

BELLINGEN  
SHIRE COUNCIL

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# Annual Report 2021-2022

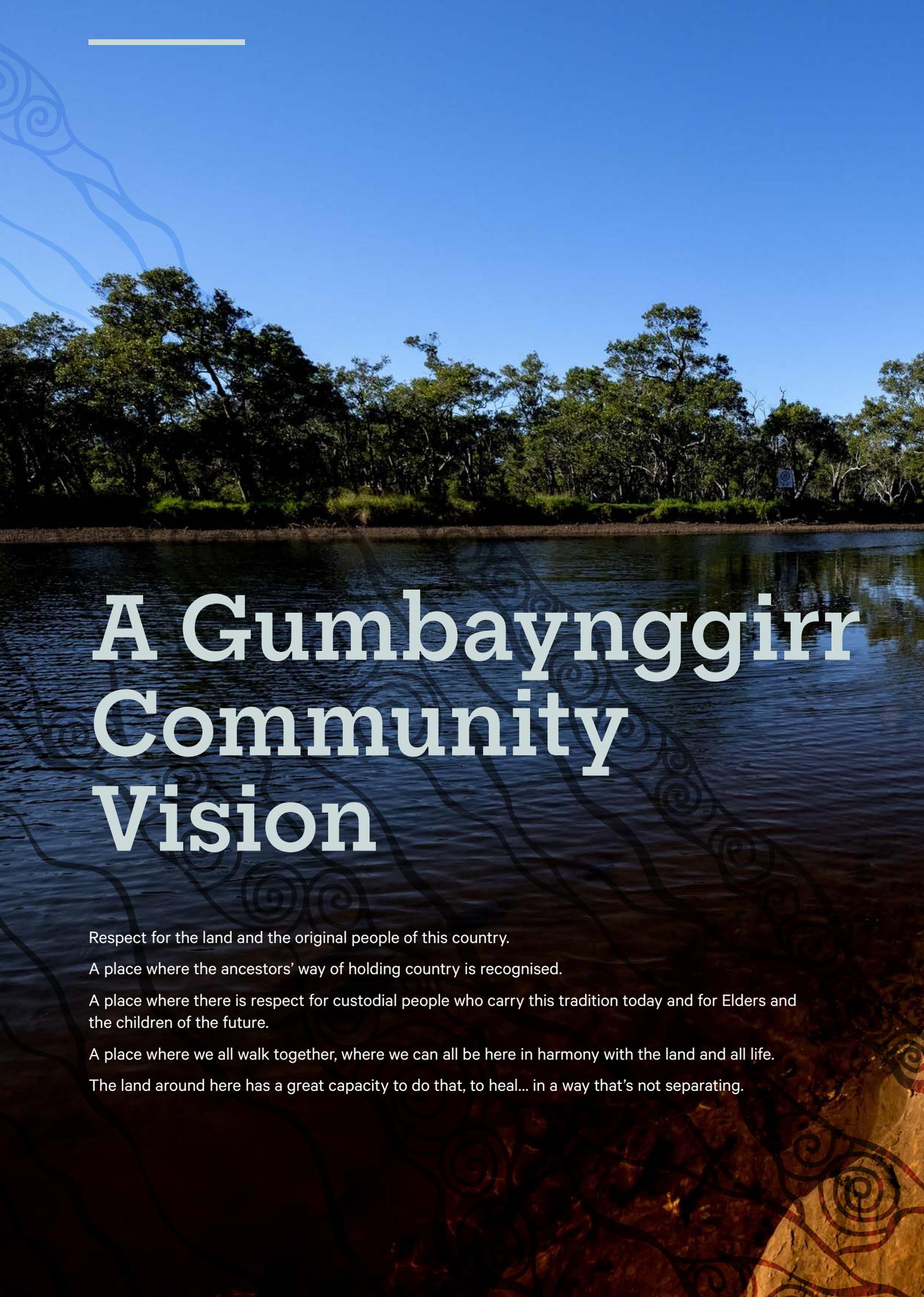
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CONNECTED  
SUSTAINABLE  
CREATIVE

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# A Gumbaynggirr Community Vision

Respect for the land and the original people of this country.

A place where the ancestors' way of holding country is recognised.

A place where there is respect for custodial people who carry this tradition today and for Elders and the children of the future.

A place where we all walk together, where we can all be here in harmony with the land and all life.

The land around here has a great capacity to do that, to heal... in a way that's not separating.



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## C. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Seperate Attachment .....	
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# Message from the Mayor & General Manager

Over the past 12 months, the impact of increased natural disasters has continued to be felt by many of our Shire's residents. Under these challenging circumstances, Council has continued to deliver services and infrastructure for our community. When this financial year began, we still had the impacts of Covid on our minds and the ongoing challenges with the severity of wet weather however, it's wonderful to see the recovery process well on track for those directly impacted.

We are pleased to see recovery into resilience work progress throughout our community. Council is working towards building positive social outcomes for the region with the creation of a dedicated Community Resilience Team to assist in this area. Homelessness and Housing affordability remains a serious concern for our Shire, and council's work with local housing groups and advocacy efforts will ensure this remains a priority focus area across the region.

Council continues to lead in sustainable initiatives with its pledge to solidify its commitment to energy and emissions reduction over coming years. Another year of great achievements, delivering a significant capital works program, all the while facing the additional challenges of increased flood risk and recovery. Council is dedicated to ensuring the community has accessible and connected facilities with amenities upgrades, footpaths, and playground projects underway that link directly to Council's Disability and Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) thanks to a range of State and Federal funding.

The past year has seen significant capital works projects including a \$11.4 million fund injection toward making our road and bridge network safer, including the completion of Tallowood and Pine Creek No. 2 bridges as part of the Bridge Renewal Program as we continue to reduce load limits and strengthen our bridge network.

A key focus area this year has been to improve the customer experience for residents and customers delivering Council services. We have made significant digital transformation progress with the introduction of planning, and procurement systems, the launch of a new website and social media platforms expanding engagement mechanisms and seeking to improve internal processes that over time will make it easier for the community to connect with Council.

The safety of our community has also remained a key priority this year. Our staff have shown incredible resilience and adaptability in the face of constant change to how we operate under COVID-19 restrictions and in response to the recent floods. Council staff have also demonstrated that it is possible to stay focused on continuing to provide a high level of customer service whilst keeping everyone safe. Positively, Council's Inclusive Tourism Strategy was awarded winner at the 2022 NSW Local Government Excellence Awards in the category Organisational Diversity and Inclusion.

Our Community Vision review also saw over 900 people participate in the development of the 2035 Vision which drives the direction of the Council for the next decade. Through this Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan has been prepared as a direct response to your priorities and identifies plans, programs, works and services to meet them. We are pleased to present this Report and look forward to continuing to work with our Councillors and the community to realise our Shire's Community Vision and remain a connected, sustainable, and creative community.



Steve Allan  
Mayor



Liz Jeremy  
General Manager



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# Connected Sustainable Creative

## Community Vision

We are a community that is inclusive, connected to each other in our shire, and with connections beyond - regionally, nationally, and globally.

We strive to live sustainably to ensure that we have enough for all, forever.

We are a community that is creatively and culturally dynamic. We are ingenious and inventive in finding innovative solutions to problems and challenges.



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Age

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# Our Community Snapshot

**13,197**  
Population

**564 (4.3%)**  
of the Shire's population identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

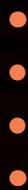
**6.3%**  
People Living With Disability

**20%**  
Aged 17 Years & Younger

**26.8%**  
Aged 65 & Over



**264,000**  
Annual Visitors



**\$454M**  
Gross Regional Product

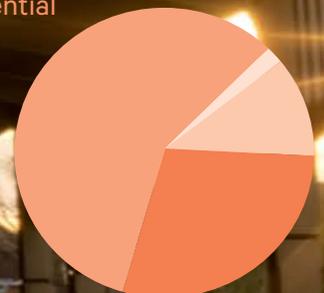


**20%**  
Households have children

**70%**  
Own or are purchasing their home

## Land Use

- Primary Production
- Parkland
- Residential
- Other



# The Annual Report in Context

The Annual Report is a component of Councils Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework, and outlines Councils achievements during the financial year in implementing its Delivery Program. It also provides the information that the Council is required to disclose.



# Structure of the Annual Report

The Annual Report is one of the key components of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework. The report helps Council to keep our community informed about outcomes and achievements in the previous financial year.

## A

### **Achievements In Implementing The Delivery Program**

Reports on the achievements in implementing the Delivery Program and measures the effectiveness of the principal activities undertaken in achieving the objectives in the Community Strategic Plan. Detailed reporting is available on [Council's website](#)

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## B

### **Statutory Information**

Council is required to publicly report on the legislated obligations Council must meet each year as well as other information the NSW Government believes should be provided to the community.

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## C

### **Financial Statements**

The full, audited Financial Statements of Council can be found in this section, as a separate attachment to this report.



# About Our Shire

The Bellingen Shire is currently home to 13,197 people (ABS Estimated Resident Population 2021), who come from many different countries and are involved in diverse occupational, cultural, and social activities.

Our Shire has three distinct geographical areas – ocean, river, and mountains incorporating the communities of Mylestom, Repton, and Urunga on the coast, Bellingen nestled in the river valley, and Dorrigo on the plateau. Each is a vibrant and rich community with its own characteristics.

Bellingen Shire has an abundance of natural assets. Some 57% of the Shire is State Forest (21.26%), National Parks (32.36%) and Crown land. This and our cultural attractions have created a thriving tourism industry with 264,000 visitors coming to our Shire each year spending a total of \$78 million. Numerous festivals, ranging from jazz, classical and world music, to environmental, food and wine events, attract distinct audiences enhancing the social and economic fabric of the region.

# Your Council

As a local government organisation, Bellinghen Shire Council is charged with the responsibility for the delivery of a diverse range of services each day.

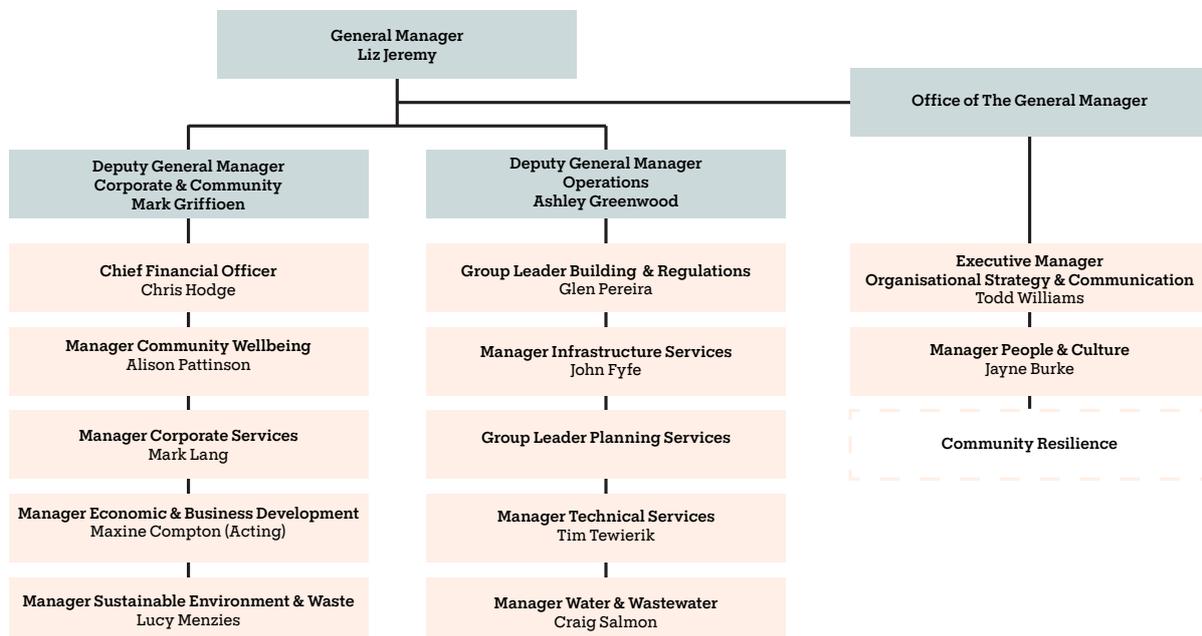
The elected Council comprises 7 councillors who represent the entire Local Government Area. The Mayor is elected by popular vote once every four years and the Deputy Mayor is nominated and elected annually by fellow Councillors.



Image: (l to r): Cr Ellie Tree, Cr Joanne Cook (Deputy Mayor), Cr Stephen Glyde, Mayor Steve Allan, Cr Dominic King, Cr Jo Brotherton and Cr Jennie Fenton.

Responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the Bellinghen Shire rests with the General Manager, Liz Jeremy. Together with senior management they ensure effective and efficient operation of the organisation.

The below diagram sets out the senior management structure for the Council.



# Operating Principles

Council is committed to the following operating principles in everything it does:

Every customer will be treated with courtesy, respect, fairness, and equity in every interaction with Council. All Council business will be conducted honestly, and transparently, in accordance with the spirit of Open Council. We will actively consult and work with the community as we formulate and implement new policies. Sometimes, because Council has a regulatory role, we may have to make decisions in line with our legal and communal obligations which may differ from an individual's specific request, or Council may be required to balance the different needs and interests of individual customers. When this is necessary, we undertake to ensure that our customers have all the facts and reasons behind such decisions and that the decision will be according to the law and in the best interests of the whole community.

We embrace our accountability for the professional management of Council processes and assets, and we undertake to apply commercial operational principles to ensure the community benefits from our efficient and effective management. We are aware of our responsibility as individuals and officers of the Council to perform our duties safely and to maintain a safe, healthy work environment.

## Our Values

We have developed core values to guide our organisation. These guiding principles dictate behaviour and help to achieve on our Community Vision and our major strategies.



Service Ethic / Commitment



Professionalism



Respect



Teamwork



Integrity



Communication

2  
Surf Clubs

1  
Saleyard

3  
Carparks

170  
Water Mains

# Community Infrastructure We Manage

## Community Facilities



## Transport



## Services



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# Highlights

In 2021-22 There Were:



**66%**

Waste Diverted From  
Landfill



**\$8.9M**

Grant funding  
successfully secured



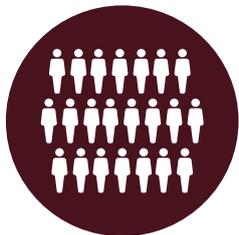
**16,991**

Phone Calls And  
Counter Enquiries  
Answered



**72,153**

Library Items  
Borrowed



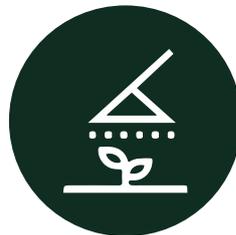
**91,714**

Library Visitors



**208.3k**

Social Media Reach



**554**

Health & Environment  
Inspections



**20,221**

Swimming Pool Visitors



**166**

Active Volunteers Involved  
in Council Programs



**74%**

First Contact  
Resolution Rate



**100%**

Building Inspections  
Carried Out Within 3  
Days



**1,127**

Response to  
Engagement Surveys

In 2021-22 Council delivered a \$19 Million capital program including:



**\$11,435,707**

Roads And Transport



**\$4,633,754**

Community Facilities  
Town Improvements  
Sport And Recreation



**\$2,979,645**

Water, Sewer, Environment  
And Waste \*Inc Flood Event

## Resilient Economy

- Council's Inclusive Tourism Strategy was adopted by Council in August 2021.
  - Grant applications submitted to progress priority actions within the Gleniffer Reserves Masterplan.
  - Bellinghen Shire Branding Strategy was adopted by Council in October 2021.
  - As part of the overall \$8M Community Resilience Program, the Disaster Recovery Funded projects under the Bushfire Preparedness, Recovery and Resilience Program were completed June 2022. This funding program saw the completion of:
    - A Food Resilience Vision,
    - An Alternative Routes report, and
    - A Vegetation mapping study to identify and address bushfire risks.
  - Business-boosting measures, such as street scape renewals and a Tourism Symposium were funded.
  - Refurbishment of community halls to be fit for purpose as emergency assembly points and recovery hubs.
  - Co Hosted the Eco Think Destination Forum.
  - Inclusive Tourism Strategy winner at the 2022 NSW Local Government Excellence Awards for Diversity and Inclusion.
  - The program also saw the allocation of over \$455,000 to community groups and individuals through three community grants programs. Projects addressed concerns and needs the community raised during consultation.
  - An Inclusive Tourism Guide was also developed and is publicly available through Council's website.
- Council adopted the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-26. Action items delivered during the reporting period include:
    - Accessible toilet upgrades at Alma Doepel Park, Mylestom
    - Accessible toilets and parking space at Roses Reserve in Thora
    - Accessible upgrades at Dangar Falls playground including an accessible footpath to the toilets and accessible picnic tables.
  - Memorial Hall upgrade works 65% complete with construction of the new Multipurpose Studio and back of house amenities and internal redevelopment of the existing hall progressed.
  - Our Libraries facilitated events including the Science Fair and STEAM workshop, Bellinghen Readers and Writers Festival and Byron Writers on the Road author event. This saw an increase of 341 participants engaging with library activities

## Community Wellbeing

- OneMobDreaming have been engaged to facilitate activities to progress the truth and ground telling project with local Aboriginal Land Councils and Local Elders.
  - Grant funding secured through the State library as part of Create NSW and design works completed for Dorrigo library extension.
  - A revised mobility map for the Shire has been finalised and new accessible toilet facilities have been provided at Burdett Park, Bellinghen, Alma Doepel Reserve, Mylestom and Roses Reserve, Thora as outcomes from Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan.
  - Reference Group established with representation from Local Elders to inform activities to progress the truth and ground telling project with local Aboriginal Land Councils and OneMobDreaming.
  - Welcomed new Australians through Citizenship as part of Harmony Week.
  - Launched the installation of the Water Cloud Sculpture in Dorrigo.
- ## Our Living Environment
- A Regional Review of waste options with Nambucca Valley Council was completed and a project with the Mid North Coast Joint Organisation to identify regional opportunities that align with the new NSW Waste and Sustainable Materials Strategy 2041 was commenced.
  - Council continued to invest in renewable energy through on-site solar generation and the purchase of GreenPower.
  - Continued funding for delivery of Environmental Levy Projects.
  - Service Review completed on the Waste Operations Services.
  - Council and the Never Never Catchment Group delivered riverbank restoration works at the Never Never Reserves.
  - The Waste Behaviour Change Project focused on the diversion of food waste from the general mixed waste bins (red) to the green bin or a home composting system.
  - A High Environmental Value Vegetation mapping project commenced.
  - The Integrated Water Cycle Management Plan (IWCM) Issue paper was completed.
  - Council facilitated engagement with the community around the Water Supply Options Report to inform the IWCM Strategy which will outline alternate supply options.
  - Herbicide Use Report finalised and published to website.
  - A draft Community Climate Action Plan has been developed that includes 17 projects on climate mitigation and adaptation actions proposed by key stakeholders.

- Flood Risk Management Plan finalised and adopted by Council.
- Water Resilience Officer progressing a water conservation program across the shire.
- Stage 2 of the Coastal Management Plan was completed with the report available on Council's website
- Council assisted Local Land Services to approach landholders who would potentially be interested in entering into Conservation Agreements on their property to protect koala habitat.

## Places For People

- Ford St / Crown St Retaining Walls - 60% Complete
- Implementation of Local Housing Strategy Actions continues including:
  - Infill Infrastructure Investigations.
  - Nominated Planning Proposals.
  - Community Land Trust.
  - Eco-village project investigations.
- Council engaged Consultants to undertake a strategic investigation of infrastructure constraints within key infill focus areas in Bellingen, Urunga & Dorrigo.
- Road Resealing program Plateau reseals complete, Valley and Seaboard - All preparation works complete however program impacted by disaster events in Feb/Mar2022, consistent wet weather prevented the final seals being undertaken in several locations in the Valley and Seaboard.
- Road Renewal Program - Valery Road and Promised Land Loop Road Projects completed.
- \$5M Secured for the Kalang Road - Remote Road Upgrade Pilot Project.
- The long term \$23M Bridge Renewal Program continues with significant works underway including:
  1. Baileys Bridge, in construction.
  2. Diehappy Bridge, in construction.
  3. Kalang River Bridge, D&C contract awarded, in design development.
  4. Knights, in construction.
  5. Richardsons, in construction.
  6. Sunny Corner Road, D&C contract awarded, in design development.
  7. Bielsdown Bridge, in construction.
  8. Pine Creek No.2 - Competed.
  9. Tallowood Point Bridge - Completed.
- Disaster recovery works commenced throughout the period.
- Dorrigo to Dangar Falls Pathway progressing.
- Dangar Falls Playground Upgrade - Completed.
- Connell Park Playground Upgrade - Commenced

## Civic Leadership

- \$4.2 Million secured from the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund to create Ring of Resilience program
- 14 council staff became accredited mental health first aiders as part of Council's health & wellbeing program
- The Local Government Elections were held on 4 of December 2021. The election result was announced on 23 December 2021 with 5 new Councillors being elected to the governing body including a new Mayor, with 2 existing councillors continuing for the new term.
- Successful implementation of Council's new Planning Assessment and Reporting Software, known as 'Greenlight'
- Comparative assessment of new Asset Management Systems underway with associated software vendors.
- Recognised Community Resilience volunteers at the 2022 Australia Day Awards Event held in Dorrigo.
- As part of Council's internal audit plan, Council engaged an external consulting firm to undertake an audit of Council's obligations under Work Health and Safety legislation as it directly relates to the Water and Wastewater Department of Council.
- Implementation of an online safety management incident reporting system (Vault) has been completed.
- Operational review undertaken of Council's Customer & Business Services, Information Technology, Geospatial, Records and Governance functions to consolidate the reporting lines under a newly formed Corporate Services Manager.
- Review of the Community Vision saw 861 community members participate in survey, face to face and online engagement activities.
- The new suite of Integrated Planning & Reporting documents was adopted by Council at It's extraordinary meeting 29 June 2022. These included:
  - Community Vision 2035
  - Delivery Program 2022-26
  - Operational Plan 2022-23
  - Long Term Financial Plan 2022-32
  - Revenue Policy, Fees & Charges 2022-23
- The newly elected Council has undergone an induction program and a series of workshops and training to inform their responsibilities and roles as part of a professional development program.
- Financial Sustainability Strategy updated and reviewed by Executive Leadership Team, with a number of actions completed through the year.
- Safeguards have been established including the use of multi-factor authentication and continued engagement with Cyber Security NSW.

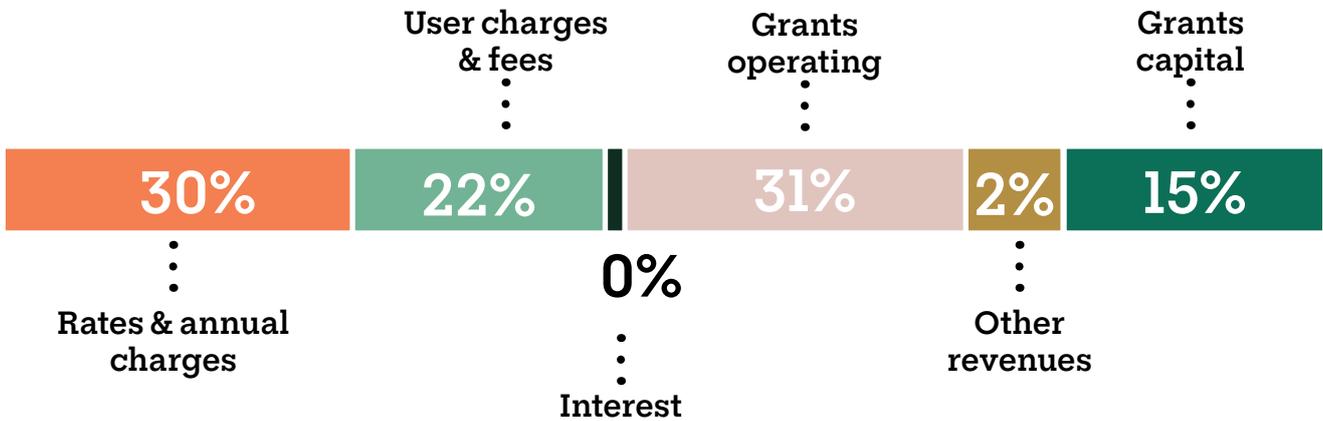
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# 2021/22 In Numbers

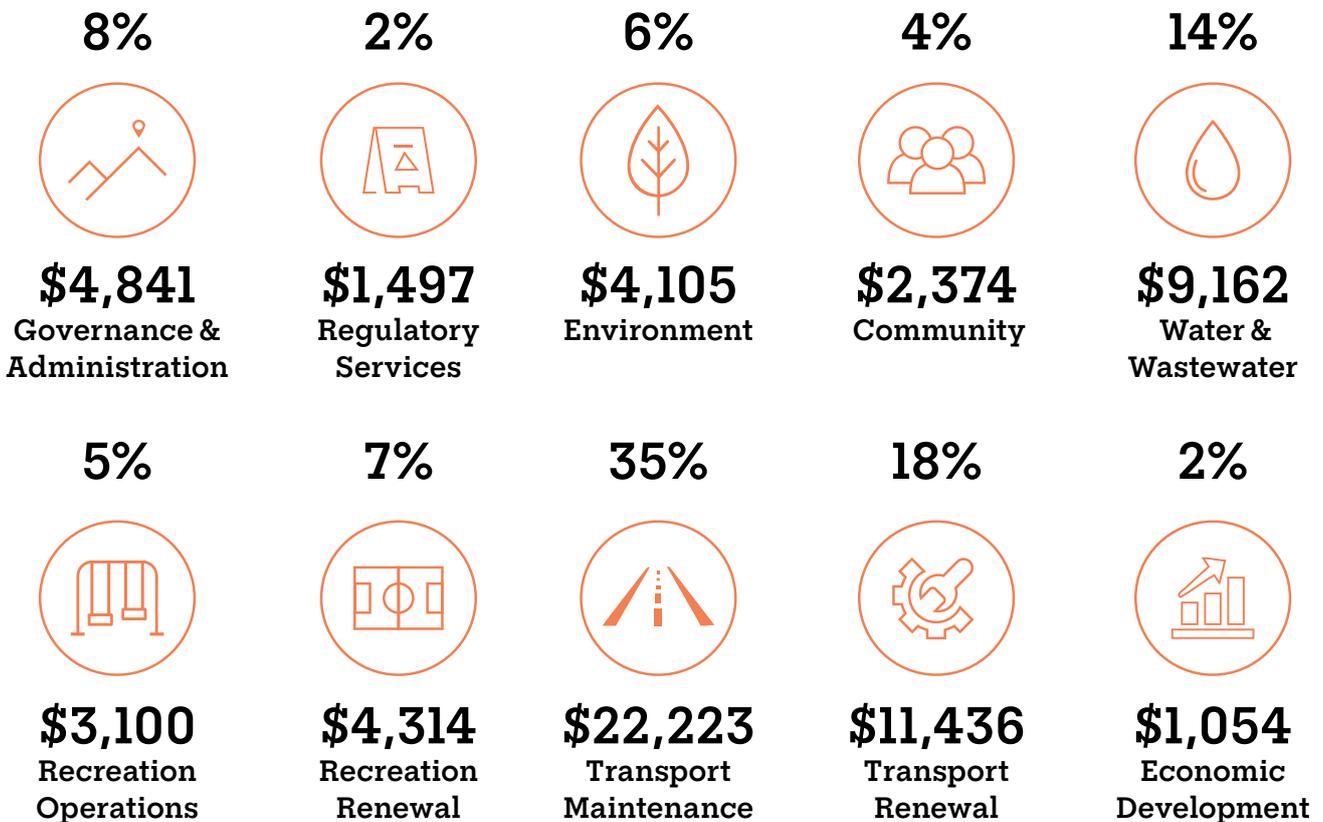


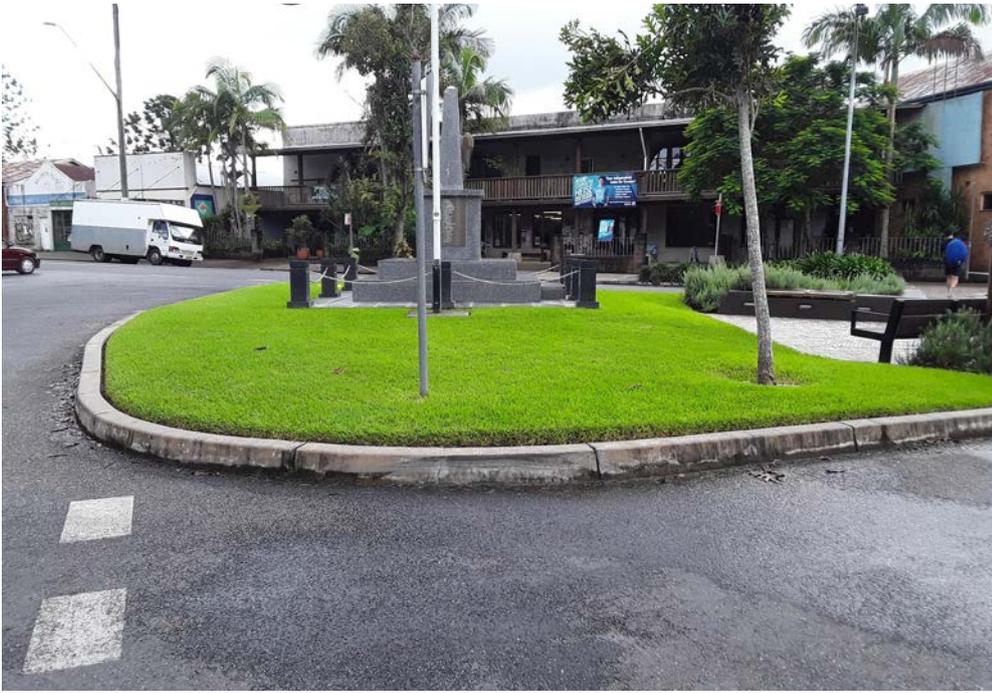
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The Council raised \$ 56.2 million from various sources



Council spent \$ 64.1 million on maintaining and renewing assets and providing services. (\$ thousands)





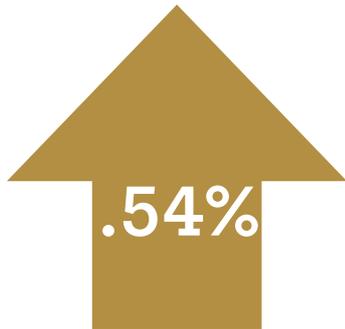
# Report Against Indicators

Council tracks a range of measures and metrics to monitor the progress and service outcomes.

These indicators are used to guide strategic direction, monitor whether the strategies are resulting in positive changes and where Council determines whether the outcomes are achieved

# Key Statistics and Trends

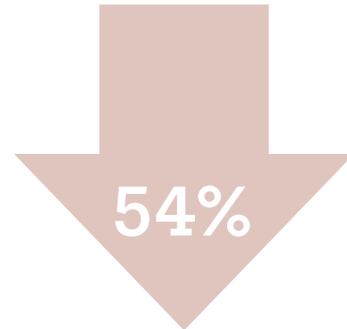
This section shows some key trends in Bellingen Shire and Council operations.



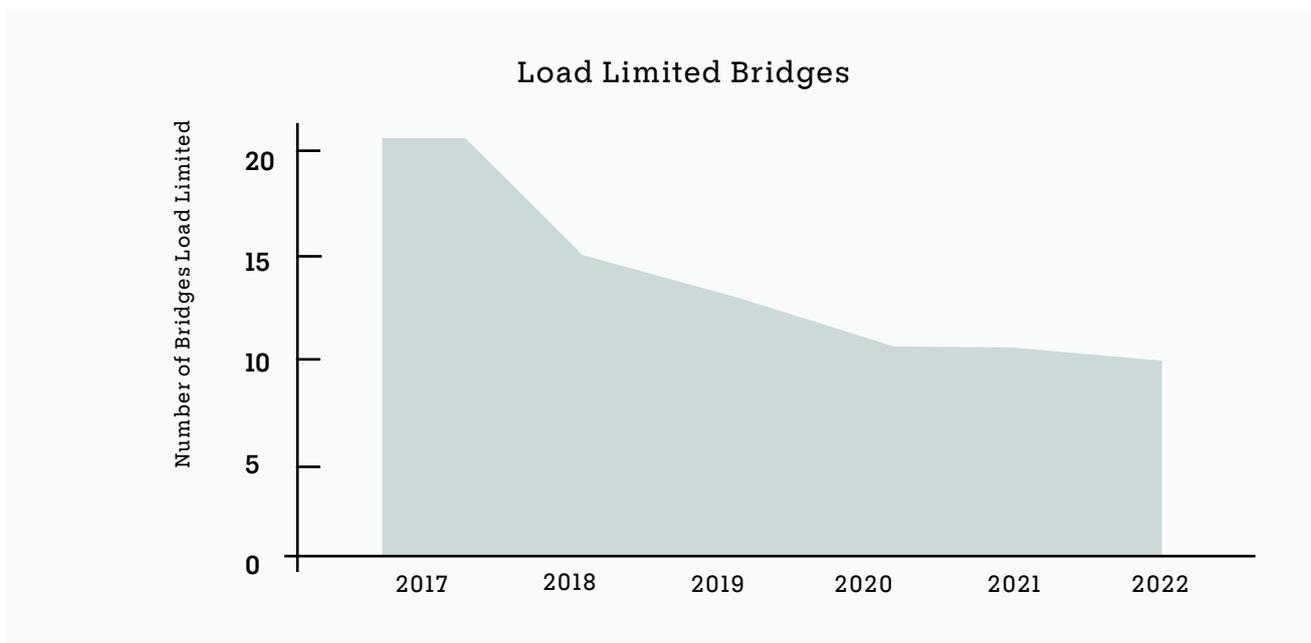
The Estimated Population of Bellingen Shire is 13,197 showing an increase by 0.54% from 13,141



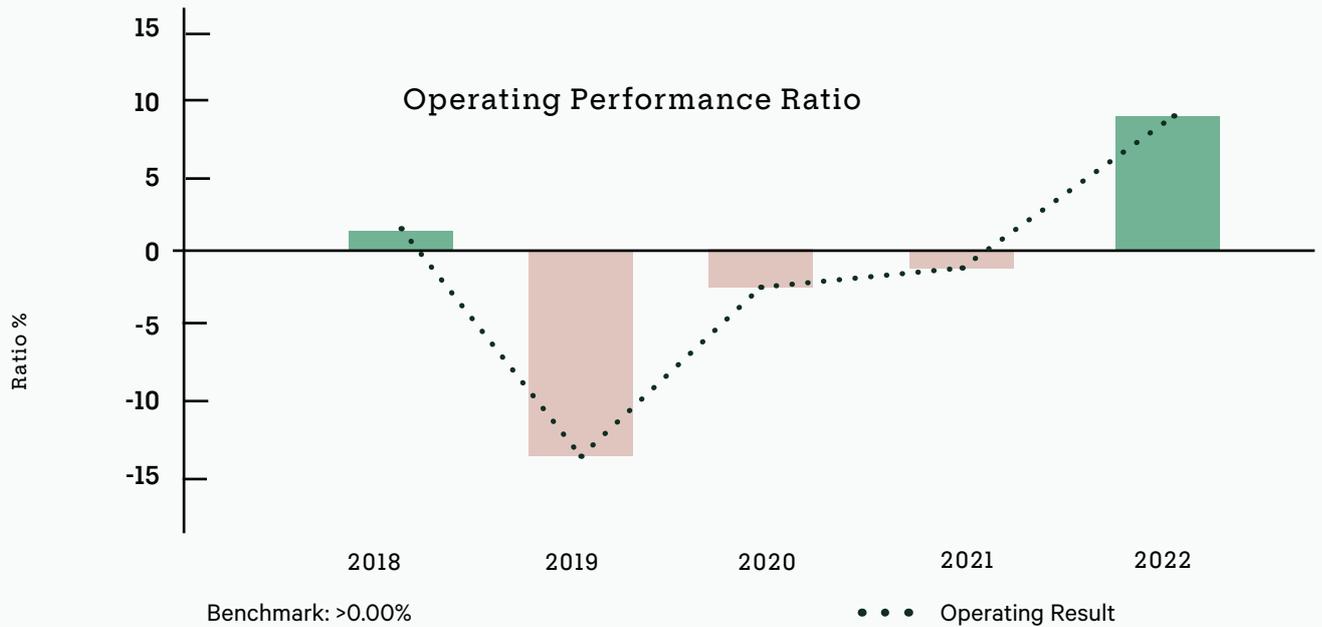
Bellingen Shire is on the way to becoming Eco Certified to ensure the long-term sustainability of our beautiful shire.



54% reduction of load limited bridges across the Shire.

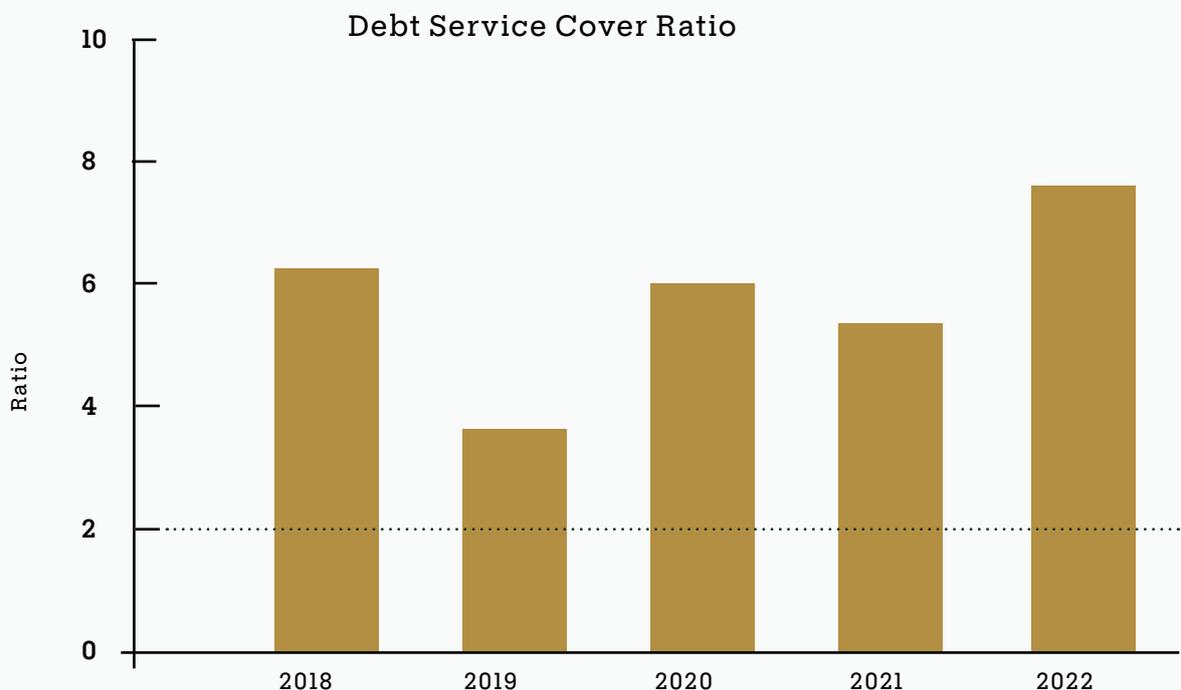


Council has conducted a detailed assessment of its 85-timber bridges, 22 of which were originally subject to load limits however at the end of 2021-22 financial year, only 10 of these bridges remained load limited.



This result measures Council’s achievement of containing operating expenditure within operating revenue.

Councils operating performance ratio result represents an improvement from the prior financial year and is significantly better than the 2021/22 ratio estimate of -3.4%. Council is continuing to work on improving this ratio into the future.



Source: Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting.

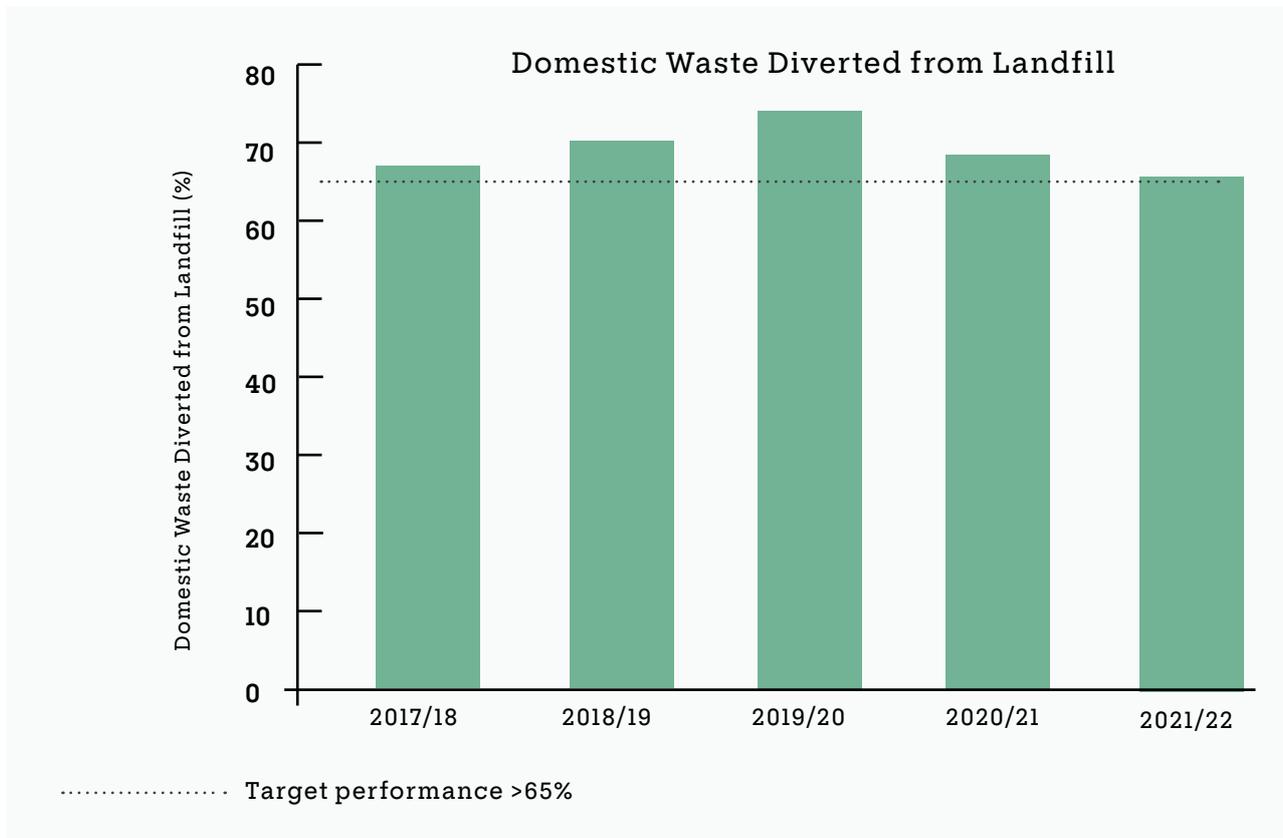
Purpose of debt service cover ratio

The ratio measures the availability of operating cash to service debt including interest, principal and lease payments.

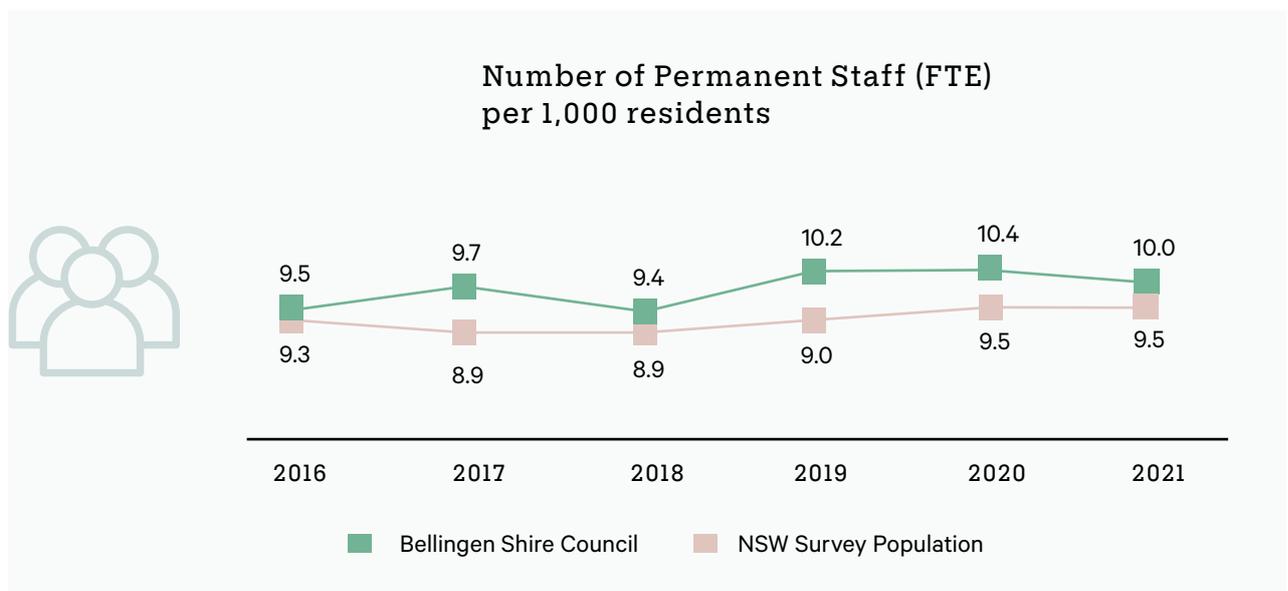
2021/22 ratio: 7.50x

This indicator emphasises that Council’s defined Operating Result maintains the capacity to meet its annual debt requirements. The 2021/22 result exceeds the industry benchmark of 2.0x, indicating sufficient operating cash to service its debts.

# Waste

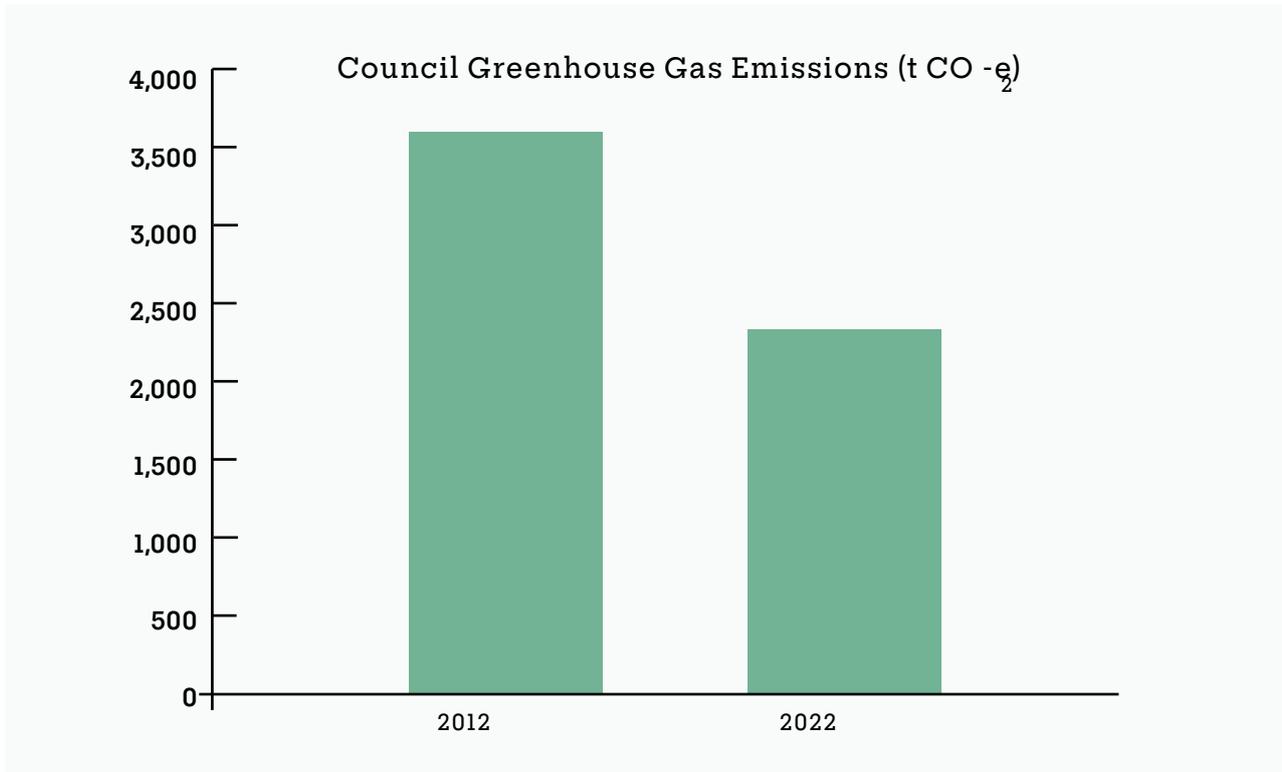


Waste diversion from landfill is relatively high considering a change to the Regulations for Mixed Waste and Organic Outputs (MWO) ceased the diversion of mixed waste from landfill. This waste is still processed prior to being placed in landfill which significantly reduces its weight in tonnes.



Data drawn from the PWC Australasian Local Government Performance Excellence Program Report 2021.

# Carbon Emissions



As part of Council's climate emergency declaration, the corporate carbon plan has now been adopted by council and emissions reduction is being woven into all areas within council operations and processes.

## Corporate Carbon Plan



100% renewable energy by 2030

Council continues to invest in renewable energy through on-site solar generation and the purchase of 100% Green Power for small sites and 20% GreenPower for 10 contestable sites. This will increase throughout 2022-23.



Zero net emissions by 2040

Emissions reductions are tracking well for purchased electricity. Emissions from fuel use will be a particular challenge until the availability and cost of Electric/low emissions plant and vehicles increases. 772 Street lighting fixtures will be upgraded to LED by Essential Energy in 2022-23, reducing total emissions by approximately 5%.

# Community Engagement



Follow us on



@BELLINGENSHIRECOUNCIL

Have   
Your Say



1,222

Participated in surveys



Like us on

facebook

@BELLINGENSHIRECOUNCIL

Community engagement is a key priority for our community and for Council and is fundamental to Council's operations. Community engagement plays an important role in making Bellingen Shire a great place for residents and people who work in and visit the area.

It is a two-way process through which the community's aspirations, concerns, needs and values help inform Council's decision-making process.

The end result is not necessarily about gaining universal support for a project or a decision. It is about fairness, transparency and involving key stakeholders in Council processes, as and when appropriate.

We value our community as a source of local expertise and actively seek community feedback. We ask for and listen to your ideas, feedback and concerns in order to make informed decisions that are in the best interest of the whole community.

Council's engagement approach is based on the public participation spectrum developed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2).

A key component of all projects undertaken by Council involves identifying stakeholders and selecting appropriate and relevant methods to engage with them. Council uses many methods to reach people including an online engagement portal that allows stakeholders to provide input and feedback on projects that affect them, or they have an interest in.

More information about engagement activities and other projects, can be found at [Bellingen.nsw.gov.au/Have-Your-Say](https://www.bellingen.nsw.gov.au/Have-Your-Say).

During the reporting period, Council undertook an extensive engagement exercise utilising the Place Score liveability survey to review and update the Community Vision and to inform the development of Council's new 4 year Delivery Program and 1 year Operational Plan.

Place Score's place measurement tools collect community insights to identify what matters most (Care Factor) to our local community and how well it is performing (Place Experience). When considered together these valuable insights help Council plan, prioritise invest and track performance.

Community insights are the most useful when they are measurable, actionable and trackable. By asking our communities directly what's most important to them and how their places are impacting them, we can change the conversation and purposefully build meaningful, measurable, actionable data and by undertaking additional surveys over the long term, trackable data.

Council's corporate Social media platforms continue to grow with a combined reach of 208,364 providing accessible avenues to information and service updates. Throughout 2021/22 a total of 1,222 people participated in 15 surveys.



**CLICK HERE**

To read the detailed progress reports  
against the 2021-22 Operational Plan.



# Reporting On Achievements

## Strategy Structure

The Bellingen Shire Strategy consists of the Shire’s vision, overarching principles and five key themes. For each of the key themes, there are a series of service commitments. This structure is illustrated in the following figure.

The key themes are supported by strategic priorities to achieve them. These are listed throughout the document.

## Overarching Principles

- Sustainability
- Social Justice



We have meaningful work and vibrant businesses within our community

We have balanced sustainable Tourism

We have a sustainable local farming sector that provides us with healthy, fresh food

Our children, young people and seniors are valued, involved and supported

We are a learning and creative community

We value, honour and actively acknowledge our Gumbaynggirr culture and heritage

We are connected safe and healthy with a strong sense of community

We have a diversity of beautiful spaces that foster community happiness and wellbeing

We have a mixture of affordable sustainable housing options for all in our community

We are connected and able to move around in a safe, accessible, affordable, healthy and environmentally friendly way

We have the facilities and services needed to be a healthy and active community

We have clean water which is protected and used sustainably

Our surroundings are quiet and clean

We reduce, reuse and recycle

We live sustainably and reduce our ecological footprint and contribution to climate change

We protect and enhance our biodiversity

We work together to protect and enhance our environment

Council is an organisation that embraces business excellence

Our community is informed and engaged with a strong sense of civic leadership

Council is proactive in representing the needs of our community



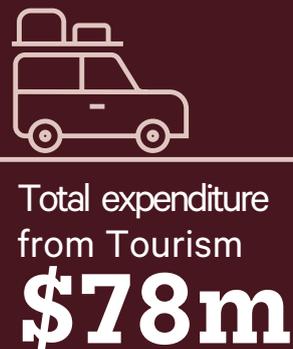
We have meaningful work and vibrant businesses within our community.

We have balanced, sustainable tourism.

We have a sustainable local farming sector that provides us with healthy, fresh food

## Our Performance

for the last 12 months





To read the detailed progress reports against the 2021-22 Operational Plan. [\*\*CLICK HERE\*\*](#) 



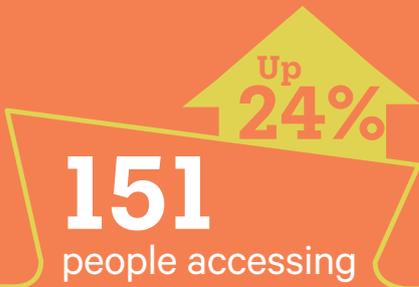
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## Our Performance

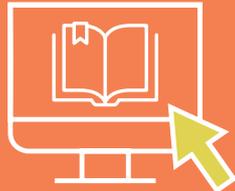
for the last 12 months



people accessing the Dorrigo Support Service  
improvement in social wellbeing



Library loans



**72,153**



Library visitors

**91,714**



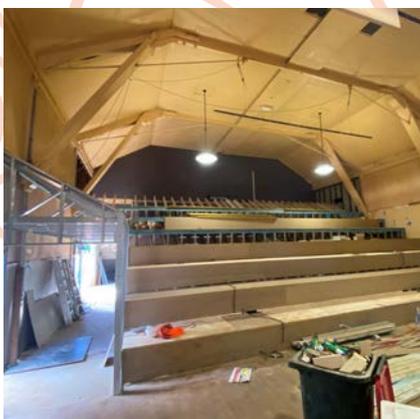
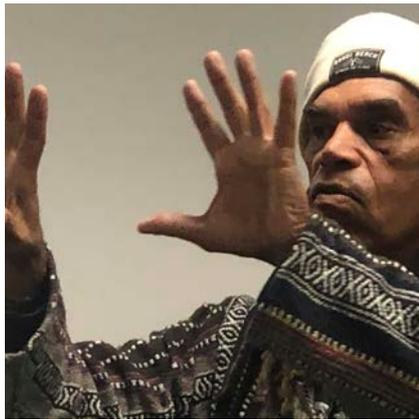
active volunteers in council programs

**166**



Attendees @ Youth Hub

**16,400**



To read the detailed progress reports against the 2021-22 Operational Plan. [CLICK HERE](#) 



We have a diversity of beautiful spaces that foster community happiness and wellbeing.

We have a mixture of affordable sustainable housing options for all in our community.

We are connected and able to move around in a safe, accessible, affordable, healthy, and environmentally friendly way.

We have the facilities and services needed to be a healthy and active community

## Our Performance

Total length of footpaths & cycleways for the last 12 months

**4km**



Established since 2017



**3** Playground renewals

**2** Playground defects outstanding



Load limited Bridges

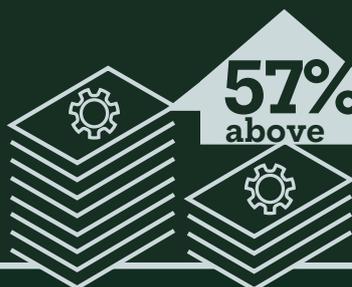
**10**

reduced by **54%** since 2017



**22**

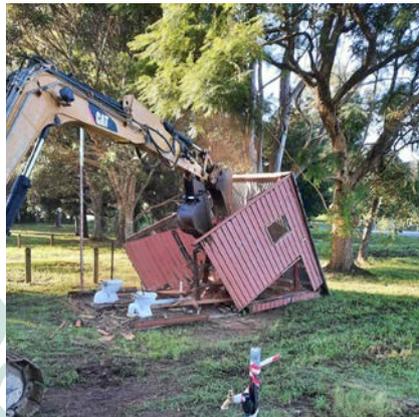
accessibility improvements to facilities and infrastructure



**57%** above

Building and infrastructure renewals ratio

*\*benchmark 100%*



To read the detailed progress reports against the 2021-22 Operational Plan.

**CLICK HERE**





We have clean water which is protected and used sustainably.

Our surroundings are quiet and clean.

We reduce, reuse, recycle.

We live sustainably and reduce our ecological footprint and contribution to climate change.

We protect and enhance our biodiversity.

We work together to protect and enhance our environment.

## Our Performance

for the last 12 months

Waste diverted from landfill

**66%**



Down **3%**

Water consumption

**1003**

Megalitres

Down **3.8%**



Council's emissions in tonnes

**2400.9**



Down **17%**

up **32%**

**325**

Invasive weed inspections carried out

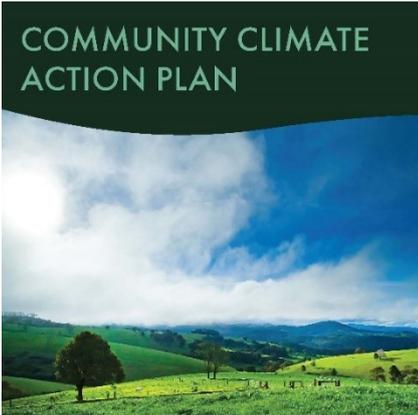


Down from **0.15%**

**0%**

Missed garbage collections





To read the detailed progress reports against the 2021-22 Operational Plan. [CLICK HERE](#) 



Council is an organisation that embraces business excellence.

Our community is informed and engaged with a strong sense of civic leadership.

Council is proactive in representing the needs of our community.

## Our Performance



for the last 12 months

**153**

(DA) Development Applications determined



Total Value of DA's approved

**\$36.8m**



**159**

GIPA Act applications received



First contact resolution

**74%**

Down  
**6%**

**16,991**

Calls to 6655 7300

*\*Introduction of new online processes*



\*Down  
**24%**

Social media reach



**204k**

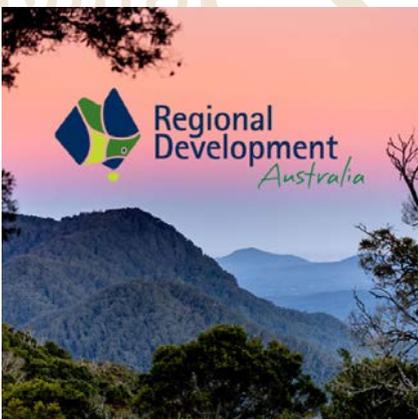
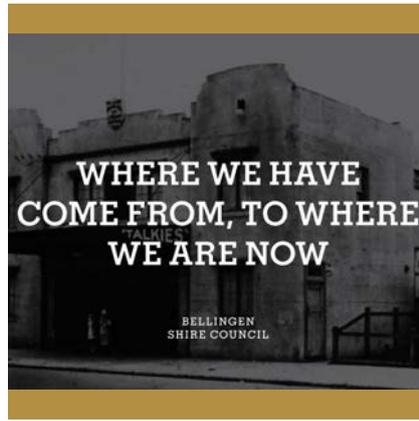


**132**

views



**3.4k**



To read the detailed progress reports against the 2021-22 Operational Plan.

**CLICK HERE**





# Statutory and Other Information

Annual reports are one of the key points of accountability between a council and its community. The 2021/22 annual report focuses on our Delivery Program and Operational Plan and outlines Our Bellingen Shire Community Vision 2027 priorities.

The NSW Government considers it important for community members to understand how Bellingen Shire Council has been performing both as a business entity and a community leader. To meet these requirements, this report includes information prescribed by the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005.

Councils are required to report annually under the Local Government Act 1993, Local Government (General) Regulation, Companion Animals Act and Regulation, Environmental Planning Assessment Act 1979, Swimming Pools Acts 1992, Swimming Pools Regulation 2018, Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994, Public Interest Disclosures Regulation 2011, Carers' Recognition Act 2010, and Disability Inclusion Act 2014. This section presents information required by legislation. Some items have also appeared earlier in the report.

## Special Variations in General Income

### Special Rate Variation 2014/15

The ordinary rates include an 11.8% Special Rate Variation which was approved by the Minister in June 2014. The SRV applies to all rateable land within the Shire. The 2014/15 SRV generated approximately \$0.65M in additional revenue in 2021/22 and is estimated to generate an additional \$7.4M over the next 10 years. The increase is funding and servicing a loan of \$4.85M for Council's capital works program to address the transport infrastructure backlog, and fund additional maintenance on the road network. The \$0.65M generated by the SRV in 2021/22 were spent in the following way:

- Repayment of loan \$0.48M (subsidised by an interest rate subsidy under the Local Government Infrastructure Renewals Scheme)
- Roads Maintenance expenditure \$0.17M

All expenditure in 2021/22 was made in accordance with the approved SRV application and Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal Determination

### Special Rate Variation 2017/18 – 2020/21 (2020/21 delayed to 2021/22 due to COVID)

In addition to the 2014/15 SRV, the ordinary rates include four consecutive 6% Special Rate Variation's which were approved by the Minister in May 2017 and May 2018. These SRV's apply to all rateable land within the Shire. The four consecutive 6% SRV's generated approximately \$1.2M in additional revenue in 2021/22, expecting to generate an additional \$13.4M over the next 10 years. The increase is partially funding Council's capital works road reseal program and Council bridge renewal program to address the transport infrastructure backlog. The \$1.2M SRV funds were spent in the following way:

- Roads resealing program \$0.97M
- Bridge Renewals program \$0.23M

All expenditure in 2021/22 was made in accordance with the approved SRV application and Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal Determination.

## Environmental Levy Projects 2020-21

### Introduction

Bellingen Shire Council applied to the Minister for Local Government in May 2005 for a special variation to general income for environmental projects. On the 30 June 2005 Council received notice that an increase of 4% was approved on an on-going basis.

As identified in the Shire of Bellingen Shire 2027 Community Vision, the environment levy supports the implementation of projects to achieve the strategic directions, outcomes, and aspirations for the future from our local community. The key focus areas are as follows:

- Invasive plant management
- Biodiversity management
- Coastal and river ecosystem management
- Sustainable food production
- Climate change adaptation and mitigation

Expenditure of the EL budget for the 2020/21 financial year to the value of \$253,300

### Summary

PROJECT	FUNDING
Environmental Levy Community Fund	\$26,210
River & Biodiversity Officer	\$27,300
(Grant funded project management, community advice, EL Community Fund administration, LandCare support, funding applications and project scoping)	\$32,000
Weeds Action Program (matching funds)	\$30,000
Sustainability and Climate Change Projects	\$17,500
Past project maintenance	\$35,000
Coastal Zone Management Plan	\$5,000
Bellinger Landcare Incorporated	\$20,000
Bellingen Urban Landcare	\$5,000
Riverwatch Partnership	\$12,000
Beach Watch	\$15,000
Koala Conservation and Protection Project (matching funds)	\$10,000
Flying Fox Habitat Restoration Program grant	\$27,702
(matching funds for 5-year project)	\$27,702
Fish Habitat Rehabilitation Grant (matching funds)	\$10,000
Seed Funding (matching funds for 2022/23 grants yet to be advertised)	\$12,973
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$260,175</b>

## Overseas Visits

There were no overseas visits undertaken by Councillors, Council Staff or other persons representing the Council during the period 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022.

## Elected Members' Expenses

### Mayor and Councillor Fees

The total fees paid to the Mayor and Councillors in 2021-22 was \$111,879.

### Councillor Support and Expenses

EXPENSES	2020-21 \$	2021-22 \$
Councillor support and provision of facilities (including provision of dedicated office equipment allocated to councillors and telephone calls made by councillors)	5,791	10,228
Attendance at conferences and seminars	11,290	14,264
Training of councillors and provision of skill development	-	18,859
Interstate visits undertaken during the year by Councillors while representing the Council, including the cost of transport, the cost of accommodation and other out of pocket travelling expenses	-	-
Overseas visits by Councillors while representing the Council, including the cost of transport, the cost of accommodation and other out of pocket travelling expenses	-	-
Expense of any spouse, partner or other person who accompanied a Councillor in the performance of his or her civic functions	-	-
Expenses involved in the provision of care for a child or an immediate family member of a councillor	-	-
Fees paid to Mayor and Councillors	111,649	111,879
Motor Vehicle Allowances	2,011	1,356
Mayoral vehicle operational costs and depreciation	9,344	12,505
Insurance costs for Councillors and Officers liability	32,740	39,457
<b>Total costs for the year</b>	<b>185,908</b>	<b>208,547</b>

## Modern Slavery Act 2018

Modern slavery affects all of us through the food we eat, the clothes we buy, and the goods we consume. Bellingen Shire Council has performed an initial review and identified the majority of suppliers as low risk within their organisation and supply chains. Council will not participate in any procurement with a supplier or contractor that is found to be engaging in modern slavery.

Contracts entered into through Regional Procurement comply with the requirements under the Modern Slavery Amendment Act 2021 (Cth) and all related legislation including the Modern Slavery Act 2018 (NSW).

Panel contracts entered into with Local Government Procurement have risk ratings applied to all approved contractors. The risk ratings undertake reasonable steps to ensure the goods and services procured are not a product of modern slavery. This provides confidence to better meet modern slavery legislative and ethical obligations.

A Contractor's modern slavery risk rating is based on:

- Awareness of the Commonwealth Modern Slavery Act 2018;
- Approach/controls in place and action undertaken to detect and prevent modern slavery within their supply chain; and
- The main country(ies) of origin for the products sold

Bellingen Shire Council is working towards a Modern Slavery disclosure as a requirement within tender schedules to mitigate the risk associated with modern slavery practices in companies' operations and supply chain. Council has not received any notification from the Anti-slavery Commissioner in regard to issues of concern with Council operations.

## Legal Proceedings

Council was not formally involved in any legal proceedings in the 2021/22 financial year, other than undertakings regarding recovering rates which are reported in the financial statements.

MATTER	ISSUE	STATUS/ RESULT	EXPENSES	RECEIVED
Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

## Works Subsidised on Private Land

No resolutions were made during this period concerning work subsidised by Council and carried out on private land.

## Major Contracts (Greater than \$150,000) Awarded

GOODS OR SERVICES	SUPPLIERS	TOTAL CONTRACT VALUE
Crown street retaining wall – Design and Construct	AJ Civil Projects	\$524,275
Tallowood Point Bridge Piling	Lts Mining & Civil Pty Ltd	\$181,505
Marx Hill to Raleigh Dam Pipeline - Bored Crossing Construction (Underbores)	Ameidat Pty, Ltd	\$480,842
RMCC Heavy Patching	Stabilised Pavements Of Australia Pty Ltd	\$190,000
Replacement of fleet vehicles	Mike Blewitt Pty Ltd	\$359,862
Project Management Services for the Bellingen Hall to Hub Project	Proarc Pty Ltd	\$170,500
Construction Phase of the Bellingen Memorial Hall	Boulus Constructions Pty Ltd	\$5,550,380
Road stabilisation, drainage and earthworks	Stabilcorp Pty Ltd	\$172,174
Fixing Country Bridges - De-sign and Supply Package	Inquik Pty Ltd	\$2,568,830
Project Management of Epar Damage Sites - March 21 floods	NSW Public Works Advisory	\$775,374
Proposal for the Preparation of an Integrated		
Water Cycle Management Strategy	NSW Public Works Advisory	\$166,687
Bielsdown River Bridge Re-placement	MCS Civil NSW Pty Ltd	\$1,694,397
Road Rehabilitation Project	Stabilised Pavements Of Australia Pty Ltd	\$192,858
Dorrigo to Danger Falls Shared Path	BPE Contractors Pty Ltd	\$663,957
Bridge Design and Construction	Coastal Works	\$663,652
Road Resealing	Colas New South Wales Pty Ltd	\$532,826
Geotechnical Investigation (Flood Recovery works)	Regional Geotechnical Solutions	\$350,765
Plant replacement	MC Trucks Pty Ltd	\$153,668
Construction Dangar Falls Reserve Play Space, Dorrigo	Moduplay Group Pty Ltd	\$187,825

GOODS OR SERVICES	SUPPLIERS	TOTAL CONTRACT VALUE
Replacement of the Public Amenities at Alma Doepel Reserve, Mylestom	Fabranamics Pty Ltd t/a Pureablue	\$160,155
Construction of Connell Park Play Space, Bellingen	Moduplay Group Pty Ltd	\$258,698
Traffic control services	Men At Work	\$327,800
Flood recovery works	The Rix Group Pty Ltd	\$159,547
Local Road Resurfacing	Boral Construction Materials Group Ltd	\$216,163
Supply of Electricity to Con-testable Sites and Street Lighting	Contestable sites: Origin Energy	
Street Lighting: AGL	\$326,418 Contestable Sites	
\$55,347 Street Lighting		
Plant replacement program for 20/21	Southside Truck Centre	\$322,750
Supply of Steel for Fixing Country Bridges Projects	Infrabuild Steel Centre	\$215,279
Urunga Sewer Treatment Plant - Biosolids Removal	Macvest Holdings	\$163,350
Council Fleet Replacement	Coffs Harbour Toyota	\$390,520
End terminal upgrade pro-gram 21/22	Guardrail Systems	\$177,043
Waterfall Way Emergency Works - Slope 14386 (Thora)	Pan Civil	\$206,757
Traffic control services	Men At Work	\$452,406
Kalang Road Emergency Slip Repairs	Pan Civil	\$628,807
RMCC - RC2FL: Guardrail in-stallation	Guardrail Systems	\$186,548
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$19,827,965</b>

## Donations and Contributions

### Developer Contributions

New reporting and accounting requirements for infrastructure contributions and planning agreements were introduced into the EP&A Regulation on 12 February 2021 through the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Development Contributions) regulation 2021 (amending Regulation).

The following table relates to contributions expenditure, including a breakdown of contributions expenditure by project.

PLAN	BALANCE 30 JUNE 2021	RECEIPTS	SPEND	BALANCE 30 JUNE 2022
Roads	1,019,210.61	20,956.50	(172,385.41)	867,781.70
Parking	30,346.19	-	-	30,346.19
Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Drainage	11,365.06	-	-	11,365.06
Comm Facilities	619,734.68	15,487.29	(53,928.48)	581,293.49
Comm Facilities- Bushfire	156,108.13	-	-	156,108.13
7.11 not under a plan	112,695.92	-	-	112,695.92
7.12 Plan	-	67,250.42	-	67,250.42
s.64	6,179,544.46	59,532.70	-	6,239,077.16
	8,129,005.05	163,226.91	(226,313.89)	8,065,918.07

### Council's Community Grants Program July 2021 – June 2022

Council offers a Community Grants Program twice a year that runs over the financial period. Grants are available through this program via the Community Support Fund, Community Event Sponsorship Fund and Creative Placemaking Fund.

The total annual budget allocation for the Community Support and Event Sponsorship Funds for the 2021-22 financial year was \$50,000 and \$5,000 for the Creative Placemaking Fund.

During Round 1, Council received seventeen (17) applications totaling \$65,662.

Ten (10) applications were received for the Community Support Fund, five (5) applications for the Community Event Sponsorship Fund and two (2) applications for the Creative Placemaking Fund.

Twelve (12) applications were supported either fully or in-part with the total funding recommended for Round 1 being \$30,999. Of this, \$28,999 came from the Community Funds budget and \$2,000 from the Creative Placemaking Fund budget.

## Community Support and Community Event Sponsorship Funds

Council's commitments with respect to Donations and Contributions are detailed as follows:

### Community Support Fund (Round 1)

ORGANISATION	ACTIVITY	\$
Don Dorrigo and Guy Fawkes Historical Society	Familiarisation Day	\$1,000
Urunga Surf Life Saving Club	Canteen upgrade at Urunga Surf Life Saving Club	\$4,000
Repton Public School P&C Association	'The River' The Musical	\$2,000
Camp Creative Inc	Improving event risk, safety, and accessibility in community venues	\$2,500
Neighbourhood Centres of Bellingen Shire Inc	People's Library: Voices of the Community 2021	\$2,199
Housing Matters Action Group Inc	Housing Matters Community Hosting Program	\$3,800
OzGREEN	First Aid Training for Bellingen Shire Micro Community Residents	\$1,500
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$16,999</b>

### Community Event Sponsorship Fund (Round 1)

ORGANISATION	ACTIVITY	\$
Arts Council of the Dorrigo Inc	Dorrigo Easter Art Exhibition (DEAE)	\$2,000
The Grub Club	Sgt. Matthew Locke MG Charity Match 2022	\$4,000
Dorrigo Folk and Bluegrass Festival Inc	Dorrigo Folk and Bluegrass Festival 2021	\$3,000
Amanda Fairbanks – auspiced by Auspicious Arts	'Everything 80s'	\$3,000
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>		<b>\$12,000</b>

### The Creative Placemaking Fund (Round 1)

ORGANISATION	ACTIVITY	\$
Kristy Holding	Pop Up Art Gallery and Studio	\$2,000
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>		<b>\$2,000</b>

During Round 2, Council received twelve (12) funding applications totalling \$37,956. Of the applications received in Round 2, six (6) were received for the Community Support Fund, ten (10) for the Community Event Sponsorship Fund and zero (0) for the Creative Placemaking Fund. Eleven (11) applications were supported with the total funding recommended for Round 2 being \$20,825. The successful organisations include:

### Community Support Fund (Round 2)

ORGANISATION	ACTIVITY	\$
Bellingen Growers Market	Promote Local Musicians and Performers	\$1,500
Neighbourhood Care Network Inc	SMS Bush Telegraph Emergency Alert Service	\$2,000
Bellingen Valley Working Equitation Inc	Timber bridge for practice and competitions	\$500
Bellinger River Sailing Club Inc	Maintenance and repairs of the Bellinger River Sailing Club	\$2,000
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>		<b>\$6,000</b>

### The Community Event Sponsorship Fund (Round 2)

ORGANISATION	ACTIVITY	\$
CWA Urunga	Urunga CWA Garden Function	\$2,035
Bellinger River Agricultural Society Inc	EJ Mantova Memorial Art Prize	\$2,500
Bellinger River Agricultural Society Inc	Bellingen Show	\$3,000
Kalang River Dragon Boat Club	Kalang River Classic	\$1,500
CWA Dorrigo	'Sconversation' Seniors Week	\$1,090
Dorrigo Dramatic Club	Back to Eden Film Festival	\$3,500
Dorrigo Folk and Bluegrass Festival Inc	Sounds at Megan	\$1,200
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>		<b>\$14,825</b>

## Heritage Fund Donations & Contributions

Council provided \$8,260 in grant funding to two grant recipients as part of the 2021-22 Local Heritage Assistance Fund. This comprised \$4,130 of funding from Council, and \$4,130 of funding provided by the NSW Department of Premier & Cabinet. The table below outlines the allocation of funding to grant recipients.

HERITAGE FUND GRANTS	LOCATION	\$
Restore doors to office and dining room in mainentrance including original Japonica finish	19 Cudgery St, Dorrigo	2,760
Restore side verandah roof of Levenvale Barn and build floor	347 Hydes Creek Rd, Hydes Creek	5,500
<b>Sub Total</b>		<b>8,260</b>

DESCRIPTION	\$
Community Event Sponsorship Fund	51,824
Bushfire Grants	92,563
MidCoast Council (Weight of Loads Contribution)	16,818
Youth Hub Contribution	106,925
Other	13,542
Environmental Levy Contributions	36,000
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>317,671</b>

The total actual amount contributed or otherwise granted by Council under Section 356 of the Act for 2021-22 was \$317,671

## Functions Delegated by Council

External bodies that exercised functions delegated by Council during the period were:

BODY	FUNCTION
<b>EXTERNAL BODIES</b>	
Clarence Regional Library Committee	Library Service
NSW Rural Fire Service	Rural Fire Services
<b>COMMUNITY COMMITTEES (SECTION 355 NSW LGA 1993)</b>	
Australia Day Committee	Australia Day Activities
Bellingen Citizens Centre Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Centre
Bellingen Island Reserve Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Reserve
Bellingen Memorial Hall Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Hall
Bellingen Shire Youth Centre	Care, Control and Management of the Bellingen Shire Youth Hub
Bellingen/Connell Park Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Parks
Bellinger Valley Historical Society Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Bellingen and Urunga Museums
Brierfield Hall Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Hall
Burdett Park Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Park
Deervale Hall and Recreation Reserve Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Hall and Reserve
Dorrigo Public Hall Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Centre
Dorrigo Recreation Grounds Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Reserve
Dorrigo Saleyards Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Saleyards
Hickory House and Neighbourhood Bus Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Community Bus & Centre
Megan Hall and Recreation Reserve Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Hall and Reserve
Mylestom Hall Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Hall
North Bellingen Children's Centre Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Centre
North Dorrigo Recreation Reserve Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Reserve
Raleigh Hall and Recreation Reserve Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Hall and Reserve
Thora Community Hall Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Hall
Urunga Literary Institute and Senior Citizens Centre Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Centre and the Literary Institute Hall
Urunga Recreation Reserve Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Reserve

## Corporations, Partnerships, Joint Ventures or Other Bodies in which Council Held a Controlling Interest

Council did not participate in any corporations, partnerships, joint ventures or other bodies in which it held a controlling interest.

## Corporations, Partnerships, Joint Ventures or Other Bodies in Which the Council Participated

ORGANISATION	ROLE
Arts Mid North Coast	Board Member
Mid North Coast Weight of Loads Group	Member
Regional Procurement	Partner
Statewide Mutual Limited	Member, Board Member
StateCover Mutual Limited	Member
Mid North Coast Joint Organisation	Member
Coffs Coast Regional Waste Services	Member
Our Living Coast Regional Sustainability Alliance	Member
Climate Emergency Australia	Member
MidWaste	Member
Sustainability Advantage	Member
Cities Power Partnership	Member
Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy	Member
Clarence Regional Library Group	Board Members

## General Manager and Senior Staff Remuneration

### Senior Staff Salaries

There are three positions within Council designated as Senior Staff as at 30 June. These include the General Manager, Deputy General Manager, Operations and Deputy General Manager, Corporate and Community. The total remuneration package of \$282,392.92 payable to the General Manager included salary, FBT costs associated with the provision of a Council owned motor vehicle and superannuation costs.

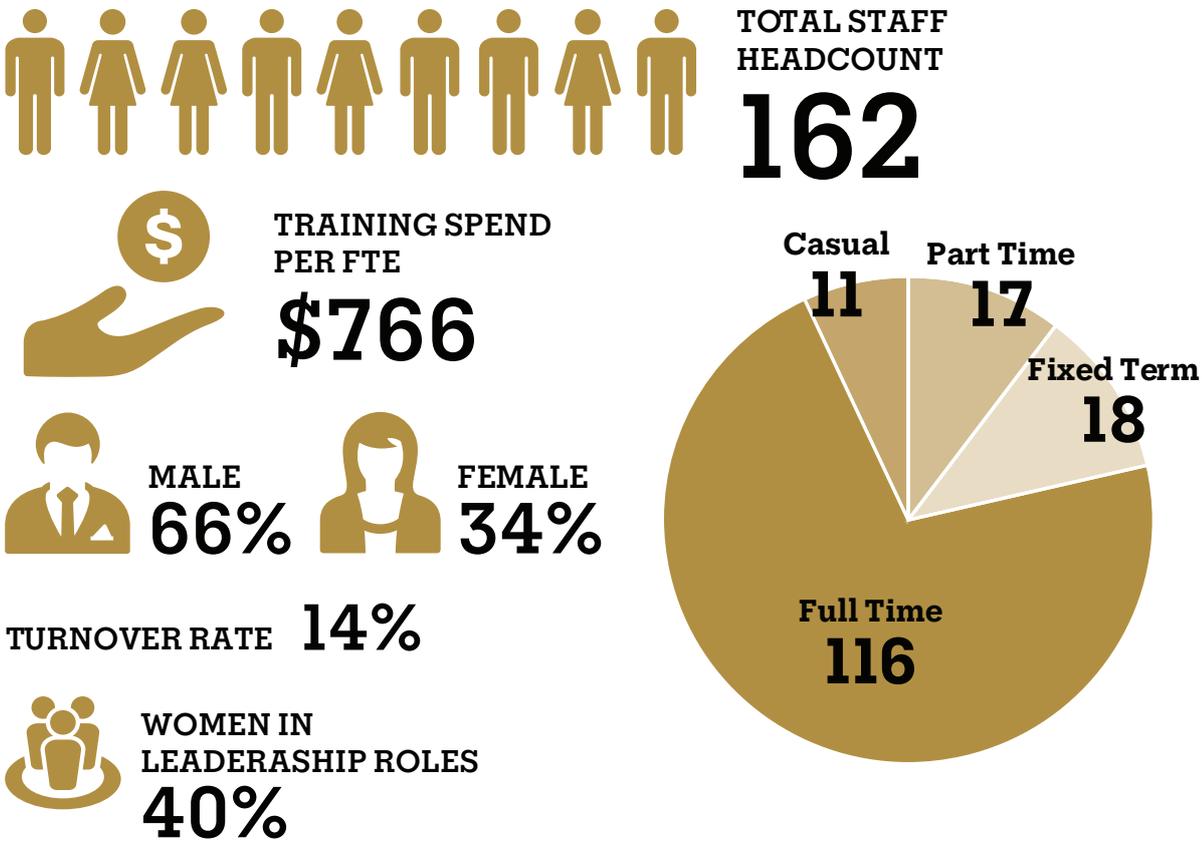
The combined total remuneration package cost of \$428,050.00 payable to the two Deputy General Manager Positions included salary, additional leave, FBT costs associated with the provision of a Council owned motor vehicle under leaseback arrangement and superannuation.

## Workforce Strategy and Equal Opportunity Employment

### Workforce Strategy

Councils Workforce Strategy responds to Council’s Community Strategic Plan – Bellingén Shire Community Vision 2035. The Workforce Strategy guides the preparation of our workforce to be professional and resilient, able to work in partnership and collaboration with external stakeholders to deliver quality local services that meet the diverse needs of our community. The Strategy document was reviewed and updated through 2021/22.

As at 25 May 2022



During the reporting period, three (3) people were employed by the council under senior staff contracts. Fourteen (14) people were engaged by the council, under a contract or other arrangement wholly or principally for the labour of the person, and Council endeavors to continue to provide employment opportunities for local youth whereby three (3) apprentices and two (2) cadets were employed by Council.

Our supporting action plan is articulated under three (3) objectives that prepare our workforce to meet our community’s immediate and long-term demands:

1. Attract - Strive to create and maintain a workforce that reflects the diversity of our community
2. Develop - Value and retain experience while at the same time grow talent and create career development opportunities.
3. Retain - Build an environment that encourages accountability and rewards performance with a focus on opportunities to enhance the health and wellbeing of our employees.

In 2021-22 we delivered a number of initiatives relating to workplace culture, diversity and equal employment that stem from our Workforce Strategy and contribute to our objectives.

### **Reward & Recognition**

Council continues to recognise the hard work and efforts of its employees through various programs. Council's annual service recognition event "Togetherbration" was held in December 2021 with 21 employees receiving recognition for 5 to 40 years of service with council.

### **Learning & Development**

In December, 34 employees attended Mental Health First Aid training, receiving accreditation to become a Mental Health First Aid Officer in the workplace. Council staff undertook the following training throughout the 2021-22 year to inform staff of their responsibilities to uphold the highest standards of behaviour in the workplace and to ensure communities have trust and confidence in local government.

- Traffic Control
- ERSED training
- Prepare a Work Zone Traffic Management Plan
- Chainsaw Training Base Tree Fall
- Chainsaw Recertification
- CPR Refresher
- Mental Health First Aid
- Payroll Tax Webinar
- LG Award Interpretation Training
- FBT Webinar
- Revenue Professionals Conference
- LG Procurement Conference
- Mastertek MJES Training
- GC21 Training
- PIA – Legal Series
- Erosion and Sediment Control Workshops
- Warden Training
- Chief Warden Training
- Fire Extinguisher Training
- First Aid
- Improving Your Report Writing Skills

### **Workplace Relations**

The Local Government (State) Award 2020 requires establishment of a Consultative Committee for the purposes of consultation and participation. Council's Staff Consultative Committee (SCC) is comprised of elected staff representatives and managers who meet regularly to work together on specific issues covered under the scope of the Award.

## Workplace Health and Safety

Council is committed to providing a safe work environment for all employees by providing safe systems of work and ongoing training. Safety is a process of continuous improvement with ongoing reviews of our safety systems and processes taking place during this period.

The following training programs were delivered:

- Bullying and Harassment
- Fire Extinguisher
- First Aid
- Incident Investigation
- Mental Health First Aid
- Traffic Management
- Warden and Chief Warden
- WHS Responsibilities and Risk Management for Managers and Supervisors

External accreditation to AS/NZS ISO 45001 has been achieved for the Integrated Management System (IMS) (the Work Health & Safety Management System) used on road construction and maintenance projects under the Road Maintenance Council Contract (RMCC) with Transport for NSW.

Council is also working with StateCover Mutual to implement VAULT, which is a safety reporting and information management system. This will replace paper-based incident reporting and the entering of manual data into spreadsheets. Expected implementation of VAULT is in the first quarter of the next reporting period.

Monthly Safety Newsletters are circulated to all staff promoting a range of initiatives including tips to stay safe, preventative messaging and health and wellbeing material through noticeboards and the intranet.

More broadly, Council staff have been actively involved with the promotion and participation in varied wellbeing initiatives including:

- R U OK Day
- Safe Work Month
- Biketober
- Movember
- Adopt-a-Family
- Fitness Passport discount gym membership initiative

## Health and Wellbeing

Health and safety committees (HSC) provide the means to give workers a voice in health and safety matters at the workplace and involve workers through participation and consultation. It brings together the person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) and workers to discuss and develop ways to improve health and safety at work. Council has an active Health and Safety Committee that meet regularly to discuss health and safety matters in the workplace. Council employs a dedicated Employee and Wellbeing Coordinator and a temporary Safety Officer as part of Council's expanded program of infrastructure works.

A number of Health and Wellbeing events are held by Council each year (e.g. RU OK Day, Australia's Biggest Morning Tea) bringing employees together to support one another in these areas.

## Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Council's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a confidential counselling program available to all employees and their immediate family members. Employees have access to up to four free sessions per year. EAP offers confidential and professional psychological support for personal or work-related issues focused on providing practical solutions. EAP counselling provides vital support to improve the mental health, resilience, and wellbeing of our employees.



## A Cuppa with Council



## Stormwater Management Services

Council did not levy a stormwater management levy during the reporting year.

## Coastal Protection Services

Council did not levy an annual coastal protection charge during the reporting year.

## Companion Animals Act - Compliance

### Companion Animals Act – Compliance Pound

- Thirty four (34) dogs were seized, surrendered, or found roaming free during the 2021/2022 year.
- Twenty (20) of these dogs were returned to their owners prior to being impounded and fourteen (14) of these dogs were transferred to Council's animal shelter.
- No (0) dogs remained in the pound from the previous year.
- No (0) dogs remained in the pound at the end of this reporting period.
- Ten (10) impounded dogs were either returned to their owner or re-homed.
- Four (4) dangerous dog was euthanised.
- Thirteen (13) cats were seized, found abandoned or stray,
- Two (2) were returned to owner and eleven (11) were transferred to the animal pound.
- One (1) cat which had been trapped and was euthanised.
- The one (1) cat was sold and the remaining nine (9) impounded cats were rehomed.

In place processes and one on one education has seen a significant increase in compliance and another decrease in the number of dogs that have been seized.

Council works closely with Nambucca Shire Council and the Macksville Pound and numerous rescue organisations. This relationship has allowed us to re-home all suitable dogs and cats that can't be adopted out via our subsidised sale and de-sexing program.

In line with Council's adopted Companion Animals Management Plan, Council aims to return companion animals to their owners, or to re-home those animals which not been collected by the owner or surrendered to the pound. Only in situations where re-homing is not possible for reasons of suitability or temperament, will euthanasia be used as a management option.

FINANCIAL YEAR – DOGS	SEIZED OR SURRENDERED	IMPOUNDED	EUTHANISED
2014 – 2015	141	94	30
2015 – 2016	62	32	15
2016 – 2017	59	28	6
2017 – 2018	51	28	4
2018 - 2019	42	19	0
2019-2020	48	25	3
2020 – 2021	26	17	1 (Dangerous)
2021-2022	34	14	4

FINANCIAL YEAR – CATS	SEIZED OR SURRENDERED	IMPOUNDED	EUTHANISED
2014 - 2015	15	12	12
2015 - 2016	9	7	7
2016 - 2017	16	13	13
2017 - 2018	8	5	5
2018 - 2019	6	6	1
2019-2020	14	14	0
2020 - 2021	17	16	1 (Feral)
2021 - 2022	13	11	1

### Statement on activities relating to enforcing and ensuring compliance with Companion Animals Act and Regulation

Council's Customer and Business Services Team in conjunction with Ranger Services interrogate the Companion Animals Register monthly and send notices to owners of unregistered dogs in the Shire. Two notices are sent (original and final reminder at 14 days) giving the owner 28 days to comply. Following the final notice if the animal is still not registered a Penalty Notice (PN) is issued for non-compliance. If after 3 months, the animal has still not been registered the processes is repeated.

Service requests are investigated and if animals are not identified with a microchip and/or are not registered their owners are issued with a written notice to comply. Non-compliance results in fines being issued.

A revised barking dog investigation and response procedure has been implemented to deal with dog noise nuisance. The new process places more empathise on the persons involved (complainant and dog owner) to resolve the matter themselves prior to Council intervening with regulatory actions. This new approach is now consistent with that utilised by other local councils.

Regular patrols are conducted, and one on one education and warnings related mainly to dog offences are issued to offenders in the first instance. PN's are issued for subsequent breaches and for serial offenders Dangerous, Menacing or Nuisance Orders are issued:

- Six (6) Dangerous Dog Orders,
- Fifteen (15) Menacing Dog Order and
- One (1) Nuisance Dog Order was issued.
- Nil (0) Nuisance Cat Orders were issued.

### Dog Attack data

Forty seven (47) dog attacks were reported and after investigation, twenty five (25) were lodged with the Office of Local Government through the Companion Animals Register.

<b>COMPANION ANIMAL MANAGEMENT FUNDING</b>	
Registration (146) - commissions	\$5,292
Impounding fees, charges	\$3,923
Fines	\$12,157
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$21,372</b>

<b>COMPANION ANIMALS - ACTIVITY 2021/22 FY</b>		
	<b>DOGS</b>	<b>CATS</b>
<b>IN</b>		
Seized	30	13
Abandoned/stray	3	10
Surrendered	4	1
<b>OUT</b>		
Returned to owner	20	4
Sold	0	1
Released to owner	5	0
Released to organisation for rehoming	5	8
Escaped pound	0	0
<b>EUTHANISED</b>		
Dangerous dog	4	NA
Owner request	0	0
Illness/disease/injury	0	0
Unable to rehome	0	1
Feral/infant	0	0
Unsuitable for rehoming	0	0
<b>IN POUND AT END OF YEAR</b>		
	0	0

## Companion Animal Community Education Programs

Council undertakes one-on-one compliance education with owners who have been found to be in breach of the Companion Animals Act.

## Strategies to promote and assist the de-sexing of dogs and cats

Council does not currently have any strategies in place for the promotion of and/or assistance with de-sexing of dogs or cats.

## Particulars of Any Environmental Upgrade Agreement Entered Into

Council has not entered into any arrangements during the period 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022.

## Report on Capital Works Projects

Council's capital projects for infrastructure facilities, including renovations and extensions have not exceeded 10% of Council's annual rate revenue during the period 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022.

## Rates and Charges Written Off

The total value of rates and charges written off for the year 2021 /2022 was \$ 505,159.05 as follows:

<b>RATES AND CHARGES WRITTEN OFF</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
General Rates	329,419.99	327,790.31
Water Annual Charges	94,502.10	92,949.24
Sewer Annual Charges	72,354.60	72,232.86
DWM Charges	-	-
	<b>496,276.69</b>	<b>492,972.41</b>
Rates-Residential	1,349.68	1,425.83
Rates-Business	-	-
DWM	-	0.69
Non DWM	382.00	402.33
Water-annual Charges	-	0.13
Water-usage Charges	7,171.18	10,139.00
Sewer-annual Charges	-	0.91
Sewer-usage Charges	234.87	162.82
Liquid Trade Waste Usage Charges	-	-
Interest-rates	228.32	51.93
Interest-water	-	-
Legal Fees/Costs	-	-
	<b>9366.05</b>	<b>12,186.64</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>505,642.74</b>	<b>505,159.05</b>

## Planning Agreements

The below table outlines the planning agreements entered into and or are ongoing with Council during 2021/22.

VPA PARTIES	PROPERTY	PARTICULARS	COMPLIANCE
Bellingen Shire Council & Shaul Rubinstein Pty Ltd (14/9/20)	84 Hyde Street & Halpins Lane & Oak Street, Bellingen	Provide car parking in Oak Street & contribute towards upgrading of Halpins Lane and other infrastructure	Yes
Bellingen Shire Council and Ruby Sequoia Pty Ltd as trustee for Ruby Sequoia Family Trust and Bruce Michael Levy and Jeanette Paula Levy as Trustees for Roses Road Trust (20/12/2020)	2A Oak Street, Halpins Lane, William Street and Oak Street, Bellingen	Provide car parking in William Street and contribute towards upgrading of infrastructure in Halpins Lane	Yes
Bellingen Shire Council and Urunga Developments Pty Ltd (23/6/2021)	4040, 4042 & 4056 Giinagay Way, Urunga	Agreements regarding upgrades of water and sewer infrastructure necessary to service subdivision in the locality	Yes

## Private Swimming Pool inspections

PRIVATE SWIMMING POOL INSPECTIONS	2021/22
Number of inspections of tourist and visitor accommodation	
Total	2
Number of inspections of premises with more than 2 dwellings	
Total	0
Number of inspections that resulted in issuing a certificate of compliance under s22D of the SP Act	
Total	40
Number of inspections that resulted in issuing a certificate of non-compliance under cl21 of the SP Reg	
Total	14

## Public's Right to Access Government Information

The Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA Act) came into effect on 1 July 2010 and replaced the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) and Section 12 of the NSW Local Government Act 1993.

The aim of the GIPA Act is to provide an open, accountable, fair, and effective government. This means that all government agencies in NSW are required to make more information freely available and more processes and documents of Government will be available following an application process.

In 2021/22 one hundred & fifty-six (156) formal valid applications for access to information were received, and two (2) formal but invalid application.

### Review of Proactive Release Program - Clause 8(a)

Under section 7 of the GIPA Act, agencies must review their programs for the release of government information to identify the kinds of information that can be made publicly available. This review must be undertaken at least once every 12 months.

Council's program for the proactive release of information involves updating Council's Agency Information Guide and Privacy Management Procedures and Plan to ensure that staff are provided with clear guidance as to what information should and should not be proactively released.

During the reporting period, we reviewed this program by analysis of the types of requests made to Council and what proportion could be answered through open access means.

Clause 8(a): Details of the review carried out by the agency under section 7 (3) of the Act during the reporting year and the details of any information made publicly available by the agency as a result of the review

REVIEWS CARRIED OUT BY THE AGENCY	INFORMATION MADE PUBLICLY AVAILABLE BY THE AGENCY
Yes	Yes

As a result of this review, we released the following information proactively through the Have Your Say section of Council's website. Each :

- Public Amenities Review
- Request for Proposal: Creation of Food Resilience Vision and Plan
- Our Council, Our Community - Becoming a Councillor
- Bellingen Memorial Hall Transformation
- Road Reserve Boundary Realignment - Waterfall Way
- Sewering Coastal Villages Project
- Economic Development & Tourism Plan
- Bellingen Shire Herbicide Review
- Waterwise Garden Giveaway
- Draft Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2026
- Political Signage
- Bellingen Coastal Management Program
- Draft Planning Agreement between BSC and Urunga Developments PL
- Water Quality Management Plan - Stakeholder Consultation
- Tell us how you connect to your community?
- Bellingen Shire Eco Destination Certification
- Draft CCTV & Body Worn Video Camera Policy
- Flood Recovery Roundtable
- Draft Revised 2022-26 Delivery Program and 2022-23 Operational Plan
- Code of Conduct
- Draft Code of Meeting Practice Policy
- Re-establishment of Alcohol Free Zones
- Reconnecting Regional Communities

During the reporting period, our agency received one hundred and fifty eight (158) formal and valid access applications (including withdrawn applications but not invalid applications).

Clause 8B: The total number of access applications received by the agency during the reporting year (including withdrawn applications but not including invalid applications).

<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS RECEIVED</b>
159

### Number of Refused applications for Schedule 1 Information - Clause 8(c)

During the reporting period, Council did not refuse any applications.

Clause 8C: The total number of access applications received by the agency during the reporting year that the agency refused either wholly or partly, because the application was for the disclosure of information referred to in Schedule 1 to the Act (information for which there is conclusive presumption of overriding public interest against disclosure)

<b>NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS REFUSED</b>	<b>WHOLLY</b>	<b>PARTLY</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
	1	0	0
% of Total	100%	0%	0%

### Statistical information about access applications - Schedule 2

<b>TABLE A: NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS BY TYPE OF APPLICANT AND OUTCOME*</b>										
	Access Granted in Full	Access Granted in Part	Access Refused in Full	Information not Held	Information Already Available	Refuse to Deal with Application	Refuse to Confirm/ Deny whether information is held	Application Withdrawn	Total	% of Total
Media	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Members of Parliament	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Private sector business	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Not for profit organisations or community groups	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Members of the public (by legal representative)	96	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	96	60%
Members of the public (other)	62	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	63	40%
<b>Total</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>159</b>	
<b>% of Total</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</b>		

\* More than one decision can be made in respect of a particular access application. If so, a recording must be made in relation to each such decision. This also applies to Table B.

**TABLE B: NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS BY TYPE OF APPLICANT AND OUTCOME\***

	Access Granted in Full	Access Granted in Part	Access Refused in Full	Information not Held	Information Already Available	Refuse to Deal with Application	Refuse to Confirm/ Deny whether information is held	Application Withdrawn	Total	% of Total
Personal information applications*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Access applications (other than personal information applications)	157	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	157	99%
Access applications that are partly personal information applications and partly other	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	1%
Total	158	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	159	
% of Total	99%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%		

\* A personal information application is an access application for personal information (as defined in clause 4 of Schedule 4 to the Act) about the applicant (the applicant being an individual).

**TABLE C: INVALID APPLICATIONS**

Reason for invalidity	No of applications	% of Total
Application does not comply with formal requirements (section 41 of the Act)	2	100%
Application is for excluded information of the agency (section 43 of the Act)	0	0%
Application contravenes restraint order (section 110 of the Act)	0	0%
Total number of invalid applications received	2	100%
Invalid applications that subsequently became valid applications	2	100%

<b>TABLE D: CONCLUSIVE PRESUMPTION OF OVERRIDING PUBLIC INTEREST AGAINST DISCLOSURE: MATTERS LISTED IN SCHEDULE 1 OF ACT</b>		
	Number of times consideration used*	% of Total
Overriding secrecy laws	0	0%
Cabinet information	0	0%
Executive Council information	0	0%
Contempt	0	0%
Legal professional privilege	0	0%
Excluded information	0	0%
Documents affecting law enforcement and public safety	0	0%
Transport safety	0	0%
Adoption	0	0%
Care and protection of children	0	0%
Ministerial code of conduct	0	0%
Aboriginal and environmental heritage	0	0%
Privilege generally - Sch 1(5A)	0	0%
Information provided to High Risk Offenders Assessment Committee	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	

*\*More than one public interest consideration may apply in relation to a particular access application and if so, each such consideration is to be recorded (but only once per application). This also applies in relation to Table E.*

<b>TABLE E: OTHER PUBLIC INTEREST CONSIDERATIONS AGAINST DISCLOSURE: MATTERS LISTED IN TABLE TO SECTION 14 OF ACT</b>		
	Number of times consideration used*	% of Total
Responsible and effective government	0	0%
Law enforcement and security	0	0%
Individual rights, judicial processes and natural justice	0	0%
Business interests of agencies and other persons	0	0%
Environment, culture, economy and general matters	0	0%
Secrecy provisions	0	0%
Exempt documents under interstate Freedom of Information legislation	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	

TABLE F: TIMELINESS		
	Number of applications*	% of Total
Decided within the statutory time frame (20 days plus any extensions)	159	100%
Decided after 35 days (by agreement with applicant)	0	0%
Not decided within time (deemed refusal)	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>159</b>	

TABLE G: NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS REVIEWED UNDER PART 5 OF THE ACT (BY TYPE OF REVIEW AND OUTCOME)				
	Decision varied	Decision upheld	Total	% of Total
Internal review	0	1	1	50%
Review by Information Commissioner*	0	1	1	50%
Internal review following recommendation under section 93 of Act	0	0	0	0%
Review by NCAT	0	0	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>% of Total</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>100%</b>		

\*The Information Commissioner does not have the authority to vary decisions, but can make recommendations to the original decision-maker. The data in this case indicates that a recommendation to vary or uphold the original decision has been made by the Information Commissioner.

TABLE H: APPLICATIONS FOR REVIEW UNDER PART 5 OF THE ACT (BY TYPE OF APPLICANT)		
	Number of applications for review	% of Total
Applications by access applicants	0	0%
Applications by persons to whom information the subject of access application relates (see section 54 of the Act)	1	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	

TABLE I: APPLICATIONS TRANSFERRED TO OTHER AGENCIES		
	Number of applications transferred	% of Total
Agency-Initiated Transfers	0	0%
Applicant - Initiated Transfers	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>

## Public Interest Disclosures Reporting

Organisations are required under the Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994 (PID Act) to collect and report on information about public interest disclosures (PIDs).

The Public Interest Disclosures Regulation 2011 outlines what information public authorities are to record and include in both the six month report to the NSW Ombudsman and the public authority's annual report:

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON PIDS	MADE BY PUBLIC OFFICIALS PERFORMING THEIR DAY TO DAY FUNCTIONS	UNDER A STATUTORY OR OTHER LEGAL OBLIGATION	ALL OTHER PIDS
Number of public officials who made PIDs	0	0	0
Number of PIDs received	0	0	0
OF PIDS RECEIVED, NUMBER PRIMARILY ABOUT:			
Corrupt conduct	0	0	0
Maladministration	0	0	0
Serious and substantial waste	0	0	0
Government information contravention	0	0	0
Local government pecuniary interest contravention	0	0	0
Number of PIDs finalised	0	0	0

*Note: The number of PIDs finalised only refers to PIDs that have been received since the commencement of the relevant period.*

### Commentary on PID Obligations

The Public Interest Disclosures Act, 1994 (PID Act) requires that Council report annually on its obligations under the Act. This report is made in accordance with Sections 31 and 6E of the PID Act, and Clause 4 of the associated regulations. The PID Act encourages and facilitates the disclosure, by public officials, of:

- Corrupt conduct
- Maladministration
- Serious and substantial waste of public money
- A breach of the Government Information (Public Access) Act, 2009
- A breach of pecuniary interest obligations under the Local Government Act, 1993.

The Act sets out a comprehensive framework for protecting public officials who disclose wrongdoing and provides clear pathways for those wanting to make disclosures.

Council's internal reporting policy contains the procedures relating to the lodgment, receipt, assessment and handling of public interest disclosures. Council's internal reporting policy and other information about the Act has been made available to staff through Council's intranet and staff induction sessions. In the reporting period 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022 Council received no Public Interest Disclosures.

## Complaint and Compliment Reporting

### Bellingen Shire Council Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures

2021-22	COMPLAINTS	COMPLIMENTS
Total	37	59

## Disability Action Plan

Actions in Councils Disability Inclusion Action Plan have been implemented over the last 12 months based on the availability of resources and plan priorities. A report will be prepared for the Minister providing details of specific actions for 2021/22. The 2022-2026 Disability Inclusion Action Plan was adopted in June 2022. and can be viewed on [Council's website](#).

## Compliance with the Carers (Recognition) Act 2010

Dorrigo Support Centre's Policies and Procedures recognises and acknowledges the valued role of carers and their diverse needs which takes into consideration culture, age, disability, religion, socio-economic status, gender identity and sexual orientation.

Through our assessment, planning, delivery, and review of services, we acknowledge the importance of consultation with carers to ascertain the model of service delivery; the participants goals and/or aspirations; health requirements and community engagement.

The carers participation in the review process in line with the Service Plan, is paramount in providing effective support for the people they care for, and/or providing the information and referral pathway that will enable them to make informed choices on services required.

## Recovery & Threat Abatement Plans

Council was not identified in any Recovery & Threat Abatement Plan by the Department of Industry, Skills and Regional Development during this period.



WE ARE THE  
SPIRIT OF THE  
PLATEAU, THE  
ANCIENT MYSTERY  
OF THE *DORRIGO*  
AND WHERE OUR  
GREAT RIVER  
RUSHES TO MEET  
THE *PACIFIC*.



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