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Bi-Annual Delivery Program 2017-21 Progress Report

1 January 2018 to 30 June 2018



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

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Introduction

This Bi-Annual Delivery Program Progress Report is for the period 1 January to 30 June 2018. It reports Wingecarribee Shire Council's progress towards achieving the 96 objectives of the Delivery Program 2017-21.

Each objective has been assigned a traffic light to signify overall progress.

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

At the end of June 2018, 90 of the 96 objectives were 'on-track', six were classified as 'needs attention', and there were none 'on-hold' or considered 'critical'.

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 2017-21](#) outlines the activities Council will undertake to achieve the objectives established in the Community Strategic Plan 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 2017-21** includes 19 four-year actions to assist in the achievement of the **Leadership** strategies. The progress for these four-year actions for the January to June 2018 reporting period is outlined below.

DP01 Develop and implement an elected-member professional development program



Council is awaiting the release of the Councillor Induction and Professional Development Guidelines before progressing further with this action. Once finalised, the Guidelines will be issued under section 23A of the *Local Government Act 1993* which requires councils to take into consideration these guidelines before exercising any of its functions.

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



As required under the *Local Government Act 1993*, the Operational Plan and Budget was placed on public exhibition from April to May 2018 and was adopted by Council in June 2018.

To further strengthen Council's Delivery Program, revised performance measures are being developed to determine the effectiveness of the Delivery Program.

During the reporting period, a Risk Management Action Plan was implemented and a Fraud and Corruption Control Plan has been drafted along with associated policies and procedures.

DP03 Improve community understanding and awareness of Council decisions



Council continues to use a variety of communication channels to inform the community of Council decisions. Council staff continue their positive working relationships with local and regional media stakeholders to ensure Council activities and decisions are reported.

Further, notices of upcoming meetings of Council are placed in local newspapers, and Council and committee meeting agendas and minutes are published on Council's website in a timely manner.

Following a period of public exhibition, Council adopted its Media Policy in April. The policy provides a framework for Council's interaction with media outlets.

DP04 Develop and maintain an engaged and safe workforce

Council continues to monitor all workplace incidents and where required these are investigated to reduce or eliminate future incidents. Overall, the number of days lost as a result of each lost time injury continues to decline and is now below industry average. By 30 June 2018, Council achieved a milestone with 158 days without any lost time claims.

Current Work Health and Safety initiatives are being directed towards finalisation of policy and procedural issues supported by training and infield audits commencing February 2018. A new initiative in 2018 was the launch of *TAKE 5*, designed to identify site risks for any type of work across Council. This initiative, based upon initial trials of the system, enhances risk identification and reduces other worksite paper-based systems.

Council is developing a Workplace Health Program to support wellbeing in the workplace, based on the South Western Sydney Local Health District's *Five Ways to Wellbeing*. Following a presentation of concept to the executive in early 2018, a working group charter is being developed. Upon approval of the charter, the working group will commence the rollout of this program across the organisation.

Skill shortages continue to be an issue with planners, engineers, accredited certifiers and accountants difficult to attract and retain. There are also skill shortages in areas such as water and sewer, where plant operators for water and sewer treatment plants are difficult to attract. With an ageing workforce the development of replacement staff through internal training of apprentices and cadets remains a high priority.

DP05 Implement actions from Council's Fit for The Future Improvement Program

Council has commenced implementing all 15 of the Fit for the Future Improvement Plan strategies. The adopted Long Term Financial Plan outlines projections for Council achieving the benchmarks set by the State government.

At its meeting on 14 February 2018, Council nominated to participate in the Canberra Region Joint Organisation. Joint Organisations were a key initiative of the State Government's *Fit for the Future* Local Government Reform program, and aim to provide a forum for councils and state agencies to collaborate, plan and deliver on regional priorities. The primary functions of a Joint Organisation are:

- Regional strategic planning and priority setting
- Intergovernmental collaboration
- Shared leadership and advocacy.

Council is working with Joint Organisation members to establish the appropriate governance framework to ensure it operates effectively.

DP06 Ensure Council's financial systems, procedures and practices are in line with industry best practice

The 2018/19 Budget (Including four-year forward estimates) and Long Term Financial Plan were formally adopted by Council on 13 June 2018. Council continues to demonstrate its commitment to strong financial management by adopting a four-year balanced budget. Council's projected cash expenditure budget for the 2018/19 financial year is \$132.4 million.

The adopted Budget includes funding for an unprecedented level of capital works. Over the next four years \$219 million of infrastructure renewal and improvement projects will be undertaken. \$107 million will be directed to water and sewer infrastructure improvements, including \$62 million towards the upgrading of Bowral and Moss Vale treatment plants. \$59 million is allocated towards roads, bridges and footpaths. \$21 million has been allocated towards community buildings and recreation areas, while \$17 million has been allocated towards storm-water drainage works.

Over the course of the next four years, Council is proposing to borrow \$48 million which will be used to fund a number of significant infrastructure projects included within the adopted Budget. Council has sufficient financial capacity to fund the debt servicing associated with these loans. Council adopted its revised Loan Borrowings Policy in May 2018.

During the course of the 2017/18 financial year Council considered variations to the budget on a quarterly basis in accordance with section 203 of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005*. All other statutory financial reports (including grant acquittals) were completed and submitted within required time frames.

Council's investments have been managed in accordance with Council's adopted Investment Policy, ensuring sufficient cash is available to manage operational requirements. The average rate of return on Council's investment portfolio for 2017/18 was 2.65%, compared to an average bank bill swap rate of 1.82%, an improved performance margin of 0.83%.

DP07 Manage Council's Fleet to ensure maximum value is obtained



Council's annual plant and light vehicle replacement program was adopted in June 2017 as part of the 2017/18 Operational Plan and Budget. The total replacement value for the 2017/18 financial year was \$2.3 million.

This included the purchase of a rear delivery patching truck in May 2018. This truck will be used to support Council's increased road maintenance activities funded through the *Investing in our Future* Special Rate Variation.

Other major items of plant that were replaced during the year included the materials handler at the Resource Recovery Centre, the Southern Highlands Community Transport Community Bus and two wing deck mowers for the open spaces team in late June 2018.

Council has commenced work on a number of the recommendations raised through the plant and fleet internal audit conducted in early 2018. This has involved reviewing and updating a number of fleet management policies, further refining plant expenditure and utilisation reports, and developing an implementation plan for Council's fleet management software.

DP08 Manage council's property portfolio to maximise community benefit



Council's property portfolio continues to be managed in accordance with legislative requirements and within the policy direction set by Council. This has included a range of property acquisitions and disposals, the execution of a number of leases and licences with community groups and commercial operators, road closures and administration of other property matters.

Council has acquired two strategic parcels of land during the 2017/18 financial year – one in the Bowral CBD, which will allow for future parking improvements, and the other adjacent to the Bowral Cemetery, which will provide for additional burial plots and potential future access improvements.

A number of small residential land sales have been approved and finalised by Council during the 2017/18 financial year. This includes land at Moss Vale and Bowral.

The enforcement of site access arrangements for the Mt Gibraltar Telecommunications Tower also continues to ensure Council's ongoing compliance with legislative and safety requirements.

DP09 Procurement activities are undertaken to achieve best value while underpinned by a robust ethical framework which enables local supplier participation



Council formally adopted its Procurement Policy in May 2018. The adoption of this Policy was the final stage of a significant review of Council's procurement guidelines and procedures. The Policy and Guidelines were developed to reflect Council's position that all procurement activities will:

- comply with legislation
- demonstrate best value for money
- consider long-term financial, environmental and social outcomes, and
- be conducted in a transparent, fair and ethical manner.

The procurement guidelines and other procurement procedures have been reviewed and updated to provide clear direction on how staff are to undertake procurement activities within Council.

Council has continued to manage its panel arrangements to ensure work is undertaken to a high standard and in accordance with contract rates. A number of major contracts have been re-negotiated over the past 12 months including the renewal of the plant and equipment hire panel contract, vegetation and bushland panel contract and the renewal of the tree management panel contract.

A range of initiatives have been introduced to encourage local supplier participation through advertising in local papers, holding pre-lodgement briefings and the inclusion of a mandatory non-cost selection criteria for local participation (weighting of 10%) for all formally evaluated tenders and quotations within Council's Procurement Policy.

DP10 Develop and implement enhanced asset management practices



Asset Management practices are continually being improved to ensure compliance with legislation and policy. Online digital data entry, processing and sign-off for Council's project completion forms (PCFs) has been introduced. Prior to introducing this change, PCFs were managed manually, using a paper based system. The introduction of online digital processing enables staff to access all relevant documentation, check designs linked to the project and check pricing and budgets, which was not easily accessible previously.

Notable achievements include:

- Desktop review for customer levels of service
- Updating and development of new asset management plans
- Refinement of capital works program for all reportable asset classes
- Revaluation of water and sewerage assets as well as linking to the Integrated Water Cycle Management (IWCM) process
- Updating the asset register
- Collection of renewal information and updated renewal programs

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- Collection of new asset data including new developments
 - Updated risk management system and risk registers including risk management planning for water, sewerage, roads and drainage assets
 - Introduction of electronic tablet-based technology for staff to collect and receive asset data, saving time and improving delivery of services onsite and in the field
 - Interpolation of data between flooding information and sewerage system information to prioritise and manage the risk for manholes and surcharge of effluent into the environment during high rainfall events
 - Introduction of a new asset inspection regime to ensure correlation of asset data registers to the physical location and condition of assets in the field
 - Improved road network data and confirmation of asset improvement priority.
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DP11 Develop and Implement Business Transformation Program



The Business Transformation Program is underway, with project teams identifying priority improvements for the first four priority projects, being:

1. Delivering a customer first culture
 2. Development application determination times
 3. Maintenance delivery management – Infrastructure Services and Water and Sewer
 4. Assets quality control
-

DP12 Enhance customer interaction with Council



One of the focuses of the Business Transformation program is enhancing Council's interaction with customers. During the reporting period a 'customer first' working group was established to review all customer contact channels in order to develop an improvement action plan.

DP13 Ensure council services are delivered efficiently and effectively



Council's Service Delivery Review Programs continue to progress well. Following a Councillor briefing in March 2018 on the Southern Regional Livestock Exchange Service Delivery Review, further analysis on comparative saleyards within NSW has been conducted. Council is also awaiting the outcome of a grant application for proposed upgrade works through the NSW Government Growing Local Economies fund. At a further Councillor briefing in June 2018, the comparative information and an update on the grant application were presented. It was agreed that a report go to Council in July 2018 to provide a status update on the review.

It is anticipated that the Aquatic Services Review will be completed in late 2018.

DP14 Identify opportunities for regional collaboration



Council formally resolved on 14 February 2018 to become a member of the Canberra Joint Organisation. The legislation under the *Local Government Act 1993* which formally enacts the commencement of the Joint Organisations took effect on 1 July 2018.

Council also continues to work with other nearby Councils on joint funded programs such as the Regional Illegal Dumping Program (RID).

DP15 Provide quality, timely and accessible information to the community

Council continues to provide quality, timely and accessible information to the community. News items are proactively sought from throughout the organisation, and communicated through multiple channels including media releases, quarterly publications of Wingecarribee Today, radio and television interviews, staff newsletters, Council's online digital Media Centre and via Council's Facebook and Twitter social media sites. Further, Council and committee meeting materials are published to Council's website in a timely manner.

Staff monitor social media sites and provide prompt feedback to queries or concerns. During the reportable period, 63 media releases were issued and 118 Facebook posts published. The March and June issues of Wingecarribee Today were also distributed across the Shire.

There were 25 formal access applications submitted in accordance with the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (GIPA Act) during the reporting period, and three of these remained open at its conclusion. Twenty-five formal access applications were finalised in the reporting period (including three carried forward from the last reporting period), within the timeframes prescribed by legislation. Ten of the finalised applications were withdrawn with the consent of the applicant, as Council could deal with the applications informally in accordance with the GIPA Act.

There were an additional 407 applications for access to Council information handled under the proactive release or informal release provisions of the GIPA Act during this period.

DP16 Implement an effective Community Engagement Framework

Council's community engagement work is guided by a policy and strategy. A review of these commenced in 2017 and continued in 2018.

A survey about communication and community engagement has been developed to seek information about how residents, businesses and property owners look for and access information, and how they expect to be consulted. The survey results will be used to inform the final review of the Community Engagement Strategy and Policy. The survey is scheduled for launch in July 2018.

During this reporting period the community was invited to consider exhibited documents or provide feedback for the following projects:

- Draft Operational Plan and Budget 2018/19
- Draft Urban Tree Policy
- Swimming Pool satisfaction surveys
- Playgrounds survey

DP17 Support Council committees and working groups

Council has commenced an internal review of the committee governance framework, and the outcome of the review has been timed to coincide with the expiry of the two-year term for Councillor representation on committees in September 2018.

DP18 Actively build capacity for community participation in leadership including mentoring and support



The development of the draft Economic Development Strategy has included a number of actions related to community leadership capacity including a skills exchange ecosystem. A proposed Southern Highlands Innovation Partnership aims to leverage community-wide leadership by facilitating continuous learning and 'can do' leadership.

DP19 Develop partnerships and networking with community, government and business



Council continues to engage extensively with individual members of the community as well as sector groups, community groups, businesses, community organisations, Local, State and Federal Government agencies and non-government organisations by attending meetings, forums and workshops.



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 2017-21** includes 19 four-year actions to assist in the achievement of the **People** strategies. The progress for these four-year actions for the January to June 2018 reporting period is outlined below.

DP20 Advocate for improved health services in the Shire



Council staff continue to participate in the South West Sydney Primary Health Network (SWSPHN) and associated initiatives, encourage outreach of services to the Aboriginal Cultural Centre, and assist in promoting preventative health initiatives.

Health related initiatives during this reporting period include:


- A Positive Ageing Forum was held during the Seniors Festival, focusing on the Five Ways to Wellbeing.
- Distribution of fresh food for families to access at the Aboriginal Cultural Centre.
- The appointment of Council staff to the SWSPHN Community Advisory Committee.
- The appointment of Council staff to the Headspace Consortium. The Headspace Consortium commenced a weekly support group for a group of students identified at one of the local secondary schools.
- Coordination and delivery of the Love Bites program to 130 students at a local high school.
- Delivery of the Aboriginal Go 4 Fun program in Term 2 at the Aboriginal Cultural Centre.
- Youth Week events were delivered under the banner of Five Ways to Well Being.
- Funding applications were submitted to Liveable Communities to increase participation of seniors in the Arts Trail, and to South West Sydney Local Health District to incorporate Five Ways to Well Being into the Community Services Expo.
- Continuation of the *Tackling the Challenge - Talking Local Men's Health* project, aiming to empower men to tell their story of overcoming life's obstacles and encouraging men to seek help in times of need.

DP21 Partner with community based organisations in provision of services



Partnerships and collaboration are a key part of all activities and events undertaken by Council. The Seniors Festival and Youth Week were major annual events held during this reporting period. The success of both of these celebrations was enhanced due to the partnerships that were created to deliver a range of different activities across the Shire.

DP22 Partner with State and community organisations to provide a broad range of health and wellness programs to target specific needs of the community



In April, both Youth Week and the Seniors Festival provided great opportunities to showcase South Western Sydney Local Health District's *Five Ways to Wellbeing* program. The *Five Ways to Wellbeing* films developed by Moss Vale High School students continue to be shown at the Empire Cinema prior to film screenings.

Partnerships with other service providers have seen an increase in the services available at the Aboriginal Cultural Centre. The Aboriginal *Go 4 Fun* 10-week healthy lifestyle program was a productive partnership with South West Sydney Local Health District, and partnership with OzHarvest and Red Cross means that families can now access free fresh food on a weekly basis at the Aboriginal Cultural Centre.

DP23 Provide affordable sport, recreation and leisure services



Council continued the maintenance schedule of facilities, including maintenance at the following sports grounds:


- Stephens Park – top dressing and aeration, completion of line marking, and changeover of the goal posts
- Mittagong Oval – direct seeding and aeration of the playing surface
- Upgrade of the sewer pipes at Bundanoon amenities, and
- Installation of a cricket pitch cover at Welby Oval.

Capital works completed over the reporting period include:

- Lake Alexandra picnic shelter and table installed
- Central Control irrigation system installed at seven facilities
- Resurfacing and cleaning of Robertson Tennis Courts
- Welby weir/Box Vale Track foot bridge renewed
- Mittagong Pool amenities flooring resurfaced
- Bowral Pool amenities building rendered
- New AFL goal posts storage container installed at Welby Oval, and
- New flooring installed in the Bowral Pool plant room and canteen.

The pool season has been completed for 2017/18. The Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre contract was awarded to Bluefit for the operation and management of the facility. Bluefit will transition into the facility from 1 July 2018.

DP24 Partner with Police, business and community representatives to implement the Community Safety Plan



Council facilitates the Wingecarribee Community Safety Committee, which aims to provide a safer community for all people in our Shire. Information promoted in Wingecarribee Today and in the local newspaper highlights the contact numbers and portals available for members of the community to contact Police.

The Southern Highlands Domestic Violence Forum has addressed initiatives to support women with or without children escaping domestic violence to remain living in this community. It remains a prevalent issue in our community requiring a coordinated approach. A banner stating *Southern Highlands Says No to Domestic Violence* has begun a tour of the Shire, being displayed at different schools and sporting events.

A funding grant was submitted to the Crime Prevention Strategy to address issues of vandalism identified at Corbett Gardens.

DP25 Partner with agencies to ensure emergency management processes and procedures are in place



The Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC) met in February and again in May. The Committee finalised and endorsed the Wingecarribee Local Snow Plan following the snow event in 2015 that resulted in a natural disaster declaration and significant damage in the Shire. The LEMC determined to base their annual emergency management exercise on a significant snow event in order to test the plan. The exercise was successfully held as a 'Desktop Discussion' exercise in June.

During Seniors Week in April the LEMC presented a two-hour workshop at Mittagong RSL called *Fire and Ice*, with the assistance of the Office of Environment and Heritage, the State Emergency Service, the NSW Rural Fire Service and NSW Police. The aim of the workshop was to engage with seniors to build resilience to extreme weather events. In support of the workshop Council staff wrote an editorial piece for the Climate Council, which was syndicated in 78 newspapers around Australia, highlighting that communities around the country are realising the importance of building community resilience in the face of climate change.

The workshop's success, along with enquires from other councils around the country following publication of the editorial piece, prompted Council to apply for a Community Resilience Innovation Program grant. This application was successful, allowing Council to further develop the workshop and collateral materials into a portable community engagement and education module to build greater community resilience to natural disasters.

DP26 Implement public health and safety regulatory programs



As part of Council's renewed commitment to public health and safety programs, Council has adopted the State Government *Scores on Doors* Food Safety Program. During the reporting period Council undertook 216 food safety inspections with 133 of food shops inspected receiving a score of 5 stars, and 36 receiving 4 stars. The remainder received 3 stars or less.

Council has continued its education and awareness campaign associated with the program ensuring that food operators are made aware of their obligations under the Act to promote public health through food safety.

DP27 Assess the changing profile of the Shire and prioritise services accordingly



A range of data requests both internally and externally have been received and managed. Data remains an important factor for funding applications and gaining an understanding of the changing needs of our community.

Council's active participation in a range of stakeholder networks and interagency meetings provides opportunities to work closely with local service providers and be aware of potential and future needs or issues and devise strategies to address them.

The exchange of experiences and expertise along with the communication of research and best practice contribute to the delivery of services in the community sector

DP28 Provide children services to support family life

Council continues to support families across the Shire with the Family Day Care Program and the Out of School Hours Service based at Mittagong Public School.

Both services are preparing for the transition to the new Child Care Subsidy Package (CCS) commencing on 1 July 2018. This is the biggest reform in this area since the introduction of subsidies for child care.

With the successful application of the Family Day Care Service for a Community Child Care Fund Grant - Sustainability, the Service is looking to develop a business and marketing plan to ensure the ongoing viability of Family Day Care into the future. Over the next three years the Service will be working towards a sustainable future and looking for ways to try and increase numbers of Family Day Care Educators, particularly in outlying areas where there is a lack of available child care services to support families.

DP29 Support agencies to implement community programs and initiatives

Council has assisted a range of community groups to implement community programs and initiatives through the provision of financial assistance.

The Wingecarribee Community Assistance Scheme program was actively promoted with 73 applications received, requesting a total of \$207,250 in funding and an additional \$12,243 from the Environment Levy. Of these, 59 applications were recommended for funding for a total of \$120,000 plus \$9,200 from the Environment Levy.

Contingency Funds were reviewed and a streamlined application process and guidelines were adopted to assist community groups organising one-off events or seeking sponsorship.

Council promoted and facilitated Club Grants, with Mittagong RSL and Moss Vale Services Club providing \$50,000 for community groups.

DP30 Provide companion animal services

Council continues to promote responsible companion animal management and work with pet owners in the Shire to ensure they meet their legislative obligations. This is achieved using a combination of education and regulatory enforcement. Council has conducted proactive patrols of off-leash hot spots to educate dog owners on their responsibilities when using public spaces as well as responding to customer reports of dog attacks, barking dogs and strays.

Under Council management the Wingecarribee Animal Shelter has continued to provide a high standard of care for the stray and unwanted animals of the Shire. Council staff continue to work with local stakeholder groups such as Friends of Wingecarribee Animal Shelter to achieve commendable re-homing rates under Council's Alternatives to Euthanasia policy. The Shelter continues to achieve excellent community engagement through media such as its Facebook page, and volunteers and community groups.

DP31 Support initiatives which enhance opportunities for learning and skill development



Council has developed a draft Economic Development Strategy, which aims to include initiatives and actions to provide increased learning opportunities in the Shire and improved skills development particularly for young people. The draft Strategy is expected to be presented to Council in late 2018 and will be followed by consultation with the community.

In conjunction with Regional Development Australia Southern Inland, Council has begun development of a digital “hub” for job seekers and businesses to connect in the region. The hub will provide information to Council on skills gaps, employment rates, and skilled visa requirements. It is designed to be used by a wide range of people, including those with disabilities or on work visas.

The hub will provide a Skills Gap Analysis to each applicant, identifying opportunities to skill up and increase their employability. This collated data will facilitate our work with training partners in the region to assist job seekers to skill up for the work that exists. Overall the hub will assist in the creation of a workforce and education “ecosystem” for our region designed to connect all community participants through one technology-enabled platform.

DP32 Provide a range of services and programs through Council Library service



Council continues to provide library services to the Shire. Over the reporting period, there was no substantial change to the number of loans when compared to previous reporting periods, although the type of material and format is evolving to accommodate an increasingly online environment.

Visitation is slightly down over the reporting period. Interlibrary loans continue to fall, indicating the current collection meets community needs. A new library website is under development, and will allow greater access and interactivity through the use of mobile devices. The use of Facebook as a communication tool has been reviewed, in particular with respect to advertising children's services within the Library, as attendance fills quickly to these events.

	2017-2018	2016-2017	% Change
Library Loans	114,635	117,526	-2.5%
E-Book and E-Audio Loans	7,307	5,096	43.4%
E-Magazine Loans	2,909	1,898	53.3%
TOTAL Loans	124,851	124,520	0.3%
Visits	80,560	83,710	-3.8%
New members	804	737	9.1%
Interlibrary Loans	122	138	-11.6%
Internet Sessions	7,473	8,401	-11%
Wireless Internet Sessions	7,361	6,980	5.5%
Library Website visits	26,889	24,300	10.7%
Beamafilm Downloads	565	1,366	-58.6%
Facebook Reach/Views	17,319	38,317	-54.8%
Story time attendance	1,883	1,758	7.1%
Baby Rhyme Time Attendance	777	978	-20.6%
Scratch and HTML Coding Graduations	17	16	6.3%
LEGO Club Attendance	201	122	64.8%
Class visits	36	16	125%
Local Studies Visits	49	-	-
Local Studies Enquiries	13	-	-

The NSW Public Libraries Association South East Zone Meeting was successfully held at Bowral in February and Shellharbour in June. The Association exists to provide a strong single voice for public libraries across NSW and at the national level as a member of the Australian Public Libraries Alliance. Topics included new consortia agreements for e-collections, the NSW State Government's announcement on reduced funding for NSW public libraries, the State Library of NSW report, the Children's and Youth report, and a tour of the \$56 million facility at Shellharbour Council.

The Wingecarribee Library Service took part in the State Library of NSW's Enquiry Completion Rate Survey in March and May 2018. This survey's primary purpose is to calculate how many reference enquiries have been made at each library service for the year. It was calculated that the staff of the Wingecarribee Library Service answer approximately 39,575 enquiries each year with approximately 2,998 enquiries answered by each staff member.

The new online BorrowBox service was launched in February 2018. This service allows Wingecarribee Library customers access to new eBooks and eAudiobooks from the BorrowBox app, which can be easily downloaded to their mobile devices and computers. Library staff gave a presentation to Councillors on 7 March 2018 as part of the extensive BorrowBox promotion.

The Friends of the Wingecarribee Library (FOWL) conducted the annual book sale in the Memorial Hall in March. The book sale was a success with net profit of \$1,642.15.

Three activities were offered by the Library Service as part of the January School Holidays Program:

- The Vegetable Plot: Award winning musical comedy. 100 children attended the show at Bowral on 10 January 2018.
- Solar System Scratch Art: 30 children attended the activity at the Bowral, Moss Vale and Mittagong Branch Libraries. This activity was booked out with a maximum of ten participants at each event.
- Bingo: 30 children attended the activity at the Bowral, Moss Vale and Mittagong Branch Libraries. This activity was booked out with a maximum of ten participants at each event.

The Summer Reading Club for children aged 5-16 years ran throughout December 2017 to the end of January 2018 and had 155 participants, an increase of 31.4% from the same reporting period last year. The Summer Reading Club is an annual promotion that the library uses to encourage reading during the school holidays. Each participant registers and receives an activity pack to record what they have read. There are incentives including tickets to enter the main prize draw (\$100 Big W gift voucher), certificates, stickers and other giveaways. This program is proudly supported by FOWL.

As part of the Local Studies Collection, the stocktake of all local history items by the Information Services Officer is nearing completion. This information will be used with strategic planning, grant applications and storage requirements. This project will be completed by September 2018.

A new semi-permanent exhibition is now being created. The *Postcards from our Past* exhibition is drawn from the Wingecarribee Public Library Local Studies collection and will explore the memories and moments captured across the Southern Highlands from the 1900s onwards. This exhibition will promote the local history collection, improve the aesthetics of the gallery space when not in use, and form part of the Tulip Time Festival 'Creating Memories' 2018 Art Trail.

DP33 Implement sector plans that address key barriers to participation in community life



Youth participation was a key element of the Youth Week planning and coordination. Fortnightly meetings at the Youth Hub allowed for active participation and input into the planning and delivery of celebrations.

The Seniors Community Reference Group actively participated in the planning and delivery of the Seniors Festival with inclusion and access a key component of all the events.

In 2017, Council finalised its Disability Inclusion Action Plan. The Plan presents an opportunity for Council to work towards sustainable outcomes while striving for equity, access, participation and equal rights for everyone. During this reporting period, Council commenced implementation of a number of initiatives to achieve better access and inclusion for people with a disability, including:

- distribution of Missed Business Guides across the Shire to retail and small businesses,
- commencement of construction of a pedestrian bridge over the Unanderra railway line at Moss Vale,
- preparation of a Play Spaces Strategy,
- implementation of the Public Toilet Strategy commenced,
- inclusion of a disability access question in the annual public swimming pool survey, and participation in the development and review of the LGNSW online inclusive tourism training modules.

DP34 Develop and implement initiatives that support new residents participating in community life



A new initiative for this period was the development of the FunFinder App, which aims to provide children, young people and their families easy access to a broad range of activities and events in and around our Shire. The app was an initiative of the Highlands Child, Youth and Family Network that applied for funds from Wingecarribee Club Grants, and was administered and financially supported by Council.

DP35 Support intergenerational programs and projects



An intergenerational activity took place at Lake Alexandra during the cross over between the Seniors Festival and Youth Week. This event involved students from Bowral High School spending time with local older residents, including residents from the Harbison dementia unit. The connections, conversations and shared stories led to a greater understanding and appreciation of each generation.

Council has applied to the NSW Government for funding to support a Grandparents Day event in late October 2018.

DP36 Support and co-ordinate a diverse range of community festivals and celebrations



The Seniors Festival commenced in April and ran for 14 days with over 40 events and activities covering every day of the festival. This year the festival promoted inclusiveness and encouraged seniors to remain active and engaged in the community. It is estimated that over 150 people participated in the festival.

National Youth Week commenced in April with a calendar of six events planned in collaboration with young people and youth services. The week culminated in an outdoor cinema event at Leighton Gardens attended by over 120 young people.

NAIDOC Week 2018 planning has been supported by a \$1,000 grant.

A Grandparents Day funding application has been submitted to the NSW Government for an intergenerational event to be held on Grandparents Day in October 2018.

DP37 Promote and deliver initiatives which enhance community understanding of Aboriginal cultural heritage



Red Room Poetry Workshops were held in April, and engaged Aboriginal school students in workshops to explore poetry in first language to celebrate, share and preserve knowledge of First Nation languages and culture. The project aimed to strengthen the connection of First Nation students to country, language and community to enable them to feel pride in their cultural identities.

The Wingecarribee Aboriginal Cluster Group continues to meet monthly under a new title - Wingecarribee Aboriginal Network (WAN).

DP38 Facilitate the promotion of community arts, emerging artists and cultural awareness and activities



Professional development and capacity building of artists remains an important part of the Arts and Culture Strategic Plan. Council has designed and delivered a range of workshops to the local arts community, including legal workshops.

Council has signed up to a project that will create a directory of artists in our local community, where individual artists can upload their information. This directory will provide a great resource for others wanting to access a range of local artists.

The Foyer Gallery exhibitions continue to be very popular and provide local artists an opportunity to display their works and promote upcoming exhibitions in the Shire.

Staff are in the process of preparing a submission for the second round of the Regional Cultural Fund for the redevelopment of Bowral Memorial Hall.




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 2017-21** includes 23 four-year actions to assist in the achievement of the **Places** strategies. The progress for these four-year actions for the January to June 2018 reporting period is outlined below.

DP39 Undertake advocacy activities to further the development of an integrated public transport network



Council staff regularly attend regional forums with Roads and Maritime Services (RMS), the Heavy Vehicle Forum, and the Institute of Public Works Engineers Australia (IPWEA) and participate in grant funding opportunities to further the development of an integrated public transport network.

Council staff incorporate the efficient connections and interface between various transport modes including rail, road, buses, taxis, cycling, pedestrian and other forms of public transport within asset management plans.

During the reporting period, staff held meetings with key RMS staff to discuss and plan for improved network outcomes within the Shire, and have also attended Infrastructure Working Group (IWG) meetings to plan regional integrated public transport networks.

DP40 Provide infrastructure linkages between public transport hubs



Council has developed a robust capital works program which includes delivery of key infrastructure projects that improve links between public transport hubs.

Projects delivered or underway include:

- Station Street upgrade, Bowral
- Berrima Road bypass, Moss Vale
- Old South Road rehabilitation, Bowral
- Merrigang Street planning and upgrade, Bowral
- Pedestrian Bridge over railway line, Moss Vale
- Kirkham Road planning and funding, Bowral

Council received grant funding of \$1.43 million under the NSW Fixing Country Roads Program for the reconstruction of Kirkham Road, Bowral between Mittagong Road and Wingecarribee Street bridge. This project has been included in the capital works program for delivery in 2018/19.

An expression of interest application was submitted for the Moss Vale bypass road project for consideration under the NSW Growing Local Economies Program. Concurrently, a submission was made under the Federal Regional Development Fund. Funding from both State and Federal governments is required for the project to proceed. The project consists of three stages extending between Berrima Road and Moss Vale Road, located primarily on existing road reserves. Although this project has not received initial grant funding, staff will continue to apply for grants and progress the design in readiness for future delivery.

DP41 Promote public transport options and linkages across the Shire



Council is in the process of updating the Shire's road network model. The model looks at how linkages across the Shire interact and how they are utilised. The project includes reviewing current and future traffic projections, identifying network deficiencies and developing projects to address deficiencies. The model output will inform future capital works programs and contribution plans.

Benefits may include:

- Improved safety
 - Less road congestion at network nodes
 - Improved future planning
 - Development information
 - Up-to-date information for Council and other road authorities
 - Alternative transport options, promoting health, economic savings and convenience, and
 - Energy savings.
-

DP42 Expand our network of footpaths and cycle ways to improve connectivity of the Shire



Council has developed a capital works program that includes the expansion of footpaths and cycleways.

Key projects completed or in progress include:

- Construction of the Pedestrian Bridge over the Unanderra railway line in Moss Vale
- Design of a shared pathway between East Bowral and Moss Vale along Eridge Park Road
- A grant application was submitted for the construction of pathways from Kings Road to Moss Vale Showground.

Development of Stage 3 of the Bicycle Strategy and a review of the Pavement Access and Mobility Plans has begun.

Council is looking at opportunities to install pedestrian and cycle pathways to link the Shire, when other major infrastructure is being constructed. This may include opportunities whilst constructing roads, water or sewer pipelines.

DP43 Partner with agencies to advocate for improved transport services



Council staff participated in the annual Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) Regional Forum held in Wollongong, the NSW Road Congress held at Parliament House Sydney, and attended numerous Institute of Public Works Engineers Australia (IPWEA) transport forums at various locations in NSW.

The forums provided Council with up-to-date technical information, funding and grant information, provided networking opportunities and built strong professional relationships with service providers and leaders.

Council has become a member of the Canberra Joint Organisation (JO), and is playing an active role in advocacy of regional transport as part of the JO Infrastructure Working Group (IWG). The IWG are investigating improvements to traditional transport services and intermodal transport options.

DP44 Provide a rigorous planning assessment framework which reflects State legislation and Council's adopted land use strategy to ensure appropriate development outcomes



The Wingecarribee Local Environmental Plan (LEP) is currently being amended in line with the recently completed Local Planning Strategy to ensure the overriding planning framework is reflective of the community's expectations. Those planning proposals that have been supported through the Local Planning Strategy process have received a gateway determination.

All Planning Proposal submissions continue to be assessed in accordance with the Departmental guidelines, and Council's template and guidelines have been reviewed and updated to ensure proposals are assessed fairly and in a consistent and efficient way.

Council's planning assessment framework will be progressively updated over the next two to three years to reflect changes to NSW planning legislation which came into effect on 1 March 2018. Council is awaiting further guidance from the State Government to effect these changes.

DP45 Review and prepare planning strategies, policies and studies that retain the character of the Shire's towns and villages



Council recently completed the Wingecarribee Local Planning Strategy which described the character and important attributes of the Shire's towns and villages. The Local Planning Strategy will inform a comprehensive review of Council's Development Control Plans (DCPs) which will guide future development in the Shire to ensure the character of towns and villages can be retained. The Development Control Plan comprehensive review has been commenced and will continue over the next 6 months. The Department of Planning and Environment has advised of changes to the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* that are likely to require content of the DCP to be in a standard format.

DP46 Implement initiatives that promote and protect cultural heritage



Council continues to run initiatives to promote and protect cultural heritage, such as the biannual Heritage Awards that were held in May 2018, the heritage grants scheme and contributing to the annual National Trust Heritage Festival to build awareness of Council's heritage activities.

Council has recently incorporated over 90 new heritage items into schedule 5 of the Wingecarribee Local Environment Plan 2010, which will ensure that these heritage significant buildings are protected both through their ability to attract future funding for maintenance and repair but also to ensure that future development is appropriately assessed to reduce or ameliorate any impact on the items.

DP47 Implement a program of towns and village centre improvements



Council remains committed to the ongoing maintenance and improvement of the Shire's town and village centres. Proactive and reactive maintenance has been undertaken in all central business district (CBD) areas including street sweeping, pavement cleaning and trip hazard removal.

Other planned projects include the design for the Corbett Gardens infrastructure upgrade and the design for the Bowral Memorial Hall redevelopment.

Service-level maintenance plans for village and town CBDs are being developed.

DP48 Implement the Street Tree Master Plan



Street tree plantings have been completed, with a further 120 trees planted in various locations in this reporting period. Planning is under way for additional planting this spring.

Council has updated the Urban Tree Policy and it was adopted by Council in May. The Tree Risk Management Plan was endorsed in June.

DP49 Provide and maintain high quality community facilities across the Shire



Council is implementing a number of operational actions that will improve the quality of facilities provided to the community. These include:

- A draft Play Spaces Strategy
- The Parks Asset Management Plan, and
- A Public Toilet Strategy.

Designs for the Civic Centre have been completed and the Civic Centre refurbishment has been submitted for development approval. The tender process for construction of the Civic Centre upgrade will commence as soon as possible, once approval has been received.

Other facilities being designed or being delivered include:

- Welby Hockey second synthetic field
- Lake Alexandra playground softfall renewal
- Design of the Iron Mines Oval amenities building
- Leighton Gardens public toilet refurbishment
- Winifred West Park public toilet refurbishment, and
- Design of the Corbett Gardens infrastructure upgrade.

DP50 Undertake the redevelopment of Bowral Memorial Hall



Significant progress has been made for the redevelopment of the Bowral Memorial Hall project with a development approval issued and an application made to the State Government for 50% funding of the project.

The design is well progressed and will be completed by the end of the 2018/19 financial year, with construction scheduled to take place in the 2019/20 financial year. Council Staff are continuing to progress this project in accordance with the Delivery Program and available funding.

DP51 Effectively plan for and deliver on the diverse needs of people with a disability

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan first year report has been submitted to the NSW Government. Council will continue to fund the Ageing and Disability Officer role within Council following the cessation of funding from the State Government for this role.

The Missed Business Guide continues to be distributed with a focus on Berrima during this period. The Guide provides local businesses with strategies on how to attract customers and staff by providing better access to their business.

Support and partnerships for projects and events supporting disability inclusion and awareness remains an important strategy. Funding was sought from the Liveable Communities grant program for a project which aimed to increase participation of people with disabilities in the Arts Festival to be held in November. Unfortunately, this application was unsuccessful.

DP52 Ensure planning controls allow for diversity of housing choice

In 2017, Council adopted a Local Planning Strategy that was endorsed by the New South Wales Department of Planning. As Council did not identify any additional or new urban release areas and instead relied upon infill development within Council's existing towns and villages, the Department specifically excluded the residential component. Council has continued its work on developing a residential strategy which identifies additional new urban release areas and new re-zoning opportunities throughout the Shire to enable diversity of housing choice. This is supported by land use zoning and variation in minimum lot size.

In 2018, Council has considered a number of planning proposals that were supported through the Local Planning Strategy. Those matters are currently being pursued through a planning proposal process that will enable greater diversity in housing choice.

A local housing strategy will be further pursued once Council has certainty over the guidelines proposed for such a strategy from the NSW Department of Planning later in 2018.

DP53 Partner with agencies to plan and deliver a program of road upgrades, renewals and maintenance

Council has developed a comprehensive capital works program and delivery plan for the 2018/19 financial year. The majority of the capital works program will be utilising a combination of in-house resources and contractors.

The following projects were completed during the reporting period:

- Old South Road rehabilitation and road widening between Merrigang Street and Bowral Road
- Wombeyan Caves Road rehabilitation
- Wilson Drive road rehabilitation, and
- Exeter Road rehabilitation and upgrade (Blackspot funded).

Construction work for the Berrima Deviation Project is continuing.

DP54 Implement a long term solution for the use and disposal of road side spoil



Council road and drain construction projects are being designed with a view to minimising spoil (excavated public road material) needing to be taken to a disposal facility. This includes the implementation of co-projects such as Clear Zone safety improvements facilitating the reuse of cut and fill material. Clear Zone safety improvements include managing road verges so that cars leaving the road at speed do not immediately hit an object or go over an embankment.

A number of sites are being investigated regarding the practicality of creating council depots for reusable material and stockpile management. Where identified as viable, the intention is to obtain Environmental Processing Licences to further reuse options.

DP55 Review and implement Water Master Plan



Council has resources committed to the development of long term strategies for infrastructure within water and sewer. Council has reviewed and updated its Integrated Water Cycle Management Plan, which has incorporated the long term capital works plan, a review of current supply zones, and the long term utilisation/upgrades of both of the Wingecarribee and Bundanoon supply schemes.

DP56 Review and implement Sewage Treatment Plant Upgrade Strategy



Council is in the final stages of obtaining approval for the Integrated Water Cycle Management (IWCM) Strategy. The adopted IWCM Strategy scenario, which forms part of the overall sewerage strategy, supports the upgrade of Moss Vale, Bowral and Mittagong Waste Water Treatment Plants (WWTPs) over the next seven years at a total cost of \$85 million.

The following projects have been included in the capital works program:

- Upgrade Moss Vale WWTP (design 2018/19, construction 2019/21) total \$28 million
- Upgrade Bowral WWTP (design 2018/19, construction 2019/21) total \$34 million
- Upgrade Mittagong WWTP (design 2018/19, construction 2019/21) total \$23 million

Expressions of interest have been prepared for consideration under the NSW Government Safe and Secure Water Program for 25% funding for the design and construction of Bowral and Moss Vale Waste Water Treatment Plants.

DP57 Improve stormwater management across the Shire



Throughout the reporting period, Council has continued work to improve stormwater management across the Shire, delivering the following during the reporting period:

- The Floodplain Management Strategy is progressing with the Office of Environment and Heritage confirming successful grant applications for Whites Creek Flood Study and Nattai Ponds Risk Management Study.
- The tender process for Whites Creek and Nattai Ponds flood study has been completed and the flood studies by specialist consultants have begun.
- Community consultation and feedback, which will feed into the flood study, is almost complete.
- Ongoing maintenance of Shire drains, creeks and reserves.

DP58 Drinking water quality management



Council continues to work through commitments and actions associated with the adopted Drinking Water Management System. The following actions have been achieved within the reporting period:

- The delivery of primary treated water was 100% compliant with the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines
- The delivery of Council's annual system review for NSW Health
- The review and re-adoption of Council's Drinking Water Policy
- The adoption of Council's Backflow Management Policy
- Continuous staff training and development
- Customer stakeholder liaison
- Water sampling and analysis programs
- Implementation of water theft management protocols, and
- The delivery of associated scopes and projects for enhancing associated water infrastructure.

DP59 Ensure the integrity of water and sewer infrastructure



Council has continued to conduct both planned and reactive maintenance of its infrastructure. Reviews and modifications of structure, skill base and work practices are continually ongoing to maximise business efficiencies and customer service standards.

Council staff continue to review policies, with revised policies on Trade Waste, Drinking Water and Backflow Management adopted in the last six months, which complement the management practices on water theft and illegal property connections.

DP60 Ensure regulatory compliance of sewerage infrastructure



The Environment Protection Agency (EPA) regulatory annual returns for five waste water treatment schemes were completed between March and May 2018. The sixth annual return will occur in September 2018. Four of the schemes were fully compliant. The Berrima scheme had a pH non-compliance associated with its final treated effluent. The pH management of its effluent has been previously raised with the EPA, and an agreed Environmental Improvement Program is currently in place to manage this long term issue.

Council has conducted a review of its licence parameters with the EPA and new achievable parameters have been agreed as part of the new licence conditions. Further licence parameters will be reassessed once the capital delivery program scoping for the three Waste Water Treatment Plant upgrades has been confirmed in 2018/19.

The last six months has also seen the successful delivery of infiltration smoke testing compliance assessments on properties in Bundanoon, which follows on from previous annual programs conducted in Bowral and Moss Vale. Smoke testing involves pumping a non-toxic mist into the sewer main to highlight any damaged assets or illegal customer connections, and is undertaken to stop the infiltration of stormwater into the sewage system.

Council has also reviewed and implemented its Pollution Response Incident Management Plans, which are essential for managing risks that may occur at all six of Council's waste water schemes.



DP61 Facilitate and advocate for enhanced access to
telecommunication networks



Council is working with telecommunications carriers to determine viable options for improved telecommunications in the region.



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 2017-21 includes 23 four-year actions to assist in the achievement of the Environment strategies. The progress for these four-year actions for the January to June 2018 reporting period is outlined below.

DP62 Manage public natural assets



Environmental management activities continue to be successfully implemented by the Environment Levy funded Bushcare program across 38 bushland sites.

Seven revegetation projects commenced during this period, at Berrima Weir Reserve, Berrima Stone Quarry Walk, Bowral Centennial Park, Moss Vale Cosgrove Park, Burrawang George Street Wetland, Robertson Caalong Creek and Mittagong Chinamans Creek.

The Community Nursery continues to operate with volunteer support, with over 6,000 plants produced in the reporting period.

The use of portable cameras for biodiversity and natural asset management has commenced. This will be a vital tool for Council for the management of bushland assets including the monitoring of biodiversity and vertebrate pests and control of damaging activities.

The Southern Highlands Koala Conservation Project continues. The Southern Highlands Platypus Conservation Project commenced, utilising community engagement, citizen science and a Platypus Spotter App that has been developed by Council.

The Southern Highlands Glossy Black Cockatoo Conservation Project commenced. Council has partnered with the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage and the "Friends of the Glossy Black Cockatoo" community group on a collaborative and citizen science based approach with our community to help save the endangered Glossy Black Cockatoo. The project is called "Glossies in the Mist" and focuses on the Southern Highlands and Southern Tablelands. It is being funded through the NSW Government 'Saving Our Species' program and will initially operate for three years with a budget of approximately \$110,000 over this period.

The project will include actions to address critical threats of loss of hollow trees, loss and degradation of important foraging habitat, inappropriate fire regimes, availability of surface water in proximity to nesting and feeding habitat, lack of awareness of the species and its habitat requirements, and loss of local and regional scale habitat connectivity. Particular focus will be on improving management for the species within the Regional Wildlife Corridor mapped in Council's LEP in the Canyonleigh area.

The Local Government NSW Roadside Environmental Management Plan Project has commenced with grant funding of \$46,000 received from Local Government NSW. The project will be completed by March 2019.

DP63 Maintain and build high value environmental lands and corridors



During the reporting period, Council continued implementation of the Private Land Biodiversity Conservation Strategic Plan. Council encourages conservation on private land through a three tiered program to support different types of landholders and conservation values.

In total, 188 properties are registered with Council's Habitat For Wildlife program, and 117 properties are registered with the Land For Wildlife program. One new Vegetation Conservation Agreement was entered into to protect and enhance Robertson Basalt Rainforest on private land.

The NSW Office of Environment and Heritage is continuing to develop the Green Web Corridors project. This uses draft vegetation mapping in conjunction with koala satellite tracking data and predictive distribution of koala habitat. Green Web is anticipated to be completed in the second half of 2018.

DP64 Ensure the impacts of development on biodiversity are assessed, monitored and mitigated



Council continues to utilise section 4.15 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* as the basis to ensure that impacts of development on biodiversity are assessed, monitored and mitigated. A more rigorous assessment process has been introduced following the adoption of the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*. All applications that involve an impact on biodiversity are now considered by a dedicated staff member who is qualified in Biodiversity Impact Assessment.

DP65 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, investigations have resulted in enforcement notices being issued for a number of matters.

Council ran two community workshops on the correct operation of wood heaters to minimise air pollution, delivered two school-based education programs focused on water quality, and ran the Household Chemical Clean Out event in May which saw the removal of over 14 tonnes of unwanted waste chemicals from our community.

DP66 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 the relevant legislation and new biodiversity legislation. Controls to minimise and mitigate environmental impacts are identified through this process.

The Local Government NSW Grant funded Roadside Vegetation Project has commenced. This project will see the development and implementation of Environmental guidelines which will relate to works within Council's road reserves that affect roadside vegetation.

DP67 Develop and implement policies that support reduction in pollution across the Shire



Council aims to ensure up-to-date environment and sustainability policies are adequate and appropriate to address our community's needs and emerging issues.

During this reporting period Council has developed a Noise Policy, procedure, fact sheets and supporting documents, and these are ready for exhibition in late 2018.

The new Urban Backyard Burning of Vegetation Policy and supporting actions have been fully implemented. The next update of the map outlining which properties can and can't undertake backyard burning will soon take place, with some data improvements. These improvements will also have a flow-on benefit for other areas of Council.

DP68 Implement planning controls that protect the Shire's natural resources



The Wingecarribee Local Environmental Plan (LEP) is currently being amended in line with the recently completed Local Planning Strategy to ensure the overriding planning framework is reflective of the community's expectations to protect the Shire's natural resources. All planning proposals to amend the LEP are assessed against relevant State Environmental Planning Policies and Ministerial Directions, which seek to protect the Sydney drinking water catchment, environmentally sensitive lands and important agricultural lands.

The planning proposal to amend the LEP is progressively moving towards gazettal.

All planning proposal submissions received by Council and included in the Local Planning Strategy have been provided with a gateway determination and have been publicly exhibited.

DP69 Advocate to State and Federal government to ensure planning control and State plans reflect community priorities



Council continues to advocate to both the State and Federal governments to ensure planning controls and State plans are reflective of community expectations. Submissions on proposed legislative and policy changes have recently been made, including the introduction of Complying Development for Medium Density Development.

Council will continue to liaise with the Department of Planning to ensure proposed legislative changes can be implemented in a way that is consistent with community expectations and priorities.

DP70 Develop partnerships with community and agencies to identify update and maintain awareness of key natural resources



Council website pages relating to environmental information are regularly reviewed and amended to ensure currency and reliability of information.

Council maintains a number of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) environmental datasets for development assessment, planning considerations and environmental assessments of Council projects. Processes are in place to ensure currency of this information.

During the reporting period, Waterwatch Program monitoring activities were undertaken at Mittagong Creek, Whites Creek, Lake Alexandra, Medway Rivulet and Caalong Creek. The aim of the monitoring is to understand catchment health by collecting data on the trends in water quality and stream condition. Results are published on Council's website and entered into the NSW Atlas of Living Australia. Council also undertakes stream macroinvertebrate sampling.

Council, in partnership with South East Local Land Services, continues to conduct 'Who's Living on My Land' workshops for Rural landholders, and has delivered two Hotspot fire management workshops.

Two editions of Wingecarribee Web e-newsletter were published and distributed to over 1,000 subscribers.

A number of citizen science tools have been developed and deployed including:

- Platypus Spotter
- Glossy Black Cockatoo Hollow Bearing Tree recorder
- Wombat Mange Treatment Tracker
- Koala Spotter

Further tools are in development.

DP71 Implement community awareness programs that promote sustainable living



During the reporting period, Council was awarded a grant from the Community Resilience Innovation Program through the Office of Emergency Management to develop a program focused on assisting senior citizens to build resilience for dealing with extreme weather events.

Council also facilitated three 'Demystifying Energy' workshops with the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH). Those who attended were encouraged to bring their electricity bills for assessment and were provided impartial advice on the suitable size for solar installations based on their energy consumption.

Development of the School Based Storm Water Program continues. Council has supported several schools during the reporting period providing storm water education sessions to students at local waterways. These sessions will be formalised into a package that can be offered to schools within the Shire.

In March, an Earth Hour event organised by Council in conjunction with Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens, local artists and Regional Arts was a great success with over 300 people attending. A local student spoke to the crowd about sustainability issues, and local renewable energy experts and OEH's energy team were on-hand to talk to the community on renewable energy and energy efficiency. Children were introduced to solar lighting through a lantern making workshop. Mains electricity lights were turned off at 8:30 to mark Earth Hour.

DP72 Develop partnerships and network to leverage off existing programs



During this reporting period, Council has assisted in developing networks between the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) and Emergency Services through the Seniors Festival event - Fire and Ice workshops.

Useful community networks were also developed through the Earth Hour event participants (including OEH and the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens) with opportunities to share information and cross-promote events, and Council continues to work with OEH to implement energy management workshops for the community.

Council is working closely with a group of south eastern Councils as part of the Cities Power Partnership “buddies” group. This network shares knowledge and resources in the area of energy management.

The Rural Fire Service (RFS) is supportive of Council's new Urban Backyard Burning of Vegetation Policy. Both Council and the RFS are now providing the community with consistent messages around this policy.

Community networks have been strengthened between Council and various community groups during the development of Plastic Free July activities including with Moss Vale Community Gardens and Creative Space group.

DP73 Implement State Government regulations

Council continues to make changes to its internal planning protocols following changes to the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* in March 2018.

Council has also implemented changes to the manner in which it undertakes assessment and determination of Tree Removal applications following the introduction of the Vegetation State Environmental Planning Policy at the end of 2017. Council now undertakes Vegetation Control Permits for consideration of tree removal under its jurisdiction.

DP74 Advocate and educate for improved development outcomes

Council has commenced work on a Local Housing Strategy and comprehensive Development Control Plan (DCP) review in 2018. The Local Housing Strategy and DCP will guide future development in the Shire to facilitate positive development outcomes that are reflective of community expectations.

The Local Planning Strategy was completed in 2017/18 and Council met with a number of government departments to advocate for more rigorous planning controls in the Southern Highlands, particularly regarding medium density development. The Department of Planning has provided an extension to the time for the introduction of the new legislation to enable Council to prepare and introduce local character statements.

DP75 Support the establishment and expansion of businesses that produce goods locally

Research has identified a need to more closely align local food producers, processors, and major local food consumers. To this end, an initial "Chef's Lunch" is planned for September 2018.

The recent Pie Time event saw approximately 200,000 locally made pies sold in June, generating estimated revenue of \$2 million.

In the energy sector, suitably qualified local energy sector businesses will be promoted within the region via Low Carbon Living Southern Highlands.

Council is also working to increase online sales of locally made products, through the promotion of low-cost online tools to small businesses in the Shire. This may also lead to an increase in the

number of technology jobs on offer in the region.

DP76 Promote and encourage waste minimisation and recycling



Council has promoted waste minimisation initiatives in the community, with over 200 students attending the Resource Recovery Centre (RRC) for recycling workshops, and 300 community members attending the RRC for information sessions on recycling. Council has also made presentations at the Country Women's Association and Bundanoon Garden Club.

DP77 Implement strategies to reduce illegal dumping



Council continues to attend Illawarra Shoalhaven Joint Organisation meetings to inform Council Rangers of opportunities for funding, grants and training for the Reporting Illegal Dumping (RID) program.

DP78 Manage the Resource Recovery Centre in accordance with Environmental Protection Authority license and ensure efficient and cost effective operations



The Resource Recovery Centre continues to operate within its Environment Protection Agency (EPA) license, and the Community Recycling Centre has been highly commended by the EPA. This has led to visits from other agencies from interstate, with both the South Australian and Queensland governments sending representatives to view Council's facility as a model of excellence.

Council continues to make improvements to the facility to assist with environmental management. Recently a cardboard bailer has been installed through EPA funding, enabling Council to access markets that others will find difficult with un-bailed cardboard. It will also reduce truck movements, saving on freight costs.

DP79 Develop and implement a Council Waste Strategy and Policy



Council's Waste Strategy is currently under review. It is anticipated it will be presented to Council in late 2018 for consideration.

DP80 Implement strategies to improve energy management



Work continued on the Energy Management Plan during the reporting period. Elements of the Plan are complete, including key procedures and a detailed action plan.

Energy management activities have continued in parallel to the plan being developed including:

- Installation of 25kW solar Photo Voltaic (PV) system on the roof of the Moss Vale works depot
- Project planning for installation of 50kW Solar PV system on the roof of the Robertson Waste Water Treatment Plant.
- Continuation of LED Street lighting project.

DP81 Undertake initiatives that increase awareness and encourage water, energy and waste reduction

The Environment Levy sponsors the Southern Highlands Local Business Awards in the category of Environmental Sustainability. Nominations for the 2018 awards are currently being received.

Council facilitated three 'Demystifying Energy' community workshops aimed to improve energy use in the home, and supported the Earth Hour event in conjunction with the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens.

DP82 Implement strategies to address the impacts of climate change

A formal review of Council's Climate Change Adaptation Plan has commenced. This will be completed and adopted in the second half of 2018.

DP83 Improve resource and energy efficiency at Council facilities and monitor carbon emission

Council is participating in the Office of Environment and Heritage Community Emissions Profile Pilot Project. The output of this project will be a Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions Profile Report containing information, references, activity data, assumptions, inputs, insights, charts, emission factors, and other relevant data relating to emissions. Council staff will participate in greenhouse gas accounting training offered as part of this project.

Annual greenhouse gas accounting for Council's operation in 2017/18 will be available later in 2018, following the receipt of all utility data.

DP84 Encourage carbon reduction across the Shire

In May, Council participated in the second meeting of the south east Cities Power Partnership members. The group consists of other Councils in the southeast region of NSW including Shoalhaven, Kiama, Bega, and Eurobodalla. The group provides a platform to share progress with the Cities Power Partnership Pledges and shared knowledge and information on energy management topics, including feasibility of large scale solar, and the development of an Electric Highway in the region to support the likely proliferation of electric vehicles. Council has submitted its pledges to the Cities Power Partnership, which are available on the CPP website.

Council partnered with Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) during Seniors Week to deliver two community information workshops:

- Demystify energy – presented by OEH, covering energy management and efficiency topics
- Staying Safe in Extreme Weather – Focused on building resilience but touching on energy management.

Council is participating in OEH's Local Government Community Emissions Baseline Pilot project, which aims to develop a global protocol for community-scale greenhouse gas emission inventories, and a compliant community emissions profile for Councils in regional NSW. The project will also provide the tools and knowledge necessary to repeat this on an annual basis.

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 2017-21 includes 12 four-year actions to assist in the achievement of the **Economy** strategies. The progress for these four-year actions for the January to June 2018 reporting period is outlined below.

DP85 Support regional activities and partnerships to broaden and promote the range business and industry investment



The draft Economic Development Strategy will assist to align business and industry investment with our primary competitive advantages. There will be a focus on innovative industries in the areas where we have a competitive advantage.

DP86 Build on partnerships that increase and broaden local employment opportunities



The draft Economic Development Strategy will include strategies and actions designed to expand local business mentoring and build partnerships with local associations to increase employment opportunities, particularly for young people.

DP87 Ensure tourism development assessment is based on quadruple bottom line principles (i.e. considers environmental, economic, social and governance factors)



A number of development applications have been considered during the reporting period that relate to tourism, including localised temporary uses and also larger function centres. All applications have been considered in accordance with the provisions of section 4.15 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* and also quadruple bottom line principles. Where concerns have been raised during the assessment that have been unable to be overcome via amendment to the plans or imposing a condition of development consent, Council has not supported the applications.

DP88 Promote the Southern Highlands as a world class tourist destination



During the reporting period, Destination Southern Highlands (DSH) continued to work at a high level with key industry and government bodies to position the Southern Highlands in International and Domestic markets as a major regional tourism destination.

During the period, DSH engaged Tourism Australia, Destination NSW and Visit Canberra to assist with the marketing and promotion of the Southern Highlands in their key international market via the inclusion of our region's major events, experiences and attractions in their marketing activities. Support was provided in their online social media platforms throughout the period as well as generating media stories through key consumers' publications both online and in traditional print (newspapers/magazines). This was also further supported through media and trade familiarisations to the region, where journalists and key travel trade representatives experienced our region either on day visits from Sydney/Canberra or on overnight itinerary stays.

To further cement our position as a world class tourist destination, the Southern Highlands has been included in the recently released Destination Sydney Surrounds South 'Destination Management Plan 2018-2022', which highlights the strengths of our region and the opportunities of visitor economy growth to developers, industry and government.

The region and its tourism opportunities have been included in the draft Economic Development Strategy that will be presented to Council in the coming months. This strategy will strengthen tourism as a focus for Council going forward and will deliver further promotional opportunities in supporting the strategy of the region being a 'world class tourist destination'.

Recent statistics from the Federal Government's Tourism Research Australia (TRA) continue to highlight that the Southern Highlands is being regarded as a world class destination with increases in visitation, spend and length of stay in our region over previous years. TRA statistics for the year ending December 2017 highlight that our region attracted 1.9 million visitors who stayed 1 million nights in the region and contributed \$272 million in visitor economy expenditure.

Destination Southern Highlands continues to employ benchmark marketing resources and activities to promote the Southern Highlands via its digital platforms—its website, YouTube, Facebook and Instagram. Further supporting this approach, DSH employs communications via print publications, customer relationship management activities, Welcome Centre concierge servicing and unique integrated destination marketing campaigns such as Tulip Time and Pie Time.

DP89 Develop and implement marketing and promotional activities to promote the Southern Highlands



During the reporting period, Destination Southern Highlands experienced successes as a result of a proactive and integrated marketing plan. Increases were achieved against the same reporting period in 2017 for:

- Visitation to the Welcome Centre – 9% increase
- Merchandise Sales at the Welcome Centre – 27% increase
- Unique Website Visits – 144% increase
- Accommodation Bookings – 77% increase
- Membership – 258% increase

These results were further supported by key industry partners of Bradman Centre, Berrima Courthouse and Fitzroy Falls who all recorded increases in visitation to their attractions.

The activities that have supported the above growth have been achieved via:

- The development and introduction of the 2019 Southern Highlands Destination Planner and Free Map consumer publications,
- Roll out of a 12-month themed marketing calendar to industry and media,

- Themed monthly events at the Welcome Centre,
- Development and marketing of the region's official website
- Expansion of DSH social media marketing platforms and associated marketing activities on the website, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter,
- Developing a close relationship with Google and TripAdvisor to promote our destination and services via their world-wide platforms,
- Working closely with tourism organisations such as Australian Tourism Data Warehouse, Tourism Australia, Destination NSW and Visit Canberra to leverage their marketing and product development services,
- Securing media visits to our region and the subsequent publicity coverage
- Introducing a proactive public relations strategy,
- The expansion and development of the 2018 'Pie Time' Destination Marketing Campaign for June, which generated national and international media coverage and resulted in over 200,000 pies being produced and sold during the month by local bakers, over \$2 million injected into the local visitor economy along with the introduction of numerous new events and experiences being available for consumers, compared to the inaugural 2017 year campaign,
- Publicity generated around the Southern Highlands Welcome Centre winning the World Toilet Tourism Awards,
- Engaging and Working collaboratively with more local businesses for the promotion of the region through the DSH Membership Program,
- The development of the My Southern Highlands local community tourism ambassador program engaging and rewarding local Wingecarribee Shire residents as proud Southern Highlands advocates amongst their visiting family and friends,
- Development and promotion of the region's flagship event Tulip Time for 2018 and the pre-event marketing opportunities associated with this year's program of events,
- Production and distribution of the 'What's On' monthly video highlighting key events and activities,
- Production and distribution of 'Meet the Maker' videos,
- Development and promotion of the Southern Highlands Golf Pass amongst the 8 local golf courses in the Southern Highlands in an effort to secure mid-week visitation, and
- Hosting national TV broadcasting segments such as Better Homes and Gardens, TODAY Show and Sydney Weekender.

DP90 Explore options to progress Moss Vale Enterprise Zone



The progress of the Moss Vale Enterprise Zone (MVEZ) is outlined in the draft Economic Development Strategy due for completion later this year. Part of the Strategy will be to develop a new brand for the MVEZ.

DP91 Support the establishment and expansion of clean industries



Council has developed a relationship with Low Carbon Living Southern Highlands (LCLSH). The aim of LCLSH is to develop cleaner industries in our region. The focus is on reducing water, waste and energy.

In addition LCLSH is slated to collaborate with Regional Development Southern Inland to promote new industry ventures.

DP92 Manage the operation of the Southern Region Livestock facility including the coordination of cattle sales in the Southern Region and provide a financial return to Council



The SRLX upgrade project is progressing through the Growing Local Economies grant assessment process.

A number of capital works projects have been completed including the power supply upgrade, installation of a diesel generator and full replacement of the lights under the roof covering the pens. The SEPCON manure processing unit is 95% installed with some inclement weather hampering the completion date.

Cattle sales have been within the agents' expectations, averaging 1,100 head at the weekly sale.

DP93 Ensure development does not impact on viable primary production and food security



All planning proposals submitted to Council for consideration are assessed against Council's strategic criteria and relevant Ministerial directions under section 9.1 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, which includes the need to protect the agricultural value of rural land. Council has continued to assess planning policies in accordance with these criteria during the reporting period.

DP94 Facilitate programs and networks that support and strengthen business development



In collaboration with local participants, Council has been working on several programs to increase skills and job opportunities in the region, including a skills exchange ecosystem and a Job-Getter program.

By leveraging a skills-based approach, the establishment of the Southern Highlands Innovation Partnership project is intended to connect and strengthen all business programs and business networks in the region.

DP95 Support initiatives that provide opportunities for business mentoring and connection



The draft Economic Development Strategy includes a number of actions related to community leadership capacity, including uncovering community leaders and developing ongoing relationships.

DP96 Support regional economic development initiatives



Council supports a number of regional economic development initiatives, including with Regional Development Australia Southern Inland, the Canberra Joint Organisation, local innovation specialists such as the Business Enterprise Centre and the Highlands Entrepreneurs Regional Development, and OzTrade.
