



# Wingecarribee Shire Council

# Annual Report

# 2019/20

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# Introduction

The Annual Report 2019/20 provides a detailed account of Wingecarribee Shire Council's operational and financial performance during the period of 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020.

The strategies and actions set out in Council's Delivery Program 2017-2021 and annual Operational Plans aim to achieve the broader objectives and aspirations of Council's long-term Community Strategic Plan (CSP), *Wingecarribee 2031*, which was developed in response to extensive community consultation. These broader objectives are summarised in Council's CSP through five key strategic themes – Leadership, People, Places, Environment and Economy. Council's Delivery Program 2017-2021 sets out a total of 100 key actions under these five themes, the achievement of which aims to ensure that Council is working towards the long-term vision for the community articulated in the CSP.

Council's Delivery Program 2017-2021 is further supplemented by an annual Operational Plan and Budget adopted each financial year which sets out annual deliverables – key activities, projects, and activities – aiming to ensure that Council continues to work towards the commitments set out in the Delivery Program and ultimately, the objectives of the CSP.

In particular, this report focuses on Council's achievements and challenges throughout the 2019/20 Financial Year in implementing Council's Delivery Program 2017-2021 and Operational Plan 2019/20. It also outlines the involvement of Council, the State and Federal Governments, volunteers and the community in response to the challenges presented by the 2019-20 bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic.

This report also includes statutory information as prescribed by the *Local Government Act 1993*, *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005* and any other applicable legislation which require certain information to be included in this report. These statutory reporting requirements also include audited financial information that details Council's financial performance for the 2019/20 Financial Year. This financial information is annexed to this report.



## Acknowledgement of Country

The Wingecaribee Shire acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of this land and we pay our respects to Elders both past and present. We would also like to acknowledge our young leaders who are the Elders of today, tomorrow and our future.



# Our Community Vision

In 2031, we will be...

**A healthy and productive community, learning and living in harmony, proud of our heritage and nurturing our environment.**



## Mayor's Message

The past year has been a year like no other.

We started the financial year in the grips of one of the longest droughts on record and ended amid an ongoing pandemic.

In between these events, bushfires threatened our Shire and would eventually burn almost a quarter of our geographic area. Sixty-eight houses were destroyed and worse yet, two volunteer firefighters, Geoffrey Keaton and Andrew O'Dwyer, lost their lives protecting local properties.



All of these disasters had, and continue to have, a profound impact on our Shire.

I am proud to say that despite these crippling disasters our community has rallied and stood firm. For example, over \$100,000 was raised through the Mayoral Relief Fund established in response to the Green Wattle Creek and Morton bushfires with monies distributed to 200 of our hardest hit families.

Given the magnitude and scale of these events it is not surprising that business over the course of the past twelve months was unlike any previous year. Water restrictions were imposed, public events cancelled and Council facilities closed. Further, Council declared a climate emergency during the year and the 2020 local government elections were postponed to September 2021.


Despite these unprecedented events and disruptions, Council continued to deliver projects designed to provide economic stimulus to the region. Projects such as the rehabilitation of Kirkham Road in Bowral, the refurbishment of the Mittagong Library and upgrade of the Southern Regional Livestock Exchange in Moss Vale will provide long-lasting benefits to our Shire.

Notwithstanding the year's challenges, Council continued to look towards the future, working with the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust to develop and launch a Southern Highlands Koala Habitat Conservation Tender and resolving not to accept any further planning proposals for residential development until Council's Local Housing Strategy was finalised.

But the drought, bushfires and pandemic were never far from mind and so it was that much of the focus of the year remained on those residents impacted by these events.

In addition to the Mayoral Relief Fund, Council allocated more than \$1 million in Federal funds towards various bushfire recovery projects. In February, Council resolved to waive a number of development-related Council fees associated with the lodgement of applications for the rebuilding of lost and damaged buildings as a direct result of the bushfires. Just weeks later, Council also initiated a \$700,000 COVID-19 financial support package.

While much work is to be undertaken, I'm heartened by the resilience shown by our Shire's residents.



An enduring image I prefer to take from the year was the release of the first rehabilitated koala at Tugalong Station. During the year, this 3,680-hectare wilderness area located in the west of our Shire became the State's newest national park and the release of 'Tug' the koala was an important step in the long-term survival of this iconic Australian species.

I conclude this year's introduction by thanking the staff and management of Council, our residents, business owners and visitors for continuing to support the Southern Highlands and together look forward to the opportunities that Council will continue to provide the Shire for years to come.

Councillor Duncan Gair

**Wingecarribee Shire Mayor**



## Acting General Manager's Foreword

The past twelve months have proved one of the most challenging years in our Shire's recent history.

The national drought, 'Black Summer' bushfires and COVID-19 pandemic forced a reprioritisation of much of Council's work schedule.

In the days immediately following the bushfires, Council staff were on the ground assessing damages and assisting with the clean-up. Our initial focus concentrated on restoring infrastructure and tree removals in and immediately around fire-affected village centres.

Within a few short weeks of the initial blazes, Council staff had removed more than 1,000 burnt and dangerous trees across our fire-affected villages.

While physical repairs continue the recovery has grown and includes initiatives to restore the long-term emotional, social, economic, environmental and physical wellbeing of the Shire's bushfire-affected communities. To facilitate this, Council developed, and continues to host, a Local Recovery Plan (LRP) which focuses on five key areas of disaster recovery being *Social, Built, Economic, Natural Resources* and *Communications* recovery.

A Local Recovery Committee was established to oversee the LRP and is provided with guidance by expert Advisory Panels, chaired by Council representatives.


I am extremely proud of the efforts of all our staff who worked during the fires and continue to assist in the recovery of our Shire via their contributions in local, regional or State bushfire-related committees, workshops and public meetings. Their ongoing efforts have helped get our Shire back on its feet and will prove pivotal in the years ahead as our residents move forward.

Despite the bushfires and pandemic, Council continued to deliver its extensive capital works program.

Transport improvements remained a priority and the multi-million dollar reconstruction of Kirkham Road in Bowral proved a key undertaking. Works completed on the southern end of the road now complement those undertaken on the northern section. As a result, the road is now an integral link to the town's transport hub and provides a safer route for trucks accessing the Bowral industrial area.

Major road works are set to continue following another year of successful grant applications. These include more than \$8 million secured from the State and Federal Governments to improve several key transport corridors, including the Old Hume Highway in Mittagong and Old South Road in Bowral.





Other Council-managed projects delivered include the Bundanoon Skate Park, Welby Hockey Centre field expansion and Bowral Rugby Club extensions.

In Bowral, we also began major undertakings on improving Merrigang Street and providing greater carparking options by starting construction on the Wattle Lane carpark.

Recognising the importance of tourism, Council also adopted the Shire's first Rural Tourism Policy and developed an Agribusiness and Equine Strategy to showcase the region's potential.

I would conclude by again commending Council staff for their efforts throughout the year. Like so much of the nation's workforce, many of our employees were forced to quickly adapt and uproot long-standing work practices at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Their adaptability and support for our community in the face of this year's adversities assures me that our Shire is in good hands and that the organisation remains committed to tackling the challenges of the years ahead.

Barry W Paull

**Acting General Manager**

# Our Shire

## Location and geography

The Wingecarribee Shire local government area (LGA) is located 75 kilometres from the south-western fringe of Sydney and 110 kilometres from Sydney's central business district. The Shire has a total area of approximately 2,700 square kilometres, 56 per cent of which is north of the Wingecarribee River. It is comparable in size to that of urban Sydney, averaging 55 kilometres from east to west and 45 kilometres from north to south, with its geographic centre north-west of Berrima and its demographic centre to the south-east of Bowral. Much of the Shire is located at or above 640 metres above sea level.





## Environment

The Wingecarribee Shire has outstanding biodiversity values primarily due to a diverse geology, large rainfall gradient east to west and the altitude changes that occur resulting in many different habitat types. Habitats include sandstone forests, tall forests, rainforests, grassy woodlands, Permian slopes, riverine habitats, and upland swamps.

There is great diversity of native flora, with over 2,150 species. There are over 370 vertebrate fauna species, approximately 50 threatened plant species, over 56 threatened animal species and one endangered animal population in the Shire. There are also 15 Threatened Ecological Communities, and over 69 different plant community types.

The Southern Highlands is home to the largest koala population in southern NSW, with more than 3,000 koalas estimated to reside in the Shire, which represents approximately 10 per cent of the total number of koalas left in the State's wild.

The Wingecarribee Shire has large areas of high conservation value including part of the World Heritage Greater Blue Mountains area, and two declared wilderness areas.

## Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians

Wingecarribee Shire Council acknowledges the Gundungurra and Tharawal (or Dharawal) people as the traditional custodians of this place we now call the Wingecarribee Shire. The Wingecarribee, Wollondilly and Nattai Rivers which run through the Shire are closely connected to the culture, dreaming and songs of the traditional custodians. A Dreamtime creation story, Gurangatch and Mirragan, describes an almighty struggle between two ancestral creator spirits, one a giant eel-like creature, Gurangatch, and the other, a large native cat, Mirragan. The scuffle resulted in the gouging out of the land to form the river systems of the Wingecarribee and Wollondilly regions.

Despite the impact of European settlement in Australia, the Gundungurra and Dharawal Aboriginal heritage has not been extinguished. The remains of prehistoric and historic Aboriginal occupation exist throughout the Southern Highlands. State Government records indicate over 400 significant Aboriginal sites within the Shire, including 86 sites or objects that exist in the vicinity of Council-managed land or roadside reserves. The Shire includes one sacred Aboriginal Place called Nungunungulla (Jubilee Rocks), which in 2015 was declared by the State Government as the 100<sup>th</sup> Aboriginal Place in New South Wales.



# Our Community<sup>1</sup>

## Population

The Wingecarribee Shire LGA has an estimated resident population of 50,493.

The Shire's median age of 47 years is ten years higher than the State and national median ages.

There has been an increase in the number of people in the Shire needing assistance due to disability in recent years, with the most current census data indicating an increase from 2,328 people needing assistance due to disability in 2011 to 2,703 in 2016.

The composition of the Shire's population is provided below.

## Population: 50,493

Male: 48%

Female: 52%



| Age Group   | Wingecarribee | NSW   | National |
|-------------|---------------|-------|----------|
| 0-14        | 17.8%         | 18.7% | 18.7%    |
| 15-24       | 11.2%         | 12.8% | 12.8%    |
| 25-59       | 38.9%         | 46.8% | 47.1%    |
| 60-84       | 29.2%         | 19.5% | 19.4%    |
| 85 and over | 2.9%          | 2.2%  | 2%       |



**77.1%** of people in the Wingecarribee Shire were born in Australia

**2.0%** of residents identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

<sup>1</sup> All data is sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) [website](#), including the Region data for the Wingecarribee Shire LGA which references figures from the *Census of Population and Housing 2016* in addition to other ABS Datasets.

## Employment

A breakdown of employment figures for the Shire is provided below. Please note that ABS statistics count only persons aged 15 years and over who reported being in the labour force.

Median equivalised total household income (weekly)\*

**\$839**

compared with a State median of \$891 and national median of \$877



| Employment type | Wingecarribee | NSW   | National |
|-----------------|---------------|-------|----------|
| Full-time       | 56.1%         | 59.2% | 57.7%    |
| Part-time       | 35.6%         | 29.7% | 30.4%    |
| Away from work  | 4.6%          | 4.8%  | 5.0%     |
| Unemployed      | 3.8%          | 6.3%  | 6.9%     |

\* Equivalised income is a measure of household income that takes account of the differences in a household's size and composition, and thus is made equivalent for all household sizes and compositions.

More than 81 per cent of people who work in the Shire also live in the area.

Over 23 per cent of the Shire's population participated in volunteering activities in the 12 months preceding the 2016 Census, higher than the New South Wales state figure of 18.1 per cent.

## Housing

An overwhelming majority (90.7 per cent) of the Shire's residents live in standalone dwellings, with medium and high-density housing accounting for just under eight per cent of the total housing stock.

## Our Council

Wingecarribee Shire Council consists of nine councillors who are elected by the residents of the Shire every four years. However, following the decision of the State Government to postpone local government elections until September 2021 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the current term of Council has been extended by one year.

### Our Elected Council for 2016 – 2021



**Clr Duncan Gair (Mayor)**



**Clr Grahame Andrews**



**Clr Ken Halstead OAM**



**Clr Gordon Markwart\***



**Clr Graham McLaughlin**



**Clr Peter Nelson**



**Clr Ian Scandrett**



**Clr Garry Turland (Deputy Mayor)^**



**Clr Larry Whipper**

\* Clr Gordon Markwart resigned from Council in August 2020 due to ongoing personal health issues.

^ Clr Turland was the Deputy Mayor for 2019/20. At the extraordinary meeting of Council on 16 September 2020, the governing body of Council elected Clr Andrews as Deputy Mayor for the remainder of the Council term until the NSW Local Government elections take place on 4 September 2021.

# Our Staff

## Workforce Demographics

Council continues to ensure that a skilled and professional workforce is employed to support the achievement of its operational and strategic goals. Like most local councils in New South Wales, Wingecarribee Shire Council has an ageing workforce, with those aged 45 and over comprising 53.9 per cent of the workforce. Currently, 41 per cent of Council's workforce is female and 59 per cent are male.

Council is working towards creating apprenticeship, traineeship and cadetship employment opportunities within Council, with several positions already operating across various branches of Council. This will provide sustainable employment opportunities for residents within the Shire, and will create a solid foundation of skills for future workforce planning. It will also help with proactively managing skills shortages in some professions within Council.

As at 30 June 2020, Council had 445 full-time equivalent employees in the following age groups:



| Age group    | Total      |
|--------------|------------|
| 17-24        | 21         |
| 25-34        | 69         |
| 35-44        | 115        |
| 45-54        | 125        |
| 55-64        | 95         |
| 65+          | 20         |
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>445</b> |



## Council Recognition

In December 2019, Council received two awards in Division B (population of 30,000 – 70,000) at the annual Excellence in the Environment Awards presented by Local Government NSW. Council's Integrated Roadside Environmental Management Framework was recognised as the winner in the Roadside Environmental Management category, while Council's waste education program received a highly commended award in the Behaviour Change in Waste category.

Another noteworthy achievement was Council's Pie Time event winning Gold at the Canberra Region Tourism Awards in November 2019. This was the second consecutive year that the Pie Time event had won Gold at this event.



## Bushfire Recovery

The 2019–20 bushfire season in New South Wales (NSW), referred to informally as the ‘Black Summer’ bushfires, was unprecedented in its scale and intensity. By 3 February 2020, the fireground in NSW had burnt 5.4 million hectares (seven per cent of the state), including 2.7 million hectares in national parks which equated to 37 per cent of the NSW park system.

The Green Wattle Creek, Currowan and Morton Fires impacted the Wingecarribee Shire in late December 2019 and early 2020. These fires caused significant loss, destruction and damage to homes, outbuildings, fences and equipment. There was significant loss and injury to wildlife and devastating damage to the natural environment. Tragically, two NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) volunteers, Geoffrey Keaton and Andrew O’Dwyer, lost their lives while fighting the Green Wattle Creek bushfire on Wilson Drive, Buxton.

The bushfires occurred at a time when the Shire was enduring a period of intense drought with minimal rainfall and above average temperatures. The fires across NSW brought significant smoke haze, impacting air quality in the Shire and restricting road and rail access on multiple occasions.

The long-term effects and extent of the impact on the wellbeing of the local community are yet to be fully realised, as are impacts on the physical environment and economy.

It is acknowledged that the recovery process will be lengthy, with time needed for clearance, repair and rebuilding. Council continues to work in partnership with emergency services, State and Federal Government agencies, non-government organisations and volunteers in delivering emotional, financial and other recovery-related support to affected residents.

Key aspects of Council’s response to the bushfires are detailed below. These initiatives reflect Council’s commitment to helping restore the emotional, social, economic and physical wellbeing of bushfire-affected villages in the Shire.





## Community recovery

Immediately following the bushfires, information kiosks were set up in Balmoral and Wingello to provide support for affected residents. The information kiosks facilitated applications for the Mayoral Relief Fund that was established by Council as well as enquiries about bushfire waste, vegetation, rebuilding and temporary accommodation. This face-to-face option complemented Council's dedicated 1800 Bushfire Recovery phone line that was initiated to help bushfire-affected residents quickly access information from Council. Council also supported the establishment of a Community Recovery Hub at Balmoral Village Hall.

Community recovery meetings in Balmoral and Wingello took place in February 2020 and were live streamed on Facebook for community

members who could not attend in person. The meetings featured an update from the Regional Recovery Coordinator and speakers from key government agencies including Service NSW and Disaster Welfare Services. The meetings provided an opportunity for the speakers to hear the concerns of those affected and for attendees to receive the latest recovery information. Council staff were present to talk about ongoing clean-up activities, infrastructure repairs and funding assistance available.

Council developed a Local Recovery Plan (LRP) focusing on five key areas for disaster recovery as recognised by the Australian Institute of Disaster Resilience – Social, Built, Economic, Natural Resources and Communications. The LRP is being used in conjunction with the State



Government's Regional Recovery Plan to implement a recovery program.



**Balmoral Village, 28 February 2020**

A Local Recovery Committee was established to oversee the LRP and includes representatives from Council, relevant State and Federal Government agencies as well as community members where required. This Committee is provided with specialist support and advice by Advisory Panels, chaired by representatives from Council.

Council participated in meetings of the Southern Regional Recovery Committee, which operates across seven LGAs impacted by bushfires including the Wingecarribee Shire, and assisted with the development of a Regional Recovery Action Plan. In addition, Council staff contributed to various sub-committees relating to Health and Wellbeing, Planning, Development and Environment,

Waste, Tourism and Hospitality. The Southern Regional Recovery Committee supports the State Recovery Committee established by the NSW Government in working to determine how to best provide recovery support to affected communities.

Council staff also joined the Bushfire Recovery Mental Health Steering Committee, which consists of representatives from South Western Sydney Primary Health Network and South West Sydney Local Health District.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, further community recovery meetings commenced online in June 2020. The first meeting featured speakers from Council, Laing O'Rourke (appointed by the State Government to clean up bushfire damaged properties), Red Cross, Community Links and Shane Fitzsimmons, former RFS Commissioner and current Commissioner of Resilience NSW. The meeting was recorded and made available on Council's [Bushfire Recovery](#) webpage. Several other online meetings were scheduled to take place in July and August 2020.

On 14 January 2020, Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AO QC, Governor of New South Wales, and Mr Dennis Wilson visited Council's Civic Centre and met with Mayor Duncan Gair and Council staff involved in bushfire recovery activities. The Governor and Mr Wilson also met with relief coordinators and community members at the Community Recovery Hub in Balmoral and visited the RFS Brigade Stations at Bundanoon and Wingello respectively.

This visit was followed on 24 February 2020 by a visit from His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd), Governor-General of Australia, and Mrs Linda Hurley. The Governor-General and Mrs Hurley were accompanied by Mayor Gair in meeting

with residents and local business owners at Hill Top Community Centre and attending a barbeque at the community recovery meeting in Balmoral.

Council received approval from Resilience NSW for funding to appoint a Bushfire Community Recovery Officer role for the 2020/21 financial year to support and build on Council's initiatives to support bushfire-impacted communities through their recovery.

A number of newsletters specific to recovery matters were produced and distributed amongst the Shire's northern and southern bushfire-affected villages. In conjunction with Resilience NSW, Council has also begun contacting impacted residents to hear first-

hand of the recovery effort and to help identify current issues and future needs of those residents.

In February 2020, Council's Destination Southern Highlands unit embarked on an economic recovery campaign titled 'Share the Love'. This campaign was subsequently adapted due to restrictions implemented by the State Government in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and initially focused on promoting local businesses through a 'Buy Local/Shop Local' campaign. A strategy was developed around three stages comprising: 1. Survive 2. Revive and 3. Thrive. This campaign is ongoing and continues to be modified in response to the pandemic.



**Coordinator Community Engagement and Coordinator Community Development at the Wingello Bushfire Recovery Meeting, Wingello Mechanics Institute, 20 February 2020**



Council secured \$250,000 from the NSW Government's Bushfire Community Resilience and Economic Recovery Fund which was allocated to the following five projects:


- Elevate the Southern Highlands Bushfire Recovery – extending the 'Share the Love' community recovery campaign by Destination Southern Highlands
- Business Events Familiarisation – developing the implementation and hosting of Business Events Familiarisation for conference organisers to mitigate the risk of closures
- Community Development – a community resilience small grants program for local and not-for-profit organisations targeted at building resilience
- Community Engagement – activities responding to community recovery needs based on the [Five Ways to Wellbeing](#) model
- Equine and Agri-business Sustainability Project – creating a long-term sustainability plan and diversified agribusiness economy for the Wingecarribee Shire to establish resilience for local operators of the future.

Council continues to apply for grant opportunities to assist with bushfire recovery and building resilience within the community as those opportunities become available.

## **Disaster Recovery Funding program of works**

With input from the respective community engagement meetings held in Balmoral and Wingello during February 2020, Council approved a program of works funded by \$1,225,000 from the Federal Government's Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements. These works comprised the following initiatives and funding allocation:

- Rate relief for properties with homes completely destroyed – \$300,000
- Removal of trees which have no ecologically or culturally significant value that pose a future fire risk in various localities – \$225,000
- Tree removal and disposal of green waste for Balmoral and Wingello – \$175,000
- Flora and fauna restoration and regeneration – \$100,000
- Establishment of an informal passive recreation area at Balmoral Park, Balmoral – \$100,000
- Tourism Recovery Program – \$75,000
- Waste disposal at Bargo Waste Management Centre for Balmoral and Buxton residents – \$50,000
- Beautification works and installation of park furniture at Casburn Park, Wingello – \$50,000
- Unfunded expenses for the provision of potable water via water tankers, cool rooms and other miscellaneous resources provided to Balmoral and Wingello in the immediate aftermath of the bushfires – \$50,000
- Restoration of bushfire damaged walking track at Glow Worm Glen, Bundanoon – \$25,000
- Repair and restoration of mountain bike tracks at Wingello and Bundanoon – \$25,000
- Removal of trees and vegetation that pose a potential fire risk and general clean up at the roadside entrance into Bundanoon – \$25,000
- Contribution to honour fallen RFS firefighters – \$15,000
- Contingency – \$10,000.



Following the bushfires, Council staff commenced the assessment and clean-up of damage to the Shire's public infrastructure and the natural environment, with an initial focus on restoring bushfire-affected villages through infrastructure repairs and tree removals in and immediately around the town centres. Staff from Blacktown City Council, City of Sydney Council and Liverpool City Council generously assisted in these efforts. This included the removal of more than 1,000 fallen trees in Balmoral, with excess wood being split and offered to Balmoral residents free of charge. Eighty-six residents took up the offer and over 500 cubic metres of firewood was delivered during the last week of April 2020.

Council also worked closely with State Government-appointed contractors, Laing O'Rourke, which was engaged to complete the clean-up of bushfire damaged properties across NSW. By 30 June 2020, a total of 123 properties across the Wingecarribee Shire had been cleared by Laing O'Rourke.

Furthermore, works have commenced on the ecological restoration components of the Federal Government's bushfire relief funding package, including the distribution of funds allocated to two local wildlife carer organisations. The [Private Land Conservation Bushfire Recovery](#) webpage has been launched and enables bushfire-affected property owners to sign up to free enhanced versions of Council's Land for Wildlife and Habitat for Wildlife Programs. Weed control on bushfire-affected Council bushland reserves has taken place and repairs to damaged reserve boundaries of Mt Alexandra Reserve (West Break Fire Trail, Colo Vale) have been completed.

## **Financial assistance**

Council's initial actions in response to the impacts of the Green Wattle Creek fire included:

- the establishment of a Mayoral Relief Fund to which Council made an initial contribution of \$50,000; and
- the distribution of cash cards to bushfire-affected residents in Balmoral on 24 and 27 December 2019.

As a result of the generous donations made by members of the public, more than \$100,000 was provided from the Mayoral Relief Fund to those residents impacted by the bushfires through financial assistance rounds overseen by Council.

On 6 February 2020, Council resolved to waive certain Council-related fees for bushfire-affected residents intending to rebuild. These included development application and pre-lodgement meeting fees, construction certificate, complying development certificate and final occupation certificate fees, local government approval fees and all critical inspection costs.

Council also worked with Service NSW in relation to a rate relief contribution for the third and fourth quarter rate instalments for those properties identified by the RFS as being destroyed or uninhabitable. In addition to the rate relief previously approved by Council which was funded from the Federal Government's Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements, a further \$325,000 in rate relief was provided to impacted property owners by Service NSW and also by Council through funds received from the NSW Government.

## Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Shortly after the devastating impacts of the 'Black Summer' bushfires, on 22 March 2020 the Prime Minister, the Hon Scott Morrison MP, announced an extensive range of measures to limit the spread of COVID-19 across communities within Australia. The measures included the enforced closures of certain businesses, while social gathering numbers were severely restricted and social distancing measures became enforceable by law enforcement agencies. These measures have had a considerable negative impact on businesses within the Wingecarribee Shire, either directly because of forced closures or indirectly due to reduced customer foot traffic and downscaled retailing options. The measures also resulted in uncertainty for many residents who are employed in impacted business sectors.

Council has supported the local community through a range of services and financial support for businesses and residents introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. At its meeting on 13 May 2020, Council formally approved a range of financial assistance measures to an estimated value of \$700,000. These were aimed at supporting residents and local businesses that have been affected by enforced shutdowns and the broader economic downturn which has eventuated as a result of the pandemic. The measures included:

- deferral of rates for all business-rated properties for six consecutive months, commencing on 1 April 2020, applicable where the property owner runs a business from the premise or provides a rent deferral period for business tenants;
- deferral of rates for six months for all property owners who lost employment or were stood down due to the Federal Government's enforced business closures;
- removal of all interest charges on overdue rates and charges, including water and sewer charges, for a period of 12 months commencing on 1 April 2020;
- provision of a rental subsidy for six months for Council-owned properties that are occupied by a small business or organisation impacted by the Federal Government's enforced business closures; and
- provision of a fee reduction for all outdoor dining areas, materials on footpaths and environment and health inspections commencing on 1 April 2020 for a period of six months.

Council has also worked with Regional Development Australia Southern Inland to initiate networks to assist businesses during the pandemic and beyond, focusing on COVID-19 Business Support, Business Activity, and *The (New) Normal*.

At the outbreak of the pandemic, Council staff worked with the Southern Highlands Suicide Prevention Program to develop a Five Ways to Wellbeing flyer. Aimed at the high rate of unemployed people with a limited knowledge of local services or how to access them, the flyer was well received by Centrelink and other services across the Shire which experienced a change in service demands.

In addition to these support measures, Council responded promptly to advice from both the Federal Government and State Government regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. Council established a Continuity Management Team to implement procedures that ensured Council's essential services

continued throughout this period and to develop actions to help slow the spread of COVID-19 within Council's workforce and the community.

Council facilities such as the Civic Centre, Welcome Centre and Bowral Central Library were temporarily closed to the public in accordance with Government restrictions to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Essential services such as customer service-related functions, lodgement of applications, domestic waste collections, water and sewer services and road maintenance were prioritised. The Resource Recovery Centre continued to operate by implementing cashless sales, enhanced hygiene measures and social distancing requirements, with service to local businesses and tradespersons given precedence.




**Temporary Council Chambers in the Civic Centre with social distancing measures in place. From 13 May 2020, Council meetings were held remotely using video conferencing software**

Council facilities subsequently reopened due to the easing of Government restrictions, subject to ongoing strict hygiene and social distancing measures to protect the health of customers and staff. Where applicable, Council facilities were also registered as 'COVID Safe' under the NSW Government's COVID Safe Program.

In response to relevant Public Health Orders issued due to the pandemic, Council staff who could work remotely were equipped with the technology to do so, allowing Council to continue to effectively deliver services to the community whilst adhering to Government restrictions. Social distancing practices were also implemented for outdoor staff enabling them to continue to deliver on planned programs.



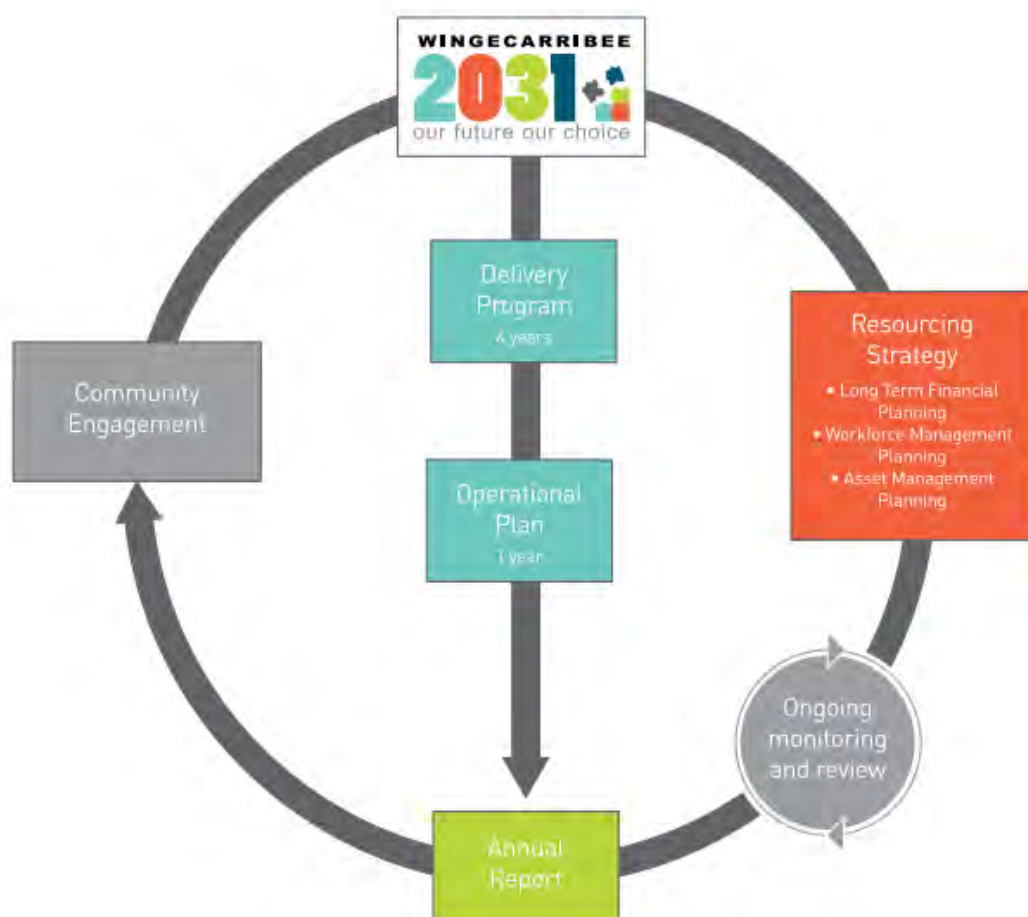


Commencing on 13 May 2020, a successful transition was made to holding Council meetings using video conferencing software. Appropriate arrangements were made for members of the public to still be able to participate in relevant parts of the meeting, such as the public forum. Regular newsletters were also prepared for Councillors to ensure they were kept up to date with the business of Council during this period.

Council is continuing to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on the Shire's community and will respond to this as appropriate in the 2020/21 financial year.

# Integrated Planning and Reporting

All local councils in NSW work within the Integrated Planning and Reporting framework. Council's framework is shown in Figure 1. The framework recognises that Council plans and policies should not exist in isolation and are strategically linked to the aspirations of the community.




**Figure 1: Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework**

The framework ensures that Council, in partnership with the community, articulates the aspirations of the community in a Community Strategic Plan (CSP) which provides at a minimum a 10-year outlook.

Council's CSP outlines five key themes underpinned by strategies that support the achievement of the community's long-term goals and aspirations. These themes are:

1. Leadership
2. People
3. Places

- 
4. Environment
  5. Economy

The CSP is supported by a four-year Delivery Program that outlines the actions Council will undertake to achieve the goals of the CSP. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the NSW Government decided that the existing Delivery Program for each council will apply for a further 12 months, maintaining the key themes and any activities not yet completed.

An annual Operational Plan is also developed to specifically detail the activities to be performed in, and the budget for, the relevant financial year. Council's Operational Plans are developed in support of the relevant Delivery Program in order to ensure that Council continues to work towards the actions set out in the Delivery Program on an annual basis.

Further, Council's Resourcing Strategy demonstrates how Council will manage its workforce, finances and assets to achieve the aspirations and issues identified in the CSP.

To view Council's integrated planning and reporting documents please visit Council's [Integrated Planning and Reporting](#) webpage.

## Achievements

This report presents Council's achievements in implementing the actions set out in the Delivery Program 2017-2021 during the 2019/20 financial year. This is the third annual report focusing on the Delivery Program 2017-2021.

Selected highlights of Council's key achievements in 2019/20 are provided below for each of the five themes of Council's CSP. These highlights generally do not include Council's response to the 'Black Summer' bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic, as these are addressed earlier in the report. Further detail is provided in the succeeding sections, with the relevant four-year actions of the Delivery Program 2017-2021 listed numerically under each CSP theme as applicable.

## Leadership

- The draft Operational Plan and Budget 2020/21 was publicly exhibited and was due to be adopted by Council on 8 July 2020, in accordance with the revised timeframes for adoption announced by the NSW Government in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- A Councillor Information Session Code was adopted, reflecting relevant provisions of Council's Code of Conduct and providing tailored guidance to ensure proper governance around how these Information Sessions are conducted.
- Council significantly increased its communication with the community through such platforms as media releases and social media, largely as a result of the 'Black Summer' bushfires and COVID-19 pandemic.
- Council's Customer Service Contact Centre was upgraded and now includes the ability for customers to request call-back services and SMS capabilities in order to send text messages to customers with information concerning customer service requests.

- Council's Community Engagement Strategy was reviewed and updated following a period of public exhibition, including a Community Participation Plan that was revised in response to recent legislative amendments regarding the advertising of development applications.

## People

- A record 43 residents pledged Australian Citizenship as part of Council's annual Australia Day Celebrations in Berrima. Sidney (Sid) Jeffrey was named as the Shire's 2020 Australia Day Citizen of the Year for his extensive volunteer work, while Young Citizen of the Year was awarded to Caitlin Gallagher for her community and volunteer work.
- A number of community events were held prior to the imposition of Government restrictions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including:
  - NAIDOC Week celebrations were held in July 2019 commencing with the official Flag Raising Ceremony and the opening of the 'Poetry in First Languages' Art Exhibition.
  - A National Grandparents Day event was held in October 2019. The event was designed as an intergenerational event where both the very young and the older members of the community could come together and participate in activities.
  - The annual Seniors Festival was held in February 2020. More than 60 events were delivered over a 12-day period in partnership with over 21 local organisations, businesses and service providers, with an estimated total attendance for the Festival of 1,900 people.
- Several sport and leisure facilities received major upgrades, including:
  - Completion of the second synthetic hockey field at Welby, fulfilling one of the agreed actions listed in the Welby Heights Oval Plan of Management.
  - Construction of Bundanoon Skate Park, a joint project with the State Government which provided funding via the Stronger Country Communities Fund. The official opening of the Skate Park on 1 June 2020 was attended by Mayor Gair and Member for Goulburn Wendy Tuckerman MP.
  - An extension of Bowral Rugby Club, consisting of increased floor space in the club house, a viewing deck, storage facilities, a new canteen area, air conditioning and a lift for disabled access. The extension works were made possible due to a \$991,330 grant from the NSW Government.
- Council approved a 99-year lease of the Aboriginal Community Cultural Centre to the Illawarra Aboriginal Land Council, following extensive community engagement including two separate periods of public exhibition and consultation with the traditional Gundungurra people and other local Aboriginal people. This lease ensures that the facility based in Mittagong remains in the hands of the Shire's First Nation Peoples.

## Places

- Council adopted a Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) after an eight-week public exhibition period. The LSPS outlines a 20-year land use vision for the Shire and aims to protect and enhance the local characteristics of the Shire's towns and villages. In addition, it includes actions to develop place-based planning controls to reflect those unique characteristics. Council also adopted a Local Housing Strategy, which seeks to increase the diversity of housing types within the Shire to ensure that housing stock is reflective of the needs of the community.
- Council successfully applied for several grant opportunities to improve road infrastructure, including:
  - \$1,852,323 from the Federal Government's Black Spot Program for safety improvements along a 2.5 km section of the Old Hume Highway, Bowral (1.5 km south and 1 km north of Centennial Road).
  - \$4,796,220 from the NSW Government's Safer Roads Program for the design and construction of several safety countermeasures on Old South Road between Merrigang Street in Bowral and Aylmerton Road in Aylmerton.
- Ongoing works took place on Wombeyan Caves Road and some adjoining roads in response to extensive damage caused by the Green Wattle Creek Bushfire and subsequent storms and floods in February 2020. Emergency reconstruction work, including the clearing of rockfalls, landslides, fallen trees and repairing the scouring of the road surface, enabled residents to continue to access properties at Goodmans Ford.
- Concept designs have been completed for the Moss Vale, Bowral and Mittagong Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) upgrades, the planning for which includes innovation through automation, energy efficiency, improved reliability, service delivery and integration between the STPs and the distribution network.
- Council awarded four grants under the Wingecarribee Heritage Assistance Grants scheme to projects requesting funding for heritage or potential heritage items. The grants contributed \$17,620 in addition to more than \$90,000 in applicant contributions.

## Environment

- Council made a Climate Emergency Declaration on 12 February 2020, recognising the latest climate change science from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and Australian Climate. Council's formal position on the issue of climate change was communicated to both the State and Federal Governments, expressing concern about climate change and advocating for more action in responding to it.
- A Southern Highlands Koala Habitat Conservation Tender was developed in collaboration with the Biodiversity Conservation Trust and launched in 2019. This Tender offers landholders within the Wingecarribee Shire an opportunity to diversify their income by earning annual management payments for conserving native vegetation on their property.



- Schools Environment Day was delivered on 22 October 2019, with approximately 600 students participating across 25 different activities.
- The Land For Wildlife (LFW) program celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of operation in the Shire. The current area of active properties in the Shire which are part of this program is over 5,000 hectares, with 3,200 hectares under conservation.
- Council successfully ran Household Chemical CleanOut and Clean Up Australia Day events in March 2020. Public participation in each event was high, with 318 households participating in the Household Chemical Clean Out and 1.2 tonnes of litter collected from over 19 sites participating in Clean Up Australia Day.

## Economy

- The Tulip Time Festival was delivered in September 2019, with a theme of 'Mary Poppins' and the charity partner of Variety - the Children's Charity. 54,500 people visited the festival, an increase of 14 per cent on 2018 figures.
- In collaboration with the Southern Highlands Food and Wine Association, Council launched a new mobile-responsive Destination Southern Highlands website aimed at attracting domestic and international visitors to the Southern Highlands.
- A draft Southern Highlands Destination Plan 2020-2030 was developed to articulate Council's role in economic development in pursuit of the community's vision as set out in Council's Community Strategic Plan *Wingecarribee 2031*. The draft Destination Plan seeks to recognise both traditional industry as well as emerging sectors in the Southern Highlands, including agribusiness, tourism, equine industries, professional business services, creative industries, healthcare, advanced manufacturing and education.
- Council adopted a Rural Tourism Policy with several aims, including to provide greater certainty and consistency in assessing rural tourism developments, outline a clear approval pathway for certain rural tourism related developments and limit opportunistic rural tourism developments.
- The tender for the design, development and construction of the saleyard upgrades at the Southern Regional Livestock Exchange was released. Progress was also made on a number of minor works, including the installation of seating as well as a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) system at the gates which allows for communication between persons entering the premises and the call centre.



# Leadership



## Leadership Services

Asset Planning and Support

Civic Leadership

Corporate Information

Corporate Relations

Corporate Strategy

Customer Service

Development Services

Economic Development

Employee Services

Financial Services

Governance and Legal

Information Services

Property Services

*The Wingecarribee Shire is vibrant with strong ethical civic and community leadership, underpinned by meaningful communication, engagement and community participation in decision making.*

*Decisions are made in a respectful and inclusive manner to advance agreed community priorities and our leaders are held accountable for their decisions.*

*Our leadership is responsive to the changing environment at a local and global level.*

*We embrace the ideas of the full spectrum of our community and actively seek out ways to include a diversity of views and input into decision making.*

**To achieve this aspiration by 2031, our community goals are:**

- 1.1 Our Council has the trust of the community and well informed decisions are made to ensure long term sustainability of our Shire.
- 1.2 Council communicates and engages with the community in a diverse, open and inclusive way.
- 1.3 Developing community leadership, strong networks and shared responsibility for the Shire promotes and enhances community capacity.

## Leadership Indicators

| Leadership Indicators   | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Percentage of formal access applications under the <i>Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009</i> decided within statutory timeframes or as agreed with the applicant | 100%    | 100%    | 100%    | 100%    |
| Hours lost due to workplace injury  | 2,275   | 539     | 1,269   | 2,627   |
| Complaints received and recorded in Compliments and Complaints Register   | 177     | 274     | 126     | 111     |
| Compliments received and recorded in Compliments and Complaints Register  | -       | 104*    | 93      | 96      |

\* Data includes only compliments received between 1 October 2017 and 30 June 2018. Compliments were not formally recorded in a register prior to this.

## DP01 Develop and implement an elected-member professional development program

Planning had commenced for the Councillor induction and professional development program for the 2020 local government elections. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, local government elections in New South Wales were postponed until 4 September 2021.

Prior to the election being postponed, a survey of potential candidates and former councillors was undertaken to inform the development of pre-election workshops and the councillor induction program. The outcomes of this survey and the Councillor Induction and Professional Development Guidelines published by the Office of Local Government will inform the development of pre-election workshops and the councillor induction program for the 2021 elections.

## DP02 Strengthen Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting and Governance Frameworks

In accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993*, the draft Operational Plan and Budget 2020/21 was publicly exhibited between 29 May and 26 June 2020. Due to Government restrictions imposed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the public exhibition was limited to online promotion via Council's project page on [yoursaywingecarribee.com.au](https://yoursaywingecarribee.com.au) and [wsc.nsw.gov.au](https://wsc.nsw.gov.au). A total of 75 submissions were received during the exhibition period and one late submission was received by close of business on 30 June 2020. The State Government provided councils with a one month extension to adopt their Operational Plans for 2020/21 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, it is sought to present the final documents to Council for adoption on 8 July 2020.

A Councillor Information Session Code was adopted on 13 May 2020. This was developed to reflect relevant provisions of Council's Code of Conduct and provides tailored guidance to ensure proper

governance around how these Information Sessions are conducted. The Code is available on Council's website at [Policies](#).

Council has in place an independent internal audit program to ensure that its internal controls are appropriate and effective, and that Council's risks are being managed successfully. Four internal audits were undertaken in 2019/20 covering the areas of procurement, development assessment, accounts receivable and planning certificates. Each audit report acknowledged where existing internal controls were effective and suggested areas for improvement that Council accepted for implementation. Each audit report was presented to Council's Audit, Risk and Improvement Advisory Committee.

Council continued to affirm its zero tolerance approach to fraud and corruption in a series of communications to its workforce. This included advice about fraud and corruption control during the COVID-19 pandemic which provided a copy of relevant guidance published by the NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption.

A total of 34 valid access applications were received by Council under Part 4 of the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (GIPA Act). One application received was transferred to another agency by agreement with the applicant in accordance with section 46(1) of the GIPA Act.

The below table summarises the decisions made with respect to the access applications decided by Council during the reporting period.

| Decision  | No. of decisions* | Percentage of total |
|---|-------------------|---------------------|
| Access to information granted in full                 | 3                 | 7%                  |
| Access to information granted in part                 | 18                | 42%                 |
| Access to information refused in full                 | 0                 | 0%                  |
| Information not held                                  | 13                | 30%                 |
| Information already available to applicant            | 3                 | 7%                  |
| Refuse to deal with application                       | 0                 | 0%                  |
| Refuse to confirm or deny whether information is held | 0                 | 0%                  |
| Application withdrawn by applicant                    | 6                 | 14%                 |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>43</b>         |                     |

\* More than one decision may be made in respect of a particular access application, as provided by section 58(2) of the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*. Statistics do not include seven access applications which remained in progress as at 30 June 2020. Statistics include access applications which were received prior to 1 July 2020 but decided within the 2019/20 reporting period.

Further information regarding how Council decided access applications under the GIPA Act during 2019/20 is available at Council's [Proactive Release of Information Register](#) webpage.

In accordance with section 21 of the GIPA Act, Council conducted its annual review of its agency information guide. The NSW Information and Privacy Commission (IPC) was consulted during this process and confirmed that Council's draft agency information guide met the mandatory requirements of the GIPA Act and incorporated recommended practices pursuant to the IPC's

guidelines. Council's updated agency information guide was adopted by Council on 24 June 2020 and is available online at [Access to Information Held by Council](#).

### **DP03 Improve community understanding and awareness of Council decisions**

During 2019/20, a total of 23 Council meetings took place, comprising 19 ordinary meetings and four extraordinary meetings.

Council and Finance Committee meetings continued to be webcast in accordance with Council's Code of Meeting Practice. Council also commenced uploading recordings of the meetings to Council's YouTube channel in order to further enhance accessibility to meetings for the community.

Due to Government restrictions imposed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, from the Council meeting of 13 May 2020 onwards meetings took place remotely via audio visual link. Appropriate arrangements were made for members of the public to still be able to participate in relevant parts of the meeting, such as the public forum.

**From 13 May 2020, Council meetings took place remotely via audio visual link in response to the COVID-19 pandemic**

### **DP04 Develop and maintain an engaged and safe workforce**

Council continues to prioritise workplace safety by ensuring all Council staff are appropriately trained and that work health and safety (WHS) procedures are in place to manage risks associated with specific work-related hazards and activities.

A number of WHS-related procedures were developed or reviewed in 2019/20, or remain under development or review as at 30 June 2020. These include traffic management procedures, WHS induction procedures and WHS Consultation and Terms of Reference – Health and Safety Committee.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Council ensured that all workplaces comply with Public Health Orders through providing hand sanitising stations, implementing COVID Safe plans across Council facilities and issuing educational resources to all staff. Council also developed and implemented the Working Remotely General Manager Practice Note and Procedure to enable staff to work safely from home during the pandemic. Physical distancing was implemented for outdoor staff enabling them to continue to deliver on planned programs.

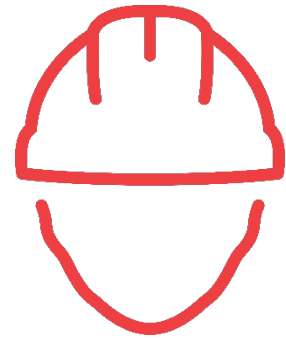
Council's Management Inspection Program has continued to be implemented in accordance with the approved procedure and inspection schedule. Corrective actions identified during these inspections are forwarded to responsible staff to rectify and actions are tracked to ensure they have been completed and the corrective action was effective.



Council's internal incident management system has continued to be used during the reporting period. When reported, responsible managers have assigned risk levels and instigated investigations to ensure improvement opportunities are identified so similar incidents do not occur again.

During the reporting period five meetings of Council's Health and Safety Committee were undertaken. These meetings are attended by Council management and nominated Health and Safety Representatives.

Council continues to work closely with StateCover Mutual to ensure that all worker's compensation claims are managed appropriately. This ensures that injured workers are treated appropriately and Return to Work Plans are put in place and implemented.



### **DP05 Manage Council's WHS risk management profile to ensure risks are mitigated**

The safety of staff has been a particular focus throughout the COVID-19 pandemic with the development and distribution of information packs to staff on sanitation and social distancing requirements. All training ceased in response to Government restrictions as training venues were not available and most providers were unable to safely deliver training due to social distancing requirements.

Each year Council participates in the Statewide Mutual Continuous Improvement Pathways (CIP) Program. This program was established by Statewide Mutual, Council's liability insurer, as a way for member councils to improve risk management practices.

The areas of focus for the 2019/20 program were:

- Risk Culture;
- Information Security;
- Contractor Management; and
- Sporting Fields.

In all areas, Council was demonstrated to have achieved some level of improvement.

The second component of the CIP program is the development of the Risk Management Action Plan (RMAP). Council determined it would focus on the development of a Contractor Management Manual and WHS Induction Procedure as the two projects for completion in 2019/20. During 2019/20, Council staff developed the manual and procedure and, pending final confirmation, Council has been advised that all RMAP requirements for 2019/20 have been met.

Council staff have continued to develop, review and implement Safe Systems of Work (SSOW) for work activities being undertaken. This has included Safe Work Method Statements for activities that include high-risk construction hazards, Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment and Control for other work activities and Safe Operating Procedures for the safe operation of plant and equipment. Council staff have also continued to complete Site Specific Risk Assessments (Take 5s) in addition to SSOW to manage all site-specific hazards associated with their work. These mechanisms are

intended to ensure the proactive identification and subsequent mitigation of work health and safety risks. Specific attention has been given to identifying and controlling risks associated with COVID-19.

### **DP06 Develop and maintain Council's Organisational Development Programs**

Council's Organisational Development Programs were developed during 2019/20 through the development of a number of new and revised policy documents. These included the Dignity and Respect General Manager Practice Note and Procedure, Training and Development General Manager Practice Note and Procedure and the Time and Attendance General Manager Practice Note and Procedure.

Council also established and implemented the Graduate, Apprentice, Trainee and Cadet Management Program. A roll out of these development programs is expected to be finalised by the end of 2020.

### **DP07 Implement actions from Council's Fit for the Future Improvement Program**

Council's Fit for the Future Improvement Plan included 15 key strategies to strengthen Council operations and improve efficiency. Six strategies have been completed and work is ongoing on the remaining nine strategies.

The adopted Long Term Financial Plan outlines projections for Council achieving the benchmarks set by the State Government. Council remains on target to meet these financial and asset management benchmarks.

### **DP08 Ensure Council's financial systems, procedures and practices are in line with industry best practice and compliant with applicable legislation**

Council's external auditor, the Audit Office of NSW, issued its auditor report stating that Council's accounting records have been kept in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993* and that the financial statements present fairly and in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards.



During the year, Council adopted the following accounting standards and interpretations (as issued by the Australian Accounting Standards Board) which were mandatorily effective from 1 July 2019:

- AASB 16 Leases;
- AASB 15 Revenue from contracts with customers; and
- AASB 1058 Income of Not-for-profit entities.

The revaluation of roads, bridges, footpaths, drainage, bulk earthworks and community land were completed as at 30 June 2020.

Council's Finance Committee has met on a quarterly basis to consider current and relevant financial matters, including quarterly reviews of the budget.

## **DP09 Manage Council's Fleet to ensure that all plant and equipment is appropriately utilised, fit for purpose and cost effective**

The total value of Council's plant and light vehicle replacement program for the 2019/20 financial year was \$2.967 million.

Council's workshop continues to comply with plant and vehicle management regimes to ensure that plant and equipment is safe, reliable and available.

Council implemented and introduced onboard weighing systems for all Council trucks over eight tonnes to enhance compliance with the National Heavy Vehicle Law.

## **DP10 Council's property activities and dealings are undertaken within the community's best interests and within legislative requirements**

Council's property portfolio continues to be managed appropriately and in accordance with legislative requirements.

Property activities and dealings undertaken during 2019/20 include:

- sale of Lots 2 and 3 10 Frankland Street, Mittagong;
- sale of vacant land in Anembo Street, Moss Vale;
- finalisation of a 99-year lease to Illawarra Aboriginal Land Council;
- finalisation of acquisition of land at 41-67 Station Street, Bowral; and
- provision of native title advice for various projects.

As at 30 June 2020, the administration and management of both leased and licenced Council premises was up to date, including the provision by lessees and licensees of valid certificates of currency of public liability insurance.

## **DP11 Procurement activities are undertaken to achieve best value while underpinned by a robust ethical framework which enables local supplier participation**

Council continues to manage its procurement activities to ensure compliance with the *Local Government Act 1993*, relevant regulations and the Office of Local Government Tendering Guidelines. Highlights during 2019/20 included tenders for:

- Civic Centre refurbishment (including a Capital Expenditure Review as reported in the Statutory Information section of this Annual Report);
- Customer Relationship Management Solution and Electronic Document Records Management System;
- Construction of stormwater drainage in Hill Top;
- Berrima Marketplace playground upgrade;
- Bundanoon Skatepark design and construction; and
- Bowral Rugby Club House redevelopment Stage 2.

## **DP12 Develop and implement enhanced asset management practices**

Council's asset management practices were reviewed as part of Council's control self-assessment program, which provides an additional level of internal assurance for management regarding the effectiveness of controls for key risks associated with Council's functions. A number of elements of Council's asset management systems were internally reviewed, including Council's Asset Management Policy and asset management plans and strategies. Council's asset management practices were determined to be in accordance with industry best practice, a finding that is consistent with an external audit of Council's asset management practices that was completed in 2019.

A condition and asset data collection survey of Council's entire road and pathways network was completed, and the data validated. This information informs Council's consideration of asset renewal programs and financial reporting.

Asset data has been updated in Council's asset management system, ConQuest, and was used to inform numerous asset management practices including capital works planning, maintenance planning, geographic mapping and financial reporting.

An Asset Management Maturity Assessment commenced during the reporting period using the Institute of Public Works Engineers Australasia assessment tool. This tool enables benchmarking against industry best practice and the identification of areas of improvement within asset management at Council. The assessment remains in progress.

## **DP13 Develop and implement Business Transformation Program**

The key elements of the Business Transformation Program relate to the development of a series of metrics to measure the responsiveness and success of development assessment processes, implementation of a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system and an upgrade to Council's document management system.

Although delays were experienced for digital aspects of the program due to barriers created by the COVID-19 pandemic, progress continued to be made on initiatives such as the adoption of a CRM system, records management system and a new website platform.

Procurement processes were undertaken for the revised corporate website and work on its development commenced. Once finalised, the new website will be easier for customers to navigate and use.

Procurement processes were also undertaken for the new CRM system, which will be rolled out in 2020/21. This new system is intended to give Council and members of the public greater visibility over matters raised with Council, to enable matters to be traced more efficiently and effectively from start to finish by both Council officers and customers.



## DP14 Enhance customer interaction with Council

Enhancing customer interaction with Council is a key focus of Council's Business Transformation Program. As part of this program, Council has automated a number of processes in its Customer Service Contact Centre, Front Counter, Cashier and Corporate areas to enhance how customers interact with Council.

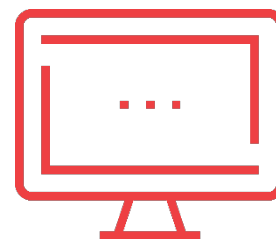
Council's Customer Service Contact Centre was upgraded with the new Contact Centre launched in first quarter of 2019/20. Features of the upgraded Contact Centre include the ability for customers to request call-back services and SMS capabilities in order to send text messages to customers with information concerning customer service requests.

In response to Government restrictions imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some Council facilities including the Civic Centre were temporarily closed to the public from late March 2020 onwards. As restrictions have eased, most of these subsequently reopened for the public to access in June 2020, with strict hygiene and social distancing measures in place to protect the health of customers and staff. Despite the temporary closure of some facilities, Council continued to deliver its customer service functions.



**Council's Customer Service Centre and various other facilities reopened to the public in June 2020 with strict hygiene and social distancing measures in place**

## **DP15 Deliver an Information and Communication Technology service that meets Council's business delivery requirements**



During the COVID-19 pandemic, Council was able to mobilise and empower over 250 staff to work remotely within 72 hours of the decision being made to reduce staffing numbers in Council facilities to comply with Public Health Orders. This was achieved through the implementation of nTier technology to allow remote access to certain Council systems, which enabled the continuation of efficient service delivery by Council.

Council is in the final stages of delivering a new disaster recovery solution, which will improve Council's ability to recover should there be either an information technology infrastructure equipment failure or a disaster recovery situation. This project will be operational in 2020/21.

Additional key technology projects delivered in 2019/20 include:

- installation of new Data Centre infrastructure, which increases speed and reliability and reduces the power consumption required to operate a large portion of Council's ICT infrastructure;
- ongoing roll out of the latest generation Microsoft Windows operating system and Microsoft Office applications, including cloud-based technology, to enhance productivity and communications across the organisation for the benefit of customers;
- upgrades to meeting room televisions and cameras at various Council facilities including the Civic Centre, Water and Sewer Depot, Infrastructure Services Depot and Welcome Centre, to achieve productivity improvements by enabling staff to meet virtually; and
- new backup system implementation to enhance disaster recovery.

## **DP16 Deliver Corporate Systems that meet Council's business delivery requirements**

Council is progressing the development and introduction of a new CRM system and upgraded electronic document records management system which, once completed, will enhance Council's delivery of services to its customers and the community.

Council also implemented a number of upgrades, changes and projects to its corporate systems to ensure that these systems meet Council's business delivery requirements. These included:

- upgrades to Council's Property and Rating system in preparation for the implementation and release of new functionality within the system, which will allow staff to more efficiently service the community;
- ongoing improvements to the development application lodgement process in preparation for the lodgement of development applications through the NSW Planning Portal which Council will be making available from July 2020;
- geographic information system (GIS) detection of fire-affected properties utilising scripts and aerial imagery to identify destroyed or damaged properties;

- automation of cadastral data feeds into GIS and mapping systems, allowing access to new parcels of land soon after new parcels of land are registered with NSW Land Registry Services; and
- complete aerial imagery coverage of the Shire as part of Council's agreement with NearMap.

### **DP17 Ensure council services are delivered efficiently and effectively**

Council has in place a service delivery program as required under its *Fit for the Future* Improvement Plan. During 2019/20, Council considered the service delivery review of Council's Children's Services and resolved to continue with direct service delivery for both Family Day Care and Wingecarribee Out of School Hours Care for a period of three years. A further service delivery review will be conducted after two years.

The service delivery review of Waste Management services was also concluded with the recommendations of the review to be considered in the development of Council's Waste Strategy.

Further, the Community Wellbeing review has been completed and two actions were developed as a result of this review, as follows:

1. A strategic workshop with relevant staff to review the traditional model and existing schemes, develop a strengths-based approach and set strategic priority areas; and
2. The development of a change management and communication plan.

These actions will be progressed in 2020/21.

The service delivery review of Aquatic Services remains in progress and is scheduled to be completed during the first half of 2020/21.

### **DP18 Identify opportunities for regional collaboration**

Council continues to participate in the Canberra Region Joint Organisation meetings, including Board Meetings, General Manager Advisory Committee Meetings and the various Professional Working Groups. Council also continues to work with regional programs and groups on matters of mutual interest and benefit, including:

- Cities Power Partnership, a national climate program for local government;
- Southern Highlands Chamber of Commerce and Industry, an advocacy organisation for businesses in all industry sectors across the region;
- NSW Local Roads Congress, a joint initiative between Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia (NSW) and Local Government NSW to optimise roads and transport outcomes;
- South Western Sydney Primary Health Network, which seeks to coordinate care and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of medical services;
- NSW Public Libraries Association (NSWPLA) South East Zone, which is a group within the peak body for public libraries in New South Wales;
- Regional Development Australia Southern Inland, which aims to maximise economic development opportunities for the Southern Inland region;

- Regional Illegal Dumping (RID) Program, a collaboration as part of the Southern Region Waste Program to prevent, investigate and prosecute illegal dumping incidents; and
- Sydney Peri Urban Network, an advocate for peri urban issues at the state and national level.

## DP19 Provide quality, timely and accessible information to the community

Council continued to use various communication channels to provide information to the community, with resources continuing to be split between both 'traditional' and 'social' media channels in 2019/20.

Council distributed 191 media releases to a range of media, community, service and first-responder organisations, an increase of 53 media releases compared with the previous year. Media releases also continued to be published online via Council's [Media Centre](#). In addition, the *Wingecarribee Today* newsletter continued to be distributed on a quarterly basis, reaching more than 27,000 households across the Shire.

Information is also distributed by electronic newsletters issued to interested community members and groups regarding Council initiatives in relation to functions such as Arts and Culture, Community Engagement, Environment and Sustainability and Library Services.

Written communications are produced in-line with current accessibility requirements.

Key information releases are also publicised via Council's online digital [Media Centre](#) and corporate [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) social media sites. 2019/20 saw a substantial increase in Council's use of social media and other non-traditional media platforms to convey information about Council to the community. This is attributed to Council's use of its social media accounts to convey important bushfire-related information to the community.

The below table provides further information regarding Council's interaction with the community using social media platforms in 2019/20 compared with previous reporting periods.

| Facebook  | 2018/19 | 2019/20* |
|---|---------|----------|
| Number of posts                                 | 256     | 477      |
| Total number of shares on Council's posts       | 1,135   | 3,061    |
| Total number of link clicks on Council's posts  | 3,960   | 7,033    |
| Twitter   | 2018/19 | 2019/20* |
| Number of tweets                                | 167     | 188      |
| Total number of retweets of Council's tweets    | 35      | 89       |
| Total number of link clicks on Council's tweets | 197     | 530      |



### Council's interaction with the community via social media accounts

\* The substantial increase in numbers for 2019/20 is attributed to the interaction between Council and the community via social media platforms between December 2019 and February 2020 as these platforms were used to convey bushfire and bushfire recovery-related information to the community.

## DP20 Implement an effective Community Engagement Framework

Council's Community Engagement Strategy was reviewed and updated in the second half of 2019. The revised Strategy, which was adopted by Council on 11 December 2019 following a period of public exhibition, included a Community Participation Plan for land use planning matters as required by a recent amendment to the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

Following this, on 17 April 2020, the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment made changes to the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000* through the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Public Exhibition) Regulation 2020*. Amendments were subsequently made to Council's Community Participation Plan, contained within the Community Engagement Strategy, in order to reflect the statutory changes. These amendments enable councils to publish advertised development on an approved website such as the NSW Planning Portal or its own corporate website.

During 2019/20, the community also had an opportunity to comment on numerous Council initiatives, strategies and policies, including:

- Draft Master Plan for Seymour Park, Moss Vale;
- Draft Public Memorials Policy and Guidelines;
- Draft Playspace Strategy;
- Draft Operational Plan 2020/21 (including Budget, Revenue Policy and Fees and Charges Policy);
- Wingecarribee River Floodplain Study;
- Recreational Walking Tracks Strategy - survey, workshop and mapping; and
- various property licensing and road closure matters;

A full list of items exhibited during the 2019/20 financial year can be found on the Your Say Wingecarribee website at [Consultation List](#).

## DP21 Support Council committees and working groups


Council staff continued to administer advisory committees, community reference groups and sunset working groups in accordance with Council's Committee Manual 2016-2020.

At the Council meeting of 10 June 2020, it was resolved that an amended Committee Manual 2016-2021 be adopted. The effect of this resolution was to extend the term of Council's advisory committees by a year to align with the extension to the Council term resulting from the decision of the NSW Government to postpone the local government elections to 4 September 2021.

## DP22 Actively build capacity for community participation in leadership including mentoring and support

Council continues to provide advocacy and leadership support as an active member of the Southern Highlands Key Stakeholders Group, which seeks to identify and develop key projects for the region.





Council hosted two successful events for NSW Small Business Month in October 2019, including a forum for local retailers encouraging collaboration which resulted in some Bowral-based retailers organising late night Christmas trading.

Council provided leadership and mentoring to the local community in response to the 2019-20 bushfire season and COVID-19 pandemic through the 'Buy Local/Shop Local' recovery program. Council also encouraged support for the My Southern Highlands Ambassador Program to stimulate increased visitation of friends and family to the Shire.

### **DP23 Develop partnerships and networking with community, government and business**

Council partners with other government agencies, the local Chambers of Commerce, Southern Highlands Key Stakeholders Group and other business and community organisations in the delivery of tourism and economic outcomes for the region.

Council offers business development services via its Partnership Program, which accounts for over 300 local business members receiving the benefits of its 'Concierge' Service initiative. Networking support was proactively provided to these local businesses to assist them with bushfire and COVID-19 pandemic recovery initiatives.

Council was also able to successfully scope and fund the development of an Agri and Equine Strategy in partnership with Destination Sydney Surrounds South and the Southern Highlands Key Stakeholders Group.



# People



## People Services

Aquatic Services

Asset Planning and Support

Children's Services

Civic Leadership

Community Wellbeing

Economic Development

Emergency Management

Library Services

Natural Area Management

Parks and Recreation

*Our Shire has a strong sense of community, where diversity is embraced and new people and ideas are welcomed. We actively encourage participation in community life where residents feel connected and their contributions are valued.*

*The wellbeing of community is enhanced through local service provision, opportunities for active and passive recreation and a vibrant network of community organisations catering for all stages of life. We work together to build on opportunities to support those vulnerable in our community.*

*We attract and nurture a diverse, creative and vibrant community. We participate in informal and formal life-long learning to enhance our quality of life.*

*Our people are able to live, work and enhance their knowledge locally.*

**To achieve this aspiration by 2031, our community goals are:**

- 2.1 Our people have the opportunity for a happy and healthy lifestyle
- 2.2 We are an inclusive community which actively reduces barriers for participation in community life
- 2.3 Wingecarribee values and nurtures a diverse, creative and vibrant community

## People Indicators

| People Indicators   | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Area of sports fields per 1,000 residents (hectares)        | 2.4     | 2.2     | 2.2     | 2.2     |
| Operating cost of actively maintained land per hectare (\$) | 12,702  | 12,003  | 12,967  | 12,701  |
| Actively maintained land per 1,000 residents (hectares)     | 6.3     | 6.3     | 6.2     | 6.2     |
| Provision of playgrounds per 1,000 children aged 0-14       | 5.7     | 5.8     | 6.0     | 6.0     |

### DP24 Advocate for improved health services in the Shire

Council has continued to advocate for improvements to health services in the Wingecarribee Shire through its representation on the South West Sydney Primary Health Network and the Wingecarribee Local Health Council.

Health and wellbeing has had an increased focus during this period, due to the 2019-20 bushfires and COVID-19 pandemic which have impacted the Shire. Coordination of the delivery of health services across the whole Shire for all age groups and sectors of the community has been crucial. The South West Sydney Primary Health Network has increased funding to Community Links Wellbeing to provide additional health services to young people and adults in local areas affected by the bushfires.




### DP25 Partner with community based organisations in provision of services

Council plays an integral role in facilitating and supporting a broad range of local and regional community sector forums and interagency meetings. These include the Southern Highlands Domestic Violence Forum, Wingecarribee Aboriginal Network, Southern Highlands Homelessness and Community Support Network and the Highlands Child, Youth and Family Network.

Council has formed partnerships with a number of community organisations, which include a partnership with the Heart Foundation and Volunteering Wingecarribee (VolWing) to commence walking groups in the local area.

Council has also partnered with Red Cross and Oz Harvest to provide the Dhungung (Food) Share program at the Aboriginal Community Cultural Centre. The program is well supported by other community organisations which attend on a regular basis to improve access to information and support services. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for the Dhungung (Food) Share program at the Aboriginal Community Cultural Centre in Mittagong has increased with over 30 food boxes provided to families each week.



A partnership between Council, Macarthur Disability Services and the Wingecarribee Adult Day Care service has resulted in a new part-time position based at Queen Street Community Centre in Moss Vale. This position assists people to navigate the Federal Government's My Aged Care system and to access packages.

## **DP26 Partner with State and community organisations to provide a broad range of health and wellness programs to target specific needs of the community**

Council has contributed to co-design processes with South West Sydney Primary Health Network and stakeholders from across the region that have informed the funded models of health-related service delivery in the local area. As a result, organisations were able to tender for funding through this model with a number of targeted programs being delivered in the Wingecarribee Shire LGA, such as After Hours Medical Care.

An Aboriginal Youth Suicide and After Care Project commenced with Wingecarribee Shire and Wollondilly Shire Councils as partners along with Tharawal. The project aims to improve the skills of local Elders and community leaders to support individuals and families impacted by suicide. This 12-month project will implement sustainable measures for the recommended model.

The 2019-20 bushfires have led to a range of State Government and community organisations working together to increase the range of health services provided to individuals and households affected by the bushfires. The COVID-19 pandemic has also required certain services to be adjusted with respect to how they are delivered to vulnerable and isolated members of our community. For example, Council's Seniors Newsletter was distributed much more widely to ensure seniors within the Shire received information relevant to their needs.

## **DP27 Provide access to sport, recreation and leisure services**

Major works at Council facilities included completion of the second synthetic hockey field at Welby, fulfilling one of the agreed actions listed in the Welby Heights Oval Plan of Management prepared by Council and the then NSW Department of Lands. Construction of Bundanoon Skate Park was also completed, with an official opening taking place on 1 June 2020 and attended by Mayor Gair and Member for Goulburn Wendy Tuckerman MP. This was a joint project with the State Government which provided funding via the Stronger Country Communities Fund.

The Bowral Rugby Club extension was likewise finalised in 2019/20. This extension consisted of increased floor space in the club house, a viewing deck, storage facilities, a new canteen area, air conditioning and a lift for disabled access. The extension works were made possible due to a \$991,330 grant from the NSW Government.

Minor works at Council facilities completed during the reporting period include:

- amenities upgrades at Leighton Gardens in Moss Vale and Winifred West Park in Mittagong;
- Mittagong Tennis Court construction and fencing;
- Bundanoon Swimming Pool kiosk and plant room refurbishment;



- the installation of LED lighting at Mittagong Oval;
- landscaping improvements at Lake Alexandra in Mittagong; and
- upgrades to the clubhouse and amenities at Burrawang Oval.

On 24 June 2020, Council endorsed the Lackey Park Regional Sporting Hub 2020 Concept Masterplan for public exhibition. This Masterplan details a shared long-term vision to turn Lackey Park in Moss Vale into a dedicated multi-discipline sporting precinct.

The 2019/20 swimming season commenced on 12 October 2019 with the opening of the Mittagong Swimming Centre. Following the conclusion of the outdoor swimming season, Council continued to maintain its outdoor swimming facilities and also reviewed policies, procedures and risk assessments. Planning for programs to be delivered in 2020/21 also commenced.

Government restrictions imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted upon the operation of the Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre in the first half of 2020, with the facility required to close to the public on 23 March 2020. During the closure period, the facility was maintained through daily perimeter and security checks, plant room maintenance, water quality testing and spot cleaning where required. Gym facilities reopened on 13 June, while aquatic facilities reopened on 19 June.



**Bowral Swimming Centre**

Attendance at Council's swimming centres is outlined in the below table.

| Attendance per pool (during season/annually)  | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| <b>Bowral</b>                                 | 47,965  | 43,854  | 38,464  | 32,128  |
| <b>Bundanoon</b>                              | 6,146   | 6,066   | 5,788   | 4,179   |
| <b>Mittagong*</b>                             | CLOSED  | CLOSED  | 16,437  | 15,510  |
| <b>Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre^</b> | 166,144 | 189,207 | 188,918 | 149,273 |

\* Mittagong Pool was closed for refurbishment during a significant period of the 2018/19 swimming season and attendance numbers reflect this.

^ Figures for the Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre include entry to both the swimming pool and gym facilities.



## **DP28 Partner with Police, business and community representatives to implement the Community Safety Plan**

In September 2019, Council hosted a full day workshop facilitated by the New South Wales Police Force focussing on police responses to incidents of domestic violence, with over 30 attendees.

The Wingecarribee Community Safety Committee continued to facilitate communication between Council, the Southern Highlands Local Area Command and the community in addressing local crime prevention, community safety and wellbeing issues. At its meetings in 2019/20, the Committee addressed the Community Safety Plan 2015-2020 and considered a number of initiatives and matters such as the Southern Highlands Walk Against Family Violence, bushfire recovery strategies, planned road safety projects and current crime trends.

## **DP29 Partner with agencies to ensure emergency management processes and procedures are in place**

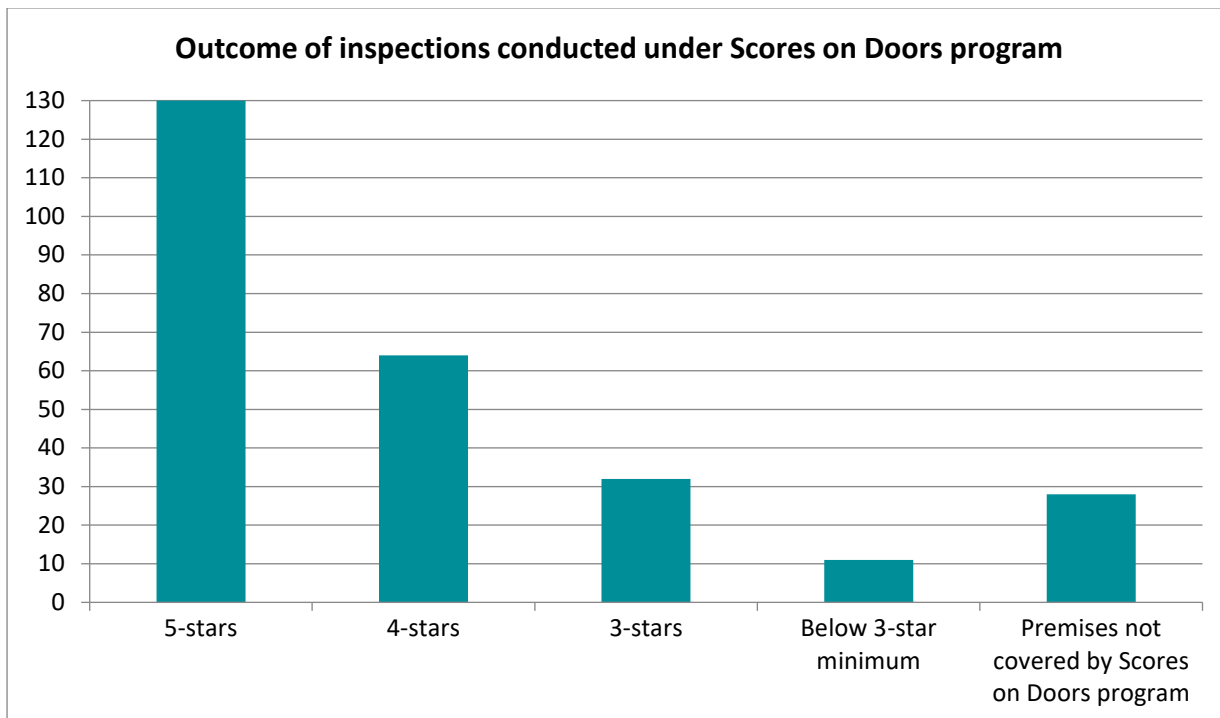
Following the 'Black Summer' bushfires, the Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC) met via audio visual link in May 2020 to discuss the plans activated in response to the bushfires, the Shire's storm events in February and the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the need to review and update specific plans having regard to revised legislation and the lessons learnt during the activation of the plans was addressed. For this reason, the LEMC determined that further consideration of additional 'potential hazards' was necessary.

The Wingecarribee Emergency Management Plan (EMPLAN), which identifies and rates the potential significant hazards in the Shire, is undergoing review and has been circulated amongst relevant stakeholders for comment. The LEMC, as a stakeholder in the Wingecarribee/Wollondilly Bush Fire Management Plan, is contributing to its review. Plans are also currently being formulated for inter-agency participation in preparedness activities with the community prior to the next bushfire season.

## **DP30 Implement public health and safety regulatory programs**

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, proactive COVID-19 safety material was circulated to all registered food premises throughout the Shire to aid efforts in increasing public awareness about relevant hygiene and safety requirements.

Across the year, Council conducted 265 routine inspections of primary food premises to assess compliance with the Food Standards Code and where applicable consider how those premises rated under the New South Wales 'Scores on Doors' hygiene and food safety scoring program. The outcomes of the inspections conducted by Council (excluding reinspections) are summarised in the chart below.



Council also undertook a number of bushfire mitigation activities, including:

- fire trail repair works, installation of new compliance signage at bushland reserves;
- installation of reserve boundary rockwork and replacement or modification of fire trail gates; and
- maintenance of Asset Protection Zones on Council-owned or managed lands.

Council regularly reviews and updates the bushfire information on its website and the front of house display of NSW Rural Fire Service publications at the Civic Centre. These publications are also displayed at other sites such as the Welcome Centre in Mittagong.

### **DP31 Assess the changing profile of the Shire and prioritise services accordingly**

Council accesses a range of data to assess the changing profile of the Shire. New data released during 2019/20 includes Australian Early Development Census data. The data assesses every kindergarten student across five domains – Social, Physical, Emotional, Language and Communication. This data informs both Council and local service providers about priority areas for the delivery of targeted intervention strategies for children aged 0-5 years.

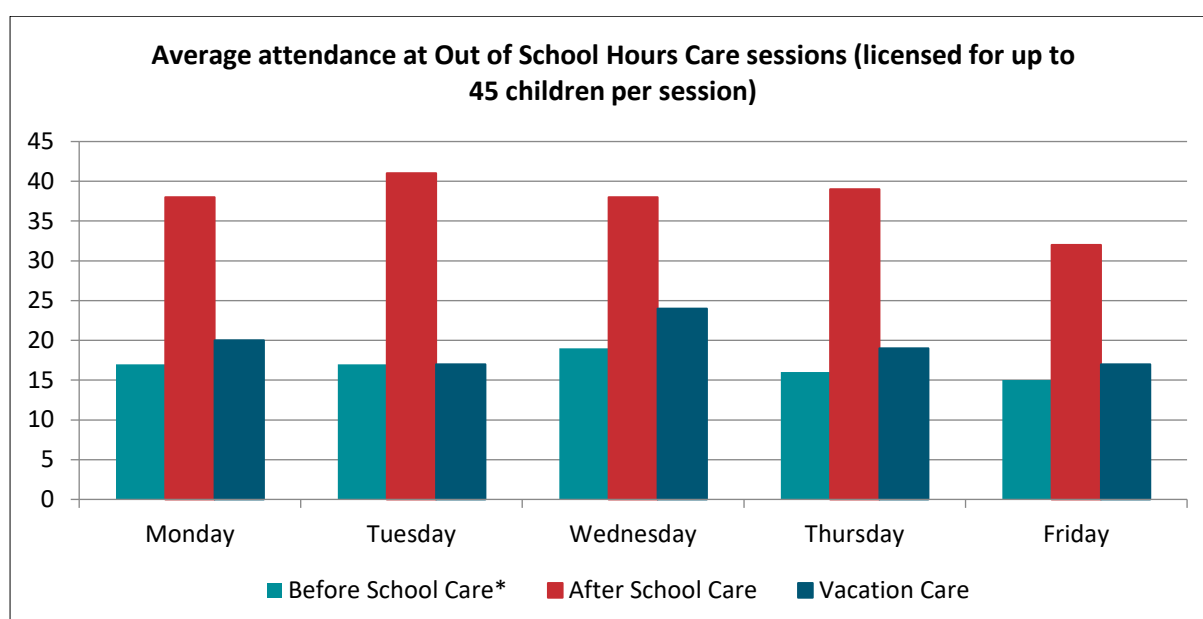
The NSW Local Health District for South West Sydney and Regional Development Australia Southern Inland released health needs data during the reporting period. This data enables Council to advocate to funding bodies for identified health needs of residents of the Shire.

## DP32 Provide children's services to support family life

The delivery of the Children's Services program has remained consistent in 2019/20 despite many challenges. These challenges included the impact of bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the ongoing efforts to recruit Family Day Care Educators within the constraints of the relevant State Environmental Planning Policy.

The continued delivery of these services despite these challenges is summarised in the below table and chart, with figures current as at 30 June 2020.

| Family Day Care indicators<br>(licensed for up to 25 Educators) |    |
|---|----|
| Number of registered educators                                  | 7  |
| Number of relief educators                                      | 0  |
| Number of prospective educators training                        | 3  |
| Number of children in care                                      | 78 |
| Number of active families                                       | 58 |
| Number of children on the waiting list                          | 62 |



\* Maximum attendance for Before School Care generally does not exceed 20 children per session as negotiated with Mittagong Public School.

Both the Family Day Care and Wingecarribee Out of School Hours Care services continued to service the needs of the community with high enrolment numbers and a waitlist for Family Day Care services.

With the relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions, staff have re-initiated many of the business and marketing plans that had been commenced prior to the impact of COVID-19 on the community.

These business and marketing plans have the goal of attracting more Family Day Care Educators to meet the growing demand of families looking for smaller childcare options.

### DP33 Support agencies to implement community programs and initiatives

During 2019/20, Wingecarribee Club Grants provided over \$50,000 to community organisations to support local initiatives, with funds distributed in August.

In addition, the Wingecarribee Community Assistance Scheme funded a record number of community organisations and sporting groups as part of the 2019/20 funding program. The Scheme provides an opportunity for locally based community, sporting, arts and cultural and service groups to apply for up to \$7,000 for one-off community programs and initiatives that align with Council's Community Strategic Plan. Close to 60 groups applied for the \$130,000 funding pool, with 51 community-based organisations receiving funds. These funds will be distributed at the start of the 2020/21 financial year.

Council also provided several donations to community groups and organisations in 2019/20. A selection of these donations is listed in the table below.

| Description  | Amount donated by Council |
|--|---------------------------|
| Domestic Violence (Women) Accommodation Argyle Housing | \$22,733                  |
| Highlands Community Centre                             | \$6,818                   |
| Highlands Pipe Band                                    | \$2,000                   |
| Illawarra Academy of Sport                             | \$10,200                  |
| Regional Art Gallery (Support Group)                   | \$2,000                   |
| Robertson Community Technology Centre                  | \$10,000                  |
| Southern Highlands Concert Band                        | \$3,000                   |
| St Vincent de Paul Youth Transitional Housing          | \$21,641                  |
| Volunteering Wingecarribee                             | \$39,865                  |

Similarly, Council supported the implementation of community programs and initiatives through contingency expenditure. The below table lists the initiatives that Council supported financially in 2019/20 through its Contingency Fund.

| Description   | Amount donated by Council |
|---|---------------------------|
| Bikes 4 Life financial assistance   | \$1,000                   |
| Bowral Classic Cycling Event 2019   | \$3,000                   |
| Hire of Bowral Memorial Hall for Mental Health Community Expo   | \$320                     |
| Illawarra Academy of Sport  | \$2,000                   |
| Refund of fees for development application 19/1207 and construction certificate application 19/1207.01 to Hill Top Men's Shed | \$988                     |
| Refund of fees for modification to development consent application 19/0955.03 to Robertson Men's Shed                         | \$387                     |

| Description  | Amount donated by Council |
|--|---------------------------|
| Refund of fees for various development applications and a construction certificate application to Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens | \$3,007                   |
| The Bundanoon Club financial assistance  | \$3,044                   |
| Winterfest Bundanoon   | \$854                     |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>\$14,600</b>           |

Further information regarding financial assistance provided by Council under section 356 of the *Local Government Act 1993* is provided in the Statutory Information section of this Annual Report.

### DP34 Provide companion animal services

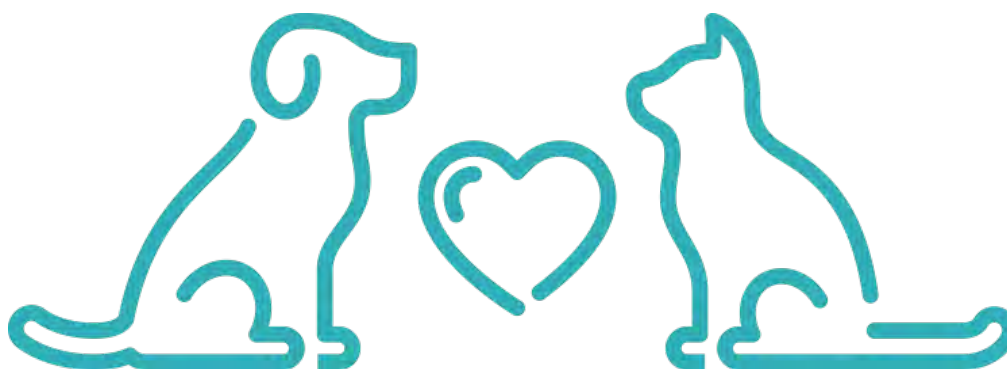
Council provides companion animal services through the operation of the Wingecarribee Animal Shelter and the provision of Ranger services.

Council's Rangers investigated several incidents involving dog attacks and issued fines and control orders where appropriate to ensure that dog owners comply with relevant legislation. Council also issued warning letters under the *Companion Animals Act 1998* requesting that companion animal owners register their companion animals and update their contact information on the NSW Companion Animal Register.

As part of Council's commitment to minimise euthanasia of impounded animals, Council adopted a revised policy position with respect to euthanasia of animals. The Wingecarribee Animal Shelter - Alternatives to Euthanasia Policy was adopted in December 2019.

As part of the Operational Plan and Budget scheduled to be adopted on 8 July 2020, Council has proposed to allocate \$5.2 million towards the capital replacement of the Animal Shelter. The allocation of this funding in the Operational Plan and Budget 2020/21 is subject to final adoption by Council following a period of public exhibition. Alternative sites within the Southern Highlands will be scoped as part of the capital replacement project, as well as a functionality assessment undertaken as part of the re-design of the facility and associated infrastructure.

Further information regarding Council's provision of companion animal services is provided in the Statutory Information section of this Annual Report.





## DP35 Support initiatives which enhance opportunities for learning and skill development

Council continued to work closely with key stakeholders in the education sector in relation to both the youth sector and areas where employment sector vacancies or skill shortages have been identified. These stakeholders include TAFE NSW, the University of Wollongong and local school careers advisory officers.

In addition, close collaboration with the Southern Highlands Key Stakeholders Group, Southern Highlands Food and Wine Association and the TAFE NSW Moss Vale campus saw several successful initiatives implemented. These initiatives included new TAFE NSW Moss Vale campus programs such as Certificate 2 and 3 courses in Agriculture and a Certificate 3 Equine 'Performance Horse' course. Upskilling workshops and webinars were also initiated to support local businesses. The workshops provided participants with access to Tourism Australia and Destination NSW marketing and product development online courses and Southern Highlands Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Council Retail Management sessions.

Council also liaised with representatives of Workplace Learning in order to provide support in sourcing industry placements for students studying vocational education and training (VET) courses. Workplace Learning is a not-for-profit, locally-based organisation servicing the Southern Highlands and neighbouring South Coast regions.

## DP36 Provide a range of services and programs through Council Library service

Council continued to offer a range of services and programs to members of the public through its libraries. This was despite the impacts of the 2019-20 bushfire season, the COVID-19 pandemic and the temporary closure of Moss Vale Branch Library from 22 December 2019 onwards as part of the Civic Centre refurbishment project.



**Mittagong Branch Library**

A number of facility upgrades were either commenced or completed during the reporting period, including:

- installation of a new external automated electronic returns chute at Bowral Central Library, allowing for the afterhours returns of loaned items, and the installation of new air conditioning units;
- upgrades to the roof and air conditioning, among other enhancements, at Mittagong Branch Library; and
- commencement of the refurbishment of the Moss Vale Branch Library, which once complete will provide the community with a larger, more accessible and user friendly facility.

The number of library loans has fallen due to the temporary suspension of certain library services as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the closure of Moss Vale Library during the Civic Centre refurbishment project. However, demand for e-resources continues to grow with Council allocating more resources to these popular platforms. Following the reopening of Bowral Central Library on 1 June 2020 with a restricted operation, there was a steady return of community members visiting the facility.

The Rural Outreach and Delivery Service (ROADS) mobile library service continued to operate where possible. From January 2020 the service incorporated a weekly visit to Leighton Gardens in Moss Vale due to the temporary closure of the Moss Vale Branch Library. However, its operations were impacted in December and January due to bushfires and again in February due to floods, before temporarily ceasing operations from March onwards due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Prior to the imposition of Government restrictions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, successful programs, events and services provided by Council's libraries included:

- school holiday programs in the July, October and December-January school holidays;
- Book Week celebrations;
- Higher School Certificate (HSC) study sessions at the Old Town Hall in Bowral;
- the rollout of a new e-platform, Indyreads; and
- a five-week online LEGO challenge.

Further information about Council Library services and how they compare with previous years is provided in the Table below. Many of the figures for 2019/20 have been impacted by the aforementioned temporary closure of the Moss Vale Branch Library, the impacts of natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic.

| Type                                  | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19  | 2019/20 |
|---------------------------------------|---------|---------|----------|---------|
| <b>Total library loans</b>            | 248,195 | 247,796 | 249,873  | 204,547 |
| <b>Library visits</b>                 | 167,225 | 166,972 | 160,807* | 113,484 |
| <b>Enquiries<sup>^</sup></b>          | -       | 39,575  | 33,355   | 31,425  |
| <b>Internet sessions</b>              | 16,786  | 14,851  | 12,432   | 7,514   |
| <b>Wireless sessions<sup>#</sup></b>  | 10,589  | 14,534  | 13,862   | 8,200   |
| <b>eLibrary downloads<sup>±</sup></b> | 9,815   | 18,590  | 30,180   | 41,473  |
| <b>Library website visits</b>         | 48,867  | 51,545  | 51,824   | 41,948  |

\* The number of library visits in 2018/19 was impacted by the closure of Mittagong Branch Library for three weeks due to renovations and the closure of certain sections of Moss Vale Branch Library for four and a half weeks due to water damage.

^ Estimate based on data collated for the State Library of NSW Enquiry Completion Rate Survey. The figures for 2018/19 and 2019/20 are more complete than those for 2017/18 as additional data sets were gathered by the State Library from 2018/19 onwards.

# Wireless sessions commenced in the second quarter of 2016/17.

± Download numbers are included in total library loans, and include eBooks, eAudio and eMagazines.

## **DP37 Implement sector plans that address key barriers to participation in community life**

Council partnered with the NSW Department of Communities and Justice to organise a Homelessness Forum. This Forum had a focus on the services that are currently provided by Council, key issues that are unique to the Shire and the identification of service gaps in support of the NSW Premier's priority to reduce homelessness in NSW by 50 per cent by 2025.

Council has engaged with services that were given funding by South Western Sydney Primary Health Network to deliver specialist Aboriginal programs within the Shire. This includes Youthlink, which has received funding to facilitate a program to address the needs of Aboriginal young people experiencing or at risk of developing mental health and co-occurring alcohol and drug concerns.

Council delivered accessible document training to key staff involved in the publication and provision of information to the community. This training provided strategies and tools to ensure that Council information is presented in a way that is accessible to all members of our community. For example, the training addressed making sure that the presentation of documents is suitable for persons who may be colour blind or require the assistance of a screen reader.

Cultural awareness training was provided to community members to provide them with a greater understanding of our Aboriginal community and how to effectively connect with members of that community respectfully.

In December, Council received funding from the State Government to provide opportunities for young people to be involved in designing a series of skill-building workshops and engaging in youth music performances. The Youth Opportunities funding for the Connect and Celebrate program has seen the growth of a youth program led by young people for young people. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to creative ways to perform live without an audience and stream to viewers online. The program has attracted a broad range of young people with different backgrounds and abilities who together are creating an exciting program focused on music.

### DP38 Develop and implement initiatives that support new residents participating in community life

Council regularly considers how new residents can be supported to participate in the local community. A Highlands Child Directory is being developed with funds provided through Wingecarribee Club Grants. The Directory is an initiative of the Highlands Child, Youth and Family Network which is facilitated by Council.

The 2020 Seniors Directory was finalised and distributed in April 2020. The directory provides information on a range of services including emergency services, government agencies, health and transport providers, support groups and social and volunteering contacts.

The ARTSfile website is a valuable source of information for all arts and cultural activities, events and resources in the Shire. Together with the Destination Southern Highlands website, ARTSfile provides a useful resource for both residents and visitors to the area, and in particular new residents looking to participate in the local community.



### DP39 Support intergenerational programs and projects

Council held a National Grandparents Day event on 24 October 2019. The event was designed as an intergenerational event where both the very young and the older members of the community could come together and participate in activities. Supported by funds from the State Government and in partnership with the Country Women's Association Moss Vale Evening Branch, the event attracted a large attendance of all ages.

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted on Council's ability to deliver intergenerational programs and projects during the second half of 2019/20 due to the vulnerability of older members of the community.





## **DP40 Support and co-ordinate a diverse range of community festivals and celebrations**

On 26 January 2020, a record 43 residents pledged Australian Citizenship as part of Council's annual Australia Day celebrations in Berrima, despite some events being cancelled due to the impacts of bushfires. Sidney (Sid) Jeffrey was named as the Shire's 2020 Australia Day Citizen of the Year for his extensive volunteer work, while Young Citizen of the Year was awarded to Caitlin Gallagher for her community and volunteer work.

The annual Seniors Festival held in February 2020 provided more events and recorded a higher attendance than in previous years. More than 60 events were held over a 12-day period in partnership with over 21 different local organisations, businesses and service providers. Overall, an estimated total of 1,900 people attended Seniors Festival events and/or activities.

Council continues to provide and support a range of community events, festivals and celebrations in implementing the strategies of its Community Strategic Plan. In 2019/20, Council coordinated several community events, including:

- Mental Health Month;
- Community Services Expo;
- Grandparents Day;
- NAIDOC Week;
- Southern Highlands Art Studio Trail;
- International Day of People with Disability.

Other events such as Youth Week were postponed due to Government restrictions imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.



**Australia Day Celebrations at Berrima**  
**26 January 2020**



**Community Services Expo**  
**10 October 2019**

## **DP41 Promote and deliver initiatives which enhance community understanding of Aboriginal cultural heritage**

Council approved a lease of the Aboriginal Community Cultural Centre to the Illawarra Aboriginal Land Council which was subsequently signed on 7 February 2020. This 99-year lease was approved following extensive community engagement, including two separate periods of public exhibition and



consultation with the traditional Gundungurra people and other local Aboriginal people. This lease ensures that the facility based in Mittagong remains in the hands of the Shire's First Nation Peoples.

Council staff and the NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group conducted a community meeting to re-establish the Wingecarribee's Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group. The Wingecarribee Local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group will promote active participation by local Aboriginal people in the consultative and decision-making process regarding education and training-related matters within the Shire.



**Clr Ken Halstead OAM and Aboriginal Community Development Officer  
NAIDOC Week Official Flag Raising Ceremony, 8 July 2019**

In July 2019, NAIDOC week was celebrated locally by bringing together Indigenous language poetry and threatened species conservation. First Nations students' poems were published on the back of buses as part of the community's NAIDOC celebrations. The 2019 NAIDOC theme of 'Voice. Treaty. Truth. Let's Work Together for a Shared Future' highlighted collaboration, creativity and respect for the environment.

The NSW Government's Saving our Species (SoS) program, together with Council and Red Room Poetry, presented a poetic and environmental learning project for young First Nations students on Gundungurra Country. The week also provided an 'On Country' experience where the community could explore, listen and learn about Gundungurra Country and Aboriginal cultural traditions.

Council participated in meetings of the Wingecarribee Aboriginal Network, which continued to meet remotely while Government restrictions were in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pandemic has also resulted in the postponement of NAIDOC Week 2020 until November 2020. As a result of this, Council developed and delivered a range of 'at home' activity packs to community members to complete and create, with the 'at home' creations to form part of the celebrations being planned for November.

## DP42 Facilitate the promotion of community arts, emerging artists and cultural awareness and activities

The 2019 Southern Highlands Art Studio Trail took place in November. More than 70 artists participated across 50 studios and it recorded total sales revenue of \$156,288. The opening event was attended by over 300 people. The below table provides information regarding visitation to the Art Studio Trail in 2019.

### 2019 Southern Highlands Art Studio Trail

Total visitation: 6,689\*



Local: 4,437

Non-local: 2,252

\* Data is based on the total number of individual studio visits according to tally forms recorded by each studio.

A new Southern Highlands ARTSfile website was launched as a part of the Art Studio Trail, giving an opportunity for communication, partnerships, and easy access to events. Applications to participate in the 2020 Art Studio Trail opened in May 2020, with more than 70 artists in addition to local galleries submitting an expression of interest.

The Planning Proposal for the reclassification of land to enable an application to construct an access road to the Southern Highlands Regional Art Gallery was endorsed by Council on 27 May 2020. The Planning Proposal was subsequently forwarded to the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment for completion. During 2019/20, the first Director of the Gallery was appointed and will undertake to complete a Business Plan for the Operation of the Gallery to satisfy Council's requirements for its commitment of \$500,000 per annum for five years.

Opening of the Art Studio Trail 2019







# Places



## Places Services

### Aquatic Services

### Asset Planning and Support

### Children's Services

### Civic Leadership

### Community Wellbeing

### Economic Development

### Emergency Management

### Library Services

### Natural Area Management

### Parks and Recreation

### Regulatory Compliance

*We have a strong 'sense of place' where people feel connected to and belong within the network of unique towns and villages.*

*We value our heritage and preserve what makes our built and natural environment unique. Development is tightly controlled to ensure the integrity of what makes our Shire special is not compromised, while providing a diversity of housing choice for current and future generations.*

*Our town and village design is sensitive to the local environment and provides safe spaces for people to live, work, learn and play.*

*We actively encourage the broader provision and use of public transport linkages both within and out of the Shire. Our public transport network is supported by safe, accessible and interconnected shared pathways that encourage people to be active.*

#### **To achieve this aspiration by 2031, our community goals are:**

- 3.1 We have an integrated and efficient network of public transport and shared pathways
  - 3.2 Wingecarribee has maintained a distinct character and separation of towns and villages
  - 3.3 Our built environment creates vibrant and inviting public spaces
  - 3.4 We have safe, maintained and effective assets and infrastructure
-

## Places Indicators

| Places Indicators   | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Construction certificates issued                                | 521     | 438     | 363     | 297     |
| Development applications approved                               | 934     | 985     | 995     | 722     |
| Subdivision certificates approved                               | 79      | 92      | 77      | 57      |
| Sealed road network re-sealed annually (%)                      | 7.9     | 9.1     | 3.3     | 7.2     |
| Unsealed road network re-sheeted (%)                            | 5       | 6       | 10      | 4       |
| Unsealed road network maintained (maintenance grade) (kms)      | 207     | 200     | 205     | 206     |
| Footpath maintained annually (carriageway kms)                  | 10.08   | 13.6    | 15.6    | 16.2    |
| Shared paths and cycle paths repaired (lineal metres)           | 4,410   | 3,311   | 1,640   | 4,456   |
| Footpath installed annually (lineal metres)                     | 1,420   | 1,100   | 500     | 203     |
| Shared paths and cycle paths installed annually (lineal metres) | 450     | 320     | 0       | 0       |

### DP43 Undertake advocacy activities to further the development of an integrated public transport network

Council continued to participate in the Canberra Regional Joint Organisation (CRJO) Infrastructure Working Group and advocate for transport improvements for the Shire. Council developed a regional transport project list together with comprehensive information that was provided to the CRJO Infrastructure Working Group. A joint submission to the NSW Government was subsequently prepared which included Council's major regional transport priorities. The regional priorities and major transport projects were presented to relevant Ministers for review.

The development of a Road Transport Prospectus was also completed in 2019/20.


Council continued to develop an Integrated Transport Strategy which followed on from the initial development of the Strategy in 2018/19. In addition, Council commenced drafting a Road Safety Plan for the Shire. These

documents, once completed, will be utilised to improve transport services within the Shire.

### DP44 Provide infrastructure linkages between public transport hubs

Council has undertaken traffic and parking surveys during 2019/20 to obtain current data to inform transport utilisation rates and assess road safety. This data, coupled with traffic modelling, allows Council to plan for required infrastructure improvements within the public transport network and between public transport hubs.

The development of the Recreational Walking Tracks Strategy will also help inform active transport links between hubs. Extensive community engagement was undertaken to inform the development of a draft Strategy, including a community survey, mapping tool and an online community forum. The community survey was completed by 144 people, while 30 people participated in the



community forum. It is expected that the draft Strategy will be exhibited early in 2020/21.

#### **DP45 Promote public transport options and linkages across the Shire**

Council actively supports improvements to and the utilisation of available public transport options. It does this through the provision of infrastructure services near or around public transport hubs, transport safety programs and education programs, advertising and public awareness campaigns and the work of Council's Local Traffic Committee.

Council pursues opportunities during planning and infrastructure delivery phases of particular projects to link transport networks including cycle ways, pedestrian footpaths, roads, railway services, and bus and taxi services.

Council continued to work closely with other government agencies to align projects with developing trends and advancements in transport technology and infrastructure.

#### **DP46 Expand our network of footpaths and cycle ways to improve connectivity of the Shire**

A number of footpath construction projects to improve connectivity within the Shire have progressed or were completed. These include the Renwick Shared Path, which will connect Renwick to Mittagong Railway Station via a footpath of approximately two kilometres in length, as well as a 500-metre path alongside Mittagong Road from Cliff Street to Tulloona Avenue, Bowral.

Council investigated numerous requests for additional pathways within the Shire, with relevant projects scoped as part of the annual budget review process.

Council also continued to undertake both scheduled and reactive maintenance projects on its footpaths and cycleways throughout the reporting period.

#### **DP47 Partner with agencies to advocate for improved transport services**

Council has worked closely with other levels of government, including Transport for NSW, the NSW Department of Primary Industries, the NSW Environment Protection Authority and Infrastructure NSW to plan for and provide necessary infrastructure for current and future transport needs.

Council continues to apply for relevant grants through State and Federal Government infrastructure funding initiatives such as the Black Spot, Fixing Country Roads, Fixing Local Roads and Safer Roads programs.

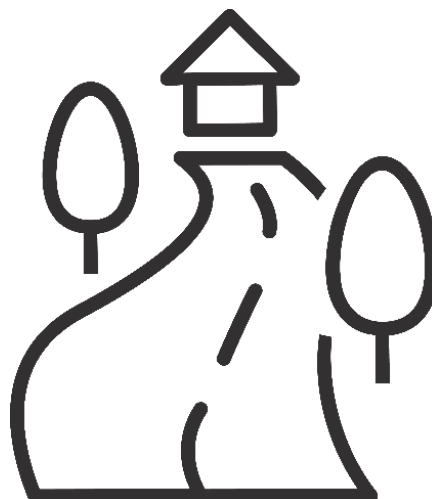
#### **DP48 Provide a rigorous planning assessment framework which reflects State legislation and Council's adopted land use strategy to ensure appropriate development outcomes**

Council assesses development applications on an ongoing basis, and has implemented measures to facilitate customer access to the NSW Planning Portal to take effect from 1 July 2020. This enables community members to submit development applications and complying development certificate applications to Council through the NSW Planning Portal. This portal hosts a range of digital planning services, mapping tools and reporting tools to assist the various parties involved in a proposed development.



## **DP49 Review and prepare planning strategies, policies and studies that retain the character of the Shire's towns and villages**

In accordance with revisions to the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, Council adopted a Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) on 24 June 2020 after an eight-week public exhibition period. The LSPS outlines a 20-year land use vision for the Shire and aims to protect and enhance the local characteristics of the Shire's towns and villages as well as include actions to develop place-based planning controls to reflect those unique characteristics.



Several planning proposals to amend the *Wingecarribee Local Environmental Plan 2010* were approved during 2019/20 following a period of public exhibition. One such amendment was to reclassify a portion of Council-owned land off Rowland Road in Bowral from Community to Operational for the purpose of providing an access road to the proposed Southern Highlands Regional Art Gallery.

## **DP50 Implement initiatives that promote and protect cultural heritage**

In support of the protection of items considered to be of local heritage significance, Council resolved to progress the heritage listing of a number of properties including:

- the 'Aitken Road Interwar Housing Group' comprising various properties on Aitken Road in Bowral; and
- 'Rochester Park' on Old Wingello Road in Bundanoon.

In addition to these individual heritage items, Council resolved to create a new heritage conservation area comprising properties in Aitken and Kangaloon Roads, Bowral.

Council awarded four grants under the Wingecarribee Heritage Assistance Grants scheme to projects requesting funding for heritage or potential heritage items. The grants totalled \$17,620 and together with more than \$90,000 in applicant contributions these funds were applied to worthwhile initiatives which included the maintenance of the Berrima Remembrance Groves and the restoration of a traditional fence to the former CBC Bank in Robertson.

## **DP51 Implement a program of town and village centre improvements**

Council continues to work collaboratively to improve and revitalise town and village centres throughout the Shire. Ongoing works undertaken by Council include graffiti cleaning, street cleaning and sweeping, pavement repairs and the maintenance of roundabout, street and roadside landscaping. New street furniture and litter bins were installed in various localities including Moss Vale, Penrose, Robertson, Wingello and Mittagong.

Council has engaged a consultant to develop the Bowral Central Business District (CBD) Streetscape Plan. The consultant developed a community consultation process that has been supported by Council and will commence in 2020/21.

Council worked with various State Government agencies to develop a Heads of Agreement to progress the Station Street Upgrade Project. Once the Heads of Agreement is executed, the project scope will be finalised and a procurement process will commence to competitively tender for the works.

Council has also ensured that sufficient parking will remain available for commuters following the Station Street Upgrade Project. Additional parking is to be constructed at Mittagong Railway Station, work has commenced on the Wattle Lane Car Park extension and construction works on Kirkham Road will, once completed, provide further on-street parking.

### **DP52 Deliver the Urban Street Tree Implementation Plan**

Council continues to implement the Wingecarribee Street Tree Implementation Plan in pursuit of the objectives of the Wingecarribee Street Tree Master Plan. This Plan establishes a clear direction for the future development, planting and management of street trees for the urban centres within the Shire. In addition to various single tree planting requests from members of the public, street tree planting works that were undertaken include:

- Bong Bong Reserve, Burradoo;
- Devon Road, Exeter;
- Exeter Oval, Exeter;
- Edward Street, Mittagong;
- Etheridge Street, Mittagong;
- Lake Alexandra Car Park, Mittagong;
- Victoria Street, Mittagong;
- Jopling Way, Moss Vale;
- Monterey Avenue and Albany Street, Moss Vale;
- Narellan Road, Moss Vale;
- Roche Close, Moss Vale; and
- Victor Crescent, Moss Vale.

### **DP53 Provide and maintain high quality community facilities across the Shire**

Council provides welcoming and accessible community facilities such as community centres and halls that offer opportunities for members of the community to meet and connect with each other. Council managed these facilities in partnership with licensees and community groups, including collaborating with stakeholders during the bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Council continued to collect data relating to community facilities across the Shire. Information and data are entered into Council's asset management system, ConQuest. This system guides the prioritisation and verification of services delivered and the necessary work required to ensure that quality community facilities continue to be provided to the community.

Council has engaged in ongoing collaboration with UrbanGrowth NSW in relation to the design of the Renwick Community Centre, due to open in early 2021. Once built, the Community Centre will become a Council-owned facility.

The Civic Centre refurbishment project commenced in January 2020, with significant renewal works occurring across the Council Chambers, Moss Vale Branch Library and a range of civic facilities and services. These works aim to increase energy efficiency, provide more accessible options to the community and bring the building up to current workplace health and safety standards.



**Civic Centre Refurbishment**

Works were undertaken at the State Emergency Service Depot in Mittagong to install roof ventilators, resulting in further functionality and air flow.

Council also implemented a number of minor capital works projects during 2019/20 to maintain the quality of its community facilities, including:

- air conditioning renewal at Bundanoon Preschool;
- drainage works at Bundanoon Soldier's Memorial Hall;
- building extension works to Wingecarribee Adult Day Care Centre in Bowral; and
- works at Mittagong Branch Library to replace the roof and air conditioning, upgrade lighting and repaint internal and external elements of the building.

A draft Playspace Strategy was developed and publicly exhibited during 2019/20. The draft Strategy aims to improve the quality of playspaces within the Shire and aligns with the NSW Government's Everyone Can Play Guidelines. It is expected that the draft will be adopted by Council in 2020/21.

Following a period of public exhibition, Council adopted the Seymour Park Masterplan on 27 May 2020. This provides guidance for the future management and development of Seymour Park in Moss Vale and will enable park improvement works to commence.

Council successfully received a \$184,447 grant from the NSW Government under the Clubgrants Category 3 Infrastructure grants program for Stage 1 of the Bong Bong Common upgrade for the Eastern Precinct. This project is identified in the Bong Bong Common Masterplan.

## **DP54 Undertake the redevelopment of Bowral Memorial Hall**

Council secured funding of \$2.8 million for the Bowral Memorial Hall Redevelopment project through the Commonwealth Government's Building Better Regions Fund – Infrastructure Projects Stream – Round 4 – Drought Support. These funds will be combined with funds allocated to the project by Council, with works expected to commence in the 2020/21 financial year.



## **DP55 Effectively plan for and deliver on the diverse needs of people with a disability**



**Accessibility improvements to the Wingello Mechanics Institute**

Council has continued to implement its Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017-2021 (DIAP). Work also commenced on the review of the Plan. An overview of achievements from the DIAP is provided in the Statutory Information section of this Annual Report.

The Access Community Reference Group continues to support the work of Council in planning for the diverse needs of people with a disability.

Relevant minor capital works projects undertaken during the reporting period included improvements to accessibility and amenities at both Leighton Gardens and Wingello Mechanics Institute. Council was also awarded a \$200,000 grant by the NSW Government under the Everyone Can Play grant program to upgrade the playspace and amenities at Seymour Park so that they are more inclusive of people with a disability.

## **DP56 Ensure planning controls allow for diversity of housing choice**

Following a period of public exhibition, Council adopted a Local Housing Strategy in June 2020.

This Strategy seeks to increase the diversity of housing types within the Shire to ensure that housing stock is reflective of the needs of the community.

Council has commenced a review of medium-density controls to remove any unnecessary barriers to providing greater housing choice. Work on detailed character and design controls has also continued, to ensure that medium density development is appropriately located and reflective of community expectations.

## **DP57 Partner with agencies to plan and deliver a program of road upgrades, renewals and maintenance**

An extensive program of capital works for roads within the Wingecarribee Shire was delivered in 2019/20. This included road widening and pavement improvement works on Wilson Drive Hill Top, Stage 2 of the Merrigang Street Bowral Reconstruction Project and works on the southern section of Kirkham Road in Bowral. The latter project entails a full width rehabilitation of the road pavement, road widening and construction of a new roundabout at Sherwood Avenue. Additional projects completed include:

- Shire-wide preparation works and delivery of the Road Resealing Program;
- Old Hume Highway, Berrima reconstruction;
- gravel resheeting at Richard Lane, Joadja and Belanglo Road, Belanglo;
- road and drainage improvements at Queen Street and Banksia Street intersection in Bowral; and
- Meryla Road, Meryla bridge sidetrack works.

Substantial progress was also made on safety improvements to Wilson Drive, Hill Top, including the management of stormwater, formalised dish drains and road widening.

Ongoing works have taken place on Wombeyan Caves Road and some adjoining roads in response to extensive damage caused by the Green Wattle Creek Bushfire and subsequent storms and floods in February 2020. Emergency reconstruction work, including the clearing of rockfalls, landslides, fallen trees and repairing the scouring of the road surface, enabled residents to continue to access properties at Goodmans Ford. Following further geotechnical assessments of parts of Wombeyan Caves Road, planning for the essential public asset reconstruction works such as construction of several major drainage and causeway structures will commence.



**Barrengarry Creek Bridge construction works**

Construction of three bridges via grant funding provided from the Federal Government's Bridges Renewal Program was undertaken. These projects related to Barrengarry Creek Bridge in Robertson and the Meryla and Gunrock Creek Bridges in Meryla.

Council continues to seek grant funding opportunities to provide improved service delivery for the community. A selection of grant applications relevant to road infrastructure that were successfully received by Council in 2019/20 is provided in the table below. Preliminary work has commenced in relation to planning the delivery of these projects and construction will take place in subsequent financial years.

| Grant             | Funding body       | Project title               | Brief description   | Funds received |
|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|---|----------------|
| <b>Black Spot</b> | Federal Government | Old Hume Highway            | Safety improvements along a 2.5 km section of the Old Hume Highway, Bowral (1.5 km south and 1 km north of Centennial Road) | \$1,852,323    |
| <b>Black Spot</b> | Federal Government | Roundabout Old Hume Highway | Roundabout at the intersection of the Old Hume Highway and Cavendish and Frankland Streets in Mittagong                     | \$703,620      |



| Grant   | Funding body                          | Project title                                   | Brief description  | Funds received |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|--|----------------|
| <b>Safer Roads</b>  | NSW Government                        | Old South Road                                  | Design and construction of several safety countermeasures on Old South Road between Merrigang Street in Bowral and Aylmerton Road in Aylmerton | \$4,796,220    |
| <b>Black Spot</b>   | Federal Government                    | Mt Broughton Road                               | Installation of vehicle actuated signs on Mt Broughton Road in Wera  | \$793,000      |
| <b>Fixing Local Roads</b>   | Federal Government and NSW Government | Roundabouts - Colo Vale (2) and East Bowral (1) | Reseal project   | \$513,000      |
| <b>Fixing Local Roads</b>   | Federal Government and NSW Government | Old South Road - Merrigang Street to Range Road | Rehabilitation Project - Design and construction   | \$2,850,000    |
| <b>Fixing Local Roads</b>   | Federal Government and NSW Government | Throsby Street - Spring Street to Yarrowa Road  | Rehabilitation Project - Design and construction   | \$1,000,000    |
| <b>Local Roads and Community Infrastructure (COVID-19 stimulus program)</b> | Federal Government                    | To be determined                                | To be determined   | \$1,184,041    |

Council partners with Transport for NSW (TfNSW) and other State Government agencies and community groups, as well as being actively involved in the Canberra Region Joint Organisation Infrastructure Delivery Working Group, to ensure the delivery of road upgrades, renewals and maintenance.

Council also works closely with TfNSW to develop and implement road safety initiatives.

## **DP58 Implement a long term solution for the use and disposal of road side spoil**

Council has identified a site at Drapers Road in Willow Vale which is proposed for processing excavated public road material. A concept plan for the site has been completed, with development consent required to allow it to be used as a processing site for this purpose such that the processed material can be reused as topsoil. This is subject to the submission of an environmental impact statement (EIS) and a NSW Environment Protection Authority environmental processing licence.

Works to date have included rehabilitation of the site by removing excess fill and contaminated material. This option will be progressed further in 2020/21.

## **DP59 Review and implement Water Master Plan**

Council has completed an update of its Water Master Plan. The Plan identifies capital and operational projects that need to be implemented to ensure the network meets the required level of service for flow, pressure and storage into the future. The Plan also identifies opportunities to improve the efficiency of the water supply network.



**Medway Dam**

Water quality modelling commenced using the updated and bulk calibrated water supply model, while water age modelling results are under consideration by Council. Operational and capital works projects will be investigated and assessed for the ongoing enhancement of water quality.

The Wingecarribee and Bundanoon Water Treatment Plants (WTPs) process improvement and options assessments continued to progress during 2019/20, including a review of the robustness of each treatment facility. Draft options reports have been received for both treatment facilities and are being considered.

The final draft report for the Medway Dam Package Water Treatment Plant feasibility study has been received. This examined the feasibility of a portable package treatment plant being located at the existing Medway WTP site as a contingency to increase Council's treated water supply during peak demand periods or an emergency. The study was funded in part by a State Government grant of \$50,000 under the Increasing Resilience to Climate Change grants program. Investigations into the ability to increase the extraction of raw water from Bundanoon Dam are also in progress.

## **DP60 Review and implement Sewage Treatment Plant Upgrade Strategy**

Council's Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy identified the requirement to upgrade Moss Vale, Bowral and Mittagong Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs).

Concept designs have been completed for the Moss Vale, Bowral and Mittagong STP upgrades. Council's Upgrade Strategy includes innovation through automation, energy efficiency, improved reliability, service delivery and integration between the STPs and the distribution network.

A specialist consultant has been engaged to complete the detailed design of the Bowral STP, while quotations for the detailed design of Moss Vale STP have been reviewed with the contract likely to be awarded early in 2020/21. The procurement process for the detailed design of the Mittagong STP project is under development.

The commencement of construction for the Bowral STP is currently anticipated for late 2021, with works at Moss Vale and Mittagong to follow.

## **DP61 Improve stormwater management across the Shire**

Council has completed a number of stormwater drainage works as per its adopted Capital Works Program for 2019/20, including:

- major stormwater and drainage construction improvement works installed at Braemar Avenue in Braemar;
- drainage construction works at Waverly Parade in Mittagong, Boardman Road in Bowral, Murrumbah Road in Wingello, Wembley Road in Moss Vale and High Street in Robertson; and
- works in relation to Stage 3 of Council's Flood Marker and Awareness Sign project.

Council secured \$300,000 in funding from the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements that will be added to the \$450,000 already allocated to renewing Vandenberg Road in Robertson. Works will include repairing and relining the table drains and improving the cross drainage to better control stormwater flows, directing them to adjacent paddocks through suitable energy dissipation features.

Council is undertaking a review of the Wingecarribee River Flood Study, with community consultation, data collection and the establishment of a hydrologic model having commenced. This review is supported by a \$130,000 grant from the NSW Government under the Floodplain Management grants scheme and intends to create an integrated model covering the Wingecarribee River and tributaries feeding the river.

Council also completed two floodplain management projects during 2019/20, being the review of the Whites Creek Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan and Nattai Ponds Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan. These provide Council with direction in dealing with flooding issues within the catchment.

## **DP62 Undertake drinking water quality management**

Council continues to work in line with its commitments under the adopted Drinking Water Management System and the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (ADWG) in close consultation with NSW Health. Council continues to monitor systems and implement process controls for key Critical Control Parameters (for example, Turbidity, pH, fluoride and chlorine residuals) in the Shire's water supplies. This is a requirement of the ongoing Drinking Water Management System and operational plans to meet the ADWG.

Water availability, customer demand and correct water use remained a key focus due to long periods of drought being experienced in New South Wales, although levels improved towards the end of 2019/20 following heavy rainfall events. New management protocols and increased communication (for example, water restrictions) were implemented to minimise both water quality and quantity impacts within the community.

A new five-year water supply agreement with Water NSW for the supply of raw water from the Wingecarribee Reservoir is under review.

## DP63 Ensure the integrity of water and sewer infrastructure

Council undertakes regular maintenance of its water and sewer infrastructure. This includes reactive maintenance in response to customer requests as well as proactive initiatives such as sewer access point inspections, jetting and flushing programs and preventive maintenance of electrical assets.

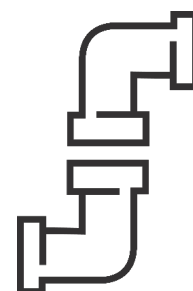
Both Wingecarribee and Bundanoon Water Treatment Plants are currently being operated to a standard that exceeds the minimum criteria defined in Council's Drinking Water Management System and the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines. Raw water levels in the Wingecarribee Reservoir and Bundanoon Dam are now stable, strengthening the security of the Shire's water supply following a sustained period of drought.

A contractor has been engaged to undertake the water filling stations enhancement project, which will enable 24-hour access to authorised water carters in the Shire. This is estimated to be completed in early 2021.



## DP64 Ensure regulatory compliance of sewerage infrastructure

Council operated its sewage treatment plants (STPs) in accordance with environment protection licences issued by the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) under the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997*. Any issues identified through regular monitoring tests are promptly addressed in consultation with the EPA, while the results of this testing are published on Council's [Regulatory Monitoring Data](#) webpage.

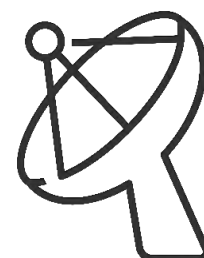


## DP65 Facilitate and advocate for enhanced access to telecommunication networks

Council has collated data on incidents of poor communication and connectivity in the Shire to assist in advocating to Government agencies and telecommunications companies for improved connectivity.

Council also assisted State Government consultants in engaging with the local community on the Regional Digital Connectivity Program, which seeks to provide regional New South Wales with better access to mobile, internet and digital services. Further, Council partnered with Regional Development Australia Southern Inland to advocate for increased Federal Government support to address telecommunications black spots within the broader Southern Inland region in south-east New South Wales.

Telecommunications infrastructure is identified as a key challenge for the Shire in the Draft Southern Highlands Destination Plan 2020-2030 which has been developed and Council will continue to engage with relevant stakeholders to improve this infrastructure.







# Environment



## Environmental Services

Development Services

Economic Development

Environmental Services

Natural Area Management

Regulatory Compliance

Strategic Land Use Planning

Waste Management

*Our unique natural environment is valued, protected and enriched. The health of local waterways and air quality is enhanced and there is a greater reliance on renewable energy and waste is minimised. We are leaders in sustainable living and our rural landscapes are productive and preserved.*

*Our wildlife corridors are actively managed and the Shire's natural assets are protected through programs which engage and encourage community partnerships and participation in initiatives which preserve our native flora and fauna.*

**To achieve this aspiration by 2031, our community goals are:**

- 4.1 Wingecarribee's distinct and diverse natural environment is protected and enhanced
- 4.2 Sustainable living practices are actively encouraged
- 4.3 Wingecarribee achieves continuous reduction in waste generation and disposal to landfill
- 4.4 Wingecarribee addresses, adapts, and builds resilience to climate change



## Environment Indicators

| Environment Indicators   | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20          |
|--|---------|---------|---------|------------------|
| <b>Bushcare and Landcare groups</b>  | 17      | 17      | 17      | 18               |
| <b>Community volunteers environmental work (hours)</b>                                     | 3,237   | 3,786   | 3,905   | 2,021*           |
| <b>Native trees and shrubs planted on public land and established native plant species</b> | 14,712  | 13,383  | 10,807  | 3,300^           |
| <b>Bushcare group work sessions</b>  | 179     | 201     | 179     | 50*              |
| <b>Domestic recycling diverted from landfill (tonnes)<sup>±</sup></b>                      | 5,345   | 5,857   | 4,276   | 3,785            |
| <b>Putrescible total (tonnes)</b>  | 12,284  | 12,084  | 12,124  | 12,348           |
| <b>Green waste (tonnes)</b>  | 9,256   | 8,380   | 8,518   | 9,075            |
| <b>Onsite sewerage management system inspections</b>                                       | 350     | 301     | 300     | 269              |
| <b>Notices/infringements issued</b>  | 21      | 28      | 44      | 115 <sup>+</sup> |
| <b>Food shop inspections<sup>#</sup></b>   | 409     | 279     | 338     | 265              |

\* Environmental work by community volunteers and bushcare group work sessions were impacted in 2019/20 by drought conditions, bushfires and restrictions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

^ Planting of native trees and shrubs on public land was impacted by drought conditions in 2019/20.

± The domestic recycling figures for 2017/18 and 2018/19 do not include drink containers recycled through the NSW Government's container deposit scheme, introduced in December 2017.

+ The substantial increase in 2019/20 of notices/infringements issued is attributed to enhanced resourcing for this function.

# This figure includes both routine inspections and subsequent reinspections.

## DP66 Manage public natural assets

Council continued the management of its public natural assets through its Environment Levy-funded Bushcare Program across 59 different reserves and management sites. Ten revegetation projects progressed throughout the reporting period, including projects at:

- Cosgrove Park, Moss Vale;
- George Street Wetland, Burrawang;
- Glow Worm Glen, Garland Street Reserve, Bundanoon Oval and Jordans Crossing, Bundanoon,
- Caalong Creek, Robertson; and
- Boronia Park, Hill Top.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Council's Community Bushcare and Rivercare Programs were placed on hold while staff instead focussed on planning and improvements to resources and processes used to deliver and administer the programs.



**Koala conservation signage at Mansfield Reserve in Bowral**



**'Tug' the koala was released onto Tugalong Station in August 2019**


Improvements were made to the protection of Council's bushland reserves ('Green Web Reserve Protection') from unauthorised activities. Further reinforcement of reserve boundaries took place at Berrima Weir Reserve and Mt Alexandra Reserve, particularly around the Welby, Mittagong and Colo Vale areas.

Council continues to implement a number of significant joint Threatened Species Projects with the NSW Government. Examples include the Southern Highlands Glossy Black Cockatoo Conservation ('Glossies in the Mist'); *Eucalyptus macarthurii*; *Persoonia glaucescens*; and *Phyllota humifusa* and *Eucalyptus aquatica*.

Strategic planning for the Southern Highlands Platypus Conservation Project remains ongoing, with research, conservation and education components being scoped and the use of Environmental DNA sampling of specific watercourses being finalised as a trial. Community-based data collection is being supported through training and the use of a Council-developed 'Platypus Spotter' application for smartphones and tablets.

Council continues to support the Southern Highlands Koala Habitat Tender launched by the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust (BCT). The BCT is a multi-million dollar State Government investment in private land conservation in the Shire to establish in-perpetuity conservation agreements. This investment benefits both koala conservation and the Green Web corridor network in the Shire that aims to protect biodiversity and important wildlife corridors. A record number of tender applications were submitted by private landholders in 2019/20.

In August, 'Tug' the koala became the first rehabilitated koala to be released onto 'Tugalong Station'. This 3,680 hectare property was purchased by the NSW Government in February 2019 to help safeguard the local koala population. Tug's release was a significant milestone for the new reserve and the Southern Highlands Koala Conservation Project.



Council is collaborating with the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and two North Coast councils to develop the Koala Regional Action Monitoring Program. This ground-breaking project is significantly advancing the approach to monitoring of koala habitat and management initiatives. The NSW Government Koala Strategy team has been briefed on the initiative.

The koala feed tree seed collection contract is underway. The first batch of seeds is being propagated at Wariapendi Nursery in Colo Vale for distribution to target private lands requiring koala habitat restoration or connectivity plantings.

Other programs to support the restoration of koala habitat have commenced and include collaborations with relevant land management agencies, the supply of plant material for large scale revegetation on public lands and support for smaller private landholdings. Council also provides reports on koala conservation at every Wollondilly/Wingecarribee Bushfire Management Committee meeting.

Regular meetings are also being facilitated with the NSW Public Land Working Group, a multi-Government agency team established by the State Government in 2019 to improve the management of public lands within the Wingecarribee Shire. This team is spearheading the development of improved bushfire and koala habitat management.

Council scoped the bushfire preparedness of wildlife carers for the upcoming bushfire season, meeting with local carers from the NSW Wildlife Information, Rescue and Education Service (WIRES) and Wildlife Rescue South Coast. Potential Council processes for four bushfire response phases (preparation, alert and standby, search and rescue, recovery and release) were drafted.

### **DP67 Maintain and build high value environmental lands and corridors**

The NSW Office of Environment and Heritage is continuing to develop the Green Web Corridors project in consultation with Council, using geographic information systems (GIS) with koala satellite tracking data to identify likely koala habitat. This project seeks to map high environmental value lands across the Shire and priority investment areas for biodiversity conservation, including private lands.

Council's Private Land Biodiversity Conservation Strategic Plan continues to be implemented. Council encourages and recruits conservation on private land through a three tiered program to support different types of landholders and conservation values.

The Land For Wildlife (LFW) program celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of operation in the Shire. A celebratory event was held for property owners involved in the program and attended by 48 people. The current area of active LFW properties in Shire comprises over 5,000 hectares with 3,200 hectares under conservation. The program aims to promote continuity of habitat across landscapes, community participation in nature conservation and to contribute to the ecologically sustainable long-term viability of agricultural systems.

Council is collaborating with a number of community groups, Government agencies and non-government organisations on the Wall to Wollondilly Project. Current work being supported by

Council, Local Land Services and Greening Australia is focussing on the removal of the final major 'willow choke' which is blocking access to kayaks and canoes on the Wingecarribee River downstream of the Burradoo Rail Bridge. Once the willow choke is removed, access to the waterway for volunteers to assist with ongoing willow control will be possible.

## **The Land For Wildlife program celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of operation in the Shire**

### **DP68 Ensure the impacts of development on biodiversity are assessed, monitored and mitigated**

Council rigorously assesses applications for development approval in accordance with the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, which requires that consideration be given to environmental planning instruments and the likely environmental impacts on biodiversity together with various other factors.

Council investigates reports of development works undertaken allegedly in breach of legislation, development consents and other approvals, taking enforcement action as required on a case-by-case basis.

### **DP69 Build community partnerships and education programs to reduce pollution**

The investigation and enforcement of pollution and illegal dumping matters continued during 2019/20, with a number of investigations resulting in the issuing of enforcement notices for various matters.

Land pollution (including asbestos pollution) is an ongoing issue in both the Shire and adjoining LGAs. Council launched the 'Dob in a Dirtbag' and 'There is no such thing as clean fill' community awareness programs to specifically target land pollution issues.

Prior to the implementation of restrictions by the State Government in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Council successfully ran Household Chemical CleanOut and Clean Up Australia Day events in March 2020. Public participation in each event was high, with 318 households participating in the Household Chemical Clean Out and 1.2 tonnes of litter collected from over 19 sites participating in Clean Up Australia Day.

Council also ran a wood smoke awareness and reduction campaign via social media, newspaper advertising and the distribution of information brochures. Business community networks were fostered to assist in the delivery of this campaign, with local woodfire heater and accessories suppliers agreeing to display a poster about wood smoke in their stores.

## DP70 Reduce the impact from Council infrastructure and operations

Council undertakes environmental assessments of the potential impact from Council works, utilising an approved procedure and assessment tool for this function. Controls to minimise and mitigate environmental impacts are identified through this process. Processes were developed for environmental assessment considerations at asset project scoping phases, including the development of a supporting mapping layer with a general induction and handover.

The Roadside Management Plan for the management of roadside vegetation was completed with grant funding from Local Government NSW. The Plan identifies the environmental priorities for all Council roads utilising an online mapping tool and provides environmental guidelines for common maintenance activities. Council's Integrated Roadside Environmental Management Framework won Division B of the Roadside Environmental Management category at the Local Government NSW Excellence in the Environment Awards held in December 2019.

## DP71 Develop and implement policies that support health, environment and sustainability outcomes within Council and across the Shire

Council maintains a number of policies that deliver positive outcomes for health, sustainability and the environment, which are periodically reviewed for consistency with legislation. Council's Smoke-Free Outdoor Areas Policy was reviewed with it being determined that the policy reflects and in some respects builds upon the *Smoke-free Environment Act 2000* in promoting public health by reducing exposure to tobacco and other smoke in certain public places. As a result, only minor amendments to the policy were proposed for consideration by the governing body of Council early in 2020/21.

Council is a member of the Sustainability Advantage program run by the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment. Through this program, a Sustainability Gap Analysis was undertaken during 2019/20 which is leading to the development of an improvement plan that will accelerate the adoption of sustainable practices across Council operations.

## DP72 Implement planning controls that protect the Shire's natural resources

The *Wingecarribee Local Environmental Plan 2010* and Council's Development Control Plans (DCPs) are regularly monitored and reviewed to ensure that the planning framework is consistent with community expectations in relation to protecting the Shire's natural resources.

Council approved amendments to certain residential DCP provisions and site specific draft amendments for two sites in the Berrima Landscape Conservation Area. The amendments provide greater clarity around what forms of residential development will be supported and where dual occupancy subdivisions will be considered, thereby resulting in more consistent urban design and environment outcomes.

Council also approved amendments to seniors housing provisions in its DCPs which provide a consistent set of controls by which to assess seniors housing to address any potential environmental impacts.



## **DP73 Advocate to State and Federal governments to ensure planning controls, plans and proposals reflect community priorities**

Council participated in working groups with the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) and other agency stakeholders with respect to relevant matters such as Short Term Rental Accommodation, the template Development Control Plan and the Low Rise Medium Density Housing Code.

Council has also worked with State and Federal Government stakeholders to advocate and respond to emerging issues that impact on the Shire's environment and sustainability. This included working with the DPIE on a number of key projects including detailed vegetation mapping and a number of koala mapping and protection projects.

## **DP74 Develop partnerships with community and agencies to identify, update, and maintain awareness of key natural resources**


Council continued to rely on key datasets including fire management units, weed management units, roadside management plan vegetation model, koala habitat and environmental assessment layers to provide accurate information to the community about the Shire's natural resources. This information also informs planning considerations, the assessment of development applications and environmental assessments of Council projects.

Council also published several editions of the Wingecarribee Web e-newsletter which were distributed to more than 1,000 subscribers. This e-newsletter provides stories and updates on initiatives for protecting and enhancing the local environment and ways in which community members can live more sustainably.



In partnership with Wollondilly Shire Council, NatureMapr has been launched in the Shire as Council's main citizen science data collection platform for the natural world. This online platform enables community members to contribute to biodiversity monitoring and provide data that can be used in the development of local biodiversity projects. The platform was also utilised for a presentation to Birdlife Southern Highlands.

The revised edition of the Rural Living Handbook is in the process of being finalised and once completed will provide comprehensive and up-to-date information for existing and prospective



landholders that live in or are planning to purchase rural land in the Shire. This initiative is supported by the Environment Levy-funded Rural Partner Program.

### **DP75 Implement community awareness programs that promote sustainable living**

The Schools Environment Day event was successfully delivered on 22 October 2019. Approximately 600 students participated in 25 different activities that aimed to enhance their awareness of sustainable living and appreciation of the planet's limited resources. As this event has been cancelled in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, planning has commenced for alternative methods of delivering sustainability education to local schools.

Council also organised a 'Speed Date a Sustainability Expert' event during the Seniors Week Festival in February 2020, providing access to local experts giving free advice on sustainable buildings, gardening and lifestyle matters.

Otherwise, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the community events and school engagement that were planned for the financial year did not take place.

### **DP76 Develop partnerships and networks to leverage off existing programs**

In September 2019, Council participated in the Shire's inaugural 2040 Regeneration Weekend event. This included screenings of the documentary film *2040*, panel discussions and workshops to enable community members to take action in support of reducing the impact of climate change.


The Earth Hour event planned for March 2020 in collaboration with the Southern Highlands Botanic Garden was cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions imposed by the State and Federal Governments.

The Community Assistance Scheme awarded \$10,000 worth of grants to eight community groups for environmental and sustainability projects, with funding sourced from Council's Environment Levy. These projects included:

- contributions towards Yerrinbool Community Garden for the Yerrinbool Village Group;
- a Multi Sort Recycling Station for Robertson Public School; and
- a Permaculture Garden for Southern Highlands Christian School.

### **DP77 Implement State Government regulations**

State Government planning regulations with respect to planning matters continued to be implemented by Council during 2019/20. Key reforms introduced by the NSW Government resulted in a number of amendments to Council policies and procedures. These include proposed amendments to Council's Notification of Development Proposals Policy to reflect the requirements of the Public Participation Plans initiative under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000*. The revised policy is anticipated to be reported to the governing body of Council in early 2020/21 prior to adoption.



Further, Council's development application documents were updated to reflect legislative amendments which increased the time period for the lapsing of development consents from five to seven years as part of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This ensured that community members were made aware of this important change when applying for development consent.

Broader State Government policy positions with respect to responsive outcomes for residential dwelling applications are addressed by Council's responsive outcomes unit, which seeks to reduce determination times for dwelling approvals in new urban release areas.

### **DP78 Advocate and educate for improved development outcomes**

Council regularly advocates for improved planning outcomes for the Shire consistent with community expectations regarding development matters. A biannual industry communications newsletter was published in January 2020 and distributed to relevant stakeholders. Council also continues to work with local industry professionals to improve development outcomes. One example of this is the ongoing revision of development engineering specifications to establish the specific design and construction standards for all infrastructure to be delivered by Council and the development industry within the Shire. It is anticipated that the updated engineering specifications will be finalised in 2020/21.

Council upskilled relevant staff in response to legislative amendments relating to development that were enacted due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the introduction of the NSW Planning Portal for the lodgement of development applications and complying development certificates. This training was undertaken to ensure that customers are provided with appropriate advice regarding these changes.

### **DP79 Support the establishment and expansion of businesses that produce goods locally**

Council supports local producers through its participation in the Moss Vale and Rural Chamber of Commerce's 'Food Cluster' program. During the first half of 2019/20, the Mittagong region cluster was established and showcases 20 businesses offering locally produced products and services, while Council also supported the Southern Highlands Food and Wine Association's Food and Wine Festival. These initiatives promoted local products, experiences and events to consumers. Furthermore, Council facilitated a connection between local food and wine producers and the Australian Parliament House Head Chef to include Southern Highlands produce on menus.

Council's draft Southern Highlands Destination Plan 2020-2030 acknowledges that fresh produce is an economic strength of the Shire. It sets out a goal of establishing a Southern Highlands produce 'brand' in collaboration with industry partners, to assist with the production and distribution of local goods and services to markets outside the Shire.

## DP80 Promote and encourage waste minimisation and recycling

Council's achievements in the area of encouraging waste minimisation were recognised in December 2019 when Council was awarded a highly commended award in Division B of Local Government NSW's Excellence in the Environment Awards for Behaviour Change in Waste.

Council promoted and implemented a number of waste education and reduction programs in 2019/20, including Plastic Free July which aims to reduce the use of plastic drinking straws, promote reusable shopping bags and eliminate soft plastics. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, planning for Plastic Free July 2020 engagement focused on moving it to a completely online platform through mapping systems and virtual participation via pledges and social media platforms.

Council also facilitated the Garage Sale Trail for the Shire in October, a national event that seeks to reduce waste and bring the community together.

During the second half of 2019/20, activities to promote waste minimisation and recycling were limited as a result of Government restrictions imposed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, preventing the delivery of workshops and information sessions to local schools and the broader community. Despite this, Council continued to distribute information on waste minimisation through its corporate website, social media platforms and through direct communication with members of the public.

## DP81 Implement strategies to reduce illegal dumping

Council actively contributes to the Southern Region Waste Program in collaboration with the NSW Environment Protection Authority and the four local councils that comprise the Illawarra Shoalhaven Joint Organisation (ISJO). These are Wollongong City Council, Shellharbour City Council, Shoalhaven City Council and Kiama Municipal Council. Initiatives of the Waste Program include implementing the Regional Illegal Dumping (RID) prevention program and coordinating surveillance, intelligence gathering and enforcement in cooperation with these agency partners to deter and detect offenders.

Council participated in initiatives to target the illegal dumping of contaminated fill waste in the Shire, including an education campaign titled 'There is no such thing as clean fill'. Investigation and enforcement activities also focused on the dumping of green waste and items such as furniture, including the dumping of items near charity and clothing bins.

Council reviewed gate fees for asbestos disposal at the Resource Recovery Centre to ensure that the charges match the cost of disposal, to encourage residents to dispose of the material legally.



## **DP82 Manage the Resource Recovery Centre in accordance with Environmental Protection Authority licence and ensure efficient and cost effective operations**

The Resource Recovery Centre (RRC) has operated in compliance with NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) licence conditions. Council continues to make concerted efforts to reduce the volume of waste going to landfill; however, the cost of recycling is escalating higher than the landfill disposal costs due to restrictions on the export of waste. Further clarity regarding this issue is expected to be provided once the Federal and State Governments have finalised their respective waste policy initiatives.

The RRC has also progressed with a Rain Water Harvesting program to assist with stormwater management on the site. This was undertaken in response to a recommendation of the EPA as part of a continuous improvement program.

## **DP83 Develop and implement a Council Waste Strategy and Policy**

Council has developed a draft Waste Strategy that seeks to enhance the amenity and environmental sustainability of the Shire. This draft Strategy is under review to ensure that it aligns with the outcomes of the service delivery review of waste management that was completed during 2019/20. To ensure a consistent approach with other levels of government, the Waste Strategy cannot be finalised until Federal and State policy initiatives with respect to waste management that are currently in development are established, such as the 20-Year Waste Strategy for NSW. A targeted waste education strategy is also being developed to complement the draft Waste Strategy.

## **DP84 Implement strategies to improve energy management**


Council has created a register of opportunities to improve energy management across the organisation. A number of projects with energy efficiency elements were identified for implementation as part of the capital works program in the 2020/21 Budget. These include the refurbishment of buildings, upgrades to water and sewage pumps and renewals of sewer mains and sewer access points.

The Civic Centre refurbishment project which includes upgraded heating, ventilation and air conditioning in the building has also substantially progressed, while planning has been undertaken for the next solar project to be installed on the Civic Centre. A system of between 70-100 kilowatts is being planned, funded by Council's revolving energy fund and installed during the repair and renovation of the building's roof.

## **DP85 Undertake initiatives that increase awareness and encourage water, energy and waste reduction**

On 12 February 2020, Council made a Climate Emergency Declaration. This Declaration recognised the latest climate change science from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and Australian Climate. It acknowledged that the Shire is vulnerable and being impacted today by





heatwaves, bushfires, severe storms and changes in rainfall greatly worsened by climate change. The initial actions of the Climate Emergency Response Plan have been implemented, including:

- Council's formal position being communicated to both the State and Federal Governments, expressing concern about climate change and advocating for more action in responding to it;
- the creation of a number of webpages that are dedicated to communicating climate action to the community; and
- drafting of a bridging statement which will be used in climate change education and engagement programs.

Subject to Government restrictions in response to COVID-19, workshops are planned for 2020/21 to engage the community in the development of an Environment and Climate Change Strategy.

Three activities to increase environmental awareness were delivered as part of the Seniors Week Festival in February 2020, including workshops on saving energy and resilience in extreme weather events.

### **DP86 Implement strategies to address the impacts of climate change**

Council updated its Climate Change Adaptation Plan which identifies the risks or impacts of climate change on Council operations and corresponding actions within Council's scope of responsibility to reduce or avoid the impact. The actions pertain to several aspects of Council's operations including supporting the community, emergency management, land use planning, environmental protection and assets and infrastructure. The implementation of these actions has been incorporated within the business plans for each branch of Council where applicable and a process developed to facilitate reporting on the Adaptation Plan's objectives and goals.

A summary of Council's Climate Change Adaptation Plan is available online at [Adaptation and Resilience to Climate Change](#).

### **DP87 Improve resource and energy efficiency at Council facilities and monitor carbon emissions**

Council continued to monitor its greenhouse gas emissions during 2019/20. It was identified that a number of factors impacted Council's emissions during the year. The 'Black Summer' bushfires resulted in a short-term spike in energy use due to increased water supply operations. There was also subsequently a reduction in energy use due to the closure of a number of community facilities and changes to Council's operations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition, a new calculation method was implemented for emissions as a result of wastewater treatment systems. As the calculation of emissions from wastewater is a complicated process, the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment simplified the methods which estimate certain relevant factors. The calculation method was used and applied to previous years to allow for comparative data to be analysed across multiple reporting periods. Due to the simplification of this calculation method, wastewater emissions will be reported separately until the method is further refined to improve the accuracy of calculations.

| Council's greenhouse gas emissions over time   |               |               |               |               |               |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Emissions from Council operations (excluding wastewater treatment) (TCO <sub>2</sub> -e) |               |               |               |               |               |
|  | 2015/16       | 2016/17       | 2017/18       | 2018/19       | 2019/20       |
| Scope 1  | 2,810         | 2,771         | 2,834         | 2,836         | 2,624         |
| Scope 2  | 9,039         | 8,705         | 8,518         | 8,394         | 8,556         |
| Scope 3  | 3,485         | 3,451         | 3,077         | 2,519         | 2,422         |
| Subtotal   | 15,334        | 14,927        | 14,429        | 13,749        | 13,602        |
| Wastewater treatment fugitive emissions (TCO <sub>2</sub> -e)*                           |               |               |               |               |               |
|  | 2015/16       | 2016/17       | 2017/18       | 2018/19       | 2019/20       |
| Scope 1  | 7,761         | 10,033        | 6,685         | 6,465         | 7,399         |
| <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>   | <b>23,095</b> | <b>24,960</b> | <b>21,114</b> | <b>20,214</b> | <b>21,001</b> |

**Notes:**

Scope 1 – Direct combustion such as fuel and gas

Scope 2 – Purchased electricity

Scope 3 – Indirect emissions through items purchased as paper

TCO<sub>2</sub>-e – Tonnes carbon dioxide equivalent

\* Significant differences across reporting periods are due to a number of factors including stormwater infiltration in high rainfall years.

## DP88 Encourage carbon reduction across the Shire

Council participates in the Cities Power Partnership (CPP) and the associated South East Buddies Group which includes other councils in close geographical proximity. The CPP is made up of 139 councils from across Australia and requires local councils which join the partnership to make five action pledges to combat climate change. Council reported its progress on these pledges to the CPP and confirmed that it was on track.

Council participated at the CANWin (Climate Action Now! Wingecarribee) Community Climate Forum in November 2019 and presented on Council and community greenhouse gas emissions data, abatement actions being undertaken and the issues ahead.

A joint program between Regional Development Australia Southern Inland and Council has also been established with the Solar My Schools model being developed for implementation within the Shire in 2020/21.



# Economy



## Economy Services

Economic Development

Development Control

Tourism and Events

Southern Regional Livestock Exchange

*We harness the economic potential of the area by building on the intrinsic advantages of the Shire. Our primary industries are thriving through the protection of good quality agricultural land, water and the environment. We broaden our economic base to provide a variety of jobs locally while embracing and capitalising on technological advancements. Our sustainable economy attracts and retains people to live and work in the area.*

*We encourage creativity and innovation in the expansion of 'clean' industries in the Shire. Local training and development opportunities are tailored to complement the skillsets required by current and future local employers.*

### **To achieve this aspiration by 2031, our community goals are:**

- 5.1 Our Shire attracts people to work, live and visit
- 5.2 Sustainable business and industry work in harmony with local community and environment
- 5.3 We support the productive use of our agricultural land and promote our diverse and thriving local agriculture industry and its right to farm
- 5.4 Local business is supported through a connected community

## Economy Indicators

| Economy indicators   | 2016/17 | 2017/18 | 2018/19 | 2019/20* |
|--|---------|---------|---------|----------|
| <b>Accommodation bookings/commission through the Welcome Centre (\$)</b> | 25,628  | 30,298  | 47,021  | 54,612   |
| <b>Commission from events ticketed through the Welcome Centre (\$) ^</b> | 3,041   | 4,044   | 3,273   | 1,545    |
| <b>Visitation to the Welcome Centre</b>                                  | 61,907  | 57,653  | 55,603  | 32,506   |
| <b>Tourism website hits<sup>±</sup></b>                                  | 286,657 | 354,370 | 559,340 | 275,685  |

\* The figures for 2019/20 were impacted by the 'Black Summer' bushfires and the COVID-19 pandemic.

^ While the Welcome Centre continues to take conference bookings, the majority are now made through an independent private company.

± The substantial increase in tourism website hits from 2017/18 to 2018/19 is attributed to a dedicated digital media strategy, spending in the promotion of the Destination Southern Highlands website ([www.visitsouthernhighlands.com.au](http://www.visitsouthernhighlands.com.au)) and ongoing marketing.

## DP89 Support regional activities and partnerships to broaden and promote a range of business and industry investment

Council continued to support regional activities and partnerships through responding to a variety of business and investment enquiries in partnership with the NSW Government.

A draft Southern Highlands Destination Plan 2020-2030 was developed to articulate Council's role in economic development in pursuit of the community's vision as set out in Council's Community Strategic Plan *Wingecarribee 2031*. Community engagement during the development of the draft Destination Plan included a series of five two-hour forums conducted in February with approximately 70 representatives from key industry sectors and peak body organisations. In June, an online presentation of the key themes and draft framework was delivered to 40 participants of the February forums. A presentation was also given to the Southern Highlands Chamber of Commerce for the benefit of their members.

The draft Destination Plan seeks to recognise both traditional industry as well as emerging sectors in the Southern Highlands, including agribusiness, tourism, equine industries, professional business services, creative industries, healthcare, advanced manufacturing and education.

Engagement with Business NSW, the Southern Highlands Chamber of Commerce and AusIndustry has been undertaken to investigate the feasibility of partnering with them in a Southern Highlands Industry Group to facilitate and promote business investment in the Shire.

Council promotes the ICN Gateway, a business networking platform, to local businesses which could provide services under major contracts. Council also organised a workshop with Austrade to increase local capability in preparing for export.

### **DP90 Build on partnerships that increase and broaden local employment opportunities**

Council works closely with several agencies and industry bodies to develop local employment opportunities. A proactive engagement program was undertaken with key partners including Regional Development Australia Southern Inland, AusIndustry, Destination Sydney Surrounds South, Southern Highlands Key Stakeholders Group, Southern Highlands Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Southern Highlands Food and Wine Association in the development of the draft Southern Highlands Destination Plan 2020-2030. This included considering strategies to deliver greater employment opportunities for key growth sectors identified in the draft Destination Plan.

Council also works with State Government agencies and non-government organisations in providing data on local employment and business generation. A visit to the region by the NSW Minister for Education and Early Childhood Education provided a valuable opportunity to present the Shire's education opportunities.

### **DP91 Ensure tourism development assessment is based on quadruple bottom line principles (i.e. considers environmental, economic, social and governance factors)**

Council continued to apply quadruple bottom line principles to the assessment of tourism development applications through its evaluation of development applications under section 4.15 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

Council adopted its Rural Tourism Policy on 13 November 2019. This aims to provide greater certainty and consistency in assessing rural tourism developments and outline a clear approval pathway for certain rural tourism related developments. It also seeks to limit opportunistic rural tourism developments and establish criteria for the determination of Planning Proposals seeking the rezoning of land to SP3 Tourist, among other things. This Policy is consistent with the NSW Government's South East and Tablelands Regional Plan 2036 as well as the Destination Sydney Surrounds South Destination Management Plan.

### **DP92 Promote the Southern Highlands as a world class tourist destination**

The Shire continued to be promoted as a tourist destination through traditional print media, radio, television and social media platforms. A key achievement realised during the first six months of 2019/20 was the successful Tulip Time Festival which took place in September 2019 with a theme of 'Mary Poppins' and the charity partner of Variety - the Children's Charity. 54,500 people visited the festival, an increase of 14 per cent on 2018 figures. More local residents also visited Corbett Gardens during the festival, with numbers up 4 per cent on 2018 attendance. The program of activities and entertainment included Plaster Pit workshops, Flamenco Dancing, music in the Gardens, local school performances and market stalls.

Visitation to the Shire was impacted greatly by both the 'Black Summer' bushfires and subsequently the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic resulted in the Southern Highlands Welcome Centre closing from 26 March to 31 May 2020 in response to Government



restrictions imposed to contain the spread of COVID-19. As a result of the ongoing pandemic and the health risks it presents, Council made the decision to cancel the Tulip Time Festival for 2020.

Tourism has been identified as a key industry for the Shire's economy in the draft Southern Highlands Destination Plan 2020-2030, which includes several strategies to continue positioning the Shire as a world class tourist destination.

### **DP93 Develop and implement marketing and promotional activities to promote the Southern Highlands**

In addition to the traditional promotion of the Southern Highlands through print media, radio and television, Council has enhanced its marketing activities utilising digital media platforms such as the Destination Southern Highlands website, YouTube, Facebook and Instagram. As part of this process, Council has partnered with Google to promote the Shire via Google's world-wide platforms and to ensure local businesses are Google verified. This enables businesses to have more control over the key information and links presented on a Google search results webpage.

In collaboration with the Southern Highlands Food and Wine Association, Council launched a new mobile-responsive Destination Southern Highlands website aimed at attracting domestic and international visitors to the Southern Highlands. The new visitor-focused website has been specifically designed with a simple structure to be user friendly, to

showcase the region with vivid imagery and to highlight key experiences available throughout the Southern Highlands. The experiences highlighted reflect the primary attributes of the region such as food and wine, the arts, gardens, cricket, heritage, nature, cycling, drives and accommodation.

The Southern Highlands Destination Planner and Map for 2020 was refreshed with a new design and launched in February 2020. Both the Planner and the Map serve as key marketing tools for the Shire and are made available to locals and visitors to the region as well as being distributed to 141 Accredited Visitor Centres in New South Wales.

Council also successfully celebrated the Pie Time event through virtual online events from 1-7 June 2020, rather than a month-long festival. Re-branding the event as 'Pie Time in Pie-solation', the virtual events which took place for Pie Time included Behind the Scenes at Heatherbraes, Cricket and Pies, Paddock to Pie Plate, In Search of the Ultimate Pie Trail, The Great Meals on Wheels Pie Drive, Friday Night Happy Hour Pies and Sweetie Pie and Bubbles. Retired Australian Rules footballer Robert 'Dipper' DiPierdomenico was secured as the Pie Time Ambassador to launch and celebrate Australia's National Pie Day on 1 June 2020.

Council's innovative 2019 Pie Time campaign was recognised as it won Gold at the Canberra Tourism Awards held in November 2019. The campaign was also entered as a finalist at the Australian Tourism Awards held in Canberra on 9 March 2020.

## **DP94 Explore options to progress Moss Vale Enterprise Zone**

Now incorporated within the industrial area referred to as the Southern Highlands Innovation Park, opportunities to progress the Moss Vale Enterprise Zone were identified in the draft Southern Highlands Destination Plan 2020-2030. In particular, increasing the local infrastructure provision to increase the attractiveness of the area for industrial investment has been pinpointed as a key catalytic project that Council will seek to progress in partnership with local industry.

## **DP95 Support the establishment and expansion of clean industries**


Council continues to promote the establishment of clean industries when it responds to enquiries from operators expressing interest in locating industries within the region. This will remain a priority as Council focuses on the key industries for the Shire identified in the draft Southern Highlands Destination Plan 2020-2030, including tourism, agribusiness and advanced manufacturing. As part of the process of developing this draft Destination Plan, Council engaged with representatives of Climate Emergency when exploring opportunities for relevant opportunities and projects.

## **DP96 Manage the operation of the Southern Region Livestock Exchange**

Council continued to successfully manage the operation of the Southern Regional Livestock Exchange (SRLX) in accordance with relevant legislation and Environment Protection Authority licence requirements. The SRLX remained functional and able to operate throughout the COVID-19 pandemic despite members of the public being unable to attend due to restrictions imposed in response to the pandemic. In response to Government restrictions imposed, access to the SRLX, including the auctions, was limited to persons directly involved with the purchase and sale of cattle.



**Mayor Duncan Gair and Member for Goulburn Wendy Tuckerman MP at the Southern Regional Livestock Exchange ribbon cutting ceremony, 2 December 2019**



The tender for the design, development and construction of the saleyard upgrades was released and progress made on a number of minor works. These included the installation of seating as well as a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) system at the gates which allows for communication between persons entering the premises and the call centre. The upgrades are funded by a \$5.2 million grant from the NSW Government's Growing Local Economies fund and will ensure that the facility reflects industry standards.

### **DP97 Ensure development does not impact on viable primary production and food security**

All Planning Proposals submitted to Council for consideration are assessed against strategic criteria which include the need to protect the agricultural value of rural land in accordance with relevant State Environmental Planning Policies and Ministerial Directions.

Council has also ensured that the environmental, social and economic impacts of development are considered in its evaluation of development applications, as required under section 4.15 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

### **DP98 Facilitate programs and networks that support and strengthen business development**

Council enhanced its support of small business by establishing a Memorandum of Understanding with Service NSW for the 'Easy to do Business' program. The program provides the opportunity for participating councils to implement programs that support small business and facilitate the sharing of resources and information and promotion of the local business community.

Partnerships with key local and regional business development organisations to develop, facilitate and promote programs that will generate investment and jobs in the Shire have been identified as a key priority in the draft Southern Highlands Destination Plan 2020-2030. Engagement sessions with industry stakeholders were critical to the development of the draft Destination Plan.

### **DP99 Support initiatives that provide opportunities for business mentoring and connection**

Council coordinated several training and mentoring workshops for local businesses, including partnering with the NSW Government's Smart and Skilled program to deliver Retail Training Workshops at Bowral Town Hall. Council also contributed to the development and delivery of Bushfire Recovery Marketing and Social Media workshops at BDCU Alliance Bank offices.

Council collaborated with the Southern Region Business Enterprise Centre on referring clients for business planning assistance, and continues to also work closely with the Southern Highlands Key Stakeholders Group to develop business mentoring in its cluster group initiatives.



## **DP100 Support regional economic development initiatives**

Council actively works with a wide range of government and industry organisations and individuals advancing regional economic development initiatives. These include Regional Development Australia Southern Inland, Southern Highlands Key Stakeholders Group, Destination NSW, Destination Sydney Surrounds South, Illawarra Business Chamber, Canberra Region Joint Organisation, AusIndustry and Austrade.

Council also participated with the Sydney Peri-Urban Network, comprising 12 LGAs on the periphery of the Sydney Metropolitan Area, with respect to the development of an Action Plan and the establishment of links with Economic Development Australia.



## Statutory Information

The following section provides additional detailed supporting information and addresses statutory requirements under Chapter 13, Parts 2 and 4 of the *Local Government Act 1993*, Part 9, Division 7 of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005* and any other legislation which requires information to be included in this report.



## Private Works

### Section 67(3) of the *Local Government Act 1993* and clause 217(1)(a4) of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005*

Private works will be undertaken by Council's Infrastructure Services branch if sufficient resources are available and the undertaking of the private works does not impact on Council's works program or core business activities. Any private works undertaken will ensure that Council does not incur a loss and that the work is to an acceptable standard.

Council's annual reports must include details or a summary of resolutions made during the relevant financial year concerning work carried out on private land and details or a summary of such work if the cost of the work has been fully or partly subsidised by Council, together with a statement of the total amount by which Council has subsidised any such work during that year.

| Private works     | Summary or details of work | No. of works | Total costs | Owner contribution | Council contribution |
|-------------------|----------------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Water fund</b> | Water main works           | 23           | \$171,480   | \$206,568          | \$0                  |
| <b>Sewer fund</b> | Sewer main works           | 49           | \$137,899   | \$229,680          | \$0                  |

## Contracts Awarded

### Clause 217(1)(a2) of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005*

The following is a list of contracts for amounts greater than \$150,000 awarded during the period 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020.

In accordance with sections 6 and 18 and Division 5 of the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*, Council keeps and publishes a register of government contracts valued at \$150,000 or more. This register is available at [Register of Council Contracts with Private Sector](#).

| Description of Works   | Contractor                                   | Contract Value |
|--|--|----------------|
| Purchase of a Multi-Tyred Roller                               | Jackson Plant & Transport Pty Ltd            | \$152,350      |
| Sewer Cleaning and CCTV Inspections                            | GMA Waste Water Services Pty Ltd             | \$203,498      |
| Council's Moss Vale Depot - Steel Shed Design and Construction | Castlereagh Structural Group Pty Ltd         | \$158,000      |
| Replacement of Sewage Pump Stations BE-5 & MV-6                | Gongues Constructions Pty Ltd                | \$1,978,350    |
| Sewer Pump Station Electrical Panel Upgrade                    | Star Electrical Co Pty Ltd                   | \$3,590,692    |
| Purchase of Organic Waste Shredder                             | Emer Pty Ltd                                 | \$580,800      |
| Supply of Water Filling Stations                               | Abberfield Technology Pty Ltd                | \$315,733      |
| Merrigang Street Reconstruction - Asphalt Concrete             | All Pavement Solutions Pty Ltd               | \$212,992      |
| Water Asset Medium Voltage Switchgear Upgrade                  | ARA Electrical High Voltage Services Pty Ltd | \$442,230      |
| Resource Recovery Centre Stormwater Management – Stage 1       | SJ Plumbing Industries Pty Ltd               | \$196,084      |

| Description of Works   | Contractor                                      | Contract Value                    |
|--|---|-----------------------------------|
| Roadside Weed Control  | Panel of 4 Contractors                          | in excess of \$210,000.00         |
| Bowral STP Upgrade - Detailed Design   | Hunter H2O Holdings Pty Ltd                     | \$880,017                         |
| Vandenbergh Road Renewal and Table Drain Work                                | Stefanutti Construction Pty Ltd                 | \$648,210                         |
| Berrima Marketplace - Playground Upgrade                                     | Growth Civil Landscapes Pty Ltd                 | \$345,781                         |
| Plant & Equipment Hire   | Panel of 43 Contractors                         | in excess of \$1,000,000 per year |
| Purchase of 4 Dual Cab Tipper Trucks   | Daimler Truck and Bus Australia Pacific Pty Ltd | \$311,797                         |
| Civic Centre Refurbishment   | Matrix Group Co Pty Ltd                         | \$6,799,000                       |
| Construction of Stormwater Drainage - Hill Top NSW                           | Stefanutti Construction Pty Ltd                 | \$286,948                         |
| Biosolids Removal, Transport and Beneficial Reuse                            | Arkwood (Gloucester) Pty Ltd                    | in excess of \$300,000 per year   |
| Purchase of Motor Grader   | WesTrac Pty Ltd                                 | \$419,650                         |
| Kirkham Road Upgrade, Bowral - Stage 1                                       | The Civil Experts Pty Ltd                       | \$2,827,400                       |
| Deep lift asphalt works for Old Hume Highway reconstruction project, Berrima | Avijohn Contracting Pty Ltd                     | \$458,700                         |
| Sewer Mains Renewal and Sewer Manhole Replacement                            | Carve Earthworks and Construction Pty Ltd       | \$4,323,218                       |
| Mittagong Tennis Courts - Remedial Works                                     | Dynamic Sports Facilities Pty Ltd               | \$182,946                         |
| Pre-Sale Cattle Tag Scanning   | Outcross Pty Ltd                                | in excess of \$165,000            |
| Installation of Scales into Trucks   | Diverseco Pty Ltd                               | \$159,868                         |
| Water Reservoir Cathodic Protection  | Corrosion Control Engineering (NSW) Pty Ltd     | \$205,772                         |
| Bowral Rugby Club House Re-Development - Stage 2                             | Lewis Building Company Pty Ltd                  | \$981,113                         |
| Bundanoon Skatepark - Design & Construction                                  | Five Design Pty Ltd                             | \$379,500                         |
| Storm Water Upgrades - Bowral and Mittagong                                  | MJ & MD Skinner Earthmoving Pty Ltd             | \$236,602                         |
| Water Mains and Water Meters Replacement                                     | Killard Infrastructure Pty Ltd                  | \$5,813,073                       |
| Water Mains Construction - Merrigang St, Bowral                              | Carve Earthworks & Construction Pty Ltd         | \$786,756                         |
| Construction of Bridge - Robertson NSW                                       | Talis Civil Pty Ltd                             | \$1,107,440                       |
| Construction of Two Bridges - Meryla NSW                                     | Kenpass Pty Ltd                                 | \$1,358,033                       |
| Mittagong Oval Lighting Renewal  | Power By Watts Pty Ltd                          | \$250,025                         |

## Condition of Public Works

Information on the condition of public works is included in the General Purpose Financial Statements through Note 11 - Infrastructure, Property, Plant and Equipment and Special Schedule - Report on Infrastructure Assets.

### 2019/20 Capital Works Projects Expenditure

| Works                               | Expenditure         |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Community and operational buildings | \$3,339,000         |
| Roads and related assets            | \$12,065,000        |
| Bridges                             | \$2,392,000         |
| Footpaths and cycleways             | \$1,022,000         |
| Stormwater drainage                 | \$6,445,000         |
| Water network                       | \$5,620,000         |
| Sewer network                       | \$5,571,000         |
| Swimming pools                      | \$65,000            |
| Parks, reserves and sportsfields    | \$2,631,000         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                        | <b>\$39,150,000</b> |

*Source: Note 11 General Purpose Financial Reports*

**Note:** This list includes capital projects dedicated to Council relating to new development. The list does not include capital expenses relating to plant replacement, library books, furniture and fittings and land.

## Capital Expenditure Review

### Capital Expenditure Guidelines

In accordance with the Office of Local Government's Capital Expenditure Guidelines issued under section 23A of the *Local Government Act 1993*, Council undertook a Capital Expenditure Review of the refurbishment of Council's Civic Centre prior to the commencement of works. The Guidelines aim to ensure that a council's evaluation of the proposed capital expenditure is consistent and transparent, that the merits of projects can be compared and that resource allocation can be made on an informed basis.

After reviewing the information provided by Council, the Office of Local Government determined that Council had satisfactorily addressed the criteria required in the Guidelines.

## Special Rate Variation

### Sections 508(2) and 508A of the *Local Government Act 1993* and Special Rate Variation Guidelines

The following 2019/20 maintenance works and capital projects were funded by the Special Rate Variation:

| Description of works                 | Expenditure        |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Maintenance works</b>             |                    |
| Roads maintenance                    | \$1,364,000        |
| Building maintenance                 | \$470,616          |
| Parks maintenance                    | \$300,592          |
| Drainage maintenance                 | \$251,000          |
| <b>Total maintenance expenditure</b> | <b>\$2,386,208</b> |
| <b>Capital works</b>                 |                    |
| Merrigang St rehabilitation          | \$1,473,280        |
| Civic Centre refurbishment           | \$426,952          |
| Local roads gravel resheeting        | \$388,020          |
| Anembo Park improvements             | \$378,937          |
| Ferguson Street drainage             | \$341,000          |
| Wombeyan Caves Road retaining wall   | \$218,059          |
| Ovington Road drainage               | \$214,528          |
| Wembley Road drainage                | \$205,501          |
| Local Roads resealing                | \$198,515          |
| Winifred West Toilets                | \$177,857          |
| Belmore to Renwick Channel Stage 1   | \$173,981          |
| Lackey Park Regional Sporting Hub    | \$172,944          |
| Mittagong Library Roof               | \$132,415          |
| Burrawang Oval Toilet                | \$129,559          |
| Leighton Gardens Toilets             | \$119,346          |
| Mittagong Tennis Court               | \$103,750          |
| Heavy Patching                       | \$100,000          |
| Tree Planting renewal                | \$84,990           |
| Erith Street drainage                | \$83,762           |
| Mittagong Road Bowral footpath       | \$76,586           |
| Wingello Hall                        | \$70,367           |
| Mittagong Oval Lighting upgrade      | \$53,872           |
| Wingello Multi-Purpose Court         | \$52,255           |
| Bundanoon Pool Kiosk                 | \$51,300           |
| Belmore to Renwick Channel Stage 1   | \$42,872           |
| Welby Oval Amenities Building        | \$33,899           |
| Drapers Road Compound                | \$32,306           |
| Church Road Oval Building            | \$27,900           |
| Design Drainage Wingecarribee Street | \$27,886           |
| Eridge Park Fence                    | \$27,141           |
| Car Park Community Oval              | \$25,000           |
| Design Drainage Berrima Road         | \$24,949           |
| Loseby Park window replacement       | \$21,253           |

| Description of works              | Expenditure        |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Construct Drainage Murimbah Road  | \$20,085           |
| Minor Capital Projects < \$20,000 | \$171,494          |
| <b>Total capital expenditure</b>  | <b>\$5,882,561</b> |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                      | <b>\$8,268,769</b> |

### IPART reporting requirements: *Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) Comparison*

This reconciliation compares Council's General Fund operating result for the period ending 30 June 2020 (source: Note 26) with the financial forecasts contained within Council's Special Rate Variation Application submitted to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) in February 2016.

| General Fund   | LTFP Projection<br>(‘000) | Actual 2019/20<br>(‘000) | Variation<br>(‘000) |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Income from Continuing Operations</b>                               |                           |                          |                     |
| Rates and Annual Charges   | \$56,551                  | \$59,428                 | \$2,877             |
| User Charges & Fees  | \$7,651                   | \$9,646                  | \$1,995             |
| Investment Income  | \$1,832                   | \$1,434                  | -\$398              |
| Other Revenues   | \$3,375                   | \$3,289                  | -\$86               |
| Grants and Contributions Operating                                     | \$8,394                   | \$10,700                 | \$2,306             |
| Grants and Contributions Capital                                       | \$2,666                   | \$20,338                 | \$17,672            |
| Rental income  | -                         | \$766                    | \$766               |
| Net Gains from the disposal of assets                                  | -                         | -                        | -                   |
| <b>Total Income from Continuing Operations</b>                         | <b>\$80,469</b>           | <b>\$105,601</b>         | <b>\$25,132</b>     |
| <b>Expense from Continuing Operations</b>                              |                           |                          |                     |
| Employee Costs   | \$30,702                  | \$31,220                 | \$518               |
| Borrowing Costs  | \$464                     | \$496                    | \$32                |
| Materials and Contracts  | \$15,363                  | \$24,767                 | \$9,404             |
| Depreciation and Amortisation  | \$15,922                  | \$18,757                 | \$2,835             |
| Other Expenses   | \$11,839                  | \$9,221                  | -\$2,618            |
| Net Loss from the disposal of assets                                   | -                         | \$1,810                  | \$1,810             |
| <b>Total Expenses from Continuing Operations</b>                       | <b>\$74,290</b>           | <b>\$86,271</b>          | <b>\$11,981</b>     |
|  |                           |                          |                     |
| <b>Net Operating Result</b>  | <b>\$6,179</b>            | <b>\$19,330</b>          | <b>\$13,151</b>     |
| <b>Net Operating Result excluding Capital Grants and Contributions</b> | <b>\$3,513</b>            | <b>-\$1,008</b>          | <b>-\$4,521</b>     |

### Major Variations Compared to Adopted Long Term Financial Plan (General Fund)

Comments and explanations for the major variations between Council's adopted *Long Term Financial Plan* compared to the actual results for the period ending 30 June 2020 are provided below.



| Movement        | Reporting Line                     | Description of Variations  | '000            |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|--|-----------------|
| <b>Increase</b> | Rates and Annual Charges           | Additional rate income and domestic waste management income compared to Budget   | \$2,877         |
| <b>Increase</b> | User Charges and Fees              | Additional development income and user charges at Council's waste facility   | \$1,995         |
| <b>Decrease</b> | Investment Income                  | Interest rates on term deposits have decreased significantly due to COVID-19.  | -\$398          |
| <b>Decrease</b> | Other Revenues                     | Minor variation when compared to Budget  | -\$86           |
| <b>Increase</b> | Grants and Contributions Operating | Additional income from financial assistance grant, bushfire recovery grants, children's services grants and environment protection grants  | \$2,306         |
| <b>Increase</b> | Grants and Contributions Capital   | Increase in dedicated infrastructure (non-cash income), Council does not budget for dedicated infrastructure   | \$17,672        |
| <b>Increase</b> | Rental income                      | Rental income was previously classified as other income, however to ensure compliance with accounting standards it is now shown separately.  | \$766           |
|                 |                                    | <b>Income variations</b>   | <b>\$25,132</b> |
| <b>Increase</b> | Employee Costs                     | Additional employees and increase in Workers Compensation Premium  | \$518           |
| <b>Increase</b> | Borrowing Costs                    | Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme adjustment to reflect grant as operating income  | \$32            |
| <b>Increase</b> | Materials and Contracts            | A range of increases have led to this variation including (but not limited to) tree contractors \$1.69M (due to bushfire and storm events), development contractors \$808K, and traffic control contractors \$610K. There are also a number of account reclassifications where expenses have been recorded as materials and contracts, rather than other expenses. | \$9,404         |
| <b>Increase</b> | Depreciation Expenses              | The increase in depreciation is primarily due to dedicated infrastructure handed to Council as part of the subdivision process. Council does not budget for dedicated infrastructure.  | \$2,835         |
| <b>Decrease</b> | Other expenses                     | This relates to the reclassification of expenses as Materials and Contracts, rather than other expenses. This is to ensure compliance with accounting standards and the Local Government Code of Accounting practice.  | -\$2,618        |
| <b>Increase</b> | Net loss from disposal of assets   | Council does not estimate the net profit/loss from the disposal of assets as part of the annual budget; instead estimates are based on the expected sales proceeds   | \$1,810         |
|                 |                                    | <b>Expense variations</b>  | <b>\$11,981</b> |
|                 |                                    | <b>Net reportable variations</b>   | <b>\$13,151</b> |

## Environment Levy

The following 2019/20 projects and programs were funded by the Environment Levy:

| Project/Program                          | TOTAL              |
|--|--------------------|
| <b>Biodiversity Conservation</b>         |                    |
| Bushland Restoration and Weed Management | \$611,320          |
| Revegetation                             | \$5,788            |
| Support Community Nursery                | \$556              |
| Vegetation Conservation                  | \$29,224           |
| Contribution to CRJO Contaminated Lands  | \$7,404            |
| Interpretative Material Natural Assets   | \$2,700            |
| Green Web Action / Strategy              | \$43,878           |
|  | <b>\$700,870</b>   |
| <b>Community Capacity and Commitment</b> |                    |
| Awareness Campaigns                      | \$485              |
| Community Education                      | \$14,772           |
| Community Support                        | \$10,024           |
| Landcare and Bushcare                    | \$53,049           |
| Environment and Sustainability Committee | \$25,985           |
| Environment Levy Awareness               | \$6,771            |
| Rural Partner Program                    | \$19,006           |
| Urban Sustainability Partner Program     | \$32,941           |
|  | <b>\$163,033</b>   |
| <b>Program Coordination</b>              |                    |
| Environment Levy Program Coordination    | \$127,737          |
| Grant Applications                       | \$17,359           |
|  | <b>\$145,096</b>   |
| <b>Environmental Systems</b>             |                    |
| Data Collection Biodiversity             | \$7,196            |
| Water Quality Equipment                  | \$622              |
|  | <b>\$7,818</b>     |
| <b>River Health and Wetlands</b>         |                    |
| Riparian Management Plans Delivery       | \$67,323           |
| Repair Riparian Zones                    | \$20,850           |
|  | <b>\$88,173</b>    |
| <b>Sustainable Living</b>                |                    |
| Community Sustainability                 | \$52,722           |
|  | <b>\$52,722</b>    |
| <b>Corporate Support</b>                 | <b>\$71,264</b>    |
|  |                    |
| <b>Expenditure</b>                       | <b>\$1,228,976</b> |

## Stormwater Management Charge

### Clause 217(1)(e) of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005*

The following 2019/20 projects were funded from the Stormwater Management Services Charge:

| Project                                       | Expenditure      |
|---|------------------|
| Piped Drainage Belmore to Renwick Channel     | \$58,965         |
| Armstrong Crescent Drainage                   | \$207,442        |
| Wembley Road Drainage                         | \$7,991          |
| Upper Caalong Street Drainage                 | \$7,974          |
| Whites Creek Floodplain Risk Study            | \$17,908         |
| Nattai Ponds Floodplain Risk Management Study | \$3,033          |
| Asset Inspection and Data Collection          | \$1,660          |
| Stormwater Minor Maintenance Works            | \$56,261         |
| Creek Cleaning                                | \$20,234         |
| Wetlands Maintenance                          | \$3,500          |
| Stormwater Drainage Maintenance               | \$99,332         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                  | <b>\$484,300</b> |

## Rates and Charges Written Off

### Clause 132 of the *Local Government (General Regulation) 2005*

The following amounts were written off by Council during 2019/20:

| Amount of rates and charges written off during 2019/20                       |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| Postponed Rates under section 595(1) of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> | \$20,285           |
| Pensioners under section 575 of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i>         | \$1,631,383        |
| Water Determinations   | \$58,660           |
| Other  | \$48,630           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>\$1,758,958</b> |

## Financial Assistance to Persons for Council Functions

### Clause 217(1)(a5) of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005*

Contributions made by Council under section 356 of the *Local Government Act 1993* in 2019/20 comprised:

| Category                       | Donations/<br>Contributions | Community<br>Assistance<br>Scheme | Rate<br>Subsidies | TOTAL            |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Arts and Culture Bodies        | \$25,070                    | \$13,836                          | -                 | \$38,906         |
| Charity/Welfare Groups         | \$44,374                    | \$10,629                          | \$7,347           | \$62,350         |
| Community Groups               | \$434,285                   | \$66,235                          | \$72,935          | \$573,455        |
| Environmental Groups           | \$8,250                     | -                                 | -                 | \$8,250          |
| Local Schools                  | \$1,220                     | \$2,492                           | -                 | \$3,712          |
| Sporting and Recreation Groups | \$88,388                    | \$23,687                          | -                 | \$112,075        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                   | <b>\$601,587</b>            | <b>\$116,879</b>                  | <b>\$80,282</b>   | <b>\$798,748</b> |

## Legal Proceedings

### Clause 217(1)(a3) *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005*

The following is a summary of the amount incurred by Council in relation to legal proceedings in 2019/20. The below table includes:

- amounts, costs and expenses paid or received by Council by way of out of court settlements (other than those the terms of which are not to be disclosed); and
- a summary of the progress of each legal proceeding and the result of the proceeding (if finalised).

| Legal Matter                   | Amounts, costs and expenses paid or received |          | Summary of the state of progress | Result   |
|--------------------------------|--|----------|----------------------------------|--|
|                                | Paid   | Received |                                  |  |
| <b>Fenwick</b>                 | \$31,255                                     | -        | Finalised                        | Costs claim against Council was settled by agreement.  |
| <b>Paloma Blanca Pastoral</b>  | \$12,430                                     | -        | Finalised                        | The development that was the subject of the Land and Environment Court appeal was approved during the conciliation stage and the matter was therefore successfully resolved between the parties. |
| <b>Turland</b>                 | \$11,798                                     | \$5,000  | Finalised                        | The development that was the subject of the Land and Environment Court appeal was approved during the hearing stage and the matter was therefore successfully resolved between the parties.      |
| <b>Michael Brown Planning</b>  | \$168,374                                    | \$12,453 | Finalised                        | The Court of Appeal upheld the Land and Environment Court's dismissal of the development appeal. Council was successful in both courts.  |
| <b>Boyce</b>                   | \$6,715                                      | \$5,000  | Finalised                        | The development that was the subject of the Land and Environment Court appeal was approved during the conciliation stage and the matter was therefore successfully resolved between the parties. |
| <b>Strathleigh Investments</b> | \$11,607                                     | -        | Finalised                        | The developer withdrew the development application that was the subject of the appeal and lodged a new development application with Council.   |



| Legal Matter        | Amounts, costs and expenses paid or received |          | Summary of the state of progress                  | Result   |
|---------------------|--|----------|---|--|
|                     | Paid   | Received |   |  |
| ERF Hospice         | \$20,061                                     | -        | Ongoing and listed for hearing in September 2020. | N/A  |
| Lendlease           | \$7,787                                      | -        | Finalised   | The developer withdrew the development application that was the subject of the appeal and may lodge a new development application with Council.  |
| Reulie Land Co      | \$53,370                                     | -        | Finalised   | The Court declared the development consent that was the subject of the judicial review to be invalid.  |
| Morris              | \$1,720                                      | -        | Finalised   | The developer withdrew the development application that was the subject of the appeal and the appeal was discontinued.   |
| Sett Homes          | \$8,246                                      | -        | Finalised   | The development that was the subject of the Land and Environment Court appeal was approved during the conciliation stage and the matter was therefore successfully resolved between the parties. |
| Catholic Healthcare | \$54,501                                     | -        | Finalised   | The matter is concurrent with Lendlease above. Same result.  |
| K.N.D Nominees      | \$8,134                                      | -        | Finalised   | The developer withdrew the development application that was the subject of the appeal and the appeal was discontinued.   |
| Phoebe Hodgson      | \$19,872                                     | -        | Finalised   | The developer withdrew the development application that was the subject of the appeal and the appeal was discontinued.   |
| Peter Gualtieri     | \$14,040                                     | -        | Finalised   | The objector withdrew the challenge to development application that was the subject of the appeal and the appeal was discontinued.   |
| Bowral Garage       | \$7,186                                      | -        | Ongoing   | N/A  |
| Lasovase            | \$32,906                                     | -        | Ongoing and listed for hearing in 2021.           | N/A  |

| Legal Matter             | Amounts, costs and expenses paid or received |          | Summary of the state of progress        | Result   |
|--------------------------|--|----------|---|--|
|                          | Paid   | Received |   |  |
| Woodbine Park            | \$13,228                                     | -        | Ongoing and listed for hearing in 2021. | N/A  |
| Mittagong Central        | \$48,702                                     | -        | Ongoing and likely to be heard in 2021. | N/A  |
| Alexandra Nielson        | \$662  | -        | Finalised                               | The order that was the subject of the judicial review was revoked by Council and the judicial review was discontinued. |
| PS Design & Construction | \$5,450                                      | -        | Finalised                               | The developer withdrew the development application that was the subject of the appeal and the appeal was discontinued. |
| John M Bennett           | \$16,405                                     | -        | Ongoing and likely to be heard in 2021. | N/A  |

## Disability Inclusion Action Plan

### **Section 13(1) of the *Disability Inclusion Act 2014***

Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017-2021 (DIAP) has continued to be implemented through a variety of actions and initiatives that seek to achieve better access and inclusion for people with disability. Selected highlights of these initiatives are provided below for each of the four key areas of focus identified in the DIAP.

#### **Attitudes and Behaviours – Council supports and encourages positive and inclusive attitudes and behaviour towards people with disability**

- Council partnered with Disability Services Australia to hold an International Day of People with Disability (IDPWD) event at Lake Alexandra, Mittagong on 3 December 2019, with approximately 100 people attending.
- A Pop-up Information Kiosk for IDPWD was held in Corbett Plaza, Bowral on 5 December 2019, supported by local disability service providers.
- Three meetings of the Access Community Reference Group were facilitated online, with the Reference Group monitoring the implementation of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan and reporting to Council through the Community Development Advisory Committee.
- 'Tool box talks' about inclusive language and communication were held with Customer Service staff.

#### **Liveable Communities – Council supports the community to promote access and inclusion for everyone and reduce barriers to liveability factors such as transport, recreation and social inclusiveness**

- Council secured an additional accessible parking space at the Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre and ensured a supply of accessible parking spaces at the conclusion of the Kirkham Road reconstruction project in Bowral.
- Construction of the Renwick Shared Path, which will connect Renwick to Mittagong Railway Station via a footpath of approximately two kilometres in length, has commenced and will include ramps at intersections that meet access requirements in accordance with the Australian Standards.
- Several of the Shire's community facilities and open spaces received upgrades to improve access and inclusion, such as:
  - An access ramp was constructed and the internal toilet converted to meet accessibility standards at Wingello Mechanics Institute.
  - An elevator was installed at the Bowral Rugby Clubhouse in Burradoo as part of the upgrade works, to ensure for accessible access to the first floor.
  - Improved access to toilets at Burrawang Oval, Winifred West Park in Mittagong and Leighton Gardens in Moss Vale was provided as part of renewal works.
- Council was awarded a \$200,000 grant by the NSW Government under the Everyone Can Play grant program to upgrade the playspace and amenities at Seymour Park to provide an accessible playground, two accessible parking spaces and an accessible toilet within the new amenities building.

- The Paws N Tales program continued to be implemented at Bowral Branch Library to encourage children with learning and reading difficulties to enjoy books whilst having support from volunteers and specially trained dogs.

**Employment – Council is committed to equal employment and workplace opportunities for current and future employees in the workplace**

- The DisabilityAWARNESS online training module for disability awareness has been incorporated in the new online training platform for Council staff, which will be implemented in 2020/21.
- Council continued to apply the principles outlined in the Equal Employment Opportunity General Manager Practice Note and Procedure to ensure that recruitment and employment processes are accessible to people with disability.
- Council's Branch Libraries continued to offer free computer and wireless access as well as Tech Time, a program providing help with technology problems to build confidence and skills in using computers and mobile devices.

**Systems and Processes – Council systems and processes are inclusive of people with disability with improved access to information and services**

- The Master Locksmith Access Key (MLAK) process was revised, including updates made to the application form in August 2019, to ensure that the key is easier to obtain for residents with disability to gain 24 hours a day, seven days a week access to a network of public facilities including wheelchair accessible toilets.
- Council's webpages on Disability Services were updated to ensure that accurate information continued to be provided to the community.
- The Bowral Branch Library undertook an accessibility project at Bowral Branch Library by removing and redistributing books so that the bottom shelf of the Adult Fiction collection is not in use, thereby making books easier to access.
- Following a review and update, Council's Community Engagement Strategy was adopted on 11 December 2019. This references Social Justice Principles and the DIAP, and includes the objective 'Manage a proactive program of community engagement, ensuring all sectors of the community are included'.

## Public Interest Disclosures

**Section 31(1) of the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994* and clause 4 of the *Public Interest Disclosures Regulation 2011***

Council has adopted a Public Interest Disclosures Policy which is available on the Council's [Policies](#) webpage. This document is also available to staff through Council's Intranet.

During 2019/20, Council received one public interest disclosure.

## Privacy Statement

Section 33 of the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* requires Council to have a Privacy Management Plan. Council's Privacy Management Plan, available at Council's [Privacy Guidelines](#) webpage, includes a commitment by Council to include a statement concerning privacy in its Annual Report.

Council continues to collect personal information for lawful purposes as part of its proper functions under the *Local Government Act 1993* and other relevant legislation. This includes, for example, personal information concerning rates records and development applications. People have the right to access their personal information which is held by Council, and to request that their own personal information be appropriately amended.

Council's Privacy Management Plan provides more detail about the collection, use and disclosure of personal information by Council.

## Mayor and Councillor Expenses

### **Clauses 217(1)(a) and (a1) of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005* and Part E of the Councillor Induction and Professional Development Guidelines**

In accordance with section 252 of the *Local Government Act 1993*, Council will pay expenses incurred or to be incurred, and provide facilities for, the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors to enable them to discharge the functions of civic office. Council's Expenses and Facilities for the Mayor and Councillors Policy is available on Council's [Policies](#) webpage.

The total cost in 2019/20 for expenses and facilities paid or provided to the Mayor and Councillors was \$249,462, which is detailed further in the below table.

| Expense category                            | Total            |
|---|------------------|
| Accommodation                               | \$2,316          |
| Conferences/Seminars                        | \$2,592          |
| Office Equipment/Maintenance                | \$1,590          |
| Printing/Stationery                         | \$638            |
| Sundries                                    | \$91             |
| Sustenance/Entertainment                    | \$27             |
| Telecommunications                          | \$5,297          |
| Overseas Visits                             | -                |
| Travel within NSW                           | \$11,009         |
| Councillor/Mayoral Fees                     | \$225,902        |
| Care of child/family member                 | -                |
| Expenses of spouse, partner or other person | -                |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                | <b>\$249,462</b> |



There were no interstate\* or overseas trips required by Councillors. There were no expenses payable in accordance with the guidelines accumulated by any spouse, partner, or other person who accompanied a Councillor. There were no expenses accumulated for the provision of care for a child or immediate family member of a Councillor.

\* For the purposes of this report, 'interstate' travel does not include travel to the Australian Capital Territory.

## External Bodies Exercising Power

### **Clause 217(1)(a6) of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005***

No external bodies exercised functions delegated by Council during the financial year. Council did not hold any controlling interests in companies during the financial year.

## Bodies Council Participated In

### **Clause 217(1)(a8) of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005***

Council participated in the following bodies during 2019/20:

- Canberra Region Joint Organisation
- Illawarra Academy of Sport
- Illawarra Shoalhaven Joint Organisation (for its Regional Illegal Dumping program)
- Regional Development Australia Southern Inland
- Southern Phone\*
- Southern Tablelands Arts
- South West Sydney Primary Health Network
- Statewide Mutual
- Sydney Peri Urban Network.

\* At its Ordinary meeting of 13 November 2019, Council resolved to sell its Southern Phone shares to AGL Energy Ltd.

## Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan

### **Clause 217(1)(a9) of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005***

Council recognises the potential negative impact of harassment, bullying, victimisation and discrimination on all employees in the workplace. Council is dedicated to providing a workplace which is fair, safe, challenging and rewarding in all aspects of employment.

Council has adopted the following principles in accordance with its Equal Employment Opportunity General Manager Practice Note and Procedure:

- Adherence to transparent, merit-based recruitment processes;
- Taking all reasonable steps to provide a workplace free from harassment, bullying, victimisation and discrimination;

- Promoting dignity and respect through training and awareness to all employees about Councils commitment to its Code of Conduct and Statement of Ethics, including the approval of the Dignity and Respect General Manager Practice Note and Procedure; and
- Providing a confidential grievance process where employees are comfortable and confident to make enquiries and complaints about harassment, bullying, victimisation and discrimination in the workplace, in accordance with approved General Manager practice notes and procedures.

## Remuneration Package for the General Manager and Senior Staff

### Clauses 217(1)(b) and (c) of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005*

The current structure of Council consists of two Divisions with three senior staff positions, as follows:

- General Manager;
- Deputy General Manager Operations, Finance and Risk; and
- Deputy General Manager Corporate, Strategy and Development Services.

Each senior staff member is employed under the relevant standard contract which is performance based for a period of five years. The contract terms include salary, provision of motor vehicles and superannuation.

For further information, copies of the Standard Contract of Employment for General Managers of Local Councils in New South Wales and the Standard Contract of Employment for Senior Staff (other than General Managers) of Local Councils in New South Wales are available on the Office of Local Government's [Standard Contracts of Employment for General Managers and Senior Staff](#) webpage.

The below table sets out the total remuneration packages of the General Manager and Deputy General Managers as at 30 June 2020.

| Position                  | Total remuneration package as at 30 June 2020 |
|---------------------------|---|
| General Manager           | \$330,000                                     |
| Deputy General Manager(s) | \$543,570                                     |
| <b>TOTAL</b>              | <b>\$873,570</b>                              |

**Note:** The figures above reflect the total remuneration package as at 30 June 2020. As contract anniversary dates fall due in September for the General Manager and December for the Deputy General Managers, actual remuneration paid during the period 1 July 2019 – 30 June 2020 is lower than the reported amount.

## Environmental Upgrade Agreements Entered Into

### Section 54P(1) of the *Local Government Act 1993*

Council did not enter into any environmental upgrade agreements under the *Local Government Act 1993* during 2019/20.

## Companion Animal Management

### **Clause 217(1)(f) of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005* and Part 16 of the Guideline on the Exercise of Functions under the *Companion Animals Act 1998* (Companion Animals Guidelines)**

Council has undertaken a strategic education program in a staged process to ensure companion animal owners register their animals. This is predominately achieved through a system of issuing notices requiring companion animals to be registered under the *Companion Animals Act 1998*. Council has found this is an effective way to ensure owners accept responsibility when owning a companion animal and comply with the statutory provisions.

Council regularly advises customers to update the details of their companion animals as part of maintaining the Companion Animal Register.

Council updates and maintains information with respect to the Wingecarribee Animal Shelter and advertises all aspects of the Animal Shelter through external social media platforms such as Facebook. Animal Shelter staff also attend community events including pet shows, Dogs Day Out and other companion animal-related events. School groups and adults with disabilities also attend the Shelter to pat and learn about the animals.

### ***Clause 16.1.2(a) of the Companion Animals Guidelines: Lodgement of pound data collection returns with the Office of Local Government***

Details about the companion animals held by the Shelter during the 2019/20 Financial Year are included in the below table.

| Companion animals held by the Wingecarribee Animal Shelter | Cats | Dogs |
|--|------|------|
| <b>Impounded (seized and stray)</b>                        | 158  | 163  |
| <b>Surrendered</b>   | 22   | 21   |
| <b>Released to owner</b>                                   | 15   | 123  |
| <b>Sold</b>  | 102  | 43   |
| <b>Transferred to rescue organisation</b>                  | 0    | 10   |

A summary of the animals euthanised during 2019/20 is provided in the table below.

| Companion animals subject to euthanasia | Cats      | Dogs      |
|---|-----------|-----------|
| <b>Dangerous dogs</b>                   | N/A       | 1         |
| <b>Illness/injury</b>                   | 19        | 1         |
| <b>Unsuitable for rehoming</b>          | 3         | 14        |
| <b>Unable to be rehomed</b>             | 0         | 0         |
| <b>Feral/infant animal</b>              | 54        | 0         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                            | <b>76</b> | <b>16</b> |

**Clause 16.1.2(b) of the Companion Animals Guidelines: Lodgement of data about dog attacks with the Office of Local Government**

Council officers have recorded all reported dog attack incidents in the Shire on the NSW Companion Animals Register. The table below provides a summary of reported incidents.

| Status  | Incidents recorded* | Attacking dogs | Animal victims | Human victims | TOTAL      |
|---|---------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|------------|
| Reported (investigation not commenced as at 30 June 2020) | 7                   | 10             | 5              | 7             | 29         |
| Finalised   | 16                  | 18             | 10             | 11            | 55         |
| Under investigation                                       | 6                   | 8              | 16             | 1             | 31         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>29</b>           | <b>36</b>      | <b>31</b>      | <b>19</b>     | <b>115</b> |

\* A single incident may involve multiple attacking dogs and victims.

**Clause 16.1.2(c) of the Companion Animals Guidelines Amount of funding spent on companion animal management and activities and Clause 16.1.4 of the Companion Animals Guidelines**

The amount of funding spent on companion animal management and activities in 2019/20 is set out below. No money was paid from the Companion Animals Fund for managing and controlling companion animals in the Shire during the year.

| Description of expenses | Expenditure      |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| Animal shelter expenses | \$404,899        |
| Ranger expenses         | \$172,166        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>            | <b>\$577,065</b> |

**Clause 16.1.2(d) of the Companion Animals Guidelines: Community education programs and strategies in place to promote and assist the desexing of cats and dogs**

Council regularly educates members of the public on the benefits of desexing dogs and cats. All dogs and cats rehomed through the Animal Shelter are desexed at the time of release as a standard policy measure. Council is looking to further expand its educative programs to specifically include education and awareness days relating to the benefits of desexing animals.

**Clause 16.1.2(e) of the Companion Animals Guidelines: Strategies for complying with the requirement under section 64 of the Act to seek alternatives to euthanasia for unclaimed animals**

Council is considering new and innovative ways to work towards zero euthanasia rates by promoting responsible pet ownership and changing the way public perceive shelter animals. Council's Wingecarribee Animal Shelter – Alternatives to Euthanasia Policy provides strategic direction for Council's compliance with the requirements of the *Companion Animals Act 1998* in relation to the euthanasia of companion animals. A revised policy position, available online at Council's [Policies](#) webpage, was adopted by Council on 11 December 2019 following a period of public exhibition.

**Clause 16.1.2(f) of the Companion Animals Guidelines:** Off leash areas provided in the Wingecarribee Shire local government area

The Wingecarribee Shire has four off leash parks:

- Centennial Park, Centennial Road Bowral (fenced);
- Jordan's Crossing, Bindar Crescent Bundanoon (unfenced);
- Alexandra Square off leash area, Edward Street Mittagong (fenced); and
- Seymour Park, Spencer Street Moss Vale (fenced).

Further information about off leash areas in the Wingecarribee Shire is available on Council's [Leash-Free Areas in the Wingecarribee Shire](#) webpage.

## Swimming Pool Inspections Program

### Section 22F of the *Swimming Pools Act 1992* and clause 23 of the *Swimming Pools Regulation 2018*

During 2019/20 the following inspections of private swimming pools were undertaken under Division 5 of Part 2 of the *Swimming Pools Act 1992*:

| Type of inspection   | Number    |
|--|-----------|
| Tourist and visitor accommodation  | 12        |
| Premises with more than two dwellings  | 0         |
| Inspections that resulted in issue of a certificate of compliance under section 22D of the <i>Swimming Pools Act 1992</i>          | 35        |
| Inspections that resulted in issue of a certificate of non-compliance under clause 21 of the <i>Swimming Pools Regulation 2018</i> | 14        |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>61</b> |


## Status of Voluntary Planning Agreements

### Section 7.5(5) of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*

If Council has entered into one or more voluntary planning agreements (VPAs) and while any such agreement remains in force, Council must include in its annual report particulars of compliance with and the effect of the VPAs during the reporting period to which the report relates. The below table provides this information.

| Description of VPA | Description of Works                | Address                | Party to VPA             | Status | Agreement Date    |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|--------|-------------------|
| Renwick VPA        | Community Centre and External Works | Renwick Drive, Renwick | Landcom                  | Active | 11 September 2008 |
| Douglas Road VPA   | Infrastructure provision            | Douglas Road Moss Vale | Maloney Nominees Pty Ltd | Active | 23 March 2010     |





| Description of VPA | Description of Works                                | Address                | Party to VPA         | Status | Agreement Date  |
|--------------------|---|------------------------|----------------------|--------|-----------------|
| Frensham Pool      | Intersection works and pool works                   | Range Road Mittagong   | Winifred West School | Active | 7 December 2012 |
| Nattai Ponds VPA   | Dedicating land Community Facilities and road works | Isedale Road Mittagong | Feldkirchen Pty Ltd  | Active | 11 April 2013   |



## Annexures

Council's Audited Financial Statements are available online at [Annual Reports](#).