

# AGENDA

## Ordinary Meeting of Council



*We're With* **YOU**

Wednesday 15 March, 2023

Council Chambers, Wingecarribee Shire Council Civic Centre

68 Elizabeth Street, Moss Vale at 3.30pm



<b>1</b>	<b>OPENING OF THE MEETING .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>APOLOGIES.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>ADMINISTRATOR MINUTES.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>GENERAL MANAGER.....</b>	<b>7</b>
	8.1 Planning Proposal To Amend Schedule 2 Of WLEP 2010 Regarding Public Events On Bush Fire Prone Land.....	7
<b>9</b>	<b>REPORTS.....</b>	<b>29</b>
	9.1 Wingecarribee Shire Community Strategic Plan - Draft For Public Exhibition ..	29
	9.2 Community Engagement Strategy - Post Exhibition Report.....	112
	9.3 Community Reference Panels - Appointment Of Community Representatives .....	174
	9.4 Bowral Sewage Treatment Plant Upgrade - Negotiation Outcome With Recommendation To Award Construction Contract .....	192
	9.5 Berrima Road Deviation Project - Acquisition Of Land.....	201
	9.6 Southern Highlands Bridge Club Lease Of Land Forming Part Of David Wood Playing Fields At Boardman Road Bowral - Update.....	205
	9.7 Cnr Kangaloon Road And Horderns Road, Bowral - Proposed Lease Of Road Reserve .....	209
	9.8 Parliamentary Enquiry In Road Network Resilience - Joint Submission .....	215
	9.9 Rates And Revenue Policies Update .....	283
	9.10 Financial Reserves Policy Update.....	304
	9.11 September 2024 Wingecarribee Shire Ordinary Election Cost Estimate And Councillor Training Costs .....	318



**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

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9.12 Bus Shelter Management Update .....	323
9.13 Macquarie Pass Update .....	327
9.14 Water Determination .....	334
9.15 Robertson Sewerage Scheme Loan .....	337
9.16 Investments Report As At 28 February 2023 .....	340
<b>10 MEETING CLOSURE .....</b>	<b>348</b>



## **Our Mission, Our Vision, Our Values**

### **OUR MISSION**

To create and nurture a vibrant and diverse community growing and working in harmony with our urban, agricultural and natural environments

### **OUR VISION**

**Leadership:** *'An innovative and effective organisation with strong leadership'*

**People:** *'A vibrant and diverse community living harmoniously, supported by innovative services and effective communication with Council'*

**Places:** *'Places that are safe, maintained, accessible, sympathetic to the built and natural environment, that supports the needs of the community'*

**Environment:** *'A community that values and protects the natural environment enhancing its health and diversity'*

**Economy:** *'A strong local economy that encourages and provides employment, business opportunities and tourism'*

### **OUR VALUES**

Integrity, trust and respect

Responsibility and accountability

Communication and teamwork

Service quality



## **Council Chambers**

### **Recording and Webcasting of Ordinary and Extraordinary Meetings of Council**

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**The Council Chamber has 24 Hour Video Surveillance.**



## **1 OPENING OF THE MEETING**

The Administrator, Mr Viv May PSM will open the meeting.

## **2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

“Wingecarribee Shire Council acknowledges the Gundungurra and Tharawal people as the traditional custodians of this land we now call the Wingecarribee Shire. I pay my respect to Elders both past, present and emerging. I would also like to extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders present here today.”

The Administrator is reminded of the obligations conferred on them at the time of their appointment.

The Administrator is to undertake the duties of the office of Administrator in the best interests of the people of the Wingecarribee Shire Council area and are to act faithfully and impartially carry out the functions, powers, authorities and discretions vested in them under the Local Government Act 1993 or any other Act to the best of your ability and judgement.

The Administrator is committed to the declaration of conflicts of interest in relation to items listed for consideration on the Agenda or which are considered at this meeting, in accordance with the Code of Conduct and Code of Meeting Practice.

## **4 APOLOGIES**

Nil at time of print.

## **5 ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

That the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 15 February 2023 MN2022/304 to MN2022/338 inclusive, be adopted as a correct record of the proceedings of the meeting.

## **6 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The provisions of Chapter 14 of the Local Government Act 1993 regulate the way in which nominated staff of Council conduct themselves to ensure that there is no conflict between their private interests and their public trust.

The Act prescribes that where a member of Council (or a Committee of Council) has a direct or indirect financial (pecuniary) interest in a matter to be considered at a meeting of the Council (or Committee), that interest and the reasons for declaring such interest must be disclosed as soon as practicable after the start of the meeting.

As members are aware, the provisions of the Local Government Act restrict any member who has declared a pecuniary interest in any matter from participating in the discussions or voting on that matter and further require that the member vacate the Chamber.

Council’s Code of Conduct provides that if members have a non-pecuniary conflict of interest, the nature of the conflict must be disclosed. The Code also provides for a number of ways in which a member may manage non pecuniary conflicts of interest.

## **7 ADMINISTRATOR MINUTES**

## **8 GENERAL MANAGER**

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### **8.1 Planning Proposal to Amend Schedule 2 of WLEP 2010 Regarding Public Events on Bush Fire Prone Land**

**Report Author:** Senior Strategic Land Use Planner

**Authoriser:** Executive Manager Strategic Outcomes

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#### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to seek endorsement of a Planning Proposal to remove the requirement for a Development Application for certain events on public land that is bushfire prone.

While the Planning Proposal would remove the need for a Development Application, the assessment of the suitability of a public event on bushfire prone land would still occur through Council's lease / licencing processes for the use of public land.

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**THIS MATTER WAS CONSIDERED AT THE LOCAL PLANNING PANEL MEETING OF 22 FEBRUARY 2023**

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#### **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION**

##### **THAT:**

- 1. The Planning Proposal to amend Schedule 2 (Exempt development) of Wingecarribee Local Environmental Plan 2010 to amend the exclusion of bush fire prone land from the provisions of exempt development for events on public land be supported,**
- 2. The Planning Proposal be submitted for a Gateway determination under s.3.34 of the *Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979* and processed in accordance with the Gateway requirements.**
- 3. Documentation to support the Planning Proposal, as endorsed by the NSW Rural Fire Service, be exhibited concurrently with the Planning Proposal.**

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#### **LOCAL PLANNING PANEL ADVICE**

The matter was considered by the Wingecarribee Local Planning Panel on 22 February 2023 and the following advice was provided:

- 1. The Panel supports in principle the Planning Proposal to amend Schedule 2 (Exempt development) of Wingecarribee Local Environmental Plan 2010 to remove*

*the exclusion of bush fire prone land from the provisions of exempt development for events on public land be supported; and*

*2. The Panel recommends the Council formally consult with Rural Fire Service on the Planning Proposal prior to requesting a Gateway determination.*

*3. Council prepare a Bushfire Risk Assessment for each site to which the Planning Proposal applies, considering relevant guidelines contained in Part 8 of Planning for Bushfire Protection 2019.*

*4. Council develop a licencing policy that incorporates, among other matters, the results of the Bushfire Risk Assessment and requires each licence application to include a Risk Management Plan that includes, among other matters, a Bushfire Risk Management Plan in accordance with relevant provisions of Planning for Bushfire Protection 2019.*

*5. The draft policy referred to in 4 above:*

- a. Be referred to Rural Fire Service for comment prior to requesting a Gateway determination and*
- b. Be exhibited concurrently with the Planning Proposal*

*6. Subject to the support of the Rural Fire Service, the Planning Proposal be submitted for a Gateway determination under s.3.34 of the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979 and processed in accordance with the Gateway requirements.*

This advice is noted and is generally supported by Council officers. However, it is recommended that the Planning Proposal proceed to Gateway determination now, and the documents required to support the Planning Proposal be prepared while the Planning Proposal is being considered by the Department of Planning and Environment for Gateway determination. This would ensure that the Planning Proposal is not subject to the significant delays that would occur if the additional documents were required to be finalised prior to the Gateway process.

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## **REPORT**

### **BACKGROUND**

Schedule 2 of the Wingecarribee Local Environmental Plan (WLEP) 2010 contains exempt development provisions additional to those specified within the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008*. One of these additional provisions relates to public events and states:

#### ***Public events***

*Use of public land (including a public reserve or public road) for public events, including stalls, meetings, exhibitions, entertainment or similar community, cultural or commercial purposes—*

- (a) proposed event must be consistent with any applicable plan of management under the [Local Government Act 1993](#) for the land,*
- (b) development must be carried out in accordance with a licence or hire agreement granted by the Council,*



*(c) must not be located on bush fire prone land.*

It is noted that these exempt development provisions exclude events on bush fire prone public land thereby requiring a Development Application (DA) in these circumstances. A significant portion of the Shire is mapped as 'bush fire prone' land, resulting in many small-scale community events requiring a Development Approval before the event can proceed. Council is deeply aware of the frustration and expense this can create for community groups, as well as the consequent impact on staff resources.

Council is also aware that the provisions of the Exempt and Complying State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) and a number of Codes within that SEPP have less restrictive provisions for activities on bush fire prone land than are currently contained in Schedule 2 of WLEP2010.

It is within this broader context that Council seeks to also amend the public events provisions of Schedule 2 of the Wingecarribee Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2010 as indicated below.

**Public events**

*Use of public land (including a public reserve or public road) for public events, including stalls, meetings, exhibitions, entertainment or similar community, cultural or commercial purposes—*

- (a) proposed event must be consistent with any applicable plan of management under the [Local Government Act 1993](#) for the land,*
- (b) development must be carried out in accordance with a licence or hire agreement granted by the Council, accompanied by a bush fire risk assessment and evacuation plan if located on bush fire prone land,*
- (c) must not involve overnight accommodation.*

The Planning Proposal forms **Attachment 1** to this report.

**REPORT**

It is noted that Council's Bush Fire Co-ordinating Committee signed off on the Wollondilly/Wingecarribee Bush Fire Risk Management Plan on the 16/05/2017. This plan is a strategic document that identifies community assets at risk and sets out a five-year program of co-ordinated multi-agency treatments to reduce the risk of bush fire to the identified assets. It is further noted that the bush fire danger status of all Council owned community halls on bush fire prone land is indicated on Council's website page for each facility. There is also a link on that page to the RFS website page which indicates current fire danger ratings and fire ban status across the State.

Council is also reviewing all aspects of the hiring of Council owned land and buildings to simplify the process for the community while ensuring that Council's and the community's risk is appropriately managed, including a greater consideration of bushfire threats. These revised processes would improve safety and risk management across all Council owned facilities and include a template for the preparation of a Bushfire Risk and Evacuation Management Plan in accordance with advice from the NSW Rural Fire Service and its publication *Planning for Bushfire Protection*.

This review will have the additional advantage of enabling the incorporation of specific requirements for Council facilities which are also Items of Heritage, such as Glebe Park in Bowral which are on the State Heritage Register such as the Market Place reserve at Berrima.

It is noted that the proposed amendments to *Schedule 2 Public Events* vary from those considered by the Local Planning Panel on 22 February 2023. These variations are based on advice from the NSW Rural Fire Service to reflect the requirement for the preparation of a bushfire risk assessment and evacuation plan if located on bush fire prone land as part of Council's hiring agreement, as indicated at (b) and to confirm that any event which involved overnight accommodation could not be considered as exempt development.

The NSW Rural Fire Service has advised that, subject to those provisions, it would not require further referral prior to Council submitting the Planning Proposal for a Gateway determination.

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## **COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION**

### **Community Engagement**

If a Gateway Determination is received to proceed with the Planning Proposal, public exhibition would be undertaken for a period of at least 28 days with the Planning Proposal notified on Council's Your Say Wingecarribee website and included in other Council community communications. Any additional documentation required by RFS, as well as Council's draft policy and procedures regarding the leasing of Council owned facilities would also be included in the exhibition material.

### **Internal Communication and Consultation**

Discussions have already occurred with relevant Council officers responsible for Council owned land and for the hiring of Council premises. These would continue throughout the processing of the Planning Proposal to ensure that an appropriate alternative system is developed which assists both customers and staff to more efficiently manage the venue booking and hiring process for events on public land.

### **External Communication and Consultation**

Council has written confirmation from the NSW Rural Fire Service that it does not object to Council proceeding to Gateway on the basis of the draft amendments contained in the recommendations to this report. In accordance with the requirements of the LEP Plan-Making Guideline and as formally required under the Gateway Determination, the draft Planning Proposal and supporting documentation would be referred to the RFS again prior to public exhibition.

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## **SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT**

### **Environment**

The proposed amendment would enable events on bush fire prone public land subject to certain conditions to ensure that appropriate bush fire management procedures are in place to protect bush fire prone land and potential vegetation loss.

### **Social**

The proposed amendment would be replaced by a more easily assessable booking and hiring process thereby facilitating more community events and social interaction without compromising public safety.

### **Broader Economic Implications**

There are no broader economic implications in relation to this report.

**Culture**

There are no cultural issues in relation to this report.

**Governance**

The Planning Proposal would be processed in accordance with relevant legislation and Departmental guidelines.

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**COUNCIL BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

There may be potential budget implications for the preparation of the site-specific Bush Fire Risk Assessment and Evacuation Plans should these be undertaken by consultants.

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**RELATED COUNCIL POLICY**

There are no related Council Policies

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**CONCLUSION**

Currently, certain community events cannot be considered as exempt development because they are located on 'bush fire prone' public land. The purpose of the Planning Proposal is to enable events as exempt development, even on bush fire prone land if accompanied by a bush fire risk assessment, and evacuation plan and provided no overnight accommodation is involved. This approach would continue to manage public safety and protect environmentally sensitive land, while also providing an easier, less expensive pathway for event approvals on public land.

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**ATTACHMENTS**

1. P P- Events on public land-v 1 Gateway [8.1.1 - 17 pages]

# **Planning Proposal**

**to amend the provisions of Schedule 2 (exempt development) of Wingecarribee Local Environmental Plan 2010 regarding events on bush fire prone public land**

Prepared in accordance with the Local Environmental Plan Making Guideline (December 2021)  
Version 1 for Consideration by the Local Planning Advisory Panel prior to Gateway lodgement

Prepared by Wingecarribee Shire Council

The Planning Proposal is categorised as Standard

March 2023

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## Description or Background

<b>Description</b>	To amend Schedule 2 of Wingecarribee Local Environmental Plan 2010 to remove bush fire prone land from the Public Events exempt development provisions
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## Part 1 - Objectives & Intended Outcomes of the Planning Proposal

### Objective & Intended Outcome

The purpose of the Planning Proposal is to amend the ‘public events’ provisions of Schedule 2 of WLEP 2010 to amend the heading and remove subclause (c). Schedule 2 of the Wingecarribee Local Environmental Plan (WLEP) 2010, which contains exempt development provisions additional to those specified within the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008*. One of these additional provisions relates to public events and states:

#### **Public events**

*Use of public land (including a public reserve or public road) for public events, including stalls, meetings, exhibitions, entertainment or similar community, cultural or commercial purposes—*

- (a) proposed event must be consistent with any applicable plan of management under the [Local Government Act 1993](#) for the land,*
- (b) development must be carried out in accordance with a licence or hire agreement granted by the Council,*
- (c) must not be located on bush fire prone land.*

It is noted that these exempt development provisions cannot apply to land mapped as being ‘bush fire prone’ and, therefore, a Development Application (DA) is required in these circumstances. Council has had discussions with the NSW Rural Fire Service as has been advised that the removal of subclause (c) would be supported by RFS. It is also proposed to replace the heading ‘public events’ with ‘events on public land’ which is a more accurate description of the purpose of the provisions.



## **Part 2 - Explanation of the Provisions**

- To achieve the intended outcomes of the Planning Proposal the Schedule 2, Exempt Development of Wingecarribee Local Environmental Plan 2010 would be amended as indicated below, noting the addition to subclause (b) of *requiring a bush fire risk assessment and evacuation plan*, and the amendment to subclause (c) to replace *must not be located on bush fire prone land* with *must not involve overnight accommodation*.

### **Public events**

*Use of public land (including a public reserve or public road) for public events, including stalls, meetings, exhibitions, entertainment or similar community, cultural or commercial purposes—*

- (a) proposed event must be consistent with any applicable plan of management under the [Local Government Act 1993](#) for the land,*
- (b) development must be carried out in accordance with a licence or hire agreement granted by the Council, accompanied by a bush fire risk assessment and evacuation plan if located on bush fire prone land*
- (c) ~~must not be located on bush fire prone land~~ must not involve overnight accommodation.*

It is noted that these amendments reflect advice received from the NSW Rural Fire Service.

- To achieve the intended outcomes of the Planning Proposal the following amendments to WLEP 2010 maps will be required:

No map amendments would result from the Planning Proposal.

## **Part 3 - Justification of Strategic & Site-specific Merit**

### **Strategic Merit**

The exclusion of 'bush fire prone' from allowing events on public land as exempt development creates community frustration and expense and the diversion of staff resources to this end. Council has had discussions with the NSW Rural Fire Service and has been advised that the removal of subclause (c) would be supported by RFS, and, on that basis therefore, Council has prepared a Planning Proposal to amend these provisions of Schedule 2 of WLEP 2010 to remove subclause (c). It is also proposed to change the title of the part of the LEP from *Public events* to a more accurate description of *Events on public land*.

To support the proposed amendment, Council is reviewing its licencing agreements and supporting documentation requirements for the hiring of public buildings and land which would continue to manage public safety and protect the environment, while also providing a more streamlined, less expensive pathway for public event approvals. It is noted that Council already has in place





mechanisms for assessing bush fire risk for public events on Council owned land. The bush fire danger status of all Council owned community halls on bush fire prone land has already been assessed and is indicated on Council's website page for each facility. There is also a link on that page to the RFS website page which indicates current fire danger ratings and fire ban status across the State.

A further advantage of this approach is that additional specific requirements can also be included for Council facilities which are also Items of Heritage, such as Glebe Park in Bowral which is on the State Heritage Register and the Market Place reserve at Berrima.

The current exempt development provisions in the Wingecarribee Local Environmental Plan have been in place since it was made in 2010 and would now appear to be redundant. It is noted that exempt and complying development provisions for temporary uses for community events do not require a bush fire assessment or management plan. It is further noted that exempt development standards for Agritourism, which were introduced into the State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt & Complying Development Codes) (the SEPP) in December 2022, generally only require an evacuation diagram and emergency contact details for agritourism activities.

If these SEPP provisions are considered sufficient, with no distinction for designated bush fire prone land, then Council's proposed amendment would seem consistent, especially as other mechanisms are in place and being developed to provide a higher level of public safety and environmental protection that the SEPP provisions allow. One key consideration for Council is that of risk and this is also being attended to through revisions to the booking and hire process to ensure that appropriate risk assessments are undertaken.

#### **Section A – Need for the Planning Proposal**

##### **1 - Is the Planning Proposal a result of an endorsed LSPS, strategic study or report?**

The proposed amendment has not come from any formal strategy, but has come from increasing frustrations within the community with regard to using Council owned land for community events. Council understands that frustration and agrees that Council owned land should be more easily available for the community. The proposed amendment would appear to bring WLEP 2010 into line with other LEPs and state policy.

##### **2 - Is the Planning Proposal the best means of achieving the objectives or intended outcomes or is there a better way?**

The proposed amendment to the relevant exempt development provisions is the only means of addressing the issue.

## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023



### Section B – Relationship to the Strategic Planning Framework

#### 3 - Will the Planning Proposal give effect to the objectives and actions of the SE & Tablelands Regional Plan (including any draft plans or strategies)?

The proposed amendment falls outside of the main remit of the Regional Plan, but is considered consistent because it seeks to facilitate the efficient management of Council's business to the benefit of the community.

#### 4 - Is the Planning Proposal consistent with Council's adopted and endorsed Local Strategic Planning Statement and Local Housing Strategy?

The proposed amendment falls outside of the main remit of the LSPS and LHS, but is considered consistent because it seeks to facilitate the efficient management of Council's business to the benefit of the community. Serving the community as efficiently and effectively as possible underpins all Council strategic documents and this matter is a good example of how this can be achieved.

#### 5 - Is the Planning Proposal consistent with any other applicable State and regional studies or strategies?

No other state or regional studies are considered applicable.

#### 6 - Is the Planning Proposal consistent with applicable SEPPs?

##### SEPP (Housing) 2021

The intent of this SEPP is to deliver a sufficient supply of safe, diverse and affordable housing  
<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/epi-2021-0714>

##### Assessment – Consistent

The principles of this Policy are:

- (a) enabling the development of diverse housing types, including purpose-built rental housing,
- (b) encouraging the development of housing that will meet the needs of more vulnerable members of the community, including very low to moderate income households, seniors and people with a disability,
- (c) ensuring new housing development provides residents with a reasonable level of amenity,
- (d) promoting the planning and delivery of housing in locations where it will make good use of existing and planned infrastructure and services,
- (e) minimising adverse climate and environmental impacts of new housing development,
- (f) reinforcing the importance of designing housing in a way that reflects and enhances its locality,
- (g) supporting short-term rental accommodation as a home-sharing activity and contributor to local economies, while managing the social and environmental impacts from this use,
- (h) mitigating the loss of existing affordable rental housing.

## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023



*The Planning Proposal is considered consistent with this SEPP because it will improve access to public land for community events.*

### SEPP (Transport and Infrastructure) 2021

*The intent of this SEPP is to provide well-designed and located transport and infrastructure integrated with land use*  
<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/epi-2021-0732>

#### Assessment – Consistent

*The key intentions of this SEPP include:*

- (a) improving regulatory certainty and efficiency through a consistent planning regime for infrastructure and the provision of services, and*
- (b) providing greater flexibility in the location of infrastructure and service facilities, and*
- (c) allowing for the efficient development, redevelopment or disposal of surplus government owned land, and*
- (d) identifying the environmental assessment category into which different types of infrastructure and services development fall (including identifying certain development of minimal environmental impact as exempt development), and*
- (e) identifying matters to be considered in the assessment of development adjacent to particular types of infrastructure development, and*
- (f) providing for consultation with relevant public authorities about certain development during the assessment process or prior to development commencing, and*
- (g) providing opportunities for infrastructure to demonstrate good design outcomes.*

*The Planning Proposal is considered consistent with this SEPP because it would not in any way undermine the provisions of the SEPP.*

### SEPP (Primary Production)

*The intent of this SEPP is to support and protect the productivity of important agricultural lands. They enhance rural and regional economies through a sustainable, diverse and dynamic primary production sector that can meet the changing needs of a growing NSW.*  
<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/epi-2021-0729>

*The key aims of this SEPP are:*

- (a) to facilitate the orderly economic use and development of lands for primary production,*
- (b) to reduce land use conflict and sterilisation of rural land by balancing primary production, residential development and the protection of native vegetation, biodiversity and water resources,*
- (c) to identify State significant agricultural land for the purpose of ensuring the ongoing viability of agriculture on that land, having regard to social, economic and environmental considerations,*
- (d) to simplify the regulatory process for smaller-scale low risk artificial waterbodies, and routine maintenance of artificial water supply or drainage, in irrigation areas and districts, and for routine and emergency work in irrigation areas and districts,*
- (e) to encourage sustainable agriculture, including sustainable aquaculture,*
- (f) to require consideration of the effects of all proposed development in the State on oyster aquaculture,*
- (g) to identify aquaculture that is to be treated as designated development using a well-defined and concise development assessment regime based on environment risks associated with site and operational factors.*

# AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023



*The Planning Proposal is considered consistent with this SEPP because it would not in any way undermine the provisions of the SEPP.*

## **SEPP (Biodiversity and Conservation) 2021**

*The intent of this SEPP is to preserve, conserve and manage NSW's natural environment & heritage*  
<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/epi-2021-0722>

### **Assessment – Consistent**

*The aims of this SEPP are:*

- (a) to protect the biodiversity values of trees and other vegetation in non-rural areas of the State, and*
- (b) to preserve the amenity of non-rural areas of the State through the preservation of trees and other vegetation.*

*It is noted that 2.3(1)(b) of the SEPP identifies land within the R3 Medium Density Residential zone as land to which the SEPP applies.*

*The Planning Proposal is considered consistent with this SEPP because it would not in any way undermine the provisions of the SEPP.*

## **SEPP (Resilience and Hazards) 2021**

*The intent of this SEPP is to manage risks and building resilience in the face of hazards*  
<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/epi-2021-0730>

### **Assessment – Consistent**

*The key aims of that part of the SEPP applicable to the Shire include:*

- (d) to ensure that in determining whether a development is a hazardous or offensive industry, any measures proposed to be employed to reduce the impact of the development are taken into account, and*
- (e) to ensure that in considering any application to carry out potentially hazardous or offensive development, the consent authority has sufficient information to assess whether the development is hazardous or offensive and to impose conditions to reduce or minimise any adverse impact*

*The Planning Proposal is considered consistent with this SEPP because it would not in any way undermine the provisions of the SEPP.*

## **SEPP (Industry and Employment) 2021 –**

*The intent of this SEPP is to grow a competitive and resilient economy that is adaptive, innovative and delivers jobs*  
<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/epi-2021-0723>

### **Assessment – Consistent**

*The provisions of Chapter 3 (Advertising & Signage) are the only part of this SEPP applicable to land in Wingecarribee Shire because it would not in any way undermine the provisions of the SEPP.*

## **SEPP (Resources and Energy) 2021**

*The intent of this SEPP is to promote the sustainable use of NSW's resources and transitioning to renewable energy*  
<https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/epi-2021-0731>

# AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023



<b>Assessment – Consistent</b>
<i>The provisions of Chapter 2 (Mining, petroleum production &amp; extractive industries) are the only part of this SEPP applicable to land in Wingecarribee Shire because it would not in any way undermine the provisions of the SEPP.</i>

<b>SEPP (Planning Systems) 2021</b>	<i>The intent of this SEPP is to provide a strategic and inclusive planning system for the community &amp; the environment</i> <a href="https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/epi-2021-0724">https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/epi-2021-0724</a>
<b>Assessment – Consistent</b>	<i>The provisions of this SEPP address State significant development and land owned by an Aboriginal Land Council and are therefore not relevant to this Planning Proposal.</i>

<b>SEPP (Regional Precincts) 2021</b>	<i>The intent of this SEPP is to consider State significant precincts, Activation precincts and other specific precincts including the Southern Highlands Regional Shooting Complex</i> <a href="https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/epi-2021-0727">https://legislation.nsw.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/epi-2021-0727</a>
<b>Assessment – Consistent</b>	<i>The only provisions of this SEPP which apply to Wingecarribee Shire relate to the Southern Highlands Regional Shooting Complex and is therefore not relevant to this Planning Proposal.</i>

## 7 - Is the Planning Proposal consistent with applicable s9.1 Ministerial Directions?

<b>Focus Area 1 Planning Systems</b>	<i>The intent of this Focus Area is to support the broader NSW planning framework, including its processes and collaborative approaches to strategic and land use planning and decision making. They seek to achieve long-term, evidence-based, strategically led planning that is inclusive, democratic, responsive to the community and the environment, and ensures decisions are transparent and prompt.</i>
<b>1.1 Implementation of Regional Plans</b>	
<b>Assessment – Consistent</b>	
<i>The objective of this Direction is to give legal effect to the vision, land use strategy, goals, directions and actions contained in Regional Plans.</i>	
<i>The Planning Proposal is considered consistent with this Direction because although the proposed amendment falls outside of the main remit of most strategies, it is considered consistent because it seeks to facilitate the efficient management of Council's business to the benefit of the community. Serving the community as efficiently and effectively as possible underpins all Council strategic documents and this matter is a good example of how this can be achieved.</i>	
<b>1.2 Development of Aboriginal Land Council land</b>	
<b>Assessment – Consistent</b>	
<i>The objective of this direction is to provide for the consideration of development delivery plans prepared under Chapter 3 of the State Environmental Planning Policy (Planning Systems) 2021 when planning proposals are prepared by a planning proposal authority.</i>	

# AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023



*The Planning Proposal is considered consistent with this Direction because no Aboriginal Land Council land is involved.*

## **1.3 Approval and Referral Requirements**

### **Assessment – Consistent**

*The objective of this Direction is to ensure that LEP provisions encourage the efficient and appropriate assessment of development.*

*The Planning Proposal is considered consistent with this Direction because it would not in any way undermine the provisions of this Direction.*

## **1.4 Site Specific Provisions**

### **Assessment – Consistent**

*The objective of this Direction is to discourage unnecessarily restrictive site-specific planning controls.*

*The Planning Proposal is considered consistent with this Direction because it would not in any way undermine the provisions of this Direction.*

## **1.5 – 1.22 – Planning Systems Place Based**

### **Assessment – Consistent**

*None of these place-based Directions apply to Wingecarribee Shire.*

### **Focus Area 2 Design & Place**

*The intent of this Focus Area is to establish quality design approaches for new development, public spaces and the environment. They promote the design of places that are healthy, sustainable, prosperous, and supportive of people, the community and Country.*

*NB: This Focus Area is not included in the current Ministerial Directions.*

### **Focus Area 3 Biodiversity & Conservation**

*The intent of this Focus Area is to recognise the fundamental importance of protecting, conserving and managing NSW's natural environment and heritage. They help balance the needs of built and natural environments, respecting both the innate and economic value of the state's biodiversity and natural assets.*

## **3.1 Conservation Zones (previously 2.1 Environment Protection Zones)**

### **Assessment – Consistent**

*The objective of this Direction is to protect and conserve environmentally sensitive areas.*

*The Planning Proposal is considered consistent with this Direction because it would not in any way undermine the provisions of this Direction.*

## **3.2 Heritage Conservation**

### **Assessment – Consistent**

*The objective of this Direction is to conserve items, areas, objects and places of environmental heritage significance and indigenous heritage significance.*





*The Planning Proposal is considered consistent with this Direction because it would not in any way undermine the provisions of this Direction.*

### **3.3 Sydney Drinking Water Catchments**

#### **Assessment – Consistent**

*The objective of this Direction is to provide for healthy catchments and protect water quality in the Sydney Drinking Water Catchment. This Direction requires that a Planning Proposal must be prepared in accordance with the general principle that water quality within the Sydney drinking water catchment must be protected, and in accordance with the following specific principles:*

- (a) new development within the Sydney drinking water catchment must have a neutral or beneficial effect on water quality (including groundwater), and*
- (b) future land use in the Sydney drinking water catchment should be matched to land and water capability, and*
- (c) the ecological values of land within a Special Area should be maintained.*

*The Direction also requires that, when preparing a Planning Proposal, Council must:*

- o consult with WaterNSW, describing the means by which the planning proposal gives effect to the water quality protection principles of this direction, and*
- o ensure that the proposal is consistent with Part 6.5 of Chapter 6 of the State Environmental Planning Policy (Biodiversity and Conservation) 2021, and*
- o identify any existing water quality (including groundwater) risks to any waterway occurring on, or adjacent to the site, and*
- o give consideration to the outcomes of the Strategic Land and Water Capability Assessment prepared by WaterNSW, being the series of land use capability maps and GIS data prepared by WaterNSW and provided to councils in June 2009, and*
- o include a copy of any information received from WaterNSW as a result of the consultation process in its planning proposal prior to the issuing of a gateway determination under section 3.34 of the EP&A Act.*

*The Planning Proposal is considered consistent with this Direction because it would not in any way undermine the provisions of this Direction.*

### **3.4 Application of C2 and C3 Zones and Environmental Overlays in Far North Coast LEPs**

#### **Assessment – Consistent**

*This Direction is not applicable to Wingecarribee Shire.*

### **3.5 Recreation Vehicle Areas**

#### **Assessment – Consistent**

*The objective of this Direction is to protect sensitive land or land with significant conservation values from adverse impacts from recreation vehicles.*

*The Planning Proposal is considered consistent with this Direction because it would not in any way undermine the provisions of this Direction.*



<b>Focus Area 4 Resilience &amp; Hazards</b>	<i>The intent of this Focus Area is to improve responses to natural and development-related hazards, and climate change. They support methods to consider and reduce risk. The principles promote healthy, resilient and adaptive communities, urban areas and natural environments.</i>
<b>4.1 Flooding</b>	
<b>Assessment – Consistent</b>	
<p><i>The objectives of this Direction are to:</i></p> <p><i>(a) ensure that development of flood prone land is consistent with the NSW Government’s Flood Prone Land Policy and the principles of the Floodplain Development Manual 2005, and</i></p> <p><i>(b) ensure that the provisions of an LEP that apply to flood prone land are commensurate with flood hazard and includes consideration of the potential flood impacts both on and off the subject land.</i></p> <p><i>The Planning Proposal is considered consistent with this Direction because it would not in any way undermine the provisions of this Direction.</i></p>	
<b>4.2 Coastal Management</b>	
<b>Assessment – Consistent</b>	
<p><i>This Direction is not applicable to Wingecarribee Shire.</i></p>	
<b>4.3 Planning for Bushfire Protection (previously 4.4)</b>	
<b>Assessment – Consistent</b>	
<p><i>The objectives of this Direction are to:</i></p> <p><i>(a) protect life, property and the environment from bush fire hazards, by discouraging the establishment of incompatible land uses in bush fire prone areas, and</i></p> <p><i>(b) encourage sound management of bush fire prone areas.</i></p> <p><i>The Planning Proposal is considered consistent with this Direction because Council has received informal support from RFS and will provide written confirmation prior to public exhibition.</i></p> <p>NB: Referral to NSW Rural Fire Service would also occur in accordance with any such Gateway Determination and this assessment will be updated to reflect RFS response prior to exhibition.</p>	
<b>4.4 Remediation of Contaminated Land</b>	
<b>Assessment – Consistent</b>	
<p><i>The objective of this Direction is to reduce the risk of harm to human health and the environment by ensuring that contamination and remediation are considered by planning proposal authorities.</i></p> <p><i>The Planning Proposal is considered consistent with this Direction because it would not in any way undermine the provisions of this Direction.</i></p>	
<b>4.5 Acid Sulphate Soils</b>	
<b>Assessment – Consistent</b>	
<p><i>The objective of this Direction is to avoid significant adverse environmental impacts from the use of land that has a probability of containing acid sulfate soils. There currently appear to be no mapped acid sulphate soils in Wingecarribee Shire.</i></p>	



#### **4.6 Mine Subsidence & Unstable Land**

##### **Assessment – Consistent**

*The objective of this Direction is to prevent damage to life, property and the environment on land identified as unstable or potentially subject to mine subsidence.*

*The Planning Proposal is considered consistent with this Direction because it would not in any way undermine the provisions of this Direction.*

#### **Focus Area 5 Transport & Infrastructure**

*The intent of this Focus Area is to support innovative, integrated and coordinated transport and infrastructure, that is well-designed, accessible and enduring. They seek to optimise public benefit and value by planning for modern transport and infrastructure in the right location and at the right time.*

#### **5.1 Integrating Land Use and Transport**

##### **Assessment – Consistent**

*The objective of this Direction is to ensure that urban structures, building forms, land use locations, development designs, subdivision and street layouts achieve the following planning objectives:*

- (a) improving access to housing, jobs and services by walking, cycling and public transport, and*
- (b) increasing the choice of available transport and reducing dependence on cars, and*
- (c) reducing travel demand including the number of trips generated by development and the distances travelled, especially by car, and*
- (d) supporting the efficient and viable operation of public transport services, and*
- (e) providing for the efficient movement of freight.*

*The Planning Proposal is considered consistent with this Direction because it would not in any way undermine the provisions of this Direction.*

#### **5.2 Reserving Land for Public Purposes**

##### **Assessment – Consistent**

*The objectives of this Direction are to (a) facilitate the provision of public services and facilities by reserving land for public purposes, and (b) facilitate the removal of reservations of land for public purposes where the land is no longer required for acquisition.*

*The Planning Proposal is considered consistent with this Direction because it would not in any way undermine the provisions of this Direction.*

#### **5.3 Development Near Regulated Airports and Defence Airfields**

##### **Assessment – Consistent**

*The objectives of this Direction are to:*

- (a) ensure the effective and safe operation of regulated airports and defence airfields;*
- (b) ensure that their operation is not compromised by development that constitutes an obstruction, hazard or potential hazard to aircraft flying in the vicinity; and*
- (c) ensure development, if situated on noise sensitive land, incorporates appropriate mitigation measures so that the development is not adversely affected by aircraft noise.*

*The Planning Proposal is consistent with this Direction because it would not in any way undermine the provisions of this Direction.*



<b>5.4 Shooting Ranges</b>	
<b>Assessment – Consistent</b> <i>The objectives of this Direction are to:</i> <i>(a) maintain appropriate levels of public safety and amenity when rezoning land adjacent to an existing shooting range,</i> <i>(b) reduce land use conflict arising between existing shooting ranges and rezoning of adjacent land,</i> <i>(c) identify issues that must be addressed when giving consideration to rezoning land adjacent to an existing shooting range.</i>  <i>The Planning Proposal is considered consistent with this Direction because it would not in any way undermine the provisions of this Direction.</i>	
<b>Focus Area 6 Housing</b>	<i>The intent of this Focus Area is to foster long-term, strategic-led and evidence-based approaches to guide a strong supply of well-located homes. They support the delivery of safe, diverse, affordable and quality designed housing that meets the needs of Aboriginal and local communities.</i>
<b>6.1 Residential Zones</b>	
<b>Assessment – Consistent</b> <i>The objectives of this Direction are to:</i> <i>(a) encourage a variety and choice of housing types to provide for existing and future housing needs,</i> <i>(b) make efficient use of existing infrastructure and services and ensure that new housing has appropriate access to infrastructure and services, and</i> <i>(c) minimise the impact of residential development on the environment and resource lands.</i> <i>The Planning Proposal is considered consistent with this Direction because</i>	
<b>6.2 Caravan Parks and Manufactured Home Estates</b>	
<b>Assessment – Consistent</b> <i>The objectives of this Direction are to:</i> <i>(a) provide for a variety of housing types, and</i> <i>(b) provide opportunities for caravan parks and manufactured home estates.</i>  <i>The Planning Proposal is considered consistent with this Direction because it would not in any way undermine the provisions of this Direction.</i>	
<b>Focus Area 7 Resilient Economies</b>	<i>The intent of this Focus Area is to support diverse, inclusive and productive employment opportunities across the state to make NSW more economically competitive. They promote the supply of strategic employment lands, innovative industries and centres as a focus for activity and accessibility.</i>
<b>7.1 Business and Industrial Zones</b>	
<b>Assessment – Consistent</b> <i>The objectives of this Direction are to:</i> <i>(a) encourage employment growth in suitable locations,</i>	



<p>(b) protect employment land in business and industrial zones, and (c) support the viability of identified centres.</p> <p><i>The Planning Proposal is considered consistent with this Direction because it would not in any way undermine the provisions of this Direction.</i></p>
<b>7.2 Reduction in non-hosted short-term rental accommodation period</b>
<p><b>Assessment – Consistent</b> <i>Not applicable to Wingecarribee Shire</i></p>
<b>7.3 Commercial and Retail Development along the Pacific Highway, North Coast</b>
<p><b>Assessment – Consistent</b> <i>Not applicable to Wingecarribee Shire</i></p>

<b>Focus Area 8 Resources &amp; Energy</b>	<p><i>The intent of this Focus Area is to promote the sustainable development of resources in strategic areas and a transition to low carbon industries and energy. They support positive environmental outcomes and work towards the net zero emissions target and continued energy security, while also promoting diversified activity in regional economies.</i></p>
<b>8.1 Mining, Petroleum Production &amp; Extractive Industries</b>	
<p><b>Assessment – Consistent</b> <i>The objective of this Direction is to ensure that the future extraction of State or regionally significant reserves of coal, other minerals, petroleum and extractive materials are not compromised by inappropriate development.</i></p> <p><i>The Planning Proposal is considered consistent with this Direction because it would not in any way undermine the provisions of this Direction.</i></p>	

<b>Focus Area 9 Primary Production</b>	<p><i>The intent of this Focus Area is to support and protect the productivity of important agricultural lands. They enhance rural and regional economies through a sustainable, diverse and dynamic primary production sector that can meet the changing needs of a growing NSW.</i></p>
<b>9.1 Rural Zones</b>	
<p><b>Assessment – Consistent</b> <i>The objective of this Direction is to protect the agricultural production value of rural land and identifies requirements for a Planning Proposal seeking to rezone Rural zoned land to a residential, business, industrial, village or tourist zone.</i></p> <p><i>The Planning Proposal is considered consistent with this Direction because it would not in any way undermine the provisions of this Direction.</i></p>	



#### **9.2 Rural Lands**

##### **Assessment – Consistent**

*This Direction applies when a Planning Proposal will either affect land within an existing or proposed rural or conservation zone or changes the existing minimum lot size on land within a rural or conservation zone. The objectives of this Direction are to:*

- (a) protect the agricultural production value of rural land,*
- (b) facilitate the orderly and economic use and development of rural lands for rural and related purposes,*
- (c) assist in the proper management, development and protection of rural lands to promote the social, economic and environmental welfare of the State,*
- (d) minimise the potential for land fragmentation and land use conflict in rural areas, particularly between residential and other rural land uses,*
- (e) encourage sustainable land use practices and ensure the ongoing viability of agriculture on rural land,*
- (f) support the delivery of the actions outlined in the NSW Right to Farm Policy.*

*The Planning Proposal is considered consistent with this Direction because it would not in any way undermine the provisions of this Direction.*

#### **9.3 Oyster Aquaculture**

##### **Assessment – Consistent**

*The objectives of this direction are to:*

- (a) ensure that ‘Priority Oyster Aquaculture Areas’ and oyster aquaculture outside such an area are adequately considered when preparing a planning proposal, and*
- (b) protect ‘Priority Oyster Aquaculture Areas’ and oyster aquaculture outside such an area from land uses that may result in adverse impacts on water quality and consequently, on the health of oysters and oyster consumers.*

*The Planning Proposal is considered consistent with this Direction because there are no ‘Priority Oyster Aquaculture Areas’ in Wingecarribee Shire.*

#### **9.4 Farmland of State & Regional Significance on the NSW Far North Coast**

##### **Assessment – Consistent**

*The Planning Proposal is considered consistent with this Direction because it is not applicable to Wingecarribee Shire.*

### **Section C – Environmental, Social & Economic Impacts**

**8 - Is there any likelihood that critical habitat or threatened species, populations or ecological communities, or their habitats, will be adversely affected because of the Proposal?**

It is not anticipated that the proposed amendment would result in any adverse impacts. The proposed amendment would enable public events on bush fire prone land subject to certain conditions based on advice provided by the NSW Rural Fire Service to ensure that appropriate bush



fire management procedures are in place to minimise bush fire potential and associated vegetation loss.

**9 - Are there any other likely environmental effects of the planning proposal and how are they proposed to be managed?**

The proposed amendment would enable public events on bush fire prone land subject to certain conditions to ensure that appropriate bush fire management procedures are in place to minimise bush fire potential and associated vegetation loss.

To support the proposed amendment, Council already developed an alternative approach to the management of public events on bush fire prone land which would continue to manage public safety and protect the environment. It is noted that Council already has in place mechanisms for assessing bush fire risk for public events on Council owned land. These processes address and support safety and risk management across all Council owned facilities.

**10 - Has the planning proposal adequately addressed any social and economic effects?**

The proposed amendment would be replaced by a simpler and more efficient booking and hiring process thereby facilitating more community events and social interaction while ensuring appropriate risk management.

**Section D – Infrastructure (Local, State & Commonwealth)**

**11- Is there adequate public infrastructure for the Planning Proposal?**

No public infrastructure would be affected by the Planning Proposal.

**Section E – State and Commonwealth Interests**

**12 - What are the views of state and federal authorities and government agencies consulted in order to inform the Gateway determination?**

NSW Rural Fire Service has provided informal support. Formal confirmation will accompany the Planning Proposal when it is submitted for a Gateway determination.

**Part 4 - Maps**

No maps would be amended by the Planning Proposal.





## **Part 5 - Community Consultation**

Community consultation would be undertaken in accordance with the Gateway determination and Council's Community Engagement Strategy. This would involve exhibition for a period of at least 28 days with notification through Council's website and community e-newsletters.

## **Part 6 - Project Timeline**

<b>MILESTONE</b>	<b>INDICATIVE /ACTUAL DATE</b>
Gateway Determination	April 2023
Agency Consultation	May 2023
Public Exhibition	June 2023
Post exhibition Report to Panel & Council	July – August 2023
Drafting Request	August 2023
Notification Request & approximate completion date	September 2023

**END OF PLANNING PROPOSAL**

## **9 REPORTS**

### **9.1 Wingecarribee Shire Community Strategic Plan - Draft for Public Exhibition**

**Report Author:** **Manager Governance and Corporate Performance**

**Authoriser:** Director Corporate Strategy and Resourcing

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#### **PURPOSE**

This report provides the draft refreshed Wingecarribee Shire Community Strategic Plan for Council's endorsement to go on public exhibition for 28 days.

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#### **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION**

##### **THAT**

1. Council note the Recommendations Report for the Community Strategic Plan included in Attachment 1 to this report.
2. The draft refreshed Wingecarribee Shire Community Strategic Plan included in Attachment 2 to this report be placed on public exhibition for a period of 28 days from 17 March to 14 April 2023

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#### **REPORT**

##### **BACKGROUND**

##### **Integrated Planning and Reporting Review**

At the meeting held on 21 September 2022, Council endorsed a phased approach to the review of the Community Engagement Strategy and Community Strategic Plan.

The first phase will run between September 2022 and June 2023. This phase is focused on:

- reviewing Council's Community Engagement Strategy
- delivering an updated suite of IP&R documents including a 'refreshed' Community Strategic Plan
- creating structures that will facilitate the implementation of the Community Engagement Strategy.

The second phase will run from August 2023 through to the local government elections in September 2024 and will focus on:

- implementing newly created community engagement structures
- implementing a co-design project to inform current and future approaches to community
- engagement resulting in a new Community Engagement Strategy and a Community Engagement Plan guiding the development of 'Wingecarribee 2040'
- undertaking in-depth data analysis and community engagement to inform the State of our Shire Report 2024 and 'Wingecarribee 2040'.

A third phase will be reconfirmed in consultation with the incoming Council post the September 2024 elections and based on the Community Engagement Plan already in train.

The focus of this report is on the review of Council's Community Strategic Plan (CSP).

### **Community Strategic Plan Requirements**

Section 402 of the Local Government Act 1993 requires NSW local government areas to have a CSP that has been developed and endorsed by its council on behalf of its community. The CSP must:

- identify the main priorities and aspirations for the future of the local government area.
- must cover a minimum timeframe of 10 years.
- establish strategic objectives together with strategies to achieve those objectives.

Council last reviewed its CSP in 2017. It is usual for the CSP to be updated at least every four years in line with the local government election cycle. Given that there were no elections in Wingecarribee in 2021, the Plan is now considered out of date and a refresh of the CSP is required prior to the September 2024 NSW local government elections.

### **REPORT**

A review of Council's CSP has now been completed. The review process involved

- desk top research and analysis of relevant policies, plans and strategies developed since 2017 to identify gaps in the existing Plan, including both challenges and opportunities, which need to be addressed
- analysis of available 2021 Census data
- consultation with external stakeholders via a series of focus groups and surveys
- consultation with internal stakeholders via a strategic workshop.

Details of the review process and community engagement undertaken to refresh the CSP are detailed in the *Integrated Planning and Reporting Project – Recommendations Report Part 2 Community Strategy Plan* included in **Attachment 1** to this report.

The review was carried out to assess whether the existing Themes, Goals and Strategies in the CSP remain 'fit for purpose' or if changes are required to ensure current, new and emerging issues, including both challenges and opportunities, are being appropriately captured and actioned. Based on the outcomes of the review process a refreshed CSP has been drafted.

The review found that the most significant gaps, both challenges and opportunities, identified at the Goal and/or Strategy level are:

- An ageing population
- Improving access to housing
- Increasing natural disasters and weather events
- Digital innovation and technology
- Supporting and retaining young people
- Our strategic location
- Rural and slow tourism
- Supporting people with a disability to access jobs
- Creative industries

Issues already featured in the Plan that require further promotion and focus include:

- The role of arts and culture in community life

- Community's role in leadership
- Planning for a growing population
- Supporting the most vulnerable people in our community
- Connecting to country, people and place
- Innovation and new technologies (in relation to the economy)
- Health and wellbeing in a COVID society and the burden of chronic illness

Issues already well covered in the Plan and remaining of high importance and urgency are:

- Climate Change
- Communication and engagement between levels of government and community
- Sustainability and condition of local infrastructure, particularly roads
- Financial sustainability
- Sustainable, fit for purpose local infrastructure
- Building resilience; our ability to survive, adapt and thrive
- Protecting biodiversity and our natural environment
- Renewable energies

The CSP Goals and Strategies have been updated based on the outcomes of the review process. A draft refreshed CSP is included in **Attachment 2** this report.

It is recommended that the draft refreshed CSP be placed on public exhibition for 28 days.

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## **COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION**

### **Community Engagement**

Details of the community engagement already undertaken is outlined in this report and attachment 1 to this report.

It is proposed that the draft refreshed CSP be placed on public exhibition for 28 days from 17 March to 14 April 2023.

A project page will be established on Council's Your Say Wingecarribee website ([yoursaywingecarribee.com.au](https://yoursaywingecarribee.com.au)). Residents will have an opportunity to complete an online form on the Your Say Wingecarribee project page or to make a submission by way of email or letter.

Public notice of the exhibition period will be provided via the following means:

- Notification to all registered members of Your Say Wingecarribee
- Notification to community contacts including village associations and chambers
- Weekly Community Update published on Council's website
- eNewsletter distributed to registered subscribers
- Social media posts
- Media release.

Focus group and survey respondents will be advised in writing of the public exhibition.

Additionally, the public exhibition of the draft CSP will be promoted during the Executive's 2023 Reconnect Visits and the Council stall at the Moss Vale Show on 17-19 March 2023.

**Internal Communication and Consultation**

An internal stakeholder workshop involving Council's Executive, Management and Coordinator team was held to inform the development of the draft CSP.

**External Communication and Consultation**

Office of Local Government's Integrated Planning and Reporting Guidelines were consulted during the development of the Community Strategic Plan.

The review of the CSP involved consultation with external stakeholders via a series of focus groups and surveys, further details are outlined in Attachment 1 to this report.

The approach for further in engagement with the community on the draft CSP is outlined in the section above on Community Engagement.

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**SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT**

**Environment**

There are no environmental issues in relation to this report.

**Social**

There are no social issues in relation to this report.

**Broader Economic Implications**

There are no broader economic implications in relation to this report.

**Culture**

There are no cultural issues in relation to this report.

**Governance**

Section 402 of the *Local Government Act 1993* requires each nsw local government area to have a CSP that has been developed and endorsed by the council. The CSP must:

- identify the main priorities and aspirations for the future of the local government area.
- cover a minimum timeframe of 10 years.
- establish strategic objectives together with strategies to achieve those objectives.

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**COUNCIL BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

There are no budget implications as a result of this report.

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**RELATED COUNCIL POLICY**

Nil

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**CONCLUSION**

The draft Refreshed CSP has been updated based on the outcomes of community consultation and to reflect legislative requirements. It is recommended that the draft CSP be placed on public exhibition for 28 days from 17 March to 14 April 2023.

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**ATTACHMENTS**

1. Report - Review of Wingecarribee 2031 [9.1.1 - 40 pages]
2. Draft Community Strategic Plan - for public exhibition [9.1.2 - 38 pages]

# Wingecarribee Shire Council

## **Integrated Planning and Reporting Project**

Recommendations Report Part 2  
*Community Strategic Plan*

Prepared by  
Kathryn Ridley Consulting  
November 2022



## Executive Summary

In September of 2022, an analysis of key documents was undertaken to inform the update to the Community Strategic Plan (the Plan); Wingecarribee 2031, *Our Future, Our Choice*, along with Council's Community Engagement Strategy.

Stakeholder engagement was also undertaken via community focus groups, surveys and a strategic workshop run for Council Executive, Managers and Coordinators.

Specifically, work was carried out to assess whether the existing Themes, Goals and Strategies in the Plan remain 'fit for purpose' or if changes are required to ensure current, new and emerging issues, including both challenges and opportunities, are being appropriately captured and actioned.

This report includes the results of the analysis and stakeholder engagement along with recommendations for changes to the Community Strategic Plan. A separate report has been developed considering changes to the Community Engagement Strategy.

In proposing recommendations, the author has tried to strike a balance between maintaining the integrity of the core structure of the Plan and identifying opportunities to improve the Plan, ensuring it provides a sound strategic platform for future planning and service delivery.

The analysis included the review of 43 'key informing documents' including internal and external strategies, plans and reports. The report builds on work completed by Karen Legge Consulting in August 2021 that assessed the Plan's alignment to requirements under the Local Government Act.

The analysis concluded that the core structure (Themes), whilst not under review this cycle, appears to provide reasonable coverage of the priorities raised during the review, however some notable gaps will need to be filled.

The most significant gaps, both challenges and opportunities, identified at the Goal and/or Strategy level are:

- An ageing population
- Improving access to housing
- Increasing natural disasters and weather events
- Digital innovation and technology
- Supporting and retaining young people
- Our strategic location
- Rural and slow tourism
- Supporting people with a disability to access jobs
- Creative industries

Issues already featured in the Plan that require further promotion and focus include:

- The role of arts and culture in community life
- Community's role in leadership
- Planning for a growing population
- Supporting the most vulnerable people in our community
- Connecting to country, people and place
- Innovation and new technologies (in relation to the economy)
- Health and wellbeing in a COVID society and the burden of chronic illness

Issues already well covered in the Plan and remaining of high importance and urgency are:

- Climate Change



## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023

- Communication and engagement between levels of government and community
- Sustainability and condition of local infrastructure, particularly roads
- Financial sustainability
- Sustainable, fit for purpose local infrastructure
- Building resilience; our ability to survive, adapt and thrive
- Protecting biodiversity and our natural environment
- Renewable energies

**The Goals and Strategies have been updated based on the results of the gap analysis and are now presented for further internal consideration and consultation.**

The following tables do not include Council's role or key partners. This information will be included in the final Plan.

### Theme 1 - Leadership

<b>Goal 1.1 - Ethical and trusted levels government that work together in the best interest of the Shire</b>	<b>Updated</b>
1.1.1 Achieve ethical governance and improve decision making, through open, accountable and positive leadership.	Updated
1.1.2 Ensure the long-term sustainability of the Council through effective planning and management of finances, assets, people and systems.	Updated
1.1.3 Improve customer service and achieve value for money through informed, responsive and efficient service delivery.	Updated
1.1.4 Deliver strategy and planning that supports the community's vision and priorities.	New
<b>Goal 1.2 - A well-informed, engaged community</b>	<b>Updated</b>
1.2.1 Provide clear, open and timely information through a mix of accessible communication methods and channels.	Updated
1.2.2 Enhance opportunities for people to 'have their say' through more genuine, inclusive and accessible community engagement.	Updated
1.2.3 Improve community participation in decision-making by reducing barriers for older, younger and disadvantaged people.	New
<b>Goal 1.3 - A leading community</b>	<b>Updated</b>
1.3.1 Build community capacity through networking, mentoring and skills development	Updated
1.3.2 Develop collaborative and creative forums that empower the community to advance agreed objectives and actively participate in decision-making.	Updated
1.3.3 Invest in digital technologies to improve how we work, live and play.	New

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

**Theme 2 - People**

<b>Goal 2.1 - A happy, healthy and resilient community</b>	Update
2.1.1 Increase the availability and affordability of locally provided health services	No change
2.1.2 Address social disadvantage through a collaborative, all of government and community approach to improving social outcomes.	Updated
2.1.3 Increase promotion of healthy lifestyle choices	No change
2.1.4 Provide a range of sport, recreation and leisure services and facilities across the Shire	New
2.1.4 Ensure a safe community through effective partnerships, planning and risk management.	Updated
2.1.5 Plan, deliver and advocate for accessible local services that support the needs of a changing and growing community.	Updated
2.1.6 Provide skills development opportunities and innovative learning hubs for people of all ages and abilities.	Updated
2.1.7 Work with education providers to improve access to tertiary education, particularly for young people.	New
<b>Goal 2.2 An inclusive community where everyone can participate in community life</b>	Updated
2.2.1 Improve community participation by reducing barriers, particularly for older, vulnerable or disadvantaged people.	Updated
2.2.2 Encourage new ideas and nurture understanding through inclusive and intergenerational programs and activities	Updated
2.2.3 Foster community spirit through volunteering	Updated
<b>Goal 2.3 A creative, diverse and vibrant community</b>	Updated
2.3.1 Bring people together through local events, festivals and celebrations.	Updated
2.3.2 Acknowledge and respect our Aboriginal community and cultural heritage and work together to improve outcomes for First Nations Peoples.	Updated
2.3.3 Support and promote our growing creative and cultural sector.	Updated
2.3.4 Embed culture and creativity across all aspects of community life through placemaking, performances, public art, and storytelling.	New

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

**Theme 3 - Places**

<b>Goal 3.1 A physically and digitally connected Shire</b>	<b>Updated</b>
3.1.1 Provide accessible, efficient and interconnected public transport systems and infrastructure within and out of the Shire.	Updated
3.1.2 Plan and deliver an interconnected and accessible network of cycleways footpaths and walking trails between towns and villages.	Updated
3.1.3 Investigate and implement opportunities to reduce travel time between the Shire and strategic population centres (e.g., Sydney, Canberra and Wollongong)	No change
3.1.4 Work in partnership to ensure a safe and reliable road network	Updated
3.1.5 Improve local roads through prioritised and timely upgrade, renewal and maintenance programs	New
3.1.6 Investigate and support initiatives that consider future transport modes and technologies.	New
3.1.7 Work with service providers to improve digital and telecommunications infrastructure and service delivery	Updated
<b>Goal 3.2 Unique towns, villages and rural landscapes</b>	<b>Updated</b>
3.2.1 Maintain the green spaces and rural landscapes between towns.	Updated
3.2.2 Identify and protect the unique characteristics of towns and villages to retain a sense of place	No change
3.2.3 Identify, protect and promote places of significant cultural heritage	No change
<b>Goal 3.3 Liveable and sustainable communities</b>	<b>Updated</b>
3.3.1 Work collaboratively to improve and revitalise town and village centres throughout the Shire	No change
3.3.2 Create welcoming and accessible community facilities that support opportunities for people to meet and connect with one another	No change
3.3.3 Provide effective, safe and well-maintained local infrastructure and assets that service the needs of current and future generations.	Relocated
3.3.4 Enhance the liveability and sustainability of local neighbourhoods through well considered place and precinct planning	New
<b>3.4 Housing that meets the needs of current and future generations.</b>	<b>New</b>
3.4.1 Provide a mixture of housing types that allow residents to meet their housing needs at different stages of their lives	Relocated (No change)
3.4.2 Support incentives and other initiatives that increase affordable housing options	New
3.4.3 Work with housing providers to increase social and community housing, aged care places, seniors living and adaptable forms of housing.	New
3.4.4 Work across all levels of government to ensure planned housing growth protects the natural environment and is supported by local services.	New

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

**Theme 4 - Environment**

<b>Goal 4.1 A protected, healthy and diverse natural environment</b>	Updated
4.1.1 Protect and enhance biodiversity through a coordinated, all of government and community approach.	Updated
4.1.2 Work collaboratively to reduce pollution and its impact on our environment.	No change
4.1.3 Conserve the key natural resources of the Shire and minimise the impact from development	No change
4.1.4 Sustainably manage natural resources, such as water, for the benefit of all life.	Updated
4.1.5 Work together to reduce bushfire risk and better protect the Shire from natural disasters.	New
<b>Goal 4.2 A community that lives sustainably for the betterment of the planet</b>	Updated
4.2.1 Develop partnerships and implement programs and education that enable people to live sustainably	No change
4.2.2 Promote building practices and the types of developments that improve resource efficiency.	No change
4.2.3 Encourage residents and businesses to source and produce goods locally	No change
<b>Goal 4.3 A low-waste community</b>	Updated
4.3.1 Minimise waste through education, promotion of alternatives and prosecution of illegal dumpers	No change.
4.3.2 Maximise the recovery of resources from the waste stream	No change.
4.3.3 Support circular economy initiatives that minimise both resource production and consumption.	New
<b>Goal 4.4 A resilient Shire that takes action on climate change</b>	Updated
4.4.1 Manage resource consumption, with significant increases in efficiency and adoption of renewable energy	Updated
4.4.2 Build community capacity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and minimise the impacts of climate change	Updated
4.4.3 Plan for predicted impacts of climate change	No change
4.4.4 Monitor and report on community and government progress to achieving net zero emissions.	Updated
4.4.5 Work collaboratively across all levels of government, business and industry to reduce carbon emissions and address climate change.	New
4.4.6 Support the community to survive, adapt and thrive in the face of extreme weather events and other crises.	New

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

**Theme 5 - Economy**

<b>Goal 5.1 People want to visit, work and invest in the Shire</b>	<b>Updated</b>
5.1.1 Broaden and promote the diversity of business and industry sectors and investment opportunities	Updated
5.1.2 Work across all sectors to improve access to local employment for people of all abilities and ages.	Updated
5.1.3 Promote slow and sustainable tourism that balances economic benefits with impacts on our environment and community.	Updated
5.1.4 Provide diversity in tourist attractions and experiences.	No change
5.1.5 Develop and promote the Southern Highland's unique brand identity.	Updated
5.1.6 Capitalise on our proximity to Sydney, Canberra and the Western Sydney Aerotropolis to attract economic opportunities and investment.	New
<b>Goal 5.2 Sustainable business and industry work in harmony with local community and environment</b>	<b>Updated</b>
5.2.1 Promote business and industry development opportunities suited to our distinct region	No change
5.2.3 Encourage and showcase leading edge, clean industries	No change
5.2.4 Encourage research and innovation that enhances the local and regional economy.	New
5.2.5 Promote and enhance our creative industries	New
<b>Goal 5.3 A thriving and diverse agricultural industry</b>	<b>Updated</b>
5.3.1 Develop and implement initiatives which allow rural industries to innovate, adapt and prosper	No change
5.3.2 Manage development to ensure it does not impact on viable primary production and food security	No change
5.3.3 Promote rural tourism and opportunities that showcase local produce and agricultural industries.	New
<b>Goal 5.4 A supported and connected local business community</b>	<b>Updated</b>
5.4.1 Implement programs that support and strengthen business development	No change
5.4.2 Promote mentoring and development opportunities to build a connected business community	No change
5.4.3 Develop partnerships within and outside of the Shire to strengthen economic initiatives	No change

# AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023

## Contents

Introduction.....	9
Scope and methodology .....	9
Desk-top research and analysis.....	10
Stakeholder engagement.....	11
<i>Focus Groups</i> .....	11
<i>Online Youth Survey</i> .....	13
<i>A Community Research Survey</i> .....	14
<i>Strategic Workshop for the Council's Executive, Managers and Coordinators</i> .....	15
Recommendations .....	16
<i>General observations and recommendations</i> .....	16
Recommendations by Theme .....	18
<i>Recommendations for Leadership</i> .....	18
<i>Recommendations for People</i> .....	21
<i>Recommendations for Place</i> .....	25
<i>Recommendations for Environment</i> .....	30
<i>Recommendations for Economy</i> .....	34
Conclusion.....	38
Appendix A.....	39

## **AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

### **Introduction**

The *Community Strategic Plan: Wingecarribee 2031* is the highest-level Plan developed by the Council on behalf of the local community. It identifies a Vision for the future along with Goals and Strategies to achieve this Vision.

Importantly, the Community Strategic Plan (the Plan) is not the sole responsibility of the Council. While Council will play a significant role and is also responsible for its development and review, many stakeholders will contribute to its implementation.

The Plan was last reviewed in 2017. It is usual for the Plan to be updated at least every four years in line with the local government election cycle. Given that there were no elections in Wingecarribee in 2021, the Plan is now considered out of date.

In September of 2022, an analysis of key internal and external facing documents was undertaken to inform the update to the Plan. This work was complemented by a program of stakeholder engagement.

Specifically, work was carried out to assess whether the existing Themes, Goals and Strategies in the Plan are 'fit for purpose' or if changes are required to ensure current, new and emerging issues, including both challenges and opportunities, are being appropriately captured and actioned.

### **Scope and methodology**

A priority of the next Council (September 2024 local government elections) will be to complete a comprehensive review of the Community Strategic Plan in accordance with the Community Engagement Strategy. This review must be completed by June 2025.

The 2022/23 update is therefore considered as an opportunity to 'refresh' the Plan, allowing the core structure to remain in place.

The review process included;

- desk top research and analysis of relevant policies, plans and strategies developed since 2017 to identify gaps in the existing Plan, including both challenges and opportunities, which need to be addressed
- analysis of available 2021 Census data
- consultation with external stakeholders via a series of focus groups and surveys
- consultation with internal stakeholders via a strategic workshop

Importantly, the process built on the findings of the *Integrated Planning and Reporting Review (IP&R) 2021* conducted by Karen Legge Consulting. This work assessed the Council's adherence to IP&R requirements as stipulated under the Local Government Act 1993 (the Act) and the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 (the Regulation).

## **AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

### **Desk-top research and analysis**

In total, 43 key informing documents were considered as part of the review. For the purpose of the exercise, a 'key informing document' is a policy, strategy, plan, or report which has bearing on the Wingecarribee Shire. Census data from 2021 was also considered with particular attention given to ongoing or emerging trends.

Only documents completed since the 2017 update of the Community Strategic Plan were considered. The list of informing documents can be found at Appendix A.

In reviewing these documents, a matrix analysis was undertaken to identify common themes or patterns. The results of this analysis are provided in a companion document *Review of Community Strategic Goals and Strategies*.

These themes were then overlayed with the results of stakeholder engagement to identify gaps in the existing Community Strategic Plan. Individual results of community engagement activities have been documented separately to this report.

The analysis found that the existing Community Strategic Plan has good, general coverage of current, new and demerging issues.

However, some notable gaps emerged which need to be addressed as part of the update.

The most significant gaps, both challenges and opportunities, identified at the Goal and/or Strategy level are:

- An ageing population
- Improving access to housing
- Increasing natural disasters and weather events
- Digital innovation and technology
- Supporting and retaining young people
- Our strategic location
- Rural and slow tourism
- Supporting people with a disability to access jobs
- Creative industries

Issues already featured in the Plan that require further promotion and focus include:

- The role of arts and culture in community life
- Community's role in leadership
- Planning for a growing population
- Supporting the most vulnerable people in our community
- Connecting to country, people and place
- Innovation and new technologies (in relation to the economy)
- Health and wellbeing in a COVID society and the burden of chronic illness

Issues already well covered in the Plan and remaining of high importance and urgency are:

- Climate Change
- Communication and engagement between levels of government and community
- Sustainability and condition of local infrastructure, particularly roads
- Financial sustainability
- Sustainable, fit for purpose local infrastructure
- Building resilience; our ability to survive, adapt and thrive



## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023

- Protecting biodiversity and our natural environment
- Renewable energies

### Stakeholder engagement

The following activities were undertaken in October 2022 to help inform the update to both the Community Strategic Plan and the Community Engagement Strategy.

#### *Focus Groups*

In the week commencing 17 October 2022, four community Focus Groups were held to test the priorities of the existing Community Strategic Plan and seek feedback on Council's approach to community engagement.

Overall, 49 people participated in the discussions which were held in Mittagong (2), Penrose and Yerrinbool.

Facilitated discussions took place which were focused on better understanding two things: the first being 'what's changed' for the community and the Shire over the past 5 years and the second being how the Council might improve its approach to community engagement.

Questions guiding the discussion on the Community Strategic Plan included:

1. *What are the big changes that we have seen across the Shire in the past 5 years?*
2. *What are the biggest challenges facing the Shire, both now and into the future?*
3. *What about opportunities?*
4. *Noting the challenges and opportunities we have discussed – which issues are the most urgent?*
5. *What kind of action should we be taking?*
6. *Who do you think is responsible for taking action?*

The following themes emerged as **challenges**:

- A growing population and what this means for the future of the Shire e.g., development, traffic, the environment, infrastructure, access to appropriate services
- Inappropriate development and loss of distinct character and liveability of individual villages and towns.
- Planning for the future and the roles of both state and local government.
- Traffic management and issues that will only be exacerbated in years to come e.g., increasing levels of local traffic in and around town centres.
- Environmental protection and the impacts of both climate change and development on biodiversity, green corridors (trees), open spaces, and threatened species.

## **AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

- Local infrastructure e.g., roads, footpaths and cycleways not fit for purpose or sustainable
- An ageing population and issues such as barriers to participating in community life; ageing in place; access to aged care facilities and services; technological barriers and the stresses of dealing with digital and online services.
- Lack of appropriate community facilities and services e.g., aged care services for an ageing population, recreational facilities for younger people and families
- Lack of public transport
- Affordable housing for younger people and key workers
- Council's level of communication and customer service (perceived as getting worse, not better)
- Lack of diversity, innovation and creativity in future planning
- Lack of tertiary education, resulting in many young people needing to move elsewhere.

The following themes emerged as **opportunities**:

- A highly artistic, creative community noting that the 'arts does more than entertain ' and builds on culture, diversity and identity
- Tourism, including eco, agri and slow tourism; festivals and events that promote villages and towns
- The Shire's location, 'beautiful' natural environment and rich, local heritage
- Agriculture and local produce, sustainable farming
- The Shire's brand e.g., the 'Garden Shire'
- Education and training with special mention given to TAFE and the potential to partner with providers to build on and showcase our strengths e.g., agriculture, the arts, and nurturing innovation
- Improving connectivity between places e.g., walking tracks and trails

## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023

### *Online Youth Survey*

An online survey was offered to young people aged between 12 and 24. The survey was open for three weeks via 'Have Your Say' and ran from 10 October to 28 October 2022.

In total, 24 people participated in the survey which is considered poor given the social media campaign, and number of schools and institutions contacted to help promote the survey which included all local high schools (nine) along with four youth organisations.

Of the total number of participants, 18 were aged between 14 and 18 years, while six were aged between 19 and 24. Given the low numbers, the results are not considered representative of this cohort however do provide some insights into young peoples' priorities.

In addition to questions about diversity and communication and engagement, participants were asked to answer the following:

1. *What do you like most about the Shire?*
2. *If you could change ONE thing about the Shire what would it be?*
3. *Right now, what are you most concerned about? (multiple choice)*
4. *If you were Mayor, what 3 issues would you take action on (multiple choice)*
5. *Do you plan on living in this area in the future?*
6. *What is the number ONE reason that you might move somewhere else ? (multiple choice)*

Finally, participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with statements about the general liveability, inclusiveness, safety, and accessibility of the Shire.

The biggest concern for participants was **climate change and natural disasters** (12) followed by cost of living and exam results. Protecting the natural environment came in fourth.

When asked what they would prioritise if Mayor for a day, **improving access to facilities** and services for young people came in first followed by; having safe and reliable local roads, addressing climate change and improving public transport.

Very few could agree with the statement 'the community welcomes new people and ideas', but most agreed they could easily find support if needed. The group was split on the ease of 'getting around the place' but the majority feel safe here and agree that public spaces are clean and vibrant.

Many are concerned that adults aren't listening to them or **valuing their ideas**.

Opinions were split on having lots of things to do, and how much the community values the natural environment and cares about the future of the planet. Most people believe there is a good variety of local shops and services and local schools. Most also felt that there are plenty of local job opportunities for young people.

When asked if they planned on **living here in the future**, 18 of 24 participants were either unsure or planning to move away. The number one reason for relocating was to further education or training followed by accessing more affordable housing and seeking different experiences.

## **AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

### *A Community Research Survey*

Every two years the Council undertakes a telephone survey aimed at identifying satisfaction with Council's communication and overall performance, including levels of service.

Participants are recruited to a tested methodology that ensures a representative sample of the broader community.

The survey was conducted as recently as 2021, however, the Council determined it timely to undertake another in October 2022.

The 2022 survey instrument was updated to included questions about the themes and goals in the existing Community Strategic Plan in order to test their relevancy and importance.

The survey, facilitated by Micromex Research, attracted over 400 participants.

Early survey results indicate that there is general consensus that the higher-level aspirations of the Plan remain sound and are largely reflective of community concerns and priorities.

At the time of writing this Report, only the high-level results of the Community Research Survey were available. The full results will be used to inform the final Community Strategic Plan.

High level results suggest significant movement in the following since the 2021 survey:

- The percentage of people who think that Council's image is very poor has increased from 23% to 31%
- The percentage of people who are 'satisfied' with Council's performance across all areas of responsibility has fallen from 27% to 19%.
- Council's mean rating for levels of satisfaction with levels of communication has decreased from 2.91 to 2.73.
- Fewer people feel that living in the shire you have the opportunity to participate in recreational and sporting activities – down from 79% 2021 to 72% in 2022

All of the five Themes of the Community Strategic Plan, were considered important and relevant to the future of the Shire.

## **AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

### *Strategic Workshop for the Council's Executive, Managers and Coordinators*

On the 26 October 2022, a strategic workshop was held with Council Executive, Managers and Coordinators. The purpose of the workshop was to provide input towards the review of both the Community Engagement Strategy and the Community Strategic Plan.

In addition to questions about community engagement, staff were asked to consider the strengths, and weaknesses of the Shire along with possible opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis).

Staff also considered the existing Plan, identifying gaps in the Goals and Strategies.

Results of the SWOT were then prioritised to identify the top challenges and opportunities.

The most urgent and important issues (weaknesses or threats) were reflective of many of the issues raised by the community however some issues were deemed more urgent by staff.

Biggest **challenges**, in order of priority according to staff:

1. Affordability and diversity of housing and the impact of this on the community i.e., homogenous community, lacking diversity
2. State of our assets
3. Ability to attract staff (Council); Financial sustainability of the Council - cost shifting, ageing infrastructure, and meeting community expectations; Limited workforce and opportunities; Transport and accessibility; Loss of character due to development
4. Lack of strategic planning to address ageing infrastructure
5. Demographics and the lack of tertiary education options particularly for young people
6. Affordability of living in the Shire (linked to item; Proximity to Sydney and the ripple effect on housing process, character of Shire, employment competition
7. Geographic size versus population (and alignment of services)

Biggest **opportunities**, in order of priority according to staff:

1. Transport network improvements and links including for active transport; Promotion of the Shire to younger demographics; Better, more sustainable design (future proofing); Unlocking potential of agri-tourism and recreation
2. Western Sydney airport/aerotropolis
3. Technological innovation; An educated and active community
4. Grant funding; Southern Highlands Innovation Park; Tertiary education; Natural resources, natural assets and biodiversity; Spatial context and accessibility to cities/strategic location

## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023

### Recommendations

#### *General observations and recommendations*

The analysis concluded that the core structure, whilst not under review this cycle, appears to provide reasonable coverage of the current, new and emerging issues. In particular, the individual vision statements under each theme go a long way in capturing the priority issues impacting now and possibly into the future.

In some cases, Strategies require updating, as while they remained relevant, they were originally written as outcome statements.

Other Strategies were considered to be too focused on Council, noting that while the Council facilitates the development and review of the Plan it is not wholly responsible for its delivery.

The Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Review undertaken by Karen Legge Consulting (2022) identified the need for more comprehensive Strategies that provide a level of detail on *how* a Goal will be achieved.

The cascading Strategies and Actions across the Wingecarribee suite of IP&R documents are pitched in such a way that the level of detail recommended is largely addressed in the Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

Some work has been carried out to provide further information at the Strategy level, however, to adjust the level at which the Strategies are currently pitched in the Plan would require significant rework of actions across the entire suite. Given this is outside of the scope of this review, it is recommended that consideration be given to the cascading nature of the Strategies, Principal Activities and Actions as part of the 2024/25 review.

The following are general recommendations aimed at 'refreshing' and improving the overall Plan:

1. Align the timeframe this cycle to the *South East and Tablelands Regional Plan 2041*.
2. Include a message from the Administrator and General Manager in line with the draft Corporate Planning Framework.
3. Include a 'plan on a page' - or high-level summary of the Plan that demonstrates the relationships between each Theme. This recommendation was raised at focus group sessions as a way to better engage people in strategic plans and demonstrate concepts such as Integrated Planning and Reporting. It is also considered better practice.<sup>1</sup>
4. Move the Integrated Planning and Reporting context to the rear of the document as per recommendations made by Karen Legge Consulting. This level of information can be confusing for the reader.
5. Insert under the section 'Engagement process and review' information about the high-level Themes that emerged during community consultation.
6. Include information that explains our 'Journey to 2025' and what is planned as a significant milestone year for the Community Strategic Plan; possibly by way of a

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<sup>1</sup> NSW Office of Local Government, Integrated Planning and Reporting Handbook 2021.

## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023

diagram that shows the steps we will take to comprehensively review the Plan, including the Vision, under the guidance of a new Council.

7. Align the Plan to the Sustainable Development Goals. These goals were developed by the United Nations and support sustainable development; a theme which emerged during focus group discussions. There are 17 goals in total.



Aligning Themes to the relevant Sustainable Development Goals is not unusual (Cessnock and City of Sydney are examples of local councils that have decided to make this connection) and promotes the significance of the Plan along with the need for the Plan to consider global trends that may impact at the local level.

8. Update the 'State and Regional Context' section with information on the drivers of change. This section will cover the big issues impacting the Shire including any 'megatrends' along with state and federal planning targets.
9. Replace the list of community statistics with info graphics to better engage the reader.
10. Remove the list of 'Key issues and challenges' on page 11. These will now feature under the relevant Theme to provide a clearer picture of the 'where we are now', 'where we want to be' and 'how we will get there' against each aspirational statement.
11. Update content to better explain the responsibilities for delivering of the Plan.

It is noted that the performance measures in the Plan will be reviewed as part of a larger project and remain out of scope for this review. However, if targets have been agreed through other strategies it is strongly recommended that these be included in the final Plan. For example, targets relating to climate change.

The development of a performance (measures) framework that considers both Shire and Organisational outcomes is encouraged, The results-based accountability <sup>TM</sup> framework provides a simple yet effective framework that may assist this process.

## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023

### Recommendations by Theme

#### *Recommendations for Leadership*

The following challenges and opportunities require focus in the Plan:

- ✓ Communication and engagement between levels of government and community
- ✓ Community's role in leadership
- ✓ Digital innovation and technology
- ✓ Financial sustainability

In July 2022 the CSIRO released its once in a decade 'megatrends' report, *Our Future World*, which considers the issues that are most likely to unfold over the coming years and have potential for substantial and possibly transformational impact.

Emerging social trends suggest that despite the rise in technological advancement, which is in itself a megatrend, human perspectives and experiences are demanding more from government. People are demanding more transparency and information. The latest Edelman Trust Barometer suggests that "Australia's trust bubble has burst" with societal trust declining for business (63% in 2021 to 58% in 2022), government (61% to 52%), media (61% to 43%) and non-government organisations 62% to 58%).<sup>2</sup>

Interestingly, this corresponds with community research results across Wingecarribee that show low levels of satisfaction with the provision of information and opportunities for genuine involvement in Council's decision-making.<sup>3</sup>

An ongoing commitment to meaningful community engagement and participation is required to restore and maintain trust. On a positive note, the October 2022 Focus Group discussions indicated an understanding and appreciation that this will take time.

The rapid adoption of digital and data technologies in recent times has meant that many sectors and organisations have experienced years' worth of digital transformation in the space of months. While progress has been significant, it is predicted to be just the start, with the vast majority of digitisation yet to occur.

Change is also driving new considerations around ethics. The draft *South East and Tablelands Regional Plan 2041* notes the need to embrace more 'smart cities' technology and data to better inform decision making and improve outcomes.<sup>4</sup> In the meantime, cybercrime is estimated to cost the Australian economy \$29 billion annually and these costs are expected to rise. There is an urgency for governments, organisations and individuals to adopt improved cybersecurity practices and systems to protect themselves against future threats.<sup>5</sup>

Council has a *Digital Strategy* which was developed since the Plan was last reviewed. It is timely therefore for the intent of that strategy to be considered as part of this update.

Financial sustainability, particularly in relation to ongoing maintenance and renewal of existing assets, remains a high priority. The 2024/25 review of the Community Strategic Plan will include more nuanced discussions with the community about expectations towards

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<sup>2</sup> CSIRO, *Our Future World: Global megatrends impacting the way we live over coming decades*, July 2022

<sup>3</sup> Micromex Research, *Community Research Survey, Interim data report*, November 2022.

<sup>4</sup> NSW Department of Planning and Environment, *draft South East and Tablelands Regional Plan*, 2022

<sup>5</sup> CSIRO, *Our Future World: Global megatrends impacting the way we live over coming decades*, July 2022



## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023

levels of service. These discussions are important given they help to manage these expectations through open context setting around what is affordable and what is acceptable.

Input from community and staff consultation suggests a motivated, engaged community. Census data indicates a highly educated community. There is a wealth of opportunity attached to community-driven leadership given this depth of experience and knowledge.<sup>6</sup>

The Goals and Strategies within 'Leadership' adequately address these issues however digital innovation and technology, and what this means for current and future service provision, is a gap. Strategy and planning that supports the community's aspirations is also a gap.

Community engagement is being specifically addressed in an updated Community Engagement Strategy; however, it is proposed that emphasis is placed within this Plan on engaging an ageing population as well as younger and disadvantaged people given that there are different barriers impeding participation for these cohorts.

No.	Goal and Strategies	Comments	Recommendation
1.1	<b>Our Council has the trust of the community and well-informed decisions are made to ensure long term sustainability of our Shire</b>	Still relevant. Council focused. Suggest rewording as a Goal statement but still capturing the intent.	<b>Ethical and trusted levels government that work together in the best interest of the Shire</b>
1.1.1	An enhanced culture of positive leadership, accountability and ethical governance that guides well informed decisions to advance agreed community priorities	Still highly relevant though Council focused. All levels of government need to be held accountable and act ethically. Suggest rewording as a strategy as opposed to an outcome.	Achieve ethical governance and improve decision making, through more transparent, accountable and positive leadership.
1.1.2	Effective financial and asset management ensure Council's long-term sustainability	Still highly relevant. Suggest broadening out to include all resourcing considerations.	Ensure the long-term sustainability of the Council through effective planning and management of finances, assets, people and systems.
1.1.3	Effective and efficient Council service delivery is provided within a framework that puts the customer first	Still highly relevant. Suggest rewording as a strategy as opposed to an outcome.	Improve customer service and achieve value for money through informed, responsive and efficient service delivery.
NEW	<b>Deliver strategy and planning that supports the community's vision and priorities</b>	This was suggested during the staff strategic workshop and acknowledges the higher level, strategic work that all levels of government undertake in discussion with the community	-
1.2	<b>Council communicates and engages with the community in a diverse, open and inclusive way</b>	Council focused. Suggest rewording as a Goal that also	<b>A well-informed, engaged community</b>

<sup>6</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census data 2021

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

No.	Goal and Strategies	Comments	Recommendation
		reflects the Community Engagement Strategy.	
1.2.1	Open and effective communication methods and technology are utilised to share information about Council plans, intentions, actions and progress	Still highly relevant. Suggest rewording to reflect the Communications Strategy.	Provide clear, open and timely information through a mix of accessible communication methods and channels.
1.2.2	Improve community engagement opportunities for people to 'have their say' and take an active role in making decisions that affect our Shire through diverse engagement opportunities	Still highly relevant. Suggest rewording to reflect some of the principles in the updated Community Engagement Strategy.	Enhance opportunities for people to 'have their say' through more genuine, inclusive and accessible community engagement.
<b>NEW</b>	<b>Improve community participation in decision-making by reducing barriers for older, younger and disadvantaged people.</b>	New. It is recommended we focus here on helping people, particularly older, isolated people, to engage. It also acknowledges that younger people face different barriers.	-
1.3	<b>Developing community leadership, strong networks and shared responsibility for the Shire promotes and enhances community capacity</b>	Suggest rewording as a Goal statement as opposed to a strategy.	<b>A leading community</b>
1.3.1	Develop leadership skills and build networks through a range of formal and informal opportunities	Still relevant. Suggest editing. Focus groups suggested more mentoring activities as part of leadership development.	Build community capacity through networking, mentoring and leadership opportunities.
1.3.2	Empower our community to advance agreed priorities and address emerging issues in a collaborative manner to explore new ideas to improve the Shire	Still relevant however suggest leading with the active verb (for consistency) and making reference to creative forums (noting the high level of educated and creative people that live and work in the Shire)	Develop collaborative and creative forums that empower the community to advance agreed objectives and actively participate in decision-making.
<b>NEW</b>	<b>Invest in digital technologies to improve how we work, live and play.</b>	This is a gap particularly given the long-term nature of this Plan and the rise and evolution of technology. Supports both the Communications Strategy, Digital Strategy amongst others.	-

## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023

### *Recommendations for People*

The following challenges and opportunities require focus in the Plan:

- ✓ An ageing population
- ✓ The role of arts and culture in community life
- ✓ Supporting and retaining young people
- ✓ Health and wellbeing in a COVID society and the burden of chronic illness
- ✓ Supporting the most vulnerable people in our community
- ✓ Connecting to country, people and place

One of the most urgent and important issues facing the Shire now and into the future is the ageing population and what this means for positive ageing, diversity, community participation and the local economy.

Service priorities will also be impacted as more people become 'frail aged' and reliant on the assistance of others.

Council's *Positive Ageing Strategy* notes that Wingecarribee Shire is ageing along with the rest of Australia. Over the next 10 years, the number of residents aged 65 and over is expected to increase from 22 percent to at least 32 percent, or 1 in 3 people, making the Shire one of the oldest in NSW. In addition, the Baby Boomer generation will enter old age with different aspirations and expectations. They are more likely to demand a greater range of higher quality services.<sup>7</sup>

Many focus group participants expressed concern about the services and facilities that would be available to them in coming years, along with options for aged care. Others are hoping to down-size and retain their independence.

An ageing population is not unique to the Shire however Wingecarribee will experience deep impacts given its overall demographic profile and ongoing migration of young people out of the area.

Provision of facilities and services for young people, including access to tertiary education, is a priority for people aged 14 to 24<sup>8</sup> however it also rates highly with the broader community.

It was identified in the *Community Research Survey 2021*, as the fourth highest priority for Council to focus on. The same survey showed that 'support for youth' had one of the highest performance gaps (18% disconnect between importance and satisfaction). Providing support for people with a disability also rated highly.

The most recent Community Research Survey (October 2022) suggests that people are becoming less satisfied with opportunities to participate in sport and recreation and there is growing importance being placed on providing services/facilities for children and families.<sup>9</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed and intensified existing health challenges around the burden of chronic illness and mental health challenges. It has also emphasised the importance of social and economic determinants of health. This highlights the need for supporting preventative health measures to achieve improved health outcomes.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Wingecarribee Shire Council, *Positive Ageing Strategy*, 2016-2026

<sup>8</sup> Wingecarribee Shire Council, *Youth Online Survey*, October 2022

<sup>9</sup> Micromex Research, *Community Research Survey*, Interim data report, , November 2022.

<sup>10</sup> CSIRO, *Our Future World: Global megatrends impacting the way we live over coming decades*, July 2022

## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023

Resilience, as a theme, is largely captured under the Theme of 'Environment' however could also be featured under 'People' given that many of the Goals also support resilient communities. For example, happier and healthier communities tend to be more resilient.<sup>11</sup>

The role of arts and culture in achieving more resilient, healthy, inclusive and connected communities cannot be underestimated. There is great potential to leverage off the growing creative community and further collaborate and innovate. Recent disaster recovery efforts in Northern NSW have demonstrated the effectiveness of arts and culture, including events and festivals, in bringing communities together to heal.

Finally, the Shire has a rich Aboriginal heritage which is largely absent in the existing Community Strategic Plan. A priority of the draft Regional Plan is 'recognising Country, people, and place'. The Regional Plan acknowledges the need to do more to ensure greater equity and recognition so that Aboriginal communities can achieve their aspirations for Country. This includes supporting strategies that strengthen Aboriginal self-determination.

No.	Goal and Strategies	Comments	Recommendation
2.1	<b>Our people have the opportunity for a happy and healthy lifestyle</b>	Suggest rewording as a Goal statement but still capturing the intent.	<b>A happy, healthy and resilient community</b>
2.1.1	Increase the availability and affordability of locally provided health services	Highly relevant.	No change.
2.1.2	Work collaboratively to address social disadvantage	Highly relevant. Suggest expanding.	Address social disadvantage through a collaborative, all of government and community approach to improving social outcomes.
2.1.3	Increase promotion of healthy lifestyle choices	Highly relevant however this strategy relates (in the Operational Plan) to the actual provision of sport and recreational opportunities not just promotion. Suggest separating these strategies out.	No change.
2.1.4	Enhance partnerships to maintain a safe community	Still relevant. Suggest expanding. Include risk management to help cover future pandemics.	Maintain a safe community through effective partnerships, planning and risk management.

<sup>11</sup> U.S Department of Health and Human Services, 2022

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

No.	Goal and Strategies	Comments	Recommendation
2.1.5	Plan and deliver appropriate and accessible local services to the community	Update to include advocacy. A gap which was identified at the staff workshop. Also acknowledge here that the population is growing and evolving.	Plan, deliver and advocate for accessible local services that support the needs of a changing and growing community.
2.1.6	Provide a diversity of formal, informal and innovative hubs for learning and skill development for all stages of life	Still relevant however suggest this needs to also assist people with a disability.	Provide skills development opportunities and innovative learning hubs for people of all ages and abilities.
New	Work with education providers to improve access to tertiary education, particularly for young people.	Suggest a focus on improving access to education to help retain young people.	-
New	Provide a range of sport, recreation and leisure services and facilities across the Shire	Suggest specifically referencing sports and recreation. This will be particularly important if seeking grant funding for future facilities. Also supports a more active (and healthy) community.	-
2.2	<b>We are an inclusive community which actively reduces barriers for participation in community life</b>	Suggest rewording	<b>An inclusive community where everyone can participate in community life</b>
2.2.1	Actively foster a spirit of participation and volunteering by addressing key barriers	Suggest rewording to call out the focus which is to support people who are at risk or disadvantaged.	Improve community participation by reducing barriers, particularly for older, vulnerable or disadvantaged people.
2.2.2	We welcome new people and ideas	This is an outcome statement. Suggest rewording. In the Delivery Program it refers to intergenerational programs.	Encourage new ideas and nurture understanding through inclusive and intergenerational programs and activities
2.2.3	Encourage all members of the community, especially older residents, to share their ideas	Suggest removing as there are no supporting activities in the Operational Plan and opportunities for old and young	Remove.

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

No.	Goal and Strategies	Comments	Recommendation
		people to share ideas is now addressed under Leadership.	
Updated	Foster community spirit through volunteering.	Suggest separating out from 2.2.1	-
2.3	Wingecarribee values and nurtures a diverse, creative and vibrant community	Suggest rewording to reflect the other Goals	<b>A creative, diverse and vibrant community</b>
2.3.1	Provide and support a range of community events, festivals and celebrations	Suggest rewording.	Bring people together through local events, festivals and celebrations.
2.3.2	Acknowledge and respect our Aboriginal cultural heritage and people	Suggest that we need to do more than acknowledge and respect.	Acknowledge and respect our Aboriginal cultural heritage and work together to improve outcomes for First Nations Peoples.
2.3.3	Support and promote the creative and cultural sector	Suggest acknowledging the growth of the creative community.	Support and promote our growing creative and cultural sector
NEW	Embed culture and creativity across all aspects of community life through placemaking, performances, public art, and storytelling.	Identified as a gap. Arts and culture are key to resilient communities. Also acknowledges the breadth of work aimed at delivering Southern Highlands Inspired and possible future grant applications. for local areas, new venues etc.	-

## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023

### *Recommendations for Place*

The following challenges and opportunities require focus in the Plan:

- ✓ Improving access to housing
- ✓ Planning for a growing population
- ✓ Sustainable, fit for purpose local infrastructure
- ✓ Sustainability and condition of local infrastructure, particularly roads
- ✓ Maintaining the character of local villages and towns

Strategic planning, that focuses on both current and future needs, is a gap in the current Plan despite numerous targets, strategies and plans actually in place at both the state and local level many of which address population growth. This growth is of concern to the community who fear the unknown impacts of growth on the liveability of the Shire, despite relatively low growth targets in comparison to other shires.

*Wingecarribee's Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS)* notes that is strong demand for residential and tourism related development as well as for infrastructure, industry and agricultural purposes. This coupled with significant growth in neighbouring local government areas is likely to result in increased development pressures for years to come.<sup>12</sup>

Managing development and growth, as well as enforcement of development and building regulations are the third and fourth lowest rated services according to the latest Community Research Survey.<sup>13</sup>

Results from focus groups and the KPMG facilitated Economic Roundtable, reinforce the desire to ensure development areas maintain the rural character of the shire with its separate localities whilst also providing integrated and affordable housing with transport linkages.

The *Wingecarribee Housing Strategy: Housing Our Community* discusses the changing nature of our demographics and what this means for future housing supply. Our ageing population, changing household structures, shrinking household sizes and increases in lone person households indicate a greater mix of housing types will be required, with growing demand for smaller houses.

Participants at the staff workshop identified a lack of focus in the existing Plan on the issue of housing given the significant impact lack of affordable and accessible housing has on a community and its economy.

The cost of maintaining and renewing, let alone building new local infrastructure, continues to be a significant financial burden for Council and ratepayers. Strategies including the *Blueprint for Resilient NSW* emphasises the need for our assets to be more 'fit for the future' and built for endurance particularly given the increasing frequency of severe weather events.

Given the importance placed on the availability, accessibility and condition of local community assets engaging the community on affordable and acceptable (or best value) services will be a key part of reviewing this Plan again in 2024/25.

Improving and maintaining roads continues to be of high importance to the community, with 2022 Community Research results showing a decrease in already low levels of satisfaction.

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<sup>12</sup> Wingecarribee Shire Council, Wingecarribee 2040 Local Strategic Planning Statement

<sup>13</sup> Micromex Research, Community Research Survey, Interim data report, , November 2022.

## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023

<sup>14</sup>. In addition, focus group discussions identified a desire for more public and active transport options. Both the *Positive Ageing Strategy* and *Youth Strategy and Action Plan* identified improved public transport as a priority for enabling people to fully participate in community life.

Connectivity is considered an 'endowment' of the Shire however requires investment and improvement.<sup>15</sup> Strategies including the *Recreational Walking Tracks*, the draft *South East and Regional Plan 2041* and the *Wingecarribee Regional Economic Development Strategy* highlight the need for integrated transport networks and appropriate supporting infrastructure (e.g., parking near train stations).

Staff workshop participants discussed the need to have more of a future focus particularly in this section of the Plan. Once considered 'future' transport options are fast becoming a reality. For example, the cost of electric vehicles is declining faster than expected, enabled by reductions in the cost of lithium-ion batteries. To accelerate the transition to e-mobility, Australia's is rethinking its fuel strategy with a focus on developing the grid infrastructure and charging stations needed to support more electric vehicles.<sup>16</sup>

The Goals and Strategies in this section have undergone the most revision: specifically, the need to elevate housing to have a dedicated Goal.

No.	Goal and Strategies	Comments	Recommendation
3.1	<b>We have an integrated and efficient network of public transport and shared pathways</b>	Suggest rewording.	<b>A physically and digitally connected Shire</b>
3.1.1.	Provide an accessible, efficient and interconnected public transport systems within and out of the Shire	Still of high importance and relevance. Suggest inserting reference to the infrastructure needed to support public transport e.g., car parks near train stations.	Provide accessible, efficient and interconnected public transport systems and infrastructure within and out of the Shire
3.1.2	Plan and deliver an interconnected and accessible network of cycleways and footpaths between towns and villages	Still of high importance and relevance. Minor change recommended to reflect focus group feedback on walking trails.	Plan and deliver an interconnected and accessible network of cycleways footpaths and walking trails between towns and villages
3.1.3	Investigate and implement opportunities to reduce travel time between the Shire and strategic population centres (e.g., Sydney, Canberra and Wollongong)	Still relevant.	No change
<b>NEW</b>	<b>Improve local roads through prioritised and timely upgrade, renewal and maintenance programs</b>	Suggest a specific focus on local roads and renewal etc. given the high priority placed on this by community and the ongoing pressure on Council's resources.	-

<sup>14</sup> Micromex Research, Community Research Survey, Interim data report, , November 2022.

<sup>15</sup> Wingecarribee Shire Council, Regional Economic Development Strategy 2018-2022

<sup>16</sup> CSIRO, Our Future World: Global megatrends impacting the way we live over coming decades, July 2022



**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

No.	Goal and Strategies	Comments	Recommendation
Relocated	Work in partnership to ensure a safe road network	Suggest moving to 3.1 from 3.4 and including the word 'reliable'. This strategy includes those roads not directly under Council's control.	Moved from 3.4. Work in partnership to ensure a safe and reliable road network
NEW	Investigate and support initiatives that consider future transport modes and technologies	Suggest having a strategy that acknowledges future transport planning. This can be used to support funding applications for study, research or other in this space. Noting that this will largely be driven by State and Federal.	-
Relocated	Improve access to communication services	Suggest expanding and moving under 3.1	Work with service providers to improve digital and telecommunications infrastructure and service delivery
3.2	Wingecarribee has maintained a distinct character and separation of towns and villages	Suggest changing for consistency across Goals	Unique towns, villages and rural landscapes
3.2.1	Maintain inter-urban breaks (i.e., the green between) and rural landscape between towns	Suggest minor change for clarity.	Maintain the green spaces and rural landscapes between towns.
3.2.2	Identify and protect the unique characteristics of towns and villages to retain a sense of place	Still of relevance and high priority for the community i.e., as demonstrated through focus group and survey results.	No change.
3.2.3	Identify, protect and promote places of significant cultural heritage	This directly links to the LSPS and remains a high priority for the community i.e., as demonstrated through focus group and survey results.	No change.
3.3	Our built environment creates vibrant and inviting public spaces	Slight rewording for consistency across Goals. Liveable places tend to have the required infrastructure in place.	Liveable and sustainable communities
3.3.1	Work collaboratively to improve and revitalise town and village centres throughout the Shire	Still of relevance.	No change.

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

No.	Goal and Strategies	Comments	Recommendation
3.3.2	Create welcoming and accessible community facilities that support opportunities for people to meet and connect with one another	Community facilities remain of high priority to the community. Suggest minor rewording.	No change
3.3.3	Provide a mixture of housing types that allow residents to meet their housing needs at different stages of their lives and support affordable housing	Currently lives within a Goal focused on public spaces. Suggest moving.	Move.
NEW	Provide effective, safe and well-maintained local infrastructure and assets that service the needs of current and future generations.	Suggest having a broader strategy that covers all local infrastructure from stormwater to bridges	-
NEW	Enhance the liveability and sustainability of local neighbourhoods through well considered place and precinct planning (beyond town centres)	Recommended to focus on the precinct planning that is captured in the LSPS. Also reinforces the need to plan for current and future populations.	-
3.4	<b>We have safe, maintained and effective assets and infrastructure</b>	Suggest this Goal has been superseded and this becomes a strategy at 3.3.4 (remove)	Now 3.3.4
3.4.1	Work in partnership to ensure a safe road network	Suggest moving to 3.1.	Move to 3.1
3.4.2	Manage and plan for future water, sewer and stormwater infrastructure needs	Still relevant however suggest moving.	Now captured under "Provide sustainable, resilient and well-maintained local infrastructure that services the needs of current and future populations".
3.4.3	Improve access to communication services	Suggest expanding and moving under 3.1	Move to 3.1
NEW 3.4	<b>Housing that meets the needs of current and future generations.</b>	High priority now and into the future noting that access to housing is a basic human right. Suggest the Plan needs to focus on this and better reflect both the LSPS and the Housing Strategy.	<b>Housing that meets the needs of current and future generations.</b>
3.4.1	Provide a mixture of housing types that allow residents to meet their housing needs at different stages of their lives	High priority.	Relocated (previously 3.3.3)

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

No.	Goal and Strategies	Comments	Recommendation
New 3.4.2	Support incentives and other initiatives that increase affordable housing options	High priority	-
New 3.4.3	Work with housing providers to increase social and community housing, aged care places, seniors living and adaptable forms of housing.	High priority	-
New 3.4.5	Work across all levels of government to ensure planned housing growth protects the natural environment and is supported by local services.	High priority. Sustainable growth is a priority for the community.	-

## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023

### *Recommendations for Environment*

The following challenges and opportunities require focus in the Plan:

- ✓ Climate Change and increasing natural disasters and weather events
- ✓ Building resilience; ability to survive, adapt and thrive
- ✓ Protecting biodiversity and our natural environment
- ✓ Renewable energies

Adapting to climate change is a megatrend that requires new ways of operating and living. Extreme and unprecedented weather events are increasing in their frequency and scale of impact. Current climate forecasts predict that we are likely to experience extreme weather conditions that exceed the bounds of historical norms and concurrent climate hazards are likely to compound the overall climate risk for sectors and regions.

Natural disasters cost the global economy an estimated \$390.5 billion in 2020.<sup>15,16</sup> The cost to Australia alone was \$13.2 billion in 2017 and this is projected to reach \$39.3 billion per year by 2050.<sup>17</sup>

Results of recent community engagement undertaken to inform the Environmental and Climate Strategy reinforce a “deep concern” that the community has over climate change, the current state of the environment and future trends and growth.<sup>18</sup>

Climate change, while living within the theme of *Environment*, impacts all aspects of life: from water availability to healthcare systems, local economies and critical infrastructure.

Throughout challenges such as COVID-19, bushfires, and floods, the Wingecarribee community required ongoing resilience; the ability to not only survive but adapt and thrive. Future pandemics and natural disasters will again test community resilience and further promote the need for people to be connected and supported, particularly those people who are most vulnerable or isolated.

Biodiversity is the variety of plants, animals, micro-organisms, and ecosystems that constitute our living environment; it is constantly changing. Threatened species are those plant and animal species considered to be at risk of extinction in the wild.

Lost biodiversity can never be fully recovered, but conservation efforts can help to restore the capacity of ecosystems to adapt and ensure that species are able to continue. Protecting biodiversity and land resources is important to sustaining natural processes, such as nutrient cycling, soil formation and pollination.

As the size of the global population continues to grow and as more people transition from lower to higher income brackets, there will be escalating pressures placed on finite food, water, mineral and energy resources. At the same time, these constraints are driving cutting-edge innovations that aim to do more with less, achieve carbon neutrality, reduce biodiversity loss and address the global waste challenge.<sup>19</sup>

The Goals and Strategies within ‘Environment’ adequately address the core issues however they would benefit from greater emphasis being placed on collaborative, all of community and government approaches to tackling the big issues such as climate change and proactive

<sup>17</sup> CSIRO, Our Future World: Global megatrends impacting the way we live over coming decades, July 2022

<sup>18</sup> JOC Consulting, WSC Environment and Climate Change Strategy – Engagement Outcomes Report 2021

<sup>19</sup> CSIRO, Our Future World: Global megatrends impacting the way we live over coming decades, July 2022

## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023

approaches to reducing waste through minimisation of material production as well as consumption (circular economy).

While the performance measures are not under review it is recommended that targets be included now if they have been agreed to through other strategy development. For example, carbon reduction targets.

Though climate change will 'live' under this theme for the purpose of planning and reporting it is considered to be impacting all aspects of life and therefore will be reflected under every theme within the context setting piece.

No.	Goal and Strategies	Comments	Recommendations
4.1	<b>Wingecarribee's distinct and diverse natural environment is protected and enhanced</b>	Suggest rewording for consistency.	<b>A protected, healthy and diverse natural environment</b>
4.1.1	Protect and improve biodiversity	Suggest emphasising the need for a strategic approach that is everyone's business.	Protect and enhance biodiversity through a coordinated, all of government and community approach.
4.1.2	Work collaboratively to reduce pollution and its impact on our environment.	Still highly relevant.	No change.
4.1.3	Conserve the key natural resources of the Shire and minimise the impact from development	Still highly relevant.	No change
4.1.4	Sustainably manage natural resources for broader community benefit	Still highly relevant. Suggest that natural resources, such as water, are vital to the community and economy.	Sustainably manage natural resources, such as water, for the benefit of all life.
New	Work together to reduce bushfire risk and better protect the Shire from natural disasters.	This was raised as an opportunity during consultation on the new Environment and Climate Change Strategy. It refers to more holistic land management practices such as Caring for Country.	-
4.2	<b>Sustainable living practices are actively encouraged</b>	Suggest rewording for consistency	<b>A community that lives sustainably for the betterment of the planet</b>
4.2.1	Develop partnerships and implement programs and education that enable people to live sustainably	Still highly relevant.	No change.

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

No.	Goal and Strategies	Comments	Recommendations
4.2.2	Promote building practices and the types of developments that improve resource efficiency.	Still highly relevant.	No change.
4.2.3	Encourage residents and businesses to source and produce goods locally	Still highly relevant.	No change.
<b>4.3</b>	<b>Wingecarribee achieves continuous reduction in waste generation and disposal to landfill</b>	Suggest rewording	<b>A low-waste community</b>
4.3.1	Minimise waste through education, promotion of alternatives and prosecution of illegal dumpers	Still highly relevant.	No change
4.3.2	Maximise the recovery of resources from the waste stream	Still highly relevant.	No change.
New	Support circular economy initiatives that minimise both resource production and consumption.	Circular economy reduces material use and redesigns materials etc. to be less resource intensive.	-
<b>4.4</b>	<b>Wingecarribee addresses, adapts, and builds resilience to climate change</b>	Still of high relevance however suggest that the Goal could be more ambitious	<b>A resilient Shire that takes action on climate change</b>
4.4.1	Manage Council's resource consumption, with significant increases in efficiency and adoption of renewable energy	Council focused. Suggest minor edit.	Manage resource consumption, with significant increases in efficiency and adoption of renewable energy
4.4.2	Build community capacity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and respond to the impacts of climate change	Still highly relevant. Minor edit suggested.	Build community capacity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and minimise the impacts of climate change
4.4.3	Plan for predicted impacts of climate change	Still highly relevant.	No change.

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

No.	Goal and Strategies	Comments	Recommendations
4.4.4	Monitor and report on community progress to achieving net zero emissions and identify key steps to achieving a carbon neutral Council	Suggest rewording as the CSP is not Council's Plan. This doesn't mean that the Delivery Program won't continue to identify Council's role and key actions.	Monitor and report on community and government progress to achieving net zero emissions.
New	Work collaboratively across all levels of government, business and industry to reduce carbon emissions and address climate change	Suggested for inclusion based on recent community research and provides a dedicated 'home' for advocacy, lobbying etc. in this space and working more closely across levels of government.	-
New	Support the community to survive, adapt and thrive in the face of extreme weather events and other crises.	Suggest a dedicated strategy that acknowledges extreme weather events and pandemics and the need to respond and act quickly.	-

## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023

### *Recommendations for Economy*

The following challenges and opportunities require focus in the Plan:

- ✓ Our strategic location
- ✓ Supporting people with a disability to access jobs
- ✓ Innovation and new technologies
- ✓ Rural and slow tourism
- ✓ Creative industries

The role of tourism, particularly as an opportunity, featured heavily amongst focus group participants and is a theme across several strategies and plans such as the *Local Strategic Planning Statement*, *Southern Highlands Destination Strategy*, the draft *South East and Tablelands Regional Plan 2041* and *Southern Highlands Inspired*.

The *Blueprint for a Resilient South East NSW* discusses a growing popularity in slow and sustainable tourism which minimises the negative impacts of tourism on the natural environment whilst also enhancing the visitor experience. Slow tourism also lends itself to more immersive experiences of local areas: their communities, creative industries, natural produce and way of life.

Specific mention was made during focus groups sessions of rural tourism and the attraction of the Shire's picturesque landscapes and food and wine industries. The *Local Strategic Planning Statement* highlights the role of rural tourism in diversifying the economy and supporting agricultural production values noting the need to balance environmental and community concern.<sup>20</sup>

Staff and community feedback included discussion on the Shire's brand and the need to develop a unique brand identity that reflects the Shire's natural strengths such as the natural environment, distinct towns and villages and gardens. Discussion also considered the use of targeted tourism campaigns that specifically promote local agricultural businesses (and produce) as well as arts and cultural events.

*Wingecarribee 2031* includes a strategy to 'Increase local employment opportunities for people in all stages of life.' This remains a priority and is supported by plans including the *Local Strategic Planning Statement* and the *Wingecarribee Regional Economic Development Strategy*. However, the existing Plan does not address supporting people living with a disability to find local employment; a priority of the *Disability Inclusion Action Plan*.

The Shire's strategic location is considered by many to be a strength which suggests several opportunities, notably the connectivity to larger population centres and the new Western Sydney Airport. Staff and community engagement participants discussed location as a key to unlocking future economic development however noting this will be reliant on improved transport linkages, and local infrastructure. Regardless, it was raised as an important opportunity which could be used to leverage investment.

Our ageing population impacts several themes in the Plan. While the issue is already addressed under the "People" and "Places" themes, strategies in place (namely those that look to improve housing affordability and access to education) will also impact the theme of "Economy". It is critical that young people, skilled people and key workers – such as nurses,

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<sup>20</sup> Different to mass tourism, slow tourism reduces mobility by encouraging people to spend more time exploring local areas; their communities and culture.



## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023

aged care workers, teachers, and police - are supported to live locally and access affordable and reliable transport if the economy and community are to be sustainable into the future.<sup>21</sup>

The need to support and attract innovation also featured in consultation with specific mention given to the Southern Highlands Innovation Park, working with tertiary institutions and investigating technologies that reduce the impact of industry on the natural environment. The draft *South East and Tablelands Regional Plan* also supports the role of increasing opportunities for innovation with a focus on renewable energy platforms.

The *Destination Strategy* highlights the challenges impacting the region's agricultural activities. It notes that the region is dominated by small farms, reducing opportunities for economies of scale and making it difficult for local farms to remain profitable. Small family farms are being converted to weekend retreats or hobby farms, which reduces their capacity and limits ability to realise broader economic outcomes.

Other industries and sectors including health care, education, manufacturing and professional services are priorities for the region but don't specifically feature in the existing Plan.

There is also opportunity to tap into the highly creative local community. This emerged as a theme during stakeholder engagement and is supported by the demographic and employment profile of the Shire. In particular there is an opportunity to promote and encourage creative industries – examples include literature, design, music, publishing, crafts, visual arts, fashion, architecture, film and video, and the performing arts.

Finally, the *Local Strategic Planning Statement* is an example of a strategic plan that acknowledges the need for local businesses to be supported through a connected community. Given that 98% of businesses are small this ongoing networking is important not just for the economy, but for the community which is at its core.

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<sup>21</sup> Wingecarribee Shire Council, *Housing Our Community*, 2021 (amended)

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

No.	Goal and Strategies	Comments	Recommendation
<b>5.1</b>	<b>Our Shire attracts people to work, live and visit</b>	Suggest including investment as an opportunity.	<b>People want to visit, work and invest in the Shire</b>
5.1.1	Broaden and promote the range of business and industry sectors	Still highly relevant. Minor change.	Broaden and promote the diversity of business and industry sectors and investment opportunities
5.1.2	Increase local employment opportunities for people in all stages of life	Should also include people living with a disability as noted in the DIAP.	Work across all sectors to improve access to local employment for people of all abilities and ages.
5.1.3	Ensure tourism balances the economic benefits with impact on environment and community.	Still highly relevant. Suggest mentioning slow and sustainable tourism as 'how' we might achieve this.	Promote slow and sustainable tourism that balances economic benefits with impacts on our environment and community.
5.1.4	Provide diversity in tourist attractions and experiences	Still highly relevant.	No change.
5.1.5	Promote Southern Highlands' unique brand identity	Suggest the brand needs further exploration. Minor wording change suggested. Destination Strategy will influence this space.	Develop and promote the Southern Highland's unique brand identity.
New	Capitalise on our proximity to Sydney, Canberra and the Western Sydney Aerotropolis to attract industry and investment	Supports the desire to attract diverse, socially responsible industry to the Shire.	-
<b>5.2</b>	<b>Sustainable business and industry work in harmony with local community and environment</b>	Still relevant. No change.	<b>Sustainable business and industry work in harmony with local community and environment</b>
5.2.1	Promote business and industry development opportunities suited to our distinct region	Still relevant	No change.
5.2.2	Encourage and showcase leading edge, clean industries	Still relevant	No change.
New	Encourage research and innovation that enhances the local and regional economy	New strategy proposed to sustain focus on the future economy and technological advancements that will change the way we work and the dominant industries/sectors.	-
New	Promote and enhance our creative industries	Reflects the highly creative community	-
<b>5.3</b>	<b>We support the productive use of our agricultural land and promote our diverse and thriving local agriculture industry and its right to farm</b>	Suggest rewording for consistency	<b>A thriving and diverse agricultural industry</b>

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

No.	Goal and Strategies	Comments	Recommendation
5.3.1	Develop and implement initiatives which allow rural industries to innovate, adapt and prosper	Still relevant	No change.
5.3.2	Manage development to ensure it does not impact on viable primary production and food security	Still relevant	No change.
5.3.3	Promote rural tourism and opportunities that showcase local produce and agricultural industries.	Suggest having a strategy dedicated to agri-tourism	-
<b>5.4</b>	<b>Local business is supported through a connected community</b>	Suggest rewording for consistency	<b>A supported and connected local business community</b>
5.4.1	Implement programs that support and strengthen business development	Still relevant however suggest minor rewording	No change
5.4.2	Promote mentoring and development opportunities to build a connected business community	Still relevant though noting that the mentoring program appears to have stalled.	No change.
5.4.3	Develop partnerships within and outside of the Shire to strengthen economic initiatives	Still relevant	No change

## **AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

### **Conclusion**

*Wingecarribee 2031: Our Future, Our Choice* provides reasonable coverage of the significant issues impacting the Shire now and into the future.

There are, however, some notable gaps which need addressing including planning for an ageing population, affordable and accessible housing and building resilience in the face of a changing world.

Given these gaps some new Goals and Strategies are recommended. The core structure of the Plan, however, will largely remain in place until the next comprehensive review scheduled for 2024/25.

It is recommended that the 2024/25 review includes targeted stakeholder engagement with those agencies, departments and organisations that will play key roles in achieving the Plan. This will help to identify the main contributors; their roles and what they are prepared to commit to.

Work needs to be completed to better articulate some of the Strategies, however, to adjust the level at which the strategies are currently pitched would require significant rework across the entire Integrated Planning and Reporting suite and may possibly impact systems.

It is proposed that this work, along with further work on performance measures, be included as part of the 2024/25 review.

Development of the next four-year Delivery Program 2025 - 2029 should provide opportunities for staff to come together and consider the intent of the Community Strategic Plan ensuring targets, principal activities and service actions are relevant and supporting the Plan's objectives.

It is possible that given the timing of the current planning cycle, there will be limited time in this cycle to invest in broader discussions that provide, at a minimum, Managers, Coordinators and subject matter experts an opportunity to come together and co-design the Delivery Program. However, this approach is highly recommended as part of the 2024/25 planning cycle as not only does it identify areas for partnering and resource sharing, but it also works to achieve a more positive, collaborative organisational culture.

It is understood that Council is undertaking further work on a performance (measures) framework. This work is encouraged and should consider performance measures for both the Shire and Organisation (Council). The results-based accountability framework™ is a simple yet effective model that may assist this process.

Finally, it is suggested that further work be completed in future years to better align service or business planning to the objectives of the Plan, possibly through development of long-term (10 year plus) service plans that consider what future service provision might look like.

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

Appendix A

**List of key informing documents.**

<b>Key Informing Document</b>	<b>Date of issue</b>	<b>Lead Author</b>
Annual Report for 2020/21	2021	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Aquatic Facilities Strategy	2012	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Biodiversity Strategy	2003	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Blueprint for a Resilient South East NSW project	N/A	Canberra Region JO
Climate Change Adaptation Plan	2019	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Communications Strategy	2021	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Community Engagement Strategy	2021	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Community Safety Plan	2015	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Community Satisfaction Survey Results	2021	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Corporate and Community Planning Framework	2021	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Corporate Relations Service Review	2021	KPMG
Delivery Program	2017	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Delivery Program Progress Report	Jul-22	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2026	2022	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Economic Roundtable Report	2021	KPMG
Emergency Management Plan	2020	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Environment and Climate Change Strategy Engagement Outcomes Report	2021	JOC Consulting
Environmental Strategy 2012-2017	2012	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Fit for a Digital Future' - WSC Digital Strategy and Roadmap	2019	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Heritage Strategy	2019	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Housing our Community - Local Housing Strategy	2021 amended	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Integrated Planning and Reporting Review Report	2022	Karen Legge Consulting
Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy	2018	NSW Government

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

Open Space Review and Long-Term Strategy	2007	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Operational Plan and Budget 2022/23	2022	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Our Future World - Megatrends Report	2022	CSIRO
Parks Strategy	2016	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plans	2008	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Playspace Strategy	2020	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Positive Ageing Strategy 2016-2026	2016	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Public Toilet Strategy 2017	2017	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Recreational Walking Tracks Strategy	2020	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Regional Youth Insights	2022	Dept of Regional NSW
Resourcing Strategy	2017	Wingecarribee Shire Council
South East and Tablelands Regional Plan 2041 (draft for public exhibition)	2022	Department of Planning and Environment
Southern Highlands Destination Strategy 2020-2030	2020	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Southern Highlands Inspired - Arts and Culture Strategic Plan 2015 – 2031	2015	Wingecarribee Shire Council
State Plan (NSW 2021 now out of date)	2011	NSW Government
Statement of Regional Priorities	2019	Canberra Region JO
Wingecarribee 2040 - Local Strategic Planning Statement	No date	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Wingecarribee Regional Economic Development Strategy	2018	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Youth Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2026	2019 edition	Wingecarribee Shire Council

This report has been produced by Kathryn Ridley Consulting for the purpose of internal consultation only. All effort has been made to appropriately acknowledge source material.



# DRAFT

## Community Strategic Plan

### Wingecarribee 2041



*We're with you*





The Wingecarribee Shire acknowledges the Gundungurra and Tharawal people as the traditional custodians of this land we now call the Wingecarribee Shire. We pay our respect to Elders both past, present and emerging.







Welcome to our third edition of the Community Strategic Plan (CSP): Wingecarribee 2041.

Planning for the future of the Shire is key to unlocking our potential and ensuring we are well positioned to address current, new and emerging challenges.

Having a clear vision and plan allows us, as a community, to come together and work towards shared goals. It also provides us with a level of confidence in knowing that a road map is in place aimed at achieving great outcomes for both current and future generations.

This CSP has been developed by Wingecarribee Shire Council on behalf of the local community. It outlines a vision for the future: a vision which was first developed by the community back in 2010.

Since that time, the vision has remained steadfast however some of our goals and strategies have changed. This is in part due to changing community priorities and the rise of new issues, both challenges and opportunities, which were not prevalent when the original Plan was first produced.

This CSP takes stock of these issues and considers how they might impact the Shire over the medium to long term and what we need to do now, to minimise any negative consequences.

The future is always uncertain, and that's why planning based on the best available information is key.

This latest edition of the Plan has been developed with community participation and was informed by extensive research. Many of the issues identified over 10 years ago, are still very much relevant today.

We are concerned about the condition of local infrastructure and the services in place to support a growing and ageing community. We care about the loss of biodiversity and the ongoing impacts of climate change as experienced through extreme weather events. We value the uniqueness of the Shire and want to see this maintained into the future. We also want to see current and future generations have improved access to housing as a basic human right.

Despite these challenges we also see great opportunity in the Shire: from our growing creative industries and diverse agricultural sector to our beautiful natural environment and close proximity to both Sydney and Canberra.

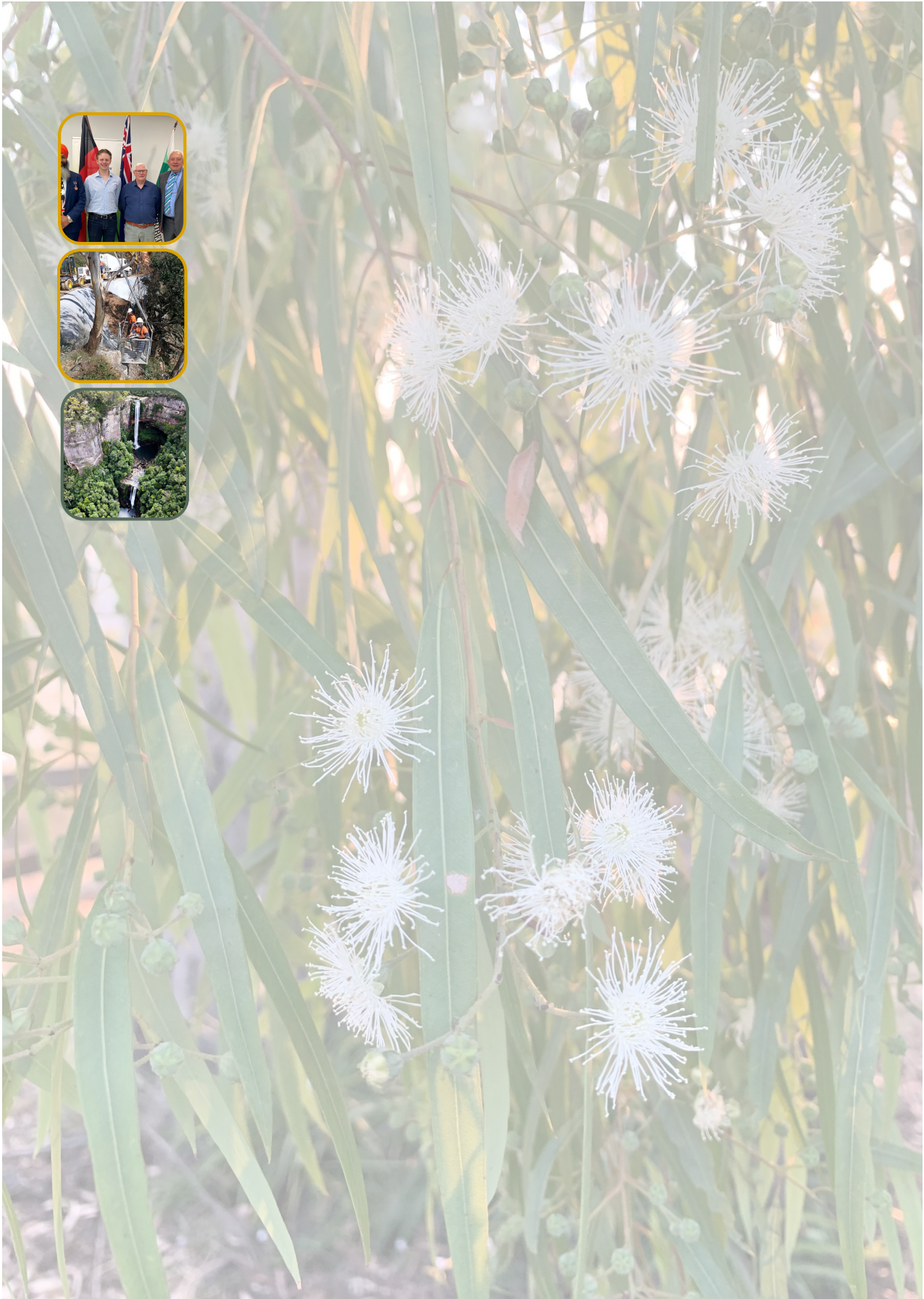
While Council plays a leading role in the development and delivery of the Plan its overall success relies on the commitment of many stakeholders: from Federal and State government to local business and industry, and the people who choose to live, work and play here.

We look forward to working with you as we strive to achieve our vision. We are optimistic that, together, we can create a bright future for the Shire.

*Viv May PSM  
Administrator*

*Lisa Miscamble  
General Manager*









Wingecarribee 2041	1
Wingecarribee 2041 - Plan on a Page	2
The Community's Plan	3
What our Community told us	3
What we value	4
Working together	5
The role of your Council	6
Our Principles	7
What we mean by Social Justice	7
What we mean by Sustainability	7
Monitoring progress	8
Wingecarribee 2041 – Our story	9
The Big Issues	10
State and Regional planning	10
About Us	11
Our Community	13
Reading the Plan	14
Our Community Vision	15
Leadership	16
People	18
Places	20
Environment	22
Economy	24
Acknowledgements	26
Appendix 1 - State and Regional Priorities	28
Appendix 2 - Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework	30
Appendix 3 – Strategic networks and government agencies	32



Where are we now?



Where do we want to be?



How will we get there?



How will we know when we have arrived?

## Wingecarribee 2041

Wingecarribee 2041 aims to answer these four questions.

It is a long-term plan that identifies where the Wingecarribee community wants to be in the future and how we aim to get there.

All local governments in NSW will have a long-term Community Strategic Plan that considers their community's current and future needs and aspirations. It is the highest-level plan developed by any council on behalf of its community.

While Wingecarribee Shire Council developed the Plan, it is not wholly responsible for its achievement.

Achieving our goals requires a collaborative effort involving the Council, other spheres of government, local business and industry and of course the community itself.

Wingecarribee 2041 is divided into five themes, each of which has its own vision, goals for the future and strategies to help us reach those goals.



Leadership



People



Places








Environment



Economy

# Wingecarribee 2041 - Plan on a Page

Our Vision "In 2041 we will be a healthy and productive community, learning and living in harmony, proud of our heritage and nurturing our environment."

	 Leadership	 People	 Places	 Environment	 Economy
Where we want to be.	<p>Ethical and trusted levels government</p> <p>A well-informed, engaged community</p> <p>A leading community</p>	<p>A happy, healthy and resilient community</p> <p>An inclusive community where everyone can participate in community life</p> <p>A creative, diverse and vibrant community</p>	<p>A physically and digitally connected Shire</p> <p>Unique towns, villages and rural landscapes</p> <p>Liveable and sustainable communities</p> <p>Housing that meets the needs of current and future generations</p>	<p>A protected, healthy and diverse natural environment</p> <p>A community that lives sustainably for the betterment of the planet</p> <p>A low-waste community</p> <p>A resilient Shire that takes action on climate change</p>	<p>People want to visit, work and invest in the Shire</p> <p>Sustainable business, industry and environment</p> <p>A thriving and diverse agricultural industry</p> <p>A supported and connected local business community</p>
	<p>Improve how decisions are made</p> <p>Ensure the sustainability of the Council</p> <p>Improve customer service</p> <p>Deliver well informed strategy and planning</p> <p>Provide clear and timely information</p> <p>Undertake genuine engagement</p> <p>Reduce barriers to engagement</p> <p>Strengthen leadership within the community</p> <p>Work collaboratively and create strong partnerships</p> <p>Invest in digital technologies</p>	<p>Improve access to health services</p> <p>Work to reduce disadvantage</p> <p>Provide sport and recreation facilities</p> <p>Plan for future services</p> <p>Keep our community safe</p> <p>Support life-long learning</p> <p>Reduce barriers to participation</p> <p>Bring people, and generations, together</p> <p>Empower First Nations peoples</p> <p>Nurture our creative community</p> <p>Promote creativity and culture</p>	<p>Improve transport networks and infrastructure</p> <p>Investigate future transport options</p> <p>Maintain the green spaces</p> <p>Protect the uniqueness of the Shire</p> <p>Protect culturally significant places</p> <p>Revitalise towns and villages</p> <p>Provide welcoming places and facilities</p> <p>Provide safe and sustainable local infrastructure</p> <p>Improve access to housing</p>	<p>Protect and enhance biodiversity</p> <p>Reduce pollution of the environment</p> <p>Conserve our natural resources</p> <p>Protect the Shire from natural disasters</p> <p>Help people to live more sustainably</p> <p>Buy goods locally</p> <p>Reduce, recover and recycle waste</p> <p>Adopt renewable energies.</p> <p>Plan for climate change</p> <p>Reduce carbon emissions</p> <p>Support the community to be resilient.</p>	<p>Grow the diversity of local business and industry</p> <p>Increase local employment opportunities</p> <p>Promote slow, rural and sustainable tourism</p> <p>Provide a range of tourism experiences</p> <p>Promote the Southern Highland's unique brand</p> <p>Leverage off our proximity to major cities</p> <p>Encourage innovation and promote local</p> <p>Support agricultural industries to prosper</p> <p>Strengthen the local business community</p>

# The Community's Plan

Wingecarribee 2041 is the community's plan.

The Plan was first developed in 2010 and involved more than 800 people from across the Shire.

Representatives from local community organisations, service providers and levels of government, participated in the Plan's creation and a further 780, participated in the 2017 review.

Our program of community engagement was broad and diverse, allowing people to express their aspirations and priorities for the future.

A mix of methods was used to get people involved: from community surveys to creative workshops, discussion forums and focus groups. The program was informed by a community engagement strategy that worked to achieve high levels of community participation and inclusion.

The 2023 review involved over 460 individual participants and activities including:

- a series of Focus Groups held in Mittagong, Moss Vale, Penrose and Yerrinbool
- an online Youth Survey
- a telephone Community Research Survey (statistically valid, representative sample of our community)
- a public exhibition and submission process

In designing the latest community engagement program, we considered the barriers that might deter people from participating and actively worked to reduce these by:

- offering a mix of face to face and online activities
- running consultations in the daytime and evening
- using accessible venues, close to public transport, across several locations



## What our Community told us

Over the years the aspirations of our community have been clear and consistent. We want:

strong civic leadership based on ethics, transparency and accountability

to maintain our sense of community

better local services and facilities that reflect the needs of the community

access to a broader range of local jobs and education

improved transport options and safer roads

a strong economy that works in harmony with our community and environment

to maintain our rural landscape and the uniqueness of our towns and villages

to protect and enrich our natural environment



Some things have changed.

New issues raised in our latest round of consultation included:

- planning for an ageing population
- supporting young people to stay in the Shire
- supporting people who are isolated or vulnerable
- building our resilience in the face of extreme weather events and other crises.
- keeping the community involved in decision making
- improving openness, communication, engagement and customer service, across all levels of government
- sustainable and responsible planning and development to manage a growing population

## What we value

In 2022 we also asked the community what they value most about living in the Shire.  
The community said:



Natural Environment  
and Open Space



Central  
location/proximity to  
Sydney



Country Lifestyle



Peace and quiet



Friendly community



Overall atmosphere

## Working together

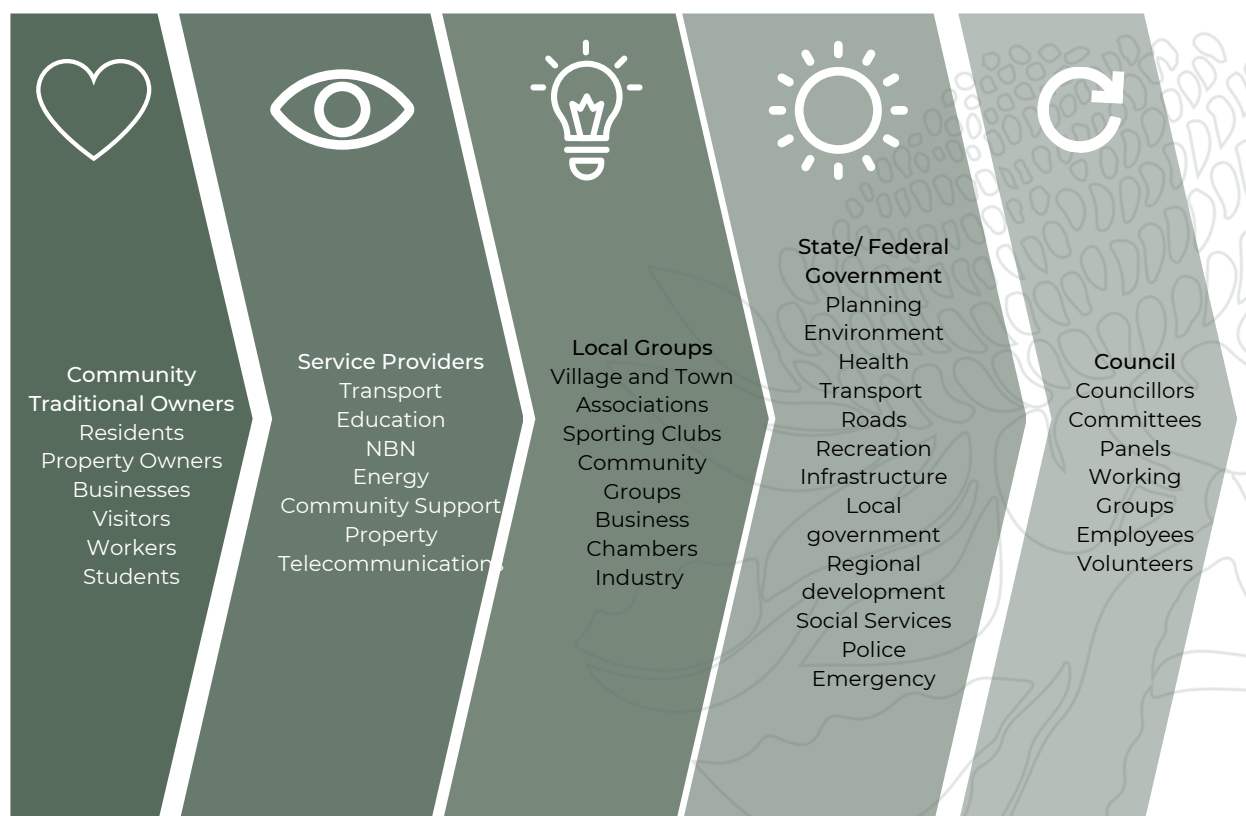
Everyone has a role to play in achieving Wingecarribee 2041.

Many people and organisations are responsible for delivering the Plan, working together to achieve the community's vision.

Federal and State agencies, service providers, residents, business and industry, non-government organisations and community groups will each play a role.

Wingecarribee Shire Council is a key contributor in the delivery of the Plan and also plays an important role in initiating, preparing and maintaining the Plan on behalf of the community. It also facilitates regular progress reports.

Stakeholders responsible for the delivery of the Community Strategic Plan tend to fall into the below categories.





## The role of your Council

Council has multiple roles to play in delivering the Community Strategic Plan.  
This includes being a:

### Advocate



to support and speak on  
behalf of the community it  
represents

### Provider



of physical infrastructure and  
essential services

### Regulator



of development, community  
health and safety, and the  
environment

### Partner



with community, private  
and government  
organisations

### Leader



to plan and provide direction  
through policy and practices

### Promoter



of the Wingecarribee Shire  
as a place to live, visit and  
invest

# Our Principles

The principles of social justice and sustainability are at the core of Wingecarribee 2041. These principles guide both the development and implementation of the Plan.

## What we mean by Social Justice

The term refers to:

- achieving equity or fairness in how decisions are made, and resources are shared
- ensuring everyone has fair access to the services and resources they need to achieve quality of life
- giving everyone opportunities to have a say on the matters that affect their lives
- promoting equal rights for everyone and providing opportunities for all people to fully participate in community life.

## What we mean by Sustainability

Sustainability refers to “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” (Brundtland 1987).

This definition also informs the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

This international framework of 17 interrelated goals, is aimed at improving the lives of communities around the world and reducing the effects of climate change.

Wingecarribee 2041 supports the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and acknowledges that we all have a role to play in tackling global problems.





## Monitoring progress

The State of Our Shire is a document that reports on any progress made towards, or away from, the aspirations and targets in the Community Strategic Plan.

Council develops the report at least every four years.

It considers the current 'state' of our community, economy, environment and local leadership.

It looks at trends over time and signals where urgent intervention might be required. It also tests the effectiveness of the current strategies in place.

The State of Our Shire report is the most comprehensive report on the Plan however more frequent, Council focused reports are prepared that monitor progress made towards the Plan's objectives including:

- Six monthly reports on progress made towards achieving the Council's Delivery Program. The Delivery Program aligns to the Community Strategic Plan and details the Council's role in achieving the Plan
- An Annual Report detailing implementation of the Delivery Program and Operational Plan, along with Council's audited financial statements.

In the past, Council developed an End of Term Report that considered the Council's progress in achieving the Community Strategic Plan. This is no longer required however past reports can be viewed on the Council website.

The first State of Our Shire report is due in 2024.

To view Council's progress reports please visit [www.wsc.nsw.gov.au](http://www.wsc.nsw.gov.au).







## Wingecarribee 2041 – Our story

The Community Strategic Plan was first produced in 2010.

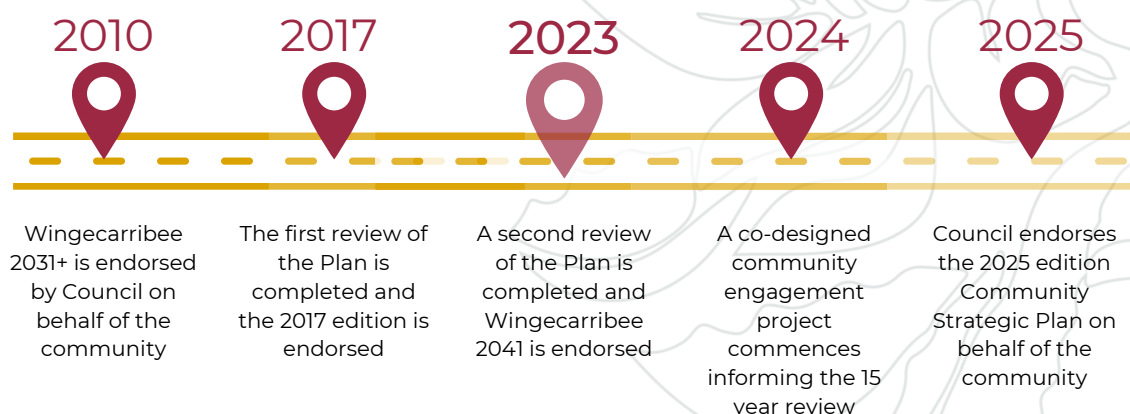
Originally called Wingecarribee 2031+, the Plan was developed over an 18-month period. Since that time, the Plan has been reviewed and updated twice, including the most recent review which commenced in 2022.

These updates help to ensure the Plan remains reflective of current, new and emerging issues.

A comprehensive review, which will revisit the community's vision for a future Shire, is scheduled for 2024/25.

The year 2025 is particularly important because it signals 15 years since the Plan's inception.

A creative, co-design process open to all members of the community, is proposed to celebrate the milestone review.



# The Big Issues

Wingecarribee Shire is home to a community that takes pride in its rich history and values its unique mix of rural and urban living. It is also a place of opportunity.

Like all communities it faces challenges many of which are not unique to the area.

Issues such as climate change, an ageing population and the rapidly evolving digital landscape are global in nature and will impact many communities, environments, governments and economies for years to come.

When considering the long-term future of the Shire and achieving our aspirational vision, we need to first understand these more significant challenges and opportunities. This helps us to identify the most important and urgent issues that require immediate action.

Understanding trends and taking appropriate action helps to minimise our risk and achieve better outcomes for the Shire, now and into the future.

Significant issues or 'drivers' are often interconnected and impact all aspects of life.

A good example is the issue of our ageing population: this will have impacts on the diversity of our community, provision of health services, the local economy and housing stock.

Another is the impact of a growing population and associated urban development on local biodiversity and natural resources.

We have identified the following as the most significant drivers of change impacting our Shire now and into the near future.

- Climate change
- Ageing population
- Population growth
- Evolving and chronic health issues
- New ways of working and learning
- Scarcity of natural resources
- Rapid technological change
- Housing accessibility and affordability



## State and Regional planning

Wingecarribee 2041 was developed within a broader NSW and regional planning context.

As a community it is important we take into consideration our place within this wider context and in doing so, consider the broader priorities for NSW and the Region and how these might impact the Shire.

It is important that State and Local Government work together to deliver coordinated strategic planning. In some cases, the local communities of Wingecarribee may object to State planning targets or priorities. When this occurs, local government can act as an advocate or lobby on behalf of the community to ensure local concerns are considered and where possible, mutually beneficial outcomes are achieved.

Over 40 strategic documents were considered during the 2023 review including the draft South East and Tablelands Regional Plan 2041, and the State and Premier's Priorities.

Our demonstrated alignment to NSW and regional priorities can be found at **Appendix 1**.



# About Us

## LOCATION AND GEOGRAPHY

The Wingecarribee Shire local government area (LGA) is located 75 kilometres from the southwestern fringe of Sydney and 110 kilometres from Sydney's central business district.

The Shire has a total area of approximately 2,700 square kilometres, 56 per cent of which is north of the Wingecarribee River. It is comparable in size to that of urban Sydney, averaging 55 kilometres from east to west and 45 kilometres from north to south, with its geographic centre north-west of Berrima and its demographic centre to the southeast of Bowral.

Much of the Shire is located at or above 640 metres above sea level.

## OUR COMMUNITIES

Our population is forecast to grow to 66,860 by 2041.

We have an economically diverse community, with 2.6% of public or social housing through to extremely wealthy high net worth individuals.

The rapid growth of south-west Sydney and the Western Sydney Aerotropolis present both challenges and opportunities to protect the green in between however to also harness the economic benefits for the Shire given the proximity to the Aerotropolis.

We have a healthy and diverse economy, driven by the health, tourism, education, manufacturing, agriculture, construction and professional industry sectors. However, our declining work force and ageing population presents unique challenges to our economy.

To our east, the large-scale urban release areas of West Dapto and Calderwood Valley will potentially alleviate development pressure in the Shire and will contribute to the workforce needed to service our key industries of health care, tourism, education, agribusiness, freight and logistics and advanced manufacturing.

The Shire is predominantly rural in character with agricultural land separating our towns and villages characterised by unique landscape and aesthetic appeal.

Our three main towns of Bowral, Mittagong and Moss Vale, located in the centre of the Shire, each have a unique function and character, however, collectively act as the economic, cultural and social heart of the Shire. The remainder of our towns and villages are separated by a semi-rural landscape and rich natural environments.



## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023

### ENVIRONMENT

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

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

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

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



### FIRST NATIONS AUSTRALIANS

Council acknowledges the Gundungurra and Tharawal (or Dharawal) people as the traditional custodians of this place we now call the Wingecarribee Shire. The Wingecarribee, Wollondilly and Nattai Rivers which run through the Shire are closely connected to the culture, dreaming and songs of the traditional custodians.

A Dreamtime creation story, Gurangatch and Mirragan, describes an almighty struggle between two ancestral creator spirits, one a giant eel-like creature, Gurangatch, and the other, a large native cat, Mirragan. The scuffle resulted in the gouging out of the land to form the river systems of the Wingecarribee and Wollondilly regions.

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



# Our Community

## POPULATION

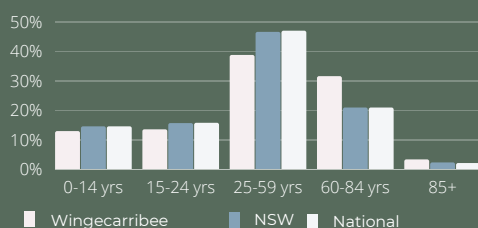
2021 Population = 52,456



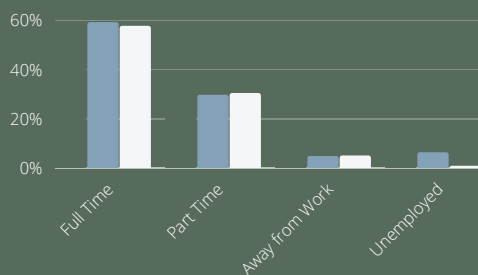
population increased by 4,825 people (10.1%) from 2016 to 2021. An average of 1.94% per year over the period.

Our projected population in 2041 is 65,275

## AGE STRUCTURE



## EMPLOYMENT



## HOUSING



90.7%

Shire's residents live in standalone dwellings



8%

high-density housing



23,618

total dwellings



26%

single person households



38.7%

two person household



43%

Own our home



81%

Work and Live in the Shire



23%

participate in volunteering activities higher than NSW figure of 18.1 %



Land area 2,689 square km

\*Source: <https://forecast.id.com.au/wingecarribee> prepared by id (informed decisions), October 2021 and ABS Statistics



47.8% of the population are males \*2016



52.2% of the population are females \*2016



In 2021, 2,940 people (or 5.6% of the population) reported needing help in their day-to-day lives due to disability. This was a similar percentage to 2016.



6.6% of residents identify as First Nations and Torres Strait Islander Peoples



77%

of us were born in Australia



7%

of us speak a language other than English

In 2016 Median age is 47 years compared to State average of 38 years

The largest changes in the age structure between 2016 and 2021

- Seniors (70 to 84) (+2,036 people)
- Young workforce (25 to 34) (+775 people)
- Older workers and pre-retirees (50 to 59) (+454 people)
- Parents and homebuilders (35 to 49) (+345 people)



12.8%

of the population earned an income of \$2,000+ per week.



12.8%

of us have a long-term health condition



Over 370 native mammal, reptile and bird species

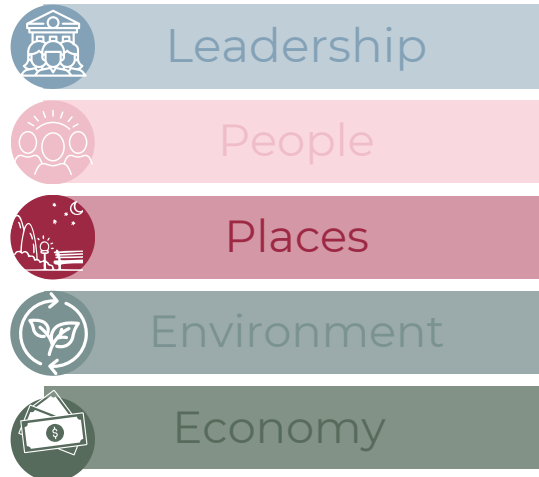
1558 native plant species  
50 threatened or endangered native plant species

53 threatened or endangered native animal species



# Reading the Plan

Wingecarribee 2041 is structured around the five themes of



No single theme is more important than another and all are equally important in achieving the aspirations of the Wingecarribee community.

The Plan outlines:

A Community Vision – our aspiration for how we want the Shire, our community and our lives to be in the future

Theme aspirations – the end result we want for children, adults, families, businesses and communities

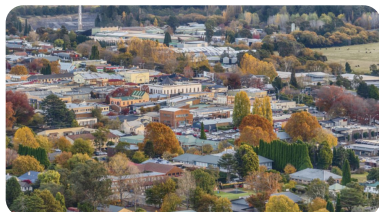
Alignment to Sustainable Development Goals – how the theme works to address global issues, at the local level

Goals – what we want to achieve

Strategies – how we plan to achieve each goal

Measures\* – how we assess the effectiveness of the strategies in place.

*\* The measures used in this document are indicative only. We are developing a framework of measures to help us better assess performance. This will include identifying baselines that will indicate if we are moving towards or away from our targets. This information will be available in the 2024 State of the Shire Report.*



## Our Community Vision

In 2041, we will be...

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



## Leadership

### Where we want to be

We trust the governments that represent us.

They work together in the best interests of the community.

They are open, accountable and allocate resources wisely.  
We are confident that they are making decisions that support our goals.

Governments listen to the community and involve us in decision-making. They are knowledgeable but also seek out new ideas and points of view.

They regularly communicate and keep us informed, ensuring we all have opportunities to have a say on what matters to us.

Most of all, our governments show strong leadership and are connected to the communities they serve.

### Top challenges and opportunities

- Communication between spheres of government and community
- Financial sustainability of local government
- Digital innovation and technology
- Supporting community or "grass roots" leadership
- Partnerships and collaboration across stakeholder groups



## Sustainable Development Goals



### How we will get there

Goal 1.1 - Ethical and trusted levels of government that work together in the best interest of the Shire	Council's role	Partners
1.1.1 Achieve ethical governance and improve decision making, through open, accountable and positive leadership	Leader	State and Federal Government Regional councils
1.1.2 Ensure the long-term sustainability of the Council through effective planning and management of finances, assets, people and systems	Leader	State Government
1.1.3 Improve customer service and achieve value for money services through informed, responsive and efficient service delivery	Leader	State Government
1.1.4 Deliver strategy and planning that supports the community's vision and priorities	Leader Advocate	State Government

## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023

Goal 1.2- A well-informed, engaged community	Council's role	Partners
1.2.1 Provide clear, open and timely information through a mix of accessible communication methods and channels	Leader	State Government
1.2.2 Enhance opportunities for people to participate through more genuine, inclusive and accessible community engagement	Leader	State Government Community
1.2.3 Improve community participation in decision-making by reducing barriers for older, younger and disadvantaged people	Leader	State Government Community
Goal 1.3- A leading community		
1.3.1 Build community capacity through networking, mentoring and skills development	Partner	Education providers Non-Government Organisations Business and Industry Community Groups
1.3.2 Develop collaborative and creative forums that empower the community to advance agreed objectives and actively participate in decision-making	Partner	Education providers Non-Government Organisations Business and Industry Community Groups
1.3.3 Invest in digital technologies to improve how we work, live and play	Leader	State Government Education providers Business and industry

### Measuring progress

Performance Indicators	Target or trend	Sources
Overall satisfaction with Council performance	Increasing	Community Satisfaction Survey
Overall satisfaction with Council provision of information to residents	Increasing	
Council's image within the community	Improving	
Satisfaction with opportunities to participate in decision making	Increasing	
Operating performance ratio	>0%	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Own source operating revenue ratio	> 60%	
Unrestricted current ratio	> 1.5	
Cash expense cover ratio	> 3 months	
Outstanding rates and annual charges	< 5%	
Debt service cover ratio	> 2	
Debt service ratio	> 0< 20%	
Workplace culture	Improving	



## People

### Where we want to be

Everyone is welcome in the Shire.

We celebrate our differences and are open to new ideas. People feel valued, connected and safe and have plenty of opportunities to get involved in the community.

We are a happy, resilient and healthy community. No matter your age or personal circumstances, you can easily access the services that you need.

We have removed the barriers that stop vulnerable or disadvantaged people from leading full and healthy lives.

We are a creative, educated and vibrant community that values the arts. We celebrate our culture, learning from the past to create a better future.

### Top challenges and opportunities

- Our ageing population
- The burden of chronic illness
- Supporting the most vulnerable people in our community
- Retaining young people
- Community health and wellbeing in a post pandemic society
- Enhancing the role of arts and culture in community life
- Recognising country, people and place.



### Sustainable Development Goals



### How we will get there

Goal 2.1 - A happy, healthy and resilient community	Council's role	Partners
2.1.1 Increase the availability and affordability of local health services	Advocate Partner	State Government Non-Government Organisations Health Care Providers
2.1.2 Address social disadvantage through a collaborative, all of government and community approach to improving social outcomes	Leader Provider Partner Advocate	State and Federal Government Non-Government Organisations Community Groups
2.1.3 Promote healthy lifestyle choices	Leader Partner	State Government Non-Government Organisations Health Care Providers
2.1.4 Provide a range of sport, recreation and leisure services and facilities across the Shire	Leader Provider Partner Advocate	State Government Local sporting organisations and groups
2.1.5 Keep the community safe through effective partnerships, planning and risk management	Partner Promoter Advocate	NSW Police State Government
2.1.6 Plan, deliver and advocate for accessible local services that support the needs of a changing and growing community	Leader	State Government Non-Government Organisations Community Groups
2.1.7 Provide lifelong learning and skills development for people of all ages and abilities	Leader Provider Partner	Education providers State and Federal Government Non-Government Organisations Community Groups
2.1.8 Work with education providers to improve access to tertiary education, particularly for young people	Advocate Partner	Education providers State and Federal Governments



## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023

Goal 2.2 An inclusive community where everyone can participate in community life.	Council's role	Partners
2.2.1 Improve community participation by reducing barriers, particularly for older, vulnerable or disadvantaged people.	Leader Provider Advocate	State Government Non-Government Organisations Community Groups
2.2.2 Encourage new ideas and nurture understanding through intergenerational and cultural programs and activities.	Leader Partner	Non-Government Organisations Community Groups Education providers
2.2.3 Foster community spirit through volunteering.	Leader	Non-Government Organisations Community Groups
Goal 2.3 A creative, diverse and vibrant community		
2.3.1 Bring people together through local events, festivals and celebrations.	Leader Provider Partner	Community Groups Non-Government Organisations Event Organisers State Government
2.3.2 Acknowledge and respect our First Nations and Torres Strait Islander communities and cultural heritage, and work together to improve outcomes for First Nations Peoples.	Leader Partner Advocate	First Nations Peoples State and Federal Government Non-Government Organisations Community Groups
2.3.3 Support and promote our growing creative and cultural sector and community.	Provider Advocate Partner	State and Federal Government Creative industries Local business Community Groups
2.3.4 Embed culture and creativity across all aspects of community life through placemaking, performances, public art, and storytelling.	Leader Provider Partner	First Nations peoples Community Groups Creative industries

### Measuring progress

Performance Indicators	Target or trend	Sources
Socioeconomic Indices for Areas (SEIFA)	Maintain	Australian Bureau of Statistics
Sense of feeling part of the community	Increasing	Multiple - Community Satisfaction Surveys, Wingecarribee Shire Council participation numbers, Office of Sport, NSW Health
Satisfaction with local arts and culture	Increasing	
Support for the First Nations community	Increasing	
Satisfaction with festivals and events	Increasing	
Provision and operation of libraries	Increasing	
Support for aged persons	Increasing	
Support for youth	Increasing	
Support for people with a disability	Increasing	
Participation in volunteering activities	Increasing	
Participation in arts and related activities	Increasing	
Opportunity to participate in recreational and sporting activities	Increasing	
People who can get help from support networks	Increasing	
Residents feel safe during the day, at night and using public facilities	Increasing	
Sport and recreation participation numbers	Increasing	
Children's health and development	Improving	NSW Health
Resident health status (across a number of areas such as body mass index, smoking related hospitalisations, coronary heart disease hospitalisations)	Improving	
Life expectancy	Maintain or improve	
Obesity	Improve	
Residents health risk behaviours	Improving	NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research
Crime recorded incidents e.g., assaults, robbery	Maintain or improve	
Family and Domestic Violence	Decrease	

\*Increases in reported offences such as domestic violence can sometimes reflect an increased confidence in or awareness of the services and the support available to victims. This type of data always requires careful analysis.

19



## Places

### Where we want to be.

We feel deeply connected to the places we live, work and play in.

Our towns and villages are vibrant, safe and tranquil, offering a special mix of urban and rural lifestyles.

Our heritage is important to us and that is why our rich history is clearly visible in our buildings, art and public places.

Our towns and villages exist in harmony with our natural environment, and we welcome new places and development that continue this tradition.

It is easy to move around and stay connected to our family and friends. We have plenty of transport options and safe, accessible and linked roads and footpaths. We also have interconnected pathways that encourage us to ride and walk.

It is easy to live here because we have a choice of affordable and accessible housing suitable for all ages - from young people to families and older residents. Our neighbourhoods are close to the facilities and services we need.

### Top challenges and opportunities

- Affordable and accessible housing
- Planning for a growing population
- Sustainable and safe local infrastructure and services, including roads
- Maintaining the character of local villages and towns
- Maintaining a mix of country and urban lifestyles



### Sustainable Development Goals



### How we will get there

Goal 3.1A physically and digitally connected Shire.	Council's role	Partners
3.1.1 Provide accessible, efficient and interconnected public transport systems and infrastructure within and out of the Shire	Advocate	State Government Transport providers
3.1.2 Plan and deliver an interconnected and accessible network of cycleways footpaths and walking trails between towns and villages	Leader Provider Partner	State Government Developers
3.1.3 Investigate and implement opportunities to reduce travel time between the Shire and strategic population centres (e.g., Sydney, Canberra and Wollongong)	Advocate	State and Federal Government Transport providers
3.1.4 Work in partnership to ensure a safe and reliable road and infrastructure network	Partner	State and Federal Government
3.1.5 Improve local roads through prioritised and timely upgrade, renewal and maintenance programs	Leader	State and Federal Government
3.1.6 Investigate and support initiatives that consider future transport modes and technologies	Partner Advocate	State and Federal Government
3.1.7 Work with service providers to improve digital and telecommunications infrastructure and service delivery	Advocate	Telecommunication service providers

## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023

Goal 3.2 Unique towns, villages and rural landscapes	Council's role	Partners
3.2.1 Maintain the green spaces and rural landscapes between towns	Leader Regulator	State Government
3.2.2 Identify and protect the unique characteristics of towns and villages to retain a sense of place	Leader Regulator	State Government
3.2.3 Identify, protect and promote places of significant cultural heritage	Leader Regulator	State Government Community Groups
Goal 3.3 Liveable and sustainable communities		
3.3.1 Work collaboratively to improve and revitalise town and village centres throughout the Shire	Leader Partner Provider	Business and Industry Community Groups
3.3.2 Provide welcoming and accessible community facilities and open spaces that support opportunities for people to meet and connect with one another	Leader Partner Provider	State Government Developers
3.3.3 Provide effective, safe and well-maintained local infrastructure and assets that service the needs of current and future generations	Leader Partner Provider	State Government Developers
3.3.4 Enhance the liveability and sustainability of local neighbourhoods through well considered place and precinct planning	Leader	State Government Community Groups
3.4 Housing that meets the needs of current and future generations		
3.4.1 Provide a mixture of housing types that allow residents to meet their housing needs at different stages of their lives.	Leader Advocate Regulator	State and Federal Government Housing providers
3.4.2 Support incentives and other initiatives that increase affordable housing options.	Leader Advocate Regulator	State and Federal Government
3.4.3 Work with housing providers to increase social and community housing, aged care places, seniors living and adaptable forms of housing.	Partner Advocate Regulator	State and Federal Government Housing and aged care service providers
3.4.4 Work across all levels of government to ensure planned housing growth protects the natural environment and is supported by local services.	Leader Advocate Partner	State and Federal Government Regional councils

### Measuring progress

Indicator or Measure	Target or trend	Sources
Housing stress (mortgage or rental)	Improve	Australian Bureau of Statistics, Transport for NSW
Number and value of building approvals	N/A monitor	
Percentage of trips to work by active transport	Increase	
Percentage of trips to work by public transport	Increase	
Road safety statistics	Improve	
Residents with internet connections at home	Increase	
Asset maintenance ratio	>100%	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Infrastructure backlog ratio	<2	
Building and infrastructure renewal ratios	>100%	
Utilisation of community halls and facilities	90%	
Condition of assets e.g., roads	Improve	
Availability of and access to public transport	Improve	Community Satisfaction Surveys and Place Score data
Revitalisation/beautification of town and village centres and surrounding areas	Improve	
Protecting heritage values and buildings	Improve	
Local traffic management	Improve	
Provision and maintenance of local parks and gardens	Improve	
Provision and maintenance of community facilities	Improve	
Enforcement of development and building regulation	Improve	





## Environment

### Where we want to be

Our natural world is healthy and flourishing.

Over time, our unique wildlife and biodiversity continues to be enriched and enhanced.

The community is actively involved in caring for and protecting our native flora and fauna.

We also actively manage our important wildlife areas and corridors.

The air and waterways are clean and support a healthier community and natural environment.

We are a low waste community that reduces, reuses and recycles where we can. We also use renewable energies - like solar energy and wind power - that are kinder to the planet. We are leaders in sustainable living, acting on climate change and building resilience in the face of natural disasters.



### Sustainable Development Goals



### How we will get there

Goal 4.1 A protected, healthy and diverse natural environment.	Council's role	Partners
4.1.1 Protect and enhance biodiversity through a coordinated, all of government and community approach	Leader Partner Provider Advocate	State and Federal Government Business and Industry Community Groups Volunteers
4.1.2 Work collaboratively to reduce pollution and its impact on our environment	Leader Partner Provider Regulator	State and Federal Government Business and Industry Community Groups
4.1.3 Conserve the key natural resources of the Shire and minimise the impact from development	Leader Partner Provider Regulator	State and Federal Government Developers
4.1.4 Sustainably manage natural resources, such as water, for the benefit of all life	Leader Partner Provider Regulator	State and Federal Government Business and Industry Community Groups
4.1.5 Work together to reduce bushfire risk and better protect the Shire from natural disasters	Leader Partner Advocate	Council Community State Government
Goal 4.2A community that lives sustainably for the betterment of the planet.		
4.2.1 Develop partnerships and implement education programs that enable people to live sustainably	Leader Partner	State and Federal Government Non-Government Organisations Community Groups
4.2.2 Promote building practices and the types of developments that improve resource efficiency	Leader Provider Regulator	State and Federal Government Developers Building Industry

## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023

Goal 4.2A community that lives sustainably for the betterment of the planet.	Council's role	Partners
4.2.3 Encourage residents and businesses to source and produce goods locally	Advocate	Federal and State Government Business and Industry Community Groups
<b>Goal 4.3A low-waste community</b>		
4.3.1 Minimise waste through education, promotion of alternatives and prosecution of illegal dumpers	Leader Provider Partner Regulator	State and Federal Government Community Groups
4.3.2 Maximise the recovery of resources from the waste stream	Leader Provider Partner Regulator	State and Federal Government
4.3.3 Support circular economy initiatives that minimise both resource production and consumption	Advocate Partner	State and Federal Government Business and industry Community Groups
<b>Goal 4.4 A resilient Shire that takes action on climate change</b>		
4.4.1 Manage resource consumption, with significant increases in efficiency and adoption of renewable energy	Leader	State and Federal Government Regional councils
4.4.2 Build community capacity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and minimise the impacts of climate change	Partner Advocate	State and Federal Government Community Groups
4.4.3 Plan for predicted impacts of climate change	Leader Advocate	State and Federal Governments Regional councils Business and Industry Community Groups
4.4.4 Monitor and report on community and government progress to achieving net zero emissions	Leader Advocate	State and Federal Government Business and Industry Universities
4.4.5 Work collaboratively across all levels of government, business and industry to reduce carbon emissions and address climate change	Advocate Partner	State and Federal Government Business and industry Community Groups Universities
4.4.6 Support the community to survive, adapt and thrive in the face of extreme weather events and other crises	Leader Partner	State and Federal Government Community Organisations

### Measuring progress

Indicator or Measure	Target or trend	Sources
Greenhouse gas emissions	Decrease	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Electricity and gas consumption	Decrease	
Percentage of domestic waste diverted from landfill	Increase	
Commercial and household water usage	Improve	
Commercial and household waste	Improve	
Illegal dumping (volume)	Decrease	
Bushland actively managed by Council	Increase	
Waterway health	Maintain	
Recycling and waste reduction take-up rates	Increase	Community Satisfaction Survey
Healthy, natural urban streams and creeks	Improve	
Litter control and rubbish dumping	Improve	
Restoration of natural bushland	Improve	
Encouraging recycling and waste reduction	Improve	NSW Office of Environment and Heritage
Number of threatened species both endangered and vulnerable	Decrease	



## Economy

### Where we want to be

Our local economy is thriving, and people want to live and work here.

We have built on the unique strengths of the Shire, such as our close proximity to major centres like Sydney and Canberra and our rich agricultural lands.

We are home to leading primary industries that work in harmony with the local environment.

There are local jobs available, allowing people to work within a variety of fields and sectors.

We have plenty of education, training and development opportunities. This helps us to build our local skills and knowledge and create workforces suitable for both current and future employers.

Local business, industry and other organisations have embraced new technologies allowing them to grow and prosper while also supporting the health of the planet.

We have become known for our variety of creative industries and are home to many artists, writers, performers, filmmakers, designers, musicians and makers.



### Sustainable Development Goals



### How we will get there

Goal 5.1 People want to visit, work and invest in the Shire.	Council's role	Partners
5.1.1 Broaden and promote the diversity of business and industry sectors and investment opportunities	Promoter Advocate Regulator	State Government Local business and industry Regional councils
5.1.2 Work across all sectors to improve access to local employment for people of all abilities and ages	Advocate	State Government Business and industry Regional councils
5.1.3 Promote slow and sustainable tourism that balances economic benefits with impacts on our environment and community	Promoter Advocate	State Government Business and industry Regional councils
5.1.4 Provide diversity in tourist attractions and experiences	Promote Advocate	State Government Business and industry
5.1.5 Develop and promote the Southern Highland's unique brand identity	Partner Promoter Advocate	State Government Business and industry
5.1.6 Capitalise on our proximity to Sydney, Canberra and the Western Sydney Aerotropolis to attract economic opportunities and investment	Promoter Advocate	Council State and Federal Government Business and Industry

## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023

Goal 5.2 Sustainable business and industry work in harmony with local community and environment	Council's role	Partners
5.2.1 Promote business and industry development opportunities suited to our distinct region	Promoter	State Government business and industry
5.2.3 Encourage and showcase leading edge, clean industries	Promoter Partner Advocate	State Government Business and industry Regional councils
5.2.4 Encourage research and innovation that enhances the local and regional economy	Promoter Partner Advocate	State Government Business and industry Regional councils
5.2.5 Promote and enhance our creative industries.	Promoter Partner Advocate	State Government Business and industry
<b>Goal 5.3A thriving and diverse agricultural industry.</b>		
5.3.1 Develop and implement initiatives which allow rural industries to innovate, adapt and prosper	Partner Promoter Advocate	State and Federal Government Agricultural industries
5.3.2 Manage development to ensure it does not impact on viable primary production and food security	Leader Regulator	State Government Business and Industry Developers
5.3.3 Promote rural tourism and opportunities that showcase local produce and agricultural industries	Partner Promoter	State Government Business and industry Regional councils
<b>Goal 5.4A supported and connected local business community.</b>		
5.4.1 Implement programs that support and strengthen business development	Partner Advocate	State Government Business and Industry Community Groups
5.4.2 Promote mentoring and development opportunities to build a connected business community.	Promoter Partner Advocate	State Government Business and Industry Community Groups
5.4.3 Develop partnerships within and outside of the Shire to strengthen the economy	Leader Partner Advocate	State Government Regional councils Business and Industry

### Measuring progress

Performance Indicators	Target or trend	Sources
Gross value of agricultural production	Maintain	Australian Bureau of Statistics
Gross domestic product	Increase	
Level of unemployment	Maintain	
Level of education of residents (Year 12 and beyond)	Maintain	
Percentage residents that travel outside the Shire for work	Decrease	
Support for tourism	Maintain	Community Satisfaction Survey
Support for local business and employment	Improve	
Number of tourism related jobs	Increase	Destination NSW, Data NSW
Visitation numbers to the Shire	Increase	
Spend by service or business category e.g., food services, accommodation	Not applicable - monitor	

## Acknowledgements

Wingecarribee 2041 would not be possible without the valuable contribution of our community. Wingecarribee Shire Council thanks all those people who participated in focus groups, workshops and surveys to inform the development and review of the Community Strategic Plan.

We also wish to acknowledge the use of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The following documents were considered during the review of the Community Strategic Plan. The Council acknowledges the authors of these documents and the insights these plans and reports have provided.

The 2023 review was conducted with the assistance of Kathryn Ridley Consulting.

Key Informing Document	Date of issue	Lead Author
Annual Report for 2020/2021	2021	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Aquatic Facilities Strategy	2012	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Biodiversity Strategy	2013	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Blueprint for a Resilient South East NSW project	N/A	Canberra Region Joint Organisation
Climate Change Adaptation Plan	2019	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Communications Strategy	2021	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Community Engagement Strategy	2021	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Community Safety Plan	2015	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Community Satisfaction Survey Results	2021	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Corporate and Community Planning Framework	2021	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Corporate Relations Service Review	2021	KPMG
Delivery Program	2017	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Delivery Program Progress Report	Jul-22	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2026	2022	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Economic Roundtable Report	2021	KPMG
Emergency Management Plan	2020	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Environment and Climate Change Strategy Engagement Outcomes Report	2021	JOC Consulting
Environmental Strategy 2012-2017	2012	Wingecarribee Shire Council

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

Key Informing Document	Date of issue	Lead Author
Fit for a Digital Future' - WSC Digital Strategy and Roadmap	2019	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Heritage Strategy	2019	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Housing our Community - Local Housing Strategy	2021 amended	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Integrated Planning and Reporting Handbook	2021	NSW Office of Local Government
Integrated Planning and Reporting Review Report	2022	Karen Legge Consulting
Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy	2018	NSW Government
Open Space Review and Long-Term Strategy	2007	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Operational Plan and Budget 2022/23	2022	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Our Future World - Megatrends Report	2022	CSIRO
Parks Strategy	2016	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plans	2008	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Playspace Strategy	2020	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Positive Ageing Strategy 2016-2026	2016	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Public Toilet Strategy 2017	2017	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Recreational Walking Tracks Strategy	2020	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Regional Community Strategic Plan	2022	Canberra Region Joint Organisation
Regional Youth Insights	2022	Dept of Regional NSW
Resourcing Strategy	2017	Wingecarribee Shire Council
South East and Tablelands Regional Plan 2041 (draft for public exhibition)	2022	Department of Planning and Environment
State Plan (NSW 2021 now out of date)	2011	NSW Government
Statement of Regional Priorities	2019	Canberra Region Joint Organisation
Wingecarribee 2040 - Local Strategic Planning Statement	2020	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Wingecarribee Regional Economic Development Strategy	2018	Wingecarribee Shire Council
Youth Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2026	2019 edition	Wingecarribee Shire Council





## State and Regional Priorities

Consultation was given to both the State and Premier's priorities when reviewing the Plan. It is noted however that the NSW State Plan 2021 is currently out of date. Changes to these priorities and how they might impact the Plan will be considered once they are available.

No.	State Priorities	Wingecarribee 2041 Goal
Strong Budget and Economy		
1	Making it easier to start a business	5.2 and 5.4
2	Encouraging business investment	5.1 and 5.2
3	Boosting apprenticeships	5.1
4	Accelerating major project assessment	
5	Protecting our credit rating	1.1
6	Delivering strong budgets	1.1
Building Infrastructure		
7	Improving road travel reliability	3.1
8	Increasing housing supply	3.4
Protecting the vulnerable		
9	Transitioning to the National Disability Insurance Scheme	
10	Creating sustainable social housing	3.4
Better Services		
11	Improving Aboriginal education outcomes	2.3
12	Better government digital services	1.1
13	Cutting wait times for planned surgeries	

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

No. State Priorities		Wingecarribee 2041 Goal
Better Services		
14	Increasing cultural participation	2.2 and 2.3
15	Ensure on-time running for public transport	
Safer Communities		
16	Reducing violent crime	2.1
17	Reducing adult re-offending	
18	Reducing road fatalities	3.1
Premier's Priorities		
1	Building Infrastructure	3.1, 3.2 and 3.3
2	Creating jobs	5.1, 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4
3	Driving public sector diversity	
4	Faster housing approvals	3.4
5	Improving education results	2.3
6	Improving government services	1.1
7	Improving service levels in hospitals	
8	Keeping our environment clean	4.2
9	Protecting our kids	2.1
10	Reducing domestic violence	2.1
11	Reducing youth homelessness	2.1
12	Tackling childhood obesity	2.1
Draft South East and Tablelands Regional Plan 2041		
1	Recognising Country, people, and place	2.3
2	Enhancing sustainable and resilient environments	4.1
3	Leveraging diverse economic identities	5.1 and 5.2
4	Planning for fir for purpose housing and services	3.4
5	Supporting a connected and active region	3.1





## Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

The Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework was introduced in 2009 and stems from the assumption that all council planning should originate from a sound understanding of the community's expectations around priorities and service levels. (Office of Local Government 2022)

It supports councils across NSW to take a consistent, well-informed approach to planning, service delivery, monitoring performance and reporting. It also requires councils to better engage the community; allowing people to genuinely participate in the decisions that affect them.



### Enable councillors to:

- work directly with their community to identify long-term priorities for local identity, growth and lifestyle
- understand the range of service standards they expect and the infrastructure that will be required to deliver them
- have meaningful conversations about the cost of meeting community expectations and map out a 4 year strategy to deliver key priorities, projects and services
- set appropriate fees and charges
- monitor council's progress
- report back to the community on success in achieving goals
- be assured that statutory and other planning, consulting and reporting requirements are being met.

The aim of the framework is to improve the sustainability of local government and the communities they serve. It also supports councils, like Wingecarribee Shire, to deliver best value services that are in line with community needs and expectations.

The following is an extract from the NSW Office of Local Government Integrated Planning and Reporting Handbook, 2021 edition.

*"The Framework is a legislative requirement which forms part of the Local Government Act 1993. In 2016, the Local Government Act 1993 (the Act) was amended with a new set of operating principles to address the way local government leads, plans for, and makes decisions about services and resources. They...*



### Assist council staff to:

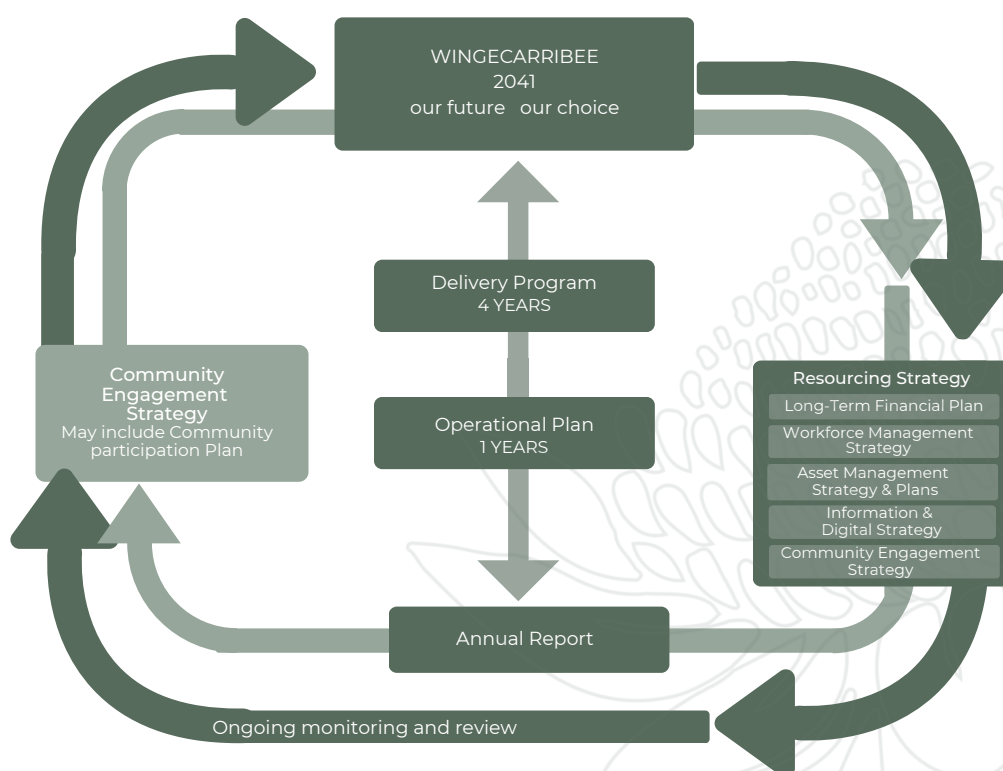
- understand community priorities and needs
- work with elected representatives on shared goals and priorities
- identify supporting plans and strategies
- undertake resource planning and meet legislative requirements
- identify achievement, projects and programs for each 4-year term
- develop reporting regimes, including how risk will be effectively managed
- understand the role employees play in delivering community priorities
- understand how they will be accountable through reporting and performance management.

## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023



The IP&R legislation was amended again in 2021 with changes introduced to clarify roles and responsibilities, improve governance, remove some reporting requirements and streamline others, and link all council plans to the Framework.

Central to the Integrated Planning and Reporting framework is the Community Strategic Plan which reflects the community's aspirations for the future.





## Strategic networks and government agencies

The following are key networks and government groups contributing to the Community Strategic Plan. They work closely with the local community and Council.

- 1.Arts, Southern Tablelands Arts
- 2.Bushfire Recovery
- 3.Canberra Region Joint Organisation (CRJO)
- 4.Department of Communities and Justice South West Sydney
- 5.Department of Planning, Industry and Environment South East & Tablelands Regional Plan
- 6.Employment, Local Jobs Program Illawarra and South Coast
- 7.Health (NSW), South West Sydney Local Health District
- 8.Health (Federal) South West Sydney Primary Health Networks
- 9.Office of Local Government
- 10.Police, Hume District
- 11.Regional Development Australia Southern Inland
- 12.Regional Illegal Dumping
- 13.Skills and Training, Training Service NSW – Smart and Skilled
- 14.Service NSW Council Relationship Management and Business Concierge
- 15.Sydney Peri Urban Network
- 16.Sports, Illawarra Academy of Sport
- 17.Tourism, Destination Sydney Surrounds South
- 18.Waste Contract (Wingecarribee, Campbelltown, Camden, Liverpool and Wollondilly)



[wsc.nsw.gov.au](http://wsc.nsw.gov.au)

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## **9.2 Community Engagement Strategy - Post Exhibition Report**

**Report Author:** Acting Community Engagement Coordinator

**Authoriser:** Director Corporate Strategy and Resourcing

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### **PURPOSE**

This report provides the outcomes from the public exhibition of the Community Engagement Strategy, including community participation plan requirements and draft Community Engagement Policy and seeks adoption of the updated documents.

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### **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION**

#### **THAT:**

- 1. Council adopt the Community Engagement Strategy included in Attachment 2 to this report.**
- 2. Council adopt the Community Engagement Policy included in Attachment 3 to this report.**

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### **REPORT**

#### **BACKGROUND**

All councils in NSW are required to develop a Community Engagement Strategy. This requirement acknowledges that community engagement is at the heart of local government and that meaningful engagement helps communities to be active participants in shaping the future of the community.

At Council's meeting held on 21 September 2022, Council endorsed a phased approach to the review of the Community Engagement Strategy and Community Strategic Plan.

As required in Phase 1, Council's Community Engagement Strategy has been reviewed and a draft refreshed Community Engagement Strategy had been prepared. The draft Strategy had been developed while considering the following:

- Assessment of the existing documents against legislative requirements
- A desk top review of best practice
- Consultation with external stakeholders via a series of focus groups and surveys
- Consulting with internal stakeholders via meetings and a strategic workshop

The process also built on research undertaken over the past 18 months, with particular attention given to the findings of the 'Corporate Relations Service Review – Final Report 2021', by KPMG and the 'Community Research Report 2021', by Micromex Research.

At Council's meeting held on 14 December 2022, Council endorsed the public exhibition of the draft Community Strategy and draft Community Engagement Policy for public exhibition for 42 days from 16 December 2022 to 27 January 2023.

#### **REPORT**

This report details the submissions and comments received during the recent public exhibition of Council's draft Community Strategy and draft Community Engagement Policy.



## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023

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Responses to the issues raised have been reported and where required some changes are recommended for the Strategy or internal procedures.

Adoption of the updated Strategy and Policy is recommended.

### Exhibition Details

The draft Community Engagement Strategy and Policy were placed on public exhibition for a total of 66 days between 16 December 2022 and 19 February 2023. The public exhibition period was initially scheduled to close on 27 January 2023, however, it was extended to close on 19 February 2023 to encourage additional submissions.

The draft strategy and policy, associated information and an online submission form was hosted at [www.yoursaywingecarribee.com.au/community-engagement-strategy-2](http://www.yoursaywingecarribee.com.au/community-engagement-strategy-2). Printed copies were also available for viewing at libraries and the Civic Centre.

A total of 265 individuals visited the online consultation hub. 148 downloads of documents were also recorded.

### SUBMISSION SUMMARY

#### Community Engagement Strategy

A total of eleven (11) submissions were received during the public exhibition of the draft Community Engagement Strategy.

A summary of topics covered in submissions is provided in **Table 1** alongside notes identifying any changes recommended for the Strategy or supporting procedures.

**Table 1**

Submission Themes	Action	Response and Recommendations
The need to ensure the newly elected Councillors value the community's feedback and feedback from the community will be considered in the final decisions made. Councillors are responsible as they are elected representatives.	Revised	Additional information added to 'Challenges and Opportunities' under the heading Our New Council.
'Traditional Owners' need to be identified as stakeholders alongside residents, property owners, businesses, visitors, workers and students.	Revised	'Traditional Owners' have been included in the final document.
Community 'partnership' arrangements between Council and community groups should be referenced in the new Community Engagement Strategy and Policy	Revised	A new item under Objective 3 – Strengthen Council's relationship with the community: Developing partnerships with the community to inform the design and delivery of projects, programs and services.
Lacking acknowledgement of the distrust of the integrity of government	Revised	Council has acknowledged the need to rebuild trust in both the Administrator and General Managers' Introduction.

		Additional information included in 'Challenges and Opportunities' under the heading Our New Council.
How does Council engage with the older population?	Noted	Our ageing population has been included in the Challenges and Opportunities section, "It is important to acknowledge the depth of experience that older generations bring to conversations about the Shire. Council will therefore continue work with the community to tap into this knowledge. A key action of this Strategy is to better understand the needs of older participants and design community engagement activities that remove barriers such as accessibility, transport, and cost. We will also work to support people in the use of technology and provide regular opportunities for face-to-face engagement.
The importance of training Council Staff in Community Engagement.	Noted	Council is currently organising Community Engagement Training for staff who are expected to undertake community engagement as a part of their role.
Roles and responsibilities of Councillors and Council staff should also comply with their respective codes of conduct in all community engagement activities.	Revised	Roles and Responsibilities now includes: 'Staff, and Councillors must always act in a professional, unbiased and responsible manner that reflects the Code of Conduct.
The importance to identify those most impacted by a decision and the selection of the most appropriate channels to reach them.	Revised	Who we engage with now includes: 'Our aim is to, in the first instance, ensure we are engaging with those people most impacted by a decision'.
There is a need to clarify "Levels of Service"	Revised	<p>Levels of Service now reads as 'One of the most important conversations the Council will have with its community is on levels of service. The term applies to both customer levels of service, for example the quality, timeliness or capacity of a service as well as technical levels of service for assets such as roads and buildings.</p> <p>We acknowledge that we cannot deliver everything all at once, and this is why careful prioritisation needs to occur. Sometimes, an increase to one service, will see a decrease to another.</p>



		The Council will consult with the community on customer levels of service as part of its service review process."
Concerns Council's Projects Map is not kept up to date	Updated Procedures	A new role has been introduced to Council, Customer Experience Officer – Digital Spaces, prioritising updating Wingecarribee Shire Council's website including the project map.

A complete list of submissions is available in **Attachment 1**. The updated Strategy is included in **Attachment 2** to this report.

### **Community Engagement Policy**

A total of three (3) submissions were received during the public exhibition of the draft Community Engagement Policy.

A summary of topics covered in submissions is provided in **Table 2** alongside notes identifying any changes recommended for the Strategy or supporting procedures.

**Table 2**

<b>Submission Themes</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Response and Recommendations</b>
The definition of 'Stakeholder' should include 'Traditional Owners'	Revised	'Traditional Owners' have been included in the definition of Stakeholders'.
Final decisions of rezoning should be made only by the Independent Planning Panel Committee.	Noted	All decisions on Planning Proposals (rezonings) are made by Council in accordance with the requirements of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. As Council has a Local Planning Panel in place, all Planning Proposals are referred to the Panel for advice prior to being considered by Council.
The draft policy should have been placed on exhibition once the strategy had been finalised.	Noted	The policy and strategy were reviewed and placed on public exhibition at the same time to ensure clear alignment between the documents and that is alignment was clear to community members.

A complete list of submissions is available in **Attachment 3**. The updated Strategy is included in **Attachment 4** to this report.

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## **COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION**

### **Community Engagement**

A project page established on Council's Your Say Wingecarribee website (yoursaywingecarribee.com.au)

Residents had the opportunity to complete an online form on the Your Say Wingecarribee project page, they could also make a submission by way of email or letter.

Public notice of the exhibition period was provided via the following means:

- Notification to all registered members of Your Say Wingecarribee, approximately 4,500 recipients
- Notification to community contacts including village associations and chambers
- Weekly Community Update published on Council's website
- eNewsletter distributed to over 2,500 registered subscribers
- Social media posts
- Media release

Focus group and survey respondents were advised in writing of the public exhibition.

### **Internal Communication and Consultation**

All staff were notified of the public exhibition

### **External Communication and Consultation**

As outlined in Community Engagement section above.

### **Governance**

Section 402A of the Local Government Act 1993, which relates to the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework, requires NSW councils to have a Community Engagement Strategy based on social justice principles.

In addition, Division 2.6 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 requires Council to have a Community Participation Plan. The plan applies to all aspects of a council's land-use planning and sets out how and when Council will engage with the community on planning and development issues. It also includes minimum exhibition requirements.

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## **SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT**

### **Environment**

There are no environmental issues in relation to this report.

### **Social**

There are no social issues in relation to this report.

### **Broader Economic Implications**

There are no broader economic implications in relation to this report.

### **Culture**

There are no cultural issues in relation to this report.

### **Governance**

Section 402A of the *Local Government Act 1993*, which relates to the Integrated

Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework, requires NSW councils to have a Community Engagement Strategy based on social justice principles.

In addition, Division 2.6 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* requires Council to have a Community Participation Plan. The plan applies to all aspects of a council's land-use planning and sets out how and when Council will engage with the community on planning and development issues. It also includes minimum exhibition requirements.

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#### **COUNCIL BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

There are no budget implications as a result of this report.

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#### **RELATED COUNCIL POLICY**

Communications Policy.

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#### **CONCLUSION**

This report and its attachment seek to ensure that Council's Community Engagement Strategy incorporating a Community Participation Plan and Community Engagement Policy is updated to meet statutory requirements and allow for effective, proactive and consistent implementation.

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#### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Submissions for Community Engagement Strategy [9.2.1 - 16 pages]
2. Community Engagement Strategy for Adoption [9.2.2 - 31 pages]
3. Submissions for Community Engagement Policy [9.2.3 - 2 pages]
4. Community Engagement Policy For Adoption [9.2.4 - 7 pages]

## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023

### PUBLIC EXHIBITION SUBMISSIONS – Draft Community Engagement Strategy

Submissions Author	Submission	Council Response
A Olsen	<p>Council's Community Engagement Strategy is an excellent document containing a first-class plan for consultation with the Wingecarribee community. It is important that the document includes statements such as 'We value the community's feedback' and 'Feedback from the community will be considered in the final decision made by Council'. This approach is totally different from the approach of the previous administration. As I wrote in October 2021 in my submission to the Wingecarribee Shire Public Inquiry: Wingecarribee Shire Council convened a public meeting in Bowral in September 2017 to consult the community on Station Street. The meeting made it clear to the community that the purpose of public consultation was to tell the community, over and over again, that Station Street was going to happen whatever the community thought and said. Of course, that Council, and that project, both ended in their separate debacles. Into the future, what will be important will be the acceptance of this Community Engagement Strategy by the incoming Councillors in September 2024. A Community Engagement Strategy that is not embraced by Councillors will be pointless and empty. These newly elected Councillors, inevitably nearly all rookies, will need a red book provided by senior staff to advise them on the culture, behaviour and approaches they will need to adopt in their new roles. That red book, as well as containing this Community Engagement Strategy, would provide strong advice to the incoming Councillors that The elected Councillors on Wingecarribee Shire Council value the community's feedback and Feedback from the community will be considered in the final decisions made by Wingecarribee Shire Council.</p>	<p>Additional information added to 'Challenges and Opportunities' under the heading Our New Council: The Wingecarribee Shire Council was dismissed in 2022 following a public inquiry. Since that time the organisation has been rebuilding and refocusing on the community. The review of this strategy has been an important step forward in that process, allowing us to learn from the past and adopt a fresh and well-considered approach to how we keep the community involved and informed. It has been designed with input from the community and aims to assist the incoming Council as it continues on a journey to rebuild the community's faith in local government. The new Council will consider the Strategy's effectiveness following the local government elections in 2024.</p>
C Hawkins	<p>Thank you for this document. It is comprehensive and more focussed on and responsive to community needs than any previous efforts, although I am unaware of any previous efforts.</p>	Noted

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

Submissions Author	Submission	Council Response
	I can see that council is trying to communicate with the community, not an easy thing to do, but thank you. We look forward to improved and upgraded facilities that maintain the environment of the region and its towns. The great pity is some of the previous decisions, particularly development decisions which are severely impacting the amenity and environment of Bowral especially.	
J Bour	An impressive document. I have one concern that flows through the strategy. We have no elected council members at present. The document easily flows over the time we go back to that. It reflects that council staff do lots of good things including communicating with people who live in the Shire and to report that back objectively to the councillors. My view of a democracy is that elected councillors reflect back to the council staff as to what their constituencies views and ideas are. Council staff and organisation than work with that. We live currently in another sphere for good reasons but too long. The public service do a fantastic job but they have to account to the elected council members. This important democratic principle is not emphasised enough in this document and proposal. Please note this is not a criticism but a serious attempt to ensure that ultimately councillors are responsible as they are the elected representatives. It has been our biggest issue and should have more focus in the strategy. Thank you J Bour	Additional information added to 'Challenges and Opportunities' under the heading Our New Council:  The Wingecarribee Shire Council was dismissed in 2022 following a public inquiry. Since that time the organisation has been rebuilding and refocusing on the community. The review of this strategy has been an important step forward in that process, allowing us to learn from the past and adopt a fresh and well-considered approach to how we keep the community involved and informed. It has been designed with input from the community and aims to assist the incoming Council as it continues on a journey to rebuild the community's faith in local government. The new Council will consider the Strategy's effectiveness following the local government elections in 2024.
L Breen	Firstly, I do not find a section on how people make contact with Council. Recently I attempted to make a complaint and request for maintenance for a local reserve which, although an important connection to town, has become so overgrown the pathway is lost and even the steps down to the road can hardly be found. Council has a place on its Web pages	A section on 'Getting Involved' has been included in the final document.

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

Submissions Author	Submission	Council Response
	<p>which is supposed to facilitate communication this does not seem to lead to a real contact. So the first need is to make sure that Council's contact points actually work and automatically respond with information assuring the person who has made contact that they have been heard.</p> <p>Secondly, I disapprove of telephone surveys of 400 people as described in one part. As well as being a small number, the use of telephone (landlines?) Is almost certain to provide a biased response.</p> <p>Thirdly, in regard to "neighbour notifications" please find a way to engage tenants as well as owners. I have been here since 1994, an Argyle Housing tenant, and it can be difficult to know what is happening in one's own street. Argyle itself does not seem to pay any attention to changes such as land sales and parkland becoming private buildings but it affects the people who live nearby.</p> <p>4. The Council needs to employ enough staff to manage community engagement. Such staff need to be able to find answers or direct questions to appropriate departments. Perhaps each department should have its own dedicated community engagement person who can also consult across departments. It is not the resident's job to know who they should be contacting and being put from one staff person to another feels like the run around and makes people upset even when they get their answers eventually.</p>	<p>Landlines and mobiles are contacted as a part of Council's Community Satisfaction Survey. random telephone statistically significant survey over 400 residents, this provides a maximum sampling error of plus or minus 4.9% at 95% confidence. This means that if the survey was replicated 19 times out of 20 we would expect to see the same results, i.e. +/- 4.9%.</p> <p>Councils DA neighbour notification includes both owners and occupiers as standard practice. However, to ensure occupiers receive notification, they should contact their realtor.</p> <p>Noted</p>

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

Submissions Author	Submission	Council Response
	<p>5. The Council's map supposedly showing where work is being done is not always correct. Work has been going on at the top of Anembo St Reserve for more than a year without an entry on the map.</p> <p>6. I am glad you plan to get rid of the Log-in for Your Say. It is just an irritation. I am somewhat amused that it is on this response page</p>	<p>A new role has been introduced to Council, Customer Experience Officer – Digital Spaces, prioritising updating Wingecarribee Shire Council's website including the project map.</p> <p>As this was a submission, log in details were required.</p>
R Russell	In the stakeholder analysis on page 9, the first column titled 'Community' include 'Traditional Owners' as a distinct category alongside residents, property owners, businesses, visitors, workers and students. It would be appropriate that Traditional Owners were acknowledged by being listed first above the other categories, to acknowledge their place and custodianship of this Country for millennia. Respectfully, Rachel Russell Co-chair Woonjeegaribay Conciliation Group	'Traditional Owners' have been included in the final document.
R Krohn	In the stakeholder analysis on page 9, the first column titled 'Community' include 'Traditional Owners' as a distinct category alongside residents, property owners, businesses, visitors, workers and students. It would be appropriate that Traditional Owners were acknowledged by being listed first above the other categories, to acknowledge their place and custodianship of this Country for millennia. Submission for updating the Policy document In part 5., on pages 5-6 of 7 of the document titled 'Definitions': 'Stakeholder', include 'Traditional Owners'.	'Traditional Owners' have been included in the final document.
V Gerada – Moss Vale Tennis Club Inc.	I feel that the Strategy and Policy are too confined to decision making. Was that the intention? If not, community engagement on the day to day operational level has been missed. An example to illustrate my concern, is the Moss Vale tennis facility which is administered, maintained and improved by the Moss Vale Tennis Club's volunteers. The facility is available to both club members and the local community/visitors alike through a secure	A new item under Objective 3 – Strengthen Council's relationship with the community, Developing partnerships with the community to inform the design and delivery of projects, programs and services.



**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

Submissions Author	Submission	Council Response
	<p>booking system installed and managed by the club. The value of the facility as a community service and Council asset has continued to increase, particularly during the last 20 years, with little reliance on Council assistance or funding. Major projects undertaken by the Club include, the introduction of court lighting for all five courts, the complete replacement of the previous asphalt surface, an extension to the clubhouse. The latest approved project, the introduction of multi-purpose courts, is scheduled to start in March. Needless to say, the 'engagement' between club community volunteers and Council has been continuous and key to the success of this arrangement. I feel that such community 'partnership' arrangements between Council and community groups should be at least referenced / encouraged in the new Community Engagement Strategy and Policy.</p>	
M Breen	<p>Introduction.</p> <p>Obviously there is a lot of work done to develop this Community Engagement Strategy (CES).</p> <p>Obviously too, Council staff are serious in seeking feedback and comment on the CES.</p> <p>Obviously too superficial comment is not likely to improve community participation as outlined in the December 14th Agenda of the Ordinary meeting of Council.</p> <p>However when I discuss with people in my community that I am examining these documents their universal response is, 'Why bother we have gone to meetings, contributed, responded to requests for input never to any avail.'</p> <p>So with a strong desire to improve relations between Council, residents and ratepayers I offer my feedback following a considerable amount of time studying the documents posted for comment and allied areas.</p> <p>I offer the following without fear or favour based on professional study of the subject matter now known as Deliberative Democracy and my experience working with</p>	<p>Additional information added to 'Challenges and Opportunities' under the heading Our New Council: The Wingecarribee Shire Council was dismissed in 2022 following a public inquiry. Since that time the organisation has been rebuilding and refocusing on the community. The review of this strategy has been an important step forward in that process, allowing us to learn from the past and adopt a fresh and well-considered approach to how we keep the community involved and informed. It has been designed with input from the community and aims to assist the incoming Council as it continues on a journey to rebuild the community's faith in local government.</p>

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

Submissions Author	Submission	Council Response
	<p>Australian and international researchers and practitioners.</p> <p><i>Outline.</i></p> <p>First I focus on the written words. Secondly I offer a critique of 'World Cafe' used by council as a consultative technique. Thirdly I document my experience in response to the request for comment during the exhibition period.</p> <p>Appendix A Review of Strategic plan review. Appendix B. Wingecarribee and the elderly.</p> <p><b>First.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is little description of the current distrust of the integrity of government of all forms. That fact is patent in Wingecarribee with the removal of councillors and the appointment of an administrator. It is also described above where many residents and ratepayers feel duded by 'public relations' approaches to consultation and deficient consultation processes. It is not clear if Council seriously acknowledges this basic situation nor how to remedy the current starting perceptions.</li> <li>• New Democracy Australia describes these matters and offers alternatives. <a href="http://www://newdemocracy.com.au">www://newdemocracy.com.au</a></li> <li>• Trust has been eroded over the years by a Council who asks 'Have Your Say' or conducts a review of say the Strategic Plan and it is as if all the responses fall into a black hole.</li> <li>• There is not documented transparency as to how responses or work in groups are graded, used to inform decisions or even acknowledged. This is despite the work done constructively and deliberating about responses. There is no track of what happens to contributions during my regularly attending to written and group consultations since 2015. Appendix A.</li> <li>• The documents on exhibition seem constructed in a Wingecarribee bubble apart from the acknowledgment of 'The Association for Public Participation' (A dubious reliable group of self promoters without credentials, from my reading) nor</li> </ul>	<p>The new Council will consider the Strategy's effectiveness following the local government elections in 2024.</p> <p>You will find our ageing population has been included in the Challenges and Opportunities . "It is important to acknowledge the depth of experience that older generations bring to conversations about the Shire. Council will therefore continue to work with the community to tap into this knowledge. A key action of this Strategy is to better understand the needs of older participants and design community engagement activities that remove barriers such as accessibility, transport, and cost. We will also work to support people in the use of technology and provide regular opportunities for face-to-face engagement."</p> <p>Critique of World Café noted.</p> <p>Appendix A : review of Strategic Plan Review noted and taken on board for future workshops.</p> <p>Appendix B : This document was handed to the facilitator at a Community Strategic Plan workshop and has helped inform Objective number 2 in the Strategy 'Reduce barriers to community participation'.</p>

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

Submissions Author	Submission	Council Response
	<p>do documents from other councils automatically suggest a standard of excellence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Without disrespecting the good will of those who developed the document it looks amateurish.</li> <li>• Viv May is quoted ‘...transparency and providing authentic and timely opportunities..’ But what will this mean in practice?</li> <li>• Page 16.9 Talks of the information needed to make decisions. Excellent practice. Committees and reference groups need more information than I have ever seen in Wingecarribee consultations.</li> <li>• The CEO is quoted on the need to consistently evaluate. Self evaluation is precarious at best. Who will be evaluated by what criteria; internally or more reliably externally.</li> <li>• Many matters managed in consultation have nothing to do with Council. They are disputes between neighbours. People appeal to Council for assistance to mediate or deliberate. How does Council offer assistance to resolve neighbourly matters? E.G. Leylandii hedges.</li> <li>• How does the Council engage the rich resources of older or retirees to inform decision making?</li> <li>• Page 16 &amp; 14 Talk of using support from new technology and methods. Fine words but these methods cannot; the elderly, those without computers, etc. See Attachment B.</li> <li>• The documents imply that the Council gives information and that this is consultation. The implication is that given information residents and ratepayers will be reassured about the reported work of Council. This public relations ethos has dogged the Council as long as I have lived here. Information is not consultation. And public relations is a wrapping exercise often to disguise or hide information. Distrusted by critical readers.</li> <li>• Secondly best practice entails ‘getting the whole system in the room’ working</li> </ul>	

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

Submissions Author	Submission	Council Response
	<p>collaboratively using structured scaffolding to achieve results owned by all concerned.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Page 17 Negotiables and non negotiables need to be clearly announced.</li> <li>• Page 17 'A toolkit for staff'. What is in the kit? ( A first Aid Kit even requires training) If staff are not trained they should not be using a kit. If they are trained they will design processes tailored to each exercise.</li> <li>• <i>'Plans for significant community engagement are usually authorised by management then endorsed by Councillors as part of their ordinary Meetings of Council. Council reports required to outline planned consultations as well or subsequent results'</i> With what expertise and on what criteria?</li> <li>• Pages 16 &amp; 17 No mention of research or training.</li> <li>• <i>In Robertson case study</i> what does 'cloud activity' mean? I was there and do not know what it is.</li> </ul> <p>Overall the documents may tick the job boxes for 'A Draft Plan'.</p> <p>The impression I get is that the appointment standards of qualifications and experience for this area require less evidence of qualification and tickets for the job than heavy equipment operators for the Council.</p>	
J Hill	<p>Hi there, I'm looking at a small NSW grant to support the local community on improving the area for a healthy and native experience to enhance the lives of the locals in Burrawang. Improved walkways to Burrawang Park. Upgrading the existing kids playground opposite the historic Burrawang general store. Increasing a better wellbeing for the locals by enhancing their experience in the local area by adding some better seating for coffee catch ups or a garden zen experience in the council locate areas. Further more a safe and happy community requires the local council support and NSW govt to achieve some improved local tourists hotspots. Many thanks and I'm also happy to speak further in person. Much</p>	<p>Council's Grants Officer has been in touch with Mr Hill and will be working together moving forward.</p>

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

Submissions Author	Submission	Council Response
	appreciated for your time in reading this email submission	
S Jones	<p>I commend Council for the revised draft Community Engagement Strategy and hope that it will when approved ensure that Council staff 'listen and learn from our community' (Page 3). I am concerned however that the Recommendations/Report - Community Engagement Strategy are not fully reflected in the draft Strategy. The findings and recommendations are valuable and I would like to see these incorporated especially into staff training to ensure consistency in dealing with the community (via varied channels) across Council. Further Comments regarding the draft: Page 7: Roles and responsibilities of Councillors and Council staff should also comply with their respective codes of conduct in all community engagement activities Page 9: Council should aim 'in the first instance' ensure 'we are engaging with those people most impacted by a decision' and the selection of the most appropriate channels to reach them. Page 11: What is Council's 'holistic' approach to support older people to participate in Council conversations? How will Council work with young people? Page 14: 'Engaging with the community on affordable and acceptable levels of service' - does this mean Council provided services? Does this mean that Council needs to discuss what services Council provides? Or what residents can expect from Council? Page 15: Council should communicate to the community that there are instances where there is limited community involvement due to eg State Government legislative requirements. Page 17: the concept of providing staff with a community engagement toolkit is worthwhile however training for all staff is required, especially for those staff employed under the former Council executive. The 'old culture' may still linger. Page 18; How Council engages with the community not only involves the determination of appropriate methodology and timing but also the integrity of the process. Council appears to appreciate how badly the community was treated by some officers/councillors of the former Council and that a level of distrust still exists. Page 20:</p>	<p>Council is currently looking into Community Engagement Training for staff.</p> <p>Roles and Responsibilities now includes: "Staff, and Councillors, must always act in a professional, unbiased and responsible manner that reflects the Code of Conduct."</p> <p>Who we engage with now includes: "Our aim is to, in the first instance, ensure we are engaging with those people most impacted by a decision"</p> <p>Council's holistic approach to supporting older people in participating in Council's conversations will include, "A key action of this Strategy is to better understand the needs of older participants and design community engagement activities that remove barriers such as accessibility, transport, and cost. We will also work to support people in the use of technology and provide regular opportunities for face-to-face engagement."</p> <p>Levels of Service now reads as "One of the most important conversations the Council will have with its community is on levels of service. The term applies to both customer levels of service, for example the quality, timeliness or capacity of a service as well as technical levels of service for assets such as roads and buildings.</p>

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

Submissions Author	Submission	Council Response
	<p>The detail provided here is worthwhile however I have rarely received any feedback from submissions to Council or responses to items on public exhibition. How will Council ensure that the community receives feedback when it is participates in any type of community engagement activity? Page 21: To whom and how are staff to debrief? For the evaluation process the question ' how can we improve' also needs to be included. Page 28: If Council will regularly evaluate and report on the effectiveness of the Strategy - how will this be undertaken?</p>	<p>We acknowledge that we cannot deliver everything all at once, and this is why careful prioritisation needs to occur. Sometimes, an increase to one service, will see a decrease to another.</p> <p>The Council will consult with the community on customer levels of service as part of its service review process."</p> <p>Council is currently looking into Community Engagement Training for staff.</p> <p>Council has acknowledged the need to rebuild trust in both the Administrator and General Mangers' Introduction.</p>

**Attachments provided as a part of the submission made by  
Mr Breen**

**Appendix A.**

Strategic Planning Review Group Observations.

Strategic Planning offers many opportunities to get the work of council right by developing a blueprint for the future. It underlies everything else in the organization.

Local Government Departmental requirements are often considered just another box to tick. This approach misses the opportunities of serious planning and erodes trust.

During recent years the professional developments involved in strategic planning have been refined. There is a substantial body of knowledge and research in the area. However, there are also a fair amount of slick and superficial do it yourself methods on sale. They give the appearance of planning when in fact there is no serious substance. No wonder many people are so critical of strategic planning.

At the organizational level individuals are tempted or encouraged to take on the complex and sophisticated processes of such planning without the requisite training, experience or skills. Unfortunately Local Government in Australia has a poor record in acknowledging and managing professional standards in these matters. Strategic planning, especially involving community consultation or deliberative democracy effects lives of residents, ratepayers and council staff for years. Best practice planning is both an educative exercise and one which builds the community while building the plan.

Community Reference Panel.

February 27 to March 6th

I was selected on application to be part of the Community Reference Panel looking at the current Wingecarribee Strategic Plan.



The letter of invitation to attend the panel gave no clear statement of the task of the panel. This should be pivotal building block. There was no statement about the authority of the panel to have any effect on the strategic plan or its implementation. In the absence of authorisations participants were implicitly making an act of faith in the efficacy of the exercises and hoping for the best.

There was no reference to material sent to participants prior to the sessions. Some of the material, particularly the "Research and Community Engagement Report" as I read it, contained serious reliability issues and had reporting contradictions. e.g., sampling numbers as a percentage of residents, numbers of staff attending workshops, no mention of workplace morale in these workshops, imbalance in online and telephone numbers, no evidence of calls to mobiles .

It might have been well to ask some questions with this sent material and ask participants to bring their reflections to the workshops. e.g., "Reading the enclosed material what do you consider the major challenges facing the Shire for the foreseeable future?" or "What do you think will be the major blocks in implementing a strategic plan in this Shire?"

*Workshop One February 20<sup>th</sup>.*

A staff member told me that the processes being used were based on the "World Café" model. I followed up on the World Café site on line. From what I have seen of the process

I think it is a deficient process. There is no significant mention of internationally recognised and respected sources in the field of participative planning. The "research" mentioned is not peer reviewed and is mostly done by stakeholder advocates of the process. There is no citing of other literature in the field nor significant examples of the process being a success. There are though some mentions of its use in Australia. Even so the recommendations of the Education Department of NSW were not followed in this Council exercise.

On the opening evening I asked for a clear definition of *what we were there to do*; what was the task. I was no wiser after the response.

Early in this session the matter of 'governance' per se was raised as there is worldwide disenchantment with governing bodies and the local press often reports complaints of Council practices. I am still not sure if governance is material for the planning.

Though there was an "Ice Breaker" exercise during which there was insufficient time to hear from all people on our table. But I wonder what the

purpose of that kind of team building exercise was when the next exercises involved totally different people.

Times for most tasks were inadequate, unless it was just a matter of writing down ideas on pieces of paper. There was no process for discussing these, improving or deepening them or resolving conflicting issues arising.

What was most concerning was that there was no transparent process for arriving at what would be recorded. Was it to be the frequency of mentions of issues or the importance of the matter? The person keeping notes?

People moved from one interest group to another so there was no continuity with the deliberations of the previous group. I posted one comment on a post it sticker and found at the end of the day two post it stickers responding to but not dealing with the issue my comment. How was the dissenting comment documented?

This process of circulating groups of reviewers generated enormous numbers of comments and suggestions. Obviously not all were of equal value. But I still do not know how the value judgments and strategic matters were resolved and recorded. I am not suggesting the staff involved skewed the results. But with the best will in the world I wonder how they could have decided what to record.

Much of the best work of participative planning is the dialogue and discussion which refines and sifts ideas and teaches about restraints and opportunities. I heard little of this nor little encouragement to pause and reach a considered opinion.

*Workshop Two 27<sup>th</sup> February.*

This session was different because of the inclusion of more staff members "to be able to give information to assist".

Would that that had been the case. Some talked among themselves or told war stories about their experiences in shires north of here. Some took over the group. So that it became a question and answer session without any review. Some just formed sub groups.

If this was an opportunity to involve serious stakeholders why were councillors not invited? Involving authority figures in participative planning is an effective way of teaching about issues and gaining commitment to what is decided.

Neutrality is an essential in these kinds of exercises.

Staff are stakeholders, are powerful stakeholders. Their role in this kind of exercise ought be to draw out comments and reflections from participants. Their role should be that of listener and recorder, or perhaps 'naïve inquirer'.

Once again there were the problems of tribes of participants moving from one key area to the next, writing and posting comments but no building on what came before nor work to arrive at consensus.

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

One unresolved matter was the use of language. It was not clear if the reporting was to include what are now known as "Weasel Words", which are products of spin-doctors. A glaring example of this is calling residents and ratepayers "Customers". Customers can make choices as to where they purchase services. Residents in a local government area have no choice to buy services from another area. False language has contributed to the distrust of governance. I would have thought that plain language and good grammar were preferable.

It would be good if the progress of suggestions we wrote or asked to be recorded could be traced.

*Workshop Three March 6<sup>th</sup>.*

I cannot comment on this workshop. I decided on reflection not to attend. The other two evenings were so frustrating I felt I could not make a useful contribution.

Now Monday April 3<sup>rd</sup>, there is an invitation to look over the work done. I will attend. I offer these reflections and observations in writing and am more than happy to discuss them in the interests of better processes and outcomes for the Shire.

My reason for putting these observations in writing, and distributing them, is that despite raising concerns on a number of occasions over the years with Council planning staff I have never received a satisfactory response.

My observations are based on my having been engaged to facilitate over fifty strategic and corporate planning exercises in Australia and overseas for large, small and several local government authorities. I have done reviews of community consultation processes for two government departments in Western Australia. I received an award from the Planning Institute of Australia for excellence in participative community consultation.

Appendix B

## Wingecaribee and the elderly.

There are many difficulties for residents as they grow old. They are a special group within our community. Often they are isolated, neglected, feel they are invisible and struggle to manage some everyday tasks.  
A major set of problems for aged residents involve dealing with Wingecaribee Council.

What is needed.

There should be a designated officer to assist vulnerable and aged persons who either do not have a computer or are not computer literate.

Do council officers understand the stress of older and vulnerable people dealing with forms and transactions on line?

Often these people are paralysed or shamed with fear when Council threats or court documents arrive.

What is needed is a personal contact and help face to face. Phones are not satisfactory for deaf residents.

Bureaucratic regulations, demands and procedures often cause fear rather than cooperation or simple compliance.

Older people often need an advocate to explain their options and the ways the Council operates. These matters are familiar simple day to day matters for Council officers; to the elderly they are like a foreign language.

My wife and I have spent more than five hours with an eighty four year old neighbour trying to help her respond to a matter about the accuracy of her

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

water bill which has now become a court matter. This matter, properly handled should never have got to this point or caused such distress.

M Breen

Wingecarribee  
SHIRE COUNCIL

Community Engagement  
Strategy



*We're with you*





The Wingecarribee Shire acknowledges the Gundungurra and Tharawal people as the traditional custodians of this land we now call the Wingecarribee Shire. We pay our respect to Elders both past, present and emerging.







It is my pleasure to introduce our 2023 edition Community Engagement Strategy.

The Strategy is the culmination of several months' worth of listening to the community about how we communicate and engage with you.

It considers what successful community engagement looks like and what it takes to get there. Importantly it has meant reflecting, as an organisation, on past and current approaches to how we engage you in the decisions of Council.

We understand that we need to do better. We are working hard to resolve a legacy of low levels of community satisfaction with how the Council has engaged with you on the matters that impact you most. This Strategy is designed to help correct that legacy.

Personally, I have had the pleasure of meeting with hundreds of residents and learning from these conversations. In addition, the team has been busy engaging with you through focus groups and surveys to better understand where and how we need to improve community engagement.

Residents, workers and business owners have talked to me directly about the importance of transparency and providing authentic and timely opportunities to get involved in decision-making. This is why we are now taking a principles-based approach to how we engage with you; with a view to achieving more inclusive, accessible, representative and respectful engagement.

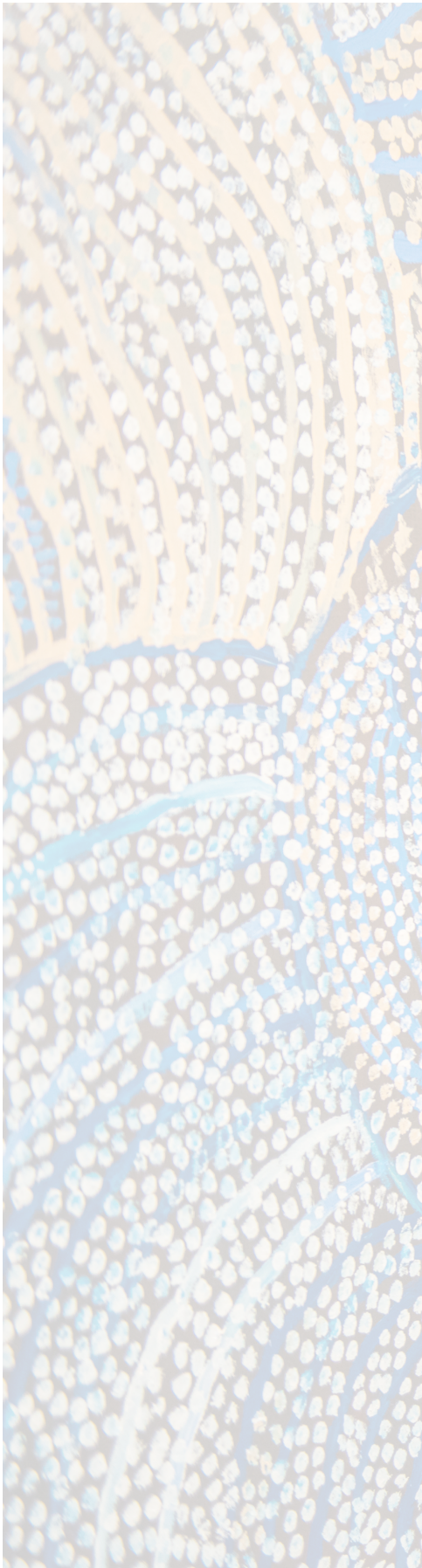
The Strategy provides us with a road map and high-level objectives that we will work towards between now and the next local government election in 2024. This approach will help to ensure that your incoming Council is well positioned to continue this ongoing and important conversation about how people across the Shire participate in the decisions that affect them.

I appreciate that real improvement can take time, but I remain optimistic that we can continue to rebuild the community's trust in our local democracy processes.

Through our Community Engagement Strategy, we aim to rebuild and develop strong, collaborative relationships across our community. We will do this through a more consistent, evaluated approach to how and when we engage.

Most of all, we will continue to listen to and learn from our community.

*Viv May PSM  
Administrator*



The community is at the heart of local government and what we do.

That is why I am particularly excited be overseeing the review of our Community Engagement Strategy at such a critical time in our history.

Our Community Engagement Strategy describes how we will inform, consult, involve, and collaborate with the community. Hearing from you helps inform the important strategies, plans, projects and services that we provide to the community.

That is why we need to get it right.

We are currently working to refocus, reinvigorate and rebuild the organisation and this Strategy is key to realising that goal.

Over the next 18 months, we will be working to progress our core objectives; one of which is to reduce barriers that might prevent people from getting involved in community engagement activities and having their voices heard.

This acknowledges that many of our residents are older and face challenges to fully participating in community life. We also want to engage with more young people by creating inclusive, welcoming and safe environments for them to share their thoughts.

We also need to restore transparency and openness between the Council and the community. That is why a focus of this Strategy is to ensure we are communicating with participants about when and how decisions have been made and how community input, along with other factors, was considered in the process.

We also need to consistently evaluate what we do. Your feedback on how we engage you will be key to our success as we build upon and learn from past experiences.

The Strategy aligns with our organisational road map and will be key in supporting us in becoming an exemplar in local government, applying learnings of the past to create a trusted, resilient, courageous and caring organisation that listens to the community it serves.

On behalf of the team at Wingecarribee I look forward to engaging with you on the issues you care about most and, working together, achieving a bright future for the Shire.

*Lisa Miscamble  
General Manager*





About the Community Engagement Strategy	1
What we mean by 'Community Engagement	1
How we developed the Strategy	2
Our roles and responsibilities.	3
Our commitment to the community	4
Who we engage with	5
Community snap shot	6
Challenges and opportunities.	7
Our Purpose	9
Our Principles.	9
Our Objectives	10
Our Approach	11
When we engage	11
How decisions are made	11
Levels of participation	12
How we engage	14
Snap shots of engagement	15
What happens to your feedback	16
Evaluating our approach	17
Community Participation Plan	18
Submission process.	19
Reporting outcomes.	19
TABLE 1 - Minimum exhibition timeframes.	20
TABLE 2 - Notification requirements.	21
Getting involved.	24
Acknowledgements.	25

## About the Community Engagement Strategy

This Community Engagement Strategy seeks to define how, when and who we engage, and sets the principles we aim to uphold.

In this context, the term 'community' refers to all our stakeholders. This includes those people who live, work, study or visit here. Importantly, it also includes other levels of government.

The Strategy reflects the vision of the Community Strategic Plan, Wingecarribee 2031.

It is strongly aligned with Council's Communication Strategy and is supported by a Policy, which outlines our commitment to achieving effective engagement, and a Community Engagement Toolkit designed to help staff plan, deliver and evaluate community engagement activities.

The Local Government Act 1993 requires all NSW councils to have a Community Engagement Strategy based on social justice principles.

Our Strategy also includes a Community Participation Plan. This Plan describes how and when the community will be engaged on planning and development matters and is required under Division 2.6 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.



## What we mean by 'Community Engagement'

Community engagement is a term that covers information sharing, consultation and active participation between government and communities.

It seeks to ensure people have an opportunity to participate in decisions that affect them. In a local government context community engagement can take many forms, ranging from receiving a letter about a neighbour's development application or responding to a "have your say" advertisement, to attending a facilitated workshop on a major project.

Community engagement helps Council:

- provide opportunities for the community to voice an opinion on proposals, plans, services and activities
- work more closely with the community to shape policy options and priorities

Community engagement does not necessarily mean achieving consensus. However, community input into Council's decision-making process provides the potential for a better, more informed decision for everyone. This results in:

- improving the relationship between the community and Council
- enhancing community ownership of decisions
- adding value to Council's decision-making processes by drawing on the skills and wisdom of people and groups in the community
- maximising the possible positive impacts of a Council decision and minimising the possible negative impacts

## How we developed the Strategy

The 2023 edition Community Engagement Strategy was informed by a series of community focus groups, a youth survey and the results of a broader Community Research Survey which attracted over 400 participants.

We asked a range of questions about community engagement including:

what is working well ?  
where can we improve ?  
what is the best way to communicate and engage with you ?

We learned that many people prefer a mix of communication and engagement methods and value opportunities to have their say. Taking conversations out to the Shire's villages and towns also proved popular, acknowledging that these distinct areas have different needs and priorities.

A core theme was the need to provide genuine opportunities for people to get involved in decision-making and to always provide feedback so that people are aware of the outcome and how their input was considered.





## Our roles and responsibilities

We all play a role in the delivery of the Strategy. Whilst the Strategy is focused on the Council's role, it is important to acknowledge that its overall success will be influenced by the participation of many stakeholders.

### Your Councillors

A Councillor's role in community engagement is to participate as an elected member, listen to the views of the community and consider those views when making decisions. They play an important role in reflecting the views of the community back to the staff ensuring that concerns and ideas are heard.

At the time of reviewing this Strategy, the Council was under Administration. In the absence of elected representatives, the role of the Administrator is to ensure the community's concerns and priorities continue to be considered as part of decision-making processes.

### Council staff

A Council staff member's role is to organise and facilitate the discussion, record, provide feedback, evaluate the engagement and consider the community's views when making informed recommendations to Council.

Staff are responsible for managing individual community engagement activities ensuring that they are in line with the Policy and Strategy. Importantly, they are also responsible for providing feedback to participants on the outcomes of an activity, how their input was considered in making the final decision.

Staff, and Councillors, must always act in a professional, unbiased and responsible manner that reflects the Code of Conduct.

### Community Engagement Coordinator

While community engagement is the responsibility of everyone, the Community Engagement Coordinator plays an important role in managing the implementation of this Strategy. The Coordinator provides advice and assistance to staff to support a more consistent and evaluated approach to delivering community engagement activities.

### Community

Our community includes a range of diverse stakeholders, including other levels of government and service providers. Members of the community are responsible for contributing to the decision-making processes available to them.

This involves making themselves aware of opportunities to engage, considering the information or options available, providing timely feedback, participating respectfully and considering the ideas of others.

### The role of local democracy

The Community Engagement Strategy supports local democracy, which is a system of government in NSW that involves democratically electing local governing bodies (the Council).

The community will elect community representatives (Councillors) to form its governing body, which in turn is responsible for developing and delivering policies, strategies, plans, and services.

The community participates in decision making through community engagement activities – or opportunities to have a say. These opportunities allow them to inform and shape Council decisions.

Under the Local Government Act, the elected Council is the final decision maker and is accountable to the community. This means ensuring that reasons for decisions are transparent and clear.

The community will elect its new Council in September 2024.

## Our commitment to the community

Wingecarribee Shire Council is committed to improving its approach to community engagement. We have listened to the community and developed a 'road map' which will guide our continuous improvement journey.

The road map includes significant community engagement milestones we aim to achieve between now and 2024.

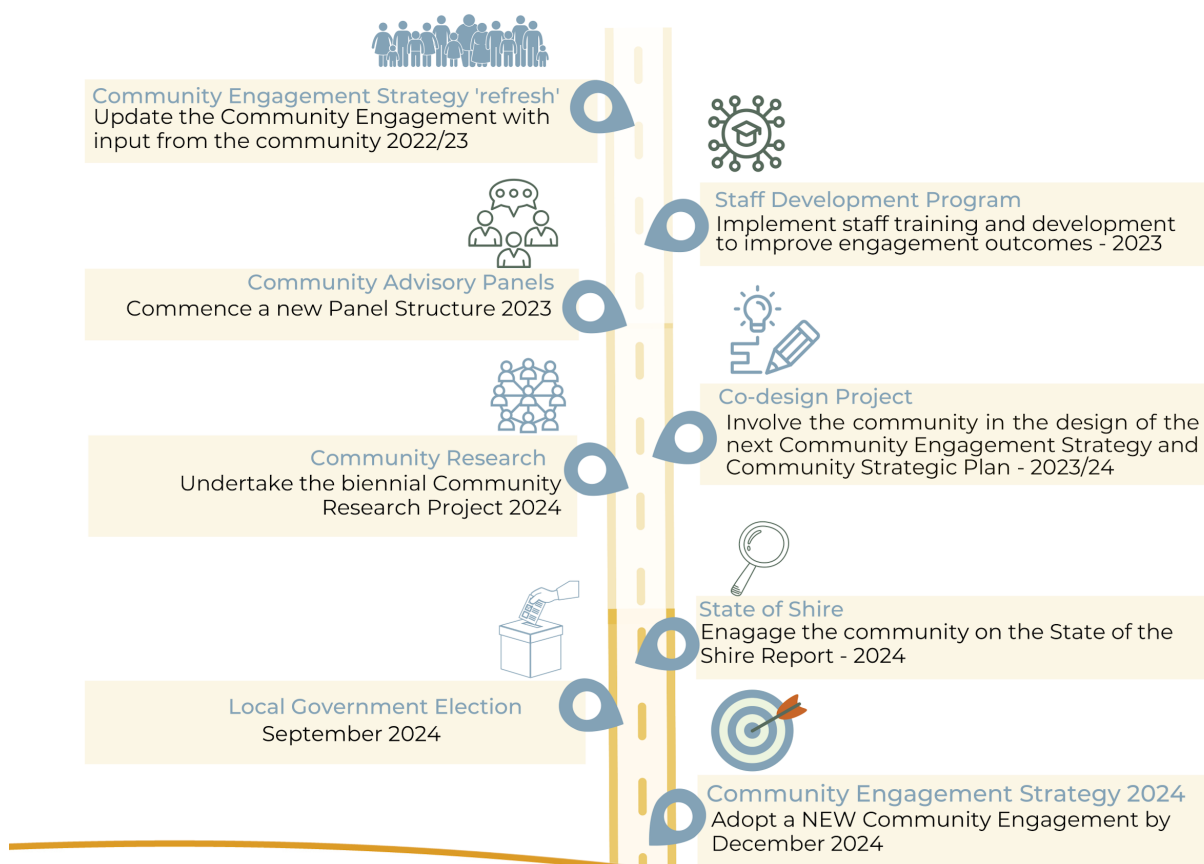
This work complements our annual program of community engagement activities designed to inform the development and delivery of projects, plans, services and other activities. The program is dynamic meaning that it changes depending on the timing and priority of decisions and projects.

Between now and the 2024 election we will continue to work hard to build our in-house capabilities, deliver genuine community engagement and actively involve our stakeholders in the decisions that affect them.

When undertaking community engagement, Council will make every effort to:

- attract and reach a cross section of the community by using a wide range of communication methods;
- invite specific community interest and user groups as identified in particular projects;
- accommodate participants' cultural, language and other specific needs;
- involve community groups and individuals who may otherwise be difficult to reach

## Community Engagement Strategy - Road Map to 2024





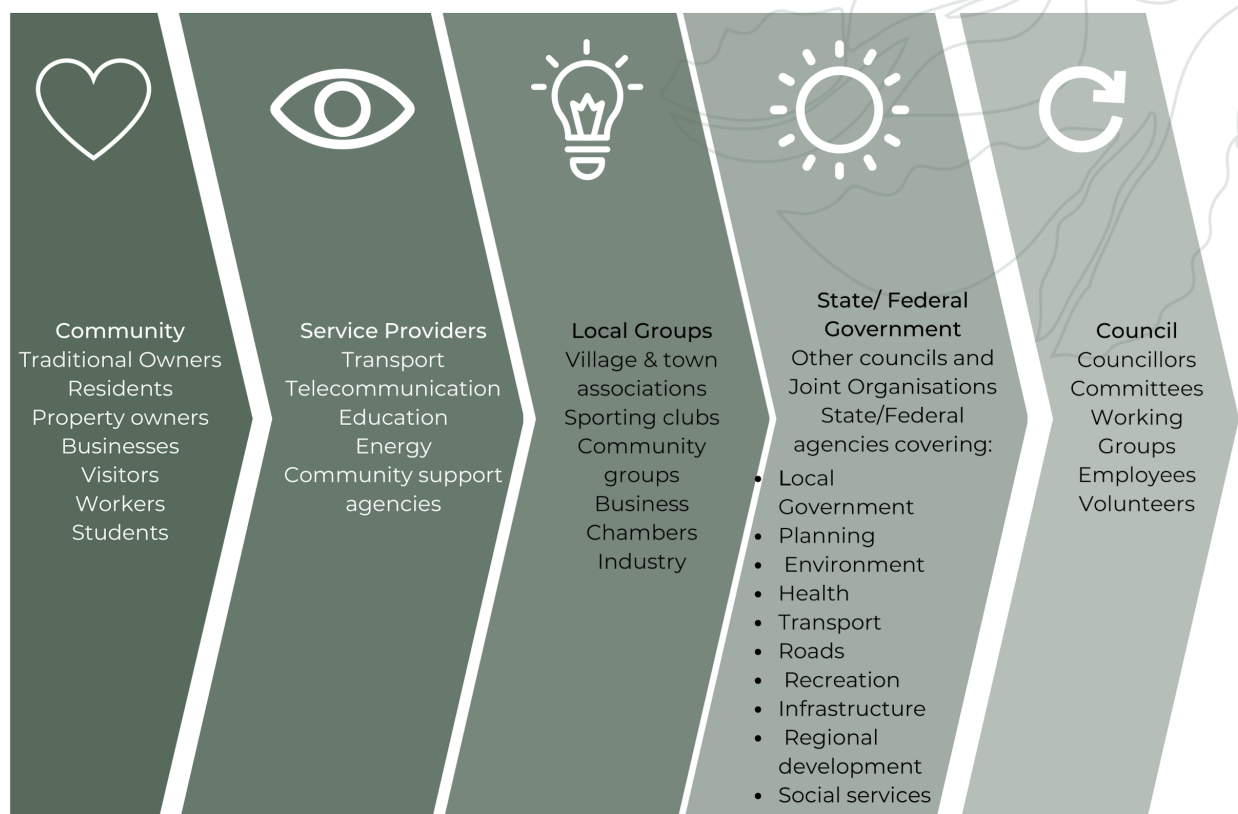
## Who we engage with

Our community is inclusive of many stakeholders. This means we need to understand and sometimes balance diverse interests, priorities and needs.

This can make community engagement challenging however it also provides us with great opportunities to hear from a diverse range of perspectives. Our aim is to, in the first instance, ensure we are engaging with those people most impacted by a decision.


Sometimes we define our communities as being communities 'of place' or communities 'of interest.' This refers to people having a particular area in common, such as a town or village. Others may share a concern about a particular issue or topic.

Our stakeholders are broadly described below



# Community Snap Shot

## POPULATION

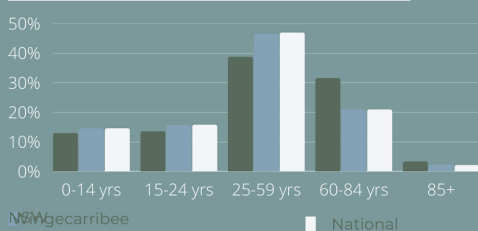
2021 Population = 52,456  1,000 residents



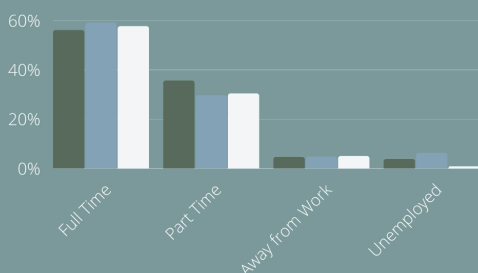
population increased by 4,825 people (10.1%) from 2016 to 2021. An average of 1.94% per year over the period.

Our projected population in 2041 is 65,275

## AGE STRUCTURE



## EMPLOYMENT



## HOUSING



90.7%

Shire's residents live in standalone dwellings



8%

high-density housing



23,618

total dwellings



26%

single person households



38.7%

two person household



26%

of us are couples with children



43%

Own our home



12.8%

of the population earned an income of \$2,000+ per week.



12.8%

of us have a long-term health condition



81%

Work and Live in the Shire



23%

participate in volunteering activities higher than NSW figure of 18.1 %



15%

of us are at school

\*Source: <https://forecast.id.com.au/wingecarribee> prepared by id (informed decisions), October 2021 and ABS Statistics

## Challenges and opportunities



### Our new Council.

The Wingecarribee Shire Council was dismissed in 2022 following a public inquiry. Since that time the organisation has been rebuilding and refocusing on the community. The review of this strategy has been an important step forward in that process, allowing us to learn from the past and adopt a fresh and well-considered approach to how we keep the community involved and informed. It has been designed with input from the community and aims to assist the incoming Council as it continues on a journey to rebuild the community's faith in local government.

The new Council will consider the Strategy's effectiveness following the local government elections in 2024.



### An ageing population

The Shire is home to many people over the age of 75. This segment of the population continues to grow.

It is important to acknowledge the depth of experience that older generations bring to conversations about the Shire. Council will therefore continue to work with the community to tap into this knowledge. An ageing population does however present some challenges. Many older residents, particularly frail aged people, experience barriers to participating in community life. This is why Council is taking a holistic approach to supporting older people to participate.

A key action of this Strategy is to better understand the needs of older participants and design community engagement activities that remove barriers such as accessibility, transport, and cost. We will also work to support people in the use of technology and provide regular opportunities for face-to-face engagement.



### Encouraging youth participation

Young people are the future of the Shire, and it is important that they have opportunities to shape that future. Young children, school aged children and young adults are typically difficult to engage and experience their own types of barriers.

To encourage higher levels of participation by younger people, the Council aims to work with young people to better understand how they wish to be engaged, and create welcoming, inclusive and safe environments for them to participate in.



### Communities of place

Our Shire consists of many distinct towns and villages, each with their own unique character and history.

Given the separate nature of these places, spread across many kilometres, it is sometimes difficult to reach everyone in a timely manner. It can also be difficult to reach consensus across these communities given diverse priorities and needs.

Council will continue to offer a mix of both place-based engagement events, which brings the conversation direct to the community, and online technologies to ensure we reach as many people as possible. Council has also introduced a Place Liaison Officer role that works across the Shire to support engagement at the local level.



## Engaging with other levels of government

It is important that the Council has ongoing and open communication with other levels of government. The Mayor and General Manager will often initiate and lead these discussions on behalf of the Council however ongoing dialogue, planning and consultation happens between individual agencies and staff on a regular basis.

A responsibility of both State and Federal Government is to proactively participate in consultation activities and work with the Council and the community to resolve issues.

## Levels of service

One of the most important conversations the Council will have with its community is on levels of service. The term applies to both customer levels of service, for example the quality, timeliness or capacity of a service as well as technical levels of service for assets such as roads and buildings.

We acknowledge that we cannot deliver everything all at once, and this is why careful prioritisation needs to occur. Sometimes, an increase to one service, will see a decrease to another.

The Council will consult with the community on customer levels of service as part of its service review process.



## Our Purpose

To achieve community engagement that actively and genuinely involves the community in the decisions that affect them.

Working with the community, we aim to achieve great outcomes for the Shire, now and into the future.

## Our Principles

The principles below guide and inform our approach to engaging with you.

We regularly evaluate our community engagement activities against these principles.

The principles were developed in discussion with members of the community along with Council staff. They support the social justice principles of access, equity, participation and rights. They also take into consideration the community participation principles in the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

1. **Genuine** – meaningful and authentic opportunities are provided for the community to be involved in decision making
2. **Open** – people are informed about the final decision and how their feedback was considered
3. **Inclusive** – everyone has an opportunity to have their say, and all people are welcome to participate
4. **Accessible** – barriers to participation are removed or reduced.
5. **Timely** – engagement occurs as early as possible, allowing sufficient time for people to contribute.
6. **Representative** – we seek opinions that are reflective of the broader community and those most impacted by a decision
7. **Clear** – information is easy to understand, and complex issues are well-explained
8. **Respectful** – all participants are treated with respect, regardless of their opinion, circumstances or role in the process.

## Our Objectives

Our objectives, or goals, are core to the achievement of this Strategy. They provide us with strategic direction.

Our staff consider these objectives when planning, delivering and evaluating community engagement. How well we achieve these objectives helps us to also evaluate our performance.

### Objective 1 - Ensure all sectors of the community have opportunities to have their say

We will do this by:

- Delivering a diverse program of community engagement activities
- Promoting community engagement activities through a variety of platforms and channels
- Investigating innovative approaches that will help us to reach more people
- Ensuring that the level of community engagement we undertake, and the methods we use, are appropriate to what we are trying to achieve

### Objective 2 – Reduce barriers to community participation

We will do this by:

- Tailoring activities to suit specific audiences and their unique needs
- Using easily accessible venues, online tools and resources
- Writing in plain English, avoiding the use of technical or confusing language
- Being aware and considerate of cultural sensitivities and needs
- Using a mix of face to face and online or digital methods
- Using artistic and creative techniques to help people share their ideas and stories

### Objective 3 – Strengthen Council's relationship with the community

We will do this by:

- Providing feedback to participants on the outcomes of decisions and what influenced the final decision
- Involving the community in the design and delivery of the Community Engagement Strategy
- Understanding diverse needs through improved stakeholder mapping and analysis
- Educating the community on the roles and responsibilities of the Council and other stakeholders
- Enabling people to monitor our progress by tracking key decisions on our website
- Developing partnerships with the community to inform the design and delivery of projects, programs and services.

### Objective 4 - Increase Council's understanding of the Shire's many communities and their unique needs and priorities

We will do this by:

- Including the outcomes of community engagement activities in Councillor and Committee briefing sessions and formal reports of Council
- Engaging the community on affordable and acceptable Council services, including levels of service, at least every four years as part of the review of the Community Strategic Plan
- Engaging the community on priority issues and overall satisfaction with Council performance via a biennial survey

### Objective 5 – Continuously improve the Council's approach to community engagement

We will do this by:

- Asking for feedback on community engagement activities
- Sharing the outcomes of community engagement more broadly to inform future activities
- Applying a consistent and coordinated approach to planning, delivering and evaluating community engagement
- Consulting with the community on appropriate channels and methods for communication and engagement
- Proactively investigating new technologies and methods to communicate and engage

## Our Approach

We develop engagement plans when delivering community engagement on major projects and decisions which may have a significant impact on stakeholders. Smaller projects of a lesser impact and fewer resources benefit from a similar but less formal approach.



## When we engage

Council often seeks public participation during the planning stages of projects or initiatives; when a change in service, activity or infrastructure is considered; or when more information and evidence is required.

In the engagement planning process, consideration is given to the complexity of the decision and the optimal time needed for people to respond. Whilst legislation sets out minimum requirements for some specific consultations, each engagement process is considered on its individual basis and merit.



## How decisions are made

The decision process can be complex. Feedback from the community will be considered in the final decision made by Council.

At times the community will have limited opportunity to have a say but when this happens, Council will clearly explain why.

Reasons that may limit the ability to inform a decision include safety, legislative requirements or other factors Council cannot influence. For example, sometimes Council will collect comments on behalf of the State Government. When this happens, we can only forward your comments on.

In other cases, Council is given a target – such as a housing development target over five years – which we cannot change. When this happens, we can only consider comments about how to meet the target, but not about whether the target itself is right. Sometimes the Council will advocate on an issue to effect change on behalf of the community.










## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023

### Levels of participation

Planning for public participation in decision-making is broadly guided by practices advocated by the NSW Government and International Association for Public Participation (IAP2). Council acknowledges that engagement may fall within five increasing levels of participation within the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum and different approaches are required for each.

Increasing levels of participation	Goal	Description	Example methods
<b>Inform</b> 	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives, opportunities and /or solutions	All levels of community engagement will involve this level.	Social media Website Adverts Flyers Letters Emails
<b>Consult</b> 	To obtain feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	This level is selected when Council asks and listens to the community about ideas to improve a particular proposal, understand what would happen if Council made a certain decision, or when a number of options are provided for community preferencing, e.g., providing feedback on a draft plan to upgrade a nearby park	Written submissions Online submissions Focus groups Surveys
<b>Involve</b> 	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	This level is selected when Council wants to include the community early in the planning process to ensure concerns and aspirations are both heard and understood, e.g., the community are engaged to help identify aspirations and solutions to create an Environmental Strategy. Initial input and local knowledge is used to inform the development of the Strategy, which is then presented for further feedback before being finalised.	Community advisory panels Working Groups
<b>Collaborate</b> 	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of preferred solutions.	This level is selected where issues and solutions are unclear and Council works with equal power and partnership to find solutions that lead to an agreed outcome, e.g., Council works closely with a demographically representative group of people to review the Community Strategic Plan.	Co-design committees Task force
<b>Empower</b> 	To place final decision making in the hands of the public	This level is selected when the community and stakeholders are provided with the skills, information, authority and resources in order to make the final decision. This level is rare given that the final decision usually sits with the elected representatives.	Highly participatory activities e.g. citizens' juries

## Design and delivery

Staff are provided with a Toolkit to assist them when planning and evaluating community engagement.

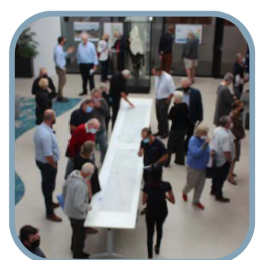
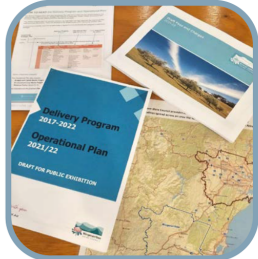
Project managers are responsible for following key steps in preparing Community Engagement Plans.

1. Define and scope the project – review Council resolution or Executive requirements. Confirm the purpose and objectives, consider the context, review risk, consider resource constraints and identify the negotiables and non-negotiables. Determine the levels of participation required at various stages of the project.
2. Identify key stakeholders – consider individuals and organisations who could be affected by a decision on the issue. Consider decision making processes, regulations and levels of authority. Gather contact details and prepare to record interactions. Identify any barriers that might impact certain stakeholders and work to reduce or remove these.
3. Plan consultation approach – offer a range of ways for stakeholders to learn about the topic and share their thoughts and ideas. Anticipate the details they will require to participate in an informed way. Tailor the approach and consider creative tools and interactive methodologies.
4. Seek approval of the plan - smaller scale engagement requires approval from, at a minimum, the responsible Director. These projects tend to be low impact and local to a small section of the community.
5. Implement the plan – conduct communication and engagement with stakeholders as described in the plan. Adhere to timeframes and budget. Develop relationships and record interactions or outcomes. Monitor process and adjust if required.
6. Consider response – collate, analyse and identify how engagement outcomes will be utilised in decision making.
7. Close the loop – provide feedback, articulate to participants how their input has been or will be utilised in decision making and what other information was used to determine the final outcome.
8. Review and report – evaluate success of the engagement plan. Consider reach, participation, design and delivery, and alignment with our engagement principles.

Plans for significant community engagement are usually authorised by management and then endorsed by Councillors as part of Ordinary Meetings of Council. Council reports are required to outline planned consultation as well as record subsequent results.

Significant, in this context, relates only to those projects that are considered high impact local or city-wide activities.





## How we engage

To ensure successful engagement, careful consideration is given to methods, tools and timing. How we engage will depend on the level of engagement we need to undertake.

Consideration is given to levels of community and stakeholder interest, political sensitivity, opportunities for partnerships, the level of social, economic and environmental impact, legislative requirements, accessibility, timeframes, resources and monetary constraints.

A range of tailored approaches are then considered.

Some of the options available include:

- Interviews and one-to-one meetings
- Surveys and polls - online, intercept and phone
- Storytelling and submissions
- Mapping and drawing
- Briefings and presentations
- Displays and information sessions
- Listening posts and drop-in events
- Focus groups, field trips and walking tours
- Brainstorming idea generation
- Moderated online forums
- Committees and working groups
- Workshops and forums
- Appreciative Inquiry
- Dotmocracy and World Cafe
- Community group meeting attendance
- Committees and working groups
- Online consultation hub [www.yoursaywingecarribee.com.au](http://www.yoursaywingecarribee.com.au)



## Snap shots of engagement



**Case Study 1**  
David Wood Playing Fields  
Playspace Upgrade



**Case study 2**  
Robertson Village Place  
Plan



**Case study 3**  
Community Research  
Project 2022

Why the  
engagement took  
place:

A draft concept design for a new and improved inclusive adventure playground was shared with the community to ensure the park meets the needs of residents and children.

To develop a community-led strategic plan for Robertson. The Robertson Village Place Plan is a holistic place-based plan to address the housing, economic, social and cultural needs of the Robertson community, both now and into the future.

Council sought to gain community insights on the challenges and opportunities facing the Shire over the next 10 years along with peoples' satisfaction with Council's performance.

Who was  
engaged:

Wingecarribee Shire residents with a focus on users of the playspace and people local to the project.

The Robertson Community

A representative sample of Wingecarribee Shire Residents.

How we engaged:

Via a project page on Council's online consultation hub, Your Say Wingecarribee, along with a drop-in session on site and a meeting for neighbouring residents.

A mix of methods was used to actively involve the community; from online surveys and discussions, to face to face sessions, a photo competition, an interactive word map and other activities.

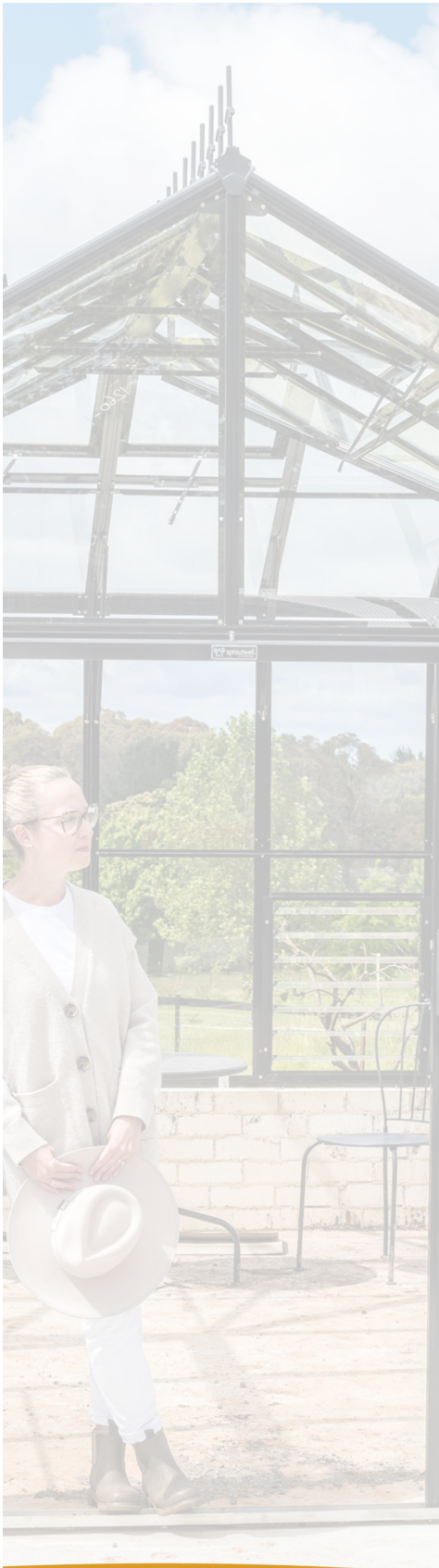
A telephone survey was conducted and over 400 people participated.

What happened to your  
feedback:

Feedback received was considered and then incorporated where possible into the detailed design. The result was a more inclusive playspace for the local community.

Community input directly informed the draft Robertson Village Place Plan. The result was a place plan that considers a longer-term, vision for the village.

Information is being used to inform Council's Delivery Program, Operational Plan and Budget and future service reviews. Results also help us to prioritise resources. The goals and strategies within the Community Strategic Plan will also be updated to reflect the community's priorities.



## What happens to your feedback.

We value the community's feedback. That's why a priority of this Strategy is to ensure that people are kept informed about how feedback was considered and what the final decision was.

How we provide feedback will often depend on the level or scope of the engagement.

In many cases, particularly whereby a group of people are directly impacted by a project or issue, we will work to contact individual participants once a decision has been made. We usually do this through email or letter. Occasionally, this may require a personal phone call.

When reporting outcomes for larger scale projects that have wider implications for the Shire, we will provide updates on our website or through a formal report to Council.

Staff are responsible for advising you at the start of the process, exactly how and when feedback will be provided.

## Evaluating our approach

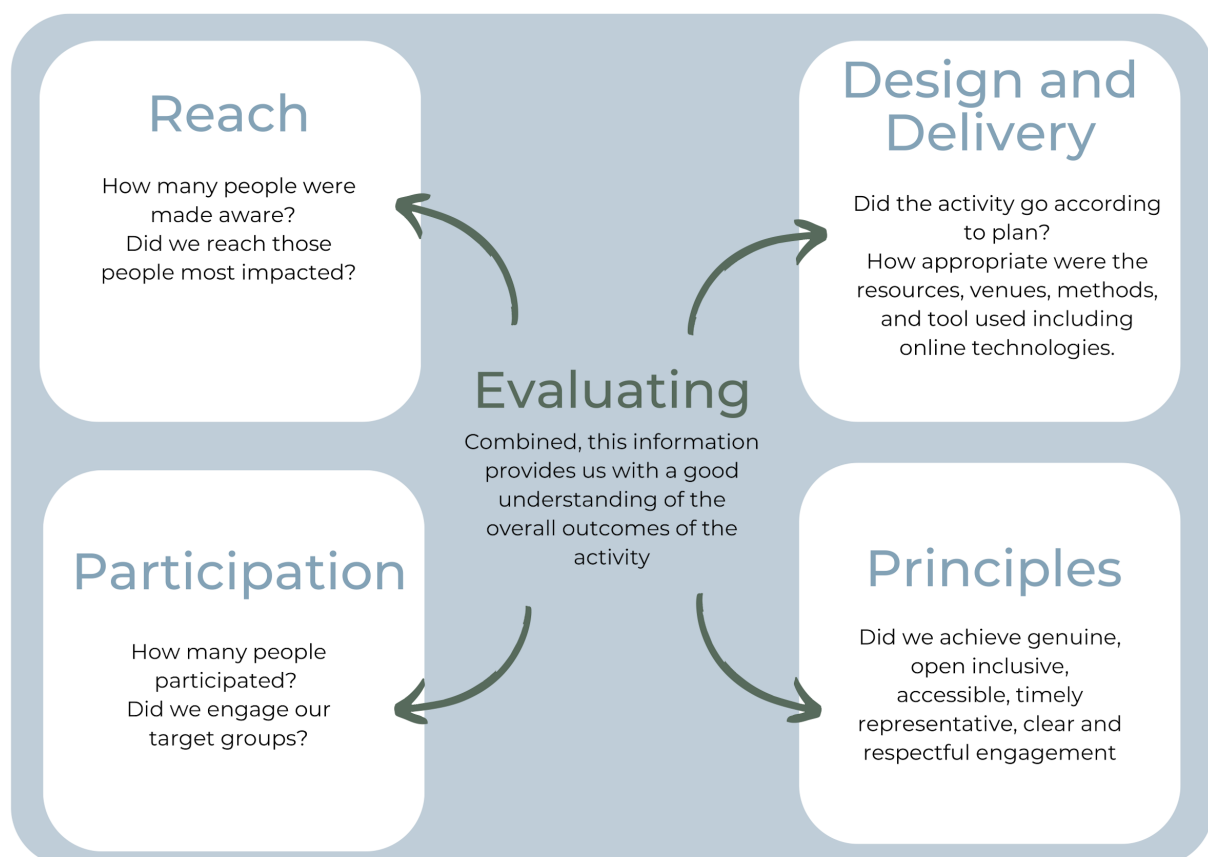
There are several ways in which we evaluate our approach.

Staff are encouraged to debrief after completing community engagement activities and assess the effectiveness of the activity against a set of criteria. This helps us to continuously improve upon what we do.

We often seek feedback from people who participated in the activity, usually through the use of surveys or questionnaires. We may ask questions about the process, methods and tools that we used, along with the overall experience.

The larger the scope and impact of the community engagement, the more formal the evaluation process and documentation will be.

We consider the following when assessing the effectiveness of individual community engagement activities and their outcomes.





## Community Participation Plan

This section of the Strategy relates specifically to how we engage the community on planning and development matters.

Council has a responsibility to deliver the objectives of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act) which stipulates mandatory and minimum requirements for community participation in strategy development, plan making and making decisions on proposed development.

The level and extent of community participation will vary depending on the location, scope of the proposal under consideration and potential impact of the decision.

When it comes to planning and development, Council's discretion over types and levels of engagement is sometimes limited. Schedule 1 of the EP&A Act identifies minimum requirements for the public exhibition of strategic planning and policy documents, as well as applications submitted to Council for determination. These minimum requirements are set out in Table 1.

Local Environmental Plans (i.e.: rezoning and alternative use) Development Control Plans and Development Contributions Plans must be advertised for a minimum of 28 days and submissions considered. But where relevant, Council will seek to extend this timeframe and also use additional forms of engagement in accordance with this Strategy.

Some Development Applications (DAs) are classified as 'Exempt' or 'Complying' Development and may be assessed by private Certifiers rather than Council staff. In these cases, there may be little or no consultation.

Consultation on other DAs is carried out in accordance with Table 2 Notification Requirements and varies according to the scale and expected impacts of each proposal.

Typically, these DAs are neighbour notified for at least 14 days or advertised for 30 days, with submissions then considered before decisions are made – usually by a senior member of staff acting under delegated authority. However, for a small percentage of applications Councillors may require further public consultation and/or call up the matter to a Council meeting in order to make the decision itself.

Proposals for very large and/or costly developments are determined by the Joint Regional Planning Panel or by the State government. Consultation on these proposals is normally guided by the minimum statutory requirements.



## Submission process

Well founded, balanced and factual submissions can inform, and influence assessment processes and Council can obtain valuable information on localised issues that may apply to the matter being considered.

Making a submission is not mandatory however it is helpful to receive supportive as well as critical feedback.

Submissions made in response to notification or advertisement of a development application, strategic plan or policy document must:

- Be made in writing
- Identify the Application Number and Property Address of the development application
- Clearly indicate the name, address, email and phone number of the party making the submission
- Clearly state the reasons or grounds for support of or objection to the proposal

Objections should not be focussed on civil disputes and should be based on planning grounds generally related to detrimental effects or unmanageable impacts such as:

- Ground levels or views to and from the land
- Privacy, overshadowing and solar access
- Amenity impacts (such as potential noise, traffic, access, odour, light or other impacts)
- Visual aspects of the building in relation to streetscape including heritage considerations
- Other localised issues such as natural hazards and stormwater / drainage

Council will acknowledge receipt of any submissions received at the conclusion of the assessment process and advise that the submission has been taken into account. Basic information on the outcome may also be provided.

For more information about lodging submissions, along with planning and development processes, please visit our website - [www.wsc.nsw.gov.au/Development](http://www.wsc.nsw.gov.au/Development).

## Reporting outcomes

In relation to applications for development consent, and applications for the modification of a development consent which was publicly exhibited, Council will publish details of:

- the land parcel and a description of the proposed development
- the decision and date on which it was made
- the reasons for the decision (having regard to any statutory requirements applying to the decision)
- how community views were taken into account in making the decision

**TABLE 1 - Minimum exhibition timeframes**

Plan Making Mandatory requirements	(Schedule 1, Part 1, Division 1 (1) of the EP&A Act 1979)
Draft community participation plans	28 days public exhibition
Draft local strategic planning statements	28 days public exhibition
Planning proposals for local environmental plans subject to a gateway determination	28 days public exhibition or: a) if a different period of public exhibition is specified in the gateway determination for the proposal—the period so specified, or b) if the gateway determination specifies that no public exhibition is required because of the minor nature of the proposal—no public exhibition.
Draft development control plans	28 days public exhibition
Draft contribution plans	28 days public exhibition
Development Assessment Mandatory requirements	(Schedule 1, Part 1, Division 2 (2) of the EP&A Act 1979)
Application for development consent (other than for complying development certificate, for designated development or for State significant development)	14 days public exhibition or: a) if a different period of public exhibition is specified for the application in Table 2—the period so specified, or b) if Table 2 specifies that no public exhibition is required for the application—no public exhibition.
Application for development consent for designated development	28 days public exhibition
Application for modification of development consent that is required to be publicly exhibited by the regulations	14 days or the period (if any) determined in Table 2.
Environmental impact statement obtained under Division 5.	28 days public exhibition

**Notes:**

1. Clause 17 in Schedule 1 to the Act states that if a particular matter has a different exhibition or notification period that applies under Part 1 of Schedule 1, the longer period applies.
2. Division 3 (18) states a public authority is not required to make available for public inspection any part of an environmental impact statement whose publication would, in the opinion of the public authority, be contrary to the public interest because of its confidential nature or for any other reason.
3. Public exhibition involves :
  - a) giving notice to individual landowners,
  - b) setting an appropriate exhibition timeframe,
  - c) advertising the exhibition and how submissions can be made, and
  - d) making documents publicly available
4. The period between 20 December and 10 January (inclusive) is excluded from the calculation of a period of public exhibition.
5. Submissions relating to applications and other exhibited documents must be made in writing and be lodged with the Council within the period specified in the notice (the exhibition period).

**TABLE 2 Notification requirements**

Development Type	Neighbour notification (14 days)	Advertised development (30 days) * exhibition requirements	No notification or exhibition requirements
New Residential Single Storey Dwellings			●
New Residential Single Storey Dwelling (and Residential alterations and additions) with change in ground level >600mm and not in an urban release area and has identifiable impacts on adjoining or adjacent properties in the opinion of a Council assessing officer	●		
New Residential Two Storey Dwellings or ancillary two storey buildings in all residential zones (and two storey residential alterations and additions) unless the subject site is located within a mapped urban release area	●		
Outbuildings that are ancillary to a residential usage of the land (e.g., sheds, pools, garage and carports)			●
Residential accommodation where there is two or more dwellings being proposed on any one site (includes secondary dwellings and dual occupancies)	●		
Residential accommodation where there is three or more additional dwellings being proposed (Including Boarding Houses, Multi Dwelling Housing and Residential Flat Buildings)	●	●	
Demolition (unless in a heritage conservation area or an item of heritage)			●
<b>Commercial</b>			
New Commercial Premises	●		
New Commercial and Industrial premises where it is considered by the assessing officer to have a potential impact on adjoining land or where the proposed development is either adjoining or adjacent to a Residential Zoning.	●	●	
Additions and Alterations to a Commercial Premises	●		
Change of Use	●		
First Occupancy of a new premises	●		
Signage	●		
<b>Subdivision</b>			
Subdivision of land into two or more lots	●		
Boundary Adjustments			●
Strata Subdivision			●
<b>Tourist and Visitor accommodation</b>			
New Facilities or alterations and additions to existing facilities or a change of use	●	●	
<b>Rural industries</b>			
Rural industries	●		
<b>Industries / storage</b>			
New Industry / Factory Buildings	●		
Alterations and Additions to Buildings	●		
Change of use	●		
Tower used to site telecommunication facilities	●	●	
<b>Extractive industries</b>			
Extractive Industries -Not designated	●	●	
Extractive Industries - Designated Development	●	●	
<b>Hospital / Religious / Education Establishments</b>			
New	●	●	
Alterations and Additions	●	●	
<b>Temporary use of Land</b>			
Uses under Clause 2.8 of the Wingecarribee Local Environmental Plan	●	●	



## TABLE 2 Notification requirements

Development Type	Neighbour notification (14 days)	Advertised development (30 days) *	No notification or exhibition requirements
<b>Other Development types</b>			
Applications where a variation to Council's policies are being proposed (which is greater than 10%), e.g., building lines, setbacks and height, excluding controls relating to cut and fill.	●		
All new development in Heritage Conservation Areas or upon the site of a Heritage Item, where the proposed works are visible from a public street (excluding mapped urban release areas)	●		
<b>Other Development not listed</b> - All other development types that are not required by legislation to be notified will not be notified. However subject to assessment of impacts by Council's assessing officer, where it is found to have uncontrolled or unmanageable impacts on surrounding properties the assessing officer shall determine the level of notification required.			
*Advertised development includes an advertisement on an approved website (NSW Planning Portal or Council's website) and also a sign on the development site in a prominent location.			

### Notes:

Any notification provides for fourteen (14) days for written submissions to be received by Council from the date of the notice of proposed development. In the case of advertised development, the advertisement period is 30 days.

Council will exclude any days where Council notifies or advertises a development proposal between 20 December and 10 January.

### Notification of amendments to Plans and Documentation (cl.55), Modifications (s.4.55) to Development Consent and Requests for Review (s8.2).

The plans for a proposed development may be amended by the applicant prior to its determination under clause 55 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000 or modified in the case where an application is determined by way of approval. Amended plans can also be considered by Council following a request for review of determination under section 8.2 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

#### a) Amendments

The applicant may submit amended plans in order to address concerns raised by Council or to address concerns raised by an objector in a submission in response to the notification process. In these circumstances it is not expected that Council will renotify the development proposal.

Where issues have not been addressed through the submission of amended plans and supporting documentation, or where there is a significant change in the proposed application which will create detrimental or unmanageable impacts, Council's assessing officers may at their discretion re-notify the proposal.

#### b) Modifications following determining an application by way of consent

For applications that have been determined by way of approval, a section 4.55 modification application may be submitted to Council for consideration. These applications can be of a minor nature (s4.55(1) and s4.55(1A) of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 involving minimal environmental impact or addressing an error or misdescription in an application. More significant modifications will be considered under (s4.55(2)). Council will generally not notify applications made under section 4.55(1) and s4.55(1A), however in the case of a s4.55(2) or a s4.55(AA) modification, if the original development application was previously notified or advertised, any future modification involving environmental impact will be notified or advertised in the same manner.

#### c) Review of determination

In the case of where an application has been determined by way of refusal or in the case of an approval where a condition(s) of consent have been imposed, a proponent may request a review of determination under section 8.2 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. Where a request is made under this section, Council shall notify the section 8.2 application in the same manner as the original development application was notified or advertised.



## Reviewing the Community Engagement Strategy

The Community Engagement Strategy will be comprehensively reviewed at least every four years with an updated Strategy to be adopted by Council in December of a local government election year.

The next review is scheduled for December 2024.

In the meantime, we will regularly evaluate and report on the effectiveness of the Strategy using performance indicators including:

- Community satisfaction with Council's level of communication
- Community satisfaction with provision of information to residents
- Community satisfaction with opportunities in Council decision making
- Progress made towards actions that support our objectives
- Results of community engagement activities



# Getting involved



Participating in community engagement activities has many benefits. Not only does community input help to shape the future of the Shire it provides people, and communities, with opportunities to come together.

By getting involved in community engagement activities you can:

- have your say on issues affecting the Shire
- gain insights into new issues
- learn more about Council's services and projects
- learn how the Council makes decisions
- meet new people

We use a variety of channels to promote ways to get involved. You can also sign up to our regular eNewsletter to keep up to date on activities and projects.

For more information you can:

- visit our website - [www.wsc.nsw.gov.au/Community/Consultation](http://www.wsc.nsw.gov.au/Community/Consultation)
- call our Customer Service on 02 4868 0888
- email us at [mail@wsc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mail@wsc.nsw.gov.au)
- visit us at

The Civic Centre  
68 Elizabeth Street  
Moss Vale NSW 2577



*We're With* **YOU**



## Acknowledgements

This Community Engagement Strategy, 2022/23 edition, could not have been developed without input from our community.

We wish to thank all those people who informed this review by participating in focus groups and surveys.

The Council also wishes to acknowledge the following community engagement frameworks, policies, and strategies:

- Bega Shire Council, Community Engagement Strategy 2019
- Blacktown City Council Community Engagement Strategy 2022
- Casey City Council, Community Engagement Strategy 2021
- Cessnock City Council, Community Engagement Strategy 2020
- City of Parramatta, Community Engagement Strategy 2020
- City of Ryde, Communications and Engagement Strategy 2014
- Knox City Council, Community Engagement Policy 2021
- Mid Coast Council, Community Engagement Strategy 2019-2022
- Northern Beaches Council, Community Engagement Framework 2017
- Penrith City Council, Community Engagement Strategy 2019
- Some of the concepts included in this Strategy are featured in the NSW Office of Local Government Integrated Planning and Reporting Handbook, 2021 edition.

Finally, we wish to acknowledge the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) and use of the Public Participation spectrum.



This Community Engagement Strategy has been prepared by Wingecarribee Shire Council to meet the requirements of the Local Government Act 1993 and concurrently serve as a Community Participation Plan for the purposes of s2.23(4) of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.

For further information contact the Community Engagement Coordinator via email to [mail@wsc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mail@wsc.nsw.gov.au) or by writing to Wingecarribee Shire Council, PO Box 141, Moss Vale NSW 2527.

[wsc.nsw.gov.au](http://wsc.nsw.gov.au)

## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023

### PUBLIC EXHIBITION SUBMISSIONS – Draft Community Engagement Policy

Submissions Author	Submission	Council Response
R Russell	In part 5., on pages 5-6 of 7 of the document titled 'Definitions': 'Stakeholder', include 'Traditional Owners'. Respectfully, Rachel Russell Co-chair Woonjeegaribay Conciliation Group	Traditional Owners have been included in the definition of 'Stakeholders'.
B Mann	Rezoning should NOT be left to the 'Employed Managers' at the time for 'final decisions' made by Council. Final Decisions on rezonings should be left to and made only by the Independent Planning Panel Committee established by Viv May back in 2021 – as was its purpose. Staff who were appointed by the previous annexed Council members; Or Appointed by any now redundant employees who's actions are still undergoing a 'review'; And/or Staff/Manager who have been employed in their positions for 'quite some time'; Should act in a professional manner and abstain and/or remove themselves from taking part in any final decisions in pursuit of conveying transparency, independence and confidence in the Council. They are non-elected officials who have a purpose, but should not ultimately be representatives of important decisions for the Community and its future. Renewal and change are essential in any organisation (Private, Government or otherwise) which can help remove the potential/occurrence for any old-fashioned 'gatekeeper' mentality. Staff members should ALWAYS act professionally, objectively and be 'for the community' and not 'against the community' or any advancement. Also, (and just for example): Those 'Managers' that may publicly profess (again, just for example and illustrative purposes only!) that they are perhaps a keen green 'environmentalist' and/or 'conservationists' (e.g. on a Linked-In profile for example) also present a 'conflict of interest' as they are unable to truly make disinterested and fair-minded	All decisions on Planning Proposals (rezonings) are made by Council in accordance with the requirements of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. As Council has a Local Planning Panel in place, all Planning Proposals are referred to the Panel for advice prior to being considered by Council.

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

Submissions Author	Submission	Council Response
	decisions for the greater good of the community. It is important to have staff who are capable of weighing up all stakeholder's interests and be able to represent a wide-range of views for good outcomes for the community and residents as a whole. We need environmentalists and conversationalist working within the Council for balance indeed, I absolutely support this, but they should not be holding the key to the entire Community's future.	
S Jones	I don't think it's appropriate to comment on a draft policy when the (draft) strategy behind it has yet to be approved. Once the strategy has been finalised and approved then perhaps is the time to 'release' the draft policy for public comment.	The policy and strategy were reviewed and placed on public exhibition at the same time to ensure clear alignment between the documents and that is alignment was clear to community members.

## Community Engagement Policy

### LEADERSHIP

**COUNCIL, COMMUNICATES AND ENGAGES WITH THE COMMUNITY IN A DIVERSE, OPEN AND INCLUSIVE WAY**

Document Type	Council Policy
Document Reference No.	[Governance to insert] (example: 2020/001)
Version No.	[Governance to insert]
Council File Reference	[Insert departmental file number, generally the relevant electronic records management system subject reference]
Adoption Date	[Governance to insert]
Resolution Number [if applicable]	[Governance to insert]
Document Owner	Manager Governance & Corporate Performance
Responsible Branch	Governance & Corporate Performance
Responsible Business Unit	Community Engagement
Review Schedule	Four years
Review Date	[Governance to insert]

*Working with you*

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## Table of Contents [Governance to insert]

1. Objectives .....	3
2. Policy Statement .....	3
3. Scope .....	3
4. Responsibilities .....	4
4.1 Councillors .....	4
4.2 Executive .....	4
4.3 [Title of Group Manager or Manager – insert position title of policy owner]Error! Bookmark not defined.	
4.4 Group Managers and Managers .....	5
4.5 Council staff .....	5
5. Performance Measures.....	5
6. Definitions.....	5
7. Related Material .....	6
7.1 Related Legislation [if applicable] .....	6
7.2 Related Policies, Procedures and General Manager Practice Notes [if applicable] .....	6
8. Non-compliance with this Policy.....	6
9. Document Control [Governance to insert] .....	6
9.1 Version Control .....	6
9.2 Superseded Documents [if applicable] .....	7
10. Attachments .....	7



## **1. Objectives**

The objectives of this Policy are:

- to express Council's commitment to engaging with the community and stakeholders on matters that affect them;
- improve understanding of community and stakeholder engagement; and
- outline how community engagement is integrated into Council activities in order to support decision making and strengthen relationships.

## **2. Policy Statement**

Council aims to achieve community engagement that actively and genuinely involves the community in the decisions that affect them.

Working with the community, we aim to achieve great outcomes for the Shire, now and into the future.

Council is committed to:

- Ensure all sectors of the community have opportunities to have their say
- Reduce barriers to community participation
- Strengthen Council's relationship with the community
- Increase Council's understanding of the Shire's many communities and their unique need and priorities
- Continuously improve the Council's approach to community engagement

## **3. Scope**

This policy outlines the principles and commitments that will guide the planning, design, implementation and evaluation of community engagement practices at Council.

Community Engagement is the responsibility of all Council service areas, teams and employees. It also applies to contractors and consultants undertaking work on behalf of Council.

### **Principles for Community Engagement**

As part of this commitment, Council has adopted the following principles which provide a framework through which all community engagement will be considered and delivered:

- Provide meaningful and authentic opportunities for the community to be involved in decision making
- Inform people about the final decision and how their feedback was considered
- Provide everyone with an opportunity to have their say, and all people are welcome to participate
- Remove or reduce barriers to participation
- Ensure engagement occurs as early as possible, allowing sufficient time for people to contribute
- Seeking opinions that are reflective of the broader community and those most impacted by a decision
- Ensuring information is easy to understand, and complex issues are well explained
- Treating all participants with respect, regardless of their opinion, circumstances or role in the process

The principles were developed in discussion with members of the community along with Council staff. They support the social justice principles of access, equity, participation and rights. They also take into consideration the community participation principles in the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.



#### **Level of engagement**

Council will call for different levels of engagement depending on the issue, statutory requirements, forecast impact on the community and at different stages of a project.

The five levels of engagement outlined in the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum shown below will be utilised.

- **Inform:** To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.
- **Consult:** To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.
- **Involve:** To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.
- **Collaborate:** To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.
- **Empower:** To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.

The identified level of engagement and its financial implication for each project will be noted in Council Committee Papers and Council Business Papers. The level will be determined in consultation with the appropriate Manager and Deputy General Manager.

#### **Statutory requirements**

Some elements of community engagement are directed by statutory requirements of the *NSW Environmental Planning and Assessment Act* (Part 2, Division 2.6) and the *Local Government Act 1993*.

## **4. Responsibilities**

Responsibilities for the implementation of this Policy are shared as follows.

### **4.1 Councillors**

Councillors shall:

- provide leadership in adhering to the requirements of this Policy;
- participate as an elected member, listen to the views of the community and consider those views when making decisions.

### **4.2 Executive**

The Executive shall:

- lead staff (either directly or through delegated authority) in their understanding of and compliance with this Policy and related documents;
- support the community engagement process and encourage the appropriate level of engagement by all staff.

### **4.3 Manager Governance & Corporate Performance**

The Manager Governance and Corporate Performance shall:

- provide guidance to Councillors, Executive and other Council staff as to the content and implementation of this Policy;



- ensure the timely review of this Policy
- conduct investigations into alleged non-compliance with this Policy

#### **4.4 Managers**

Managers shall:

- provide guidance to Council staff within their respective branches as to the content and implementation of this Policy, seeking guidance from the policy owner as required.

#### **4.5 Council staff**

Council staff shall:

- read, understand and comply with this Policy;
- organise and facilitate the discussion, record, provide feedback, evaluate the engagement and consider the community's views when making unbiased recommendations to Council;
- manage individual community engagement activities ensuring that they are in line with the Policy and Strategy, and provide feedback to participants on the outcomes of an activity or how community input informed the final decision.

## **5. Definitions**

### **Community Engagement**

Community engagement is a term that covers information sharing, consultation and active participation between government and communities.

It seeks to ensure people have an opportunity to participate in decisions that affect them.

In a local government context community engagement can take many forms, ranging from receiving a letter about a neighbour's development application or responding to a "have your say" advertisement, to attending a facilitated workshop on a major project.

### **Communication**

The exchange and promotion of information between Council, community and internal or external stakeholders.

### **Community**

Community refers to the people who have a stake and interest in the Wingecarribee Local Government Area (LGA) and includes, people who:

Live, work, study or conduct business or are involved in local community groups or organisations in the LGA.

Visit, use or enjoy the services, facilities and public places located within the LGA.

### **Stakeholder**

**Traditional Owners**, property owners and residents, business representatives, associations, other levels of government and agencies who have an interest or are directly impacted by the decisions of Council.



IAP2

International Association for Public Participation

## **6. Related Material**

### **6.1 Related Legislation**

The following legislative materials are related to this Policy:

- *Environment Planning and Assessment Act 1979*
- *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*
- *Local Government Act 1993*
- *Local Government Amendment (Governance and Planning) Act 2016*
- *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998*

### **6.2 Related Policies, Procedures and General Manager Practice Notes**

The following policies/plans/strategies and documents are related to this Policy:

- Code of Conduct
- Code of Meeting Practice
- Community Engagement Toolkit (internal doc)
- Community Engagement Strategy
- Communications Strategy
- Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2026
- Notification of Development Proposals Policy
- Positive Ageing Strategy 2016-2026
- Privacy Management Plan
- Youth Strategy & Action Plan 2016-2026

## **7. Non-compliance with this Policy**

Non-compliance with this Policy should be reported to Group Manager Corporate and Community who will investigate and determine the appropriate course of action to resolve the matter.

## **8. Document Control [Governance to insert]**

### **8.1 Version Control**

Version	Adoption Date	Notes
[insert version no.]	[insert date on which version was adopted]	[describe amendments/changes from previous version]
[insert version no.]	[insert date on which version was adopted]	[describe amendments/changes from previous version]
[insert version]	[insert date on]	[describe amendments/changes from previous version]



no.]	which version was adopted]	
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## **8.2 Superseded Documents**

The following documents are superseded by this Policy:

Document Title	Adoption Date	Notes
Community Engagement Policy	10 April 2019	[describe reasons for superseding the document]
Community Engagement Policy	26 November 2014	[describe reasons for superseding the document]

## **9. Attachments**

There are no attachments to this Policy.

Approved by:

WINGECARRIBEE SHIRE COUNCIL

[Governance to insert adoption date]



### **9.3 Community Reference Panels - Appointment of Community Representatives**

**Report Author:** Director Corporate Strategy and Resourcing  
**Authoriser:** General Manager

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#### **PURPOSE**

This report recommends the appointment of Community Representatives to Council's newly established Community Reference Panels until the September 2024 local government election.

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#### **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION**

##### **THAT:**

1. Council appoint the following community representatives to the Climate Change and Environment Community Reference Panel until the September 2024 local government election:
  - a. Mr Derek White
  - b. Ms Janelle Menzies
  - c. Mr Andy Lemann
  - d. Ms Jen Slattery
  - e. Ms Kim Zegenhagen
  - f. Ms Pip Rainey
  - g. Mr Pat Hall
  - h. Ms Suzzanah Cowley
2. Council appoint the following community representatives to the Community focused Community Reference Panel until the September 2024 local government election:
  - a. Ms Finette Sheather
  - b. Ms Katie Fagan
  - c. Mr Jonanthan Melrose-Rae
  - d. Ms Jodie Swan
  - e. Ms Katie Constantinou
  - f. Mr Peter Stewart
  - g. Dr Allan Stiles
  - h. Ms Tam Johnson
3. Council appoint the following community representatives to the Sports, Recreation and Leisure Community Reference Panel until the September 2024 local government election:
  - a. John Vild
  - b. Mr Ryan Elphick
  - c. Mr Miles Lochhead
  - d. Ms Lyn Collingridge
  - e. Mr Peter Mitchell
  - f. Ms Rebecca Duffy
  - g. Mr Chrisopher Blaxland
  - h. Mr Stuart Perry

4. Council appoint the following community representatives to the Economy Community Reference Panel until the September 2024 local government election:
  - a. Ms Brigid Kennedy
  - b. Ms Carissa Wells
  - c. Mr Greg Goidman
  - d. Mr Ian Bollen
  - e. Ms Julianne Christie
  - f. Mr Michael Ellis
  - g. Mr Rishard Colley
  - h. Mr Ross Muller
5. Council write to all applicants who submitted an expression of interest to be a part of the Community Reference Panels and thank them for their time in making an application.

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## **REPORT**

### **BACKGROUND**

At the meeting held on 21 September 2022 Council adopted an engagement structure that comprised of four strategically focused Community Reference Panels with the following focus areas

- Climate Change and Environment
- Community
- Sport, Recreation and Leisure
- Economy.

The role of the Community Reference Panel's (CRP's) is to support Council in reviewing the vision objectives and goals of the Community Strategic Plan and their translation to the 4-year Delivery Program through an active and ongoing community engagement program. The aim is to ensure that current knowledge, critical thinking, and analysis is applied to strategy development, increasing the confidence that Council is making the right decisions and that those decisions are not made in isolation, but in a genuine partnership with community.

In accordance with the CRP Terms of Reference (TOR) which were also adopted at the 21 September 2022 Council meeting, the composition of each Panel is as follows:

- 1 Independent Chair – Council staff member
- 2 Support Staff – Governance Officer and Professional Team Member on key topic under discussion
- 2 - 3 Invited Technical Specialists from relevant government or non-government agencies
- 8 Community Representatives sought via EOI process
- Ex officio external experts as required.

### **REPORT**

#### **Expression of Interest – Community Representatives.**

In December 2022, Council called for Expressions of Interest (EOI) from members of the community for each of the four CRP's. Council sought community representatives with a strong affiliation to the Shire and expertise related to the focus of the CRP. Ideally and where possible the composition of community representatives for each panel would be broadly representative of the of the Shire's demographics in relation to age, gender and locality (According to the 2021 census 48% the Shire's population is aged over 50 years, 52% are female and 47% live in a village). In consideration of the

## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023

December/January holiday period expressions of interest were scheduled to close on 22 January 2023.

The opportunity to submit an EOI for participation in the CRP's were promoted via the following

- Project page on Your Say Wingecarribee
- Council's Community Update
- Council's e-newsletters – 'Your Shire, this week' 'Your Say Wingecarribee'
- Social media post
- Media releases in December and February
- Promotions through professional networks
- Email to Community Engagement Strategy and Community Strategic Plan Focus Group participants.

In late January 2023 a review of EOI received for each of the CRP's found that many strong applications had been received however they were not broadly representative of the Shire's demographics. Based on this, the EOI process was extended to 5 March 2023 to allow for further promotion of the opportunity.

A total of 81 EOI applications were received for the CRPs. **Table 1** below provides an overview of the number of applicants for each CRP as well as high level demographics.

**Table 1**

Community Panel	Reference	No. EOI Received	Age Group			Gender		Locality		
			<50	>50	NS*	M	F	Town	Village	NS*
Climate Change and Environment		21	3	18	0	11	10	15	6	0
Community		35	17	16	2	12	23	20	12	3
Sport, Recreation and Leisure		13	10	3	0	11	2	9	4	0
Economy		12	10	1	1	7	5	3	9	0

\* not specified

EOIs were reviewed and assessed by the manager or coordinator responsible for the CRP, the relevant Director and General Manager. **Table 2** below outlines community representatives recommended for appointment to each CRP. Section 8.1 of the TOR specify that *"The term of membership is the period that coincides with Council Elections. At this time, all positions are declared vacant."*

**Table 2**

Climate Change and Environment	Community	Sport, Recreation and Leisure	Economy
Mr Derek White	Ms Finette Sheather	Mr John Vild	Ms Brigid Kennedy
Ms Janelle Menzies	Ms Katie Fagan	Mr Ryan Elphick	Ms Carissa Wells
Mr Andy Lemann	Mr Jonathan Melrose-	Mr Miles Lochhead	Mr Greg Goidman

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

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	Rae		
Ms Jen Slattery	Ms Jodie Swan	Ms Lyn Collingridge	Mr Ian Bollen
Ms Kim Zegenhagen	Ms Katie Constantinou	Mr Peter Mitchell	Ms Julianne Christie
Ms Pip Rainey	Mr Peter Stewart	Ms Rebecca Duffy	Mr Michael Ellis
Ms Pat Hall	Dr Allan Stiles	Mr Christopher Blaxland	Mr Richard Colley
Ms Suzzanah Cowley	Ms Tam Johnson	Mr Stuart Perry	Mr Ross Muller

Upon publishing of this business paper, all applicants will be notified of this report being considered at the 15 March Council meeting.

**Attachment 1** to this report provides an overview of all EOI received for each panel, including an overview of experience and knowledge.

The process for inviting Technical Specialists from relevant government or non-government agencies is still underway and will be the subject of a further report to Council.

**Community Reference Panel Meetings for 2023**

CRP Meetings will be held quarterly in the Moss Vale Civic Centre from 3 pm to 5 pm on the following dates for 2023:

- Thursday 20 April
- Thursday 22 June
- Thursday 21 September
- Thursday 14 December

The first meeting will involve a joint one-hour induction for CRP panel members followed by a one-hour initial panel meeting.

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**COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION**

**Community Engagement**

Extensive community engagement was undertaken for the review of Council's Advisory Committee structure. The EOI for CRP was undertaken from 12 December until 5 March 2023.

**Internal Communication and Consultation**

Executive

Executive Manager Strategic Outcomes

Manager Assets

Manager Environment & Sustainability

Coordinator Community Development

**External Communication and Consultation**

The opportunity to submit an EOI for participation in the CRP's were promoted via the following

- Project page on Your Say Wingecarribee
- Council's Community Update
- Council's e-newsletters – 'Your Shire, this week' 'Your Say Wingecarribee'
- Social media post
- Media releases in December and February
- Promotions through professional networks
- Email to Community Engagement Strategy and Community Strategic Plan Focus Group participants.

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## **SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT**

### **Environment**

There are no environmental issues in relation to this report.

### **Social**

There are no social issues in relation to this report.

### **Broader Economic Implications**

There are no broader economic implications in relation to this report.

### **Culture**

There are no cultural issues in relation to this report.

### **Governance**

There are no governance issues in relation to this report.

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## **COUNCIL BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

There are no budget implications as a result of this report.

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## **RELATED COUNCIL POLICY**

Community Engagement Policy.

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## **CONCLUSION**

After conducting an extensive EOI process, it is recommended that Council appoint community representatives as outlined in the staff recommendation to the following Community Reference Panels:

- Climate Change and Environment
- Community
- Sport, Recreation and Leisure
- Economy.

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## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. EOI for Climate Change & Environment Community Reference Panel [9.3.1 - 3 pages]

2. EOI Community focused Community Reference Panel [**9.3.2** - 5 pages]
3. EOI for Economy Community Reference Panel [**9.3.3** - 2 pages]
4. EOI for Sport, Recreation and Leisure Community Reference Panel [**9.3.4** - 2 pages]



**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

Name	Age	Gender	Location	Experience & knowledge of social issues & Community Affiliations	Additional Comments
Pat Hall	Over 50	F	Bundanoon	Strong experience in numerous areas. NPWS, Aboriginal culture, Education, species recovery, community projects, landscape regeneration. Resident from southern villages.	Selected
Derek White	Over 50	M	Mittagong	Represents a strong community group as secretary of Winzero. Experienced engineer, project manager and senior manager	Selected
Jen Slattery	Over 50	F	Colo Vale	Experience in land management and bush regeneration. Experience and knowledge across the whole Shire. Member of Southern Highlands Landcare Network (SHLN), Australian Plant Society (APS), Bushcare, Citizen Science. Representative from northern villages.	Selected
Andy Lemann	Over 50	M	Mittagong	Local business owner and builder. Strong experience for energy efficiency buildings. Community network activities.	Selected
Kim Zegenhagen	Over 50	M	Bowral	Volunteer Mt Gibraltar Landcare and Bushcare, RFS volunteer, Secretary to the Australian Plant Society.	Selected
Pip Rainey	Under 50	F	Bowral	Waste management experience. Environment and sustainability experience at local government level.	Selected
Janelle Menzies	Over 50	F	Glenquarry	Local farmer and landscape advocate. Experience with Landcare, LFW, and hosted LLS field events. Represents a demographic covered by few of the other members.	Selected
Suzzanah Cowley	Under 50	F	Bowral	Strong applicant. Filmmaker in the area of environment, agriculture and climate change. Local business owner and active local community member.	Selected

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

Nadine Williams	Under 50	F	Robertson	Local parent passionate about reducing impact on the planet. Represented from one of the villages and under 50 demographic which is potentially under represented in the CRP EOI's. Shortlisted	Shortlisted. Demographic potentially under represented. Some of the strengths potentially covered via other members on the panel.
Greg Olsen	Over 50	M	Bundanoon	Strong EOI. Winzero member, Bundanoon BCA, and strong community participation. Candidate at State election for the Greens Party.	Strong EOI placed on short list
Lyndall Breen	Over 50	F	Moss Vale	Strong EOI. Long time member of SHLN. Winzero member.	Strong EOI, Demographic currently covered. Place on short list
Louis Flower	Over 50	M	Bowral	Long term member / advocate for SHLN.	Demographic covered in the Panel list. Placed on shortlist.
Miles Lohead	Over 50	M	Mittagong	Strong EOI. Winzero member, waste , solar, Recommended for member of Sports and Rec CRP.	Recommended for member of Sports and Rec CRP
Christine McGuigan	Over 50	F	Moss Vale	Personal experience in this area. Background in diverse areas. Local community participation.	Strengths potentially covered via other members of the proposed CRP.
John Bone	Over 50	M	Moss Vale	Engineering, WHS, local government experience. Former Councillor and senior manager at different Councils.	Demographic currently covered in proposed EOI

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

Peter Bawden	Over 50	M	Bowral	Industrial engineer in mining and manufacturing. Winzero member. Strong local interested. Strong EOI..	Demographic currently covered. Placed on shortlist.
Donna Walker-Smith	Over 50	F	Mittagong	Teacher, Battle for Berrima involvement.	Demographic covered in current CRP list.
Peter Cunningham	Over 50	M	Bowral	Civil engineer.	Demographic covered in current CRP list.
Robert Westaway	Over 50	M	Bowral	Building design, quality assurance, compliance. Some of the background potentially covered via other members on the CRP.	Demographic covered in current CRP list.
Leon Nielsen	Over 50	M	Moss Vale	Land for Wildlife member, Bushcare volunteer.	Demographic currently covered in CRP. Placed on short list.
Kate Lewin	Over 50	F	Bundanoon	Bundanoon CA, volunteer NPWS with bush tucker gardens in schools. Long experience across the Shire.	Demographic currently covered in proposed CRP. Shortlisted.

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

Name	Age	Gender	Location	Experience & knowledge of social issues & Community Affiliations	Additional Comments
Katie Constantinou	Under 50	F	Bowral	Disability advocate, Harbison Board member, Dementia Support. Law background & public policy.	Selected
Dr Allan Stiles	Over 50	M	Robertson	Previous experience on advisory committee, Arts & Culture. Member Robertson Environment Protection Society & Highlands Sinfonia	Selected
Jodie Swan	Under 50	F	Moss vale	Advocate for education, art & accessibility. Creative Learning Manager Ngunungugla Regional Art Gallery	Selected
Jonathan Melrose-Rae	Over 50	M	Bundanoon	Community Engagement & Development experience, Marketing & Fundraising Director. Winterfest convenor. LGBTQI+, seniors & homelessness advocate.	Selected
Katie Fagan	Under 50	F	Robertson	20 years' experience in Arts, Health promotion and disability support. Project coordinator. Active community member creative programs, events, training and P&C	Selected
Peter Stewart	Over 50	M	Bowral	Strategy Development experience. Secretary local disabled children's charity 4K. Voluntary roles include disability sector, Theatre advisory board, affordable community housing & local sporting group	Selected
Finette Sheather	Under 50	F	Bundanoon	Community sector experience. Volunteer roles Domestic Violence Forum, sport clubs and P&C	Selected
Tam Johnston	Under 50	F	Moss Vale	Disability & Aged Care support, Early Education care, civic & citizenship, Senior Executive and Board experience. Advocate for community connection opportunities post covid & changing demographics in Wingecarribee	Selected

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

Zac Hulm	Under 50	M	Balaclava	Experience in aged care sector. Community event experience with Bowral Classic & Tulip Time and local non for profits. Volunteer for over 20 years	Panel has Harbison & Southern Highlands Foundation representation. Under 50 demographic represented in panel from Villages. Aged care experience already in panel also. Shortlisted
Jacqueline Milne	Over 50	F	Bowral	Nursing background and experience in raising cattle. Experience in ER research & the National Trust.	Demographic already represented Shortlisted
Skye Cannon	Under 50	F	Moss Vale	Outreach Officer with social policy experience. Volunteer roles in local sporting groups. Advocate for diversity & inclusion	Strong EOI. Demographic is represented in panel Shortlisted
Danielle Johns	Under 50	F	Moss Vale	Working or vulnerable families. Experience in Grant writing & on the board for 4K	Demographic and 4K representation in selected panel Shortlisted
Sandra Jones	Over 50	F	Moss vale	Employment in management, public relations, communications and marketing. Experienced member of a wide variety of community groups across the shire	Strong EOI. Demographic is represented in panel Shortlisted

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

Nicole Smith	Over 50	F	Mittagong	BDCU Children's Foundation, Southern Highlands Business Women's Association, GROW Southern Highlands, Southern Highlands Community Foundation	Strong EOI however demographic already represented Shortlisted
Nicki Freeman	Over 50	F	Bowral	Strong performing arts experience.	Arts & culture representation on panel as well as demographic
Lily Cummins	Under 50	F	Renwick	Experience in business and marketing. Advocate for arts in community	Arts & Culture representation in panel as well as Ngununggula representation
Dianna Innes	Not specified	F	Bowral	Member of various community organisations	EOI required more information
Paul Totman	Over 50	M	Mittagong	Hospitality background and member of Sydney Cricket Ground Turf Club	EOI required more information
Charles Ho	Over 50	M	Mittagong	Fellow Royal Australian Institute of Architects, Associate Royal Institute of British Architects, Member of Nature Society, Tanglin Club, Singapore, Art Gallery NSW and Southern Highlands Golf Club	Strong demographic representation within Panel
Victor Varlamov	Under 50	M	Welby	Experience in user design and design for accessibility	EOI required more information
Kim McKay	Under 50	F	Burrawang	Professional experience of over 25 years in Marketing + Communications. Specialist in Branding, Digital Comms and Stakeholder management	EOI requires more community & social issue experience



**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

Ross Muller	Under 50	M	Wildes Meadow	Advocate for sustainable employment opportunities for young people & diverse regional community groups. 2007 Wingecarribee Young Citizen of the Year.	Selected on Economy Reference Panel
Erica Leeming	Not specified	F	Robertson	2 businesses & Community Association President	EOI required more detail.
Scott Dennis	Over 50	M	Bowral	Worked APAC region supporting Pfizer. Community event experience	Health representation within invited representatives
Milena Stojanovska	Under 50	F	Not Specified	Assistant Director Ngununggula	EOI required more detail. Arts & Culture representation in panel as well as Ngununggula representation
Megan Monte	Under 50	F	Mittagong	Director Ngununggula. Previous history in director and curator in art centres	Arts & Culture representation in panel as well as Ngununggula representation
Jason Webster	Under 50	M	Bowral	Business related experience. Active member Greens party	EOI more suited for Economy Panel
Birte Larsen	Over 50	F	Mittagong	Practising artist with membership in art institutions. Interests walking & cycling and pedestrian connectivity	EOI required more detail. Arts & Culture representation in panel
Mark Williamson	Over 50	M	Berrima	Experience in Music. Chamber of Commerce experience	EOI suitable for Economy panel

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

Barbara Young	Over 50	F	Bowral	Medical background. Active Greens background and member of BDAS.	Strong EOI. Health sector already represented within invited representatives
Ildko Haag	Over 50	F	Not specified	Experience in psychology, self-development and trauma/reconciliation	Strong EOI required more experience with social issues
Bruce Bargon	Over 50	M	Bundanoon	Member of Bundanoon Community Association, National Trust and Australian Decoration Fine Arts Society	EOI required more information
Averil Cutroni	Under 50	F	Bowral	Experience in communication and community engagement.	EOI required more information
Christine Hafey	Over 50	F	Not specified	Experience in legal aid and strong volunteer presence in community	Strong EOI required more experience with social issues
Michelle Pontello	Under 50	F	Sutton Forest	Business management experience. Member of Chamber of Commerce, career advisors' groups and TAFE working bodies	EOI suitable for Economy panel

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

Name	Age	Gender	Location	Experience & knowledge of social issues & Community Affiliations / Experience	Additional Comments
Greg Goidman	Over 50	M	Bowral	Extensive background in finance and consulting industries. Strong focus on innovation and entrepreneurship	Selected
Brigid Kennedy	Over 50	M	Mandemar	Representative of the Moss Vale and Rural Chamber. Head of the Agriculture and Equine sub group in the Key stakeholders group, and on the Visitor Economy Taskforce.	Selected
Carissa Wells	Not stated	F	Bowral	Representative of Business Southern Highlands, and CEO and Director of Regional Development for RDASI.	Selected
Ian Bollen	Over 50	M	Canyonleigh	Extensive business and industry experience. Formal qualifications in related fields. Chair of a number of boards.	Selected
Julianne Christie	Over 50	F	Yerrinbool	Specialises in regional economic development. Held senior positions in State and Local Government. Lectured in economics. Special interest in Community and Economic Resilience.	Selected
Richard Colley	Over 50	M	Bundanoon	Extensive senior experience in Local Government as a General Manager and as an Administrator at a number of Council's.	Selected
Michael Ellis	Over 50	M	Sutton Forrest	Diverse experience in Government and NGOs. Experience working on Special Activation Precincts and major employment areas. Focus on place making and activation.	Selected

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

Ross Muller	Under 50	M	Wildes Meadow	Broad experience. Works in finance sector, and operates a tourism and hospitality business. Established relationships in industry.	Selected
Graeme Day	Over 50	M	Moss Vale	Former representative of the Business Chamber and similar industry groups, and former Councillor (Shoalhaven).	Strong EOI however relatively limited information provided and demographic well represented. Shortlisted
Kate Talty	Over 50	F	Bundanoon	Extensive experience in the corporate sector.	Strong EOI, however required more detail. Shortlisted
Lucinda Albert	Over 50	F	Colo Vale	Diverse experience in relevant industries (agriculture, tourism, health care, education, sustainability etc). Experience and knowledge of key economic drivers including education, arts and culture, sustainability and the NDIS.	Strong EOI, however not considered as strong as the applications that were selected. Shortlisted
Darri Hubers	Over 50	F	Hill Top	Passionate about the Highlands and small business. Working knowledge of procurement in Local Government.	Strong EOI, however not considered as strong as applications that were shortlisted and selected.

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

Name	Age	Gender	Location	Interests & Affiliations	Additional Comments
Christopher Blaxland	Over 50	M	Bowral	President Bowral Tennis, member of Southern Highlands Croquet Club. Previous member SH Botanic Garden	Selected
John Vild	Over 50	M	Bowral	Cycling	Selected
Lyn Collingridge	Over 50	F	Burradoo	Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens	Selected
Miles Lochhead	Over 50	M	Mittagong	Co-patron Southern Highlands Water Polo. Participated in wide range of sports	Selected
Peter Mitchell	Over 50	M	Bowral	Moss Vale Basketball, walking trails	Selected
Ryan Elphick	Under 50	M	Bundanoon	President Exeter Soccer Club, member Bundanoon Swimming Club. Coach Bundanoon cricket, volunteer Bowral Little Athletics	Selected
Stuart Perry	Under 50	M	Bowral	Ultramarathons, rock climbing, walking trails	Selected
Rebecca Duffy	Under 50	F	Burrawang	Member of Burrawang Hockey Club and Burrawang Tennis	Selected
Richard Batterley	Over 50	M	Moss Vale	Photography. Previous involvement with track & field athletics	Not selected – no current involvement or affiliation with sport and rec activities. Athletics already has degree of representation in selected EOIs.
Neville Mellish	Over 50	M	Hill Top	None listed	Not selected – other EOIs contained greater involvement or affiliation with sport and rec activities.

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

Matthew Rasheed	Over 50	M	Burradoo	None listed	Not selected – other EOIs contained greater involvement or affiliation with sport and rec activities.
Richard Colley	Over 50	M	Bundanoon	None listed	Not selected – other EOIs contained greater involvement or affiliation with sport and rec activities.
Barry Smith	Over 50	M	Bowral	None listed	Not selected – other EOIs contained greater involvement or affiliation with sport and rec activities.



## **9.4 Bowral Sewage Treatment Plant Upgrade - Negotiation Outcome With Recommendation To Award Construction Contract**

**Report Author:** Senior Project Manager

**Authoriser:** Director Service and Project Delivery

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### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to:

- present a summary of and the outcome of the direct negotiations undertaken with regard to the Bowral Sewage Treatment Plant Upgrade project (with the view of entering into a contract for construction); and
- seek authority to enter into a contract for the construction of the proposed works via a Council resolution.

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### **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION**

#### **THAT:**

1. Council accepts the offer from Haslin Constructions Pty Ltd for the Bowral Sewage Treatment Plant Upgrade Construction for a lump sum price of \$54,368,978 (inclusive of GST);
2. Council delegate authority to the General Manager to execute the contract and other documentation required to give effect to this resolution; and
3. Council endorses the proposed funding strategy.
4. Attachment 1 to this report be withheld from access to the media and public as required by section 11(3) of the Local Government Act 1993 for the following reason, Attachment 1 includes information that is confidential in accordance with s10A(2) of the Local Government Act 1993, and under clause 10(A)(2)(d)(i) – as it relates to commercial information of a confidential nature that would, if disclosed, prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied it.

---

### **REPORT**

#### **BACKGROUND**

At the Council meeting of 19 October 2022, a report was presented on the Bowral Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) Tender for Construction (RFT 6330/22.2). From that report it was resolved (MN 2022/230) that:

1. *Council, in accordance with Sections 178(1)(b) and 178(3)(b) of the Local Government (General) Regulations 2021, decline all tenders and delegates to the General Manager to enter into direct negotiations with suitable parties with the view of entering into a contract for the construction of the Bowral Sewage Treatment Plant.*
2. *Council, in accordance with Section 178(4)(a) of the Local Government (General) Regulations 2021, notes the reason for entering into direct negotiations with suitable parties on the basis that it is anticipated the same outcome will be reached if the tender was to be readvertised and that a satisfactory outcome will be reached through direct negotiations with suitable parties.*

- 3. Council notes that an external probity advisor will be appointed to oversee the negotiations of this contract.**
- 4. Following the completion of the negotiations, a further report be provided to Council on the outcomes of the negotiations and with the view to seek authority to enter into a contract via a resolution of Council.**

#### **REPORT**

Following the above resolution, Council entered into negotiations with Haslin Constructions Pty Ltd (Haslin) with the view of entering into a contract for the construction of the works. As detailed in the Council report of 19 October 2022, it was recommended to initially enter into direct negotiations with Haslin given that they were identified as the 'most advantageous tenderer for RFT 6330/22.2.

A team approach was taken with regard to the negotiations, led by suitably experienced senior staff.

Prior to commencing the negotiation process, a Negotiation Plan was prepared – as per the Office of Local Government's 'Tendering Guidelines' and the ICAC publication 'Direct Negotiations: Guidelines for Managing Risks'. The Negotiation Plan was approved by the General Manager together with providing the Director Service & Project Delivery delegation to lead the negotiations. The negotiation strategy was further developed with the preparation of a 'walk away' strategy.

It is noted that prior to commencing any negotiations, both Council and Haslin agreed to 'negotiation protocols' to be adhered to during the process. These protocols included understandings that both parties agree to:

- negotiate in good faith to determine if there is a mutually acceptable method for the delivery of this project;
- act ethically with integrity at all times;
- agree to treat all information, documents and matters associated with the negotiations as confidential; and
- expressly agree to keep discussions confidential within their respective organisations (including Council's engaged agents).

An initial meeting was held with Haslin on 23 November 2022, followed by a number of correspondences between Council and Haslin to explore and interactively discuss potential modifications to Haslin's original tender offer with the view to find potential cost savings that are mutually acceptable without impacting on the project objectives and outcomes.

It is noted that an independent (external) probity advisor (Walter Partners) oversaw the initial negotiation meeting and was copied into all subsequent correspondences between Council and Haslin.

The Principal Design Consultant has also reviewed technical aspects of Haslin's tender offer and subsequent negotiation information submitted by Haslin, providing opinions and advice on the information supplied. (This is also noting that the Principal Design Consultant has also signed a confidentiality/conflict of interest agreement with regard to this project.)

Given the confidential matters discussed in the negotiations process (including 'commercial in confidence' information provided by Haslin and their suppliers), this open report will only summarise the outcomes of the negotiations. However, a detailed report is provided as a confidential attachment - demonstrating that Council officers have been diligent in progressing the negotiations in an attempt to obtain a better outcome for Council, and that a 'value for money' outcome has been achieved.

This level of confidentiality is considered appropriate and in accordance with the recommendations in the Office of Local Government's *'Tendering Guidelines'* and the ICAC publication *'Direct Negotiations: Guidelines for Managing Risks'*.

To protect the interest of all parties, a probity report has been prepared by the independent (external) probity advisor (Walter Partners), stating that in their opinion 'the process undertaken by Council staff was fair, transparent, is capable of withstanding external scrutiny and was consistent with all probity principles and the Negotiation Plan'. The probity report is provided as an attachment.

#### **SUMMARY OF PRICE ADJUSTMENTS RESULTING FROM THE NEGOTIATIONS**

The commencement point for the negotiations was the original tender submission from Haslin, which offered a Tender Price of \$54,467,388 (including GST) to undertake the proposed works.

The report provided as a 'confidential attachment' discusses in detail the negotiations undertaken, and areas of potential cost saving explored. At a high level, the areas of potential cost savings explored included (but were not limited to):

- Review of costs attributed to line items in the tender schedule of prices to ensure that there were no mistakes or anomalies in the amounts offered – with none being identified when tender prices were rechecked by the proponent;
- Assessment of innovations and alternative equipment offered in the original tender submission;
- Potential opportunities to descope the project (including assessment of the impacts should such descope eventuate);
- Potential opportunities to defer some non-critical works (including assessment of the impacts of deferring such works); and
- Commercial aspects of administering the contract, including the potential of use of 'rise and fall' pricing mechanisms (such as aligning aspects of the works to adjustment indexes and currency fluctuations) in lieu of a 'fixed price' contract. As 'rise and fall' adjustments are subject to economic climate conditions, over a long construction period changes could be either positive or negative. Given the current market volatility, it was considered too risky to enter into a 'rise and fall' arrangement. This is noting that normal procedure is for government agencies to enter into fixed lump sum contracts – primarily so that there is some surety of cost.

The negotiation process allowed for resolution on technical aspects of equipment being offered to ensure compliance with the specification and ensure that the proposed equipment is 'fit for purpose'.

At the completion of the negotiations, ten (10) negotiated matters resulted in price adjustments, which are summarised as follows:

- Changes to the requirements associated with the long service levy, with a reduction to the Government charged levy rate resulting in a negative price adjustment;
- An innovation associated with the construction of two (2) major pumps stations – being an alternative construction methodology to address impacts on these structures due to groundwater - resulting in a negative price adjustment;
- An innovation associated with the aeration testing required for process proving of the biological reactors - resulting in a negative price adjustment;
- An innovation associated with offering an alternative backwash pump to that specified (noting that the pump being from the same 'preferred' equipment supplier, however a

different model has been verified as meeting specification requirements). This has resulted in a negative price adjustment;

- An innovation and scope change associated with modifications to the aerobic digester (existing infrastructure) which will negate the need to construct a thickener structure. This has resulted in a negative price adjustment;
- A scope change required to meet Endeavour Energy's requirements associated with the power supply upgrade has resulted in a minor positive price adjustment;
- A positive price adjustment required to account for cost escalations since the time of tender;
- A scope change associated with the handling of surplus material from construction excavations. Following the tendering of the Bowral project, the design for the Moss Vale STP has progressed and it has been identified in the earthworks calculations that there will be a 'cut to fill' shortage. Therefore, the surplus material from the Bowral project can supplement the fill shortage at the Moss Vale site. This will result in a positive price adjustment (to be treated as a schedule of rates items – to be measured on the volume of actual material transported to the Moss Vale site);
- A scope change associated with deferring some non-critical items associated with the demolition of some structures that will become redundant at the completion of the upgrade works. The demolition of these items will be treated as 'optional' works, with a decision at a later date as to whether these demolition works can be undertaken by Council after the completion of the new works (or by a more cost effective means). This has resulted in a negative price adjustment; and
- A scope change associated with the provision of 'Contract Works' insurance coverage. The contract documents were written with the 'Contractor' being responsible for initiating 'Contract Works' insurance. During the negotiations it was determined that Council (through their broker) was able to arrange more robust 'Contract Works' insurance coverage to protect the interests of both parties from financial risk should a 'major peril' event impact on the works during construction. This has resulted in a negative price adjustment to the offered contract price (albeit that Council will need to initiate this 'Contract Works' insurance).

The total sum of the agreed adjustments during the negotiations equals -\$98,410.

Therefore, the adjusted contract Price offered is summarised as follows:

Tender Submission Price Offered by Haslin	\$ 54,467,388.00
Sum of Agreed Negotiated Adjustments	- \$ 98,410.00
<b>Adjusted Contract Price Offered</b>	<b>\$ 54,368,978.00</b>

#### **ASSESSMENT OF THE NEGOTIATED OUTCOME**

The objective of the negotiation was to come to a suitable agreement with Haslin to allow the award of the contract. It was considered that the most desirable outcome (best case scenario) would be that at the outcome of the negotiations that Haslin's offered price to undertake the works is less than their original tender submission price.

Given the current economic climate and 'overheated' construction market, the negotiated adjusted contract price offered by Haslin represents 'value for money'.

It should be noted that during the negotiation process a number of technical aspects of equipment being offered have been resolved to ensure compliance with the specification and ensure that the proposed equipment is 'fit for purpose'

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## **COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION**

### **Community Engagement**

No community engagement was undertaken in either through the tender or the negotiation process.

### **Internal Communication and Consultation**

The Bowral STP Upgrade project has developed over a number of years with input from Council's Assets, Water Services, Project Delivery, Environment and Finance teams, as well as the Executive team.

It is noted that there was a need during the negotiation process to resolve technical aspects of equipment being offered to ensure compliance with the specification and ensure that the proposed equipment is 'fit for purpose'. Council's Water Services operational staff were consulted to assist in resolution of matters when necessary.

### **External Communication and Consultation**

No external communication or consultation was undertaken through the negotiation process.

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## **SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT**

### **Environment**

A detailed REF has been undertaken for the proposed Bowral STP Upgrade pursuant to the provisions of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, and Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000, with consideration to the likely impact of the activity on the environment, having regard to all relevant factors. The REF concluded that it is unlikely that there would be any significant adverse environmental impacts associated with the proposed works associated with the Bowral STP Upgrade.

### **Social**

The construction of the Bowral STP Upgrade will provide a robust and reliable sewage treatment facility that will protect public health and the environment.

### **Broader Economic Implications**

Given the scale of the project, during the construction phase there will be employment opportunities created, as well economic opportunities created for local suppliers and subcontractors.

The commissioning of the upgraded STP will allow for further residential development in the catchment, which will have a role in supporting long term employment creation.

### **Culture**

There are no cultural issues in relation to this report.

## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023

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### Governance

For the original tender for the construction of the proposed works, the tender was conducted in accordance with Part 7 of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005.

The subsequent negotiations have been undertaken in accordance with the recommendations in the Office of Local Government's 'Tendering Guidelines' and the ICAC publication 'Direct Negotiations: Guidelines for Managing Risks'.

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### COUNCIL BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

A budget allocation has been made in Council's Long-Term Financial Plan (LTFP) for the Bowral STP upgrade project. Due to inflationary pressures on materials, the allocated budget was revised, and the budget will be aligned to outcomes of these negotiations. Although it will not have a direct impact on the capacity to deliver this project, the longer-term implications of Sewer Fund will be revisited as part of reviewing the LTFP to ensure the Sewer Fund is financially sustainable.

The proposed funding and forecast cashflows for the Bowral STP are as follows:

Year	Bowral STP upgrade			
	Capital Grants	Section 64 Developer Contributions	Sewer Fund Reserve	Loans
2022/23	-	-	1,500,000	-
2023/24	4,000,000	760,000	15,740,000	-
2024/25	2,600,000	4,800,000	14,600,000	-
2025/26	-	-	6,000,000	5,000,000
2026/27	-	-	-	-
2027/28	-	-	-	-
Grand Total	6,600,000	5,560,000	37,840,000	5,000,000
Project Total				55,000,000

The proposed funding will be included in the draft 2023/24 Operational Plan along with funding proposals for the Moss Vale and Mittagong STP upgrades and is being funded from a number of different funding sources. There is currently \$1.5 million allocated in the 2022/23 budget to cover any incurred costs during this financial year and will be monitored accordingly.

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### RELATED COUNCIL POLICY

Council's Procurement Policy was used to inform the original tender process and the subsequent negotiations undertaken.

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### CONCLUSION

Although the Bowral STP is operating within its Environment Protection Licence, the plant is at its design capacity and there is a critical need for its augmentation to accommodate future growth in the catchment.



The upgraded STP will:

- provide treatment capacity to meet current and future population demands within the catchment;
- improve process and operational performance;
- provide treatment infrastructure to meet environmental objectives from the regulator and stakeholders; and
- protect the sensitive environment the STP discharges into which is part of the Sydney Drinking Water Catchment.

Following an open tender process for the construction of the proposed works, the price offered by the 'most advantageous' tender was well in excess of the pre-tender estimate. The tender prices received were reflective of the currently 'overheated' construction market (which has been widely reported as impacting on the pricing of larger scale projects in Australia). This volatility in construction industry pricing has been attributed to a number of factors including matters related to COVID-19; global supply chain issues; inflation uncertainties; currency fluctuations; materials cost increases; fuel prices; and skilled labour shortages.

Following Council's resolution to decline all tenders, a thorough negotiation process has been undertaken with Haslin Constructions Pty Ltd to explore and interactively discuss the potential for modifications to be made to Haslin's offer, with a major focus to explore possibilities for reduction adjustments to the submitted tender price.

At the completion of the negotiations, a number of negotiated matters resulted in price adjustments (both positive and negative). Given the current economic climate and 'overheated' construction market, the negotiated adjusted contract price offered by Haslin is considered to represent 'value for money'.

The negotiation process also allowed for resolution on technical aspects of equipment being offered to ensure compliance with the specification and ensure that the proposed equipment is 'fit for purpose'.

As such, it is recommended that Council accepts the offer from Haslin Constructions Pty Ltd for the Bowral Sewage Treatment Plant Upgrade Construction for a lump sum price of \$54,368,978 (inclusive of GST).

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#### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. CONFIDENTIAL REDACTED - CONFIDENTIAL Under Separate Cover. Bowral STP Upgrade Negotiations. This attachment is confidential in accordance with s10A(2) of the Local Government Act, 1993, under clause 10A(2)(d) - commercial information of a confidential nature [9.4.1 - 11 pages]
2. Probity Report - WSC - Bowral STP Upgrade - Negotiations [9.4.2 - 2 pages]

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

**WALTER PARTNERS**

21 February 2023

General Manager  
Wingecarribee Shire Council  
Civic Centre,  
68 Elizabeth Street,  
Moss Vale, NSW 2577

By email to [richard.batty@wsc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:richard.batty@wsc.nsw.gov.au)  
[c.c.ned.tripkovic@wsc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:c.c.ned.tripkovic@wsc.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Ms Miscamble

**PROBITY REPORT – Bowral STP Upgrade – Negotiation Phase**

Walter Partners was originally appointed to review and monitor the probity of the processes relating to the Invitation to Tender for design development (to the extent specified) and construction of the upgrade and augmentation works at the Bowral Sewage Treatment Plant. That process was terminated when it was decided that neither of the two tenders received provided value for money. Both tenderers achieved adequate technical scores. As a result, it was decided to enter into direct negotiations with the tenderer that had submitted the lower price which was Haslin Constructions Pty Ltd (Haslin).

Walter Partners engagement was extended to cover the negotiation phase of the procurement. This probity report relates to that negotiation process.

Our role involved monitoring and providing advice where required, during the negotiation process and providing an opinion on whether the process was undertaken by Council in a fair and transparent manner consistent with all probity principles, in accordance with the Negotiation Plan and being capable of withstanding external scrutiny if challenged.

In undertaking our role as probity advisors for this RFT we have:

- reviewed the Negotiation Plan and other documentation relating to the planning of the negotiation process;
- attended the initial negotiation meeting on 23 November 2022 via Teams;
- reviewed all emails between Council and Haslin and reviewed the documents attached to those emails;
- reviewed the Bowral STP Upgrade – Negotiations Summary and Bowral STP Upgrade Negotiations Spreadsheet Final;
- observed the negotiation process and were available to provide advice as required; and
- prepared this probity report on the negotiation process.

Liability Limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation

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**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

In our opinion, the process undertaken by Council staff was fair, transparent, is capable of withstanding external scrutiny and was consistent with all probity principles and the Negotiation Plan.

Please feel free to contact the undersigned if you wish to discuss this report.

Yours sincerely



Don Walter  
Director

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## 9.5 Berrima Road Deviation Project - Acquisition of Land

**Report Author:** Coordinator Property Services  
**Authoriser:** Director Corporate Strategy and Resourcing

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### PURPOSE

To seek Council resolution for the acquisition of stratum lots for road purposes. The acquisition is required for the Berrima Road Deviation Project.

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### OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

#### THAT:

1. The General Manager be delegated authority to negotiate with the owner of the stratum lots identified in registered Plan of Acquisition DP 1271421 being Lot 38 DP 1271421 and Lot 39 DP 1271421 ("the stratum lots") for acquisition for the purposes of road.
2. If the acquisition of the stratum lots referred to in resolution 1 cannot be negotiated by agreement Council resolves to:
  - (a) acquire the stratum lots by compulsory acquisition under section 177 and 178 of the *Roads Act 1993 (NSW)* and in accordance with the requirements of the *Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act, 1991 (NSW)*;
  - (b) approve the making of an application to the Minister of Local Government for the issue of a proposed Acquisition Notice under the *Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991 (NSW)* with respect to the stratum lots referred to in resolution 1 above.
  - (c) approve the making of an application to the Governor for the publication of an Acquisition Notice in the NSW Government Gazette under the *Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act, 1991 (NSW)* with respect to the stratum lots referred to in resolution 1 above.
3. Council affix the Common Seal of Council to any documents required to be sealed in connection with the acquisition of the stratum lots referred to resolution 1 AND THAT authority be delegated to the Mayor/Administrator and General Manager to execute those documents.
4. Authority be delegated to the General Manager to execute on behalf of Council any documents associated with the acquisition of the stratum lots referred to in resolution 1 that does not require the Common Seal of Council.

---

### REPORT

#### BACKGROUND

On 16 March 2022 Council resolved (MN 2022/54):

#### THAT:

1. *The General Manager be delegated authority to negotiate with the owner of land identified in Registered Plan of Acquisition DP1271421 being Lot 24 DP 1271421, Lot 26 DP 1271421, Lot 27 DP 1271421, Lot 28 DP 1271421, Lot 29 DP 1271421, Lot 30 DP 1271421 , Lot 31 DP*

*1271421 and Lot 32 DP 1271421 ("the land") for acquisition of the land for the purpose of road.*

2. *If the acquisition of the land referred to in Resolution 1 cannot be negotiated by agreement Council resolves to:*
  - (a) *Acquire the land by compulsory acquisition under sections 177 and 178 of the Roads Act, 1993 (NSW) and in accordance with the requirements of the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Terms) Compensation Act 1991;*
  - (b) *Approve the making of an application to the Minister of Local Government for the issue of a proposed Acquisition Notice under the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991 (NSW) with respect to the land referred to in resolution 1 above AND THAT Council request the Minister for Local Government approve a reduction in the notification period from ninety (90) days to sixty (60) days;*
  - (c) *Approve the making of an application to the Governor for the publication of an Acquisition Notice in the NSW Government Gazette under the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991 (NSW) with respect to the land referred to in resolution 1 above.*
3. *Council affix the Common Seal of Council to any documents relating to the acquisition required to be sealed in connection to acquisition of the land referred to in Resolution 1 together with any documentation associated with the Construction Access Licence Agreement AND THAT authority be delegated to the Mayor/Interim Administrator and General Manager to execute those documents.*
4. *Authority be delegated to the General Manager to execute on behalf of Council any documents associated with the compulsory acquisition of the land referred to in resolution 1 and the Construction Access Licence Agreement that does not require the Common Seal of Council.*

#### **REPORT**

In addition to the lots outlined for acquisition in the report to Council dated 16 March, 2022, two stratum lots are also required for acquisition.

These lots define the boundaries of the stratum airspace above the Boral railway line. Stratum subdivision is a type of Torrens title subdivision that creates 'stratum lots' which are lots that are limited in height or depth (or both).

In most cases, land shown in a deposited plan is unlimited in both height and depth. However, a plan may be registered whereby stratum lots are created to definite an upper and/or lower height limitation on lots to create new stratum lots.

Registration of the plan of acquisition DP 1271421 created the following stratum lots:

- Lot 38 - designated (W) in the plan is a stratum lot unlimited in height but limited in depth to a horizontal plane of RL 666.80m A.H.D and also being the common boundary of Lot 40 below.
- Lot 39 - designated (X) in the plan is a stratum lot unlimited in height but limited in depth to a horizontal plane of RL 666.90m A.H.D and also being the common boundary of Lot 22 below.

The above stratum lots are required for placement of the bridge structure across the airspace above the Boral railway corridor.

Resolution providing for acquisition of the stratum lots is required if Council wishes to gain the Minister's consent to issue a Proposed Acquisition Notice for the stratum lots.

Whilst Council continues to work with Boral to finalise the terms of acquisition and agreement, a resolution for acquisition of the stratum lots is required if agreement cannot be reached.

---

## **COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION**

### **Community Engagement**

This is an administrative matter between Council as roads authority and the affected owner of the land.

### **Internal Communication and Consultation**

Project delivery

### **External Communication and Consultation**

Property owner

Council's legal advisers

---

## **SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT**

### **Environment**

There are no environmental issues in relation to this report.

### **Social**

There are no social issues in relation to this report.

### **Broader Economic Implications**

There are no broader economic implications in relation to this report.

### **Culture**

There are no cultural issues in relation to this report.

### **Governance**

There are no governance issues in relation to this report.

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## **COUNCIL BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

The cost associated with acquisition of the additional stratum lots can be funded through the remaining budget allocation approved by Council on 10 April 2019 in relation to the Berrima Road Deviation Project. Compensation payable in relation to the acquisitions will be based on independent valuation reports obtained by Council.

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## **RELATED COUNCIL POLICY**

None identified.



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**CONCLUSION**

It is recommended Council formally approve the resolutions contained in this report to enable Council to finalise acquisition of the stratum lots if agreement cannot be reached with Boral.

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**ATTACHMENTS**

Nil

## **9.6 Southern Highlands Bridge Club Lease of Land Forming part of David Wood Playing Fields at Boardman Road Bowral - Update**

**Report Author:** Coordinator Property Services

**Authoriser:** Director Corporate Strategy and Resourcing

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### **PURPOSE**

To provide an update on the request received from the Southern Highlands Bridge Club for a one off payment of \$150,000 in return for Surrender of Lease of land forming part of David Wood Playing Fields, Boardman Road, Bowral.

---

### **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION**

#### **THAT:**

1. Council pay the Southern Highlands Bridge Club the sum of \$75,000 being a 50% portion of the requested \$150,000 (in line with the 50% lease term secured by the Bridge Club).
2. Council release further pro-rata payment, up to a maximum total of \$150,000, upon the Bridge Club securing further lease terms within Moss Vale Golf Club.
3. The payment of \$75,000 be contingent upon the Southern Highlands Bridge Club providing confirmation in writing of:
  - (a) the Lease period being offered by Moss Vale Golf Club; and
  - (b) their Surrender of Lease and Lease Agreement for the area of Council owned land at David Wood Playing Fields.

---

### **REPORT**

#### **BACKGROUND**

The Southern Highland Bridge Club's approach to Council requesting payment of \$150,000 was first reported to Council on 20 July 2022 at which time Council resolved (MN 2022/168):

*THAT delegated authority be granted to the General Manager to action the officer's recommendation subject to the General Manager being satisfied that any lease arrangements between the Moss Vale Golf Club and the Southern Highland Bridge Club are in the community interest.*

Following correspondence and discussions with the Bridge Club a further report was presented to Council on 16 November 2022. At the meeting on 16 November 2022 an email received from the Bridge Club that morning was tabled. The email from the Bridge Club requested that the report to the meeting of 16 November 2022 be deferred until the first Council meeting in the New Year.

The request was on the basis that ongoing negotiations with the Moss Vale Golf Club had been temporarily suspended, due to unforeseen circumstances relating to key golf club personnel. The Bridge Club advised that discussions in relation to the lease were anticipated to recommence in December 2022.

At the meeting on 16 November 2022 Council resolved (MN 2022/254):

## **AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

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*THAT in accordance with the request from the Southern Highlands Bridge Club the matter be deferred until the February meeting of Council on the understanding that the Council's delegation to the General Manager to finalise the matter dated 20 July 2022 be maintained.*

### **REPORT**

No further updates were provided by the Bridge Club following the email requesting the report to the meeting of 16 November 2022 be deferred. Accordingly, an email was sent to the Bridge Club on 27 January 2023 advising that a report was being resubmitted to the February meeting of Council and asking if there are any further updates. On 30 January 2023 the Bridge Club responded advising they would provide further information as soon as possible. They also advised they had not been able to meet with Moss Vale Golf Club this year due to holidays etc but were planning to do so that week.

On 8 February 2023 an email was received from the Bridge Club advising the Club had been unable to meet with the Golf Club until that week.

The Bridge Club advised that discussions regarding the future partnership with Moss Vale Golf Club was positive and they would endeavour to work on an appropriate agreement to make this happen and discussions would be ongoing until both clubs are in a position to present final agreements to their respective stakeholders.

The Bridge Club further advised that they believe any agreement is more likely to be in the form of a six (6) or 10 year agreement to occupy and they hoped to be in a position to provide more information for Council's March meeting.

Following receipt of the above information, the report to Council was deferred to March. The Bridge Club was, however, informed that no further extension would be provided.

On 7 March 2023 the Bridge Club met with the Administrator and verbally advised that they have been able to secure a five (5) year lease with a five (5) year option. The Administrator advised the Bridge Club that they should request a Heads of Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding for a further 10 year period for space within the Golf Club or equivalent space elsewhere following expiration of the initial 5 + 5 year lease.

Council's position has not changed since the report to Council on 16 November, 2022. To be satisfied that the lease arrangements between Moss Vale Golf Club and Southern Highland Bridge Club are in the community interest, Council requires a long lease term to be secured to enable release of the requested funds.

Council was initially advised that the Southern Highlands Bridge Club had negotiated a 10 year lease with a 10 year option with Moss Vale Golf Club.

When the initial statement of intended agreement from Moss Vale Golf Club was provided to Council, the term of lease outlined was for a period of five (5) years. This is a shorter period than initially advised (being only 50% of the previously advised term) and therefore the matter is reported back to Council for consideration of the options available.

### **OPTIONS AVAILABLE**

The options available to Council include:

1. As the term of the lease (including option) currently offered is for 50% of the initial proposed term, Council agree to pay to the Bridge Club the sum of \$75,000 being a 50% portion of the \$150,000 requested. The payment would be contingent upon the Bridge Club providing confirmation of their surrender of lease and surrender of lease agreement and any provision

of any other documentation required to bring to an end the agreement to lease of the area of Council owned land at David Wood Playing Fields.

Council can release further pro-rata payments, up to a maximum of \$150,000 upon the Bridge Club securing further lease terms with Moss Vale Golf Club.

2. Council reimburse the Bridge Club for substantiated direct costs incurred by the Bridge Club for the DA proposal. Council would require invoices/proof of payments to be submitted. The reimbursement payment would be contingent upon the Bridge Club providing confirmation of their surrender of lease and surrender of lease agreement and provision of any other documentation required to bring to an end the agreement to lease the area of Council owned land at David Wood Playing Fields.
3. Council decline the payment request made by the Bridge Club, on the basis that Council is not satisfied that the payment is in the community interest.

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## **COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION**

### **Community Engagement**

This is an administrative matter and no consultation has been undertaken.

### **Internal Communication and Consultation**

Executive

### **External Communication and Consultation**

Southern Highlands Bridge Club

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## **SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT**

### **Environment**

There are no environmental issues in relation to this report.

### **Social**

There are no social issues in relation to this report.

### **Broader Economic Implications**

There are no broader economic implications in relation to this report.

### **Culture**

There are no cultural issues in relation to this report.

### **Governance**

There are no governance issues in relation to this report.

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## **COUNCIL BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

In accordance with the resolution of Council on 8 December 2021 (MN 342/21) the General Manager is delegated authority to reimburse to the Club, agreed costs associated with the proposal including development costs and associated fees. Finance have advised that funding for any payment to the Bridge Club should be sourced from the Property Development Reserve.

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**RELATED COUNCIL POLICY**

None identified.

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**CONCLUSION**

The Bridge Club have verbally advised that they have secured a five (5) year lease with a five (5) year option with Moss Vale Golf Club. Council must ensure that any payment made to the Bridge Club is in the community interest.

This report recommends Council pay a 50% portion of the amount requested by the Bridge Club with further pro-rata payment to be made upon the securing of further lease terms with Moss Vale Golf Club (up to a maximum of \$150,000). Payment of the 50% (being \$75,000) is to be contingent upon the Bridge Club providing written confirmation of the term of the lease being offered by the Golf Club together with surrender of lease and surrender of agreement to lease for Council owned land at David Wood Playing Fields.

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**ATTACHMENTS**

Nil

## **9.7 Cnr Kangaloon Road and Horderns Road, Bowral - Proposed Lease of Road Reserve**

**Report Author:** **Property and Project Officer**

**Authoriser:** Director Corporate Strategy and Resourcing

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### **PURPOSE**

This report seeks Council approval to enter into a five (5) year Lease for a portion of road reserve at the corner of Kangaloon and Horderns Road, Bowral. The applicant is Tujilo Pty Ltd being the owner of 202 Horderns Road, Bowral ('the applicant').

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### **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION**

#### **THAT:**

1. Council approve a five (5) year Road Lease of part of the unformed road reserve at the Corner of Horderns Road and Kangaloon Road, Bowral to the applicant, Tujilo Pty Limited.
2. Rental in the first year in respect of the Road Lease be \$640.00 plus GST per annum in the first year, with annual increases at CPI (Sydney All Groups Index) or 5% whichever is greater.
3. The General Manager be delegated authority to execute the Road Lease.

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### **REPORT**

#### **BACKGROUND**

Council has been approached by the applicant seeking use of a small segment of the road reserve at the corner of Kangaloon and Horderns Road, Bowral for one (1) single business identification sign.

The applicant has recently commenced development of a proposed tourist facility at their property on Horderns Road, Bowral which is due for completion in late 2023/2024.

The applicant is seeking a road lease for part of the road reserve to install future business identification signage (subject to Council approval) to both promote and provide direction to its business.

#### **REPORT**

An agreement has been in place between Council and Milton Park Management Pty Ltd, owners of Milton Park Country House and Spa, for the use of a small segment of road reserve at the corner of Kangaloon Road and Horderns Road, Bowral for one (1) single business identification sign.

At its meeting on the 20 July 2022, Council resolved to formally approve an application to renew the lease of part of the road reserve to Milton Park Management Pty Ltd (MN2022/152):

#### **THAT**

1. Authority be delegated to the General Manager to negotiate the terms and conditions of a short term road lease of the areas shown in Attachment 1 to this report being part road

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

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*reserve, corner Kangaloon Road and Horderns Road, Bowral to 'Milton Park Country House Hotel and Spa' for a maximum period of five (5) years for an amount of \$640 + GST with annual CPI increases.*

- 2. Council place on public exhibition for a minimum of twenty eight (28) days the proposal to enter into the road lease referred to in Resolution 1 above.*
- 3. If there are no objections received during the period of public consultation, the General Manager and Interim Administrator/Mayor be delegated authority to execute the road lease referred to in Resolution 1 above AND THAT if any objections are received, a further report be submitted to a future meeting of the Council.*

During the period of public consultation for the above road lease to Milton Park Management Pty Ltd, Tujilo Pty Limited (the applicant in this report), approached Council to seek their own lease of part of the road reserve on the same terms and conditions as the road lease between Council and Milton Park Management Pty Ltd.

The area of road reserve subject to proposed road lease to Tujilo is approximately 55 sq m. **Attachment 1** to this report is an aerial showing the proposed area of lease (adjacent to the existing business identification signage for Milton Park located on site).

In accordance with Part 10 Division 2 of the *Roads Act 1993*, Council can grant a short-term lease of an unmade and unused section of road reserve.

Council has publicly exhibited its intention to enter into a Road Lease with the applicant for a period of 28-day period which closed on Friday 9 December 2022.

During the period of public exhibition, there were a total of three (3) submissions received. A summary of the submissions are outlined below:

No.	Summary of Submission	Response
W & R Long Bowral	<p>Concerns raised that there is no indication of the intended form of signage to be located within the new lease area.</p> <p>Concerns that the area of road reserve could be aesthetically unpleasing, an eye saw, if continued signage applications are allowed within the area of road reserve.</p> <p>Signs located on a sharp corner to draw the attention of motorists on a busy road could result in a major traffic hazard. Recent example are the recently erected signs around East Bowral directing traffic to Ngununggula Regional Gallery.</p> <p>The existing signage on site for Milton Park Country House, Hotel and Spa is relatively unobtrusive. The submitter is</p>	<p>The application is for the road lease only. Erection of signage including the type and style of signage is not authorised under the proposed lease. Approval of signage is subject to Council consent.</p> <p>These items of concern will be considered and addressed at time of assessment of any application for erection of signage.</p>



	concerned that any additional signage may have a negative impact on them as neighbours and could prove a danger to motorists at the T intersection of the roads.	
R & H Snelling Bowral	<p>There are several large subdivisions and major hotel development which produces traffic which largely feeds into this intersection. The proposed area of lease renders the whole road reserve unfit for the purpose of safety improvement which is badly needed.</p> <p>Possibly look at relocating the new lease area to the adjacent corner which is also a reserve.</p>	<p>The application is for the road lease only. Erection of signage including the type and style of signage is not authorised under the proposed lease. Approval of signage is subject to Council consent.</p> <p>These items of concern will be considered and addressed at time of assessment of any application for erection of signage.</p>
Yufan Australia Milton Country Hotel & Spa Park House Bowral	<p>The land subject to the application is currently maintained by the current lessees' company and business to ensure professional display of current signage.</p> <p>If the subject lease is granted for the purpose of business signage this does not meet Councils objectives to avoid proliferation and visual confusion in the area as per the intention of DCP (see DCP A6.17.3(e))</p> <p>Under the current Rural Lands DCP any 'offsite' signage is prohibited and for this reason a lease should not be granted for business signage which is prohibited (see DCP A6.17.3(l))</p> <p>Advertising and business signage must relate to an approved use carried out on the Land. (See DCP A6.17.6(b))</p> <p>The application does not identify the business for which the signage will be displayed. As such Council cannot determine and assess if the business use is an approved use.</p> <p>The existing use of various components of the business by the applicant have not been approved by Council. DCP</p>	<p>Maintenance of the lease space is the responsibility of the Lessee.</p> <p>The application is for the road lease only. Erection of signage including the type and style of signage is not authorised under the proposed lease. Approval of signage is subject to Council consent.</p> <p>These items of concern will be considered and addressed at time of assessment of any application for erection of signage.</p> <p>Any change to the use of a property for rating purposes is assessed and determined by Council's rates department and is not related to the road lease application.</p>

	<p>conditions have not been met e.g. parking.</p> <p>From prior Council meetings the applicant is not paying the business activity rating category evidencing the operation and compliance of an approved business.</p> <p>Based on the above issues, the application should not be approved as Council cannot verify if the use is an approved use on the land and the applicable business rating category is not being paid to support an application for business signage.</p>	
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It is proposed that the road lease be for a five (5) year term with rental payable to be \$640.00 per annum + GST as determined by independent market valuation provided by Herron Todd White dated 7 October 2022.

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## **COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION**

### **Community Engagement**

Public exhibition of the proposed road lease was advertised from Friday 11 November 2022 until close of business Friday 9 December 2022.

### **Internal Communication and Consultation**

Relevant Council officers and managers.

### **External Communication and Consultation**

The applicant.

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## **SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT**

### **Environment**

There are no environmental issues in relation to this report.

### **Social**

There are no social issues in relation to this report.

### **Broader Economic Implications**

There are no broader economic implications in relation to this report.

### **Culture**

There are no cultural issues in relation to this report.

**Governance**

There are no governance issues in relation to this report.

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**COUNCIL BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

None identified. The applicant will be responsible for all fees associated with the lease and will pay rental determined by market valuation.

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**RELATED COUNCIL POLICY**

Permanent Road Closure and Road Lease Policy.

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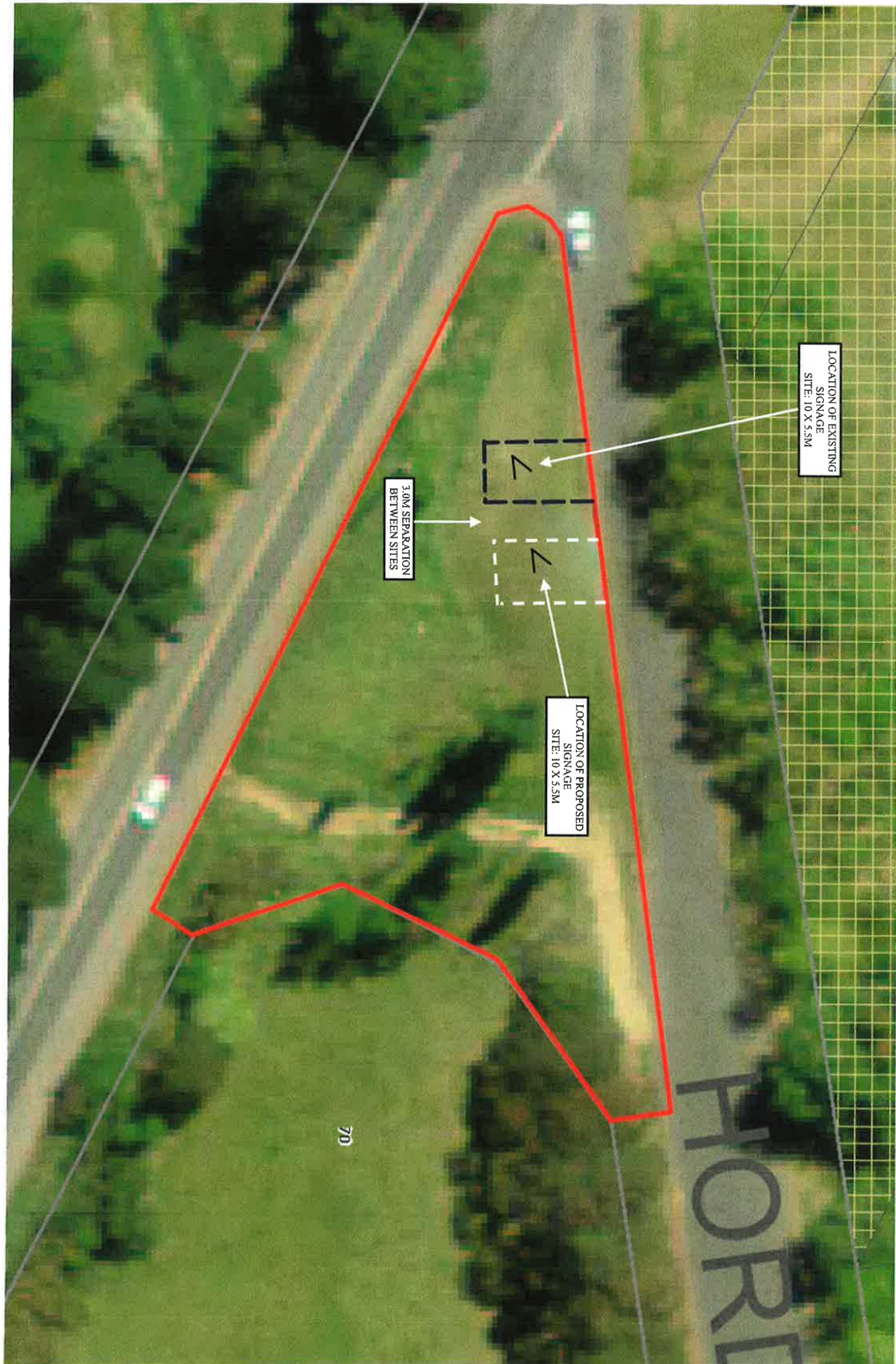
**CONCLUSION**

This report recommends that Council endorse a road lease for a five (5) year term to the applicant for lease of part of the road reserve located at the corner of Horderns Road and Kangaloon Road, Bowral.

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**ATTACHMENTS**

1. Attachment 1 - Aerial Lease Space [9.7.1 - 1 page]



## **9.8 Parliamentary Enquiry in Road Network Resilience - Joint submission**

**Report Author:** Manager Assets

**Authoriser:** Director Service and Project Delivery

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### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's formal endorsement of the submission made by the Canberra Region Joint Organisation to the Parliamentary inquiry into the implications of severe weather events on the national regional, rural and remote road network.

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### **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION**

#### **THAT:**

1. Council endorse the Canberra Region Joint Organisation submission to the Parliamentary inquiry into the implications of severe weather events on the national regional, rural and remote road network.

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### **REPORT**

#### **BACKGROUND**

On 1 December 2022, the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport launched an inquiry into the implications of severe weather events on the national regional, rural, and remote road network.

The inquiry is to examine road engineering and construction standards to strengthen road resilience against natural disasters, including the critical role of climate change trends and data to inform infrastructure standards.

The Committee has a stated concern about the increasing deterioration of the nation's road network, particularly in regional, rural, and remote areas. The extreme flooding events and other natural disasters across the nation have impacted many Australians, and the Committee is seeking to understand how road planning and construction may be improved to enhance road climate resiliency and support our communities.

#### **REPORT**

Through collaboration between member Councils and leadership with the Organisation itself, the Canberra Region Joint Organisation (CRJO) prepared a comprehensive submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry.

The submission provides a thorough review of disaster experience across the Region, the damage incurred, lessons learnt and recommendations for improved resilience.

This submission calls on the Australian Government to:

1. Increase the Australian Government's Roads to Recovery Program from \$500m to \$1B per annum on-going across Australia from 2023-24.

2. Index the annual Roads to Recovery allocations aligned to the construction cost index plus the growth in the road asset base to maintain funding levels in real terms.
3. Revise the Roads to Recovery Statement of Intent to include the development of local road resilience plans and the integration of natural disaster adaptation strategies into Council transport, asset management, long term financial plans, delivery programs and annual budgets.
4. Allow Councils to utilise Roads to Recovery funding to develop road resilience, road safety and road network management plans on a one-off 50/50 funding basis with a maximum limit of \$50,000 per Council (subject to increasing the overall funding).
5. Decouple the roads component of the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program and extend a new \$250m per annum Community Infrastructure Program 2025-26 onwards.
6. As a minimum, double the Australian Government's Bridge Renewal Program from \$85m per annum to \$170m per annum to target improving the resilience of local road routes (with a priority on replacing timber/hybrid bridges, causeways and other vulnerable structures).
7. Work with Local Government NSW and the NSW Government to negotiate the removal of emergency services levy charges from NSW Councils for the NSW Rural Fire Service, State Emergency Services and NSW Fire and Rescue in return for a commitment from Councils to develop formal road resilience plans and spending the equivalent amount of funds on the resilience of roads for a period of not less than five (5) years.
8. Develop new guidelines for the Natural Disaster Funding Arrangements to allow increased flexibility to build back better with fast efficient approval mechanisms suited to enabling timely recovery work post-disaster.
9. Work with State Governments to ensure improved arrangements are put in place for the provision and on-going care of roads servicing large scale green power projects such as wind and solar farms to reduce the cost shift to Local Government.
10. Work with State Governments to reduce red tape and provide additional Government resources to enable faster approvals for road infrastructure construction, maintenance and management, including during disaster recovery works.
11. Provide a financial incentive program to assist Local Government employ, train and develop new Cadet Engineers.
12. Work with professional bodies such as the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia to rebuild the capacity and skills of public works personnel within and servicing Local Government, with a specific focus on whole of road network planning, road drainage, road pavements and road surfacing.
13. Work with universities to increase the focus on whole of road network planning, road drainage, road pavements and road surfacing in future Engineering degree course curriculum.
14. Continue to support apprenticeship programs to develop new and existing workers in the operational skills required to build and maintain roads.
15. Support on-going research into cost effective resilient road materials and independent product review by specialized bodies such as the National Transport Research Organisation (previously ARRB) with appropriate guidelines and training programs to imbed this into practice.
16. Continue to collaborate with State and Local Governments, business and the international community to address longer term climate change.

The CRJO submission also identifies examples of the development of more resilient routes for roads and highlights the critical role some Council roads play in providing a more resilient transport network in parallel to the State highways network. Collaboration across Governments (including across State borders) to develop these alternate routes will accelerate positive outcomes in overall

community resilience and help drive economic development and higher productivity outcomes across regional Australia.

The submission also identifies a range of known proven resilience improvement techniques, including:

- i. Focusing efforts on the sound engineering improvements that will have a major positive benefit, the most important being bridges, stormwater structures and drainage improvement (including maintenance), road pavements and road resurfacing.
- ii. Ensuring all Councils have appropriate risk management policies and codes of practice in place linked to road hierarchy and available resources, to prioritise defects.
- iii. Rebuilding the skills and capacity of the existing and future workforce in the fundamentals of road network management, construction and maintenance.
- iv. Simple modifications to current road standards.
- v. Proven products with further research required on those being tested or under trial.
- vi. Wider use of technologies to improve the quality of outcomes.
- vii. Identification of increasing challenges to resilience (such as the adverse impacts of higher mass and autonomous vehicles, and the adverse impacts of large scale green power projects on local roads), and development of solutions.

It is therefore recommended that Council formally endorse the submission made by the Canberra Region Joint Organisation to the Parliamentary inquiry.

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## **COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION**

### **Community Engagement**

Nil

### **Internal Communication and Consultation**

Coordinator Assets Roads & Drainage

Specialist Engineer – Infrastructure Maintenance

### **External Communication and Consultation**

Canberra Regional Joint Organisation (CRJO)

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## **SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT**

### **Environment**

There are no environmental issues in relation to this report.

### **Social**

There are no social issues in relation to this report.

### **Broader Economic Implications**

There are no broader economic implications in relation to this report.

### **Culture**

There are no cultural issues in relation to this report.



**Governance**

There are no governance issues in relation to this report.

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**COUNCIL BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

There are no direct budget implications as result of this report. The outcomes of the CRJO report estimates the damage to Council's Road and Bridge network to be over \$90 million. Advocacy for grant funding (such as DRFA – Disaster Recovery Funding Agreements) will continue to expedite the road repairs whilst continuing to spend rates on road renewals.

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**RELATED COUNCIL POLICY**

Community Strategic Plan:

Goal 3.1 - We have an integrated and efficient network of public transport and shared pathways

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**CONCLUSION**

In December 2022, the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport launched an inquiry into the implications of severe weather events on the national regional, rural, and remote road network. The Canberra Region Joint Organisation (CRJO) has prepared a comprehensive submission to the Inquiry.

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**ATTACHMENTS**

1. CRJO Submission [9.8.1 - 64 pages]



## **CRJO Regional Submission**

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*Australian Government Inquiry into the Implications  
of Severe Weather Events on the National Regional,  
Rural and Remote Road Network*

# AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>3</b>
Background to the Inquiry.....	3
Disaster Experience Across the CRJO .....	4
The Role of Improved Infrastructure Planning and Funding Certainty .....	6
RECOMMENDATION .....	10
<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>2. State Highway Network &amp; Climate Resilient Transport Networks .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>3. Local Road Network Managed by Councils .....</b>	<b>2</b>
3.1 Local Road Ownership .....	2
3.2 Bridges and Major Structures .....	3
3.3 Other Lessons Learnt from Natural Disasters .....	12
3.4 Local Road Networks – Legacy Challenges and Solutions .....	24
3.5 The Role of Improved Infrastructure Planning and Funding.....	32
3.6 Road Engineering and Innovations in Product Development .....	37
<b>4. Conclusion .....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>Appendix A – Eurobodalla Critical Infrastructure Resilience Plan .....</b>	<b>50</b>

## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023

### Executive Summary

#### Background to the Inquiry

This submission to the Standing Committee is made on behalf of the Canberra Regional Joint Organisation of Councils (CRJO) and its member Councils. This submission addresses the specific focus of the Standing Committee inclusive of progressive adaptation of the existing road network to provide a more resilient future. The submission addresses the impacts of bushfire, flood, storms, drought, heat and coastal impacts.

This evidence-based submission highlights the specific challenges in the CRJO region. However, the solutions being implemented and/or proposed offer universal applicability for regional communities across Australia.

The Australian Government's House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport is inquiring and seeking to report on the implications of severe weather events on the national regional, rural and remote road network ([Inquiry into the implications of severe weather events on the national regional, rural, and remote road network – Parliament of Australia \(aph.gov.au\)](https://aph.gov.au/Inquiries/Inquiry%20into%20the%20implications%20of%20severe%20weather%20events%20on%20the%20national%20regional%20rural%20and%20remote%20road%20network)).

The inquiry includes a particular focus on:

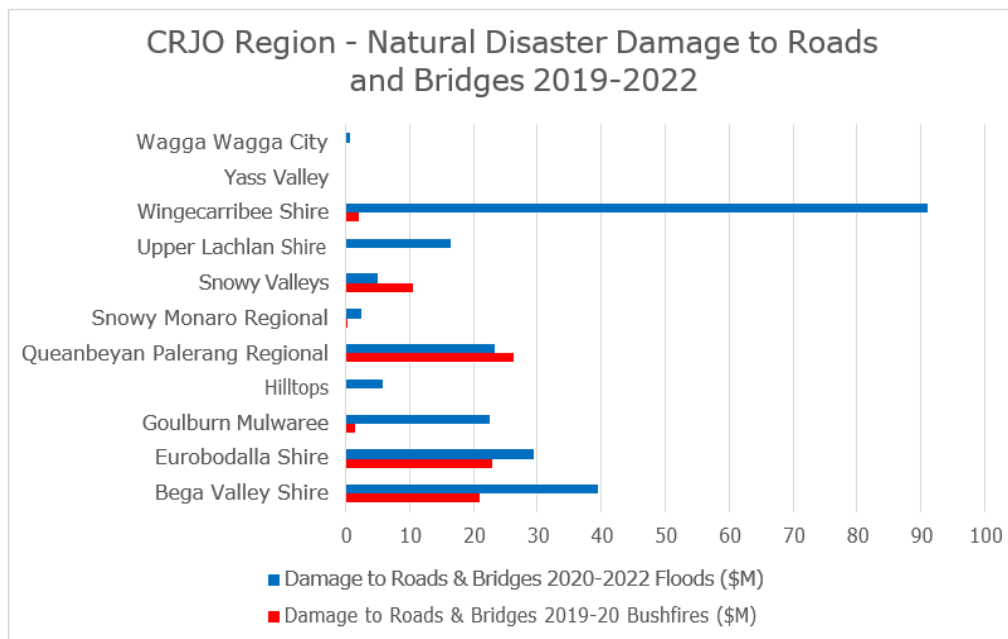
- Road engineering and construction standards required to enhance the resiliency of future road construction;
- Identification of climate resilient corridors suitable for future road construction projects;
- Opportunities to enhance road resilience through the use of waterproof products in road construction;
- The Commonwealth's role in road resilience planning and;
- Related issues

The focus of the Committee is consistent with the National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy ([National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy 2021 to 2025 \(dcceew.gov.au\)](https://www.dcceew.gov.au/national-climate-resilience-and-adaptation-strategy)). That strategy identifies the need to pro-actively adapt roads to better withstand the impacts of severe weather events and the changing climate. It also highlights the failure to act will see the economic cost of natural disasters across Australia increase from an estimated \$38B per annum in 2021 to \$73B per annum by 2060 (Deloitte Access Economics, reporting to the Australian Business Roundtable for Disaster Resilience and Safer Communities).

## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023

### Disaster Experience Across the CRJO

Councils within the CRJO have experienced **up to twelve declared natural disasters each** including preceding drought, bushfires, floods, storms and ocean storm impacts over the last three years. **These natural disaster events have resulted in approximately \$305M** in damage to road and related transport infrastructure across our region (excluding Snowy Valleys Council) as covered under the Government's Natural Disaster Funding Arrangements.



Graph E1 – Damage to Roads under Natural Disaster Funding Arrangements Across the CRJO from 1 July 2019 – 30 June 2022

#### Note:

Yass Shire Council suffered no disaster damage in this period but over \$4m in disaster damage in early 2023-24.

As a result of the 2019-20 bushfires, the lack of resilience of the road network resulted in:

- i) Significantly increased levels of risk to the community, first responders and early recovery personnel.
- ii) Significant challenges bringing in emergency services resources to assist with the response effort and/or providing connections from airports and/or sea to key destinations.

## **AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

- iii) Sadly, delays in retrieving deceased persons and in treating, rescuing or euthanising impacted stock and wildlife.
- iv) Extreme difficulties in safely evacuating community members (including tens of thousands of visitors over peak summer holiday periods).
- v) Major challenges during the disaster response including re-supply of essential food, fuel and other supplies and provision of safe access by other agencies to facilitate restoration of other critical infrastructure (such as power and telecommunications).
- vi) Major disruption to regional communities and our regional economy.
- vii) Significant adverse impacts in the short to medium term on the well-being of regional communities.
- viii) Extended periods of unplanned peak workloads creating a significant shortage supply for infrastructure design and delivery, and extreme fatigue within the local workforce during recovery.

The adverse impact of the multiple floods, wind and rain storms that followed the bushfires was extensive. This was exacerbated by the fragility of the scorched landscape immediately following the bushfires, with slopes vulnerable to extensive erosion, high levels of ash and debris washing into drains and watercourses disrupting normal drainage paths. Burnt trees also fell randomly creating high risk for the community and workers.

These subsequent events also significantly disrupted recovery efforts, often washing temporary recovery measures away and changing the scope of recovery works needing to be designed and delivered, as damage upon damage extended with each passing event. Administratively, this became a nightmare with each Council recording thousands of damage sites across their networks and trying desperately to track initial damage, extended damage and recovery efforts.

The extensive period of wet weather since February 2020 also resulted in a major decline in the condition of the overall local and regional road network with numerous road failures including potholes, edge break, shoves and other pavement failures. These types of damage are often not covered under the provisions of the natural disaster relief arrangements pushing the cost back to our member Councils with the scale of the task exceeding the financial capacity of most Councils.

Our member Councils are addressing these challenges in efficient and innovative ways. However, their efforts to create a more resilient future must overcome existing legacy deficiencies across the transport network, an on-going shortfall in funding, inefficient institutional arrangements between levels of Government, uncertain future funding models, on-going wet weather resulting in repeat damage &/or failures, and a shortage in skills and capacity within the LG and the consulting and contractor workforce.

## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023

Some Councils also highlight the adverse impact of large-scale green power schemes are having on existing local roads and as a result of new local road assets being 'gifted' to Councils without adequate funding to meet on-going costs. Whilst member Councils support the pursuit of measures to reduce climate change, the Australian Government should work with State Government to mitigate the cost shift to Local Government.

### The Role of Improved Infrastructure Planning and Funding Certainty

Critical to building future resilience is better infrastructure planning.

***Critical to good infrastructure planning and the development of skills and capacity of the workforce, is greater certainty of funding availability and quantum over the medium to long term. This is especially true in regional areas where the dependence on grants from State and Australian Governments is a large proportion of our Councils' funding source for work on roads.***

Improved infrastructure and long-term financial planning is often stifled as the grant funding beyond the current financial year is unknown or at best an uncertain estimate with uncertain timeframes.

The Australian Government needs to take a more significant role in ensuring Local Government is more sustainably funded, particularly across region Australia where the scale of the road asset base compared to population is disproportionately high.

The Australian Government should also provide greater guidance on the intent of funding provided to Local Government to ensure national objectives such as those laid out in the National Climate Resilience and Adaptation Strategy (and the National Road Safety Strategy [National Road Safety Strategy 2021-30 | Office of Road Safety](#)) are achieved. This would improve the return on investment for Government through a more resilient economy and reduced future disaster claims for repair of damage.

The CRJO has piloted the Resilience Blueprint project ([Blueprint for a Resilient South East NSW – Canberra Region Joint Organisation](#)).

An integral part of the Resilience Blueprint is the preparation of critical infrastructure resilience plans for each Council and/or the region. If funding support is provided by the Australian Government, **the CRJO stands ready to pilot the preparation of critical infrastructure resilience plans for each of its member Councils.**



## **AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

These infrastructure resilience plans would greatly assist communities and all levels of Government target specific actions to optimize investment of funds and take account of social equity issues. These plans should then be integrated into each Council's transport network, asset management, long term financial plans, delivery programs and annual budgets to ensure the required actions are achieved with regular progress reporting back to the community.

Improved infrastructure planning provides a more pro-active approach to improving resilience of road networks whilst offering:

- i) improved integration of road safety, capacity, freight, multi-modal and livability outcomes on a whole-of-network and/or route basis.
- ii) significant efficiencies in the delivery of works and better integration with other agencies to provide whole of Government efficiencies. For instance, improved infrastructure planning allows integration with other service providers to plan, locate or relocate services in advance, which otherwise cause projects delays and/or increased risk to worker safety during tight delivery timeframes to meet grant funding deadlines.
- iii) identification of opportunities to better align with other infrastructure (e.g., power, telecommunications, water, sewer (e.g., aligning a power line with a road corridor may make the power network more resilient)
- iv) better identification of the critical role specific roads play in providing a line of defense for fire-fighting purposes (e.g., a fire break, a place of last resort for backburning operations).
- v) improved optimization through the re-use of materials delivering cost savings, 'Circular economy' and environmental benefits.
- vi) reduced whole of Government costs, including limiting future costs to the Australian and NSW Governments under the Natural Disaster Funding Arrangements (NDFA).

An example of this advanced level of road network planning has been undertaken by Eurobodalla Shire Council through the development of the following strategic documents:

- i) Eurobodalla Road Safety Plan 2019-22 ([Eurobodalla-Road-Safety-Plan-2019-2022.pdf \(nsw.gov.au\)](#))
- ii) Northern Area Transport Network Plan ([Northern-Area-Transport-Network-Plan.pdf \(nsw.gov.au\)](#))
- iii) Draft Southern Area Transport Network Plan ([Draft Southern Area Transport Network Plan \(nsw.gov.au\)](#))
- iv) Eurobodalla Critical Infrastructure Plan (attached as Appendix A)

## **AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

This latter document addresses the resilience of critical infrastructure including roads, water, sewerage, telecommunications and power supply infrastructure based on the lessons learnt from the lived natural disaster experience during the 2019-20 bushfires and the subsequent ten declared natural disaster floods since. Earlier versions of this resilience plan guided recovery efforts at Eurobodalla. This lived experience has broader application to other regional communities and serves to highlight the many challenges during recovery. An example of the challenges outlined in this submission, and successes during recovery have been documented with photographs in report IR22/024 to the Eurobodalla Shire Council meeting held on 13 September 2022 (see Council's web-site at [Agenda of Ordinary Meeting - Tuesday, 13 September 2022 \(nsw.gov.au\)](#) and [Attachment-A-Infrastructure-Recovery.pdf \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)).

At the current time, most regional Councils are too highly dependent on individual grants, as opposed to certain levels of on-going grant funding support aligned to the scale of the asset. In regional areas, when combined with typically smaller rate bases and the limitations of NSW rate pegging, the current uncertain funding model is insufficient to address the resilience challenge, or indeed sound road network planning.

Many individual grant applications also fail to yield successful outcomes, creating significant inefficiencies within Government-to-Government funding arrangements. When grant success does come, the funding profile for regional Councils is often lumpy with significant peaks that prove difficult to resource, leading to project delays and frustration from all parties working under this current inefficient individual grant funding model. Councils can also struggle to meet matching funding requirements on these larger scale projects.

The Roads to Recovery Program is by far the most successful and efficient targeted grant funding model between the Australian Government and Local Government, however the on-going funding levels are insufficient to address the scale of the future resilience challenge.

Additionally, NSW Councils contribute significantly financially as well as operationally to State Government emergency management agencies, being the NSW Rural Fire Service, NSW State Emergency Services and NSW Fire & Rescue. This is an arrangement based only on history, with poor alignment to the core functions of Councils and significant inefficiencies for all parties. The NSW Roads and Transport Directorate Roads Congress resolved to advocate to move this cost burden of these NSW Government agencies back to the NSW Government. This has also been a policy platform of LGNSW and many Councils directly across the State. In return, Councils could agree to directing the equivalent funds for a period of not less than five years toward improving resilience of the transport network. As the current expenditure on these NSW Government emergency services agencies is substantially an operational expense for Local Government, removing these costs from Councils would allow more sustainable funding and a greater borrowing capacity within Councils to accelerate resilience improvements to the transport network. This would ultimately reduce the cost of future damage in natural disasters and the costs needing to be borne by the NSW and Australian Governments under the NDFA.

## **AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

In NSW, many roads and tracks used to access individual properties are Crown roads owned by the NSW Government. Crown Lands are not resourced to provide any engineering expertise and/or resources to recover these roads. The NSW Government often looks to Councils to assist, despite Council resources typically being stretched well beyond capacity to address the thousands of challenges on their own local road network. The Australian Government should work with the States to develop an improved response and recovery arrangement for these roads, preferably through NSW Government agencies (e.g., Transport for NSW and/or NSW Public Works Advisory).

The universal experience (the crisis) over the last three years is perhaps best summarized by one practitioner from our member Councils who stated:

*"Since 2019, Council has had 9 storm/flood events and the constant wet conditions along with these events has meant a logical or structured maintenance schedule has been disregarded and we have been acting purely reactively and constantly reassessing which job is the highest priority for safety and resilience (priorities seemed to change every other day). Resourcing of these works and the organising of these works has been one of our major struggles, including our administration staff being overwhelmed with road maintenance requests from residents, a lack of asset inspectors to provide feedback and information, a lack of staff to manage natural disaster funding requirements and processes and a lack of crews and plant to keep our large road networks at a safe and serviceable level. It has been difficult to increase permanent staff numbers with the uncertainty of so much additional work and funding into future years and unfortunately, we cannot seem to get many (if any) suitable casual staff. While it has not been ideal conditions to undertake construction projects, we have still had to postpone several Capital Projects to fall construction staff and plant back to maintenance. This has caused issues and additional workload in regards to existing funding deadlines for these projects.*

*Additionally, we try to utilise contractors wherever possible to supplement our own workforce, but the availability of suitable contractors, while understandable, has been a real issue in getting jobs done in a timely and efficient manner. Procurement of goods and services has also been a major issue in getting work done when required, the procurement process for larger value works seems to take up valuable time both in manpower and delaying works. Greater funding certainty would most definitely assist council's Infrastructure department to staff appropriately and fund a structure that will be sustainable and provide an acceptable service level."*

***In summary, greater funding certainty and more efficient Government to Government funding models are critical to:***

- the efficient development and delivery of infrastructure resilience, road safety, freight, capacity and livability outcomes prioritized on a whole of network basis and;***

## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023

- *the development of a more sustainable workforce with skills and capacity needed to deliver high quality and timely outcomes.*

### RECOMMENDATION

This submission calls on the Australian Government to:

- Increase the Australian Government's Roads to Recovery Program from \$500m to \$1B per annum on-going across Australia from 2023-24.
- Index the annual Roads to Recovery allocations aligned to the construction cost index plus the growth in the road asset base to maintain funding levels in real terms.
- Revise the Roads to Recovery Statement of Intent to include the development of local road resilience plans and the integration of natural disaster adaptation strategies into Council transport, asset management, long term financial plans, delivery programs and annual budgets.
- Allow Councils to utilize Roads to Recovery funding to develop road resilience, road safety and road network management plans on a one-off 50/50 funding basis with a maximum limit of \$50,000 per Council (subject to increasing the overall funding).
- Decouple the roads component of the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program and extend a new \$250m per annum Community Infrastructure Program 2025-26 onwards.
- As a minimum, double the Australian Government's Bridge Renewal Program from \$85m per annum to \$170m per annum to target improving the resilience of local road routes (with a priority on replacing timber/hybrid bridges, causeways and other vulnerable structures).
- Work with Local Government NSW and the NSW Government to negotiate the removal of emergency services levy charges from NSW Councils for the NSW Rural Fire Service, State Emergency Services and NSW Fire and Rescue in return for a commitment from Councils to develop formal road resilience plans and spending the equivalent amount of funds on the resilience of roads for a period of not less than five (5) years.
- Develop new guidelines for the Natural Disaster Funding Arrangements to allow increased flexibility to build back better with fast efficient approval mechanisms suited to enabling timely recovery work post-disaster.
- Work with State Governments to ensure improved arrangements are put in place for the provision and on-going care of roads servicing large scale green power projects such as wind and solar farms to reduce the cost shift to Local Government.
- Work with State Governments to reduce red tape and provide additional Government resources to enable faster approvals for road infrastructure construction, maintenance and management, including during disaster recovery works.

## **AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

- Provide a financial incentive program to assist Local Government employ, train and develop new Cadet Engineers.
- Work with professional bodies such as the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia to rebuild the capacity and skills of public works personnel within and servicing Local Government, with a specific focus on whole of road network planning, road drainage, road pavements and road surfacing.
- Work with universities to increase the focus on whole of road network planning, road drainage, road pavements and road surfacing in future Engineering degree course curriculum.
- Continue to support apprenticeship programs to develop new and existing workers in the operational skills required to build and maintain roads.
- Support on-going research into cost effective resilient road materials and independent product review by specialized bodies such as the National Transport Research Organisation (previously ARRB) with appropriate guidelines and training programs to imbed this into practice.
- Continue to collaborate with State and Local Governments, business and the international community to address longer term climate change.

This submission also identifies examples of the development of more resilient routes for roads and highlights the critical role some Council roads play in providing a more resilient transport network in parallel to the State highways network. Collaboration across Governments (including across State borders) to develop these alternate routes will accelerate positive outcomes in overall community resilience and help drive economic development and higher productivity outcomes across regional Australia.

The submission also identifies a range of known proven resilience improvement techniques, including:

- i) focusing efforts on the sound engineering improvements that will have a major positive benefit, the most important being bridges, stormwater structures and drainage improvement (including maintenance), road pavements and road resurfacing.
- ii) ensuring all Councils have appropriate risk management policies and codes of practice in place linked to road hierarchy and available resources, to prioritise defects.
- iii) rebuilding the skills and capacity of the existing and future workforce in the fundamentals of road network management, construction and maintenance.
- iv) simple modifications to current road standards.
- v) proven products with further research required on those being tested or under trial.
- vi) wider use of technologies to improve the quality of outcomes.
- vii) identification of increasing challenges to resilience (such as the adverse impacts of higher mass and autonomous vehicles, and the adverse impacts of large scale green power projects on local roads), and development of solutions.

# AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023

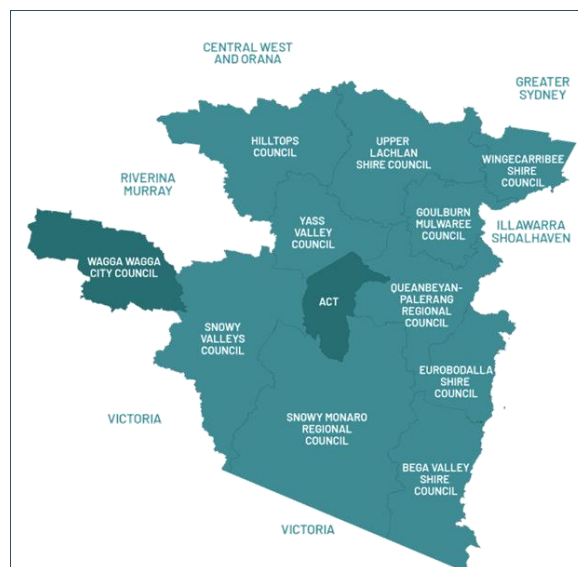
## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Canberra Region Joint Organisation (CRJO) was proclaimed a corporate entity within the NSW Local Government Act on 1 July 2018. The Canberra Regional Joint Organisation covers eleven (11) member councils with representation from the ACT Government and Canberra Airport.

The CRJO region is a unique and diverse geographic region which stretches from the south-west slopes, through the Sydney-Canberra corridor across to the coastal regions of Eurobodalla down to the Sapphire Coast and then up to the Snowy Mountains.

The region has a population, including the ACT, exceeding 800,000 people with a total area of 92,000km<sup>2</sup>, and a gross regional product (GRP) of \$9.82 billion. The South-East and Tablelands Region population is expected to continue to grow by 1% annually. The region will also continue to attract tens of millions of visitors each year as the growth of Canberra and south-west Sydney continues to outstrip expectations and our regional tourism product continues to expand and diversify.

The region also supports airports at Canberra, Merimbula, Moruya and Cooma with an expanding port at Eden. The region is also the base of the largest scale electricity generation project in Australia with the Snowy Hydro 2 development; an infrastructure scheme of national importance. There are also numerous wind and solar power projects across the region.



Canberra Region Joint Organisation

**2. STATE HIGHWAY NETWORK & CLIMATE RESILIENT TRANSPORT NETWORKS**

The inquiry seeks to identify more climate resilient transport routes. This reflects the overall function of the transport network regardless of road ownership required to keep business and the economy moving. This becomes even more critical when responding to natural disasters and especially during periods of evacuation.

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The State Highways across the region provide critical transport, supply and visitor connectivity for our region including to/from the Australian Capital Territory, Sydney and cross border links into Victoria.

The State highway network failed to deliver a resilient solution during the 2019-20 bushfires with extensive periods of closure causing major disruption to response and evacuation and to re-supply of fuel, food and other supplies. Aside from the direct impacts of bushfire and related smoke, the major cause of highway closure was the resultant falling and/or risk from burnt trees and damage to ancillary infrastructure (e.g., signs, protective fencing and the like). The efforts of Transport for NSW, member Councils and Forestry NSW to manage the network and re-open the highways during the bushfire response was nonetheless outstanding in the circumstances.

Some resilience work has been undertaken since by Transport for NSW in accord with recommendations 31 and 32 of the NSW Bushfire Inquiry. However, significant additional work and changes to maintenance practices are needed if resilient highways are to be secured for future natural disasters, particularly through bushland areas such as along the Princes Highway south of Nowra to the Victorian border and through the Snowy Mountains. Across the border, the Victorian Government is to be commended for taking heed of the lessons learnt and undertaking more extensive work on some highways to improve future resilience (e.g., along the Princes Highway).

These highways have also suffered significant damage and/or inundation (coastal and flooding) as a result of the on-going natural disaster floods, ocean inundation events and extended periods of rainfall during the repeat La Nina weather events.

The east-west escarpment crossings have proved particularly vulnerable, requiring extensive geotechnical stabilization work to better secure these critical highways links to Canberra, western NSW, the Hume Highway, Sydney and Melbourne.



## **AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

Pavement failures (including potholes) have been extensive and are steadily being addressed by Transport for NSW and member Councils (who undertake work for Transport for NSW on some highways).

The NSW Government has included improving the resilience of the State highway network in collaboration with other levels of Government in the Future Transport Strategy 2021 ([Future Transport Strategy: Our vision for transport in NSW](#)) and the Draft South East and Tablelands Transport Plan 2022 ([Draft South East and Tablelands Regional Transport Plan \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)).

This includes building resilience into future route selection and design of major highway upgrades such as the Barton Highway and Princes Highway. This work must continue to include taking account of bushfire, floods and coastal inundation events and the impacts of longer-term climate change.

For example, any new bypass of Moruya should provide a high level of flood resilience across the Moruya River and floodplain. The decisions on such matters must take account of other critical infrastructure such as the Eurobodalla Regional Hospital and Eurobodalla Regional Collocated Emergency Services Precinct (which are being located in south Moruya and provide regional scale services requiring certainty of road transport access).

The Australian Government should therefore include natural disaster resilience in any funding agreement with the NSW Government (and other States) to ensure these matters must be addressed during planning, design and construction of major transport infrastructure such as highway construction and other critical infrastructure, rather than assume these matters will be addressed.

There are also opportunities to better integrate proposed future highway routes with major power transmission lines (e.g., future highway realignment from Batemans Bay to Mogo) which would improve the resilience of highway and reduce the overall environmental footprint of major infrastructure service corridors (during both construction and on-going maintenance).

Resilient solutions for the movement of people and goods into and out of our region should consider alternate parallel Council owned roads, taking account of the lessons learnt from these natural disasters.

Examples of this include the coastal routes of Beach Road/George Bass Drive/North Head Drive and Bermagui Road both of which performed major roles when the Princes Highway was closed during the bushfires. This was due to the differences in bushfire behaviour resulting from the favourable humidity and wind direction off the Pacific Ocean compared to the western areas of this coastal strip.

## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023



The need to maintain and upgrade these Council owned routes has already been identified by Bega Valley and Eurobodalla Shire Councils. These matters have also been supported by the Local Emergency Management Committee, the Illawarra South Coast Regional Emergency Management Committee and the Far South Coast Bushfire Risk Management Committee.

**Key alternate routes to the existing highways for the movement of people and freight during natural disasters identified by CRJO Councils include those shown in Table 2.1 below.** The majority of these roads are classified as regional roads under the NSW road hierarchy (not to be confused with the Australian Government term roads of strategic importance).

In the western area of the CRJO region, these routes may also act as alternate routes when the rail line is unavailable due to either disaster damage, major incident and/or upgrades works on the rail network.

Council	Critical Alternate Routes for Transport Resilience
Bega Valley Shire	Bermagui Road, Sapphire Coast Drive/Arthur Kaine Drive Mt Darragh Road, Nethercote Road, Dr George Mountain Road, Imlay Road (NSW Forestry Road)
Eurobodalla Shire	Glenella Road/Beach Road/George Bass Drive/North Head Drive route, Bermagui Road
Goulburn Mulwaree	Oallen Ford Road – Windellema Road – Jerrara Road – Mountain Ash Road Oallen Ford Road – Sandy Point Road – Cullulla Road – Lumley Road – Bungendore Road
Hilltops	Rugby Road, Murring Gap Road, Jugiong Road, Rye Park Road
Queanbeyan Palerang Regional	Nerriga Road (MR92) Captains Flat Road, Cooma Road, Old Cooma Road (MR270 Braidwood to Queanbeyan)
Snowy Monaro Regional	Burra Road, Bobeyan Road, Middlingbank Road, Delegate Road, Snowy River Way, Maffra Road, Jerangle Road, Barry Way, Yaouk Road
Snowy Valleys	Alpine Way, Tooma Road, Yaven Creek Road, Taradale Road
Upper Lachlan Shire	Nil
Wingecarribee Shire	Nil

## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023



Council	Critical Alternate Routes for Transport Resilience
Yass Valley	Yass Valley Way
Wagga Wagga City	Nil

Table 2.1 – Critical Alternate Route to Highways for Transport Resilience  
(Provided by Councils)

### 3. LOCAL ROAD NETWORK MANAGED BY COUNCILS

#### 3.1 Local Road Ownership

The local road network is critical to keeping communities connected across the CRJO region with few alternate transport options available. In NSW approximately 90% of the road network is under the care and control of local Councils (about 80% of the road network Australia wide). CRJO Councils currently look after 18,793km of local and regional roads worth approximately \$10 billion.

Council	Regional Sealed Roads (km)	Regional Unsealed Roads (km)	Local Sealed Roads (km)	Local Unsealed Roads (km)
Bega Valley Shire	232.7	18.8	583	694.5
Eurobodalla Shire	57.6	Nil	562.2	399.2
Goulburn Mulwaree	235	Nil	567	377
Hilltops	299.8	Nil	943	1503.9
Queanbeyan Palerang Regional	202	48.6	756.7	685
Snowy Monaro Regional	254	72	675	1653
Snowy Valleys	142.9	25.3	590.4	436.7
Upper Lachlan Shire	219.4	35.1	544.3	1120.5
Wingecarribee Shire	95.9	38.9	782.3	360.3
Yass Valley	157.5	15.6	503.6	582.4
Wagga Wagga City	174.6	0	1052.6	1095
<b>Total Region</b>	<b>2071.4</b>	<b>254.3</b>	<b>7560.1</b>	<b>8907.5</b>

Table 3.1.1 - Road Length and Type (30 June 2022)

The road network and supporting stormwater systems make up about 80-90% of the infrastructure value within CRJO Council's General Fund asset base.

Evidence from Council's indicates the sealed local road network is increasing by up to 1% each year, or up to 10% each decade. **The Australian Government therefore needs to recognize that allocations under**



programs like Roads to Recovery need to be adjusted annually by the construction cost index plus the anticipated growth in the local road network to keep pace with the actual cost increases placed on local Councils.

The NSW Government is currently considering the outcomes of the Regional Road Review and may transfer ownership of up to 15,000km of local regional roads back into the State Road network. The recommendations from the appointed NSW Government Advisory Panel are currently with the NSW Minister for Regional Transport and Roads for determination.

Within the CRJO region there are also extensive networks of roads, mostly unsealed within the State Forests and National Parks. A small percentage of residents access their properties via roads maintained by these agencies, or via NSW Government owned Crown roads. More recently the NSW Government has recognized the impact of natural disasters on the Forestry roads, allocating an additional \$60m over three years to Forestry NSW to address the worst of the repairs across their network. Key challenges include fallen and high-risk trees, intense regrowth of wattle and eucalypt species along roads, burnt timber bridges and structures, significant flood damage including pavement damage and loss of culvert structures.

### **3.2 Bridges and Major Structures**

The resilience of bridges and major structures (including retaining walls) is critical to sustaining connectivity of local transport routes and the overall transport network.

When these bridges and structures are destroyed or damaged in natural disaster, this also has a major impact on the time, extent of work and cost of recovering the remainder of the transport network including the limitations posed in accessing damaged roads beyond bridge sites. The loss of key structures can also:

- i) adversely impact rebuilding of homes and reconnecting communities, as occurred post the 2019-20 bushfires.
- ii) limit access required to restore other critical infrastructure such as power, telecommunications, water and sewerage systems.

Therefore, particular attention is needed to ensure bridges and major structures are suitably designed to provide resilience to natural disasters. Table 3.2.1 below shows the major structures across local road networks within the CRJO region at 30 June 2022.

## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023



Council	Timber Bridges	Concrete Bridges & Major Structures	Causeways	Culverts >1200mm
Bega Valley Shire	36	124	73	343
Eurobodalla Shire	16	44	19	56
Goulburn Mulwaree	1	39	72	159
Hilltops	4	90	2	NP
Queanbeyan Palerang Regional	17	147	59	250
Snowy Monaro Regional	37	90	127	244
Snowy Valleys	5	126	3	119
Upper Lachlan Shire	3	41	305	103
Wingecarribee Shire	6	51	14	48
Yass Valley	1	54	32	390
Wagga Wagga City	2	58	NP	NP

Table 3.2.1 – Bridges and Major Structures (30 June 2022)

Note: NP = not yet provided

In the 2019-20 bushfires the loss of timber and hybrid bridges significantly impacted the safety and effectiveness of firefighting efforts, evacuation of community and early recovery efforts. This is an example of how the changing climate and prolonged drought combined with the reduced quality of bridge timbers now available, means that timber bridge structures are more vulnerable to damage in natural disasters.

A total of 28 timber bridges across our region burnt requiring full replacement. These timber bridges have been or are being replaced with concrete bridges under the Natural Disaster Funding Arrangements as a result of the bushfires. Photos 3.2.1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 below (courtesy of Bega Valley Shire Council and Eurobodalla Shire Council) provide examples of the impacts of losing a bridge to bushfire followed by repeat flood events.

A further 3 timber bridges required replacement as a result of the flood damage since February 2020.

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**



Photo 3.2.1 – Pericoe Bridge Pericoe Road, Towamba destroyed  
in the 2019-20 bushfires (courtesy of BVSC)





Photo 3.2.2 – Pericoe Bridge Pericoe Road, Towamba (courtesy of BVSC)  
replaced with a new bushfire resilient single lane concrete bridge





Photo 3.2.3 – Belimbla Bridge Eurobodalla Road was one of 18 timber bridges burnt in Eurobodalla during the 2019-20 bushfires severing access to the western agricultural, Forestry and National Parks area of Eurobodalla (courtesy of ESC).



Photo 3.2.4 – Belimbla Bridge Eurobodalla Road (courtesy of ESC) Repeat flood disasters destroyed temporary access structures multiple times.  
Note the depth of ash debris on the banks of Belimba Creek.



Photo 3.2.5 – Belimbla Bridge Eurobodalla Road Belowra (courtesy of ESC)  
New bushfire resilient concrete bridge – an innovative Inquik structure  
built by regional contractors

Numerous culvert structures and causeways were damaged during floods either due to overtopping, blockage and/or erosion of inlets and outlets. Many culverts are under- sized for the catchments flowing to the road and should be upgraded when funding permits. There is also a significant shortfall in the number of transverse drainage pipes leading to damage to road pavements, table drains and batters. In some instance this has also led to major landslides on the low side of the road.

**Addressing the inadequacies of transverse, longitudinal stormwater and sub-surface drainage would have a major positive benefit to the resilience of local roads, and in many cases can be achieved in a cost-effective manner. Improving the skills and capacity of the sector in this regard should also be a priority focus for training.**

Many causeways should also be upgraded to bridges to provide a reasonable level of service and prevent roads washing into downstream waterways. Upgrading causeways and other major structures would also assist the migration and survival of native fish species and avoid the need for expensive fish ladders.





Photo 3.2.6 - typical under-sized culvert structure that is regularly overtopped causing repeat flood damage (courtesy of Upper Lachlan Shire Council).  
A new well designed larger culvert structure could be installed at relatively low cost to mitigate future damage, loss of farm access and future NDFA claims.

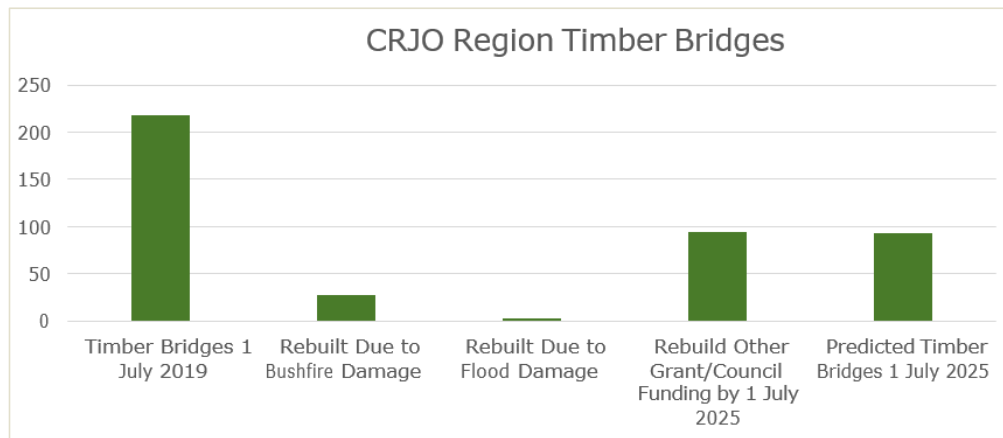


Photo 3.2.7 – typical causeway structure in very poor condition (photo courtesy of Upper Lachlan Shire Council). To build future resilience, structures like this one should be prioritized for replacement with a suitably sized bridge.



CRJO Councils have already identified timber bridges and other major structures such as culverts as a major risk to the local road network. Councils have allocated their own funding where able and pro-actively pursued grant funding to replace timber bridges with confirmed funding commitments allowing further replacement and/or upgrades as shown in Table 3.2.2 below.

The recent announcement by the Australian Government to provide \$1.64m in funding to replace the Namina Road causeway at Jeir Creek near Yass is welcome news. The CRJO encourages the Australian Government to expand this type of allocation to address the regular loss of connectivity at causeways across the region.



Graph 3.2.1 – Change in the Timber Bridge Network Since 1 July 2019

Graph 3.2.1 above demonstrates the effectiveness of our Councils in delivering vastly improved resilience when funding is provided. This is despite the numerous challenges during disaster recovery (including dealing with construction of new bridges in waterways during repeat flood disasters).

The extensive positive impact of the NSW Government's Fixing Country Bridges Program supported by the Australian Government's Bridge Renewal Program can be seen above and in Table 3.2.2 below. By 30 June 2025, based on committed funding, the number of timber bridges across the CRJO will be reduced from 218 down to 93.

## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023



Council	Timber Bridges 30 June 2019	Timber Bridges on Roads Replaced Due to Bushfire Damage	Timber Bridges Replaced Due to Flood Damage	Timber Bridges Replaced under FCB, BRP, LRCIP and/or Council to 30 June 2025	Timber Bridges Residual Expected 30 June 2025
Bega Valley Shire	58	10	0	21	27
Eurobodalla Shire	34	16	1	10	7
Goulburn Mulwaree	1	0	0	1	0
Hilltops	4	0	0	1	3
Queanbeyan Palerang Regional	35	2	2	9	22
Snowy Monaro Regional	43	0	0	17	26
Snowy Valleys	6	0	0	2	4
Upper Lachlan Shire	12	0	0	12	0
Wingecarribee Shire	9	0	0	8	1
Yass Valley	12	0	0	11	1
Wagga Wagga City	4	0	0	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>93</b>

Table 3.2.2 – Timber Bridges Replacement with Concrete and/or Concrete Steel Structures 2019-2025

Note:

- FCB equals NSW Government Fixing Country Bridge Program
- BRP equals Australian Government Bridge Renewal Program

Five Councils within the CRJO formed the first collaborative memorandum of understanding to facilitate more efficient delivery of timber bridge replacements across the region, funded under the NSW Government Fixing Country Bridges Program. Innovative bridge options such as the Inquik and Fixing Country Bridges solutions now mean smaller bridges can be replaced with greater efficiency utilizing resources available within regional Australia.

The collaborative MOU developed by our Councils working with Transport for NSW has since been adapted to other regions across NSW covering more than fifty NSW Councils.



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The Australian Government should take a greater role in funding the replacement of timber bridges, vulnerable bridges, culvert structures and causeways to accelerate improved resilience of the local road network. **This is best achieved by:**

- i) **doubling the Australian Government’s Bridge Renewal Program and increasing the weighting for the replacement of timber bridges and causeways, and removing the requirement for co-contributions in specific circumstances (e.g., large scale projects, projects being undertaken by smaller regional Councils)**
- ii) **doubling the Roads to Recovery allocation to allow Councils to target smaller structures on the local road network.**

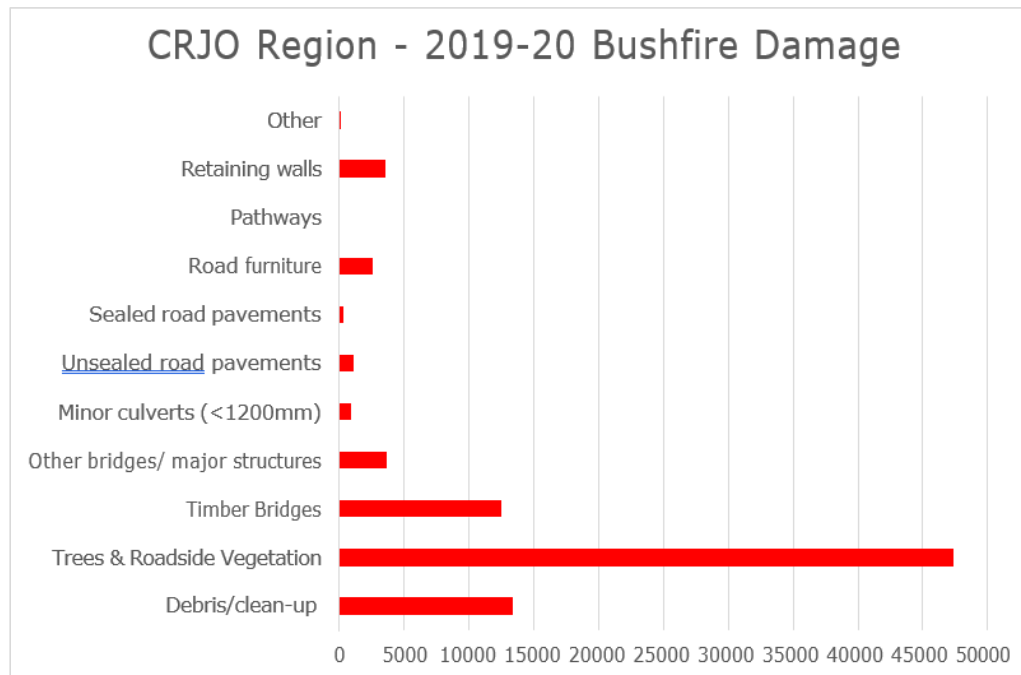
Any new structures should be designed and built with greater flood capacity, resilience to damage in floods and bushfire and greater load carrying capacity to help overcome ‘first mile’ impediments to more productive transport. This pro-active approach will better match the market capacity for project delivery and will contribute to improved economic activity and productivity, especially across the agricultural and mining sectors.

Some Councils have also directed parts of the Australian Government’s Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program toward timber bridge replacement, specifically to improve resilience of the road network during natural disasters.

### **3.3 Other Lessons Learnt from Natural Disasters**

There are numerous lessons learnt from the natural disasters experienced over time, and more specifically the 2019-20 bushfires and floods since. These events highlight the major challenges and vulnerabilities through lived experience on a whole of network and/or route basis. The resultant disaster damage often provides experienced local Council personnel with a ‘road map’ for resilience improvement.

Feedback from member Councils on the nature of the damage during the bushfires and floods provides an excellent guide to allow more focused responses to the challenges of severe weather impacts on the local road network. The graphs included below show the types of damage sustained in the bushfires and the subsequent floods across the CRJO region.



Graph 3.3.1 – 2019-20 Bushfires Disaster Damage by Type Across the CRJO

As a result of the **2019-20 bushfires**, the regional data demonstrates the main impacts being **trees and roadside vegetation and clean-up (\$60.7m or 71% of NDFA claims)**, **vulnerable timber bridges and culverts (\$17.2m or 20% of NDFA claims)**, **vulnerable timber retaining structures (\$3.6m or 4.2% of NDFA claims)**, **road furniture (e.g., guardrail, signs, guide posts) and pavement damage**. The latter damage was due to the increased use of unsealed roads during the response combined with the impacts of trucks and equipment undertaking clean-up of roadsides, homes and farms.

The risk posed by burnt trees was very high including to the community, first responders and early recovery personnel. The removal of fallen and/or standing burnt out trees is a high-risk activity and requires specialist personnel and equipment, working in difficult conditions.

A more planned approach to managing roadside vegetation, especially on/at the top of steep roadside batters should be implemented but is often limited by funding.





Graph 3.3.1 – a Council work crew was very lucky not to be seriously injury when a tree fell piercing the truck window during an early bushfire recovery operation.

During the subsequent floods, trees growing on steep fill and cut road batters resulted in batter collapses due to the combined actions of “root jacking” and the added weight of the tree itself. The result was batter collapse, road closure and high-risk recovery work for Council teams.

It is important to note that the management of roadside vegetation can be undertaken in an environmentally sensitive manner using the real-life experiences of the 2019-20 bushfires. Removal of critical trees and especially those on or at the top of steep batters can make a significant improvement during both bushfires, wind and storm events. Managing overhanging canopies and distributing the weight of the tree to the outside can also provide a significant benefit. Selected tree work can also have a significant positive benefit to road safety.

In the medium to long term, Governments need to ensure key transport routes are move resilient to natural disasters. A combined focus on providing increased landscape scale solutions outside of road reserves to better secure biodiversity outcomes is recommended and could be incorporated with projects to improve the drought, bushfire and flood resilience of the rural landscape (as demonstrated through trial projects such

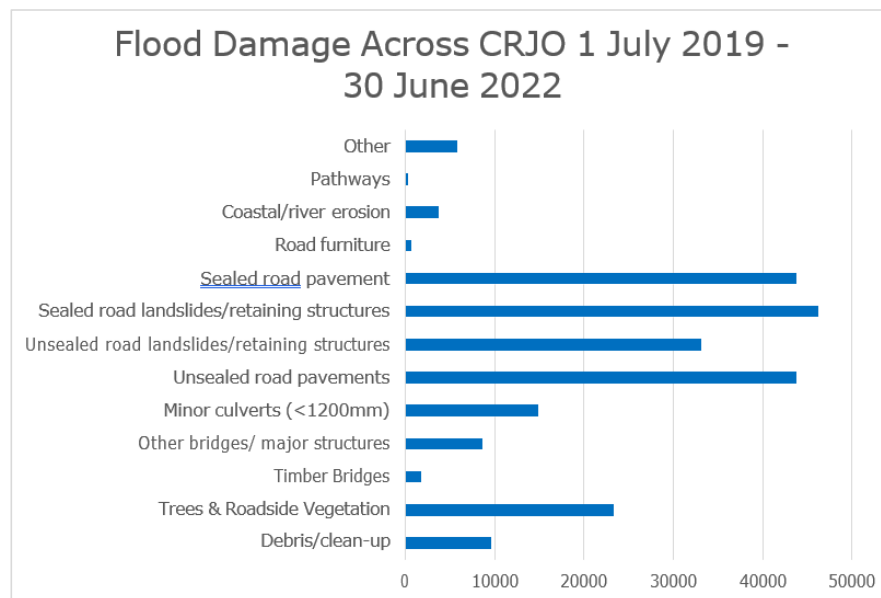
## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023



as those undertaken by the [Mulloon Institute \(themullooninstitute.org\)](https://themullooninstitute.org). This has the potential to slow stream and gully flows to roadways in some landscapes, thereby reducing damage to road infrastructure. It also has the potential to hold ground moisture on landscape scale to better protect agricultural land against drought and bushfire.

During the flood disasters since the 2019-20 bushfires to the 30 June 2022 (see Graph 3.3.2 below), **the key flood damage types were landslides (34% of NDFA claimed damage), unsealed road pavements (19%), sealed road pavements (19%), bridges and stormwater structures (12%), trees/roadside vegetation and initial clean-up (14%)**. The tree and roadside vegetation damage was likely to be less than usual in the floods post the intense 2019-20 bushfires due to the extensive tree removal undertaken as part of the bushfire recovery. Wingecarribee Shire Council suffered a particularly high level of sealed road pavement damage at \$27.35m, more than four times other Councils in the CRJO.

The vulnerability of bridges and structures during floods is highlighted by the data. For instance, Bega Valley Shire Council report that over one hundred bridges and structures sustained significant damage during the last three years. Challenges have arisen in a small number of cases when Councils have sort to replace timber structures, with some community members expressing concern about the aesthetics rather than the future resilience of a new concrete structure for the benefit of the broader local or regional community.



Graph 3.3.2 – 2019-22 Flood Damage by Type Across the CRJO  
(Excludes data from Snowy Valleys Council)

## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023



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Note: Data from Hilltops Council was recorded as 'other' as damage costs could not be split across damage type. These costs covered works across the various categories listed above.

The information gathered during these disasters can be integrated into network and/or whole of route transport improvement plans and transport asset management plans.

As an example, Eurobodalla Shire Council has pro-actively undertaken extensive planning work incorporating improved resilience into the Northern Area Transport Network Plan ([Transport-Network-Plan-Northern-Area-Eurobodalla.pdf \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)), Draft Southern Area Transport Network Plan ([Draft Southern Area Transport Network Plan \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)) and the Eurobodalla Critical Infrastructure Resilience Plan 2020.

Experience over the last three years again highlights that the current Natural Disaster Funding Arrangements need to be further enhanced, particularly given the limitations on funding 'building back better' solutions. Following natural disasters, the time imperative is to recover road networks to reconnect communities as quickly as possible whilst managing the significant risks associated with failed and/or damaged roads and bridges.

Although some provision for undertaking betterment works has now been provided by the Australian and NSW Governments, this remains a competitive grant application process which takes an extensive amount of resource and time with uncertain outcomes. Meanwhile whilst grant applications are considered, communities can remain disconnected and often Councils must proceed with like for like solutions due to the time imperative and a lack of alternate funding.

Greater efficiency is needed to streamline approvals of funding to facilitate building back better to provide improved resilience. This can be achieved through the development of new guidelines for the NDFA with limits on the quantum of extra cost of betterment (for instance a limit of 'like for like' plus 20% for specific known circumstances could be implemented). Approvals for other circumstances could still be implemented with a higher level of information required before approvals were provided.

Here are a few real examples of real-life challenges during recovery:

- i) Example 1 - a timber bridge is burnt to the ground in the 2019-20 bushfires. The NDFA now permits a timber bridge to be replaced with the same configuration concrete structure (e.g., a single lane timber bridge can be replaced with a single lane concrete bridge). This addresses resilience of the bridge to bushfire but often does not adequately address resilience to flooding or the long-term effects of climate change. A replacement bridge could be built slightly longer and to a higher level for minimal additional cost if the NDFA provisions facilitated approved more efficiently (i.e., as a primary replacement consideration under the NDFA project approval process). This is currently not the case and replacement bridges are often replaced to similar flood level as the previous timber bridges.



Photo 3.2.1 – Sinclairs Bridge Eurobodalla Road (courtesy of Eurobodalla Shire Council).

This timber bridge was burnt in the 2019-20 bushfires. The bridge was temporarily repaired and then replaced with a concrete bridge under the Natural Disaster Funding Arrangements. Greater flexibility in the effective use of the NDFA funding would have permitted a higher and slightly larger single lane structure to be built, making the bridge far more resilient to natural disaster floods. During this subsequent flood, access to rural communities was constrained and the clean-up of the flood debris shown in this picture was funded by the NDFA.



- ii) Example 2 - an unsealed road pavement is lost or substantially damaged during a natural disaster flood. Replacement of the pavement material is approved. However, the primary cause of the failure, being a lack of transverse road drainage, is unable to be addressed as the funding required is unavailable under the current NDFA provisions. The new recovered unsealed road pavement is built but remains vulnerable to extensive repeat damage in the next flood/storm event unless Councils can secure additional funding to address the lack of transverse drainage. Some Councils have managed to address some of these issues by allocating part funding from programs such as the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program.
- iii) Example 3 - a road batter collapses in a natural disaster flood event. The section of road batter that has collapsed can be replaced and stabilized providing a more resilient solution at the site of the specific collapse. This often requires highly specialized geotechnical investigation and stabilization works (e.g., such soil nailing, retaining wall construction). Designs are prepared, contracts prepared, tendered and let, and the approved work undertaken, often by specialized city-based contractors with high establishment and significant site establishment charges. But the work included is confined to the section that has actually collapsed. The section adjoining remains highly vulnerable to collapse yet the NDFA funding does not address preventative or efficiency measures to take advantage of the high upfront costs whilst the contractor is on-site. Unless additional funding is secured from alternate sources to extend the work, the risk of further disconnection of communities in the next natural disaster remains unaddressed.



Photo 3.2.2 – Landslides are highly problematic to recover post disaster and require longer lead times, highly specialised geotechnical design, drill testing, tendering under the LG Act 1993 and delivery of

works by highly specialised contractors. It is far safer to stabilise an embankment prior to failure than after a batter collapse (photo courtesy of Wingecarribee Shire Council)

- iv) Example 4 - a road is washed out at a road culvert crossing due to blockage and overtopping of the roadway. The culvert is repaired under the NDFA provisions on a like for like basis despite the culvert being well under-sized for the catchment flowing to the roadway. The opportunity to upgrade the culvert at a lower overall cost is lost, leaving the road vulnerable to further damage in the next natural disaster. The opportunity to re-use the existing culvert elsewhere on the network is also lost, negating opportunities for a vast improvement in overall cost effectiveness and network resilience.



Photo 3.2.3 – Larbert Road, Braidwood. Road wash-out due to a lack of table drains and transverse drainage across the roadway  
(Common example courtesy of Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council).



Photo 3.2.4 – typical undersized culvert structure with poor resilience when overtopped. Repairing this structure will leave this road vulnerable to repeat failure and damage. With specialist engineering knowledge, the capacity of this existing culvert can be improved at a moderate cost and/or the structure made more resilient to overtopping. Preferably though this structure would be replaced with a larger culvert structure and these existing box culverts re-used elsewhere on the local road, taking a more planned network wide approach. Regrettably, the inflexibility of the NDDRA means optimum solutions are often not able to be achieved (courtesy of Upper Lachlan Shire Council).





Photo 3.2.5 – Example of a legacy issue with an undersized culvert with the pipe inlet installed too high, resulting in high stormwater flows running along the road table drain rather than safely under the road through the culvert. The outcome is eroded table drains and excessive water saturating the downstream road pavement, causing a loss of pavement width on a tight curve and potholes in the ageing bitumen seal. Rectifying the road pavement without relaying and upgrading the culvert will inevitably result in future failures. Funding and specialist engineering advice is required to ensure issues like these are appropriately treated (courtesy of Upper Lachlan Shire Council).

## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023



- v) Example 5 – a major landslide occurs making the road impassable. The rectification of the existing road is cost prohibitive with high risks to workers during recovery. A suitable permanent alternate route around the site exists and can be achieved at a comparable cost. The alternate route offers vastly improved resilience for the future. Although this can be obvious to experienced practitioners (both at Council and in the supervising agency), the NDFA model requires extensive site investigations, detailed designs and cost estimating for multiple solutions prior to giving approvals for the alternate route. This design and approval process is expensive and adds extensive delays to the approvals process and recovery period. In this case, the delay meant that the 202km temporary alternate road (in this case via Mt Wandera Forestry tracks) required significant upgrading to provide a trafficable surface, and remained vulnerable to collapse itself. That temporary route collapsed down the side of Mt Wandera on 10 December 2021. Residents were diverted back onto Araluen Road on 10 December 2021, whilst the new permanent road was still under construction. There was no other alternate access for residents.



Photo 3.2.6 - Major 35m high landslide with an unstable embankment on Araluen Road Moruya West (courtesy of Eurobodalla Shire Council).



Photo 3.2.6 – Araluen Road Moruya West (courtesy of Eurobodalla Shire Council)

After extensive geotechnical, survey and design work, approval was finally given to construct a 1.2m alternate route around the major landslide site at a cost saving to Government of about \$2m under the NDFA. The new route now provides a far more resilient solution for local residents, tourist operators and farmers, Forestry NSW and National Parks in perpetuity. The new project also produced about 20,000 tonnes of material suitable for re-use elsewhere along the route. This project utilized new drone technology to speed up the process of survey and terrain modelling for the development of the design. The project was able to proceed with the cooperation of Forestry NSW and two other impacted landowners.



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### 3.4 Local Road Networks – Legacy Challenges and Solutions

It is important to recognize that many existing roads were built as part of the original settlement of rural and remote areas. Often these roads were originally built to accommodate transport by horse and cart or to the particular standard of the day many years ago.

Quality materials supply may have been limited at the time of original construction or designs prepared for the expected traffic then rather than the much heavier and larger trucks now utilizing the local road network. Payloads on trucks using local transport routes have almost doubled in weight since the mid-1990s. Even local residential streets are experiencing significantly higher number of trucks with multiple waste services and a major shift to on-line ordering direct to home via delivery truck rather than car.

New developments such wind and solar power schemes are being built on previously low-key local roads in rural NSW, resulting in a changing traffic loading impacting road pavements along with increasing assets being handed to Councils without appropriate resources to manage the on-going costs.

In some cases, roads were built generations ago in very steep and/or difficult terrain and lack supporting infrastructure like catch drains, transverse drainage culverts and/or proper batter protection. Older retaining walls and/or the key foundations of steep fill batters were sometimes built of timber. These features make these types of roads particularly vulnerable to natural disasters and often failures take the form of catastrophic landslides which are highly problematic and very costly to rectify. The scale of the catastrophic failure can also be much larger than if planned works were being undertaken. The risk to workers during recovery works is also much higher.

Additionally, decades of underfunding means road resurfacing and other pro-active maintenance activities (such as table drain and shoulder maintenance) are often well below recommended levels.

Consequently, many existing roads have numerous legacy issues which make them more vulnerable to the impacts of natural disasters and/or extended periods of wet weather. These same legacy issues can also increase the risk of road crashes, the associated trauma to people and the cost to Government, businesses and the community.

Given the large scale of the local road network across the region and Australia, actions need to be targeted and integrated into short to medium strategies to achieve network and whole of route outcomes.

Addressing these matters therefore requires strategic infrastructure planning on a network and whole of route basis. If the strategies are implemented, **fundamental road engineering measures can have a major positive impact on the resilience of local road networks to natural disasters (as well as improving road**





**safety, capacity, transport efficiency and livability outcomes). These positive impacts will also greatly assist in prolonged periods of wet weather.**

However, the major impediment to implementation remains funding (both the amount and certainty over time). A shortage of skilled, trained and experienced personnel, particularly experienced professional Engineers, is also a significant challenge. The Australian Local Government Association report the lack of professional Engineers is the number one skills shortage in Local Government in Australia.

- i) Issue: Inadequate budget on-going for pro-active preventative maintenance.  
Solution: Increase maintenance funding and action to ensure functionality and preparedness before major disasters. Focus on pro-active preventative maintenance strategies. Rebuild skills and capacity within Councils.
- ii) Issue: Lack of adequate table drains.  
Solution: Upgrade, protect and maintain roadside table drains, and/or provide concrete kerb and gutter in steep or highly erodible terrain to protect the roadway and table drain.
- iii) Issue: Lack of regular transverse stormwater drainage, particularly on unsealed road networks.  
Solution: Install additional transverse drainage with appropriate outlet protection on a priority basis and increase on-going maintenance budget to ensure functionality.
- iv) Issue: Lack of catch drains on top of road batters.  
Solution: Where practicable, install, protect and maintain road batter catch drains to limit the water getting to the roadway.
- v) Issue: Lack of suitable or adequate sub-surface drainage resulting in high water tables and saturated road sub-grades and structural road pavements. Solution: Install and maintain sub-surface drainage on a priority basis.
- vi) Issue: Lack of road crossfall.  
Solution: Progressively increase nominal road crossfall in association with road renewal activities particularly on flat longitudinal grades (e.g., as part of gravel re-sheeting and maintenance grading programs increase crossfall to 6-8% or during sealed road pavement rehabilitation works increase the nominal crossfall to 4-5%) on a priority basis.
- vii) Issue: Aged, oxidised and cracked bitumen road surfacing (a prime cause of sealed road failures and potholing during wet weather).  
Solutions: Increase resealing frequency taking a risk-based approach linked to road hierarchy and pavement vulnerability, utilise seals with rubber additives on higher order and vulnerable roads to achieve a longer life/improved water resistance, improve road drainage, divert heavy traffic if able. For thin asphalt surfacing renew more often, utilise crumbed rubber, utilise suitable asphalt mixes on low trafficked urban roads with higher bitumen content.



Photo 3.4.1 – local sealed road failing due to a combination of no batter catch drains and inadequate routine maintenance of table drains resulting in stormwater regularly flowing along the road. Combined with an ageing bitumen seal and flattening grades, potholing under traffic is inevitable (courtesy of Upper Lachlan Shire Council)

- viii) Issue: Poor quality of the underlying subgrade material, impacts of high ground moisture levels.  
Solution: Lower the water table with suitable sub-soil drainage including appropriate outlets, replace or stabilize subgrade material, install drainage blankets with suitable rock or macadam materials, utilise suitable geotextiles.



Photo 3.4.2 – weak underlying subgrade materials combined with high moisture levels require sound engineering methods to drain and strength the road before new structural pavements is built (courtesy of Upper Lachlan Shire Council)

- ix) Issue: Poor quality structural pavement materials, often natural gravels that are more susceptible to moisture due to high plasticity (i.e., a higher clay content) and/or inadequate total depth of road pavement materials for current traffic loads.  
Solutions: Improve drainage, pavement stabilization and/or pavement overlay with high quality road base pavement materials, use of specialized geotechnical products (e.g., such as geofabrics).





Photo 3.4.3 – sealed roads often hide road pavements constructed many years ago on poor wet sub-grades and/or poor-quality clayey pavement materials. When wet weather comes, the Council is often left with an expensive fix and adverse reputational impacts (courtesy of Wingecarribee Shire Council). Pavement testing can help Councils better understand the risks but is often beyond the affordability of Councils to undertake on a network wide basis.

- x) Issue: Unsealed Road shoulders leaving the central sealed road pavement more vulnerable to moisture intrusion into the traffic lane, leading to premature road pavement failure.  
Solution: Progressively extend road pavement and seal road shoulders (this will also provide a significant improvement in road safety and accessibility for other modes of transport such as bicycles), improve drainage.
- xi) Issue: Lack of culvert structures and/or undersized culvert structures on unsealed and sealed roads. This leaves unsealed roads particularly vulnerable, leading to eroded table drains, a loss of gravel and often more catastrophic batter collapses/landslides.  
Solution: Systematically install an increased number of stormwater culverts/upgraded culverts with appropriate inlet and outlet treatment to prevent erosion. Maintain structures on-going.



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- xii) Issue: Road structures (major culverts and bridges) constructed in an era where material size (e.g., timber lengths) or the standard of the day means these structures have insufficient flood carrying capacity and/or lack adequate batter protection when overtopped and/or have vulnerable road approaches and/or inadequate inlet/outlet treatment.

Solutions (examples):

- Replace timber bridges with more resilient concrete bridges with an appropriate flood and load carrying capacity, upgrade major culvert to increase flood capacity and reduce susceptibility to blockage and overtopping.
- Design and construct more resilient road embankments/batters, approaches and erosion treatment for larger scale events.
- Where necessary, seal road approaches and/or make use of alternate more resilient road pavements (e.g., deep lift asphalt, foamed bitumen stabilisation and/or concrete pavements on the approach to the bridge).



Photo 3.4.4—undersized culvert structures lead to a higher frequency of overtopping and pavement damage. The preferred and safer solution is to replace the culvert structure with a larger more resilient culvert solution less prone to blockage. Any new structure should be designed for partial blockage in major events with appropriate road, batter, inlet and outlet treatment. A cheaper, less desirable flood prone option is to replace the road pavement with a section of concrete causeway with appropriate upstream and downstream protections. This may reduce loss of the road infrastructure but leaves the road vulnerable to being cut in flood events, creating an impasse for emergency services and a higher risk to the community using the road.

xiii) Issue: Unsealed roads in vulnerable locations.

Solution: Upgrade drainage, construct adequate road pavement and seal, protect pavement edges where traffic and/or circumstance warrant (this work will often remove risk to maintenance grading teams).

## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023



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- xiv) Issue: Unsealed roads with higher traffic volumes and importance (e.g., regional roads, busier school bus routes).  
Solution: Upgrade drainage, reconstruct and seal the road (this will usually achieve significant road safety benefits).
- xv) Issue: Inadequate roadside vegetation maintenance leaving roads vulnerable to extended closure in bushfire and storms and placing responders in high-risk situations to re-establish road networks. May also lead to batter collapse due to “root jacking” by the tree and/or the added mass of the tree to steep batters.  
Solution: Establish and maintain appropriate vegetation management to ensure functionality of road elements (e.g., batters, drainage lines) on all routes, establish and maintain vegetation set-backs for resilience and road safety giving consideration to road hierarchy, disaster risk and the environmental impacts. Flatten road batters where practicable (not materials re-used from other projects can be utilised for this purpose and will often make maintenance activities such as roadside slashing much safer for Council crews).
- xvi) Issue: Road levels susceptible to inundation and/or water abutting the road for lengthy periods.  
Solution: Where practicable, progressively overlay & lift the road pavement consistent with the route plan, extend road width to provide sealed shoulders, flatten/protect road batters, increase maintenance and resealing frequency.
- xvii) Issue: Higher risk slopes above, part of and below roads. Solution: Identify higher risk sites on a whole-of-route or network basis. Obtain specialist geotechnical advice when needed. Where practicable, divert water flows away from these areas. Remove larger trees causing ‘root jacking’ and/or loose material from steep batter faces to mitigate risk. Implement higher frequency and post rainfall inspection, monitoring and maintenance regime with record keeping. Where funded, provide suitable geotechnical design and treatment to stabilise (e.g., soil nailing, rock bolting, control netting, retaining walls, drainage systems). Consider an alternative route if an available option.



Photo 3.4.5 – Eurobodalla Shire Council lifted Beach Road Batemans Bay by about 300mm as part of this road safety upgrade. The road overlay was constructed as a highly resilient deep lift asphalt pavement with an associated drainage upgrade. The new pavement is more able to withstand the very high traffic loads (about 20,000 vehicles per day) and the overlay construction methodology assisted in adapting to future sea level rise as well as providing a cheaper and less disruptive construction method. The solution also better matched future redevelopment requirements for the adjoining medium density residential properties. Other sections of Beach Road near Hanging Rock reserve were previously lifted by up to 600mm using a mix of gravel sub- base overlain with a resilient deep lift asphalt pavement with improved drainage systems. All upgrade works were only made possible through external NSW and Australian Government grant funding.

### **3.5 The Role of Improved Infrastructure Planning and Funding**

A major impediment to progressing well planned maintenance, renewal and upgrade of the local road network remains the uncertainty of on-going road funding. By far the most efficient and equitable way for the Australian Government to introduce increased road funding to Local Government is to increase the annual allocation of Roads to Recovery funding allocation.

The annual allocation of Roads to Recovery funding by the Australian Government is currently \$500m per annum. This \$2.6B program runs from 2019-20 to 2023-24. This program has been legislated to allow budget allocations for easier flow through to Local Government across Australia.



## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023



The annual Roads to Recovery funding amounts across the region are shown in Table 3.2.1 below.

Council	Roads to Recovery
Bega Valley Shire	\$1,221,983
Eurobodalla Shire	\$1,039,292
Goulburn Mulwaree	\$1,074,884
Hilltops	\$1,770,968
Queanbeyan Palerang Regional	\$1,527,709
Snowy Monaro Regional	\$1,744,322
Snowy Valleys	\$871,816
Upper Lachlan Shire	\$1,203,048
Wingecarribee Shire	\$1,184,041
Yass Valley	\$857,227
Wagga Wagga City	\$2,050,700
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$14,545,990</b>

Table 3.2.1 – Annual Roads to Recovery Allocations

Feedback from member Councils indicates the majority of Roads to Recovery funding is being expended on the fundamentals of road renewal such as resealing, gravel re-sheeting, sealed road pavement renewal and reconstruction of existing roads. This highlights that Councils are wisely focusing on improving the sustainability of their local road network through this highly successful Australian Government funding program.

Clever use of these funds to progressively adapt the local road network whilst these works are being undertaken can provide a systematic approach to improving the resilience of the overall transport network to natural disasters and to prolonged periods of wet weather. This requires Councils to plan well, adapt standards to more resilience options and to consistently produce high quality outcomes. Unfortunately, the evidence shows the funds available under the Roads to Recovery Program are currently insufficient to address the current renewal shortfalls and adapt the local road network in a more holistic and strategic way.

The Local Roads Community Infrastructure Program allocations by the Australian Government as currently spread across four phases with a total program of \$3.25B. Three phases are complete or in progress. The allocations to Councils across Phases 1-3 within the CRJO region are shown in Table 3.2.2 below.



**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**



<b>Council</b>	<b>LRCIP Phase 1</b>	<b>LRCIP Phase 2</b>	<b>LRCIP Phase 3</b>	<b>Percent Spent on Roads</b>
Bega Valley Shire	\$1,221,983	\$1,720,920	\$2,443,966	43%
Eurobodalla Shire	\$1,039,292	\$1,704,195	\$2,078,584	42%
Goulburn Mulwaree	\$1,074,884	\$1,534,951	\$2,149,768	25%
Hilltops	\$1,770,968	\$1,672,314	\$3,541,936	41%
Queanbeyan Palerang Regional	\$1,527,709	\$2,624,598	\$3,055,418	66%
Snowy Monaro Regional	\$1,744,322	\$1,709,516	\$3,488,644	80%
Snowy Valleys	\$871,816	\$961,818	\$1,743,632	NP
Upper Lachlan Shire	\$1,203,048	\$1,013,878	\$2,406,096	74%
Wingecarribee Shire	\$1,184,041	\$2,133,512	\$2,368,082	85%
Yass Valley	\$857,227	\$1,020,648	\$1,714,454	76%
Wagga Wagga City	\$2,050,700	\$3,082,560	\$4,101,400	85%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$14,545,990</b>	<b>\$19,178,910</b>	<b>\$29,091,980</b>	

Table 3.2.2 – Local Roads Community Infrastructure Program Allocations

A survey of Councils across the CRJO indicates that about two thirds of the LRCIP funding from phases 1-3 was expended on roads across the region. This includes expenditure on works to improve resilience with the aim of reducing the incidence of communities being disconnected and reducing the associated future natural disaster claims on the NSW and Australian Governments. In part, this lower proportion of expenditure on roads, reflects the exceptionally high commitments to disaster recovery works on local roads during this period, with Councils taking the opportunity to direct some LRCIP funds to other community infrastructure during this period.

The Australian Government has just announced the LRCIP funding under Phase 4 which must be spent by 30 June 2025. Councils will determine how these funds will be spent.

## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023



Council	LRCIP Phase 4
Bega Valley Shire	\$1,221,983
Eurobodalla Shire	\$1,039,292
Goulburn Mulwaree	\$1,074,884
Hilltops	\$1,770,968
Queanbeyan Palerang Regional	\$1,527,709
Snowy Monaro Regional	\$1,744,322
Snowy Valleys	\$871,816
Upper Lachlan Shire	\$1,203,048
Wingecarribee Shire	\$1,184,041
Yass Valley	\$857,227
Wagga Wagga City	\$2,050,700
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$14,545,990</b>

Table 3.2.3 – Local Roads Community Infrastructure Program Phase 4 Allocations

Research across the CRJO indicates that roads and the supporting stormwater systems make up about 80-90% of infrastructure value (based on Gross Replacement Cost) of infrastructure funded from Council's General Fund. This excludes water and sewer infrastructure which are separately funded on a service cost basis).

To achieve more focused road resilience and transport outcomes, it is strongly recommended that the Australian Government double the current level of Roads to Recovery funding to \$1B Australia wide in the May 2023 budget and apply the new level of funding from 2023-24 onward in conjunction with:

- i) Reinforcing the requirement for Councils to sustain their 'own source' levels of funding on roads.
- ii) Providing an amended Roads to Recovery Statement of Intent requiring Councils to integrate future network and route resilience and road safety planning into their road network, asset management plans and Roads to Recovery funded programs.
- iii) Decoupling the local roads component from any future Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program to provide greater certainty for road planning and delivery, better alignment with the objectives of the Australian Government and an improved return on investment inclusive of a reduction in future road network damage and the associated claims payable by State and the Australian Governments under the Natural Disaster Funding Arrangements. It is recommended that an on-going Community Infrastructure Program be extended commencing in 2025-26 with a funding pool of 250m per annum for Community Infrastructure.

## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023



The Australian Government has also introduced the \$200m per annum resilience betterment fund, which will be on a competitive basis. This funding is being provided through respective State Governments. With over five hundred and thirty Councils across Australia, this program is likely to be substantially over-subscribed. However, some member Councils have indicated that due to the unrealistically tight timeframes, existing commitments and limitations on resources due to the peak workloads associated with the recovery, that they will not be submitting a grant application in the initial round. It is important to recognise that this response would be by no means a reflection of need. A better approach for round one may have been to fund a strategic assessment of needs and priorities and to develop at LGA or regional level critical infrastructure resilience betterment plans.

To free up funding for Local Government to pursue resilience improvements to the road network, LGNSW, the NSW Roads and Transport Directorate and IPWEA NSW/ACT have partnered to advocate to the NSW Government to remove the cost of emergency services agencies from Local Government. In return, NSW Councils could offer to develop critical infrastructure resilience plans and commit the saving in funding emergency services to improving the resilience of the road network for a minimum of 5 years. This would demonstrate an improved return on investment for Government. As NSW Government emergency services levies are an operating expense within Council's profit and loss statement, this would free up funds to either cash or loan fund resilience improvements to the road network. This would allow Councils greater flexibility to accelerate road resilience works and ultimately save future costs to Councils as well as the NSW and Australian Governments under the NDFA.

The NSW Government has recently announced \$280m in funding under the Regional and Local Roads Repair Program (RLRRP) to assist NSW Regional Councils repair the road pavement failures resulting from the on-going rainfall, not covered by the NDFA or already within Councils' program of works.

This is a welcome one-off funding announcement which will assist in the short term, with funding required to be spent within one year. This new allocation, however welcome, will not resolve the on-going annual funding shortfall needed to sustain the local and regional road network, nor is this funding offer designed to address future resilience.

This new program will require separate administration and accounting to track defect repairs, projects, costs and reports back to the NSW Government, as well as additional resources within the NSW Government to oversee the expenditure of funds.

## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023



The funding distribution under the RLRRP for CRJO Councils is as follows:

Council	RLRRP Allocation
Bega Valley Shire	\$2,771,543
Eurobodalla Shire	\$2,006,757
Goulburn Mulwaree	\$2,335,601
Hilltops	\$5,008,505
Queanbeyan Palerang Regional	\$3,082,300
Snowy Monaro Regional	\$4,844,320
Snowy Valleys	\$2,178,800
Upper Lachlan Shire	NP
Wingecarribee Shire	\$2,223,196
Yass Valley	\$2,295,489
Wagga Wagga City	\$4,211,192

Table 3.2.4 – NSW Government Regional and Local Roads Repair Program allocations to be spent within one year of signing the deed of agreement. This funding will provide temporary relief to assist repair defects arising from on-going rainfall, not covered under natural disaster funding arrangements.

### 3.6 Road Engineering and Innovations in Product Development

This submission outlines examples of basic road engineering to help make the road network more resilient. This expands on the information under 3.4 of this submission. Key examples include:

#### i) Sealed road resurfacing

Resurfacing of roads (e.g., a bitumen reseal of a sealed road) is perhaps the most under-rated and important action Councils and road managers can take to protect the road asset and provide a more resilient and safer outcome for their communities. It is relatively cheap and can greatly reduce maintenance costs associated with individual defect repairs such as potholing, and significantly delay expensive pavement reconstruction costs.

Bitumen surfacing typically oxidises after about 8-10 years, which means the protective road surface begins to crack. The road should ideally be resealed at that time to keep the structural road pavement protected. Current shortfalls in funding however mean that some Councils are only achieving average resealing frequency of up to 35-50 years, leaving local roads highly vulnerable to moisture intrusion during periods of wet weather (and higher crash risks due to the loss of friction of the road surface over time).



The risk is even higher in regions with higher rainfall and/or snow, ice and frost such as coastal regions like Bega Valley and Eurobodalla and colder mountain/tableland areas.

The data from CRJO Councils shows that road managers are already directing Roads to Recovery funding towards this key action, but the available funds are simply not enough. The Australian Government should recognize this and take action to increase the Roads to Recovery program to be target this issue.

Councils and road managers can better mitigate the risk of pavement failure (and the risk of road crashes) within a constrained funding environment by:

- a) Re-directing available on-going funding to increase the frequency of resealing (ideally to not more than 10-15 years based on road hierarchy).
- b) Linking nominal average resurfacing frequencies to road hierarchy. The busier the road and the more important the function of the road, the more important it is to resurface with greater frequency.
- c) Incorporating crumbed rubber into bitumen reseals and asphalt resurfacing on higher order roads based on the adopted road hierarchy and local knowledge to improve water resistance.
- d) Ensuring qualified and experienced engineers assess their road network.
- e) Implementing on-going training programs to ensure Council personnel have the skills to determine appropriate solutions and oversee the quality of work undertaken by contractors.
- f) Improving the accuracy of datasets held in Council's asset management registers for the road resurfacing component of the road pavement including age, type of resurfacing, any additive products and the like.
- g) Make use of regular road assessment surveys, at least on higher order roads, using available technologies to measure cracking and surface texture to improve predictive behaviour and resurfacing designs.

Governments should continue to support independent research into potential products that claim to improve the performance of road resurfacing. This includes research into the additional quality control measures that may be needed to reduce the risk of failure when resurfacing local roads with new products.

This independent research is critical to improving confidence in new products and persuading road managers to trial or adopt new technologies compared to proven products.

Austroads and the National Transport and Research Organisation (previously known as ARRB) are well positioned to provide this independent research and provide feedback to the broader sector. It is critical though that this research provide solutions tailored to **lower trafficked roads which make up the majority of the road network across Australia and often require modified engineering solutions.**



There is also growing concern in the road sector about the future of bitumen products currently used in road resurfacing. These products are relatively cheap, cost-effective and commonly applied right across the Australian landscape. However, these products are derived from fossil fuels. There is currently no viable alternative product. It is therefore critical that the Australian Government be mindful when setting future Government policy and considering future resource development project approvals and international trade arrangements.

**ii) Sealed road pavements**

The CRJO Councils currently look after a total of 18,793km of local and regional roads worth over \$10B (at 30 June 2022).

9,631km of these roads are sealed, with 2,071km of these sealed roads classified by the NSW Government as regional roads due to the higher importance in providing key transport links across the region. The remaining 9,162km are unsealed, with 254km of these unsealed roads being classified as regional roads.

Most sealed roads in the CRJO regions consist of a number of structural pavement layers of granular material overlaying the sub-grade material (either modified or naturally occurring). The vast majority of these pavements are protected by a bitumen seal, with a much smaller proportion surfaced with asphalt. The on-going repeat natural disasters and prolonged periods of wet weather have resulted in pavement failures due to moisture penetration through road surfacing combined with high water tables weakening natural sub-grades and structural pavement layers.

Advice from Councils with good resealing programs in place, indicates this had a positive impact in reducing the incidence of potholes and other pavement failures up until the December 2021 natural disaster floods. These additional events saw peak ground saturation levels achieved resulting in rapid decline in the condition of some roads, causing complete failure of whole sections of sealed road within a short time of the event occurring.

Road pavements are typically designed for 20 years based on the traffic type and volumes, the underlying soil types (i.e., the pavement subgrade) and prevailing ground moisture conditions. The road pavement design often assumes adequate on-going road maintenance and renewal (e.g., resurfacing), yet current funding models result in service levels well below desirable requirements.

Additionally, given the level of available funding, most of these road pavements will need to extend the average useful life beyond 60 years or more before renewal. The resultant annual financial cost of this average pavement life is approximated by the depreciation of the road pavement asset.





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Depreciation costs directly impact Council financial operating statement and sustainability. The road pavement is typically the highest value asset owned by a regional Council.

Typical factors influencing the life of a road pavement include:

- i) Surface, sub-surface, transverse and longitudinal drainage
- ii) Sub-grade material strength and moisture condition
- iii) Road pavement materials quality
- iv) Quality of construction and on-going maintenance and renewal (including road resurfacing)
- v) Traffic volumes and more specifically the volume and size of heavy vehicles
- vi) Whether the road has sealed shoulders or not
- vii) Frequency and type of resurfacing and roads maintenance

Moisture is the number one enemy of road pavements. Small defects such as potholes, shoves, rutting and edge break can accelerate the intrusion of water into the structural road pavement and subgrade leading to premature road failure. This highlights the criticality of adequately funding road maintenance and road resealing/resurfacing as a priority action. The quality of repairs is also crucial (e.g., has the pothole been properly squared, taken back to solid material, primed, refilled and compacted above road level, or was it repaired using a 'drop and go').

Simple changes can also be made to help extend the life of local sealed roads where funding availability is well short of desirable levels. These include:

- a) Increasing the nominal road crossfall from 2-3% to 4-5%, especially where the longitudinal grade along the roadway is flat (e.g., long flat sections of road, in sags at the change of grades). These changes can be implemented in new construction and pavement renewal works on a progressive basis. Careful engineering application is required, especially on rural roads where the transition into and out of curves needs to be adjusted on the approach to and exit from curves to ensure standard change of grades to produce a safe transition into the superelevation through curves.
- b) Increasing the nominal road pavement design life from 20 to 40 years. This typically requires a relatively small increase in overall pavement depth, offering a cost-effective way to ensure adequate structural pavement depth of the natural sub-grade and a longer average pavement life. This will make the road more suited to cheaper stabilisation methods during future renewal operations. New subdivisions should also be constructed to this standard, helping local roads stand up to the early construction activity whilst homes are being constructed.
- c) Ensuring pavement designs are based on soaked sub-grade strength tests to mimic a wetter ground environment. This can be critical to ensuring an adequate pavement design.

- d) Improving the road crossfall throughout construction of the road pavement layers, which will improve sub-surface drainage and usually save significant costs in pavement materials. Achieving higher accuracy and quality outcomes is now more readily achieved with newer technology such as laser-based field survey equipment automatically linked to construction machinery.
- e) Ensuring sub-surface drainage and sub-grade earthworks are designed and constructed to ensure a dry sub-grade and road pavement materials across the full width of the road pavement (not just adjacent to the sub-surface drainage line).



Photo 3.6.1 – typical example of a road with a very flat longitudinal grade and almost no road crossfall. The roadside vegetation is also constraining appropriate table drain clearing, shaping and maintenance. The inevitable result is that water is held on the roadway causing potholing and premature road failure. Filling the pothole is only treating the symptom, not the primary cause, resulting in repeat failures and a high level of community frustration (courtesy of Upper Lachlan Shire Council)

- f) Provision of sealed road shoulders with adequate crossfall consistent with the road pavement. Often the area most susceptible to water intrusion is at the edge of the seal. If the wheel path of the traffic is immediately adjacent to the area most susceptible to water intrusion, a premature pavement failure during wet weather is almost inevitable. Sealing the road shoulder moves the traffic away from this water affected area. It can also provide an improvement in road safety performance as high as a 30% reduction in crash rates.
- g) Use of higher quality pavement materials to lower the road pavement susceptibility to moisture (i.e., typically high-quality crushed rock materials are now preferred over natural materials).



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- h) Where appropriate, use of sub-grade, sub-base and/or base pavement materials stabilisation, to improve strength and reduce susceptibility to higher moisture levels. There are numerous alternate products available with different applications and cost implications. Higher cost applications such as foam bitumen should be utilised in specific situations and only following appropriate independent pavement testing by accredited laboratories.
  - i) Improving the quality and consistency of defect repair (e.g., simple measures such as squaring potholes and removing loose debris prior to repair).
  - j) Utilising modified pothole repair materials better suited to undertaking repairs in wet weather. There is a wide range of materials now available, albeit at a higher cost.
  - k) Replacement of granular pavements with high strength deep lift asphalt pavements. This is usually a much higher cost to construct and should be used in a targeted manner for specific circumstances (e.g., for high trafficked roads, where site disturbance to business activity is far less desirable or in areas where granular pavements are unlikely to provide a resilient solution such as the approach to bridges on high trafficked routes).
  - l) Making use of new and existing technologies to determine actual pavement materials make-up, assess pavement condition to better predict pavement performance and identify appropriate engineering treatments.

Ensuring a more pro-active approach to maintenance is also key, focusing on preventative measures such as regular table drain maintenance, road shouldering and maintenance of drainage structures. When funding is insufficient, Councils are often forced to move to a reactive maintenance model with a focus on fixing the pavement defect (e.g., the pothole) to remove the immediate risk, rather than addressing the primary causes of failure on a network wide basis.

**iii) Unsealed road pavements**

The CRJO Councils currently have 9,162 km of unsealed road in total. Of those 254km has been classified by the NSW Government as regional roads due to the higher importance of providing key transport links across the region. About half the local roads in NSW are unsealed roads.

Many of these roads have poor pavements, challenges with rock bars close to the road surface and/or are surfaced with low-medium quality natural gravels locally available. Many have no gravel resurfacing left as a result of decades of under-funding and a lack of cyclic gravel re-sheeting.

The data provided by member Councils indicates that flood damage to the unsealed road pavements had an estimated recovery cost of \$43.5m across the region (excluding landslides and damage within the Snowy Valleys Council LGA). This represented about 19% of all flood damage claims under the NDFA in the floods in the period from July 2019 to June 2022.



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The other key damage types were landslides and slope instability, damage to table drains, culverts and/or culvert outlets. In the 2019-20 bushfires, the main cost of recovery was the removal of thousands of fallen and/or hazardous burnt-out trees that had become unsafe due to the bushfire. The other key damage (addressed separately under Section 3.2) was the loss and/or damage to timber bridges.

Effectively maintaining an unsealed road network requires specialized network management and engineering knowledge and an experienced team with a high level of operational skill.

Unsealed road network management programs must be strategic, longer term and designed to suit the specific context and to take advantage of cyclic renewal and improvement programs linked to hierarchy and vulnerability.

Factors such as the adequacy and maintenance of drainage systems, availability, quality and type of surfacing materials, rainfall and climate, natural materials, terrain, traffic volume, availability of water, and the frequency of maintenance grading operations all have a major impact on the performance of an unsealed road network.

Obviously unsealed road networks are typically more susceptible to wet weather than sealed roads. However, reconstructing and sealing roads can be expensive and should only be undertaken after seeking specialist engineering advice. Sealed roads typically encourage higher speeds which can introduce higher levels of hazards if not well designed and constructed.

Sealed roads also have an average annualized whole-of-life cost of up to double that of an unsealed road. Therefore, it is neither affordable in the short or long term to reconstruct and seal the extensive unsealed road networks across Australia.

However, specific circumstances may warrant reconstruction and sealing of unsealed roads, or specific sections of unsealed roads:

- a) Where the traffic volumes become excessive making unsealed road maintenance problematic.
- b) On shorter sections of road that would benefit from sealing to reduce risk to maintenance personnel (e.g., near very steep batters or near vulnerable retaining/embankment stabilization structures).
- c) On the approach to bridges or major structures to protect the environment and/or improve resilience.
- d) Where the availability of materials and/or personnel makes on-going care of an unsealed road problematic or cost prohibitive.
- e) To remove short lengths of unsealed roads (such as dead-end sections of unsealed roads) that require significant site establish set-up and cost to improve the cost effectiveness of the Council's overall operations.



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The Australian and NSW Government funding models should support the reconstruction and sealing of unsealed roads of higher importance to the transport network, provided reconstruction is an economically viable option.

The simplest forms of resilience improvement for the majority of the unsealed road network includes actions such as:

- a) Undertaking regular maintenance grading and associated work.
- b) Improving transverse drainage by providing and maintaining a sufficient number of culverts across the road with appropriate inlet and outlet treatments to ensure the stormwater flows get into the pipe and pass through under the road and into the receiving environment without causing erosion. These culverts should be of sufficient size for the catchments leading to the roadway. If done well, improving transverse drainage in a specific way can also bring about a significant improvement to environmental outcomes, especially by reducing sediment loads into any downstream waterways.
- c) Providing suitable catch drains and table drains to direct stormwater flows away from the road pavement (where practicable).
- d) Increasing the road crossfall to 6-8%. This can only be achieved where there are sufficient quality materials available on the site. This often means positive change needs to be systematically built into the gravel re-sheeting (resurfacing) programs and undertaken over the medium-term cycle. The natural sub-grade should also be ripped, shaped and compacted to the same crossfall prior to gravel re-sheeting.
- e) Removing any shallow rock bars prior to gravel re-sheeting (see (d) above).
- f) Utilising quality gravel re-sheeting materials such as a modified crushed rock sub-base quality material or good quality natural gravel with sufficient clay to bind the material and sufficient pavement strength to cater for the anticipated traffic volume and type. There are adequate guidance documents and testing methods already available to allow assessment of options specific to each region or Council.
- g) Placing the unsealed road network into a hierarchy and systematically linking the network management priorities, maintenance grading, gravel re-sheeting and other servicing frequency to that hierarchy. For instance:
  - o a higher trafficked road with a school bus route and dairy farms may warrant a higher level of service than a road with the same traffic volumes that is not required to service regular school bus services and daily truck movements supporting agricultural production.
  - o a section of unsealed road within steep terrain where drainage is critical may require more regular maintenance grading and servicing to ensure the drainage system remains functional.
- h) 'Dust sealing' an unsealed road where the road alignment, roadside environment and road pavement makes this a viable option. This option can be utilised in specific situations and can offer a more affordable 'holding solution' until sufficient funds become available in the future.



Various propriety products suggest improvements to unsealed road pavement performance. Feedback from practitioners, however, indicates their experiences in practice have been mixed. Often the cost of these treatments can be as much or more than more proven techniques such as gravel re-sheeting. These pavement additive treatments will not resolve any underlying transverse or longitudinal drainage issues, which should be given priority if resilience improvements are to be achieved.

Nonetheless, the Australian Government should support independent research to assess new products coming to the marketplace to give greater confidence to practitioners on managing the risk of failure. The National Transport and Research Organisation and some Universities are well placed to assist in this regard. Councils should also be encouraged to undertake their own trials to assist assessment under field conditions.

**iv) Skills and capacity of the workforce within the Local Government sector**

There are numerous other engineering requirements for constructing and renewing road pavements, whether sealed or unsealed. There is a worsening skills shortage in both the Government and private consulting and contracting sector.

Ensuring the workforce within Local Government has the skills and capacity to make appropriate decisions on the application of the relevant road building and maintenance treatments with an ability to deliver consistently high-quality outcomes, requires an on-going investment in training existing personnel and developing the workforce of the future. It also needs to be remembered that Local Government often provides the training ground for numerous personnel who ultimately move into the private contracting sector.

ALGA regularly report the number one skills shortage across the Australian Local Government sector as being Professional Engineers. Yet many Councils have been unable to establish cadetship programs to develop the skills sets specific to the Local Government environment. There are also significant shortages in the survey, design and quality control areas.

Whilst some efforts are being made to develop the workforce required, it is recommended that the Australian Government take a greater role by:

- a) Introducing a new program incentivizing Councils to invest in Professional Engineering cadetships.
- b) Continuing to support Nationally Accredited Certificate III and IV programs and apprenticeship programs for the development of operational personnel.
- c) Supporting Nationally Accredited Diploma level qualification in survey, design and civil engineering
- d) Working with professional organisations like the Institute of Public Works and Engineering Australia and the National Transport and Research Organisation to develop and deliver tailored training programs for existing Local Government personnel across Australia.





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- e) Working with Australian universities to ensure Civil Engineering Degree curriculums incorporate road network management and resilience planning suited to the changing Local Government context.

**v) Improving preparation for natural disasters**

The technology and predictive modelling and systems now available to better predict the occurrence of natural disasters can be utilised to improve immediate preparedness for natural disasters. Whilst resources significantly constrain the work that can be undertaken immediately prior to a natural disaster, many Councils now re-direct resources to known challenge areas to ensure available drainage systems and other preventative measures are functional prior to the disaster arriving.

When safe to do so, Council crews are typically also tasked to undertake activity during the disaster event. These works are targeted at treating developing issues across the network and managing the risks to the broader community during the event. This work can prove invaluable in planning and prioritising immediate actions to respond to and recover from natural disasters, including adapting to evacuate residents and/or assist emergency response crews in the midst of a natural disaster crisis. Whilst these measures are only a mitigating action, they are nonetheless critical to mitigating the broader risk to the community, the agricultural sector and business.

**vi) Technology, equipment and products Improvements**

There have been numerous advances in technology and products to assist in better managing, building and maintaining road networks.

It remains critical however that decisions and activities are underpinned by sound engineering knowledge. This submission again highlights that the fundamental engineering principles, knowledge and skills must be applied, especially to addressing existing road network legacies challenges.

A few examples:

**a) Drones**

Drones are now used extensively for asset inspections, survey and photographs. The use of drones allows faster assessment of disaster damage, more efficient response, better decision making and better identification of risk to the community and workers. Drones are especially useful in steep terrain, providing direct access to see and assess the extent of damage on batters, embankments, bridges and culvert structures.



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b) Laser equipment on plant and equipment

Laser equipment installed directly on plant and equipment now allows far more accurate control during construction and maintenance activities. This assists with the level control throughout the whole road pavement construction, allowing crews to produce higher quality outcomes with vastly improved worker safety and cost saving in materials use.

c) Electronic field devices with GPS and Artificial Intelligence

New technologies have been implemented by Councils, specifically designed for roads to allow far more accurate and faster recording of defects, damage to assets, estimates of cost and recovery actions.

These same devices are excellent for accurately recording changes to infrastructure to assist with improved asset management and network planning.

There are now options emerging to use artificial intelligence to pick-up road defects and changing road conditions. These developments offer exciting potential for roads maintenance. Care is needed however to ensure a data and resource hungry model is avoided and the quantum of funds available for the actual work in the field remains the most important priority.

d) Crumbed rubber additives to bitumen seals and asphalt

These additives re-use car tyres and provide a 'tried and tested' improvement in waterproofing of the road surfacing layers. This does come at an extra cost which often means Councils need to target the use of these products at higher order roads within their road hierarchy. Aligning treatments such as this where they are needed most can be a cost-effective strategy to better protect road pavements.

Trials on the use of recycled plastics in asphalt have apparently produced mixed results. Research into the use of these materials should continue, especially relating to higher levels of quality control requirements to ensure consistently high quality outcomes.

e) Modified pre-mix products

Numerous companies have developed modified pre-mix to assist improve the bond and resilience in wet weather. However, these products still require trained personnel to correctly install the repair with sound preparation prior to application the most important steps.



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f) Stabilisation of pavement subgrades and structural pavement layers

This treatment comes in many forms such as lime, lime/slag, cement, foamed bitumen stabilisation. Each can have a significant positive impact on improving the resilience of road pavements, in the right circumstances. These treatments are widely used on local road networks, especially lime stabilisation in its various forms. These treatments range in cost with foam bitumen being the most expensive. Used in the right circumstances, stabilisation can reduce the cost of rebuilding a road.

Careful application based on specialist engineering advice and appropriate pre- testing is required before selecting any form of stabilisation treatment. There are circumstances where other standard pavement reconstruction methods will provide a superior and far more cost effective outcome.

Stabilisation products are also available for unsealed roads. Feedback indicates mixed outcomes, but nonetheless further research and trials are encouraged.

g) Road assessment and pavement testing equipment

There are a number of companies now able to provide road assessment services, including pavement coring and testing. This testing can greatly assist understanding risks to road pavements on a network basis.

The National Transport Research Organisation (previously ARRB) has also developed the [iPAVE | ARRB](#). This vehicle can allow road authorities to determine information on the structural integrity of the road pavement as the vehicle passes along the road at 80km/hr.

The NSW and Australian Governments should work together and consider funding a program across Australia to collect improved data on the existing local road network. The value from such an exercise can be vastly improved by focusing on regional roads and higher order distributor roads. Significant efficiencies and cost savings in data collection could also be achieved if these data collection exercises were combined with cyclic data collection across the State highway network, whilst the vehicles are in the regions. This would focus the data collection on the highest trafficked and most important sealed roads to better manage the overall risk. It could also allow capacity building across both State agencies such as Transport for NSW and Council engineering teams.



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#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The detail in this submission highlights that there is no one solution to improving the resilience of the road network to natural disasters and severe weather events, including prolonged periods of wet weather.

The existing local road network has significant fundamental legacy challenges which make it vulnerable to damage during natural disasters and severe weather events.

The types of impacts during such events are provided in this document based on real lived experience across the CRJO region over the last three years (and before).

To achieve the optimum outcomes in improving the resilience of the local road network requires:

- 1) improved infrastructure resilience and network management planning.
- 2) increased and more efficient Government to Government funding models that provide:
  - a. improved funding certainty.
  - b. more realistic on-going funding levels aligned to the scale and growth of the local road network under Councils care and control, indexed to account for the increasing cost of road related construction and maintenance.
- 3) a concerted effort to rebuild the skills and capacity within the Local Government and public works sector.

There are numerous other factors including opportunities to use innovative technologies and new products to improve resilience. However, without the underlying fundamental infrastructure network planning, adequate on-going funding models and the underpinning engineering skills and capacity, significant improvements in resilience to natural disasters and severe weather will remain challenging and damage will increase with time as the effects of climate change become more extensive.

The recommendations included within the Executive Summary offer targeted solutions based on evidence and real lived experience. These solutions are tailored for Local Government and will be offset by future savings to the NSW and Australian Governments in lower natural disaster claims.

These are recommended to the Committee for implementation.



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**APPENDIX A – EUROBODALLA CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE RESILIENCE PLAN**

The Eurobodalla Critical Infrastructure Resilience Plan is attached courtesy of Eurobodalla Shire Council. The CRJO records its appreciation to Eurobodalla Shire Council for sharing this plan for the benefit of others.

The first version of this plan was developed as a working document in April 2020, taking the lessons learnt from the devastating 2019-20 bushfires and subsequent February 2020 flood. The plan took account of the specific lessons learnt throughout the natural disaster response including those arising from the operation of the Eurobodalla Emergency Operation Centre in protecting the Eurobodalla community throughout the 100 days of the 2019-20 bushfires.

This plan was regularly updated until rewritten in September 2022 to better record the actions since the bushfires and update future actions in line with the report to Council meeting held on 13 September 2022 (IR22/024 with attachments).

The document remains a working document and is regularly updated by the Eurobodalla Shire Council Infrastructure Services team to take account of successes and changing circumstances.

The plan has been used successfully throughout recovery period including providing focus for advocacy to secure substantial grant funding to make the Eurobodalla region far more resilient to future natural disasters.

The plan addresses local roads and highways as well as other critical infrastructure such as power supply, telecommunications, water and sewerage.

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## **9.9 Rates and Revenue Policies Update**

**Report Author:** Coordinator Revenue

**Authoriser:** Director Corporate Strategy and Resourcing

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### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to present the updated Debt Recovery Policy and Water Determination Policy with a view of placing them on public exhibition for feedback for 28 days.

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### **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION**

#### **THAT:**

1. Council receive and note the report.
2. The draft Debt Recovery Policy and draft Water Determination Policy be placed on public exhibition for 28 days with a view of tabling a further report after the exhibition period, should any feedback be received.

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### **REPORT**

#### **BACKGROUND**

Council has a number of policies relating to how it manages revenue and the associated debtors from such revenue streams. Council currently has Debt Recovery Policy and Hardship Policy, as two separate policies, that were due to be presented to Council in the 2013/14 financial year. Council also has a Water Determination Policy that was due to be presented to Council in the 2010/11 financial year. This report provides an update on these policies.

#### **REPORT**

In light of the current economic climate, ratepayers are experiencing financial pressures that may have an impact on their ability to pay their rates and water charges. To ensure that Council is working with ratepayers and debtors to manage their rates and water payments in a timely manner, the following policies have been identified to be updated to ensure alignment with existing legislation and best practice. The following policies are being proposed to be exhibited for 28 days:

- Consolidation of the Debt Recovery and Hardship Policy into a combined Debt Recovery Policy which covers financial hardship.
- Water Determination Policy.

To compliment the review of these policies, Council is working to develop a payment management solution to assist ratepayers to manage their payments through a direct debit solution which also provides oversight of their outstanding rates and charges. This will allow ratepayers to self-manage their rates and water debt and also seek assistance from Council on a payment arrangement to provide a holistic service to those who require assistance.

Proposed Changes to the Debt Recovery Policy Changes

The Debt Recovery Policy covers rates, water and sundry debtors and how they are managed from a debt management perspective. The following is a summary of changes made to the Debt Recovery Policy:

- Consolidate the Hardship Policy into the Debt Recovery Policy to align the management of payment of rates and charges with a view of retiring the existing Hardship Policy upon adoption.
- Hardship will be considered on a case-by-case basis with payment arrangements for hardship to be considered over 24 months instead of 12 months.
- Debt recovery for Water and Sewer payers and rate payers will now be consistent where in the past there were different parameters for both payment types.
- References to the methodology of how Council charges for legal recovery action is now captured.
- Pensioners who did not pay in line with instalments had interest waived until May of each year. This provision has been removed as it is not consistent with legislation and overly onerous to administer.
- Sundry Debtors (those classed as non-rates and water debtors) have been classed differently due to the nature of debt being classed as unsecured where rates and water charges are secured debt against the property.
- The policy also covers off timing in regard to rebates and how they are retrospectively applied.

It is proposed that the adoption of the policy will align with the launch of Council's proposed debt management system, Payble. This will assist ratepayers in managing their rates and water debt on platform that provides such options as weekly direct debits, SMS reminders and an app to monitor payments.

Proposed Changes to the Water Determination Policy

The Water Determination policy allows for a water & sewerage account to be adjusted for high water usage that is the consequence of a water leak. As there are no legislative provisions to cover for these, Council, in the capacity of being the Water Authority, can provide for an adjustment in accordance with parameters outlined in the policy. The adjustment is a 50% reduction of the total bill for the period identified once the parameters are satisfied within the policy.

The following is a summary of changes made to the Water Determination Policy:

- A ratepayer could only have one Water Determination throughout the ownership of their property. This has resulted in some owners being excluded from a water determination that were made as early as the 1980's. The policy has been updated to ensure a determination can now be received at, at a minimum, once every seven years.
- Provisions for consideration during extreme weather events such as flooding, where leaks are more difficult to identify.

Upon adoption of this policy, it is proposed to retrospectively apply the Water Determination Policy to March 2022, where a number of leaks were not detected due to the adverse wet conditions experienced in the Shire.

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**COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION**

**Community Engagement**

This will be publicly exhibited for 28 days for feedback.



**Internal Communication and Consultation**

The Finance team has developed this to ensure it aligns with legislation and systems configuration.

**External Communication and Consultation**

This will be publicly exhibited for 28 days for feedback.

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**SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT**

**Environment**

There are no environmental issues in relation to this report.

**Social**

There are no social issues in relation to this report.

**Broader Economic Implications**

There are no broader economic implications in relation to this report.

**Culture**

There are no cultural issues in relation to this report.

**Governance**

There are no governance issues in relation to this report.

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**COUNCIL BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications with this report.

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**RELATED COUNCIL POLICY**

The current policies impacted by this report are:

- Hardship Policy
- Debt Recovery Policy
- Water Determination Policy

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**CONCLUSION**

The Debt Recovery Policy and Water Determination Policy have not been publicly exhibited for a long period. It is proposed to publicly exhibit these reports for 28 days and table a further report if feedback is received.

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**ATTACHMENTS**

1. Debt Recovery Policy - COUNCIL 15-03-2023 [9.9.1 - 11 pages]
2. Water Determination Policy - COUNCIL 15-03-2023 [9.9.2 - 7 pages]

## Debt Recovery – Rates, Water & Sewerage and Sundry Debtor Accounts including Provisions for Hardship & Pensioner Rate Rebates Policy

**Our Council has the trust of the community and well informed decisions are made to ensure long term sustainability of our Shire**

**Effective financial and asset management ensure Council's long term sustainability**

Document Type	Council Policy
Document Reference No.	[Governance to insert] (example: 2020/001)
Version No.	[Governance to insert]
Council File Reference	104/5
Adoption Date	[Governance to insert]
Resolution Number [if applicable]	[Governance to insert]
Document Owner	Chief Financial Officer
Responsible Branch	Finance
Responsible Business Unit	Revenue
Review Schedule	Three years
Review Date	[Governance to insert]

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## **Table of Contents [Governance to insert]**

1. Objectives.....	3
2. Policy Statement .....	3
2.1 Billing information.....	3
2.2 Recovery Process Rates and Water & Sewerage Accounts .....	3
2.3 Debt Recovery Process - Sundry Debtors.....	5
2.4 Recovery Proceedings – Rates, Water & Sewerage and Sundry Debtor Accounts.....	5
2.5 Payment Arrangements .....	7
2.6 Pensioners.....	8
2.7 Hardship .....	8
3. Scope.....	9
4. Responsibilities.....	9
4.1 Councillors.....	9
4.2 Executive .....	9
4.3 Chief Financial Officer .....	9
4.4 Managers.....	9
4.5 Council staff.....	9
5. Performance Measures.....	10
6. Related Material.....	10
6.1 Related Legislation .....	10
6.2 Related Policies, Procedures and General Manager Practice Notes.....	10
7. Non-compliance with this Policy.....	10
8. Document Control [Governance to insert] .....	10
8.1 Version Control .....	10
8.2 Superseded Documents [if applicable] .....	10
9. Attachments.....	11



## **1. Objectives**

The objectives of this Policy are:

- To provide clear expectations of how Council will collect rates and charges within its statutory framework.
- To ensure the timely collection of rates, charges and other debts owing to Council to ensure overdue rates, charges and other debts does not become unmanageable for ratepayers.
- To ensure that the recovery process is undertaken in a consistent and fair manner ensuring that confidentiality is always maintained.

## **2. Policy Statement**

### **2.1 Billing information**

#### **Notices for Rates & Annual Charges**

Local Government legislation requires that the annual Rates and Charges notices are issued prior to 31 July each year. These notices can either be paid in a lump sum (by the 31 August of that year) or by four instalments due on 31 August, 30 November, 28 February and 31 May of that financial year. Where the due date of a payment falls on the weekend, payment becomes due on the next business day.

Instalment notices are then required to be issued at least one month prior to the instalment due date, in accordance with Section 562 of the Local Government Act 1993.

Rate notice amounts will be considered as being in arrears when they are not paid by the due date.

#### **Notices for Water & Sewer Charges**

Water & Sewerage charges are billed three (3) times per year and invoiced amounts will be deemed due thirty (30) days after the date of issue.

Water & Sewerage notice amounts will be considered as being in arrears when they are not paid by the due date.

#### **Invoices for Sundry Debtor Amounts**

Invoices will be issued as required and invoiced amounts will be deemed due thirty (30) days after the date of issue.

Sundry Debtor invoice amounts will be considered as being in arrears when they are not paid by the due date.

### **2.2 Recovery Process Rates and Water & Sewerage Accounts**

#### **Stage 1 - Reminder Notice**

Following the due date of a Rates and Water & Sewerage Notice, a reminder notice will be issued to all ratepayers with overdue amounts greater than \$20.00 where the account is currently not subject to recovery proceedings.

**Wingecarribee Shire Council**

**Page 3 of 11**

***Debt Recovery – Rates, Water & Sewerage and Sundry Debtor Accounts including Hardship provisions***

***Policy, version [Governance to insert]***



The Reminder Notice will advise:

- The amount of any overdue rates and charges and the due date;
- A statement that interest charges apply to overdue amounts in accordance with the provision of the Local Government Act 1993 (included as a part of the overdue amount);
- A statement that the ratepayer should contact Council prior to the due date of the reminder notice to enter into a suitable payment arrangement if they are not in the position to pay the overdue rates and charges.

At this stage, no formal legal action has been commenced and no legal costs have been incurred.

#### **Stage 2 - Urgent Reminder Letter**

Where a Reminder Notice has either not been paid or an acceptable payment arrangement entered into, an Urgent Reminder Letter will be issued to all ratepayers who satisfy the arrears criteria detailed below.

A Rate Account will be considered as being in arrears when two (2) or more instalments are overdue, and the sum of those instalments is greater than the minimum Professional Costs rounded to the nearest \$100.00 (see note below).

A Water & Sewer Account will be considered as being in arrears when the overdue amount is greater than the minimum Professional Costs rounded to the nearest \$100.00 (see note below).

**NOTE:** The amount considered as being arrears for the 2022/2023 year is \$600.00 being equivalent to the minimum Professional Costs of \$591.00 rounded to the nearest \$100.00. This aligns to the scale of legal costs and charges that are set by the relevant legislation and updated periodically:

- Court Fees – Schedule 1, Civil Procedure Regulation 2017;
- Service Fees – Schedule 2, Civil Procedure Regulation 2017
- Professional Costs – Schedule 1, Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Regulation 2015

A payment or payment arrangement is expected to be entered into within 14 days of the letter. If a payment or payment arrangement has not been entered into, a Legal Letter of Demand may be issued in accordance with this policy.

#### **Stage 3 - Legal Letter of Demand**

Where an Urgent Reminder Letter has either not been paid or a payment arrangement entered into, the account will be referred to Council's appointed legal representative who will issue a Legal Letter of Demand.

This letter will allow the ratepayer(s) fourteen (14) days to respond either by way of payment or by making a payment arrangement. The intent of the legal letter of demand is to advise the ratepayer(s) that if the amount is not paid or a payment arrangement entered into, legal proceedings will commence at which time legal costs will accumulate against the ratepayers account.

At this stage, no legal costs have been incurred by the ratepayer by receiving a legal letter of demand.

Recovery proceedings (detailed later in this Policy) will be commenced on those accounts that have either not been paid or a payment arrangement entered into.



### **2.3 Debt Recovery Process - Sundry Debtors**

#### **Stage 1 - Sundry Debtor Statement**

A statement will be issued within five (5) days from end of month to all debtors with amounts owing greater than \$10.00 and who are currently not subject to recovery proceedings.

At this stage, no formal legal action has been commenced and no legal costs have been incurred.

#### **Stage 2 - Final Notice**

Where a Sundry Debtor Statement has either not been paid or an acceptable payment arrangement entered into within ten (10) days of the statement being issued, a Final Notice will be issued to a debtor. If a payment has not been received or a reasonable payment arrangement been entered into, a Legal Letter of Demand or Legal Reminder Letter may be issued.

#### **Stage 3 - Legal Letter of Demand and Legal Reminder Letters**

Where a Final Notice has either not been paid or a payment arrangement entered into, the account will be referred to Council's appointed legal representative who will issue one of two (2) letters dependant on the overdue amount.

##### **Legal Letter of Demand**

Those accounts with overdue amounts greater than the minimum Professional Costs rounded to the nearest \$100.00 (see note below) will be issued with a Legal Letter of Demand.

This letter will allow the debtor fourteen (14) days to respond either by way of payment or by making a payment arrangement. The letter will also advise the debtor that if the amount is not paid or a payment arrangement entered, legal proceedings will commence at which time legal costs will begin to accumulate on the overdue amount.

##### **Legal Reminder Letter**

Remaining accounts will be issued with a Reminder Letter which allows the debtor fourteen (14) days to respond either by way of payment or by making a payment arrangement. This letter will not make any statement with regards to legal proceedings.

The Recovery files for any unpaid Legal Reminder Letters will be closed and the amounts will either be considered for write off at year end or allowed to accumulate until such time as recovery proceedings can be commenced.

At this stage, no legal costs have been incurred by the debtor by receiving a legal Letter of Demand.

### **2.4 Recovery Proceedings – Rates, Water & Sewerage and Sundry Debtor Accounts**

Where a Legal Letter of Demand has not been paid or a payment arrangement entered into by the due date, Council's appointed legal representative will be instructed to commence legal recovery proceedings.



A summary of the recovery proceedings is below.

#### **Statement of Claim**

A document issued by the Local Court and served on the ratepayer/debtor(s) as a formal notification that Council is seeking payment of the overdue amount.

The legal costs and professional fees incurred by Council by issuing the Claim will be charged to the Rates, Water & Sewerage, Debtor account (whichever is applicable). As every effort is made to personally service the Statement of Claim, any reasonable expenses of tracing the person(s) will also be added to the relevant account.

The ratepayer/debtor can pay the amount of the debt filed with the Court, enter into a payment arrangement or lodge a defence with the court.

#### **Default Judgement**

Following the expiration of the date nominated on the Statement of Claim, Council will seek to obtain a default judgement ruling against the ratepayer/debtor(s) where payment of the full amount of the statement of claim has not been paid or a payment arrangement entered and/or adhered to.

As a judgement debt is registered with credit agencies and this may impact on a ratepayer/debtor(s) capacity to obtain finance or credit in the future, prior to obtaining a default judgement debt, Council will instruct its appointed legal representative to issue a letter allowing the ratepayer/debtor fourteen (14) days to respond. If no response is received within the time frames, an instruction to Council's appointed legal representatives to file for default judgment will be issued and associated costs incurred and charged against the ratepayer/debtor(s) account.

#### **Other Legal Proceedings**

After obtaining a default judgement, the most appropriate action will be taken to recover the debt. This may include one or more of the following courses of action:

- Writ of Execution
- Rent for Rates (If the property is being leased or rented, Council may serve the occupier with a rental order to pay the overdue rates (Section 569 of the Local Government Act 1993).
- Examination Notice
- Examination Order
- Garnishee Order (against the ratepayer salary or bank account)
- Bankruptcy proceedings
- Winding up proceedings

Council's Coordinator Revenue or a delegated officer will authorise the above recovery proceedings in conjunction with advice from Council's legal representative.

The legal costs and professional fees incurred by Council in taking the above actions (except for the Examination Notice) will be charged to the relevant account.





#### **Legal Costs**

As legal proceedings are only commenced as an absolute last resort, legal costs will only be waived where it can be clearly identified that the recovery proceedings were commenced in error or because of a Council error.

For example, where a change of address or notice of transfer advice was either not processed or was incorrectly processed by a Council officer.

#### **Sale of Land for Unpaid Rates**

If the rates or charges on a rateable property are overdue for more than three (3) years or one (1) year in the case of vacant land, a resolution of Council may be made to commence proceedings to sell the property for unpaid rates. The process outlined below has been referenced by Chapter 17, Part 2, Division 5 of the Local Government Act 1993 and Section 133 of the Local Government Regulations 2005.

Once a resolution of Council has been obtained to proceed with the sale of land for unpaid rates, a certificate (formatted in accordance with Section 713 of the Local Government Act 1993) must be signed by the General Manager or Public Officer. Council will then proceed with advertising of the sale of land for unpaid rates as required by Section 715 of the Local Government Act and Section 133 of the Local Government Regulations 2005.

Sale proceedings will cease when all rates and charges payable (including overdue rates and charges) are paid to Council or an arrangement satisfactory to Council for payment of all such rates and charges is entered by the ratepayer.

Any sale of land for unpaid rates must be by way of public auction. Land that fails to sell at public auction may be sold by private treaty. Land may be sold to Council, a councillor, a relative of a councillor, a member of staff of Council or any relative of a member of staff of Council in the case of sale by public auction but may not be sold in the case of sale by private treaty.

If the funds received by way of sale are less than the total value of the rates, the balance of rates will be written off. If the funds received by way of sale are greater than the rates, the funds will be held in trust and distributed to the parties entitled to funds as deemed by Council.

### **2.5 Payment Arrangements**

A ratepayer/debtor(s) who is experiencing financial difficulties may enter into an alternate payment arrangement to pay their overdue amount.

Any arrangement should allow for an account to be brought up to date (including any other amounts that become due during the payment term) within twenty-four (24) months of the agreement being made with ongoing reviews as required.

As interest will still accrue on any overdue rates or water & sewerage amount, the ratepayer will be encouraged (as it is in their best interests) to bring their account(s) up to date as soon as possible.



## **2.6 Pensioners**

### **Statutory Pensioner Rebates**

An owner of a property may apply for a pensioner concession rate rebate on their rate account.

An applicant(s) who satisfies the criteria set out by section 575 of the Local Government Act 1993 will have a rebate amount applied to their rate account:

- For the year in which the application is made only, and
- Where the maximum amount of the rebate is determined by the aforementioned section.

### **Retrospective Rebates**

Applications will only be approved for the year in which the application is received unless there are extenuating circumstances that prevented the application from being lodged in a timelier manner.

### **Life Tenants & other Applicants**

Under section 577 of the Local Government Act 1993, Council will approve an application for a pensioner concession rate rebate to an applicant who is either:

- the life tenant under the will of the late owner, or
- where the applicant can produce a legally binding agreement showing that they are responsible for the payment of rates for the property for which the application is being made.

Applicants will still be otherwise assessed under the requirements set out by section 575 with respect to the calculation of the rebate amount and residency requirements.

Applications for pensioner concession rate rebates under section 577 of the Local Government Act 1993 should be subject to some level of periodical review.

## **2.7 Hardship**

An application under Hardship can be made at any time by an owner to assist with the payment of either a Rates or Water & Sewerage Account. Hardship will be considered on a case by case basis depending on an individual's circumstance.

Assistance will only be offered via interest relief (i.e. the waiving of interest charges).

To be eligible for this assistance on either or both accounts, the below criteria must be met:

- The total household expenditure of the applicant should be at least 75% of the total household income; and
- The applicant will be required to enter into an arrangement where total annual payments equals at least 1.5 times the current annual rates for the property;
- At least twelve (12) month's payments must be made before any interest relief is made.

## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023



Application for assistance must be made using the prescribed form and Council reserves the right to:

- Request documentation to substantiate any information provided in the application, and
- Refuse any such application for failing to provide the requested documentation.
- Review existing arrangements at the end of each rating year or as required.

Accounts will be reviewed in July of each year at which time interest charges will be waived according to the below table:

Current Annual Rates	Total Interest Waived (*see note below)
1.5 times	50%
2 times	100% (maximum)

*\*as a percentage of total interest charges raised during the corresponding year of payments*

Applicants who do not satisfy the eligibility criteria detailed above are eligible to make an application for an alternate arrangement but are not eligible for interest relief.

### 3. Scope

This Policy applies to all Councillors and Council's Officers and manages the recovery of all debt owed to Council.

### 4. Responsibilities

Responsibilities for the implementation of this Policy are shared as follows.

#### 4.1 Councillors

Councillors shall be aware of the process described by this Policy.

#### 4.2 Executive

The Executive shall be aware of the process described by this Policy.

#### 4.3 Chief Financial Officer

The Chief Financial Officer shall:

- provide guidance to Councillors, Executive and other Council staff as to the content and implementation of this Policy;
- ensure the timely review of this Policy; and
- conduct investigations into alleged non-compliance with this Policy.

#### 4.4 Managers

Managers shall provide guidance to Council staff within their respective branches as to the content and implementation of this Policy, seeking guidance from the policy owner as required.

#### 4.5 Council staff

Council Staff shall be aware of the process outlined by this Policy and of the need to seek assistance and guidance from Council's Revenue Team.

Wingecarribee Shire Council

Page 9 of 11

**Debt Recovery – Rates, Water & Sewerage and Sundry Debtor Accounts including Hardship provisions**

**Policy, version [Governance to insert]**



## **5. Performance Measures**

The effectiveness of this Policy will be measured by recovery being in line with the required Local Government benchmark.

## **6. Related Material**

### **6.1 Related Legislation**

The following legislative is related to this Policy:

- The Local Government Act, 1993 (NSW)
- Local Government Act (General) Regulations 2005
- Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009
- Local Courts Act, 1970
- Local Courts (Civil Claims) Rules 1988
- Legal Profession Act, 2004
- Legal Profession Regulations, 2005

### **6.2 Related Policies, Procedures and General Manager Practice Notes**

Council's Revenue Policy included in the Annual Operational Plan is related to this Policy.

## **7. Non-compliance with this Policy**

Non-compliance with this Policy should be reported to Chief Financial Officer who will investigate and determine the appropriate course of action

## **8. Document Control [Governance to insert]**

### **8.1 Version Control**

Version	Adoption Date	Notes
[insert version no.]	[insert date on which version was adopted]	[describe amendments/changes from previous version]
[insert version no.]	[insert date on which version was adopted]	[describe amendments/changes from previous version]
[insert version no.]	[insert date on which version was adopted]	[describe amendments/changes from previous version]

### **8.2 Superseded Documents [if applicable]**

The following documents are superseded by this Policy:

**Wingecarribee Shire Council**

**Page 10 of 11**

***Debt Recovery – Rates, Water & Sewerage and Sundry Debtor Accounts including Hardship provisions***

***Policy, version [Governance to insert]***

## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023



Document Title	Adoption Date	Notes
[insert document title]	[insert date on which document was adopted]	[describe reasons for superseding the document]
[insert document title]	[insert date on which document was adopted]	[describe reasons for superseding the document]
[insert document title]	[insert date on which document was adopted]	[describe reasons for superseding the document]

### 9. Attachments

There are no attachments to this Policy.

Approved by:

WINGECARRIBEE SHIRE COUNCIL

[Governance to insert adoption date]

## Water Determination Policy

**Our Council has the trust of the community and well informed decisions are made to ensure long term sustainability of our Shire**

**Effective financial and asset management ensure Council's long term sustainability**

Document Type	Council Policy
Document Reference No.	[Governance to insert] (example: 2020/001)
Version No.	[Governance to insert]
Council File Reference	104/5
Adoption Date	[Governance to insert]
Resolution Number [if applicable]	[Governance to insert]
Document Owner	Chief Financial Officer
Responsible Branch	Finance
Responsible Business Unit	Revenue
Review Schedule	Four years
Review Date	[Governance to insert]

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## **Table of Contents [Governance to insert]**

1. Objectives.....	3
2. Policy Statement .....	3
2.1 Provisions .....	3
2.2 Extreme weather event.....	4
2.3 Applications that are not successful .....	4
2.4 Calculation of the adjustment.....	4
3. Scope.....	4
4. Responsibilities.....	4
4.1 Councillors.....	4
4.2 Executive .....	5
4.3 Chief Financial Officer .....	5
4.4 Managers.....	5
4.5 Council staff.....	5
5. Performance Measures.....	5
6. Definitions .....	5
7. Related Material.....	5
7.1 Related Legislation .....	5
7.2 Related Policies, Procedures and General Manager Practice Notes.....	6
8. Non-compliance with this Policy.....	6
9. Document Control [Governance to insert] .....	6
9.1 Version Control .....	6
9.2 Superseded Documents [if applicable] .....	6
10. Attachments.....	6





## **1. Objectives**

To provide a determination (or adjustment) to the owner of a property in a situation where high-water usage on a water & sewerage account is the result of circumstances that are beyond the owner's control.

## **2. Policy Statement**

Once water has passed through the meter at a property it becomes the responsibility of the owner of the property.

There is no provision in the Local Government Act 1993 that require or allow for a water & sewerage account to be adjusted for high water usage that is the consequence of a water leak, so it becomes the Policy of the respective Water Authority of whether an adjustment is provided.

This policy provides some (but not full) compensation to an owner where high-water usage was the result of a concealed, undetectable or an inaccessible leak.

### **2.1 Provisions**

Council will provide an adjustment under this Policy where the following conditions are met:

- An application for a determination under this Policy will not be accepted where the water & sewerage account is in arrears unless the owner has previously entered into an arrangement to pay those arrears, and
- Where a water & sewerage account is not in arrears, the access charges on the affected notice(s) should also be finalised by the due date of the notice(s), as any adjustment will only be made in respect of the water usage charges, and
- An application for an adjustment under this Policy must be received by the due date of the affected water and sewerage account(s), and
- The applicant must an owner of the property, or their authorised agent, and
- One claim will be offered per property, per seven (7) year period of ownership irrespective of whether ownership is sole or part ownership of the property, and
- A claim for adjustment under this Policy must be made in writing and include a copy of the invoice for any repairs undertaken by a licensed plumber, and
- The Council must be satisfied that the leak would not have been noticed in day to day activities either because it was concealed, undetectable or not easily accessed, and
- The Council must be satisfied that any repairs have been undertaken in a timely manner, and
- Before an adjustment is processed to a water & sewerage account, the owner is required to sign and return a deed of release to Council agreeing to the claim;
- If the repair of the leak has not been undertaken by a licensed plumber, a statutory declaration must be provided by the owner stating:
  - Who has repaired the leak;
  - The address where the work was carried out;
  - The date, nature and location of the repairs;
  - A statement that the defect was not readily visible or apparent.



## **2.2 Extreme weather event**

Where an extreme weather event (like flooding) masks the presence of a leak or delays the repair of a leak, Council may choose to:

- provide an adjustment over more than one (1) billing period provided they are consecutive billing periods, and
- accept an application for a water determination outside of the deadline required by this Policy.

An extreme weather event counts as a claim within a 7 year period.

## **2.3 Applications that are not successful**

Where an application for a determination under this Policy is not successful, the owner will be allowed thirty (30) days from the date of the advice to pay the outstanding usage charges.

Property owners who have a Private Water Service Agreement with Council for the supply of water are ineligible to claim for a determination under this Policy.

## **2.4 Calculation of the adjustment**

The maximum adjustment provided will be equal to 50% of the difference between the water usage charge of the affected account and an estimate of the average consumption for that period calculated using the usage of the four (4) billing periods immediately preceding the affected notice.

Where current ownership of the property is less than two (2) consecutive billing periods, Council may choose to obtain two (2) additional readings over consecutive months to determine the average consumption to be used when calculating the adjustment.

Where the leak appears to affect more than one billing period, Council may choose to replace the additional affected billing period from any calculation with the usage from another billing period.

# **3. Scope**

This Policy applies to all Councillors and Council's Officers and manages the recovery of all debt owed to Council.

# **4. Responsibilities**

Responsibilities for the implementation of this Policy are shared as follows.

## **4.1 Councillors**

Councillors shall be aware of the process described by this Policy.



#### **4.2 Executive**

The Executive shall be aware of the process described by this Policy.

#### **4.3 Chief Financial Officer**

The Chief Financial Officer shall:

- provide guidance to Councillors, Executive and other Council staff as to the content and implementation of this Policy;
- ensure the timely review of this Policy; and
- conduct investigations into alleged non-compliance with this Policy.

#### **4.4 Managers**

Managers shall:

- provide guidance to Council staff within their respective branches as to the content and implementation of this Policy, seeking guidance from the policy owner as required.

#### **4.5 Council staff**

Council staff shall:

- be aware of the process outlined by this Policy and of the need to seek assistance and guidance from Council's Revenue Team.

### **5. Performance Measures**

The success of this Policy will be measured by:

- The number and dollar value of applications processed;
- The number of applications rejected;
- The number and type of feedback received.

### **6. Definitions**

**Water Determination**                      An adjustment provided to a water & sewerage account

### **7. Related Material**

#### **7.1 Related Legislation**

The following legislative material is related to this Policy:

- The Local Government Act 1993



## **7.2 Related Policies, Procedures and General Manager Practice Notes**

The following **policy** is related to this Policy:

- Council's Revenue Policy included in the Annual Operational Plan

## **8. Non-compliance with this Policy**

Non-compliance with this Policy should be reported to the Chief Financial Officer who will investigate and determine the appropriate course of action.

## **9. Document Control [Governance to insert]**

### **9.1 Version Control**

Version	Adoption Date	Notes
[insert version no.]	[insert date on which version was adopted]	[describe amendments/changes from previous version]
[insert version no.]	[insert date on which version was adopted]	[describe amendments/changes from previous version]
[insert version no.]	[insert date on which version was adopted]	[describe amendments/changes from previous version]

### **9.2 Superseded Documents [if applicable]**

The following documents are superseded by this Policy:

Document Title	Adoption Date	Notes
[insert document title]	[insert date on which document was adopted]	[describe reasons for superseding the document]
[insert document title]	[insert date on which document was adopted]	[describe reasons for superseding the document]
[insert document title]	[insert date on which document was adopted]	[describe reasons for superseding the document]

## **10. Attachments**

There are no attachments to this Policy.

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**



Approved by:

WINGECARRIBEE SHIRE COUNCIL

[Governance to insert adoption date]

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## **9.10 Financial Reserves Policy Update**

**Report Author:** Deputy Chief Financial Officer

**Authoriser:** Director Corporate Strategy and Resourcing

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### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to present the updated Financial Reserves Policy and placing it on public exhibition for feedback for 28 days.

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### **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION**

#### **THAT:**

1. Council receive and note the report.
2. The draft Financial Reserves Policy be placed on public exhibition for 28 days with a view of tabling a further report after the exhibition period, only if feedback is received.

---

### **REPORT**

#### **BACKGROUND**

At the Extraordinary Council meeting in June 2022, Council adopted a Financial Reserves Policy. The Financial Reserves policy formally documented the reserves that Council should maintain in managing its funding sources.

#### **REPORT**

In developing the 2023/24 Operational Plan and Budget, Council is reviewing its reporting formats to report on Services aligned to Council's organisational structure. In providing this revised information, a review of Council's Financial Reserves Policy has been conducted to align Council's reserves to ensure funding of each service is captured accurately.

The following changes are proposed to Financial Reserves Policy and have been incorporated in draft version found in **ATTACHMENT 1**:

The Service Units reserve is currently being used to mitigate cash flow fluctuations for a number of Council operations. In deleting this reserve, it is noted that a levy of \$3 per head has been collected the Southern Regional Livestock Exchange for capital improvements. This \$3 Levy will be transferred to the Capital Works Reserve to fund future capital works from 23/24 onwards. Upon deletion of the Service Units Reserve, it is proposed to transfer the balance of funds from the Service Units reserve to the Capital Works reserve to prioritise essential ICT capital works. Upon adoption of this policy, any previous resolutions that that require funds to be allocated to the Service Units reserve be rescinded.

Reserve Name	Internally Restricted - Service Units - Delete
Purpose	To set aside funds for the continuing operations and future improvement of Council's facilities and services, including Cemeteries, Family Day Care,

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

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	Swimming Pool, Saleyards and Tourism.
Source of Funds	Net surplus result from service units, which exceed adopted budget position are essentially transferred to reserve to fund future operations and capital works improvements.

It is proposed to amend the scope of the Capital Works Reserve to include funding ICT Capital projects. Council has under-invested in Information Communication and Technology Capital works over the past decade and this funding source will allow for ICT projects to be delivered along with associated efficiencies. It is also suggested to remove the requirement of “match grant funding when they are required to be matched dollar for dollar” from this reserve.

Reserve Name	Internally Restricted - Capital Works – Amended Scope
Purpose	To provide funds for future upgrade and improvement of capital works, including buildings, infrastructure assets, other structures and Information Communication and Technology Capital works.
Source of Funds	General Revenue – Untied Rate Income

It is proposed to amend the scope of the Election Reserve to include councillor induction, the funding of the development of Integrated Planning and Reporting documents including the Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program which is refreshed every four years in line with the election of a new Council.

Reserve Name	Internally Restricted - Election Reserve – Amended Scope
Purpose	To set aside funds to fund council elections, councillor induction and the development of Integrated Planning and Reporting documents in line with Council election cycles.
Source of Funds	General Revenue – Untied Rate Income

The creation of this reserve was resolved at the December 2022 meeting of Council. This reserve will see contributions collected to fund car parking solutions within the Bowral town centre.

Reserve Name	Internally Restricted – Car Parking Contributions Reserve – New
Purpose	To set aside funds for car parking solutions within the Bowral area in accordance with the catchment area identified with the relevant scheme.
Source of Funds	Car Parking Contributions Revenue



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## **COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION**

### **Community Engagement**

The Financial Reserves Policy will be publicly advertised for 28 days.

### **Internal Communication and Consultation**

Not applicable

### **External Communication and Consultation**

The Financial Reserves Policy will be publicly advertised for 28 days.

---

## **SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT**

### **Environment**

There are no environmental issues in relation to this report.

### **Social**

There are no social issues in relation to this report.

### **Broader Economic Implications**

There are no broader economic implications in relation to this report.

### **Culture**

There are no cultural issues in relation to this report.

### **Governance**

There are no governance issues in relation to this report. Upon adoption of the policy, the CFO will need to ensure that Council's financial ledgers align to the outcomes of this policy.

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## **COUNCIL BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

This report has no financial implications. Upon adoption, funds from these reserves will need to be released which should have a positive impact on Council's working capital position.

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## **RELATED COUNCIL POLICY**

Not applicable.

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## **CONCLUSION**

The draft Financial Reserves Policy has been updated to ensure that it aligns to the expectations of Council's revised reporting and endorsed resolutions. The draft Financial Reserves Policy is recommended to be publicly exhibited for 28 days.

---

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Draft Financial Reserves Policy - March 2023 Update [9.10.1 - 11 pages]

## Financial Reserves Policy

### LEADERSHIP

**OUR COUNCIL HAS THE TRUST OF THE COMMUNITY AND WELL INFORMED DECISIONS  
ARE MADE TO ENSURE LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY OF OUR SHIRE**

Document Type	Council Policy
Document Reference No.	[Governance to insert] (example: 2020/001)
Version No.	[Governance to insert]
Council File Reference	[Insert departmental file number, generally the relevant electronic records management system subject reference]
Adoption Date	[Governance to insert]
Resolution Number [if applicable]	[Governance to insert]
Document Owner	Chief Financial Officer
Responsible Branch	Finance, Procurement and Fleet
Responsible Business Unit	Financial Services
Review Schedule	2 years from adoption
Review Date	[Governance to insert]



## **Table of Contents [Governance to insert]**

1. Objectives.....	3
2. Policy Statement .....	3
i) Externally Restricted Reserves.....	4
ii) Internally Restricted Reserves .....	6
iii) Unrestricted Funds.....	8
3. Scope .....	8
4. Responsibilities.....	8
4.1 Council.....	9
4.2 Executive .....	9
4.3 Chief Financial Officer .....	9
4.4 Managers.....	9
4.5 Council staff.....	9
5. Performance Measures.....	9
6. Definitions .....	10
7. Related Material.....	10
7.1 Related Legislation .....	10
7.2 Related Policies, Procedures and General Manager Practice Notes.....	10
8. Non-compliance with this Policy.....	10
9. Document Control [Governance to insert] .....	10
9.1 Version Control .....	10
10. Attachments.....	11



## **1. Objectives**

The objectives of this Policy are to

- Provide a framework for the preservation and use of Council's limited financial resources to support Council's financial strategy and ensure long term financial sustainability and capacity to provide quality services on an ongoing basis;
- Provide agreed direction and control in respect to the type of reserves that are required.

## **2. Policy Statement**

Council is committed to following the guidelines established in this Financial Reserve Policy:

- Council will set aside funds as required by specific legislation. These funds will be managed and accounted for so as to comply with the relevant legislation;
- Council will also from time to time set aside additional funds for Council's specific purposes;
- Restricted funds will be reported in the Annual Financial Statements and reviewed annually against the specified requirements of each fund;
- Restricted funds will be reviewed quarterly against the annual budget by the Branch Manager accountable for that fund;
- Each specific fund shall be approved by Council and must be supported by a statement which outlines the following:
  - Purpose of Restricted Funds;
  - Source of funds;
  - The apportionment of interest earned on cash held for that fund;
  - Accountability for the collection, management and expenditure of that fund;
  - Relevant legislation or Council Minute supporting the creation of the fund;
- Creation of all restricted funds shall be in accordance with this policy, and through formal Council resolution;
- Expenditure of Restricted Funds shall be in strict accordance with the approved budget, and expenditure shall not exceed funds available without specific Council Resolution; and
- All Restricted Funds are to be 100% cash backed.

### **Outline of Policy**

The following section outlines what restricted reserves Council can hold and their purpose.

- Externally Restricted Reserves – These are restricted reserves which are determined by Legislation which can only be used for the purposes of which the funds were created for. The use of externally restricted reserves for projects and programs which are inconsistent with the purpose of these reserves is not permitted under legislation.
- Internally Restricted Reserves – These are restricted reserves which are typically established at the discretion of the Council and can be used for strategic programs and/or projects; and for sound financial management purposes.

## AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023



- Unrestricted funds – The level of working funds available to manage liquidity requirements and to manage unforeseen budget variations.

### i) Externally Restricted Reserves

Reserve Name	Domestic Waste Management
Purpose	By virtue of Section 496 of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> (as amended), Council must levy a separate charge for domestic waste management services, which include garbage and recycling services. Under the legislation Council cannot finance these services from ordinary rates so the charge must be sufficient to recover reasonable costs of providing these services. Council can only use these funds for the provision and management of domestic waste services within the Wingecarribee Local Government Area.
Source of Funds	Domestic Waste Services & Management Levy.

Reserve Name	Environment Levy
Purpose	This restricted asset is to set aside funds for managing natural resources for our local environment and community.
Source of Funds	Environment Levy in accordance with Section 495 of the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i>

Reserve Name	Quarry Royalties
Purpose	This restricted asset is to fund the maintenance of roads impacted by Quarry extraction transport, and the employment of a Quarry Officer.
Source of Funds	Extractive Industries Royalty Payments

Reserve Name	S64 Water, Sewer & Stormwater Contributions
Purpose	Section 64 of the <i>Local Government Act</i> enables Council to levy developer charges for water supply, sewerage and stormwater. These developer charges are levied to recover part of the infrastructure costs associated with providing a level of service to new developments and/or alterations and additions to existing developments. The Act requires Council to set these funds aside to be used specifically for the provision of these facilities and services.
Source of Funds	S64 contributions as levied in accordance with Council's adopted S64 Development Servicing Plans for Water Supply, Sewerage and

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**



	Stormwater.
--	-------------

Reserve Name	S7.11 & S7.12 Developer Contributions
Purpose	Section 7.11 & 7.12 of the Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979 enables Council to levy contributions as a consequence of development. These contributions are essential in providing quality facilities to an expanding local population. The Act requires Council to set these funds aside to be used specifically for the provision of these facilities.
Source of Funds	Developer contributions as levied in accordance with Council's adopted S7.11 & S7.12 Developer Contributions Plans.

Reserve Name	Sewerage Services
Purpose	Isolate cash available to Sewerage Services to enable a continuity of operations to meet the needs and expectations of Council and the community. These funds can only be used to fund sewerage operations, or projects and programs which are directly related to sewerage operations.
Source of Funds	Revenue collected from sewerage services provided by Council.

Reserve Name	Specific Purpose Unexpended Grants
Purpose	An external restriction is placed on grant funding that has been received for a specific purpose that has not been spent by the end of the financial year.
Source of Funds	Grant funding that is for a specific purpose is provided to Council from various sources.

Reserve Name	Stormwater Management
Purpose	This restricted asset is to set aside funds for both capital projects and recurrent expenditure relating to stormwater management services. These funds can only be used for stormwater projects and programs where a stormwater catchment area has been identified by Council.
Source of Funds	Stormwater Management Services Charge in accordance with Section 496A(1) of the Local Government Act 1993



Reserve Name	Water Supplies
Purpose	Isolate cash available to Water Supply to enable a continuity of operations to meet the needs and expectations of Council and the community. These funds can only be used to fund water supply operations, or projects and programs which are directly related to water supply operations.
Source of Funds	Revenue collected from water supplies provided by Council.

**ii) Internally Restricted Reserves**

Reserve Name	Bonds and Deposits
Purpose	Council requires bonds or security deposits to be paid with development applications and contract works. Bonds are released when the relevant conditions of development consent have been met. Where these conditions are not met, Council retains the funds with the intent of undertaking the works in lieu of the developer.
Source of Funds	Any person or company that has paid a deposit, retention monies or bond to Council.

Reserve Name	Capital Works
Purpose	To provide funds for future upgrade and improvement of capital works, including buildings, infrastructure assets, other structures and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Capital works.
Source of Funds	General Revenue – Untied Rate Income

Reserve Name	Car Parking Contributions Reserve
Purpose	To fund expenditure on Council waste facilities.
Source of Funds	Waste Facilities Fees and Charges

Reserve Name	Election Reserve
Purpose	To set aside funds to fund council elections, councillor induction and the development of Integrated Planning and Reporting (IPR) documents in line with Council election cycles.
Source of Funds	General Revenue – Untied Rate Income



**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**



Reserve Name	Employee Leave Entitlements
Purpose	To provide funds for employee leave entitlements which have been accrued but not yet paid.
Source of Funds	General Revenue – Untied Rate Income

Reserve Name	Financial Assistance Grant
Purpose	To set aside Financial Assistance Grants (FAG) council received in advanced for the next year general operations.
Source of Funds	Untied Grant

Reserve Name	Investing in Our Future
Purpose	To increase Council's maintenance and renewal expenditure on roads, drainage, parks and buildings.
Source of Funds	Special Rate Variation Income

Reserve Name	Management Committees
Purpose	To have funds available to Management Committees.
Source of Funds	Management Committee Revenue

Reserve Name	Mayoral Relief Fund
Purpose	To isolate cash collected from donations for charity purpose.
Source of Funds	Donations

Reserve Name	Plant and Fleet Replacement
Purpose	To provide funds for the purchase of plant and fleet assets.
Source of Funds	Plant User Charges

Reserve Name	Property Development
Purpose	To fund future land and property development/acquisitions.



Source of Funds	Profit on sale of land.
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Reserve Name	Revolving Energy Fund
Purpose	This restricted asset is to fund projects that reduce Council's billed energy consumption.
Source of Funds	Initial funding from General Revenue. Also, savings in billed energy from Refund projects are reinvested back into the fund until the initial project cost is repaid.

Reserve Name	Waste Facilities General Fund
Purpose	To fund expenditure on Council waste facilities.
Source of Funds	Waste Facilities Fees and Charges

### iii) Unrestricted Funds

These are funds which are available to be used to cover unforeseen budget shock, where expenses not provided for in the annual budget and not covered by the external and internal restricted reserves. These funds are also available to:

- boost Council's financial liquidity in paying suppliers, providing services and retaining staff;
- meet short term cash flow requirements to fund capital works projects;
- meet Council's operational efficiency by covering no-budgeted discretionary expenditure; and
- support Council's long-term financial sustainability

This policy applies a minimum amount of \$5,000,000 set aside in unrestricted funds before any funds are allocated to the internally restricted reserves.

Another measure of Council's liquidity is the Unrestricted Current Ratio. This ratio measures the adequacy of working capital and its ability to satisfy obligations in the short term for the unrestricted activities of Council. Immediate action will only be required to address Council's unrestricted funds should the Unrestricted Current Ratio (General Fund) fall below the industry benchmark of 1.5:1.

## 3. Scope

This policy applies to Councillors and staff with delegated authority to act upon the Council's financial reverses.

## 4. Responsibilities



Responsibilities for the implementation of this Policy are shared as follows.

#### **4.1 Council**

Council shall:

- Monitor the implementation of this Policy through the Quarterly Budget Review Statement, Annual Budget, Long Term Financial Plan and Annual Financial Statements.

#### **4.2 Executive**

The Executive shall:

- Ensure the implementation of this Policy as delegated by Council in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993;
- Delegate the management of Council's financial reserves to the Chief Financial Officer or other staff through the delegated approval process.

#### **4.3 Chief Financial Officer**

The Chief Financial Officer shall:

- Provide guidance to Council, Executive and other Council staff as to the content and implementation of this Policy;
- Ensure the timely review of this Policy;
- Oversee the management of Council's financial reserves ensuring compliance with this policy;
- Submit Quarterly Budget Review Statement, Annual Budget, Long Term Financial Plan and Annual Financial Statements to Council on the position of Council's financial reserves; and
- Provide sound, reliable advice to the Council and Executive on financial reserves matters.

#### **4.4 Managers**

Managers shall:

- provide guidance to Council staff within their respective branches as to the content and implementation of this Policy, seeking guidance from the policy owner as required

#### **4.5 Council staff**

Council staff with delegated authority to manage Council's financial reserves shall:

- Be required to acknowledge they have received a copy of this policy and understand their obligations in this role;
- Manage Council's financial reserves function ensuring compliance with this policy.

## **5. Performance Measures**

The success of this Policy will be measured by:

- Maintaining an Unrestricted Funds balance of \$ 5million
- Ensuring the Unrestricted Current Ratio exceeds industry benchmark



## **6. Definitions**

**Externally Restricted Reserves** Funds which have an external restriction, whether by statute or otherwise, which governs the management of money held within the fund.

**Internally Restricted Reserves** Funds which Council has resolved to set up, to hold monies for specific purposes. The operation of such funds is solely governed by Council.

**Unrestricted Funds** All cash and cash equivalents other than restricted funds.

## **7. Related Material**

### **7.1 Related Legislation**

The following legislative materials are related to this Policy:

- Local Government Act 1993
- Local Government Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting
- Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (NSW) 1979

### **7.2 Related Policies, Procedures and General Manager Practice Notes**

The following policies are related to this Policy:

- Investment Policy
- Loan Borrowings Policy

## **8. Non-compliance with this Policy**

Non-compliance with this Policy should be reported to the Chief Financial Officer who will investigate and determine the appropriate course of action.

## **9. Document Control [Governance to insert]**

### **9.1 Version Control**

Version	Adoption Date	Notes
[insert version no.]	[insert date on which version was adopted]	[describe amendments/changes from previous version]
[insert version no.]	[insert date on which version was adopted]	[describe amendments/changes from previous version]
[insert version no.]	[insert date on which version was adopted]	[describe amendments/changes from previous version]



no.]	version was adopted]	
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## 10. Attachments

There are no attachments to this Policy.

Approved by:

WINGECARRIBEE SHIRE COUNCIL

[Governance to insert adoption date]

DRAFT

## **9.11 September 2024 Wingecarribee Shire Ordinary Election Cost Estimate and Councillor Training Costs**

**Report Author:**                      **Manager Governance and Corporate Performance**

**Authoriser:**                          Director Corporate Strategy and Resourcing

---

### **PURPOSE**

This report confirms that the NSW Electoral Commission has been engaged to administer the September 2024 ordinary election of councillors and advises of the current cost estimate for the administration of this election, as well as potential financial impacts resulting from reforms to the councillor conduct framework.

---

### **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT Council note that the current cost estimate from the NSW Electoral Commission for the administration of the September 2024 Wingecarribee Shire Council local government election is \$440,228 (excluding GST) and the funding source will be the Election Reserve.**

---

### **REPORT**

#### **BACKGROUND**

Section 296AA of the Local Government Act 1993 (the Act) requires councils to plan for the administration of elections, polls and constitutional referenda by resolving to either enter into an arrangement with the NSW Electoral Commission (NSWEC), by contract or otherwise, or to engage a commercial electoral services provider to administer them.

Under section 296(3) of the Act, councils are required to determine at least 18 months before a local government election whether they will engage the NSWEC to administer their election. As a result, a resolution to engage the NSWEC to administer the 2024 election must be made by no later than 14 March 2023.

At the Council meeting held on 15 December 2022 Council resolved as follows:

*"THAT pursuant to section 296(2) and (3) of the Local Government Act 1993 Wingecarribee Shire*

*Council ("the Council"):*

- 1. Enter into an election arrangement by contract for the Electoral Commissioner to administer the election of Councillors for Council scheduled for September 2024.*
- 2. Enter into a council poll arrangement by contract for the Electoral Commissioner to administer all council polls of the Council (if required) as a part of the September 2024 ordinary elections.*
- 3. Enter into a constitutional referendum arrangement by contract for the Electoral*

*Commissioner to administer all constitutional referenda of the Council (if required) as a part of the September 2024 ordinary elections.”*

The NSWEC were advised of the above Council resolution in December 2022.

## **REPORT**

### **Election Cost Estimate**

On 30 January 2023, the NSWEC have advised of the cost estimate for the conduct of the September 2024. The estimated cost for the Wingecarribee Shire Council election is \$440,228 (excluding GST).

The NSWEC have advised they will only ever charge the actual cost to conduct the election and they do not apply any margin to the cost. Council has also been advised that costs have risen since the December 2021 local government elections and are likely to continue to rise between the date of this estimate and the holding of the election.

Key cost increases include:

- Early voting centre rental costs have significantly increased since LGE21
- Logistics costs are increasing by 10% year-on-year
- The fuel levy for material deliveries and collections has increased by 24%
- The 3-year CPI increase is 13.12%
- Staff costs have risen by 2.83% pa
- Growth in the number of electors is 3.34% over 3 years
- Paper costs have risen (affecting ballot papers and printed rolls)

THE NSWEC have also noted that the estimate does not include the ‘core’ costs of running the election (for example, the Electoral Commission’s head office operating/capital costs such as staff payroll, training, IT system development and maintenance of the electoral roll). These core costs are met by the NSW Government.

### **Candidate Pre-election Training and Councillor Induction Training Costs**

The Minister for Local Government has recently announced bipartisan support for a new councillor conduct framework being developed and subsequently released an Implementation Roadmap (The Roadmap). The roadmap is included in **Attachment 1** to this report.

The roadmap identifies ‘updating and enhancing induction, training and professional development initiatives.’ Council officers are currently investigating the estimated financial implications of the reforms. A budget estimate will be provided for the revised training as a part of the 2023/24 budget to implement the resulting reform initiatives.

---

## **COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION**

### **Community Engagement**

N/A



**Internal Communication and Consultation**

N/A

**External Communication and Consultation**

NSW Electoral Commission

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**SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT**

**Environment**

There are no environmental issues in relation to this report.

**Social**

There are no social issues in relation to this report.

**Broader Economic Implications**

There are no broader economic implications in relation to this report.

**Culture**

There are no cultural issues in relation to this report.

**Governance**

Under section 296(3) of the Act, councils are required to determine at least 18 months before a local government election whether they will engage the NSWEC to administer their election. As a result, a resolution to engage the NSWEC to administer the 2024 election must be made by no later than 14 March 2023. Council provided advice to the NSWEC that Council had resolved for NSWEC to administer the Wingecarribee Shire local government election scheduled for September 2024.

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**COUNCIL BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

The NSWEC have advised that the current estimate for the September 2024 Wingecarribee Shire local government election is \$440,228 (excluding GST). The costs applied by NSWEC and related costs will be funded from Council's Election Reserve in the 2023/24 budget. Training and induction costs will also be included in the 2023/24 budget to ensure a comprehensive training and induction program can be conducted.

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**RELATED COUNCIL POLICY**

Nil

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**CONCLUSION**

Council engaged the NSWEC to administer the September 2024 Wingecarribee Shire local government elections. The NSWEC has provided a cost estimate of \$440,228 (excluding GST) to administer the election. Following the release of *Councillor Conduct Framework – Implementation Roadmap 2023* Council officers are investigating the estimated financial implications of the reforms as a part of the 2023/24 budget process to ensure adequate funding is available to implement the resulting reform initiatives.

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**ATTACHMENTS**

1. Councillor- Conduct- Framework- Roadmap-to- Reform-2023 [9.11.1 - 1 page]

## Councillor Conduct Framework – Implementation Roadmap 2023



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## **9.12 Bus Shelter Management Update**

**Report Author:**                      **Manager Assets**  
**Authoriser:**                         Director Service and Project Delivery

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### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the audit of bus stops and bus shelters within the Wingecarribee Shire, as well as development of a Policy covering both the provision of bus shelters and placement of advertising on them.

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### **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION**

#### **THAT:**

- 1. Council receive and note this report.**
- 2. The draft Bus Shelter Advertising Policy is submitted to 21 June 2023 Ordinary Council Meeting, for endorsement to proceed with public exhibition.**

---

### **REPORT**

#### **BACKGROUND**

At the Ordinary Council Meeting 11 August 2021, the Interim Administrator (now Administrator) resolved that:

- 1. In consultation with residents, schools, and public transport providers a review be undertaken on the location of all bus stops and shelters in the Shire to determine demand for shelters*
- 2. Respecting heritage conservation areas, a draft Bus Shelter Advertising Policy be developed for community consultation which includes:*
  - (i) provision for advertising on bus shelters within the commercial and business areas of Moss Vale, Bowral, Mittagong and Bundanoon, and*
  - (ii) the provision of bus shelters without advertising within all other areas of the shire*
- 3. Following the adoption of the Bus Shelter Advertising Policy a tender be called for the management of bus shelter maintenance provision, renewal and advertising.*

#### **REPORT**

As set out in the Wingecarribee Shire Council Road Map the organisation is currently within a period of change, taking a back to basics approach characterised by 'refocus, reinvigorate, rebuild'. As part of this journey, the Roads and Drainage Assets Team (the Team) underwent a period of resourcing change throughout 2021 and 2022. This has prevented any significant progress being made to action the resolution of the 11 August 2021 Council Meeting.

The Team has delivered a significant contribution to the Shire through the successful application of over \$5M from the grant funding programs of Fixing Local Roads, Fixing Country Bridges and Get NSW Active. A contract has just been awarded to leading experts Infrastructure Management

Group (IMG) to conduct a condition audit across the full sealed and unsealed road network – the results of which will provide an accurate picture of the state of the road as well as provide a robust four-year capital works remediation program. Bitzios Consulting has been engaged to update the Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plans (PAMP) for the main town centres of Moss Vale, Bowral and Mittagong which will set the pedestrian and cyclist network for these areas.

The Team is now at full resourcing and an action plan has been prepared to deliver on the resolution of the 11 August 2021 Council meeting.

The Action Plan and associated timeframes is as follows:

1. Assessment of existing bus stops & shelters:
  - For each bus stop:
    - Identify current amenity provision (Bus shelter, concrete hardstand, timetable pole etc); and
    - Determine compliance with accessibility standards.

Anticipated completion: 12 May 2023
2. Community Consultation:
  - Survey, gauging the communities thoughts on:
    - Current provision of bus shelters;
    - Condition and maintenance of bus shelters; and
    - Requested location for bus shelters.

Anticipated consultation timeframe: 27 March to 21 April 2023.
3. Determine Provision Level of Service for Bus Shelters:
  - Analyse current provision of bus shelters;
  - Determine sustainable provision level of service;  
Potential triggers could be Bus Shelters are to be provided in Town/Village Centres and along State or Regional Roads.

Anticipated completion: 12 May 2023.
4. Develop Bus Shelter Advertising Policy:
  - Policy will focus on specification and controls of advertising on bus shelters. Provision level of service will be initially included within the Policy, however will be removed and enshrined within Transport Asset Management Plan upon completion of the Plan.

Anticipated completion: 26 May 2023
5. Final Council Report:
  - The results of the action steps will be presented to Council at the Ordinary Council Meeting 21 June 2023.

The assessment, consultation and level of service will primarily focus on the general public bus routes administered by Berrima Buslines and Transport for NSW. Completion of the aforementioned steps for these networks alone is a significant undertaking.

---

## **COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION**

### **Community Engagement**

It is noted that consultation has already been completed with Berrima Buslines, who have identified high use bus stops which would be well served by either replacement or installation of a bus shelter. This feedback will be considered in the completion of Action Step 3: Determine Provision Level of Service for Bus Shelters.

Further consultation will be undertaken as part of Action Step 2: Community Consultation through the form of a survey which will be distributed to via the Your Say Wingecarribee website, social media and Council's newsletter.

**Internal Communication and Consultation**

Community Engagement Coordinator

Coordinator Assets Roads & Drainage

Senior Traffic Engineer

**External Communication and Consultation**

Berrima Buslines

---

**SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT**

**Environment**

There are no environmental issues in relation to this report.

**Social**

There are no social issues in relation to this report.

**Broader Economic Implications**

There are no broader economic implications in relation to this report.

**Culture**

There are no cultural issues in relation to this report.

**Governance**

There are no governance issues in relation to this report.

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**COUNCIL BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

There are no budget implications as result of this report.

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**RELATED COUNCIL POLICY**

Community Strategic Plan:

Goal 3.1 - We have an integrated and efficient network of public transport and shared pathways

---

**CONCLUSION**

A comprehensive audit of the existing bus stop and bus shelter network is to be completed in the coming months along with community consultation. The outcomes of this will determine a sustainable and effective provision level of service for bus shelters within the Shire. A bus shelter advertising policy will be prepared and submitted for Council's consideration to the June 2023 Council Meeting.

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**ATTACHMENTS**

Nil



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### **9.13 Macquarie Pass Update**

**Report Author:**                      **Manager Assets**  
**Authoriser:**                         Director Service and Project Delivery

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#### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on Macquarie Pass in response to the Interim Administrator Minute from Ordinary Council Meeting 20 April 2022.

---

#### **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION**

##### **THAT:**

- 1. Council receive and note this report.**
- 2. Council meet with State and Federal Members to secure funding for the traffic and economic studies required for a potential change in the operation of Macquarie Pass.**

---

#### **REPORT**

##### **BACKGROUND**

At the Ordinary Council Meeting of 20 April 2022, the Interim Administrator (now Administrator) resolved through Item 8.1 Community Update:

*Council staff have been working with the Robertson community to develop the Robertson Place Plan and one of the issues that has been raised through that process is the impact of heavy vehicles on the Illawarra Highway.*

*Not only the impacts on amenity and pedestrian safety within the Robertson village centre, but also the regular closing of Macquarie Pass as a result of heavy vehicles that restricts movement to and from the Southern Highlands.*

*I will be asking the General Manager to raise these concerns with both Transport for NSW and our State Members to investigate whether restricting heavy vehicle usage on Macquarie Pass is an option to resolve these issues.*

##### **REPORT**

Macquarie Pass is an eight kilometre long section of the Illawarra Highway passing through Macquarie Pass National Park. The Highway provides a vital connection between the Wingecarribee Shire and the Illawarra.

The Illawarra Highway, including Macquarie Pass, is designated as a State Road and the roadway itself is managed and operated by Transport for NSW (Transport). Macquarie Pass currently operates under the vehicular restrictions of prohibition of all B-double heavy vehicles and vehicles must be a maximum of 2.5 metres wide and 19 metres long.

In response to the outcomes of the Council Meeting of 20 April 2022, Council wrote to Transport requesting a review of heavy vehicle access along Macquarie Pass. This letter is included as Attachment 1.

Council received a letter of response from Transport, acknowledging the significant efforts of the Robertson Place Plan and advising that for the matter to progress Council would need to complete a body of work to more fully identify issues, solutions and impacts through a variety of traffic studies. This letter is included as Attachment 2.

It is understood that these studies would as a minimum consist of:

- Traffic study to understand current usage patterns of Macquarie Pass (users and destinations);
- Traffic study on alternative use of Macquarie Pass (i.e. detour heavy vehicles to Picton Rd);
- Economic/social study on benefits/impacts of alternative use; and
- Cost/benefit of the alternative use – weighing up potential safety benefits with economic/social cost.

Formal quotations have not been sought for these studies, however it is anticipated that the total cost would be in excess of \$100,000 and duration of greater than 12 months.

Further collaborative conversations were held with Transport in late 2022, and Transport has provided the following four insights into the performance and future planning of Macquarie Pass:

**1. Traffic volumes**

Tube counts situated on the Illawarra Highway at the bottom of Macquarie Pass in June 2020 show an ADT of 3931 and heavy vehicle proportion of 14.1%. Note that the travel patterns may be affected by COVID at this time. In June 2016, the same location received an ADT of 4048 and heavy vehicle proportion of 8.8%.

**2. Transport Management Centre incident data**

The Transport Management Centre (TMC) is internal to Transport and is responsible for managing the NSW State-road network 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The TMC report and monitor planned and unplanned traffic incidents

An analysis of the Historic Unplanned Incidents data maintained by the Traffic Management Centre from January 2020 to August 2022 shows 239 incidents reported along the Illawarra Highway at Macquarie Pass across all categories. It is important to note that an incident does not always equate to a disruption to traffic flow. Heavy vehicles accounted for 29 breakdowns and 7 accidents in the reporting period (15% of all incidents). Heavy vehicle breakdowns peaked in 2021 with 18 incidents compared to 6 in 2020 and 5 in 2022 (to August). The average duration of heavy vehicle incidents was 123 minutes.

**3. Safe System Analytics Crash Data**

There were 63 reported crashes along Macquarie Pass for the five-year period between January 2017 and December 2021. Of these crashes, 51 were casualty crashes resulting in 21 serious injuries and 24 moderate injuries and 6 minor injuries.

The majority of all crash types were off road on curve with 38 crashes (60%). The second prevalent crash type was head-on with 14 crashes (22%). Motorcycles were involved in 32 of the crashes (51%) and heavy vehicles were involved in 12 (19%).

#### **4. Long term plans for Illawarra Highway**

Macquarie Pass is situated in a National Park and presents significant ecological, geological and topographical challenges. These sensitivities are present within the whole Illawarra Escarpment. Given these complexities, any deviation from the existing Illawarra Highway road corridor to provide an alternative route is not a priority for Transport.

Transport will continue to investigate safe road infrastructure along the Illawarra Highway such as widened centrelines, safety barrier, motorcycle safety barrier underrun, audio-tactile line marking and intersection improvements. Macquarie Pass has received Safer Roads Program funding in recent years to upgrade some of the high risk curves. Maintenance projects to improve slope stability have also presented opportunities for road widening, such as at the bottom hairpin.

Transport is actively exploring innovative solutions at the two hair-pins. A recent delineation trial which involved installing Raised Reflective Pavement Markers (RRPM) to guide vehicles to the outside of the curve has shown an improvement in driver behaviour and resulted in less conflict between opposing vehicles.

Reviewing the above data and comments received from Transport, it is observed that heavy vehicles account for 9 – 15% of traffic along Macquarie Pass and are involved in 15% of all incidents along Macquarie Pass. It could therefore be concluded that it is rather traffic safety upgrades for all road users of Macquarie Pass that are required as a priority, as opposed to further restricting heavy vehicle usage of Macquarie Pass.

The approach of pursuing targeted safety improvements along Macquarie Pass is set to be enshrined with the transport objectives of Transport through finalisation of the South East and Tablelands Regional Transport Plan.

Initiative 27 of the Plan is titled Illawarra Highway Safety and Reliability with the commitment that Transport will undertake investigations for road safety and resilience improvements on the Illawarra Highway. The Plan recognises the importance of the Illawarra Highway to the Wingecarribee Shire and so the initiative has been designated a short timeframe (0-5yrs).

None the less, through investigation of potential further restriction of heavy vehicles along Macquarie Pass could find it to be an effective method of improving safety for all road users – including heavy vehicles themselves. It is therefore recommended that Council meet with State and Federal Members to secure funding for the traffic and economic studies required to investigate a potential change in the operation of Macquarie Pass

Upon review of the information provided by Transport is recommended that Council receive and note this report, advocate to State and Federal members for allocation of investigation funding and continue to support Transport in their management of the Illawarra Highway and Macquarie Pass.

---

## **COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION**

### **Community Engagement**

Nil

### **Internal Communication and Consultation**

Nil

### **External Communication and Consultation**

Transport for NSW

---

## **SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT**

### **Environment**

There are no environmental issues in relation to this report.

### **Social**

There are no social issues in relation to this report.

### **Broader Economic Implications**

There are no broader economic implications in relation to this report.

### **Culture**

There are no cultural issues in relation to this report.

### **Governance**

There are no governance issues in relation to this report.

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## **COUNCIL BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

There are no budget implications as result of this report.

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## **RELATED COUNCIL POLICY**

Community Strategic Plan:

Goal 3.1 - We have an integrated and efficient network of public transport and shared pathways

---

## **CONCLUSION**

Macquarie Pass is an eight kilometre section of the Illawarra Highway which is under the management of Transport for NSW. The draft South East and Tablelands Regional Transport Plan provides a commitment from Transport for NSW for the delivery of safety and resilience upgrades along the Illawarra Highway, and therefore it is recommended that Council continue to support Transport for NSW in their management of the roadway.

---

**ATTACHMENTS**

1. Letter to Tf NSW 18 May 2022 [9.13.1 - 1 page]
2. Letter from Tf NSW (26 May 2022) [9.13.2 - 1 page]

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

18 May 2022



Civic Centre  
68 Elizabeth Street Moss Vale  
PO Box 141 Moss Vale NSW 2577

02 4868 0888

mail@wsc.nsw.gov.au

ABN 49 546 344 354

Ms Joanne Parrott  
PO BOX 477  
Wollongong East NSW 2520

ATTN: Vanessa Wilson – Senior Manager, Community & Place Partner – South East Tablelands

Dear Ms Parrott,

**Heavy Vehicle Restriction on Macquarie Pass**

Council has been working closely with the Robertson community over the past several months for the development of the Robertson Village Place Plan. This holistic place-based plan is being collaboratively developed to address the housing, economic, social and cultural needs of the Robertson community - both now and into the future.

An issue that has recurrently arisen throughout this process is the impact of heavy vehicles access along the Illawarra Highway. Although heavy vehicles have an obvious impact on amenity & pedestrian safety within Robertson Village itself, the primary concern is the regular closing of Macquarie Pass as result of heavy vehicle breakdown or driver error.

It is acknowledged that heavy vehicle access via Macquarie Pass is a connection valued by some industries. However Council is of the understanding that the negative impacts experienced by the local community warrant a review this route.

At Ordinary Council Meeting 20 April 2022, it was resolved that Council would seek to engage with Transport for NSW (TfNSW) for the investigation of this heavy vehicle route and assessment as to whether it would be beneficial for heavy vehicles to instead be directed to Picton Road.

I would therefore like to request a meeting with the appropriate TfNSW representatives to further discuss and progress this matter.

Yours sincerely



Shaun Robinson  
Manager Assets

*Working with you*

WSC.NSW.GOV.AU

WINGECARRIBEE - A COAL MINING FREE SHIRE

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**



**Transport  
for NSW**

26 May 2022

Ms Lisa Miscamble  
General Manager  
Wingecarribee Shire Council  
PO Box 141  
MOSS VALE NSW 2577

Email: [information.management@wsc.nsw.gov.au](mailto:information.management@wsc.nsw.gov.au)

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**HEAVY VEHICLE RESTRICTION ON MACQUARIE PASS**

---

Dear Ms Miscamble,

Thank you for your letter dated 19 May 2022 regarding the heavy vehicle restriction on Macquarie Pass and Transport for NSW (Transport) acknowledges the work Wingecarribee Shire Council have been doing recently to progress the Robertson Place Plan.

Transport notes that some of the initiatives may have an impact on the state road network through Robertson. Transport can support Council as they continue their work on this Place plan, and in identifying initiatives that may be progressed to address identified priorities for this Community.

As this early stage of the project, it would be premature to comment on the merits or otherwise of the proposal to restrict heavy vehicle traffic on Macquarie Pass and redirect through an alternative route, whether Picton Road or another.

In order to fully understand the proposed initiative for an alternate route for heavy vehicle traffic through the town of Robertson, there is a body of work that Council would need to progress to identify the issue to be addressed, the types of users and origin and destination information, through a variety of traffic studies.

Transport can assist council with identifying the relevant studies that would assist them with the problem definition and ultimately identifying the recommended solution.

As requested, a meeting can be organised to progress this conversation. **Vanessa Wilson, Senior Manager Community and Place Partnering** will be in contact to arrange a suitable time.

Yours faithfully,



**Joanne Parrott**  
Director Regional Community Partner  
South Region  
Regional and Outer Metropolitan  
**Transport for NSW**

OFFICIAL

Transport for NSW  
Level 4, 90 Crown Street, Wollongong NSW 2500 | [W transport.nsw.gov.au](http://www.transport.nsw.gov.au) | ABN 18 804 239 602

Document Set ID: 235941  
Version: 1, Version Date: 30/05/2022



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## **9.14 Water Determination**

**Report Author:** Coordinator Revenue

**Authoriser:** Director Corporate Strategy and Resourcing

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### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to provide a property owner in Bowral a once-off adjustment to their Water and Sewer Notice in addition to the adjustment allowed under Council's Water Determination Policy due to exceptional circumstances.

---

### **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION**

#### **THAT:**

1. Council approve the once-off adjustment of \$5,491.30 to the Water and Sewer Notice in addition to the adjustment made under Council's Water Determination Policy.
2. Attachment 1 to the water determination report be withheld from access to the media and public as required by section 11(2) of the Local Government Act 1993 for the following reason, Attachment 1 includes information that is confidential in accordance with s10A(2) of the Local Government Act 1993, and under clause 10(A)(2)(b) – as it relates to the personal hardship of any resident or ratepayer.

---

### **REPORT**

#### **BACKGROUND**

Council's Water Determination Policy sets the criteria that must be met for an owner to be eligible for an adjustment to a high-water usage charge that resulted from an undetected water leak and the method of calculating that adjustment.

The owner of this property is eligible for such an adjustment but is seeking assistance in addition to that allowed under the Policy.

#### **REPORT**

Council's water meters were read during December 2022 to issue the second Water & Sewer Notices for the 2022/23 year. The water meter reading data is reviewed to, amongst other things, identify any properties with unusually high-water usage which may indicate the existence of a leak.

Before sending the Water & Sewer Notices, a letter was posted to the owner advising of the unusually high-water usage to enable them to investigate the existence of a leak and have it rectified if one is located.

A letter was posted to the owner of this property on 12 December 2022 however mail delivery delays resulted in this letter only being delivered on 31 December, a delay further compounded by the owner leaving for holidays shortly thereafter.

The owner contacted Council upon returning from holidays on the 24 January 2023:

- Apologising for the delay in the reply;

- Confirming the existence of several leaks at the property including a major one located approximately 2 metres under a rose garden;
- Confirming that all identified leaks had been repaired prior to the letter being received;
- Requesting an adjustment under Council's Water Determination Policy.

Since purchasing the property in 2012, the owner had an average water usage ranging between 1KL to 7.5KL per day, however the leaks in question resulted in an average usage of 58.433KL per day. This high-water usage resulted in a water usage charge of \$22,706.06 on the most recent Notice.

As the owner satisfied the criteria, the application was approved for an adjustment of \$10,982.60 calculated in accordance with the Water Determination Policy. The adjustment was equivalent to 50% of the difference between the high-water usage charge and an estimate of the normal water usage charge of \$740.87 calculated using historical water usage data.

In recognising the owner being proactive in fixing the leaks, the challenges experienced in identifying the leak, and the significance of the amount of the water usage charge, it is recommended to increase the adjustment under Council's Water Determination Policy by 25% in this instance only.

This amounts to an adjustment of \$5,491.30 in this instance, in addition to the \$10,982.60 adjustment made under Council's Water Determination Policy.

---

## **COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION**

### **Community Engagement**

N/A

### **Internal Communication and Consultation**

N/A

### **External Communication and Consultation**

N/A

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## **SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT**

### **Environment**

There are no environmental issues in relation to this report.

### **Social**

There are no social issues in relation to this report.

### **Broader Economic Implications**

There are no broader economic implications in relation to this report.

### **Culture**

There are no cultural issues in relation to this report.

### **Governance**

There are no governance issues in relation to this report.

---

**COUNCIL BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

The reduction in recoverable water usage charge amounts to \$5,491.30 in addition to what is allowable under Council's Water Determination policy.

---

**RELATED COUNCIL POLICY**

Water Determination Policy

---

**CONCLUSION**

Due to the quantum of the water usage charge and the landowners efforts to rectify the leaks, Council provides the property owner in Bowral a once-off adjustment to their Water and Sewer Notice in addition to the adjustment allowed under Council's Water Determination Policy due to exceptional circumstances.

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**ATTACHMENTS**

1. CONFIDENTIAL REDACTED - Under Separate Cover. Water Determination. This attachment is confidential in accordance with s10A(2) of the Local Government Act, 1993, under clause 10A(2)(b) - as it relates to the personal hardship of any resident or ratepayer. [9.14.1 - 1 page]

---

## **9.15 Robertson Sewerage Scheme Loan**

**Report Author:** Deputy Chief Financial Officer

**Authoriser:** Director Corporate Strategy and Resourcing

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### **PURPOSE**

To seek Council approval to repay the balance of the loan principal on the Robertson Sewerage Scheme loan.

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### **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT Council repay the balance on the Robertson Sewerage Scheme Loan of \$2,671,916.98 in April 2023 from Sewer Fund reserves.**

---

### **REPORT**

#### **BACKGROUND**

On 13 March 2013, Council resolved that authority be granted for the contracts for the Robertson Sewerage Scheme Loan be executed under the Common Seal of Council if required.

The loan contract for \$4,500,000 was drawn down on 6 April 2013 with Westpac Bank at an interest rate of 5.11%. The loan was amortised over 20 years with repricing to occur each 5 years with final maturity in April 2033. In April 2018 the loan was repriced with the Commonwealth Bank of Australia at an interest rate of 3.42% and is due for repayment or repricing on 6 April 2023.

#### **REPORT**

The loan is currently with the Commonwealth Bank of Australia at an interest rate of 3.42% and is due for repayment or repricing on 6 April 2023. The current balance of the loan payable is \$2,671,916.98. In accordance with Council's Loan Borrowing Policy, Council should review outstanding loans to take advantage of flexibility in the repayment profile should Council's financial situation change over time.

The options available to Council on this loan are:

1. Repay the outstanding balance of the loan of \$2,671,916.98 to the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, or
2. Offer the loan to approved lenders for refinancing at current market rates for a further 5 or 10 years.

#### ***Option 1 – repay the loan***

The balance of the Sewer Fund borrowings is budgeted to be \$5,097,982.15 at 30 June 2023, which is made up of 5 separate loan contracts. If Council elects to repay the Robertson Sewerage Scheme Loan in April 2023, the balance of borrowings will be \$2,426,065.17 at 30 June 2023.

Council's budget and long-term financial plan have included the current interest rate of the loan, which is 3.42%, with total interest payable of \$470,947 between April 2023 and April 2033. Interest rates have increased significantly recently and if Council was to refinance the loan, repayments will be based on a higher interest rate.

Using an indicative interest rate of 5.9% (10-year rate), the interest payable over the next 10 years will be \$884,378 which is an increase of \$413,431 on the current rate of 3.42%. Repaying the loan will reduce Council's capacity to invest and the net increase in interest payable is estimated to be \$176,315 over the next 10 years, based on 4.8% interest received on term deposits.

Repaying the loan and reducing Council's total borrowings could make Council more appealing to potential lenders in the future, particularly with significant borrowing amounts anticipated to be required for the construction and upgrade of the 3 Sewerage Treatment Plants.

Repayment of the outstanding principal can be funded from existing cash reserves in the Sewer Fund.

***Option 2 – refinance the loan***

Council can offer the current loan balance of \$2,671,916.98 to lenders for financing at current market rates for either the next 5 or 10 years.

Using an indicative interest rate of 5.9% (10-year rate), the interest payable over the next 10 years will be \$884,378 which is an increase of \$413,431 on the current rate of 3.42%. Council's budget and long-term financial plan will need to be updated to reflect the new repayment schedule.

Future loan principal and interest repayments will be funded from revenues in the Sewer Fund.

---

**COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION**

**Community Engagement**

Nil

**Internal Communication and Consultation**

Nil

**External Communication and Consultation**

An indicative interest rate on borrowings was obtained from a commercial lender.

---

**SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT**

**Environment**

There are no environmental issues in relation to this report.

**Social**

There are no social issues in relation to this report.

**Broader Economic Implications**

There are no broader economic implications in relation to this report.

**Culture**

There are no cultural issues in relation to this report.

**Governance**

There are no governance issues in relation to this report.

---

**COUNCIL BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

If Council elects to repay the loan, the budget and long-term financial plan will need to be updated to remove any future interest and principal repayments for this loan as well as reduce investment income. The repayment of the principal can be funded from existing cash reserves in the Sewer Fund.

If Council elects to refinance the loan, the budget and long-term financial plan will need to be updated to reflect current markets rates for borrowings.

---

**RELATED COUNCIL POLICY**

Loan Borrowing Policy

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**CONCLUSION**

It is recommended that Council repays the Robertson Sewerage Scheme Loan in April 2023. This will make Council more appealing to prospective lenders while also reducing the interest payable at the current market conditions on this loan.

---

**ATTACHMENTS**

Nil

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## **9.16 Investments Report as at 28 February 2023**

**Report Author:** Deputy Chief Financial Officer  
**Authoriser:** Director Corporate Strategy and Resourcing

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### **PURPOSE**

This report presents Council's Cash Investment Portfolio held at 28 February 2023.

---

### **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT Council receives and notes this Cash Investment Report as at 28 February 2023.**

---

### **REPORT**

In accordance with section 212 of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021, the Responsible Accounting Officer must provide Council with a written report setting out details of all money that Council has invested under section 625 of the Local Government Act 1993.

This report provides details of Council's Investment Portfolio as at 28 February 2023.

**Attachment 1** to this report provides Council's Cash Investment Portfolio, detailing investments held and a summary of the portfolio by the institution invested with and their credit rating.

In accordance with section 212(1)(b) of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021, the investments listed in **Attachment 1** have been made in accordance with:

- The Local Government Act 1993,
- The Local Government (General) Regulation 2021,
- The Ministerial Investment Order 2011, and
- Council's Investment Policy.

Interest earned from investments totalled \$3,631,504 for the eight months to 28 February 2023.

The interest is attributable to each fund as listed in the table below.

<b>Fund</b>	<b>YTD Original budget</b>	<b>YTD revised budget</b>	<b>YTD actual</b>	<b>Revised Budget Variance</b>
<b>General fund</b>	277,333	1,349,475	1,381,877	32,402
<b>Water Fund</b>	235,333	1,059,558	1,142,397	82,839
<b>Sewer Fund</b>	166,000	1,046,031	1,107,230	61,199
<b>Total</b>	<b>678,666</b>	<b>3,455,064</b>	<b>3,631,504</b>	<b>176,440</b>



---

**ATTACHMENTS**

1. February 2023 - Investment Report Summary [9.16.1 - 6 pages]

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

**Wingecarribee Shire Council  
Investment Report Summary**

For the period ending 28 February 2023

**List of Investments**

Council's investment portfolio as at 28 February 2023 consists of the following investments:

INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO AS AT 28 February 2023						
Institution	Type	Amount	Interest Rate	Investment Term - Days	Maturity Date	% Investment Portfolio
NAB	Term Deposit	4,000,000	0.90%	365	3/03/2023	1.96%
AMP	Term Deposit	5,000,000	1.90%	333	10/03/2023	2.45%
Judo	Term Deposit	3,000,000	1.15%	364	17/03/2023	1.47%
ING	Term Deposit	5,000,000	1.40%	364	24/03/2023	2.45%
NAB	Term Deposit	5,000,000	1.60%	365	31/03/2023	2.45%
CBA	Term Deposit	5,000,000	1.84%	364	6/04/2023	2.45%
AMP	Term Deposit	5,000,000	1.95%	360	6/04/2023	2.45%
ING	Term Deposit	5,000,000	2.21%	365	19/04/2023	2.45%
ING	Term Deposit	5,000,000	2.50%	365	26/04/2023	2.45%
ING	Term Deposit	3,000,000	2.72%	364	28/04/2023	1.47%
Judo	Term Deposit	4,000,000	3.10%	365	5/05/2023	1.96%
ING	Term Deposit	4,000,000	3.08%	365	11/05/2023	1.96%
MyState	Term Deposit	5,000,000	3.20%	365	30/05/2023	2.45%
CBA	Term Deposit	5,000,000	3.96%	287	13/06/2023	2.45%
ME	Term Deposit	5,000,000	4.15%	365	23/06/2023	2.45%
CBA	Term Deposit	5,000,000	3.94%	365	23/06/2023	2.45%
ING	Term Deposit	6,000,000	4.00%	364	30/06/2023	2.94%
MyState	Term Deposit	4,000,000	4.05%	364	30/06/2023	1.96%
CBA	Term Deposit	5,000,000	4.02%	317	13/07/2023	2.45%
ME	Term Deposit	5,000,000	4.00%	364	28/07/2023	2.45%
CBA	Term Deposit	5,000,000	3.79%	365	3/08/2023	2.45%
CBA	Term Deposit	5,000,000	4.00%	365	10/08/2023	2.45%
NAB	Term Deposit	5,000,000	0.60%	729	25/08/2023	2.45%
NAB	Term Deposit	5,000,000	0.60%	731	28/08/2023	2.45%
MyState	Term Deposit	2,000,000	4.23%	364	1/09/2023	0.98%
BOQ	Term Deposit	8,000,000	4.41%	731	2/09/2024	3.93%
CBA	Term Deposit	5,000,000	4.20%	365	15/09/2023	2.45%
CBA	Term Deposit	5,000,000	4.89%	720	16/09/2024	2.45%
MyState	Term Deposit	4,000,000	4.61%	365	28/09/2023	1.96%
AMP	Term Deposit	2,500,000	4.60%	365	4/10/2023	1.23%
NAB	Term Deposit	2,000,000	4.20%	365	10/10/2023	0.98%
CBA	Term Deposit	5,000,000	4.48%	360	26/10/2023	2.45%
AMP	Term Deposit	2,500,000	4.70%	365	15/11/2023	1.23%
NAB	Term Deposit	5,000,000	4.30%	365	21/11/2023	2.45%
Auswide	Term Deposit	8,000,000	4.60%	365	30/11/2023	3.93%
CBA	Term Deposit	3,000,000	4.79%	364	5/01/2024	1.47%
CBA	Term Deposit	2,500,000	4.64%	365	16/01/2024	1.23%

**AGENDA OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 15 MARCH 2023**

## Wingecarribee Shire Council Investment Report Summary

For the period ending 28 February 2023

INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO AS AT 28 February 2023						
Institution	Type	Amount	Interest Rate	Investment Term - Days	Maturity Date	% Investment Portfolio
GSB	Term Deposit	7,000,000	4.78%	365	30/01/2024	3.44%
GSB	Term Deposit	5,000,000	4.65%	365	6/02/2024	2.45%
GSB	Term Deposit	5,000,000	4.95%	365	17/02/2024	2.45%
CBA	Term Deposit	5,000,000	5.04%	365	22/02/2024	2.45%
NAB	Call Account	10,898,150	3.00%	NA	NA	5.35%
BDCU	Call Account	3,332,894	0.90%	NA	NA	1.64%
AMP	31 day Notice A/C	58	2.55%	NA	NA	0.00%
<b>Total Investments</b>		<b>\$203,731,102</b>				<b>100.00%</b>

**Institution Legend**

AMP = AMP Limited  
ANZ = Australia & New Zealand Banking Group  
Auswide = Auswide Bank  
BOQ = Bank of Queensland  
BDCU = Berrima District Credit Union  
Bendigo = Bendigo & Adelaide Bank

CBA = Commonwealth Bank of Australia  
GSB = Great Southern Bank (formerly CUA)  
IMB = IMB Bank  
ING = ING Direct  
ME = Members Equity Bank  
MyState = MyState Bank

NAB = National Australia Bank  
Newcastle = Newcastle Permanent  
St George = St George Bank  
WBC = Westpac Banking Corporation  
Rural = Rural Bank  
Judo = Judo Bank

## Wingecarribee Shire Council Investment Report Summary

For the period ending 28 February 2023

### Policy Compliance

Council's Investment Policy provides clear direction for the diversification of Council's investment portfolio. This ensures credit and diversification risk is managed in accordance with the adopted risk management framework, as outlined in Council's Policy.

### Individual Institution Limits

A summary of investments placed by institution is as follows:

Institution	S&P Short Term Rating	Maximum %	Actual %	Invested \$	Supports Fossil Fuels	Policy Compliance
NAB	A1+	40%	18.11%	36,898,150	YES	YES
CBA	A1+	40%	27.24%	55,500,000	YES	YES
ING	A1	25%	13.74%	28,000,000	YES	YES
AMP	A2	15%	7.36%	15,000,058	YES	YES
BOQ	A2	15%	8.84%	8,000,000	YES	YES
ME (acquired by BOQ)	A2	Combined with BOQ %		10,000,000	YES	YES
BDCU	A2	15%	1.64%	3,332,894	NO	YES
MyState	A2	15%	7.36%	15,000,000	NO	YES
Auswide	A2	15%	3.93%	8,000,000	NO	YES
GSB	A2	15%	8.34%	17,000,000	NO	YES
Judo	A3	10%	3.44%	7,000,000	NO	YES
<b>Total</b>			<b>100.00%</b>	<b>203,731,102</b>		

### Portfolio Credit Limits

A summary of investments placed by credit limit is as follows:

S&P Short Term Rating	Maximum %	Actual %	Invested \$	Policy Compliance
A1+	100%	45.35%	92,398,150	YES
A1	80%	13.74%	28,000,000	YES
A2	60%	37.47%	76,332,952	YES
A3	20%	3.44%	7,000,000	YES
Govt	25%	0.00%	0	YES
<b>Total</b>		<b>100.00%</b>	<b>203,731,102</b>	

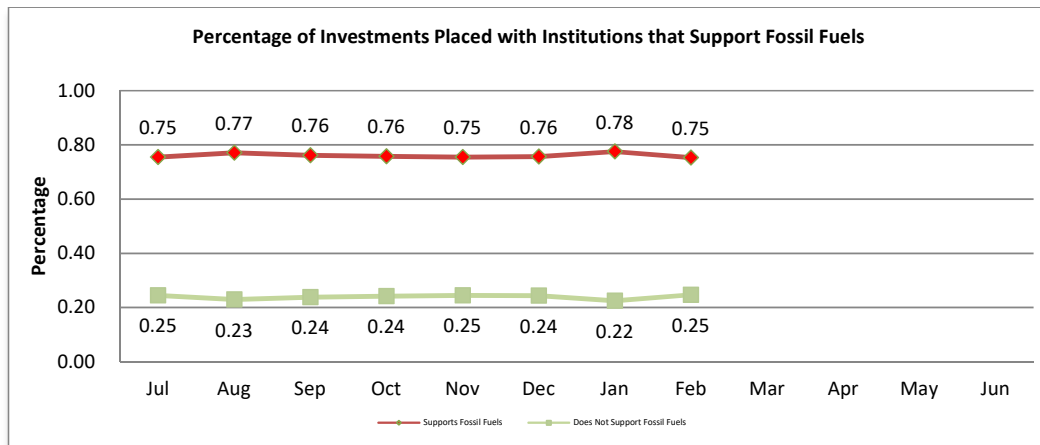
## Wingecarribee Shire Council Investment Report Summary

For the period ending 28 February 2023

### Non-Fossil Fuel Investment Preferecing

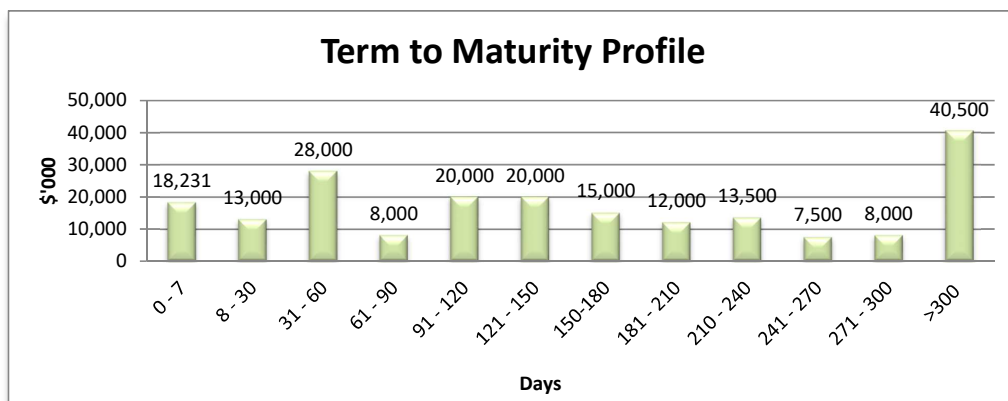
Council's adopted Investment Policy states a preference for placing funds with institutions that do not support the fossil fuel industry. The chart below identifies Council's percentage of investments placed with institutions that do not support the fossil fuel industry.

As investments mature Council will actively seek investments with institutions that do not support the fossil fuel industry, on the basis that they offer equivalent returns and are compliant with legislation and the objectives and parameters of the Investment Policy.



### Term to Maturity

Investments have been placed giving due consideration to Council's liquidity requirements. Enough Working Capital is available to ensure Council continues to meet its ongoing cash flow requirements for operational and capital expenditure.

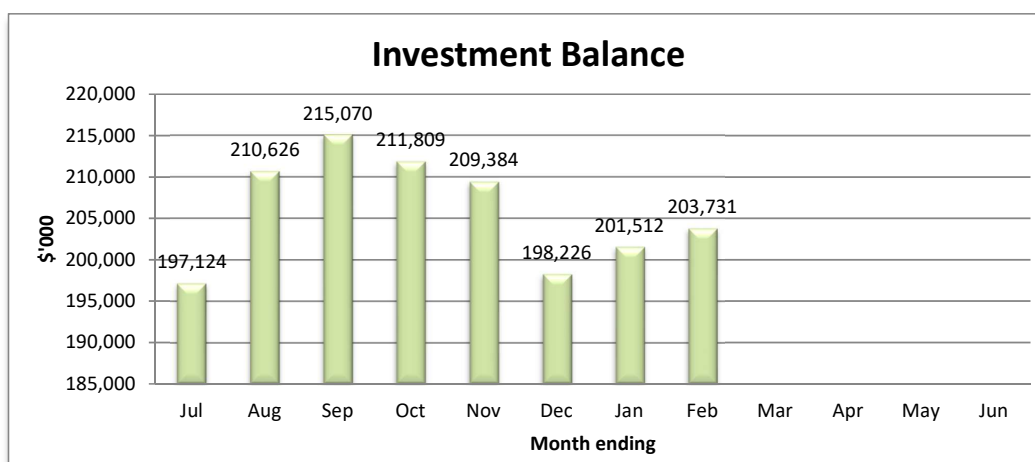


## Wingecarribee Shire Council Investment Report Summary

For the period ending 28 February 2023

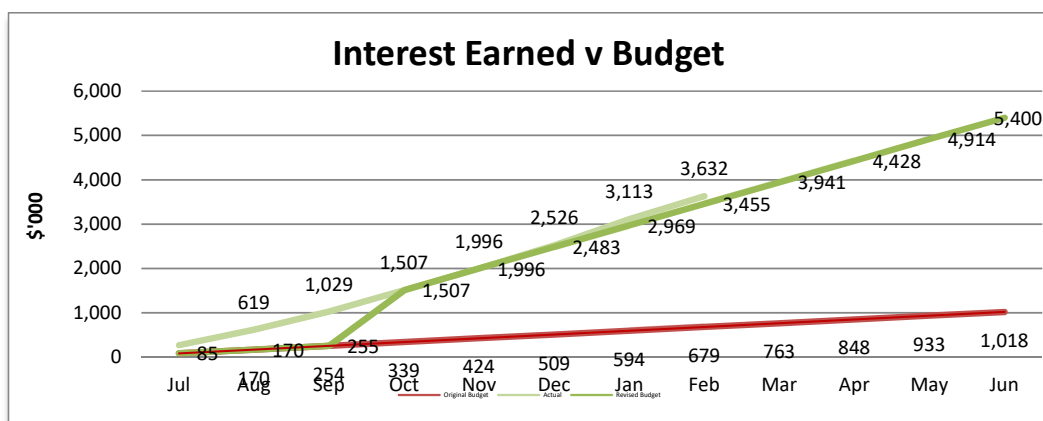
### Portfolio Performance

Council's investment balance at the end of February 2023 was \$203.731 million. This has increased by \$2.219 million since the end of January 2023.



### Interest Revenue

Council's 2022/23 original budget for return on investments was based on the market conditions and expectations at the time, which was a protracted low interest rate environment. After Council's 2022/23 budget was adopted, there have been sharp increases in the official cash rate and this has seen an increase in the interest rates being offered in the fixed interest market. A revised investment revenue forecast of \$5,400,000 was adopted as part of the September Quarterly Budget Review, which is reflective of current market conditions.



## Wingecarribee Shire Council Investment Report Summary

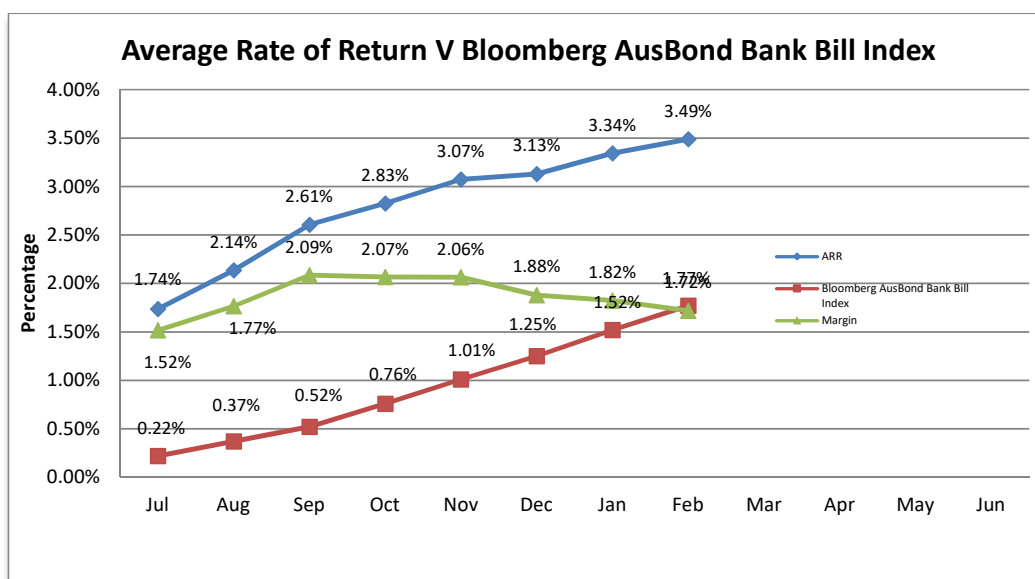
For the period ending 28 February 2023

### Performance against Benchmark

Council's investment portfolio is benchmarked against the Bloomberg AusBond Bank Bill Index.

The average rate of return (ARR) achieved for February 2023 was 3.49% which is an increase of 0.15% from January 2023. The Bloomberg AusBond Bank Bill Index for 1 year was 1.77%.

The margin against the Bloomberg AusBond Bank Bill Index was 1.72% for February 2023.





## **10 MEETING CLOSURE**