



Bi-Annual Delivery Program 2017-2021 Progress Report

1 July 2019 to 31 December 2019



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Introduction

This Bi-Annual Delivery Program Progress Report is for the period 1 July 2019 to 31 December 2019. It reports Wingecarribee Shire Council's progress towards achieving the 100 objectives of the Delivery Program 2017-2021.

At the end of December 2019, of the 100 objectives 100 were 'on track', none were 'delayed', none were classified as 'needs attention', none were 'on hold', none were considered 'critical'. Each objective has been assigned a traffic light to signify overall progress.

-  On track (green)
-  Needs attention (amber)
-  Critical (red)
-  On hold (grey)
-  Delayed (purple)

Integrated Planning and Reporting

Under section 404(5) of the *Local Government Act 1993* and the NSW Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework, Council requires a report on progress towards achieving its Delivery Program every six months. The [Delivery Program 2017-2021](#) outlines the activities Council will undertake to achieve the objectives established in the Community Strategic Plan, *Wingecarribee 2031* within the resources available under the Resourcing Strategy. The diagram below provides an overview of Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework.



Leadership

Wingecarribee 2031 outlines the following **Leadership** Community Goals:

- 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

The **Delivery Program 2017-2021** includes 23 four year actions to assist in the achievement of the **Leadership** strategies. The progress for these four year actions for the July to December 2019 reporting period is outlined below.

DP01 Develop and implement an elected-member professional development program

Council staff are continuing to plan for the development and delivery of induction training and professional development for Councillors following the 2020 local government elections.

During the reporting period, surveys were designed and undertaken to seek information from potential candidates and former councillors in the lead-up to the election which will guide the preparation of induction programs for the remainder of 2019/20.

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

Council continues to deliver on the Integrated Planning and Reporting and Governance outcomes.

Work has commenced on the annual review of Council's Delivery Program and the development of the Operational Plan and Budget for 2020/21. Reporting on the 2018/19 Operational Plan was completed with the Annual Report being published in November.

The NSW Electoral Commission was contracted to administer Council's local government election in 2020 in accordance with a Council resolution from the ordinary meeting of 25 September 2019.

Two internal audits from the approved audit program for 2019/20 were undertaken in the reporting period, in procurement and development assessment. These audits reviewed the adequacy and effectiveness of Council's policies, guidelines, systems, processes and practices relating to these functions. Internal controls were also reviewed to assess their effectiveness in reducing the potential for error or fraud and corruption.

Council continues to deal with requests from the public to access Council information, with 12 formal access applications received during the reporting period and 16 finalised within statutory time frames. In addition, a total of 427 applications for access to information were handled under either the mandatory proactive release or informal access provisions of the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*.

DP03 Improve community understanding and awareness of Council decisions

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

Council produced and distributed the September and December 2019 issues of Wingecarribee Today to more than 27,500 properties across the Shire. Regular electronic newsletters were also issued to interested community members and groups regarding Council's Arts and Culture, Community Engagement and Environment and Sustainability initiatives.

DP04 Develop and maintain an engaged and safe workforce

Work health and safety procedures continue to be reviewed. Resources have been allocated to ensure that this occurs in a timely manner.

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

Council continues to monitor work health and safety (WHS), providing advice to staff and management on Safe Systems of Work requirements and undertaking and supporting investigations of incidents when they occur while identifying changes to Safe Systems of Work and Safe Work Method Statements where required.

Training of staff in WHS related matters remains a high priority.

DP06 Develop and Maintain Council's Organisational Development Programs

Council has completed the introduction and use of the Cornerstone Recruitment module. This system was developed to meet and support Council's ongoing recruitment processes in an electronic environment replacing the previous paper based system.

Planning has also commenced for the development of the Cornerstone Performance Management module. The performance management system includes the development of specific position-based key performance indicators aligned to Council's Operational Plan and Branch Business Plans. The system also includes the development and implementation of competency-based skill elements which will influence training calendars and map overall staff performance.

Recruitment remains a priority. Whilst turnover has reduced there is a nationwide shortage of qualified Planning, Accredited Certifier, Engineering, Accounting and Human Resources staff with the skills and knowledge of local government required by Council. To meet the skills gap Council has engaged cadet engineers, trainee accredited certifiers, apprentices and trainees. In addition, to meet short term business needs a pool of casual on call business support officers, plant operators and labourers has been established to provide staff at short notice.

Skills based training continues to be provided for staff to maintain accreditation in work related activities such as planning and certification, confined spaces, first aid and working at heights along with other job related refresher courses.

In the reporting period all staff have received mental health awareness training with a number of staff

completing an in-depth two day course to qualify as mental health first aiders.

Senior staff of Council have undertaken a review of Council's Risk Profiles which has been presented to the Audit, Risk and Improvement Advisory Committee.

Business Continuity mock exercises have been held to test the adopted Business Continuity Plan (BCP). The BCP has also been the subject of an ongoing review to assess the effectiveness of the sub plans within the BCP.

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 other 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.



The 2018/19 Financial Statements and Auditors Reports were presented to Council on 13 November 2019. Council's auditor, the NSW Audit Office, issued an unmodified audit opinion on Council's accounts, stating that Council's financial records were fairly and appropriately presented. All other statutory financial reports were completed and submitted within required timeframes.

The September review of the 2019/20 Budget was presented to the Finance Committee on 20 November 2019. The result presented was a projected surplus of \$22,071 which was transferred to the Capital Projects Reserve for consideration as part of the 2020/21 Budget.

Preparation of the 2020/21 Annual Budget and Long Term Financial Plan has commenced and will be presented to Council in accordance with agreed timeframes and in line with legislative requirements.

Council continues to support its local farming community through a rate deferral scheme for farmland rated properties which are affected by current drought conditions. This scheme has resulted in \$195,200 in rate deferrals and interest waived of \$11,800 since its approval in August 2018.

Residents across the Shire continue to take advantage of receiving their rates and water notices electronically. There are currently 1,031 customers registered to receive their rate notices through BPAY View and 1,117 customers registered for eBilling.

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



Council continues to complete maintenance schedules in line with manufacturer specifications, ensuring the safety and reliability of Council's plant and fleet.

In line with Council's National Heavy Vehicle Legislation responsibilities, Council has installed

weighing scales into all trucks over 8t GVM (22 trucks) during the second quarter of the 2019/20 financial year. This will eliminate potential load breaches in relation to the transportation of material in Council trucks.

Council's Plant Replacement Program is on track to be delivered within budget and agreed timeframes and in line with operational specifications.

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 compliance with legislative requirements.

The management of Council's property portfolio also includes the timely reporting to Council on property matters for formal approval. During the first half of the 2019/20 financial year this included the formal approval of the lease of the Aboriginal Community Cultural Centre to the Illawarra Aboriginal Land Council and amendments to the lease to the Southern Highlands Botanical Gardens. Council also received formal notification from the Office of Local Government that the proposed leases to the Southern Highlands Golf Club and Southern Highlands Bridge Club were approved by the Minister for Local Government.

Council continues to work towards compliance with the *Crown Land Management Act 2016*. Council received formal confirmation from the Office of Local Government in November 2019 that its initial categorisation of Crown Land had been approved in full. Council will now commence the development of Plans of Management for those reserves determined high priority and where funding is available.

With respect to Council's land disposal program, the tender results for the sale of 10 Frankland Street were presented to Council in November 2019. Council formally resolved to accept the tender submission from Willow Properties and Paloma Blanca for Lots 2 and 3 Frankland Street with contracts exchanged in December 2019.

Council has also sold one of the five subdivided lots at Anembo Street Moss Vale which settled in December 2019.

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*, Regulations and Office of Local Government Tendering Guidelines. Tenders are reported to Council in a timely manner and the recent introduction of Council's revised Procurement Policy and Guidelines continues to see improvement in procurement practices.

During the first half of the 2019/20 financial year, Council's procurement practices were audited in line with the internal audit schedule approved by the Audit, Risk and Improvement Advisory Committee. The outcome of the audit was overall positive, with a number of areas identified as best practice. There were nine findings from the audit with the majority ranked low or medium risk. A number of these findings were addressed immediately.

DP12 Develop and implement enhanced asset management practices

Council's asset management practices were reviewed during the reporting period as part of the annual financial reporting audit. Auditors assessed how assets are accounted for and what systems and processes are in place. The provision of Asset Management Plans was also reviewed as part of the audit. Council's asset management practices were considered consistent with best practice.

A condition and asset data collection survey of Council's road network was completed and the data is being validated.

Asset data has been updated in the 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.

DP13 Develop and implement Business Transformation Program

Following an open tender process, Council has resolved to undertake direct negotiations in relation to the implementation of an updated Electronic Document Record Management System and Customer Relationship Management and Workflow Management System. These systems will be introduced in 2020.

Staff have undertaken a comprehensive review of all Development Engineering Design Specifications which has resulted in updating the content and drawings to current standards. As part of the update process, Council invited local engineering operators to review the documents.

In relation to development application determinations, Council has moved on to further categories of developments to ensure delays in determinations are minimised. This has followed on from the successful program of dealing with residential dwelling house applications in new release areas which has seen determination times drop to an average of 12 days. The priority area now is economic development-based applications for new development and change of use in existing premises.

DP14 Enhance customer interaction with Council

Continued development of automated processes in the Contact Centre, Front Counter, Cashier and Corporate areas is enhancing how customers interact with Council. The complete review of the Corporate Website and revision of scripting in the Contact Centre ensures that Council remains on track with how customers interact with Council.

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

Council has now completed a number of technology projects over the reporting period. These projects include the following:

- Implementation of new, high availability firewall configuration with upgraded internet connectivity. This will improve the services offered internally and externally by Council.
- Commissioned and installed new Data Centre infrastructure. This will see an increase of

speed and reliability. In addition to this, it has reduced the amount of power consumption needed to operate.

- Roll out of a new, cloud-based phone and collaboration system to the organisation. This system has improved Council's internal communication and offers a fully cloud-based system to the organisation.
- A new contact system, also cloud based, was released to the organisation. This system allows for greater reporting and visibility of Council's customer service channels. In addition the system will improve disaster recovery options for Council.

Over the next six months Council will continue to implement its five year Information and Communication Technology Strategic Plan. In addition Council will continue to upgrade all equipment in line with its life cycle management policy and look for innovative ways to improve the technology offering to Council and the community.

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



Council continues to investigate and implement new processes to ensure a faster delivery of service to the community.

Council is currently in the final stages of a procurement process which will see the introduction of a new Customer Relationship Management System, Electronic Document Records Management System and a new customer focused website. It is expected that the procurement process will be completed by March 2020.

Council will continue to review and look for ways to improve its applications to better serve the community and Council.

DP17 Ensure council services are delivered efficiently and effectively



The service delivery review program remains ongoing and enables Council to identify service delivery improvements. During the reporting period, Council considered the service delivery review of Children's Services and resolved to continue in direct service delivery for both Family Day Care and Wingecarribee Out of School Hours Care for a period of three years, with a further service delivery review to be conducted after two years.

The service delivery review of Waste Management was also concluded with the recommendations of the review to be considered in the development of Council's Waste Strategy. The service delivery review of Community Wellbeing is still in progress while the review for Aquatics Services is on hold pending the capture of additional data.

The 2019 Community Satisfaction Survey was undertaken and the results published on Council's website during the reporting period.

DP18 Identify opportunities for regional collaboration



Council continues to participate in Canberra Region Joint Organisation meetings including the Board Meeting, General Manager Advisory Committee Meetings and various Professional Working Groups.

DP19 Provide quality, timely and accessible information to the community

Council continues to provide quality, timely and accessible information to the community. News items continue to be proactively sought from throughout the organisation and via a range of mediums. These items are promptly issued via a range of communications channels including media releases, quarterly publications of Wingecarribee Today, radio and television interviews, staff newsletters, Council's online digital Media Centre and Council's Facebook and Twitter social media sites. These sites are continually monitored by staff with feedback provided as soon as possible.

During the reporting period, 88 media releases were issued and 218 posts issued on Facebook with an average reach of 2,233. This led to 3,344 link clicks on Facebook and 1,744 'shares' and resulted in 445 new followers. For the same period 88 tweets were issued resulting in 36 new Twitter followers.

DP20 Implement an effective Community Engagement Framework

Consultation activities have mainly focussed on targeted communication with stakeholders and the public exhibition of policies, leases, licence agreements, designs or plans.

Council's Community Engagement Strategy was reviewed and updated in the second half of 2019. The publicly exhibited version included a Community Participation Plan for land use planning matters as required by a recent amendment to the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. Submissions received during public exhibition of the document guided additional improvements which further clarified Council's approach. The Community Engagement Strategy was adopted by Council on 11 December 2019.

Of particular interest to the community was the first stage of consultation associated with the preparation of local character statements. This commenced with a photo competition focussed on capturing the unique people, places, landscape and buildings in the Shire. Entrants added markers, comments and photos to an online mapping tool.

Local government elections are scheduled for September 2020. Community and councillor surveys were conducted in October to obtain information about the perception or experience of councillor roles, the barriers candidates face and ways Council could respond to these. Responses will be used to guide how pre-selection sessions are organised and information is managed.

With a significant increase in construction projects occurring in 2020, there has been a focus on ensuring local stakeholders are notified and kept informed about works which may impact on their daily activities.

DP21 Support Council committees and working groups

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

A casual vacancy for a community representative on the Community Development Advisory Committee was filled during the reporting period, while Council also resolved to increase the number of community representatives on the Heritage Advisory Committee from three to four and appointed two new community members to that Committee.

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

Council has become a supporter of the establishment of the Southern Highlands Key Stakeholders Group with the goal of identifying and building on key projects around jobs growth through education and training. Monthly meetings have occurred in this reporting period.

DP23 Develop partnerships and networking with community, government and business

Council staff continue working with community, government and business sectors to evaluate new opportunities and support existing initiatives.

Council recently entered into a contract 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, sharing resources and information and promoting the local business community. It also provides a 'Concierge' service for businesses to cut through the red tape for retail start-ups.

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; organising buses for directly impacted residents to inspect fire-affected Balmoral and Buxton; the distribution by staff on 24 and 27 December 2019 at the Balmoral Village Rural Fire Service shed of cash cards to fire-affected residents; and supporting the work of the Emergency Operations Centre.

People

Wingecarribee 2031 outlines the following **People** Community Goals

- 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

The **Delivery Program 2017-2021** includes 19 four year actions to assist in the achievement of the **People** strategies. The progress for these four year actions for the July to December 2019 reporting period is outlined below.

DP24 Advocate for improved health services in the Shire



Wingecarribee Local Health Council has commenced meeting with a broad cross section of local health providers and community members supported by the South West Primary Health Network. Council is represented on the Local Health Council by the Coordinator Community Development. The Local Health Council guides, informs and participates in the activities that contribute to improved health and service outcomes for the Wingecarribee Shire community.

DP25 Partner with community based organisations in provision of services



Council has partnered with the Heart Foundation and Volunteering Wingecarribee (VolWing) to commence walking groups in the local area. The activity is reliant on VolWing finding suitable volunteers to lead the groups in their local area.

Council, Red Cross and Oz Harvest have partnered to provide the Dhungung (Food) Share program at the Aboriginal Community Cultural Centre for this period. The program is well supported by other community organisations who attend on a regular basis to improve access to information and support services. The year ended with a Christmas celebration where all community members and services were in attendance.

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



A Mental Health Symposium held at Warwick Farm highlighted the available services being provided by South West Sydney Primary Health Network. Council has contributed to co-design processes that have informed the funded models of service delivery in the local area. Organisations are able to tender for funding through this model. A number of targeted programs are being delivered in the Wingecarribee Shire Local Government Area.

A new service with Wingecarribee Shire and Wollondilly Shire Councils as partners along with Tharawal in an Aboriginal Youth Suicide and After Care Project has commenced. 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.

DP27 Provide access to sport, recreation and leisure services



The 2019/20 Swimming Season commenced on Saturday 12 October 2019 with the opening of Mittagong Swimming Centre. Unfortunately, the Centre had to close on 22 October due to plant failure; however, it was reopened again on Saturday 14 December 2019. Bowral Swimming Centre opened earlier than originally scheduled on 31 October 2019 due to the closure of Mittagong Swimming Centre. Bundanoon Swimming Centre opened for the season on Saturday 16 November 2019.

Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre received 42,525 visits in the second quarter to 10 December 2019, compared to 43,602 the previous year to 10 December 2018.

All sports fields and open space areas have continued to be maintained to agreed service standards, though mowing in high fire danger areas was delayed due to fire danger periods. Drought conditions and water restrictions have proved challenging with watering ovals and gardens.

During the reporting period capital renewal works included upgrades to Leighton Gardens and Winifred West amenities buildings, upgrades to Burrawang sports ground club house and amenities and the installation of LED lighting at Mittagong Oval.

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



The Wingecarribee Community Safety Committee met in November with the August meeting being cancelled due to the absence of key members. The Committee discussed topics raised by members and covered in the Community Strategic Plan as well as focusing on local crime statistics provided by Local Area Command.

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



The Local Emergency Management Committee has continued to work on reviewing Consequence Management Guides, the Emergency Risk Management Plan for the Shire and the Wingecarribee Emergency Management Plan (EMPLAN).

The review of the EMPLAN scheduled for 2019 resulted in the addition of a Snow Plan but remained otherwise unchanged. It will be submitted to the Regional Emergency Management Committee meeting to be held in February 2020 for endorsement.

Substantial work was completed on an update to the Emergency Risk Management Plan, with an added focus on those Council assets that are identified as being critical to response efforts during an emergency event. There is a significant review planned for 2020 in collaboration with Council asset owners to update emergency procedures and look at mitigation strategies for potential emergency events in the future.

DP30 Implement public health and safety regulatory programs



Council has continued to implement public health and safety regulatory programs throughout the reporting period. Council has conducted in excess of 160 inspections relating to food premises

throughout the Shire and staff continue to educate the community on food safety awareness including the Food Authority's 'Scores on Doors' program. Proactive food safety promotional material was recently circulated to all registered food premises throughout the Shire to aid efforts in increasing public awareness.

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



The Australian Early Development Census data was released during this period. This information is provided every three years. The data assesses every kindergarten student across five domains - Social, Physical, Emotional, Language and Communication. The results indicate if a child is on track, vulnerable or at risk. This information is broken down for each town and village area which enables it to be mapped over the different periods. The data informs both Council and local service providers about priority areas for the delivery of targeted intervention strategies for children aged 0-5.

Recent data has also been provided by the NSW Local Health District for South West Sydney and by Regional Development Australia - Southern Inland. This enables Council to advocate to funding bodies around the health needs identified through the data.

DP32 Provide children services to support family life



At its meeting on 27 November, Council resolved to maintain the current Child Care Services (Family Day Care and Wingecarribee Out of School Hours Care) provided to the community for three years, demonstrating a commitment to working families and those raising children in the Shire.

DP33 Support agencies to implement community programs and initiatives



Council worked with a group of agencies to implement a Sleep Out for Homelessness Week in August, however the event was cancelled. The group involved merged with the Emergency Services Network and are now involved in developing a Homelessness Information Resource with the funds provided.

During the reporting period, Wingecarribee Club Grants provided over \$50,000 to community organisations to support local initiatives, with these 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.

DP34 Provide companion animal services



Council has continued to provide companion animal services to the residents of the Shire through the successful operation of the Animal Shelter and the provision of ranger services.

The Animal Shelter receives excellent community support for its work, reflecting the dedication of Council staff to providing a high quality of care to the lost, stray and unwanted animals of the Shire. Council staff continue to work alongside the volunteer organisation Friends of Wingecarribee Animal Shelter on fundraising and community engagement.

Council continues to respond to community concerns about off leash dogs by increasing ranger patrols of hotspot areas. Council also investigates dog attacks and issues fines and control orders where appropriate.

As part of Council's commitment to minimise euthanasia of impounded animals, Council adopted the

DP35 Support initiatives which enhance opportunities for learning and skill development



Council staff recently joined key business sector representatives from the region along with staff from TAFE NSW and the University of Wollongong to discuss issues and opportunities for both campuses. The newly formed Southern Highlands Key Stakeholders Group has established an Education and Training Sector Group to develop initiatives around fulfilling demand for courses and skill shortages.

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



The number of library loans remained constant over the reporting period when compared to previous reports. The use of e-resources continues to grow with the library allocating more resources to these popular platforms. It is expected that loans will be affected by the temporary closure of both Mittagong and Moss Vale Library branches for renovation projects in the 2019-2020 reporting period.

Attendance at children's programs has slightly reduced but has performed above expectations due to the impact of temporary Branch Library closures for upgrades. Attendance at the many children's programs and events including Higher School Certificate study sessions, the Children's Christmas Program, Bookweek and October School Holiday program remains strong with positive community feedback. Local studies visits and enquiries continue to grow and is a result of increased interest in the collection and successful networking and promotion by the Library.

The planned Mittagong Branch roof upgrade was completed in five weeks over September and October 2019. Work included the removal and replacement of the roof, completion of interior painting and replacement of the weathered front door. The Moss Vale Library has temporarily closed for approximately 12 months for the Moss Vale Civic Centre Repair and Refurbishment Project. While the majority of the Moss Vale collection is in storage many of the materials are still available to customers from the Bowral Library Stack. The Mobile Library will continue to visit Leighton Gardens every Friday between 10am and 4pm while the upgrade is being completed.

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



Council delivered Accessible Documents Training to key staff involved in the publication and provision of information to the community. This training provided strategies and tools to ensure that all Council information is presented in a way that is accessible to all members of our community.

Council assisted in the organisation of a consultation on the provision of After Hours General Practice services in the Wingecarribee Shire. NSW Health is encouraging community members to access afterhours general practitioner services rather than presenting at emergency departments as an improved recovery framework based on a cost efficiency model.

Funding received by Council from NSW State Government - Youth Opportunities will see opportunities for young people to be involved in designing a series of skill-building workshops and engaging in youth music performances that will build up to a music festival to celebrate the youth in our community. The project is designed to be led by young people for young people.

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



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 Wingecarribee Seniors Directory is being updated and will be ready for distribution during the Seniors Festival in February 2020.

DP39 Support intergenerational programs and projects



A National Grandparents Day event took place on 24 October and 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 together. Supported by funds from the State Government and in partnership with different Council departments and the Country Women's Association Moss Vale Evening Branch, the event attracted a large attendance of all ages.

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



Mental Health Month, Community Services Expo, Grandparents Day, NAIDOC Week, the Art Trail, International Day of People with Disability and Local Government Week were all held during the reporting period.

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



In July 2019, NAIDOC week was celebrated locally in a special way by bringing together Indigenous language poetry and threatened species conservation. First Nations students' poems were published on a grand scale on bus backs 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, with Wingecarribee Shire Council and Red Room Poetry, presented the poetic and environmental learning project for young First Nations students on Gundungurra Country earlier in this Year of Indigenous Languages. The week also provided an 'On Country' experience where the community could come and explore, listen and learn about Gundungurra Country and Aboriginal cultural traditions.

Gundungurra Elder Aunty Sharyn Halls welcomed all to the traditional lands of the Gundungurra people along with a smoking ceremony lead by traditional Lore men. Activities included a history walk of the Berrima river, storytelling, bush tucker and medicine, identifying artefacts and grinding grooves, Aboriginal cultural burning and the Glossies in the Mist conservation workshop.

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



During this period the 2019 Art Trail was designed, implemented and evaluated with over 70 artists participating across 50 studios. A new Southern Highlands ARTS FILE website was launched at the Art Trail, giving an opportunity for communication, partnerships, and easy access to events.

Council staff attended a Planning Workshop at Southern Tablelands Arts to plan for better collaboration and delivery of arts and culture across the region in 2020.

Plans are underway to support the redevelopment of the Civic Centre by creating portraits in spaces that will provide life to dead spaces.




Places

Wingecarribee 2031 outlines the following **Places** Community Goals

- 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

The **Delivery Program 2017-2021** includes 23 four year actions to assist in the achievement of the **Places** strategies. The progress for these four year actions for the July to December 2019 reporting period is outlined below.

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



Council has developed and submitted a regional transport project list, together with comprehensive information, to the Joint Organisation Infrastructure Working Group in Canberra where a joint submission to the NSW Government was prepared which included Council's major regional transport priorities. The regional priorities and major transport projects were presented to Ministers within the NSW Government for review. The South East Tablelands - Future Transport Regional Transport Plan is currently being developed by Transport for NSW.

Council staff have commenced drafting an Integrated Transport Strategy and 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 to obtain more current data to inform transport utilisation rates. This data, coupled with the Traffic Modelling, allows Council to plan for the required infrastructure linkages between public transport hubs. Currently, staff are planning improvements to infrastructure linking and surrounding transport hubs, such as train stations, within the Shire.

The development of the Recreational Trails strategy will also help inform active transport links between hubs. Appropriate resources have been tasked to complete the strategy.

DP45 Promote public transport options and linkages across the Shire



Council actively supports improvements and utilisation of available public transport options through the provision of infrastructure services near or around public transport hubs, promotion through transport safety programs and education programs, via the Traffic Committee and through advertising and public awareness campaigns.

Council pursues opportunities during planning and infrastructure delivery phases to link transport networks including cycle ways, pedestrian footpaths, roads, railway services, and bus and taxi services. Council works closely with other government departments to align to developing trends and advancements in transport technology and infrastructure.

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



The Bicycle Strategy Stage 3 is being developed and will provide a plan for improved connectivity for bicycle and recreational walking facilities throughout the shire.

Council staff continue to seek grant funding opportunities to fast track the expansion of the footpath and cycle way network. Generally, grants only offer 50 per cent funding and Council will need to source the matching funds if grants are successful.

DP47 Partner with agencies to advocate for improved transport services



Council staff work closely with other levels of government, including Roads and Maritime Services, Sydney Trains, Transport for NSW, Department of Primary Industries, the Environmental Protection Authority and Infrastructure NSW, to plan and provide necessary infrastructure for current and future needs.

Numerous grants have been applied for through the following schemes: Fixing Country Roads, Fixing Local Roads and Black Spot Program. Council staff have engaged with key agencies to ensure that applications are robust and provide the best opportunity for success.

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



Rigorous assessment of development applications has continued with reporting improvements an ongoing feature of team development.

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



Council commenced work on a Local Character Study, with the launch of a photo competition aimed at capturing the character of the Southern Highlands. The consultation will result in Local Character Statements for each of the towns and villages, and supporting development controls aimed at protecting the character of the Wingecarribee Local Government Area.

The Local Character Statements will also be incorporated into the Local Strategic Planning Statement which will guide how the Shire will grow over the next 20 years.

DP50 Implement initiatives that promote and protect cultural heritage



The 2019/20 heritage assistance grants scheme received four applications that were successful, with all works anticipated to be completed by the end of the financial year.

Council staff are also working on a heritage education package, which aims to provide advice and assistance to owners of heritage items, developers and consultants, the broader community and Council assessment staff.

Council staff are also working on a review of Schedule 5 of the Wingecarribee Local Environmental Plan (WLEP) as well as considering a number of new heritage items to be incorporated into the WLEP.

DP51 Implement a program of towns and village centre improvements



Council has engaged a consultant to develop the Bowral Central Business District (CBD) Master Plan. The consultant has developed a community consultation process which Council staff are currently reviewing. Consultation is planned to commence early in 2020.

Council is currently undertaking a range of works to maintain existing town CBDs and village precincts to manage risks within budget limitations. Works undertaken during the reporting period include Christmas tree placements in Bowral and Mittagong and the completion of street defect repairs in Bowral, Mittagong and Berrima streets.

DP52 Deliver the Urban Street Tree Implementation Plan



Council has completed the following street tree planting in line with the outcomes and objectives detailed in the Street Tree Implementation Plan and Street Tree Master Plan for the 2019-20 growing season:

- Etheridge Street, Mittagong was planted with Saw Tooth Oak Trees
- The street tree planting project for Berrima Road was completed with Pin Oaks and Silver Banksia
- Pin Oaks were planted in Braemar
- Brush Box were planted in Monterey Avenue and Albany Street, Moss Vale

The following street tree planning projects remain ongoing:

- Victor Crescent, Moss Vale was scoped and programmed for planting in March 2020 with Tulip Trees
- Planting was scoped and programmed for Roche Close, Moss Vale in March 2020 with Chinese Elms
- Narellan Road, Moss Vale was planted with various trees in between October and November 2019, with the planting project to be completed in March 2020

DP53 Provide and maintain high quality community facilities across the Shire



Council staff are continuing to develop strategies and collect data for community and public facilities across the Shire. Information and data are fed into Council's Conquest Asset System which provides information for prioritisation and verification for services delivered and the necessary work required to ensure ongoing quality service is provided for the community.

Council continues to manage community facilities in partnership with licensees and community groups.

Masterplans for the Bong Bong Common and Berrima Marketplace have been completed.

DP54 Undertake the redevelopment of Bowral Memorial Hall



Council has completed an application for funding for the Bowral Memorial Hall Redevelopment project in the Commonwealth Government's Building Better Regions Fund - Infrastructure Projects Stream - Round 4 - Drought Support. Applications closed on 19 December 2019 and results are expected to be announced in May 2020.

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



The Disability Inclusion Action Plan is currently being reviewed as part of Council's planning and reporting requirements.

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

DP56 Ensure planning controls allow for diversity of housing choice



A draft Local Housing Strategy was reported to Council for public exhibition in December 2019. The draft Strategy sought to increase the diversity of housing types within the Shire to ensure that our housing stock was reflective of the needs of our community. The draft Strategy was deferred by Council and will be reported back to Council in early 2020 for public exhibition.

Council is currently working on detailed character and design controls to ensure that medium density development is appropriately located and is reflective of community expectations.

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



Council is undertaking programmed and reactive maintenance on its road networks.

Council is partnering with the Roads and Maritime Services, other State Government authorities and community groups and is actively involved in the Canberra Region Joint Organisation and its Infrastructure Working Group to ensure the delivery of road upgrades, renewals and maintenance.

Council staff continue to seek grant funding opportunities to provide improved service delivery for the community.

Works undertaken include:

- Shire-wide preparation works and commencement of the Road Resealing Program;
- Old Hume Highway, Berrima reconstruction;
- Gravel resheeting at Richard Lane, Joadja and Belanglo Road, Belanglo;
- Kirkham Road, Bowral utility adjustments;
- Road and drainage improvements at Queen Street and Banksia Street intersection; and
- Meryla Road, Meryla bridge sidetrack works.

Ongoing design work conducted in-house and through consultancy services continues to deliver improved road quality and consistency throughout the Shire. Council is also working with agencies to develop and implement road safety initiatives in conjunction with Roads and Maritime Services.



DP58 Implement a long term solution for the use and disposal of roadside spoil



Council has identified a site at Drapers Road which is proposed for processing Excavated Public Road material.

Progress on this facility is as follows:

- Concept plan completed
- Development Application lodgement to proceed facilitating the site being used as a processing site for table drain clearing material, subject to Council gaining an environmental processing licence
- A depot concept plan and cost estimate has been developed for consideration in the forward budget estimates.

A second site has been identified at an abandoned quarry. A remediation plan exists for the quarry. Council officers are in discussion with NSW Crown Lands on amendments to the remediation design. If and when approved this will provide an ideal site to deposit roadside reuse material.

DP59 Review and implement Water Master Plan



Council has completed the review of the Water Master Plan. The plan identifies capital and operational projects to improve the efficiency of the water supply network. Priority projects have been included in the forward capital works program.

Water quality modelling has commenced using the updated and bulk calibrated water supply model. Modelling will determine water age within the network, which has a correlation to water quality. Operational and capital works projects will be investigated to overcome any water age issues.

The Wingecarribee and Bundanoon Water Treatment Plant process improvement options assessment is progressing and will review the robustness of each treatment facility. Options for mitigating any process risks will be determined and costed.

A Drought Management Plan is currently being reviewed by Council staff and will be modified to become a Water and Sewerage Emergency Response Plan which will consider additional issues such as fire and flood.

The Medway Package Water Treatment Plant feasibility study has commenced and aims to assess the ability for a package treatment facility to be obtained to improve climate change resilience.

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 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.

Council lodged funding applications through the Safe and Secure Water Program for funding from the State Government for the detailed design and construction of the plants. Unfortunately, Council was unsuccessful with the grant application for Moss Vale STP; however, it was successful in obtaining \$6.6M towards the upgrade of Bowral STP.



Quotations for the detailed design of the Bowral STP are being sought. The detailed design phase of the Bowral STP is expected to take approximately nine months.

Quotations for the detailed design for the Mittagong STP and Moss Vale STP will be sought subsequent to the award of the Bowral STP detailed design engagement.

Council continues to address network risk, improved service delivery and lowering lifecycle costs and operational costs. Council is also planning and delivering an entirely new Wide Area Network telecommunications system which will provide enhanced speed, real time data and allow automation to be implemented at a level never before possible for critical water and sewer infrastructure.

DP61 Improve stormwater management across the Shire



Council staff are regularly reviewing and implementing floodplain management strategies, which guide and inform Council's floodplain management projects.

Council is delivering two floodplain management projects this financial year:

- Review of Whites Creek Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan
- Nattai Ponds Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan.

Council was successful in obtaining a \$130,000 grant for the review of the Wingecarribee River Flood Study.

Strategies also drive Council's stormwater management plans, including the stormwater drainage works undertaken in accordance with the design and capital works program.

Council is undertaking programmed and reactive maintenance on stormwater drainage networks.

DP62 Undertake drinking water quality management



As per previous reporting periods, 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 our water supplies as a requirement of ongoing Drinking Water Management Systems and operational plans to meet ADWG.

Water availability, customer demand and correct water use have remained a key focus due to long periods of drought being experienced in NSW. New management protocols and increased communication (for example, about water restrictions) have been implemented to minimise both water quality and quantity impacts within the community.

DP63 Ensure the integrity of water and sewer infrastructure



Council continues to deliver both planned and reactive maintenance of its water and sewer infrastructure. The ongoing capital and operational investment to provide the required resources, appropriate skill base and best practice systems of work will optimise efficiency and maintain customer service standards.

Key programs of note that occurred in this period are as follows:

- Calibration of water flow meters for both Sewage Treatment and Water Treatment Plants;



- Preventive planned maintenance specification on electrical assets was completed;
- Bush fire inspection of electrical assets conducted before summer risks and demand;
- The backflow and trade waste management processes that were implemented on Council's Property and Rating system in the last period have continued to be success and have improved both customer management and business efficiency. There are currently approximately 360 approved trade waste businesses on Council's Property and Rating system;
- The scoping of the new water distribution systems is now underway to replace the current filling station set up, with the project for eight stations due to be completed in 2020;
- Council's standard operational practices and network security has been impacted significantly in the last couple of months due to fire fighting water demand in the north and south of the Shire;
- The Clear Scada Telemetry Project upgrade is currently in progress by Safegroup. The Asset Electrical Panel Design Program has been completed and an electrical panel commissioning tender is being advertised early in next reporting period;
- 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 Dam still continue to reduce due to low rainfall and drought conditions; however, regular communication of demand is in place between the relevant stakeholders to ensure availability for operational treatment;
- Dam safety inspections have been conducted by qualified operators following adopted protocols. No known structure risks at both Bundanoon and Medway have been highlighted within this period. Moss Vale, Mittagong and Bowral Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs) are currently meeting licence; however, they may exceed the annual licence due to the extended dry period which is effecting the treatment capability of the STPs;
- Algal blooms within this period at Berrima STP may also affect the annual licence pH of the final effluent.

DP64 Ensure regulatory compliance of sewerage infrastructure



The Robertson sewage treatment scheme compliance annual return was completed and submitted to the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) between September and October 2019.

The Moss Vale, Mittagong and Bowral treatment schemes are currently meeting licence requirements; however, they have all been impacted by the extended dry periods. This is affecting the treatment capability which may impact final annual return results at the end of the fourth quarter.

The dry period and algal blooms at Berrima treatment scheme may also impact the pH licence requirement of the final effluent leading to an impact on the annual return results.

On 26 November 2019 the Pollution Incident Response Management Plan was activated due to an unexpected major breakdown of the operational process decant weir at Mittagong Sewage Treatment Plant (STP). Excellent work practices and the commitment of staff along with good communication with the EPA minimised the risk of regulatory non-compliance. The process returned to full operation on 4 December 2019.

Positive communication between Council and the EPA has continued with both minor operational and capital investment in place to minimise long-term environmental impacts.

Key capital programs continue to be delivered as part of Council's Delivery Program with the designs for essential upgrades (due to regulatory catchment demand and capacity) to the Bowral, Moss Vale and Mittagong STPs remaining in progress by NSW Public Works Advisory. All are expected to be

delivered within a five year program with construction at the Bowral STP due to be started in 2020/21.

Key operational and maintenance programs have also continued to ensure regulatory compliance and minimise risk; for example, enhanced remote monitoring of treatment assets, manhole inspections, jetting and flushing programs.

DP65 Facilitate and advocate for enhanced access to telecommunication networks



Improved telecommunications infrastructure across the Shire will factor in the soon to be developed 'Destination Plan' (Tourism and Economic Development Strategic Plan) which was initiated by Council in late November 2019.



Environment

Wingecarribee 2031 outlines the following **Environment** Community Goals

- 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

The **Delivery Program 2017-2021** includes 23 four year actions to assist in the achievement of the **Environment** strategies. The progress for these four year actions for the July to December 2019 reporting period is outlined below.

DP66 Manage public natural assets



Environmental management activities continue to be successfully implemented by the Environment Levy-funded Bushcare program and contractors across 59 different reserves and management sites.

Ten revegetation projects progressed during this period 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.

The Community Nursery continues to operate with volunteer support, with over 2,018 plants produced in the reporting period which are being preparing for use when the drought breaks.

Council continues to implement a number of significant joint projects with the NSW Government including:

- Southern Highlands Glossy Black Cockatoo Conservation Threatened Species Project;
- Eucalyptus macarthurii Threatened Species Project; and
- Persoonia glaucescens Threatened Species Project.

The Southern Highlands Koala Conservation Project remains ongoing and is co-funded by Council and the NSW Government *Saving our Species* program.

Council continues to support the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust (BCT) to launch the Southern Highlands Koala Habitat Tender, a multi-million dollar State Government investment in private land conservation in the Wingecarribee Shire. A record number of applications were submitted by private landholders. BCT tender agreements are funded in-perpetuity conservation agreements.

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

Council staff deliver update reports at every Wollondilly-Wingecarribee Bushfire Management Committee meeting and contributed to and reviewed the University of Melbourne's report on 'Fire risk modelling to support fire management and conservation of koalas *Phascolarctos cinereus* in the Wingecarribee Local Government Area'.

Current koala road kill reduction strategies involved the Roads and Maritime Services using their motorway variable message signs to warn motorists of koalas during breeding season. Council facilitates messaging through Facebook to warn of koalas on roads.

The koala sightings database is maintained and regularly uploaded to Bionet. 20 sightings were recorded between October and December 2019, with the total number of sightings now at 315.

Council staff scoped the bushfire preparedness of carers for this 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. Also initiated were talks about workshops to assist local carers in relation to eucalyptus identification and burns first aid. Council has assisted in the capture of koalas in care.

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. This uses the draft vegetation structural layer in conjunction with koala satellite tracking data and predictive distribution of koala habitat.

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 10th anniversary of operation in the Shire. A celebratory event was held for LFW property owners and attended by 48 people. The current area of active LFW properties in Shire is 4859 hectares with 3200 hectares under conservation. Six LFW property agreements totalling 94 hectares were finalised during the reporting period, while six new LFW Property Expressions of Interest were received making a total of fifteen property assessments currently underway.

Nine new Habitat for Wildlife agreements were received in this period bringing the total to 217.

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



The rigorous assessment of applications in accordance with environmental legislation has continued and biodiversity values protected under the assessment requirements of section 4.15 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

DP69 Build community partnerships and education programs to reduce pollution



Council continues to operate an investigation and enforcement program for pollution and illegal dumping matters. During the reporting period a number of investigations have resulted in enforcement notices being issued for various matters. Land pollution (including asbestos) is an increasing issue in the Shire. These matters are being investigated and actioned in accordance with appropriate legislative provisions. Council launched a significant community awareness program called Dob in a Dirtbag targeting this issue.

Council is preparing for the Household Chemical Clean Out event and Clean Up Australia Day in March 2020.

DP70 Reduce the impact from Council infrastructure and operations

Council undertakes environmental assessments of the potential impact from Council works, utilising Council's adopted procedure and assessment tool for this function. These tools have been reviewed to reflect changes in legislation. Controls to minimise and mitigate environmental impacts are identified through this process. In-house training has been delivered to key project management staff.

The Roadside Management Plan for the management of roadside vegetation was completed with grant funding from Local Government NSW. This Plan won a Local Government NSW Excellence in the Environment Award 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 and these are periodically reviewed for consistency with legislation. No major updates were scheduled or completed during this period.

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

Council's Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plans 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. Staff are currently reviewing Council's stormwater development controls and engineering specifications to ensure that future development does not impact on water quality within the Shire.

All Planning Proposals received by Council which are included in the Local Planning Strategy have either received a Gateway Determination or have been finalised.

DP73 Advocate to State and Federal government to ensure planning controls, plans and proposals reflect community priorities

Staff continue to stay up to date with proposed legislative changes to ensure planning controls reflect community priorities and to advocate to the NSW Government on behalf of the Wingecarribee Shire community. Council staff have been involved in working groups with the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment on Short Term Rental Accommodation, the template Development Control Plan and the Low Rise Medium Density Housing Code.

Council continues to work with State and Federal Government stakeholders to advocate and respond to emerging issues that impact on the Shire's environment and sustainability. Council is currently working with the Office of Environment and Heritage 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's webpages relating to environmental information are regularly reviewed with amendments made to ensure the currency and reliability of information.

Council maintains a number of Geographic Information Systems environmental datasets for development assessment, planning considerations and environmental assessments of Council projects. Processes are in place to ensure the currency of this information. Key datasets include fire management units, weed management units, roadside management plan vegetation model, koala habitat and environmental assessment layers.

Waterwatch Program monitoring activities were undertaken at Mittagong Creek, Whites Creek, Lake Alexandra, Medway Rivulet and Caalong Creek. The monitoring program is providing data on catchment health. The aim of the monitoring is to collect data on the trends in water quality and stream condition, with the results published on Council's website. Council also undertakes stream macroinvertebrate sampling. This monitoring program is providing data on catchment health and the results are also entered into the NSW Atlas of Living Australia. The latest results are showing a growing impact in water levels and water quality from the ongoing intense drought.

The December 2019 edition of the Wingecarribee Web e-newsletter was published and distributed to over 1,000 subscribers.

NatureMapr has been launched in the Shire as Council's main community engagement and citizen science data collection platform. A presentation on the platform has been delivered to Birdlife Southern Highlands.

DP75 Implement community awareness programs that promote sustainable living

The Schools Environment Day event was successfully delivered on 22 October 2019. Approximately 600 students attended and participated in 25 different activities. Council also participated in the 2019 Regeneration Weekend event in Bowral. Planning has commenced for the 2020 Earth Hour event as well as activities for Seniors Week in February 2020.

Council has a number of school based activities in the area of energy and water. One school workshop was delivered during this period.

DP76 Develop partnerships and networks to leverage off existing programs

Planning and collaboration with the Southern Highlands Botanic Garden team has commenced and is on track for the 28 March 2020 Earth Hour event. Council participated in the 2019 Regeneration Weekend community-led event in Bowral.

The Community Assistance Scheme awarded \$10,000 worth of grants to eight community groups for environmental and sustainability projects with funding supplied from the Environment Levy.

DP77 Implement State Government regulations

Council has continued to implement State Government regulations within the reporting period.

Council has considered in excess of 1611 development applications to 31 December 2019.

With a raft of reforms being progressively introduced by the State Government, Council has continued to alter its policy positions to reflect these changes. This includes altering 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*.

As part of the State Government policy to provide for greater jobs and housing including broader policy positions of responsive outcomes for residential dwellings, Council has renewed its commitment to responsive assessment outcomes in residential housing through the establishment of a responsive outcomes unit which deals specifically with residential applications in new release areas. This initiative has seen a reduction in the average determination time of prescribed applications to 12 days (average) to December 2019. This initiative delivers on State Government policy to ensure that average determination times on housing approvals are reduced.

DP78 Advocate and educate for improved development outcomes



Continuous improvements to Council's knowledge and systems with respect to both staff and Council's website for educative purposes have been undertaken.

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



Council continues to support the Moss Vale and Rural Chamber of Commerce's 'Food Cluster' development program. During the reporting period the eighth Cluster was launched which saw the Mittagong region Cluster established, showcasing 20 local businesses promoting locally made products and services.

Council has also proactively supported the Southern Highlands Food and Wine Association in the development of local products and experiences. This was evident during the 2019 Pie Time and Food and Wine Expo events with new products, experiences and events being available to consumers.

DP80 Promote and encourage waste minimisation and recycling



The Resource Recovery Centre continues its commitment to ongoing waste minimisation and recycling to be promoted at every possible opportunity.

Council staff have met all targets for the training of students and community groups. Council also received a Highly Commended award in Division B of Local Government NSW's Excellence in the Environment Awards for Behaviour Change in Waste in December 2019.

DP81 Implement strategies to reduce illegal dumping



Council has 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.

In addition, Council staff will participate in 'Operation Rumble' which was approved last quarter. The campaign seeks to target illegal dumping of contaminated fill waste in the Shire. Council recently dealt with an incident of illegal dumping of asbestos and subsequently issued a media release to seek community assistance to identify the person or persons responsible.

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 been compliant with Environmental Protection Authority licence conditions. However, the current drought and extended periods of very hot conditions will require a change to the RRC's operational procedures to manage the elevated risk of fire.

Proactive steps have been taken, including a 40 per cent reduction in green waste organics stockpiled on site with over 4,000 tonnes of shredded, unprocessed green waste organics transported to an external processing site.

DP83 Develop and implement a Council Waste Strategy and Policy

A draft Waste Strategy has been developed and will be further reviewed to consider recommendations from the recently completed Waste Services Review before it is presented to Council for endorsement in the first quarter of 2020.

DP84 Implement strategies to improve energy management

Planning has been undertaken for the next solar project to be installed on Council's Civic Centre in Moss Vale. A system of between 70-100kw 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

Three activities have been prepared for Seniors Week in February 2020. The Speed Date a Sustainability Expert event will allow community access to local experts providing free advice on sustainable buildings, gardening and lifestyle matters. Workshops are also being prepared for saving energy and resilience in extreme weather events. Development has commenced on a Cool Spot campaign in response to increased heatwave events.

Council participated in the Community Climate Forum in November 2019 which presented climate action and climate adaptation programs.

DP86 Implement strategies to address the impacts of climate change

Council adopted its updated Climate Change Adaptation Plan during this reporting period. Planning for a number of the projects has started for commencement in the second half of this financial year.

DP87 Improve resource and energy efficiency at Council facilities and monitor carbon emission

The annual calculation of greenhouse gas emissions has been completed and the results published on Council's website. For the period 2018/19 the emissions total was 14,642 tCO₂-e (tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent). Electricity, fuels and street lighting were the highest sources of greenhouse gas emissions. Emission levels have been reduced by 12 per cent over the last five years despite the population increase. Emissions attributed to providing water and sewer account for

57 per cent of the total emissions.

DP88 Encourage carbon reduction across the Shire



Council continues to participate in the Cities Power Partnership (CPP) and the associated South East Buddies Group. Reporting to the CPP on progress against pledges was completed and confirmed that Council is on track with its pledges.

Council participated at the Community Climate Forum in November 2019 and presented on Council and community greenhouse gas emissions data, abatement actions being undertaken and the issues ahead.



Economy

Wingecarribee 2031 outlines the following **Economy** Community Goals

- 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

The Delivery Program 2017-2021 includes 12 four year actions to assist in the achievement of the **Economy** strategies. The progress for these four year actions for the July to December 2019 reporting period is outlined below.

DP89 Support regional activities and partnerships to broaden and promote the range business and industry investment



Council has engaged with a number of potential investors seeking to relocate or expand businesses in the region during the reporting period.

Council and the NSW Government also worked together to produce the Wingecarribee Regional Economic Development Strategy 2018-2022. The Strategy is aimed at delivering infrastructure to the region which will enhance the liveability of the region, facilitate development of agriculture as a key strength and specialisation and grow the visitor economy based on food, wine and events, grow education, health and aged care sectors, and strengthen the manufacturing base. This State Government strategy has now been followed up with the development of the Canberra Region Joint Organisation Economic Development Strategy.

The development of a 10 year Wingecarribee Shire 'Destination Plan' has commenced and will be delivered to Council for approval in June 2020. The Plan will identify key strategies in business development and business growth opportunities that align with the region's key attributes of Agribusiness, Tourism and Hospitality, Tertiary and Education, Health and Residential Care, Freight and Logistics along with Advanced Manufacturing.

DP90 Build on partnerships that increase and broaden local employment opportunities



Council continues to liaise with tertiary education institutions, local schools and the business sector to identify skill gaps in the local workforce. This has recently been supported with the establishment of the Southern Highlands Key Stakeholders Group to work in partnership with Council in an effort to develop local business and employment opportunities. Council is also working with State Government agencies and non-government agencies in providing data on local employment and business generation. A recent visit to the region by the NSW Minister for Education and Early Childhood Education provided a valuable opportunity to present our region's education opportunities.

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



Tourism applications have been assessed against quadruple bottom line principles as required under section 4.15 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* with outcomes increased over the last quarter.

DP92 Promote the Southern Highlands a world class tourist destination



Council undertook a proactive marketing program of integrated activities for the period July to December 2019 which recorded increased visitation and expenditure to the Shire. These Shire wide increases were also realised with above budgeted visitation and sales at the Southern Highlands Welcome Centre.

Destination Southern Highlands worked closely with its industry partners to generate record levels of exposure for the Southern Highlands and positioned it as a key regional tourism destination. Increased awareness and exposure of the region was in part generated by major events such as Tulip Time, the Bowral Classic, the Food and Wine Festival, the Arts Studio Trail and the Bong Bong Picnic Races among others.

Destination Southern Highlands continued to undertake digital advertising during the reporting period to position the region as a must visit destination.

The launch of the region's new website visitsouthernhighlands.com.au in November 2019 also assisted in promoting the Southern Highlands as a world class destination with multi-lingual assets and the addition of Chinese apps Weibo and Weichat to target this growing market. The new websites also well-positioned the region through professional imagery, experiences, events and bookable products.

The development of the 2020 Southern Highlands Destination Planner by the Destination Southern Highlands team as the region's official publication was completed and this will be a major marketing tool to promote the region's key experiences, products and people.

Council continues to work closely with Destination NSW, visitCanberra and Tourism Australia to promote the Southern Highlands via their marketing channels and resources. A number of trade and media films were conducted to introduce the region into possible international and domestic wholesale travel programs. As a result, the region received coverage by leading journalists.

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



Highlights during the reporting period of marketing activities assisting in the promotion of the region included:

- Implementation of an innovative Theme Marketing Months Program for the region which was supported by local industry via events and marketing messages.
- Development of the 2020 Southern Highlands Destination Planner and Map containing new experiences and a new look and branding.
- Awarded Gold in the 'Destination Marketing' category at the Canberra Region Tourism Awards held in Canberra in November 2019 for the region's 2019 Pie Time campaign.

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- Commencement of the development of a new Destination Management Plan to include Tourism and Economic Development Strategies.
 - Development of new Products and Experiences - Heritage Festival Scoping Study, Tulip Time Festival Relocation Feasibility Study and Pie Time 2020 Campaign.
 - Launch of the region's new \$100,000 website visitsouthernhighlands.com.au.
 - A Proactive Visiting Journalists Program and associated media exposure with key industry partners of Destination NSW and Tourism Australia.
 - The production and distribution of regular Monthly 'What's On in the Highlands' videos.
 - Active social media marketing activities with high reach and exposure.
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DP94 Explore options to progress Moss Vale Enterprise Zone



Recommendations in relation to the promotion of the Moss Vale Enterprise Corridor are to be included in the development of the 10 year 'Destination Plan' which commenced in November 2019 and will be finalised in mid-2020.

DP95 Support the establishment and expansion of clean industries



Recommendations in relation to the establishment and expansion of clean industries are to be included in the development of the Shire's 10 year 'Destination Plan' which commenced in November 2019 and will be finalised in mid-2020.

DP96 Manage the operation of the Southern Region Livestock Exchange



The Southern Regional Livestock Exchange continues to comply with relevant legislation and Environmental Protection Authority licence requirements. The major refurbishment works are progressing after considerable consultation with key stakeholders. Tenders for the various components of the capital works will go out to the market in 2020.

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



Rural lands have been considered 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 has provided ongoing support for the Southern Region Business Enterprise Centre and Regional Development Australia Southern Inland.

Council has recently supported small business with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with Service NSW for their 'Easy to do Business' Program. The establishment of the new Southern Highlands Key Stakeholders Group will also facilitate the development of new business programs and job growth.

DP99 Support initiatives that provide opportunities for business mentoring and connection



Council continues to offer business development and mentoring services via its Partnership Program, which accounts for over 300 local businesses receiving the benefits of its 'Concierge' Service Program.

Council also supports the Southern Highlands Key Stakeholders Group Program which is looking to develop business mentoring in its cluster group initiatives.

DP100 Support regional economic development initiatives



Council is an active member of the Canberra Region Joint Organisation. Staff will work with surrounding councils on common economic development opportunities. This is further supported with the development of the Southern Highlands Key Stakeholders Group. In addition, a close working relationship with Southern Inland and Destination Sydney Surrounds South regional business groups is a priority for Council.

