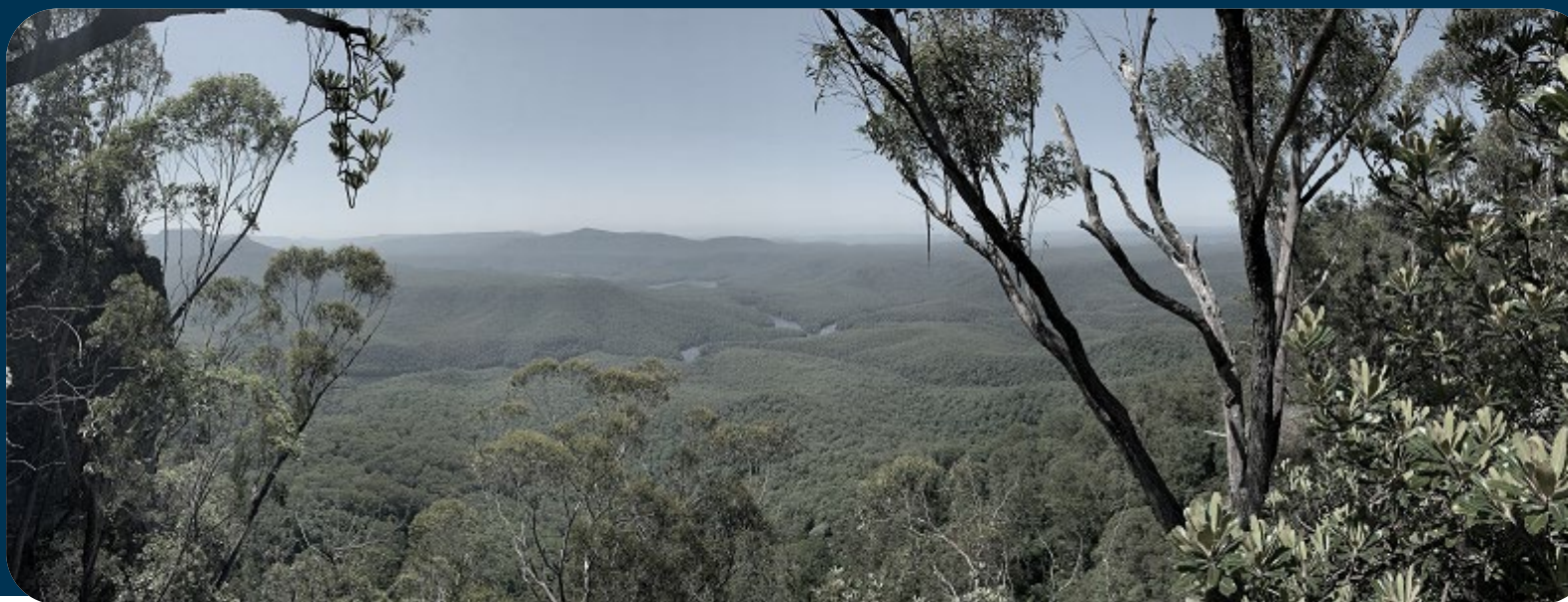


Bi-Annual Delivery Program 2017-22 Progress Report

1 January 2021 to 30 June 2021



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Introduction

This Bi-Annual Delivery Program Progress Report is for the period 1 January 2021 to 30 June 2021. It reports Wingecarribee Shire Council’s progress towards achieving the 100 objectives of the Delivery Program 2017-22.

At the end of June 2021, of the 100 objectives 95 were ‘on-track’, 5 were classified as ‘needs attention’, while none were ‘on-hold’, considered ‘critical’ or ‘delayed’. Each objective is assigned a coloured circle to signify overall progress, as per the below key:

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

Integrated Planning and Reporting



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 2017-22** includes 23 actions to assist in the achievement of the **Leadership** strategies. The progress for these actions for the January to June 2021 reporting period is outlined below.

DP01 Develop and implement an elected-member professional development program

The NSW Local Government Election was scheduled to take place on 4 September 2021, however in July 2021 the NSW Government announced that as a result of COVID-19 (Delta Variant) the election would be postponed to 4 December 2021.

To support residents interested in standing for Council, three candidate information sessions facilitated by Local Government NSW, two sessions were held along with a forum delivered by the Australian Local Government Women's Association NSW Branch to encourage women to stand for Local Government elections provided an overview of the role and responsibilities of a councillor and key information about local government.

An Induction Program has been developed which provides a range of topics to enable Councillors to be effective in their roles including:

- Governance framework
- Roles and responsibility
- Legislative frameworks
- Strategic planning and policies
- Relationship building

The Induction Program will be supplemented with an ongoing professional development program, for the new Council as well as individual learning and development plans. ensure that Councillors acquire and maintain the skills to perform the role of a councillor.

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

Council developed and publicly exhibited the draft Operational Plan and Budget Council also held drop-in sessions in Mittagong, Moss Vale, Hill Top, Robertson, Bundanoon and Yerrinbool in May and June 2021. Following the consideration of submissions received from the community, the Operational Plan and Budget was adopted by Council in June 2021.

A review of Council's policy register was undertaken during the reporting period and identified the need to repeal a number of redundant policies. At its ordinary meeting of 10 February 2021, Council repealed 10 policies, reasons for repeal included being replaced by other documents, legislative changes and technology advancements.

Continual review of the policy register ensures that Council's policy positions remains current and remains consistent with legislation and industry best practice.

Following the suspension of Council and the appointment of an Interim Administrator, the Code of Meeting Practice was revised. The new Code reflects a commitment to becoming a paperless office and improves transparency and openness with respect to pre-meeting briefing sessions, workshops and other information sessions

DP03 Improve community understanding and awareness of Council decisions

In 2021 greater focus has been placed on ensuring openness and transparency to restore public confidence in Council. As a part of this process there has been an increase in information released on Council's website and released through a variety of communication channels to ensure understanding and awareness of Council decisions.

As outlined in DP02 amendments to Council's Code of Meeting Practice were made to improve transparency and openness with respect to pre-meeting briefing sessions, workshops and other information sessions, this will ensure greater understanding and awareness of Council decisions.

DP04 Develop and maintain an engaged and safe workforce

During the reporting period work has continued on enhancing WHS related procedures and two WHS safety committee meetings have taken place to ensure that Council operates a safe and effective workplace for all staff.

WHS Induction and Traffic Management

Full implementation of the training on approved procedures has been delayed. One on one training has been provided when requested and the procedure and associated forms placed on Council's intranet.

Managing the Risk of Falls from Height

Initial consultation for this procedure has closed and WHS staff have begun to review this feedback and update the consultation record.

Hazardous Manual Tasks

The Hazardous Manual Task procedure is progressing with the first draft close to being completed after which it will undergo internal consultation.

Health Monitoring

The draft procedure is currently being reviewed and finalised by key staff after which it will undergo internal consultation.

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



This Program was impacted by the COVID-19 lock down, with significant resources diverted to implementing and managing COVID Safe work plans.

A review of Council's Business Continuity Plan was undertaken with a desktop training exercise for key staff completed this year.

Council's Risk Register has been and will continue to be reviewed to ensure the identified risks are reflective of the risks facing and will assist Council in developing ways to mitigate that risk.

DP06 Develop and Maintain Council's Organisational Development Programs



Council is currently reviewing the operations of the Organisational Development branch including the systems and methods which are currently being used.

The current focus is on improving organisational culture. This will see a review completed of how Council attract and more importantly retain staff, and the current system used to manage recruitment and on boarding. It is expected that this review will be completed and implementation commencing by the end of October 2021.

DP07 Implement actions from Council's Fit for The Future Improvement Program



Council's Long-Term Financial Plan has been updated as part of the 2021/22 Budget. This Plan monitors performance against industry set benchmarks. The review found that Council is continuing to meet all industry benchmarks with the exception of the Infrastructure Renewal Ratio. This ratio measures Council's performance in renewing assets at the same rate that they are depreciating.

While the Long-Term Financial Plan includes a significant increase in infrastructure renewal works funded through the approved special rate variation, depreciation forecasts have increased due to

additional assets Council has received through urban development. To address this issue Council will review its depreciation methodology as part of the next review of its Strategic Asset Management Plan to ensure that the calculation of depreciation expenditure reflects current industry practices.

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



The preparation of the 2019/20 Financial Statements have commenced with significant changes to the presentation of the Annual Financial Statements prescribed through the Local Government Code of Accounting Practice and Reporting. The interim audit was conducted by the NSW Audit Office in June 2021.

The March Review of the 2020/21 Budget was presented to Council on 12 May 2021. The result presented was a balanced budget.

The 2021/22 Operational Plan and Budget including the Revenue Policy was adopted by Council on 23 June 2021.

A review of Council's finances was conducted by Finch Consulting with their report tabled at the Council Meeting on 12 May 2021. The report included eleven (11) recommendations and Management has accepted the recommendations in totality.

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



Council's Fleet team continues to complete maintenance schedules in line with manufacturer specifications, ensuring the safety and reliability of Council's plant and fleet. Council's Plant Replacement Program is on track to be delivered within budget and agreed timeframes and in line with operational specifications.

The completion of proactive maintenance schedules across Council's plant and equipment ensures that core services such as road maintenance and construction, the mowing of parks and passive recreation areas, and the provision of water and sewer services can be delivered without significant disruption caused through plant or equipment failure.

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



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

The management of the property portfolio includes the timely reporting to Council on property matters for formal approval. The second half of the 2020/21 financial year saw the reporting of a number of property matters including:


-
- Lease from Australian Rail Track Corporation for Willow Vale shared pathway.
 - Various acquisition matters.
 - Application to be appointed as Reserve Trust Manager for Crown land at Hampden Park Robertson.
 - Application for transfer of Crown Road at Wingello.
 - Applications for road closure at Robertson (being the Robertson RFS site).
 - Proposed sale of Council property at Colo Vale.
 - Classification of the new Renwick Community Centre.

Exchange of contracts for the sale of Council owned land at Colo Vale (being the site of the old RFS shed) took place in June 2021 with settlement due in August 2021.

Completion of the purchase of land for the new animal shelter took place in May 2021.

Native title assessment continues to be undertaken by Council's Property Officers in accordance with the requirements of the Crown Land Management Act 2016.

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



Council continues to manage its procurement activities to ensure compliance with the *Local Government Act 1993*, Regulations and Office of Local Government Tendering Guidelines. Tenders are reported to Council in a timely manner.

Some of the significant procurement activities commenced during the second half of 2020/21 include:

- Wombeyan Caves Road restoration works
- Water assets emergency generators
- Moss Vale bypass design - stage 1
- Legal services panel
- West Bowral trunk main duplication
- Old South Road water main extension
- Cleaning of Council's Civic Centre, Moss Vale
- Bong Bong Common construction - stage 1
- Mittagong Memorial Hall structural repair.

DP12 Develop and implement enhanced asset management practices



Council's asset management practices were reviewed during the reporting period as part of Council's end of Financial year auditing process. Improvements to Council's re-valuation processes were identified and have been implemented over the course of the 2020/21 financial year.

A condition and asset data collection survey of Council's parks and open space assets has been completed. The data has been updated into Council's asset management system and was used for revaluation as part of the end of financial year reporting process.

Suitably qualified contractors were engaged to complete sewer and stormwater CCTV condition inspections. Eight kilometres of stormwater mains have been inspected and cleaned. The sewer CCTV cleaning and inspection contract has also completed with approximately 28 kilometres of mains to be condition assessed.

An Asset Management Maturity Assessment, using the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia assessment tool was completed with eleven (11) elements reviewed. The results are being reviewed and any refinement of the assessment ratings will be undertaken.

DP13 Develop and implement Business Transformation Program



Council continues to work towards the implementation of its five (5) year ICT strategic plan, as a part of the digital transformation program.

A record management system was launched to the organisation in March 2021. This system, in addition to staff education, will ensure that Council is able to meet its obligations under the NSW State Records Act 1998.

Council will commence the roll out of Customer Request Management system, which will be a staged roll out over the next 12 months. This system will ensure that all requests coming into Council are captured and the community and customers of Council will be able to track the progress of their requests in real time through the Council's website.

Electronic Plan stamping for consents has recently been introduced to improve the ease with which consents can be managed and issued. This forms part of our paper lite / less approach to consents and aligns with the need for paperless approach due to Covid-19 impacts.

Mobility will continue to be a large focus of Council's transformation journey to enable staff to have access to all Councils systems in real time from anywhere. This will ensure that work is being conducted effectively and that updates are available to Customers on their requests as they happen.

DP14 Enhance customer interaction with Council



Council has launched more online services to allow customers to be able to interact with Council from anywhere at any time. The focus has been on online fillable forms, which allows customers to lodge several requests with Council without the need to print and manually submit these requests.

Over the coming months Council will be introducing further enhancements with the introduction of the Customer Relationship Management system which will allow customers to lodge online requests and monitor their progress in real time.

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



Council pivoted its IT systems to ensure that it could maintain service delivery, whilst complying with

Public Health Orders to continue to offer a high level of customer service and interaction during the current phase of the pandemic.

Council has now delivered a new disaster recovery solution, which improves Council's ability to recover should there be either an IT infrastructure equipment failure, or a disaster recovery situation.

In order to improve staff productivity and enable faster interaction with customers, Council has commenced work on inter office network upgrade which will be completed the next six months.

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



To ensure a faster delivery of service to the community, Council has implemented an Electronic Document Management system. Over 5,000 documents a week are managed by the system which will result in improved customer service, information provision and transparency. This project will ensure that Council complies with requirements under the State Records Act.

In addition to the above, Council has completed phase one of its new website project, which was launched in February 2021 and has received over 1.1 million hits since going live, an increase of 160%. Further enhancements in online services will be released regularly over the coming 18 months allowing residents and customers to transact with Council at any time that is convenient to them

Council has commenced the implementation of its new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System which will capture and track all incoming correspondence to Council and will enable Council to monitor compliance with agreed response times. Customers and residents will be able to track their requests in real time, enabling greater transparency on interactions with Council.

DP17 Ensure Council services are delivered efficiently and effectively



Council's Service Delivery Review Program remained ongoing during the reporting period, enabling identification of service improvements.

A review of the Community Wellbeing service was completed during the reporting period. Recommendations have been used to inform a review of the Community Development team structure, guide development of strategic priorities and enhance functionality within the team and across council.

The 2021 Community Research results showed an ongoing trend in declining satisfaction with Council's level of communication, information provision and opportunities to participate in decision making. As a result, Council's Corporate Relations service was identified for review, which includes the following functions:

- Communications
- Community engagement
- Civic receptions
- Events coordination.

A consultancy firm has been engaged to facilitate the review, with completion due by end September 2021.

DP18 Identify opportunities for regional collaboration



Council continues to participate in the Canberra Region Joint Organisation meetings including General Manager Advisory Committee Meetings and the various Professional Working Groups allowing council to explore opportunities for collaboration on regional strategic priorities

Council is also continuing to work with other adjoining councils and councils within our region which were affected by the 2019/20 summer bushfires to deliver recovery initiatives to the affected communities. In collaboration with Bega Valley Shire Council, Wingecarribee Shire Council was successful with the joint project called 'Community Connectors Program' under the Bushfire Community Recovery and Resilience Fund Stream Two (BCRRF2). Council has begun early planning on deliverables of this project. A more detailed report on the project will be included in the next reporting period.

DP19 Provide quality, timely and accessible information to the community



Council continues to provide quality, timely and accessible information to the community. News items are distributed via a range of mediums. The variety of communications channels employed by Council and the number of messages issued in the reporting period demonstrate Council's commitment to improving community engagement and open and transparent communications.

These items are promptly issued via a range of channels including media releases, quarterly publications of Wingecarribee Today, radio and television interviews, staff and electronic newsletters, the online digital Media Centre and via our social media platforms including Facebook and Twitter accounts. These sites are monitored by staff with feedback provided as soon as possible.

During the reporting period 90 media releases were issued and 127 posts issued on Facebook with an average reach of 2,362. This led to 10,799 'link clicks' on Facebook and 613 'shares' which resulted in 1,045 new Facebook followers. A total of 8,070 followers were subsequently recorded as of 30 June 2021. For the same period 72 Tweets were issued resulting in 40 new Twitter followers.

Council's weekly e-newsletter which was launched in late 2020, continues to increase the number of subscribers. At the end of the six-month period 24 weekly e-newsletters were issued to over 2,500 subscribers with an average 'open rate' of 45.1%. These joined other regular electronic newsletters issued from various Council departments including the Community Engagement, Environment, Tourism and Arts and Culture teams.

DP20 Implement an effective Community Engagement Framework



The Community Engagement Strategy was updated in June 2021 following legislative changes to the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EPA Act) and Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000 (EPA Regulation).

The Community Engagement Strategy has been an appropriate guide for ensuring consultation could continue while complying with the fluctuating restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The online consultation hub at www.yoursaywingecarribee.com.au continued to offer a covid-safe method for idea sharing and the capture of feedback about proposals, strategies and plans.

The following consultations were undertaken:

- Produce Hub Feasibility Study survey
- Bowral Main Street Improvements
- Environment and Climate Change survey, workshops and discussion forum
- Communications Strategy - public exhibition
- Masterplan for Casburn Park, Wingello - public exhibition
- Re-exhibition of Local Strategic Planning Statement and Local Housing Strategy
- Sport and Recreation Survey
- Destination Southern Highlands Fees and Charges - public exhibition
- Code of Meeting Practice amendments - public exhibition
- Operational Plan 2021/22 including Budget, Revenue Policy and Fees and Charges - public exhibition
- Amended Expenses and Facilities for the Mayor and Councillors Policy - public exhibition
- Planning Proposal to amend secondary dwelling provisions in rural zones
- Planning Matters - public exhibitions
- Leases, licences and other property related matters

9993 unique online consultation visitors were recorded during the reporting period. 5832 of the visitors took action to explore the detail of specific consultations and 747 actively participated in the online platform by completing surveys and submission forms, contributing to forum topics or sharing information in mapping tools.

DP21 Support Council committees and working groups



At the Extraordinary Council meeting on 17 March 2021, Council dissolved the Finance Committee, and all financial reports are now considered at the Ordinary Meetings of Council. The consideration of financial reports in Ordinary Meeting of Council aims to improve openness and transparency of Council

A review of the Charter and Membership of the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee was undertaken with a revised Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee Terms of Reference being adopted at the Ordinary Council meeting on 21 April 2021. The review was undertaken to ensure the Committee reflects best practice and complies with foreshadowed legislative changes relating to audit, risk and improvement committees. At the Council meeting the existing Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee was dissolved and subsequently Council called for expressions of interest from suitably qualified individuals to nominate as independent external committee members.

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



Information about business support services and initiatives are regularly communicated to the leadership teams of the three business Chambers and other peak business bodies to assist them in building capacity within their organisations for the benefit of the local economy.

DP23 Develop partnerships and networking with community, government and business



A number of initiatives relating to bushfire recovery were supported during the reporting period.

Community Recovery Concert hosted by Council was supported by the Rural Fire Service, Recovery Support Service and Red Cross.

Recovery & Regenerate Fun Day & BBQ was a partnership between Council, Community Recovery Support Service, Southern Highlands Foundation and four local native nurseries. DP89, DP90 and DP99 provide more detail regarding business partnerships and networking.

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 2017-22** includes 19 actions to assist in the achievement of the **People** strategies. The progress for these actions for the January to June 2021 reporting period is outlined below.

DP24 Advocate for improved health services in the Shire



The COVID-19 pandemic and the impact of the 2019/2020 Black Summer bushfires have dominated the advocacy for improved health service provision in the Shire. This has led to funding being extended, especially to services that provide mental health supports to bushfire impacted residents. Council staff have been able to advocate local need through representation on several networks including the SouthWest Sydney Primary Health Network Community Advisory Committee, Regional Recovery Health and Wellbeing Committee, Mental Health Bushfire Recovery Steering Committee and the local Social Recovery Sub Committee.

Council provided *Bushfire Recovery Small Grants Program* to support locally led community recovery initiatives.

South West Sydney Primary Network consulted with Council staff in the design and scope of a non-clinical, community-based approach to support mental health and community wellbeing for bushfire affected communities in our Shire. The tender for this funding will be opened in July.

DP25 Partner with community-based organisations in provision of services



Council actively seeks to partner with services to provide events, workshops and deliver programs in the local community.

Youth Week is an example of a program of activities for young people that was developed and delivered in partnership with a range of community based organisations including Highlands Youth Service, Traxside Youth Health Service, PCYC, ReFrame, Southern Highlands Homelessness Service and TAFE.

Council partnered with Community Links Wellbeing and Wildflower Holistic Services to deliver three workshops for community *Stories to Heal Us - Transforming the human narrative through visual story telling*. These workshops targeted bushfire impacted residents in the Southern villages.

Council partnered with Southern Highlands Foundation to cover the cost of printing 2,000 copies of the PhotoVoice Book that captures through photographs the fire, recovery and resilience in our Shire

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



Council convenes the Social Recovery Subcommittee which includes representatives from different State and Federal Government Departments, emergency relief agencies, volunteer organisations and community recovery providers. The Committee has supported a range of projects including:

- Re-Grow Wingecarribee - planting project that allows school aged children to contribute to their community's recovery, building resilience and promoting wellbeing
- Stories to Heal Us - providing a creative space for residents to tell their story and begin to heal
- Wellbeing workshops offered to Early Learning Centre staff at two centres.
- Skateboarding workshops offered by Council in partnership with Totem Skating and Highlands Youth Services in Bundanoon
- Pop-Up Drive-in Movies held over three nights supported by Moss Vale Rural Fire Service volunteers and a crew of dedicated community volunteers. Feedback was that parents enjoyed being able to spend time with their children and for some it was the first event out as a couple they had been able to enjoy in a long time.

DP27 Provide access to sport, recreation and leisure services



Open Space and Sports

Council continues to provide a high standard of maintenance programs for its open spaces, sportfields and recreational areas.

Maintenance programs have been scheduled and completed for community parks, playgrounds and cemeteries in line with agreed timeframes and schedules.

Mowing, landscaping and garden maintenance of sport fields, community parks and high-profile open space areas within the Local Government Area continue to ensure the public amenity of the Shire is of a high standard.

Outdoor Swimming Centres:

Bowral Swimming Pools have recently undergone refurbishment works to pool linings in preparation for the Saturday 9 October 2021 opening.

Minor maintenance works are complete at Bundanoon Pool in preparation for opening Saturday 13 November 2021.

In May 2021 the Mittagong Swimming Centre was impacted by a severe weather event and as a result was flooded. This took place after contractors commenced works to rectify damage caused by the December 2020 flood. As a result this facility will be closed for the upcoming season to enable a review of works to be undertaken,

Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre:

The Moss Vale War Memorial Aquatic Centre had 182,445 visits in the 2020/21 financial year compared to 152,085 the previous financial year. This is an increase of 30,360 visits. This is was a result of the 2019/20 financial year closures for a period of 83 days due to the NSW Public Health

restrictions.

The Moss Vale Aquatic Centre has been focused on rebuilding the services on offer to members, and guests while maintaining COVID-19 safety in line with NSW Public Health restrictions. The aim for the duration of the 20/21 financial year was to ensure member and enrolment retention by allowing the community to feel safe when using the facility and services on offer. All services on offer at the Moss Vale Aquatic Centre have returned with varying and changing restrictions based on the NSW Health Orders set at the time.

The learn to swim program peaked with 221 swimming classes and 860 students participating during the financial year. The Moss Vale Aquatic Centre saw attendance reach 23,430 compared to 14,593 the previous year. Swimming classes have continued to diligently comply with a COVID-19 safe curriculum. This year has seen the strongest enrolment of students in the seven years of the Moss Vale Aquatic Centre operations.

The Bluefit Health Club attracted 928 members and included 50 group fitness classes on the timetable within the year. Bluefit Health Club saw attendance reach 53,334 compared to 46,291 the same quarter the previous year.

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



Council supported the Southern Highlands Domestic Violence Forum Expect Respect Golf Day which was well attended at its new venue, Moss Vale Golf Course. This event brought together business, community members and community organisations to raise awareness and funds. \$20,000 was raised which will go towards the delivery of healthy relationships workshops in schools, training facilitators in Love Bites and raising awareness of family and domestic violence in community.

Council officers participate in the Southern Highlands Domestic Violence Forum. The Forum meets on a monthly basis to plan and deliver programs and activities in line with the Strategic Plan that the Forum have developed.

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



LEMC meetings were held on 16 February and 18 May 2021 and we welcomed a new member from the Illawarra Aboriginal Land Council.

The LEMC Field Exercise took place on 19 April 2021 in conjunction with local industry at the BORAL Berrima Cement Works. While the exercise was executed successfully it was not without a number of areas identified for future training and response work. With the growing presence of industry in the Shire, we work to prepare for all kinds of hazards including those associated with local heavy industry and this exercise has given our emergency management agencies locally, invaluable experience and exposure to different and credible hazards within our area. The exercise was the first that focused on both a multi-agency rescue response that also presented a serious threat to the local community. The LEMC will be planning additional 'desktop' exercises within the confines of the current COVID-19 heightened threat environment to prepare for the start of the Storm and Bush Fire period later in the year.

Following the review of the Wingecarribee EMPLAN and multiple delays due to COVID-19 last year, our updated EMPLAN was finally able to be presented to the South East Region REMC meeting held in November 2020 where it was ratified and signed by the Committee. An updated copy is available for review on Council's website. It should be noted that the EMPLAN details Wingecarribee Shire's emergency management arrangements for the prevention of, preparation for, response to and recovery from identified locally occurring hazards in the Shire. As such, it contains confidential and sensitive information which has been removed from the publicly available version.

DP30 Implement public health and safety regulatory programs



Council has continued to implement public health and safety regulatory programs during the reporting period. The inspections check that food and drink premises are following proper food safety practises when storing, handling and preparing food and following acceptable cleaning and hygiene protocol in order to protect consumers from poor food handling practices and the potential spread of food-borne illness. Council has conducted in excess of 115 inspections relating to food premises and 72x COVID safety plan checks throughout the Shire. Staff continue to educate the community on food safety awareness including the Food Authority's 'Scores on Doors' program and providing COVID-19 safety material and information.

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



Council has purchased a more comprehensive suite of data information tools from .id Profile. The tools are available on Council's website and will be of significant benefit to the Wingecarribee community in assessing changing profile and ability to prioritise services. Additional data will be made available through Economy .id, Forecast .id and Atlas .id. This suite of tools will provide accurate, consistent and in-depth data allowing for more effective strategic decision making across Council.

DP32 Provide children services to support family life



The Department of Education (Early Childhood Directorate) undertook its assessment and rating process on Council's Out of School Hours service. The assessment and outcome found that the Service demonstrated Council's commitment to compliance with the national regulation and focus on embedding and providing safe and responsive education and care to the children and families who use the Services.

Council has collaborated and partnered with "Community Links" to provide a suitable location to hold their Aboriginal Playgroup. In addition, staff have worked alongside "Beyou' and "Early Childhood Australia" to provide trauma training to local Early Childhood Services working with children who are suffering trauma from the bushfires and the effects of the pandemic. Both the playgroup and the trauma training were initiated after collaborating with community agencies on programs reflecting a need in the community.

DP33 Support agencies to implement community programs and initiatives



Council allocates funds to locally based community organisations through the annual Wingecarribee Community Assistance Scheme. These funds help to establish, improve, or enhance resources, services and facilities and access for all residents of the Wingecarribee Shire, by providing grants for capital works, equipment, programs, activities and events or facilities.

There are two types of funding available under the Community Assistance Scheme. These are:

- Donations of \$600 and
- Grants up to \$7,000

2021/2022 Community Assistance Scheme received 55 applications requesting a total of \$198,878 in funding. The allocation of the \$120,000 available through the Community Assistance Scheme will be announced by Council in July.

DP34 Provide companion animal services



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

Council staff continue to work alongside the volunteer organisation Friends of Wingecarribee Animal Shelter and receive community support for their work, reflecting the dedication of Council staff and volunteers to providing a high quality of care to the lost, stray and unwanted animals of the Shire.

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

Council has approved funding for the construction of a new shelter. The land has been purchased and concept plans have been developed. The site is under review in terms of possible co- development, housing both the SES building and a more concise version of the animal shelter that will suit current needs. The plans are under external review by Architects.

In addition, there is a current review being undertaken by an external consultant as a resolution of Council to identify any gaps in the Statutory Provisions and Policies of the animal shelter.

The new temporary office at the shelter is in the final stages of construction and should be operational in the next 8 weeks.

DP35 Support initiatives which enhance opportunities for learning and skill development



Throughout this reporting period, local youth services were supported to implement training in barista and safe food handling to young people as part of NSW Youth Week. As a part of Council's Create and Celebrate program youth participants attended an on-stage workshop and developed skills in

performing on stage. These training opportunities were provided through State Government Youth Opportunities funding.

Culture and Community Responsive Training was delivered in partnership with Ngaran Ngaran Culture Awareness in, providing valuable awareness training to local community members and services providers. This was the second of two training opportunities provided to community members.

Council staff have regular engagement with TAFE and University of Wollongong in facilitating the Careers Advisors group, promotion of courses and referral to initiatives that contribute to activation of the campus.

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



Statistics in this quarter and in the comparison statistics (2019-2020 column) have been affected by the following major events.

- COVID-19 Safety Plan Restrictions Temporary closure of the Moss Vale Branch Library 2020-2021 as part of the Civic Centre Repair and Refurbishment project

OP085	2020-2021	2019-2020	% Change	Description
Library Loans	42,243	10,042	320.7%	Statistics continue to improve over the last three quarters as customers have increased access to facilities and services with borrowing and visiting routines being re-established
E-Book & E-Audio Loans	8,335	9,466	- 11.95%	eBook and eAudio loans continue to be popular. A slight drop due to people returning to visit Library branches and the takeover of a eResource company by another and the subsequent change in the App on the Library website
E-Magazine Loans	2,034	3,669	- 44.56%	Loans for e-magazines remain steady although affected by the takeover of a eResource company by another and the subsequent change in the App on the Library website
TOTAL Loans	52,612	23,177	127%	A good result considering the Library service has still not returned to pre COVID/building renovation conditions. Last year's results were dramatically affected by COVID-19 temporary restrictions and shut downs.
Visits	21,741	4,539	379%	The numbers of customers returning to the library is encouraging and is steadily increasing each quarter. Although it may take years for the library to re-establish pre COVID visitations, it will be helped with the reopening of the Moss Vale Branch Library
New members	312	110	183.6%	New member applications remain steady
Interlibrary	44	0	100%	No substantial change to ILL's this quarter and it

Loans				remains consistent since its reintroduction in January 2021
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¹ Wireless sessions are preferred by clients as they are longer, they can use their own technology and they can choose where to sit within the library.

² This is a specialised collection of Australian short films, independent documentaries and art house titles and requires customers to data stream content.

Moss Vale Branch Library Refurbishment Major Project 20-21: The Moss Vale Branch Library refurbishment project has now been completed and is waiting on the Civic Centre Repair and Refurbishment project to be finalised. The Moss Vale Branch Library refurbishment project had achieved significant milestones in this quarter including:

- Installation of all Library Technology including self-checkouts, RFID returns, print management system, security gates (with people counting facility) Multifunction Copier, public and staff PC's
- Installation of the Tovertafel 2 (Magic Table 2) a specialised multimedia projector with games designed for people with alzheimers, mental disabilities and autism. This unit will also aid and increase motor and cognitive function in small children.
- Installation of the FUYLL Cell Tower 5, lockers for personal technology
- Installation of new HSC collection and expansion of Graphic Novel collection
- Purchase of new WiFi Transmitters and Internet Hub for the Library

Bowral Library Carpark

The Bowral Library carpark had new line marking organised and completed on the 19 May 2021. This included the relocation of Accessibility car parking spaces at the bottom of the ramp between the Wingecarribee Community Health Centre and the Bowral Branch Library. This will enable better access to all of the facilities in the Bendooley Precinct.

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



2021 Seniors Festival was delivered with funding provided NSW Government, Macarthur Disability Services and Council. There was a total of 57 community events provided for seniors in Wingecarribee. These events were designed to connect community, improve knowledge, provide information, improve health and wellbeing and increase awareness of local services for the active and less active members of or community.

As a part of Council's 'Create & Celebrate' program a music festival called the 'Fools Festival' brought together over 700 young people from schools across the Shire. The event was supported by 30 service providers in sharing service information and interactive activities. The importance of having local youth support services available was highlighted by the feedback from the suicide prevention service.

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



The Seniors Directory, Seniors Newsletter, Arts File website and Aboriginal Community email distribution list provided regular opportunities to promote local events and activities to different members of the community.

Council staff are reviewing information on its website to ensure that information provided is up to date, easy to access and promotes activities and events for community members.

DP39 Support intergenerational programs and projects



Council staff have been working with local primary school students to connect to culture through intergenerational activities. The Bushtucker Garden project involved Council staff and an Aboriginal elder, Aunty Sharon working with Kangaloon Public School and Gib Gate School students to develop their bushtucker gardens in the school grounds. The program increases knowledge and awareness and creates opportunity for discussions between the students and the leaders of the program.

Council staff worked alongside Department of Planning, Industry and Environment, National Parks and Wildlife Services and the Gundungurra Aboriginal Heritage Association to collaboratively deliver the community planting days at the newly established Guula Ngurra National Park, Canyonleigh. School students connected with Aboriginal community, bush care groups and the Canyonleigh Rural Fire Service. Participants planted 1200 plants over 12 hectares of Koala Habitat in the paddocks of the old Tugalong Station to transform it into the new Guula Ngurra National Park. This project demonstrates a positive community of practice where all generations are working towards a common goal of developing a significant site.

DP40 Support and coordinate a diverse range of community festivals and celebrations



Seniors Festival, Reconciliation Week and Youth Week all took place during this period. These key events profiled our local community and provided opportunities for people to connect and engage in diverse and accessible activities and events.

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



Dhungung (Food) Share program provides fresh food boxes at the Wingecarribee Aboriginal Cultural centre for local Aboriginal families. The partnership between Council, OzHarvest, Red Cross and Highlands Community Centre provides flexible delivery of a food security program on a weekly basis to families in need.

Culture and Community Responsive Training was delivered in partnership with Ngaran Ngaran Culture Awareness. This provided awareness training to local community members and service providers, 26 local community members and service providers attended the one-day workshop.

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



Planning is underway for the 2021 Arts Trail which is scheduled to take place in over the first two weekends in November. Covid 19 restrictions are being considered as a part of this planning process.

Council has received funding from the Live Music Office to deliver a Live and Local project. This is a comprehensive capacity building program which seeks to strengthen the ecology of local grassroots live music communities. Planning is underway to deliver this later in the year in collaboration with the local music industry to activate local music opportunities.

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 2017-22** includes 23 actions to assist in the achievement of the **Places** strategies. The progress for these actions for the January to June 2021 reporting period is outlined below.

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



Council continues to participate in the Canberra Regional Joint Organisation - Infrastructure Delivery Working Group and advocate for transport improvements for the Shire. The development of a Road Transport Prospectus has been completed and includes details on the major roads projects within the Shire.

Council continues to work closely with Transport for NSW on numerous transport matters such as capital works projects, grants, transport modelling and road safety initiatives.

DP44 Provide infrastructure linkages between public transport hubs



The Draft Capital Works Program has been updated for the next four years. The road program includes the additional Blackspot, Safer Roads and Fixing Local Roads projects and considers links between transport hubs.

Project scopes have been completed in Council's project management system and each project has progressed through the approval process. The 4-year capital works program was adopted 23 June.

Council adopted the Recreational Walking Tracks Strategy during the reporting period. The adoption and implementation of the strategy will improve active transport links between hubs and some projects have been incorporated within the Draft Capital Works Program.

DP45 Promote public transport options and linkages across the Shire



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

Council pursues opportunities during planning and infrastructure delivery phases to link

transport networks including cycle ways, pedestrian footpaths, roads, railway services, and bus and taxi services.

Council works closely with other government departments to align to developing trends and advancements in transport technology and infrastructure.

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



Council has approved \$500,000 in new footpaths in villages across the Shire as part of the 2021/22 capital works program.

A number of footpath maintenance, renewal and construction projects were completed and have progressed during the reporting period. These pathways improve connectivity within the Shire.

Staff have investigated numerous requests for additional pathways within the Shire and projects have been scoped and will be considered as part of the annual budget review process or grant offering.

The Recreational Walking Tracks Strategy has been adopted and will improve the promotion of active transport networks within the Shire. Implementation of the strategy has been considered as part of the annual capital works program review.

DP47 Partner with agencies to advocate for improved transport services



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

Council continues to participate in the Canberra Region Joint Organisation and advocate for improved transport services for the region and the Shire.


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



The WLEP 2010 and associated DCPs are now under review and relevant consultants being engaged and strategic consideration of community engagement in the strategic and statutory planning processes is underway.

Council has reviewed and updated its Housing Strategy and Local Planning Statement and remains on track to meeting strategic targets at both the State Government level and local level. A Climate Change Strategy is also being drafted for the area and numerous Wingecarribee


Local Environmental Plan updates have been completed.

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

Council recently adopted the Wingecarribee Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) and Local Housing Strategy which provide a long-term land use planning framework for the Shire which aims to, among other things, retain the character of the Shire's towns and villages.


The Strategies provide an objective and evidence-based framework to ensure that growth is managed in a way that is consistent with the community's expectations.

Council has commenced a comprehensive review of its DCPs, which will include character statements and place-based development controls for the Shire's towns and villages. The updated planning framework will ensure that the unique characteristics of our towns and villages are protected and enhanced.

DP50 Implement initiatives that promote and protect cultural heritage 

Council continues to implement a range of initiatives to promote and protect cultural heritage, including the annual heritage grants scheme, biennial heritage awards and heritage advisory service which lead to improved development outcomes throughout the Shire and project and enhance the character of our towns and villages.

Council is in the process of undertaking a major review of Heritage listings within the Wingecarribee LEP including the review over 200 potential heritage items that were identified in the Wingecarribee Heritage Survey and deferred by Council in 2012. This project will ensure that significant properties are protected through the LEP for the current and future generations.

DP51 Implement a program of towns and village centre improvements 

The maintenance of Town and Village Centres has been completed to operational service standards. This includes street sweeping, litter bin collection, waste removal from illegal dumping, amenities cleaning, garden maintenance of car parks, roadside gardens and roundabouts.

Planning work has commenced on the development of the Winifred West Masterplan and Council has been successful in obtaining grant funding from the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund to undertake stages 1-3 of the Casburn Park Masterplan at Wingello.



Council Tree Management Team have completed 74 street tree plantings to address customer enquiries and the outcomes detailed in the Wingecarribee Street Tree Implementation Plan and Street Tree Master Plan.

Street tree plantings were completed in the following locations:

- Green Vase Zelkova - Ginahgulla Drive, Bowral
- Japanese Maple - Derby St, Bowral
- Green Vase Zelkova - Sir James Fairfax Circuit, Bowral
- Chinese pistachio Capital Pear Tree - Roty Avenue, Renwick
- Flowering plum - Armstrong Crescent, Robertson
- Camellia - Young Road, Moss Vale
- Flowering Plum - Spencer St, Moss Vale
- Pin Oak - Foldgarth Way, Burradoo
- Bottle Brush - Fidelis St, Bundanoon
- Snow Pear - Parmenter Court, Bowral
- Various native trees - Sproules Lane, Glenquarry
- Chinese Elm - Thwaite Park, Moss Vale
- Flowering Cherry Tree - Wandevan Place, Mittagong
- Flowering Cherry Tree Purcell Street, Bowral
- Chinese Elm - Eloura Lane, Moss Vale
- Chinese Elm - George Cutter Pl, Renwick
- Oak Tree - Currockabilly Street, Welby
- Japanese Elm - Sir James Fairfax Dr, Bowral
- Plena Crabapple - Gordon Rd, Bowral
- Sweet Gum - Albert St, Mittagong
- Argyle Apple - Huxley Street, Mittagong
- Brushbox & Bottle Brush Endeavour - West Parade, Hill Top
- October Glory - Balaclava St, Balaclava
- Japanese Maple - Arthur Street, Moss Vale
- Sweet Gum - Warwick Close, Bowral

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- Tulip Tree - Carrisbrooke Row, Bowral
 - Green Vase Zelkova - Ginahgulla Drive, Bowral
 - Japanese Maple - Derby St, Bowral
-

DP53 Provide and maintain high quality community facilities across the Shire 

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

Council continues to manage community facilities in partnership with licensees and community groups, including collaborating with stakeholders during the COVID-19 pandemic.

DP54 Undertake the redevelopment of Bowral Memorial Hall 

Council was successful in its application to the Commonwealth Government's Building Better Regions Fund Infrastructure Projects Stream Round 4. Council has been awarded \$2.8 million for the redevelopment of the Bowral Memorial Hall. The principal contractor has been engaged and site establishment is completed. Council has addressed key stakeholder concerns by altering the stage design to provide a permanent sound shell for the concert hall. The modified design requires section 4.55 modification of consent.

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


In February Council launched the **See Me, Hear Me** Campaign, with business support. Postcards highlight stories of those in the community who are service users, service staff and the services available locally and is designed to support, promote and create awareness. Plans are underway to deliver the disABILITY AWAREness training for staff online. The training is designed to promote awareness of the barriers, both environmental and attitudinal, experienced by people with a disability and identify ways in which these barriers may be overcome.

DP56 Ensure planning controls allow for diversity of housing choice 

Council staff are currently implementing the priority actions within the Local Housing Strategy, including undertaking a review of medium density housing provisions to encourage a greater diversity of housing within the Shire.

Council are also in the process of establishing a Land and Housing Monitor which will allow

Council to monitor and measure the success of the Housing Strategy in increasing housing diversity in the Shire, and where targets are not being met, Council will look at policy changes and / or incentives to ensure the local housing stock meets the needs of our community both now and in the future.

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

Council continues to undertake programmed and reactive maintenance on its roads networks with numerous roads serviced over the reporting period.

Capital Works design and construction projects have been delivered and commenced. Projects completed include: Sutton Forest Belanglo Road Gravel Road Resheeting; Fitzroy Falls Bodycotts Lane Gravel Road Resheeting; Wingello Pine Tree Road Gravel Road Resheeting; Sutton Forest Greenhills Road Gravel Road Resheeting (Drainage Works).

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

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

Council is continuing to progress investigation and approvals for potential sites within the Shire. Utilising approved materials for projects such as the Anembo Park regrading, and beautification works are nearing completion and present optimum alternatives for the reuse of materials.

DP59 Review and implement Water Master Plan 

Council is delivering multiple water projects this financial year:

- Wingecarribee and Bundanoon Water Treatment Plant (WTP) Upgrade Options Assessment (65 per cent complete) - Final process review reports and option reports are in progress
- Design - Bundanoon Dam to Exeter Reservoir transfer mains and Werai Balance Tank and Pump Station (10 per cent complete). Asset sizing/optimisation is in progress, with the pipeline and pump duty identified.
- Design - Wingecarribee WTP to Oxley Drive transfer main (30 per cent complete). The design is in progress, and the survey and services locating underway.
- Design - West Bowral reservoir transfer main (30 per cent complete). The design is in progress and the preferred pipe alignment has been finalised. The Draft Review of Environmental Factors has been submitted, and the survey and services locations are complete.
- Design - Bowral to Moss Vale transfer main (10 per cent complete). The concept options report is complete, and a preferred concept has been identified. The preparation of

procurement documentation is underway for the completion of the detailed design.

- Construction - New inlet control valves at four reservoirs (15 per cent complete). The preparation of procurement documentation is underway, incorporating the concept design and modelling.

DP60 Review and implement Sewage Treatment Plant Upgrade Strategy



Progress on the design phase at each plant is summarised below:

- Bowral STP Upgrade Detailed Design: 95 per cent complete. The design is expected to be completed in September 2021 and reviews are being undertaken by State Government authorities.
- Moss Vale STP Upgrade Detailed Design: The Principal Design Consultant has been engaged. The Basis of Design and concept layout for the main structures completed. The design of major structures is approximately 50 per cent complete all workshops now complete.
- Mittagong STP Upgrade Detailed Design: The procurement phase is now complete, and works are commencing on the detailed design.

DP61 Improve stormwater management across the Shire



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

Review of the Wingecarribee River Flood Study (90% complete). Works continuing into 21/22. Draft Flood Study completed in May 21 and circulated internally. Council report for public exhibition permission drafted. Public exhibition planned for November, then completion of final report in early 2022.

A number of capital works design and construction projects were delivered or have commenced during the reporting period. This included the practical completion of Glebe Street, Bowral Drainage Improvements, Bundanoon Penola Street Drainage Construction, and Moss Vale Dangar Street Culvert Renewal Stage 1.

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

Drainage maintenance customer requests are actioned within 14 days in accordance with key performance indicators to the effect that the request is inspected, made safe and where applicable maintenance programmed or a capital works request submitted for project scoping and prioritisation

DP62 Undertake drinking water quality management



Council has continued to work in line with its commitments under the adopted Drinking Water Management System (DWMS) and the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (ADWG) in close consultation with NSW Health.

Both Wingecarribee and Bundanoon Water Treatment Plants have operated to a standard that exceeds the minimum criteria defined in Council's Drinking Water Management System and the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines (ADWG)

Raw water levels in the Wingecarribee Reservoir are stable and operating above 80 per cent and Bundanoon dam is currently at 100 per cent. Algal detection levels within the raw water remain below ADWG guideline levels for both dams.

Dam safety inspections at both Bundanoon and Medway dams being conducted as per Dam safety regulation requirements

An Internal review of Council's Drinking Water Management System (DWMS) structure and action programs is currently ongoing to ensure long term business needs are achieved. This is due for completion in the first quarter 21/22.

This period has seen significant progression on the implementation of staff skill competency, sampling/analysis and compliance programs within the water supply distribution network as part of Council's commitment within the adopted DWMS

DP63 Ensure the integrity of water and sewer infrastructure



Council has continued to deliver operational planned and reactive maintenance and long-term capital programs of its water and sewer infrastructure.

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

- Electrical and mechanical asset planned maintenance has continued as per asset specifications
- Seven of the new water distribution systems (urban filling stations) have now been installed Confirmation and customer communication regarding program implementation/roll out has been delayed to the first quarter of 2021/22
- The Electrical Panel installation project continues to progress with Star Electric at pump stations within the sewage network. This program is estimated to be completed by late 2021, in conjunction with the linked telemetry/Clear Scada system upgrades currently being delivered by Safegroup

ClearSCADA process management system upgrades have been completed at five STP's with the remaining Robertson STP to be completed in 21/22.

- Completion of 85% of the 20/21 water and sewer critical main upgrades program
- Completion of sewer manhole refurbishments/replacements program
- Two new pump stations at Moss Vale and Berrima have replaced older infrastructure to

reduce the risk of overflow to the environment and provide increased reliability for operations. The period has seen 90% delivery of all customer requests received on Council's Conquest management system within 20/21

- A containment project at Robertson STP was completed to reduce the risk of a spill to the environment
- The internal CCTV program of the sewerage network has increased significantly identifying faulty assets prior to failure for repair and accurately documenting and cleaning the sewerage network.
- A preventative maintenance program has been developed for the sewerage network to reduce overflows and blockages through routine cleaning
- An operational preventative maintenance program was developed and implemented for routine tasks for the operators above the current inspections to increase the integrity of the STPs.

DP64 Ensure regulatory compliance of sewerage infrastructure



Positive communication has continued between Council and the Environment Protection Authority, WaterNSW and the Department of Environment and Industry (DPIE) – Water within this period with no reports of major risks. All reporting to all agencies is up to date.

Council has completed five of the six EPA annual returns for Mittagong, Bowral, Moss Vale, Berrima and Bundanoon licenced schemes during the period. There were only low risk (minor) non-compliances mainly due to the significantly increased rainfall within the period (65% more flows) which were unavoidable.

Backflow and trade waste management has been ongoing during the reporting period with safe work practices and some remote inspections being undertaken to ensure a COVID safe procedure for our staff and customers.

An external audit program has been developed to review the environmental compliance of the STP's on an annual basis, in order to drive best practice environmental management and continuous improvement.

All development and customer requirements have been managed accordingly during this reporting period with no known major outstanding issues following the storm events that occurred during the reporting period.

DP65 Facilitate and advocate for enhanced access to telecommunication networks



Council staff are working closely on telecommunications opportunities for the region and have met with NBN regarding new developments in the Shire. Council continue to monitor any further government announcements and initiatives which may have implications for the Shire.

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 2017-22 includes 23 actions to assist in the achievement of the Environment strategies. The progress for these actions for the January to June 2021 reporting period is outlined below.

DP66 Manage public natural assets



Council implements an active Bushcare program across 59 reserves and management sites. This program focuses on bush regeneration and control of environmental weeds at Council managed sites and is funded by the Environment Levy. COVID-19 protocols are currently in place for volunteers in Council's Community Bushcare and Rivercare Program. The Community Nursery continues to operate with volunteer support, with over 1322 plants despatched in the reporting period.

Threatened Species Recovery Projects

Council is working with the NSW Government on recovery projects for important Threatened Species in the Shire. These projects include:

- Southern Highlands Koala Conservation project
- Southern Highlands Glossy Black Cockatoo Conservation "*Glossies in the Mist*"
- *Eucalyptus macarthurii*
- *Persoonia glaucescens*
- *Phyllota humifusa*
- *Eucalyptus aquatica*.

The award-winning Southern Highlands Koala Conservation Project (SHKCP) is achieving significant results in koala habitat restoration, facilitating conservation across private land, improving fire planning in key koala habitat, and developing new koala monitoring tools which will help Council's across the State. The project is entering an extended period of project delivery under the NSW Government Saving Our Species Program. Southern Highlands Glossy Black Cockatoo Project - A draft feed / habitat map has been created for the Shire and is being used in the recovery actions in the SoS project. This map identifies appropriate areas for Glossy black cockatoo plantings and is being used for the 21/22 financial year habitat planting program.

The use of eDNA sampling of specific watercourses was trialled in March for the Southern Highlands Platypus Conservation Project. This is providing genetic monitoring for platypus in waterways where current data is minimal. This information informs future recovery programs and assists in managing the health of the platypus across the Shire. Rapid Assessment of Riparian Condition (RARC) training completed for Council staff. A planting guide for platypus habitat was developed, and this is being used in on ground works in Council's Bushcare program.

Council implements integrated treatment of rabbits on Council land collaboratively with South East

Local Land Services (SELLS) and adjoining private landholders. Recent control programs include roadsides in sections of Werai, Manchester Square, and Exeter. Preparation work has commenced on upcoming private / public land rabbit control actions in collaboration with SELLS.

Council continues to represent on the Southern Highlands /Taralga Wild Dog Working Group

The Welby Weir Reserve boundary protection (new fencing) project has been completed as part of the Green Web Project. New populations of threatened flora were detected and have been protected by the fence construction.

Council undertakes environmental assessments of the potential impact from Council works and identifies controls to minimise and mitigate environmental impacts. A scheduled review of Council's Part 5 Environmental Assessment Procedure has been completed to ensure currency.

Council continues to implement the flora and fauna bushfire recovery program. Bushfire affected reserves are being managed for weed infestations, monitoring has occurred on a monthly basis for regeneration and weed incursions and contractor weed control works are implemented as required.

The Private Land Conservation Bushfire Recovery website has been launched and enables fire affected properties to sign up to free enhanced versions of Councils Land for Wildlife (LFW) and Habitat for Wildlife Programs.

37 new LWF Property agreements have been completed for bushfire affected properties, conserving 1540 hectares of native vegetation.

DP67 Maintain and build high value environmental lands and corridors



Council's Private Land Biodiversity Conservation Strategic Plan continues to be implemented. Council encourages conservation on private land through a three-tiered program to support different types of landholders and conservation values. The three programs are open to the community are Land for Wildlife (for large landholders), Habitat and Wildlife, and Private Conservation Agreements.

The total number of active Land for Wildlife properties comprises: 167 properties, 6404 hectares of property, and 3686 hectares of conservation area.

Council works in a collaborative partnership with community groups, Government Agencies, and non-government organisations on the Wall to Wollondilly Project. The project focuses on a key corridor along the Wingecarribee River between its junction at the Wollondilly River and the wall at the Wingecarribee Reservoir. Current work being supported by Council, Local Land Services (LLS) and Greening Australia is focussing on the removal of the final major "willow choke" which is blocking access on the Wingecarribee River downstream of the Burradoo Rail Bridge. Once the willow choke is removed, access to the waterway for volunteers to assist with ongoing willow control will be possible.

Properties affected by the 2019-20 Bushfires remain eligible in 2021 for Council's Private Land Conservation Bushfire Recovery program. This program enables fire affected properties to sign up to free enhanced versions of Councils Land for Wildlife and Habitat for Wildlife Programs. 30 new properties have registered so far for the enhanced Land for Wildlife program, representing over 670 hectares of native vegetation.

Plans are progressing for large-scale habitat restoration on private lands in the Kangaloon area, and over 1500 koala feed trees have been supplied to the National Parks and Wildlife Service for community tree planting events at the Guula Ngurra National Park at Canyonleigh. Training assistance for local

Aboriginal community members in acquiring certification (for example, Chemcert) to build capacity in implementing revegetation activities is being facilitated. A regular supply of Koala Feed Trees has been established and are available for purchase at Wariapendi Native Nursery, Colo Vale under an agreement with Council. All profit from the sale of these trees goes back to Koala carers. Over 1,000 Koala Trees have been provided free to properties registered with Council's Land for Wildlife Program.

Council has played a key role in supporting the NSW Biodiversity Conservation Trust (BCT) multi-million-dollar State Government investment in private land conservation in the Shire. The NSW Government has announced the successful private properties who will receive funding in-perpetuity for conserving and managing Koala Habitat on their properties. \$11.8 million has been awarded to five properties in the Shire.

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



Council continues to assess applications in accordance with section 4.15 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

Council continues to request and require relevant specialist reports to support applications on environmentally sensitive land in regard to biodiversity (flora and fauna) and these are considered by in-house experts and external consultants throughout the rigorous assessment process.

The recent introduction of the Wingecarribee Local Planning Panel for certain types of development applications will also assist in managing the shires precious biodiversity due to the increased scrutiny of such applications due to the expertise of panel members (e.g., the Chair is a lawyer who specialises in planning law) and a rigorous assessment process undertaken by the panel.

Recent court proceedings have proven that Council will protect endangered species and ensure that relevant legislation (Koala habitat and Riparian corridors) is adhered to, and values are protected - the ongoing Frensham School matter being considered by the NSW Land and Environment Court is an example of this behaviour and better way of protecting local biodiversity.

DP69 Build community partnerships and education programs to reduce pollution



Council operates an investigation and enforcement program to respond to pollution and illegal dumping matters. An education program supports these functions and provide information and education for the community.

Operation Houdini was a major campaign organised jointly with NSW government stakeholders targeting illegal landfill operators specifically in the Wingecarribee Shire Local Government Area. This has resulted in the interception of asbestos laden waste trucks heading into the Shire.

Pollution complaints for landfill have reduced, although land based asbestos complaints have increased, mostly due to bushfires and the clearing of land exposing historical dumping.

DP70 Reduce the impact from Council infrastructure and operations

Council undertakes Environmental Assessments on Council and activities and projects to assess and reduce the potential impact on the environment. Council utilises an adopted procedure and assessment tool for this function. Controls to minimise and mitigate environmental impacts are identified through this process. In-house training on this process is delivered to key groups.

Council works within the framework of an adopted Roadside Management Plan to manage the potential impact from regular Council activities along road corridors. A scheduled review of Council's Roadside Management Plan (RMP) was undertaken in April. Following an environmental incident which occurred during this period, changes were made to the environmental guidelines to remove ambiguity for staff.

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

Council maintains policies and strategies that deliver positive outcomes for health, sustainability and the environment and these are periodically reviewed for consistency with legislation and community needs and expectations.

Environment and Climate Change Strategy is a key strategy that will provide a ten-year guide to deliver both environmental and climate change targets. This strategy is currently under development. During this period Council undertook the community consultation part of the process. The engagement was very successful with over 550 residents participating in online workshops, pop up stalls and surveys. The result of the consultation will feed directly into the next phase of the strategy development.

Council's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan is currently under development. This will be a Net Zero carbon roadmap for Council's operations. It will propose targets, key actions and implementation dates. This is due to be ready in the first half of the 21/22 year

A draft Biodiversity Offset Scheme policy has been prepared and is currently being considered across the organisation. This will focus on offsets of impacts from Council works and assist decision making, transparency reporting and flag early triggers.

The Backyard Burning Policy and the Asbestos Policy have been reviewed and readopted by Council. This compliments the Protection of the Environment (Clean Air) Regulation and aims to ensure clean air for the Shire's residents while balance waste disposal needs.

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

Council's Strategic Land Use Planning staff continue to work with Council's Environment and Sustainability team to ensure the planning framework provides adequate protection for local natural resources.

Both the Local Housing Strategy and Local Strategic Planning Statement were developed through an evidence-based process which sought to, among other things, manage growth in a way that protects the Shire's natural resources. The new land use strategies will ensure that growth can be managed without impacting on important natural areas and waterways.

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

Staff continue to stay up to date with proposed legislative changes to ensure planning controls reflect community priorities and to advocate to the State and Federal Government on behalf of the Wingecarribee Shire community.

Council has recently made representation on a number of proposed legislative changes in relation to agricultural lands, housing, employment lands and infrastructure funding to advocate on behalf of our community and ensure that Government considers and understands the impacts of legislative changes on the Wingecarribee Shire.

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

Council publishes a number of webpages for the community that provide information and assistances on important environmental and sustainability matters. These webpages are regularly reviewed with amendments made to ensure the currency and reliability of information.

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

Council is developing an online map product which can be used by the community (at a property level) to provide guidance in the selection of appropriate Koala feed trees and other native plants for restoring cleared areas of their property. This is based on the plant communities which are predicted to have been present prior to clearing. This tool will directly contribute to the reconstruction or improvement of koala habitat and biodiversity in the Shire.

The Rural Living Handbook provides practical information and advice to rural landholders in the Shire. It is particularly useful to landholders new to the Shire and new to rural living. The Rural Living Handbook has been updated and a limited print run has been completed in time for the upcoming AgriShow in Moss Vale.

Wingecarribee Web is a free newsletter keeping residents up to date with local environmental and sustainability news, notices and events. Quarterly editions of the e-newsletter have been published during this period. All past editions are available online at Council's website.

During this period community field activities and events have been undertaken to engage, inform and interact with the community. Some of these events included:

- Community Koala info session at Mansfield Reserve
- Earth Hour Stall
- FrogID webinar - co-organised with Australian Museum.
- Guula Ngurra Tree Planting Day. Talk about Koala Habitat
- Gib Gate preschool koala presentation

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- U3A walk and talk about Koalas in Mansfield Reserve
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DP75 Implement community awareness programs that promote sustainable living



Council provides a variety of community awareness programs to reach both specific target audiences and wider cross sections of the community. Details of some of these programs are outlined below.

Council co-hosted the fourth annual Earth Hour event with the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens. Earth Hour 2021 - Sculptures in the Garden with eight stallholders showcasing sustainable living practices such as cycling, thrift shopping and electric cars.

The event was designed to cater for a wide cross section of the community, and an estimated 1,000 residents attended. Activities included six performers including roving educational performers who delivered a kids workshop during the lights out part of the night.

Southern Highlands Green Drinks has been relaunched. The Green Drinks movement exists in over 52 countries and was created as a regular event where like-minded, passionate people can come together to network in a social environment. The latest events featured local heroes who are undertaking fantastic sustainability work.

Council delivers an environmental education program with local schools. In a new initiative, Council joined with the EnviroMentors program to assist in the delivery of this program. This year saw 931 students participating in Sustainability workshops in 9 schools over 10 days, educating students in waste reduction, management and recycling.

DP76 Develop partnerships and networks to leverage off existing programs



A joint program between Regional Development Australia - Southern Inland and Council has been established with the Solar My Schools program. Council is using this recognised program to engage and work with schools across the Southern Highlands to improve uptake of solar PV systems on school buildings. Due to delivery constraints by RDASI, WSC staff have taken over the lead in the delivery of this program. Engagement has commenced with several local schools, supporting them through this program.

WinZero

WinZero - Council have been supporting WinZero and especially their Landscape Regeneration initiative. This initiative has lent itself to creating a working group with a range of local stakeholders involved in land management and agriculture.

DP77 Implement State Government regulations



The commencement of a suite of e-planning services that Council will be offering in 2021 to improve the customer service experience and deliver on commitments to reduce determination times is underway. New technology has been delivered to the planning team and is revolutionising the way we perform our roles. The new records system ECM has also brought with it benefits and challenges for our planners who have adapted well to the new system. All relevant staff attended training on new systems including ECM, Doc Assembler and Trapeze. Trapeze is the key PDF reader/manager programme that Council needed to enable electronic plan stamping thereby reaching benchmarks set by other Councils and DPIE. Draft stamps have been reviewed and once fully approved will be in use for plan stamping shortly. This commences the 'paper lite' approach to planning and certification that we have been aiming for.

The Local Planning Panel has been introduced and is already successfully dealing with relevant applications.

The Righting the Wrongs Second Report on Planning Development and Regulatory review has resulted in increased workloads for all but real benefits for the customer. Also, the resulting removal of two layers of senior management in planning which has caused a cascade of tasks and increased workload for the three remaining senior staff. This was exacerbated by the resignation of the team leader for the BSO team. However, positive steps have been taken to manage the team and ensure that service delivery continues apace.

Council has also made changes to a number of its processes in response to statutory changes relating to compliance and enforcement.

The planning and certification functions have continued to run throughout all Covid lock downs and outages but there have been technical issues resulting in delays in particular the notification process.

DP78 Advocate and educate for improved development outcomes



Council staff have noted an improved liaison with State Government Agencies throughout the DA assessment process, further to the establishment of the Planning Delivery Unit at the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment. We continue to work closely with them to help us through this period of Administration and its impacts upon planners and ensure outcomes are achieved.

The pre-lodgement service has been busy throughout this time and planners have noted increased call levels in regard to planning and processes. This enhances opportunities with the community in regard to good planning outcomes.

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



Wingecarribee has supported the Creative South initiative, a new guide focussing on products, venues and services of creatives located with Southern NSW.

Council staff assisted ServiceNSW to identify and set up key local businesses which provided substantive offerings to the community under the Dine and Discover voucher scheme and increased sales for goods and services produced locally.

DP80 Promote and encourage waste minimisation and recycling



School groups and community groups continue to be engaged on ways to reduce waste by worm farming, wax cotton wraps and bamboo bathroom and eating utensils elimination plastic. Council continues to pursue various opportunities and are currently investigating the viability of a mobile CRC trailer to assist our residents in the villages.

An extensive program is being rolled out for Plastic free July however the recent COVID outbreak has moved some classes to an online forum. Four videos have been produced to allow residents easy access to informative ideas on how they can help to reduce waste.

DP81 Implement strategies to reduce illegal dumping



While educating the community on various ways to reduce waste, the topic of illegal dumping has also been highlighted as to the effect that it has on our flora and fauna.

Councils RID ranger is also proactive in pursuing any leads to illegal dumping in the Shire and works in with our partners in Illawarra Shoalhaven Joint Organisation to share the latest information and intelligence that is available for any social media scams that may be appealing for a land holder looking at placing some fill on their property thinking that a few loads of soil might be helpful.

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



The Resource Recovery Centre has complied with all licence conditions which included activating the Pollution Incident Response Management Plan (PIRMP) due to excessive rain fall during recent storm events. Council continues to work towards finalising a storm water management plan in accordance with a direction issued by the Environment Protection Authority.

The specific Asset Management Plan for the site has been completed which includes a proposed capital renewal and improvement plan that can be used to inform future works and Council's Long-Term Financial Plan.

Despite COVID-19 restrictions impacting on community education and awareness programs during the over the course of the 2020/21 financial year, activities and programs are continuing to be developed and where possible held online.

DP83 Develop and implement a Council Waste Strategy and Policy 

After the release of the State Government's Waste Strategy in June 2021, Council's Waste Strategy was brought into alignment with the State Strategy and is currently being internally reviewed before being presented to Council for the purposes of public exhibition.

DP84 Implement strategies to improve energy management 

A Greenhouse Gas Reduction Plan is currently being developed for the organisation. Through Council's Sustainability Advantage membership, the consultants Presync have been commissioned to develop emissions targets and a roadmap for WSC to achieve Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions. The roadmap will outline the energy management actions, and other organisational steps required to meet this target.

A register of energy management opportunities is maintained across Council. A number of projects with energy efficiency elements have been identified for implementation as part of the capital works program in the 2021/22 budget. These include the refurbishment of buildings, upgrades to water and sewage pumps and renewals to sewer mains and manholes.

Council has completed an assessment of Council assets solar and lighting upgrade potential.

Revolving Energy Fund (REFund) reimbursements for the 2020/2021 are being calculated in preparation for a report to Council in August. Preparation work has been completed for the next solar project to be installed on Council's Civic Centre in Moss Vale. A system of 100 kilowatts is to be installed, funded by Council's revolving energy fund and installed as part of the Civic Centre refurbishment

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

As part of Council's Seniors Week community program, two workshops were provided for residents on topics that increase household sustainability.

WSC joined with Regional Development Australia - Southern Inland (RDA-SI) to roll out the Solar My School program to the schools of Wingecarribee Shire. This program will engage local schools and facilitate the installation of solar PV on school buildings in the Shire. Engagement has commenced to support several schools through this program.

Council has delivered sustainability education to primary schools utilising the services of the 'EnviroMentors' program. This year saw 931 students participating in the sustainability workshops in 9 schools over 10 days, educating students in waste reduction, energy management and recycling.

A pilot program of Sustainability Villages is being developed as a route to deliver programs, provide support, and instigate change. Robertson identified as suitable village to pilot the concept and an initial meeting has been held with some key community members in Robertson to gauge appetite for such an initiative.

DP86 Implement strategies to address the impacts of climate change 

The Climate Change Adaptation Plan (CCAP) was adopted in 2019 which provides a plan of agreed actions across Council. Progress is being made on a number of CCAP actions including bushfire prone assets, biodiversity and climate change, embedding climate change adaptation in strategies including asset management and improvement plans (buildings), development of heatmaps, climate change actions in the Local Strategic Planning Statement, street tree species consideration, engineering standards review, water efficient irrigation specifications, flood studies, drought management plan review, and climate haven work. Heatmaps are being developed in-house which can be used as an indicator of heat zones.

Reporting on CCAP actions requires some improvements as a number of actions as are being undertaken without reporting back into the CCAP has been taking place. Work to improve this is flagged in the 21/22 year.

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

The annual reporting on Council's greenhouse gas emissions is completed during the first quarter of the financial year. Results are published on Council's webpage.

For the period 2019/20, Council's greenhouse gas emissions total was 20,346 tCO₂-e (tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent). Electricity, wastewater treatment and fuel were the highest sources of greenhouse gas emissions as seen in Figure 1. Emissions attributable to providing water and sewer (electricity and fugitive emissions) account for 72 percent of the total emissions.

Council has been undertaking energy efficiency projects and switching to renewable energy since 2011. Emissions have reduced 11 percent from 2015/16 for Council's emissions excluding wastewater fugitive emissions (e.g. methane from the treatment of sewage). The variability of wastewater emissions is largely due to yearly differences in rainfall conditions which makes identifying trends across years difficult.

DP88 Encourage carbon reduction across the Shire 

Council has undertaken extensive research in the option to enter into a 100% Renewable Energy Power Purchase Agreement (PPA). Council has joined a bulk buy group, led by Procurement Australasia. This group has entered a tendering process aiming for 100% renewable electricity with 100% surrendering of LGCs to make a large part of Council's electricity use carbon neutral (large sites and street lighting). Small sites will be on a separate PPA through Local Government Procurement. This arrangement means that once our current electricity contracts expire in January 2023 100% of Council's greenhouse gas emissions from this electricity can be discounted.

A 100kW solar PV system is due to be installed on the Civic Centre in the final stages of the Civic Centre refurbishment. This will significantly reduce the Council Chamber's electricity use and thus carbon emissions.

A pilot is currently being developed to trial a public electric vehicle charging station in Moss Vale. Further energy efficiency projects at the Moss Vale Aquatic centre are currently under development.

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 2017-22 includes 12 actions to assist in the achievement of the **Economy** strategies. The progress for these actions for the January to June 2021 reporting period is outlined below.

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



Council staff have met with NBN regarding new developments in the Shire, and support for Council's requirements. A meeting was held with Acenet, a recipient of grants in support of digital connectivity in poorly connected areas of the Shire to assist them address any issues relating to Council in delivery of these services. The local provider has also discussed their proposals to the Council's development assessment team who have assisted them and will continue to support ventures that enable the digital communication network rollout to the local community.

DP90 Build on partnerships that increase and broaden local employment opportunities



Council officers continue to engage with relevant stakeholders to broaden employment opportunities across the Shire including with the South Coast Illawarra Local Jobs Program and Training Services NSW.

Discussions have resulted in plans for an expansion of Winter Skills pilot conducted in the Snowy region, to the Southern Highlands. Staff have also engaged with hospitality providers regarding issues with filling local vacancies including involvement with a TAFE hosted Industry Forum undertaken throughout the period. Grant programs are being promoted with industry in relation to further job creation.

An itinerary was created for a local Manufacturing Industry Tour attended by Careers Advisors Southern Highlands (CASH), TAFE, University of Wollongong and Training Services NSW. This was designed to link the Careers Advisors to potential job opportunities for students; and introduce Training Services NSW to local manufacturers who can now benefit from funded programs and other initiatives for workforce growth and retention.

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



All tourism or related applications are assessed against the requirements of section 4.15 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* which requires consideration of the following 'matters for consideration' -

'(b) the likely impacts of that development, including environmental impacts on both the natural and built environments, and social and economic impacts in the locality,'

Such consideration is undertaken during the assessment process for all tourism or related development applications/modifications/section 8.2 Review applications.

The rigour of assessment has recently been demonstrated by the refusal of an application by the newly formed Wingecarribee Local Planning Panel regarding increased number of attendees for a concert at the Centennial Winery. The new Local Planning Panel is a step forward for Council regarding ensuring the independence and integrity of the assessment process. This is the first Regional Council to have such a Panel as previously these were used solely in metropolitan Sydney and Wollongong as required by law.

DP92 Promote the Southern Highlands as a world class tourist destination



Southern Highlands Destination Strategy 2020-2030 was developed to provide a roadmap for Wingecarribee Shire Council to move forward with strategic planning and actions for Tourism and Economic Development for the next 10 years. It is important to note that the Strategy is the first to combine both Tourism & Economic Development into one plan and identify increased opportunities across tourism and attractions, agribusiness, equine, professional business services, Creative Industries, healthcare, advanced manufacturing and education.

Through these combined opportunities the Southern Highlands can create new jobs which will attract young families to the area and help to rebalance our demographics into the future. Our economy will become more diverse, we will grow whilst protecting the unique character of our region.

The 2021-22 *Southern Highlands Escape* – our new annual publication has been expanded to include tourism, lifestyle and business services. The new style incorporates consumer information with the addition of living in the Southern Highlands, making it a publication catering to visitors and locals. This publication was released in July and distributed to:

- Southern Highlands Welcome Centre
- 160 Information Centres throughout NSW
- Destination NSW and Tourism Australia offices, both here and overseas
- Fulfillment of information requests vis Destination Southern Highlands
- Local accommodation houses and venues
- Promotional packages for special interest groups, weddings & conferences
- Included in Welcome Packs available for businesses and residential enquiries

-
- Wingecarribee Shire Council
 - High visitation locations throughout the Southern Highlands, including (but not limited to) cellar doors, speciality shops, attractions, etc.
 - All advertisers

This publication is the key promotional tool used by Destination Southern Highlands, Wingecarribee Shire Council, local businesses and schools to showcase our region.

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



The major marketing campaign was Pie Time 2021. Destination Southern Highlands encouraged Local business participation which provided marketing opportunities during what typically is an off-season period for the Southern Highlands.

Results compiled to date for Pie Time 2021 indicate that the number of pies sold across the many participating businesses for the month of June was in excess of 75,000.

There were 75 pieces/articles of coverage across print, radio, TV, online, social media and industry newsletters were achieved which is equivalent to approximately \$1.7 million of advertising (budget for this campaign was \$80K).

In addition, Google advertising across Search, Display and YouTube was seen 2,143,769 times and drove 10,309 people to the web-site. This is a fantastic result for increasing recognition of the Southern Highlands.

The planning and development of the annual Tulip Time 2021 event is well underway, with 75,000 tulip bulbs and 35,000 annuals planted in Corbett Gardens by the end of May for this year's 60th anniversary celebration. Collaboration with key stakeholders, being Lions Club of Bowral, Bowral/Mittagong Rotary, The Southern Highlands Business Chamber, charity partner CAN Assist Southern Highlands, local primary and pre-schools continued to ensure the festival would meet the needs of the community and visitors.

DP94 Explore options to progress Moss Vale Enterprise Zone



Following the adoption of the Destination Strategy, Council has commenced work on Stage 1 of a Master Plan and Servicing Strategy project for the Southern Highlands Innovation Park. The Master Plan will provide clearer direction on the future of the SHIP and provide greater certainty to industry in the provision of infrastructure and services.

DP95 Support the establishment and expansion of clean industries



Council officers are working with the proposed electric vehicle manufacturing industry located in the Southern Highlands Innovation Park regarding the potential to attract future clean industries into the Shire.

DP96 Manage the operation of the Southern Region Livestock Exchange

The Southern Regional Livestock Exchange has remained functional throughout COVID and has recently gone back to stage 2 restrictions. Throughput at the facility has been down compared to previous years, which is due to several factors, such as producers restocking after drought conditions have improved.

A report was presented to Council in June 2021, in relation to the progress of the SRLX Improvements Project. The current expected completion date for all the grant funded works is April 2022.

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

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

Agricultural productivity was a key consideration in identifying new living areas through Council's Local Housing Strategy, to ensure that new development does not impact on primary production and food security.

DP98 Facilitate programs and networks that support and strengthen business development

The various communication channels of Council and Destination Southern Highlands facilitates information regarding bushfire and Covid-19 support and funding opportunities. Business support was provided for Wander the Wingecarribee, Pie Time, and the application to NSW Top Tourism Town which Berrima won in this category. Grant Guru has been reviewed and recommended for Council's use as a new product to more effectively access and manage grant applications.

Following adoption of the Southern Highlands Destination Strategy 2020-2030 in November 2020, projects are being aligned with each of the eight Major Industries, five Key Catalytic Projects and Priority Activities defined under the four pillars of People Place Prosperity and Partnership.

DP99 Support initiatives that provide opportunities for business mentoring and connection

Council officers are in regular communication with the Shire's three local business Chambers and regularly attend networking with Six Degrees of Separation, Business Women's Network and Highlands Connect.

DP100 Support regional economic development initiatives



Engagement in regional collaboration ensures that Wingecarribee is top of mind when government and other agencies are developing programs and projects for our region. During the reporting period there has been routine engagement with Regional NSW South East, Regional Development Australia Southern Inland, Canberra Region Joint Organisation, Live Music NSW, Sydney Peri-Urban Network, Destination Sydney Surrounds South, Business NSW, AusIndustry, Austrade, Business Australia, Southern Region Business Enterprise Centre, Training Services NSW and other regional agencies.

Under the terms of an MOU there is regular engagement and collaboration with the ServiceNSW Council Relationship Manager and Business Concierge which has provided critical and timely information on COVID-19 conditions and business support for communicating to community and business.

Council facilitates a monthly engagement session with representatives from three tiers of government working in the broader region. There has also been active participation in the NSW government Planning Reforms process which will have significant outcomes for regional economic development.