



**BELLINGEN  
SHIRE COUNCIL**

**Annual Report  
2023-2024**

---

# 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.



# Contents

## INTRODUCTION

Executive Summary	6
Our Community Vision	8
The Annual Report in Context	10
Structure of the Annual Report	11
About Our Shire	12
Your Council	13
Operating Principles	14
Community Infrastructure We Manage	15

## A. REPORTING ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Highlights	16
The Year in Numbers	20
Report Against Indicators	22
Resilient Economy	30
Community Wellbeing	32
Places For People	34
Our Living Environment	36
Civic Leadership	38

## B. STATUTORY & OTHER INFORMATION

Community Engagement Activities (Refer to Part A - Report Against Indicators)	27
Special Variations in General Income	42
Program of Service Reviews	43
Environmental Levy Projects	44
Overseas Visits	45
Elected Members' Expenses	45
Mayor and Councillor Fees	45
Councillor Support and Expenses	45
Works Subsidised on Private Land	45
Modern Slavery Act 2018	46
Legal Proceedings	46
Major Contracts (Greater than \$150,000) Awarded	47
Donations and Contributions	49
Developer Contributions	49
Particulars of Any Environmental Upgrade Agreement Entered Into	52
Report on Capital Works Projects	52
General Manager and Senior Staff Remuneration	52
Functions Delegated by Council	53
Corporations, Partnerships, Joint Ventures or Other Bodies in which Council Held a Controlling Interest	54
Corporations, Partnerships, Joint Ventures or Other Bodies in Which the Council Participated	54
Stormwater Management Services	54
Coastal Protection Services	54
Implementation of Workplace Strategy and Equal Opportunity Employment	55
Workplace Health and Safety	56
Labour Statistics as at the Relevant Day	58
Mayor or Councillor Training	58
Rates and Charges Written Off	59
Companion Animals Act - Compliance	60
Private Swimming Pool inspections	62
Planning Agreements	63
Public's Right to Access Government Information	66
Recovery & Threat Abatement Plans	71
Public Interest Disclosures Reporting	72
Implementation of Disability Inclusion Action Plan	73
Compliance with the Carers (Recognition) Act 2010	73

## C. FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Seperate Attachment	
---------------------	--



GARGAL, BINDARRAY, JULUUM, WALUUR  
BELLINGEN  
SHIRE COUNCIL  
OCEAN, RIVER, MOUNTAIN, VALLEY

---

# Message from the Mayor & General Manager

As we near the conclusion of the current Delivery Program, we are both honoured to continue in our roles as the Mayor and General Manager of Bellinghen Shire. Our journey together has been marked by progress, commitment, and a collective vision for our vibrant, diverse, and engaged community.

This Annual Report highlights the ongoing efforts of the Bellinghen Shire Council in delivering the works and programs outlined in our Delivery Program. It reflects our dedication to continuous improvement and our strong alignment with the needs of our community. Our shared focus remains on fulfilling our commitments, ensuring that our natural environment, which is so cherished by both residents and visitors, is protected, healthy, and sustained for generations to come.

In the past year, we have seen significant progress, particularly through our ambitious Capital Works Program. The implementation of a \$28.3 million program, one of the largest in our Shire's history, has led to substantial upgrades to roads, bridges, and parks. These improvements are designed to enhance infrastructure and support the well-being of our community. We would like to express our gratitude to the operational staff for their dedication and hard work, ensuring these projects are delivered efficiently with minimal disruption to our residents.

We are also proud to announce that the Bellinghen Shire has been recognised as a leader in sustainable tourism. Our commitment to global sustainability standards was recognised when we achieved the prestigious ECO Destination Certification through Ecotourism Australia. This achievement places Bellinghen Shire among an exclusive group of Australian destinations that prioritise sustainability.

Our relationship with local businesses also grew stronger this year, exemplified by the successful Mayoral Business Forum event. This important occasion allowed for valuable dialogue and collaboration between the Council, local businesses, and industry leaders, all united in the goal of driving sustainable growth in our region. It reinforced our commitment to creating a business-friendly environment that supports local enterprises.

Community development has also taken a significant step forward with the official opening of the Connell Park Netball Courts. This new facility, part of the broader Connell Park redevelopment plan, provides a multi-sport space for netball, basketball, and handball. It promises to enhance community health, inclusivity, and well-being, and there are more exciting upgrades to come.

Additionally, we have made great strides with the Dorrigo Community Hall and Library extension upgrade, a joint initiative with the NSW Government. This project aims to improve communal spaces in Dorrigo, fostering greater connectivity and engagement within the local community.

On the advocacy front, we have continued to strengthen relationships with key state ministers, including the Hon. Jenny Aitchison MP and Hon. Stephen Kamper MP. These engagements are crucial for ensuring our community's needs are heard and addressed at the state level, particularly in relation to infrastructure and support for local businesses.



Steve Allan  
Mayor



Mark Griffioen  
General Manager



---

# 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.



50

Median  
Age





# Our Community Snapshot



**13,253**  
Population

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

**6.3%**  
People Living With Disability

**22%**  
Aged 19 Years & Younger

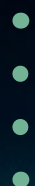
**26.9%**  
Aged 65 & Over



**31.4%**  
Households have children

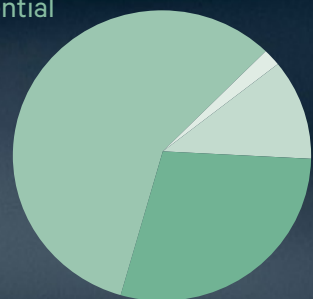
**70%**  
Own or are purchasing their home

**295,000**  
Annual Visitors



## Land Use

- Primary Production
- Parkland
- Residential
- Other



Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data 2021.

# 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](#)

---

## 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.

---

## 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 Bellingin Shire is currently home to 13,231 people (ABS Estimated Resident Population 2023), 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, Bellingin nestled in the river valley, and Dorrigo on the plateau. Each is a vibrant and rich community with its own characteristics.

Bellingin 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 295,000 visitors coming to our Shire last year spending a total of \$114 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.

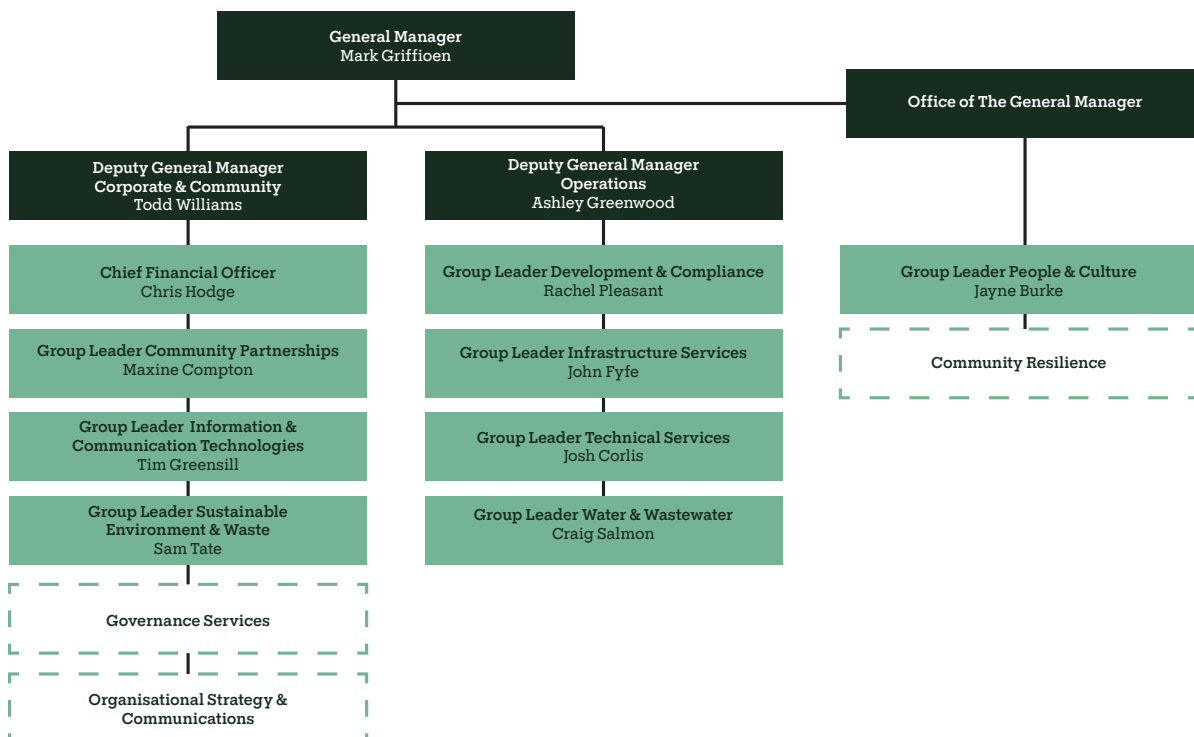
The elected Council comprises 7 councillors who represent the entire Local Government Area. The Mayor is elected by popular vote once every four years and the Deputy Mayor is nominated and elected by fellow Councillors.



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, Mark Griffioen. Together with senior leadership they ensure effective and efficient operation of the organisation.

The below diagram sets out the senior leadership structure for the Council as at 30 June 2024.



# 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



32km Shared Paths



3 Waste Management Centres



11 Reservoirs

# Community Infrastructure We Manage

## Community Facilities



## Transport



## Services



---

# Highlights

In 2023/24 There Were:



**73%**

Waste Diverted From Landfill



**\$2.72M**

Grant funding successfully secured



**15,935**

Phone Calls And Counter Enquiries Answered



**71,290**

Library Items Borrowed



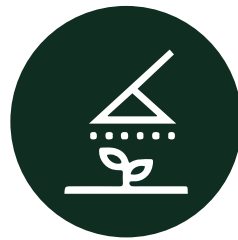
**81,903**

Library Visitors



**735.6k**

Social Media Reach



**766**

Invasive Plant Inspections



**29,724**

Swimming Pool Visitors



**156**

Active Volunteers Involved in Council Programs



**429**

Bookings at Memorial Hall



**100%**

Annual Road Maintenance Program Completed



**1,124**

Response to Engagement Surveys



In 2023/24 Council delivered a \$28.3 Million capital program including:



**\$5.5M**

Bridges



**\$13M**

Roads And Footpaths



**\$1.9M**

Community Facilities  
Town Improvements  
Sport And Recreation



**\$7.9M**

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

## Resilient Economy

- A ribbon-cutting event marked the completion of major upgrades to Bellingen Memorial Hall, attended by Mayor Cr Steve Allan and Governor of New South Wales Her Excellency Margaret Beazley AC KC, enhancing the hall's role as a modern cultural hub.
- Recognition of local tourism excellence, with Reflections Holiday Park - Urunga receiving a bronze award and Rebecca Beaton awarded gold as Outstanding Tourism Business Leader.
- Council adopted a comprehensive plan focused on sustainable economic growth, infrastructure development, and supporting agribusiness, arts, and cultural sectors.
- The Visitor Information space in Urunga was transformed to showcase local artisans, leading to the permanent stocking of local products at the Waterfall Way Visitor Information Centre.
- A holiday season initiative promoting shopping within the Shire through targeted advertising, gift card promotions, support for local markets, and showcasing local products at the Visitor Information Centre.
- Bellingen Shire achieved the esteemed ECO Destination Certification from Ecotourism Australia, joining a select group of sustainable tourism destinations across Australia.
- Launch of a new film festival offering a diverse program of screenings, celebrating Bellingen Memorial Hall's cinema legacy and enriching local cultural experiences.
- Unveiling of a portrait of renowned pianist David Helfgott by artist Cherry Hood, with Helfgott in attendance, enhancing the Hall's cultural heritage.
- Council-hosted workshops in Bellingen and Dorrigo, equipping nearly 100 local businesses, community groups, and not-for-profits with essential funding application skills.

## Community Wellbeing

- Awarded \$50,000 in community grants to local projects, including the Bellingen Readers and Writers Festival and Gumbaynggirr Wenonah Head Aboriginal Corporation.
- Celebrated NAIDOC Week with cultural gatherings and interactive programs to promote First Nations culture.
- Created a public artwork with the community during Reconciliation Week to symbolise our reconciliation journey.
- Recognised local heroes in the Bellingen Shire Community Awards, with a citizenship ceremony and program led by guest speaker Sue Maddox.
- Hosted a Seniors Week event with music, talks on sustainability, and support resources for seniors' well-being.

- Co-hosted the Disability Inclusive Emergency Planning (DIEP) Forum to enhance emergency resilience for vulnerable community members.
- Held Dementia Awareness Week events to provide education and support resources on dementia's impact.
- Supported a Mental Health Awareness Walk to reduce stigma and unite the community.
- Installed Auslan signs in three parks to promote accessibility and inclusivity.
- Organised Gleniffer Gathers to strengthen community bonds and disaster resilience.
- Hosted Community Stalls Day at Maam Gaduying Park, providing essential services and support resources for residents.

## Places For People

- The Connell Park Play Space upgrade enhanced safety and accessibility with new play elements, compliant equipment, and a fenced area.
- Through the Fixing Country Bridges initiative, 21 of 31 bridge replacements have now been completed, enhancing rural connectivity. The following 11 key bridges were successfully completed - Weicks, Crossmaglen, Sunny Corner, Pine Creek No. 1, Kalang River, Slarkes Culvert, and Spricketts Creek in 2023, as well as Slarkes Road, Johnsens, Youngs, and Bielsdown bridges in 2024.
- Road upgrades included improvements on Gleniffer Road, Slarkes Culvert Rehabilitation, Hillside Drive Retaining Wall, and Billings Road. Heavy patching and resealing for the 2023/24 period was also completed.
- Community amenities upgrades included a new perimeter fence, wet decks, filtration improvements, and electrical upgrades at the Bellingen Swim Centre. A water standpipe was also installed for the Repton Rural Fire Service to speed up emergency tanker filling. The Bellingen Neighbourhood Centre veranda was renovated with durable Ekodeck decking, structural repairs, and an accessible ramp, funded by the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program and Council's maintenance budget.
- Infrastructure improvements included a 2-meter-wide footpath on William Street with a 4-meter school crossing, ramps, pedestrian islands, and drainage. Waterfall Way, connecting Bellingen to Boggy Creek, received a \$5 million upgrade to its pavement, drainage, and safety.
- The Dorrigo Community Centre and Library Extension project, funded by the NSW Government and Council, will expand and refurbish the facilities to provide modern, accessible spaces for community and library services.

## Our Living Environment

- The Integrated Water Cycle Management Plan (IWCM) Issue Paper was completed, confirming Bellingen's secure aquifer yield and storage capacity. Council secured \$634,000 for monitoring bores and a backup well.
- A Regional Review with Nambucca Valley Council was completed, and a project was launched with the Mid North Coast Joint Organisation to align with the NSW Waste Strategy 2041.
- The Lower Bellingen and Kalang Rivers Floodplain Risk Management Plan was adopted to guide flood-prone area development, considering climate change. Bellingen Riverwatch, Australia's largest citizen science program, won two awards with support from the Council's Environment Levy.
- Bat boxes were installed on bridges as part of the Fixing Country Bridges Program to provide habitat for bats.
- A trial program for recycling medicine blister packs was launched with local pharmacies, receiving positive community feedback.
- Council continued participation in the NSW Government's Beachwatch program, providing water quality updates and real-time alerts.
- "Fix It" Workshops at The Bowerhouse engaged the community in sustainable repairs, promoting waste reduction.
- The Sewering Coastal Villages Project received confirmation of over \$11 million in funding, with construction at the Urunga Sewerage Treatment Plant beginning in May 2024.
- The Zero Waste Tableware Library was introduced, offering sustainable alternatives to single-use plastics for community events.
- Council supported the Bellingen/Nambucca Sustainable Schools Network, fostering environmental sustainability in schools.
- The Bellingen Spring Plant Fair focused on invasive species management, supported by the Invasive Plants Officer and funding from Local Land Services.
- The Return and Earn facility was relocated, with over 9.8 million containers recycled to maintain a greener environment.
- Flying Fox Research continued at Bellingen Island, including population counts and vegetation monitoring to aid conservation efforts.

## Civic Leadership

- Councillors were inducted, taking an Oath of Office during an official ceremony, followed by workshops and training to inform their roles and responsibilities as part of their professional development.
- ShireSpeaks Sessions were held across the Shire, providing a platform for open communication between the community, Councillors, and senior Council leadership, allowing residents to voice concerns and offer feedback.
- The Community Awards event at Bellingen Memorial Hall recognised outstanding community contributions, with Mayor Cr Steve Allan acknowledging recipients and conducting a Citizenship ceremony for new Australians.
- Community surveys were conducted to inform the update of the Integrated Water Cycle Management Plan, aimed at strengthening water security and resilience in the Shire for future sustainability.
- The Council continued to strengthen community engagement, receiving 1,124 responses from various surveys, ensuring the voices of residents helped shape key decisions and future projects.
- The Community Resilience Grants program progressed, enhancing disaster response capabilities, with Local Disaster Plans developed for communities like Kalang, Megan, Darkwood, and Gleniffer. First Aid and CPR training was offered in various areas, equipping 34 community members with essential skills.
- Mark Griffioen was appointed General Manager
- Mayor Cr Steve Allan, GM Mark Griffioen, and Michael Kemp MP met with ministers such as Hon. Jenny Aitchison MP, Hon. Stephen Kamper MP, and Hon. Rose Jackson MP to discuss regional infrastructure projects, including housing, roads, and community services.
- Cr Ellie Tree was elected as the youngest Deputy Mayor in Bellingen Shire's history, advocating for greater inclusivity in decision-making and focusing on issues affecting youth and families.
- Commencement of a draft Indigenous Engagement Policy formalising Council's approach to engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, ensuring culturally respectful practices and fostering stronger relationships.
- Council has engaged CATALYSE to conduct the MARKYT Community Scorecard, providing independent community feedback on local issues to benchmark performance, guide strategic planning, and identify improvement areas.

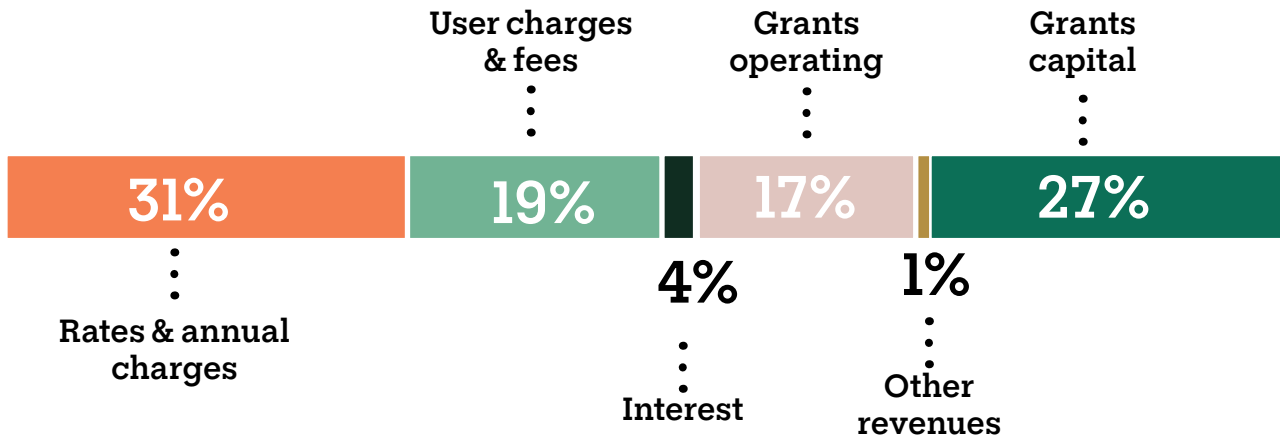
---

# 2023/24 In Numbers

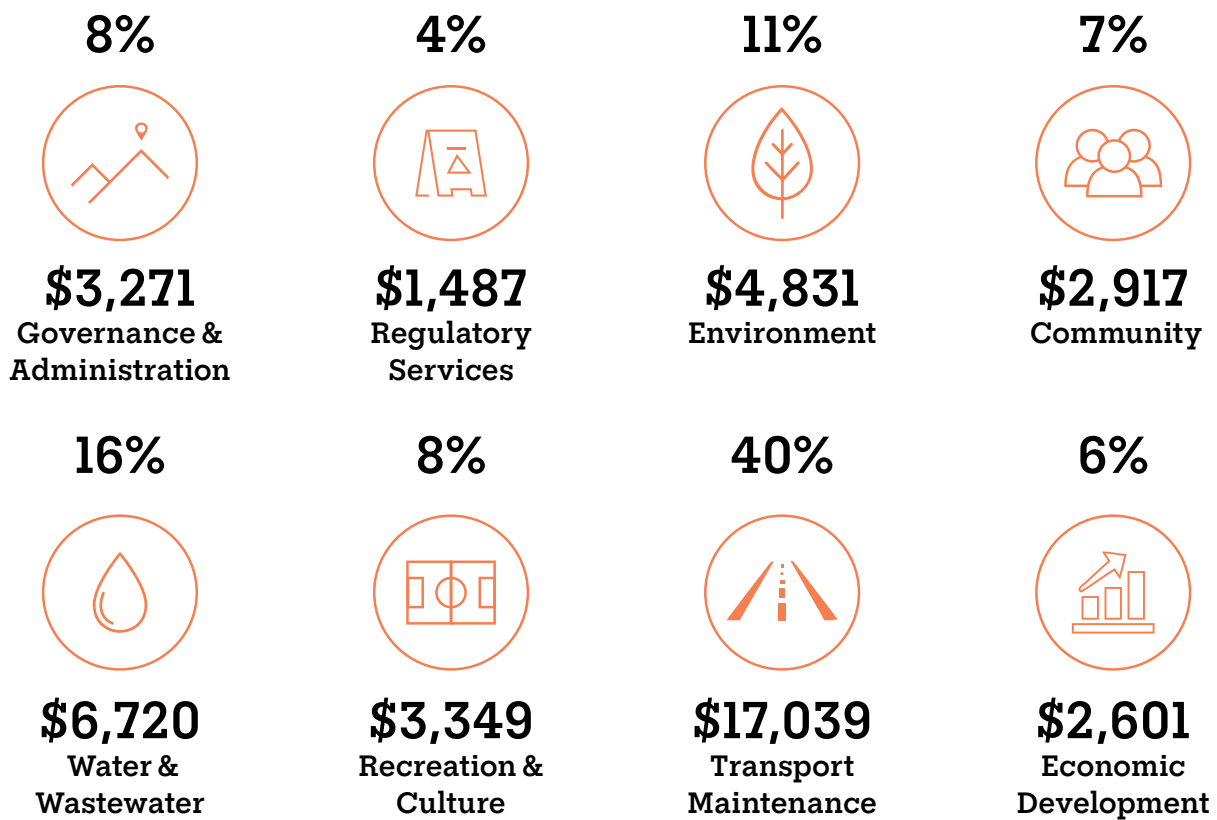


B  
S  
C

Council raised \$ 59.7 million from various sources



Council spent \$ 42.2 million on maintaining and renewing assets and providing services. (\$ thousands)





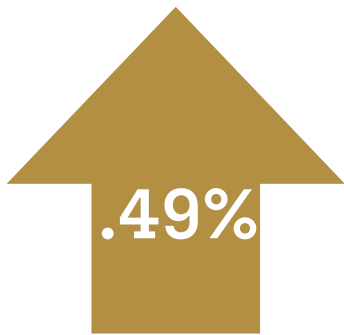
# Report Against Indicators

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

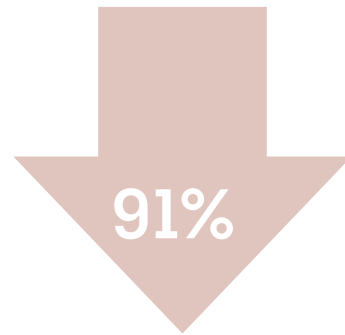
This section shows some key trends in Bellingen Shire and Council operations.



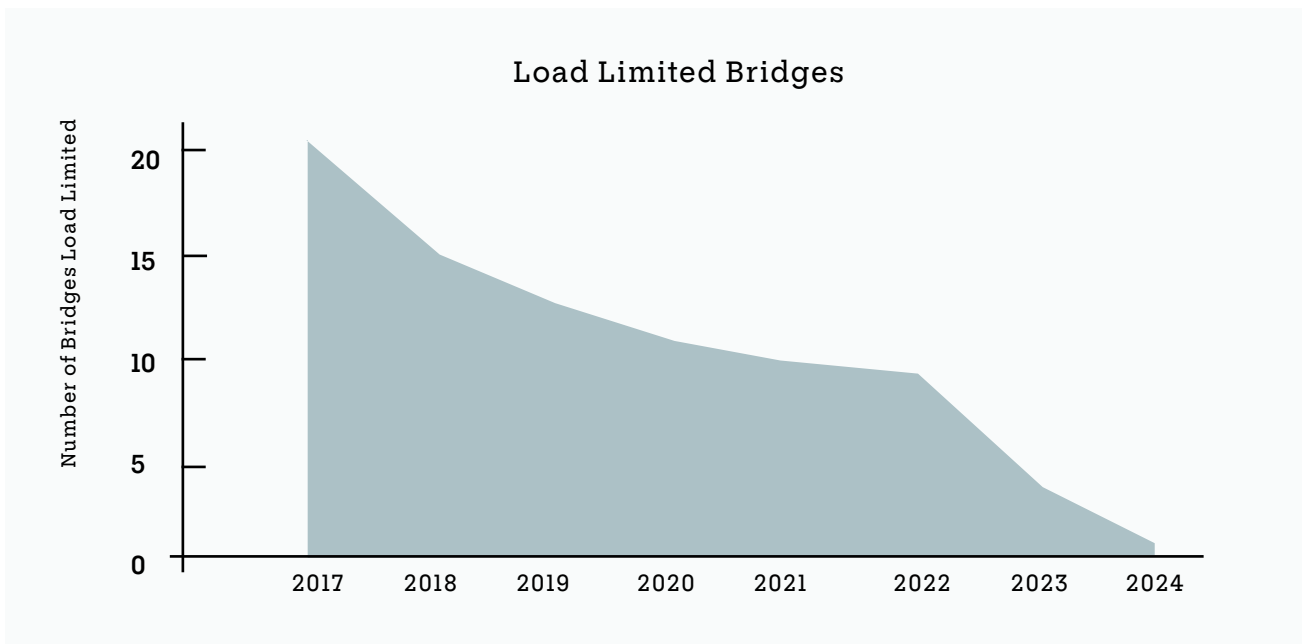
The Estimated Population of Bellingen Shire is 13,262 showing an increase by 0.49% from 13,197



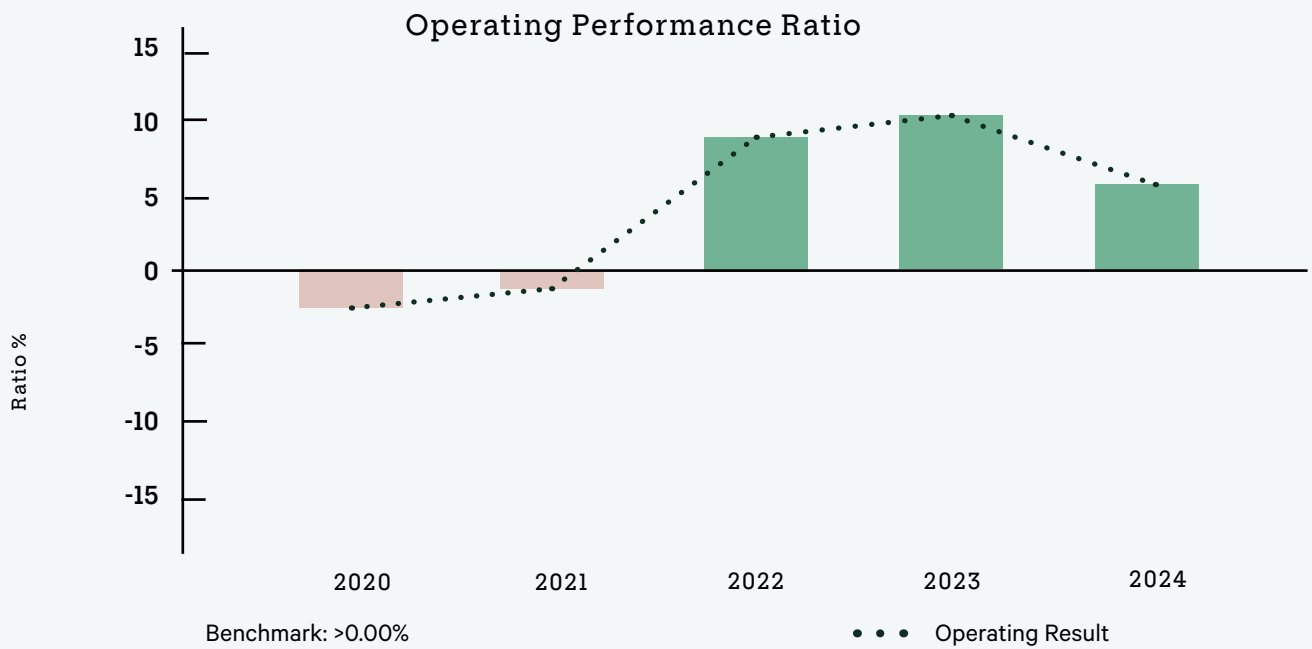
Bellingen Shire is Eco Certified to ensure the long-term sustainability of our beautiful shire.



91% reduction of load limited bridges across the Shire since 2021/22 reducing the number to 1.

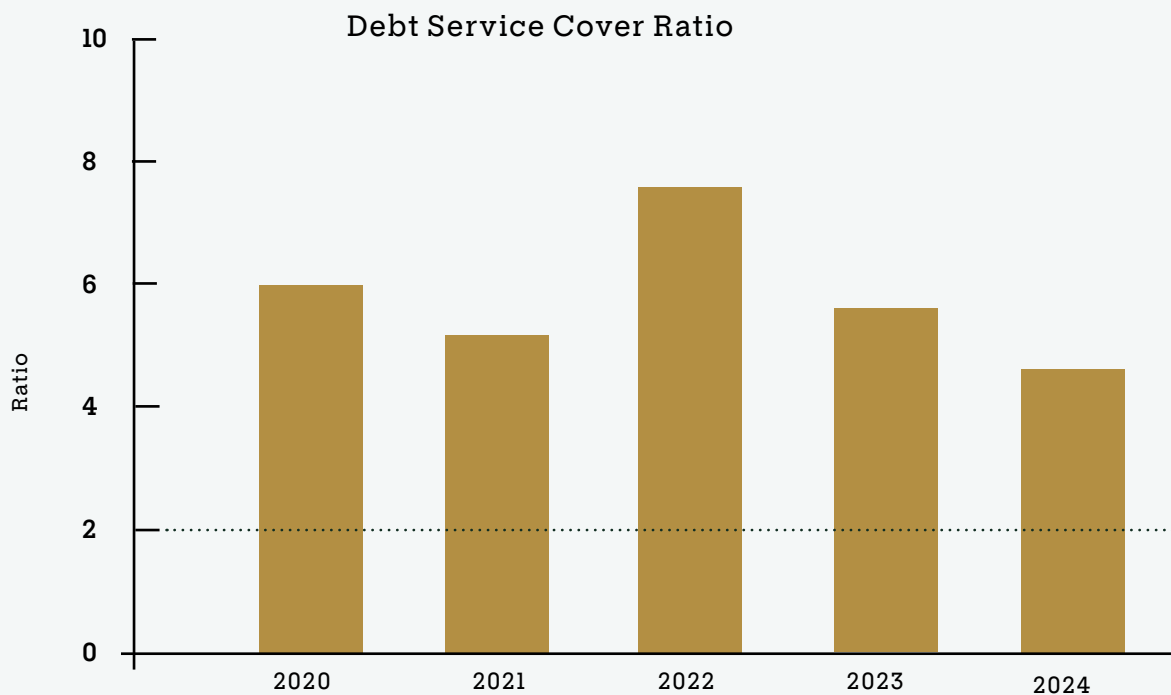


Council has conducted a detailed assessment of its 85-timber bridges, 22 of which were originally subject to load limits however at the end of 2023/24 financial year, only 1 of these bridges remained load limited.



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

2023/24 ratio: 5.61%  
Councils operating performance ratio result represents a reduction from the previous financial year. It is expected that this ratio will continue to fluctuate in coming years as a result of revenue recognition timing differences.



Benchmark ..... Minimum >=2.00

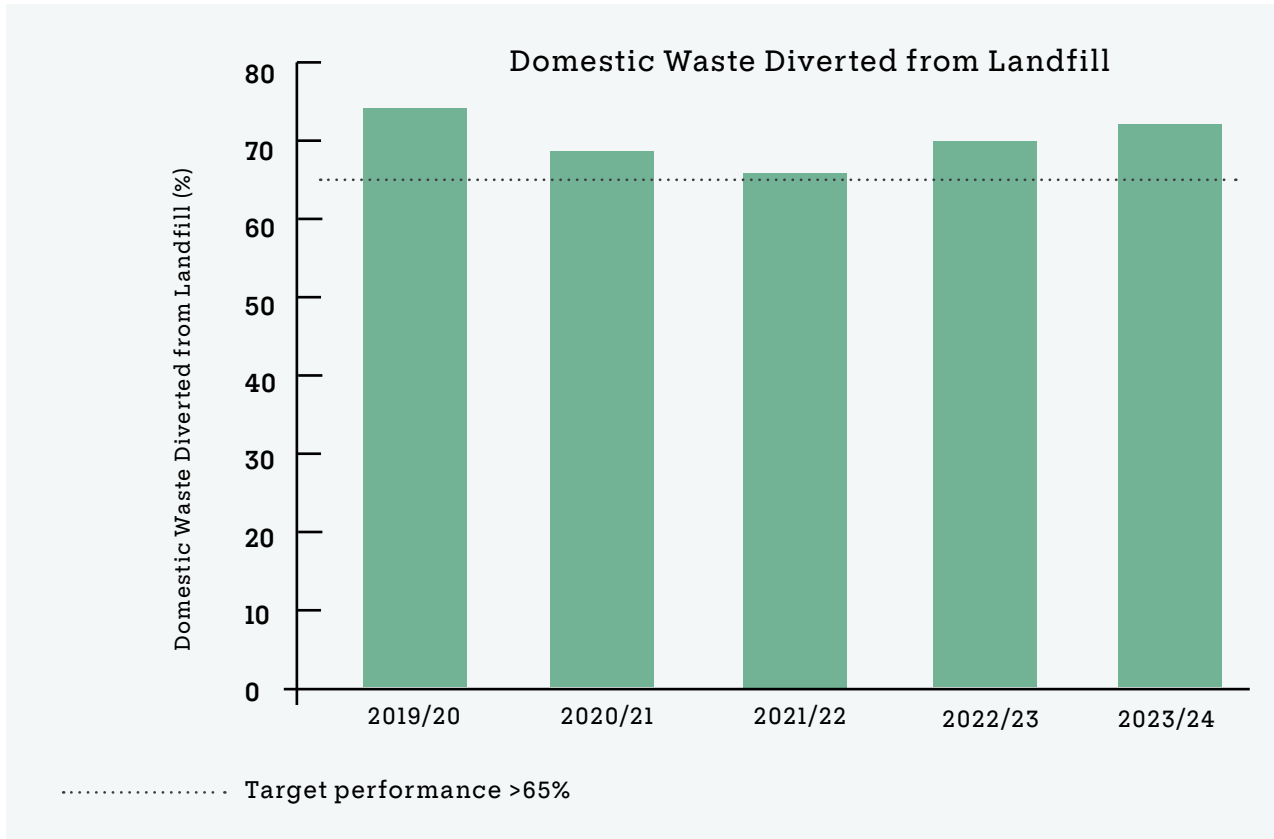
Source: Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting.

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

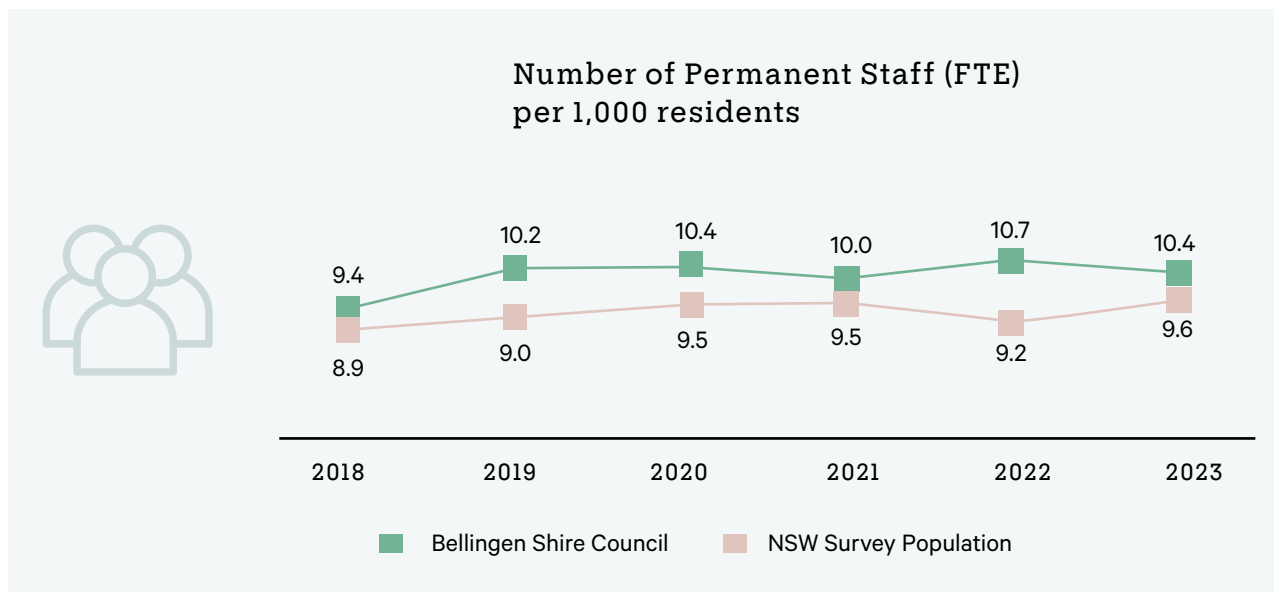
2023/24 ratio: 4.33x  
This indicator emphasises that Council's defined Operating Result maintains the capacity to meet its annual debt requirements. The 2023/24 result exceeds the industry benchmark of 2.0x, indicating sufficient operating cash to service its debts.



# Waste

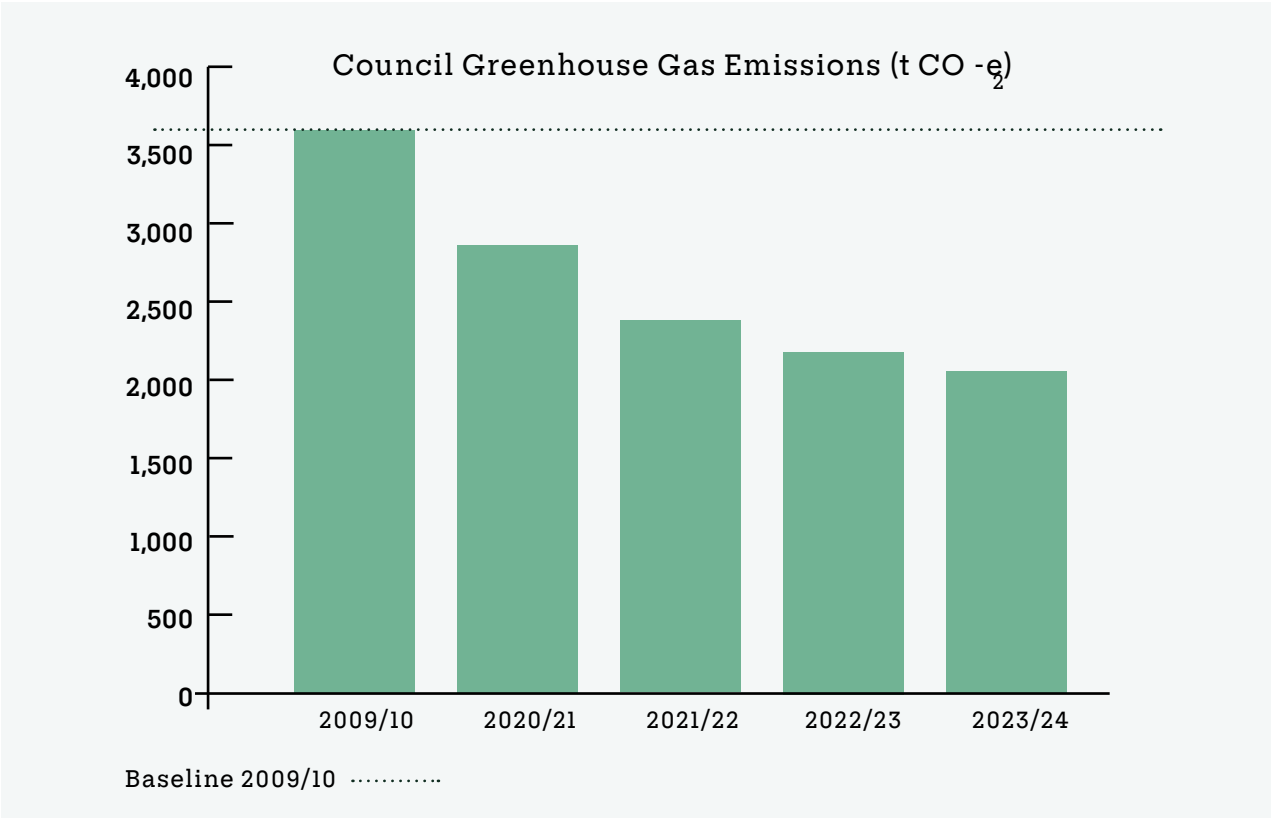


Domestic waste diversion from landfill continues to increase and currently exceeds the state average by 8%.



Data drawn from the PWC Australasian Local Government Performance Excellence Program Report 2023.

# Carbon Emissions



As can be seen in the chart, in the 2023/24 financial year Council achieved a 43.6% reduction in emissions from the 2009/10 baseline. This is just 1.4% short of Council's target of a 45% emissions reduction by 2030.

# Corporate Carbon Plan



100% renewable energy by 2030

Significant progress has been made in advancing the Corporate Carbon Plan, alongside Council's involvement in a Power Purchase Agreement with 13 regional councils in New South Wales. The agreement will secure 100% renewable energy for 163 of Council's major sites.



Zero net emissions by 2040

Council has advanced toward its 2040 net zero targets by retrofitting lighting systems and various solar installations, achieving a 43.6% emissions reduction for 2023/24 compared to 2009/10 baseline levels. At this rate, the Council is on track to exceed its 45% reduction target by 2030.

# Community Engagement

Community engagement is a top priority for both our local community and the Council. It's vital for how the Council operates, ensuring that our community are aware of, and have the opportunity to provide input into the programs and services that affect them.

Community engagement means we listen to what the community wants and needs, and this helps us make decisions. It's not about everyone agreeing; it's about being fair, transparent, and involving the right people when needed.

We value our community's input and actively ask for ideas, feedback, and concerns to make informed decisions that benefit everyone.

We follow a public participation model developed by the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2). For every Council project, we identify stakeholders and use different methods to involve them. We have an online portal for people to share their thoughts on projects that affect them or interest them.

You can find more information about our engagement activities and projects at [Bellingen.nsw.gov.au/Have-Your-Say](https://Bellingen.nsw.gov.au/Have-Your-Say).

Council has commissioned CATALYSE to conduct an independent MARKYT Community Scorecard in July 2024. This Scorecard is designed to gather in-depth feedback from the community on various local issues, facilities, and services, providing valuable insights into how well the Council is meeting community needs and identifying areas for improvement. The results will be benchmarked against other local governments, offering a clear perspective on the Council's performance within a broader context, and will serve as a tool to track progress and guide future priorities for the Shire.

Importantly, Council has invested strongly in its social media program this year to share information and updates, reaching a wide audience. In 2023/24, Council's social media accounts reached 735.6k people and through our Have Your Say portal, 1,124 people participated in 68 surveys.

Follow us on



@BELLINGENSHIRECOUNCIL

Like us on



facebook

@BELLOSHIRECOUNCIL

Have  
Your Say



1,124

Participated in  
surveys



## FIND OUT MORE

Read the detailed progress reports  
against the 2023/24 Operational Plan.



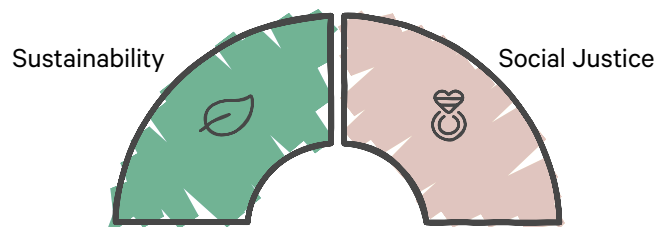
# Reporting On Achievements

## 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 Principle



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



Everyone in our community is valued, involved and supported

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

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



We have a diversity of beautiful spaces and the facilities and services needed to 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 clean water which is protected and used sustainably

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

We work together to protect and enhance our biodiversity and natural environment



Council is well governed, future focused and responsible in its service delivery.

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

Council is proactive in representing the needs of our community



The Bellingen Shire is a place filled with vibrant businesses and our community has access to meaningful work. Our farming sector remains local and is sustainable, and provides our community with healthy and fresh food. We have balanced, sustainable tourism that attracts visitors that reflect our values and protects our natural assets.

## Our Performance

for the last 12 months



Grant funding per head

**\$100**

(Based on population of 13,231)



Visitors to the Shire

**295,000**

down  
**12%**



up  
**15%**

**60%**

Grant applications successful



up  
**34%**

Total expenditure from Tourism

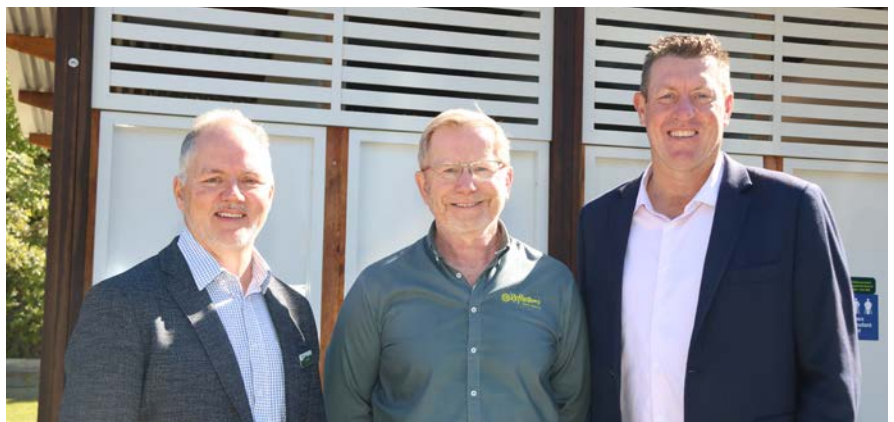
**\$114M**



Gross regional product

**\$584M**

up  
**12%**



Read the detailed progress reports against the 2023/24 Operational Plan.

**FIND OUT MORE**





“The Bellingen Shire actively acknowledges our Gumbaynggirr culture and heritage, valuing and honouring the community’s rich connection to place. Everyone in our community is involved and supported and we are connected, safe and resilient with a strong sense of community.”

## Our Performance

for the last 12 months

**209**

people accessing the Dorrigo Support Service  
experience improvement in social wellbeing

up  
**7%**

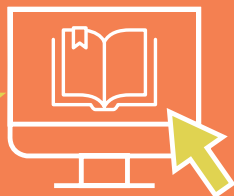
**29,724**

Swim centres visitors

up  
**10%**

Library loans

down  
**6%**



**71,290**

Library visitors

**81,903**



down  
**10%**

*\*Due to Dorrigo Library Refurbishment Project.*



active volunteers in council programs

**153**

down  
**6%**

Engagement @ Youth Hub

**2,371** participants in programs





Read the detailed progress reports against the 2023/24 Operational Plan.

**FIND OUT MORE**





"The Bellingen Shire has a diversity of beautiful spaces and the facilities and services needed to foster community happiness and wellbeing. We are connected and able to move around in a safe, accessible, affordable, healthy and environmentally friendly way, and have a mixture of affordable sustainable housing options for all in our community."

## Our Performance

Total length of footpaths & cycleways for the last 12 months

**7.5km**

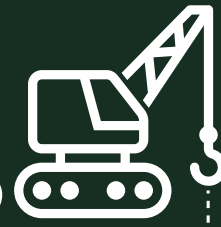


Established since 2017



1.3km delivered in 2023/24

**13**



Bridge Replacements



**1** Load limited Bridge



reduced by **91%** since 2017



**46**

up **142%**

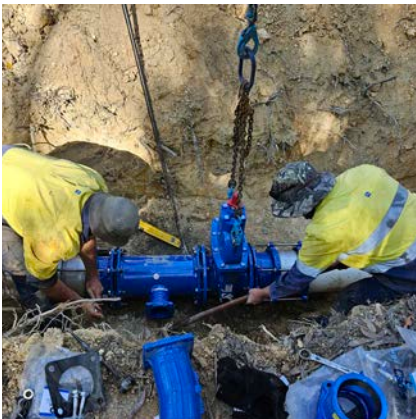
accessibility improvements to facilities and infrastructure

**146%** above



Building and infrastructure renewals ratio

\*benchmark 100%



Read the detailed progress reports against the 2023/24 Operational Plan.

**FIND OUT MORE**





"The Bellingen Shire has clean water which is protected. We live sustainably, reduce our ecological footprint and contribution to climate change as we work together to protect and enhance our biodiversity and natural environment."

## Our Performance

for the last 12 months

Waste diverted from landfill

**73%**



up **4%**

Water consumption

**1,092**

Megalitres



up **4%**

Council's emissions in tonnes

**2,054**



down **44%**  
Since 2010

up **13%**

**766**

Invasive weed inspections carried out



**100%**

Compliance on water drinking quality tests



**0%**

Missed garbage collections



Read the detailed progress reports against the 2023/24 Operational Plan.

**FIND OUT MORE**





"The Bellingen Shire is a community that is informed and engaged with a strong sense of civic leadership. The Council is well governed, future focused and responsible in its service delivery and proactive in representing the needs of our community."

## Our Performance

for the last 12 months

**101** Number of days median net time for development approvals  
 down **34%**

**429** Bookings @ Memorial Hall

**37** Number of animals impounded

up **48%**

Responses to engagement surveys  
**1,124**

**212** GIPA Act applications received



**15,935** Calls & Counter Enquiries Answered



Social media reach

up **40%**



**584k**



**10.2k**



**122.8k**



**18.2k**



**Disaster Communications Plan**  
Bellingen Shire Council



Read the detailed progress reports against the 2023/24 Operational Plan.

**FIND OUT MORE**







# Statutory and Other Information

Annual reports are one of the key points of accountability between a council and its community. The 2023/24 annual report focuses on our Delivery Program and Operational Plan and outlines Our Bellingen Shire Community Vision 2035 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 \$0.69M in additional revenue in 2023/24 and is estimated to generate an additional \$8.1M 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 \$0.69M generated by the SRV in 2023/24 were spent in the following way:

- Repayment of loan \$0.54M (subsidised by an interest rate subsidy under the Local Government Infrastructure Renewals Scheme)
- Roads maintenance expenditure \$0.15M

All expenditure in 2023/24 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 2022/23 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 \$1.3M in additional revenue in 2023/24, expecting to generate an additional \$14.7M over the next 10 years. The increase is partially funding Council's capital works renewal program to address the transport infrastructure backlog. The \$1.3M SRV funds were expended on the following Infrastructure programs:

- Road resealing/heavy patching program in 2024 \$1M
- Bridge Renewal Program 2024 \$0.3M

All expenditure in 2023/24 was made in accordance with the approved SRV application and Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal Determination.

## Special Rate Variation 2023/24 – 2026/27

In June 2023, the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal Determination approved a cumulative 31.06% special variation over a period of 4 years. The first year of the progressive variations was implemented during 2024, increasing rates by 8%. The first year of the SRV generated an additional \$323K above the rate peg. As per the SRV application, funds were used to offset increases in operational costs as a result of inflationary pressures impacting service costs across Council.

In addition to implementing the approved SRV, Council continued to implement various programs to contain costs and improve financial sustainability. Including:

- Continued to identify opportunities for increasing fees and charges and sourcing new revenue streams to increase operating revenue, including a detailed benchmarking exercise of building and regulatory fees and charges.
- Continued to review all budgets for individual services (strategic cost review) with the intent of containing costs and improving operational efficiency. One such measure introduced has resulted in a reduction in Workers Compensation premiums of \$263K, representing a 0.6% decrease in operating costs.
- Budgetary controls have also been enhanced to provide further control over employee headcount and staff management to contain employee costs.
- Council will be introducing a cash management reconciliation process for all internal and external restrictions during the 2024/25 financial year.

All expenditure in 2023/24 was made in accordance with the approved SRV application and Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal Determination.

## Program of Service Reviews

Service reviews are a vital process that Bellingden Shire Council uses to ensure that services and facilities meet community needs and wants. The program of service reviews allows Council to better respond to changing customer priorities and needs, determine the right mix of services and align services with the Community Vision, define statutory and non-statutory services while considering the potential for service divestment, generate financial savings, and review and optimise service levels while enhancing staff capacity and skills.

During the reporting period Council undertook the following Service Reviews:

- Review of Dorrigo Support Service – for the introduction of Brokerage programs
- Review of Information & Communication Technology
- Review of Governance Services
- Review of Disaster Communications

## Environmental Levy Projects 2023/24

### Introduction

The funds are accrued as a special variation of 4% to General Income for expenditure on environmental projects. The variation was approved, in an ongoing capacity, by the Minister for Local Government in 2005.

The Environment Levy supports the implementation of projects to achieve the strategic directions, outcomes and aspirations outlined in Council's Community Vision 2035.

The key focus areas include:

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

The projects portfolio valued at \$362,400 utilised the 2023/24 Environmental Levy to the value of \$271,808. Additional grant revenue of approximately \$90,592 was also secured.

### Summary

PROJECT	FUNDING
Environmental Levy Community Fund	\$25,000
River & Biodiversity Officer	\$50,000
Weeds Action Program (co-contribution Local Land Services grant)	\$15,000
Sustainability and Climate Change Projects	\$30,308
Community Education/Events	\$7,000
Past project maintenance	\$26,000
Landcare contributions	\$26,000
Coastal Management Plan (1:2 grant co-contributions DPE)	\$31,000
Riverwatch partnership	\$12,000
Water Quality Management Plan - delivery	\$22,000
Biodiversity Strategy	\$27,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$271,808</b>

## Overseas Visits

There were no overseas visits undertaken by Councillors, Council Staff or other persons representing the Council during the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024.

## Elected Members' Expenses

### Mayor and Councillor Fees

The total fees paid to the Mayor and Councillors in 2023/24 was \$179,470

### Councillor Support and Expenses

EXPENSES	2022/23	2023/24 \$
Councillor support and provision of facilities (including provision of dedicated office equipment allocated to councillors and telephone calls made by councillors)	13,312	9,470
Attendance at conferences and seminars	17,398	29,080
Training of councillors and provision of skill development	5,060	5,029
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	-	1,268
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	128,223	179,470
Motor Vehicle Allowances	1,987	777
Mayoral vehicle operational costs and depreciation	9,374	5,024
Insurance costs for Councillors and Officers liability	43,403	46,658
<b>Total costs for the year</b>	<b>218,758</b>	<b>276,777</b>

## Works Subsidised on Private Land

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

## 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

Council has taken reasonable steps to ensure that goods and services procured by and for the council during the FY23/24 were not the product of Modern Slavery. The actions and future initiatives Bellingen Shire Council have undertaken towards this are outlined in Councils Modern Slavery Statement.

This statement outlines Bellingen Shire Council's commitment to combatting modern slavery and the measures we have implement during this reporting period to reduce the risk of our procurement activities resulting in or contributing to human rights violations.

We recognise the importance of taking steps to ensure that goods and services procured by and for our council are not the product of modern slavery.

Our supply chain includes a vast range of suppliers, contractors and partners to provide the goods and services required for the region. The key projects Bellingen Shire Council undertook for FY23/24 included;

- Bridge Renewals
- Natural disaster restorations
- Martells Road Rehabilitation
- Gleniffer Road Rehabilitation
- Connell Park and amenities
- Urunga Sewerage Treatment Plant

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 2023/24 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

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

GOODS OR SERVICES	SUPPLIERS	TOTAL CONTRACT VALUE (INC GST)
		<i>NOTE: THIS VALUE INCLUDES ANY VARIATION PURCHASE ORDERS</i>
Harness Cask Bridge - Design and Supply of Superstructure	Coastal Works	\$356,000
Relining of the Bellingen pool and associated tiling works and upgrade of the sand filter	Plantation Pools and Spas	\$177,522
Hillside Drive Retaining Wall - Construct Only	Coastal Works	\$558,063
Road base material for South Arm Road	The Bayrange Pty Ltd for Jungs Quarry Only	\$264,369
Design and Construct - Joyces Bridge Replacement	Coastal Works	\$2,072,549
YNSW Bellingen and Dorrigo pool yearly contribution	YMCA	\$478,305
Annual Service Agreement Contribution for Bellingen Youth Hub management and service delivery	Neighbourhood Centres of Bellingen Shire Inc	\$204,140
Stormwater Assets Assessment	Stantec Australia Pty Ltd	\$295,999
South Arm Road - Spray Seal Works	Boral Construction Materials Group Ltd	\$166,870
Traffic Control Service ( Road Rehabilitation)	Newada Pty Ltd T/as Men And Women At Work	\$460,000
Reflections Holiday Parks (paying agent for grant funding facilitation)	Reflections Holiday Parks	\$465,817
Purple pipe Urunga South	Urunga Developments Pty Ltd	\$170,180
Urunga South Sewer Pump Station	Urunga Developments Pty Limited	\$295,310
Footpaths Prince Street to Doepel Street	Mid North Coast Contractors Pty Ltd	\$422,462
Road base material - Martells Rd Rehab Works	The Bayrange Pty Ltd for Jungs Quarry Only	\$431,550
Construction Services – Embankment Restoration – Rockfill and Regrading package	Department Of Regional Nsw T/a Soil Conservation Service	\$1,125,969
Martells Rd - Seal	Bitupave Ltd T/as Boral Construction Materials Group Limited	\$255,112

GOODS OR SERVICES	SUPPLIERS	TOTAL CONTRACT VALUE (INC GST) <i>NOTE: THIS VALUE INCLUDES ANY VARIATION PURCHASE ORDERS</i>
Road subbase material	The Bayrange Pty Ltd for Jungs Quarry Only	\$470,800
Road Seal & Reseal works	Bitupave Ltd T/as Boral Construction Materials Group Limited	\$314,801
Road materials - Martells Rd Rehab Works	Dorrigo Quarry Pty Ltd	\$190,575
Bellingen Netball Courts	Sports Build Pty Ltd	\$623,761
Contract and project management for Urunga STP upgrade	NSW Dept of Public Works	\$297,579
CBD Master Plans - Bellingen, Urunga, Dorrigo	Mcgregor Coxall	\$203,910
Construction of Dorrigo Building Upgrades	PKN Constructions Pty Ltd	\$1,431,865
Waterfall Way Seal and Reseal works	Bitupave Ltd T/as Boral Construction Materials Group Limited	\$936,427
Upgrade design for Water Treatment Plants	City Water Technology Pty Ltd	\$293,641
Design and Construction Services, Embankment Restoration, Soil Nails - Flood Recovery Works	Pointe Engineering Pty Ltd	\$933,517
Road base material - North Bank Rd	Valla Quarry	\$173,250
Asphalt works -North Bank Rd and Elliot & Kennys Close	Colas New South Wales Pty Ltd	\$157,765
Raleigh Depot Office Upgrade – Emergency Operations Centre - Construction	Binet Constructions	\$189,270
Road base material - TFNSW Ordered Works	The Bayrange Pty Ltd for Jungs Quarry Only	\$187,000
Supply and deliver bridge (PSC) planks	Waeger Constructions Pty Ltd	\$484,693
Upgrade of Urunga Sewerage Treatment Plant	Leed Engineering and Construction Ltd	\$21,700,045
Lower Bielsdown Road Drainage	Fortade Group Pty Ltd	\$450,007
Supply and installation of guardrails	Guardrail Systems Pty Ltd	\$293,382
Piling - Harness Cask Bridge	PCA Ground Engineering	\$154,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$37,686,503</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 2023	RECEIPTS	SPEND	BALANCE 30 JUNE 2024
Roads	959,725	145,857	542,000	563,582
Parking	31,542	1,612	0	33,154
Drainage	11,813	603	12,416	0
Community Facilities	544,885	104,927	400,000	249,812
Community Facilities - Bushfires	162,259	8,291	0	170,555
7.11 not under plan	117,136	7,875	0	125,011
7.12 Plan'	128,375	533,623	0	661,998
Section 64	6,761,291	1,323,918	0	8,085,209
	8,717,026	2,126,706	954,416	9,889,316

### Council's Community Grants Program July 2023 – June 2024

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 available budget for 2023/24 was \$50,000, which was split across Round 1 and Round 2.

During Round 1, Council received twenty three (23) applications totalling \$88,148.83.

Six (6) applications were received for the Community Support Fund, twelve (12) applications for the Community Event Sponsorship Fund and five (5) applications for the Creative Placemaking Fund.

Sixteen (16) applications were supported either fully or in-part with the total funding recommended for Round 1 being \$29,277.

## 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	\$
Bellingen Community Playgroup / Playgroup NSW	Bellingen Community Playgroup Renewal Project	\$1,000
Bellingen Community Arts Council	One Enchanted Evening	\$430
Bellingen Readers and Writers Festival	Bellingen Readers and Writers Festival Schools Program	\$2,500
Country Women's Association of New South Wales - Urunga Branch	Upgrading the meeting room's furniture at the Urunga CWA restrooms.	\$1,255
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>		<b>\$5,185</b>

### Community Event Sponsorship Fund (Round 1)

ORGANISATION	ACTIVITY	\$
Bellingen Muse	Bellingen Muse	\$2,000
Camp Creative	Camp Creative	\$1,500
Housing Matters Action Group Inc	Housing Matters - Working together to unlock housing solutions	\$1,500
Urunga Business and Community	URUNGAlights	\$4,000
Dorrigo Folk & Bluegrass Festival Incorporated	21st Dorrigo Folk & Bluegrass Festival 2023 - Temporary Fencing	\$2,500
Bellingen Reader and Writers Festival 2024	Bellingen Reader and Writers Festival 2024	\$2,000
Country Women's Association of NSW	Senior's Week Sconversation	\$500
Taranta Festival Inc	Taranta Festival	\$1,500
Bellingen Youth Orchestra Inc. 2023 Schools Concert	Bellingen Youth Orchestra Incorporated	\$2,000
Bellingen Community Arts Council	Bellingen Shire Arts Trail Weekend	\$1,748
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>		<b>\$19,248</b>

### The Creative Placemaking Fund (Round 1)

ORGANISATION	ACTIVITY	\$
Anneliese Hauptstein	Spray It Loud: Amplifying Youth Voices through Stencil Art	\$2,650
The Bellingen Valley Historical Society	Display Cabinets for Bellingen Museum	\$2,194
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>		<b>\$4,844</b>

During Round 2, Council received Fourteen (14) applications totalling \$52,054.14.

Three (3) applications were received for the Community Support Fund, seven (7) applications for the Community Event Sponsorship Fund and Four (4) applications for the Creative Placemaking Fund.

Ten (10) applications were supported either fully or in-part with the total funding recommended for Round 2 being \$20,608.

### Community Support Fund (Round 2)

ORGANISATION	ACTIVITY	\$
Gleniffer Community Association	Digital Piano purchase	\$1,000
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>		<b>\$1,000</b>

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

ORGANISATION	ACTIVITY	\$
Bellingher River Agricultural Society Inc	E J Mantova Memorial Art Prize 2024	\$2,202
Bellingher River Agricultural Society Inc	Bellingher Show 2024	\$3,000
Arts Council of the Dorrigo INC	Dorrigo Easter Art Exhibition "Being Here Now"	\$2,500
Bellingher Improved Music Collective Inc	BIMCI 2024 Music Performance Season	\$2,000
Dorrigo Chamber of Commerce	Dorrigo Dahlia Day	\$1,130
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>		<b>\$10,832</b>

### The Creative Placemaking Fund (Round 2)

ORGANISATION	ACTIVITY	\$
Hayley Egan	MotherSong Picnic	\$1,000
The Art Space Urunga	Brush Strokes	\$2,391
Bellingher Readers and Writers Festival	Street Performance and Youth Activities	\$2,385
Paul Hayes	Urunga Originals	\$3,000
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>		<b>\$8,776</b>

## Heritage Fund Donations & Contributions

Council distributed \$15,000 of funding to four grant recipients as part of the 2023/24 Local Heritage Assistance Fund. This comprised \$7,500 of funding from Council, and \$7,500 of funding provided by the NSW Department of Premier & Cabinet. The table below outlines the allocation of funding to grant recipients.

LOCAL HERITAGE ASSISTANCE FUND GRANTS		\$
Repaint exterior of building	25-27 Hyde Street, Bellingen	\$3,000
Heritage Paint Project	8 Watson Street Bellingen	\$3,000
Marx Hill Rejuvenation	864 Waterfall Way, Bellingen	\$3,000
Pressed metal Ceiling Repair	92-94 Hyde Street Bellingen	\$3,000
Internal Door Restoration	19 Cudgery Street Dorrigo	\$3,000
<b>Sub Total</b>		<b>15,000</b>

The total actual amount contributed or otherwise granted by Council under Section 356 of the Act for 2023/24 was \$57,425.

## Particulars of Any Environmental Upgrade Agreement Entered Into

Council has not entered into any arrangements during the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024.

## 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 2023 to 30 June 2024.

## 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 \$296,900.00 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 \$451,459.96 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.

## 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>	
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 (dissolved during the reporting period)	Care, Control and Management of the Hall
Bellingen Youth Hub (dissolved during the reporting period)	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
Sustainable Schools Network	Member
North Coast Regional Weeds Network	Member

### Stormwater Management Services

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

### Coastal Protection Services

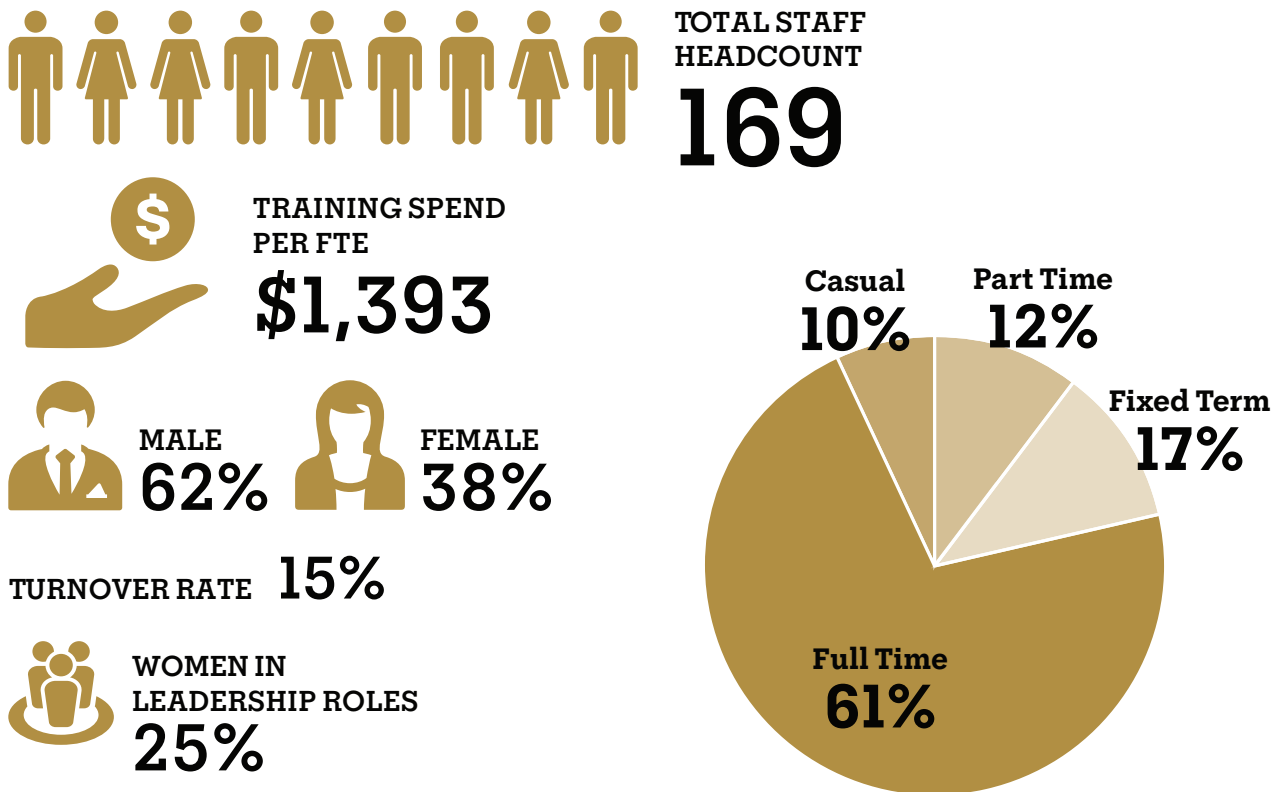
Council did not levy an annual coastal protection charge during the reporting year.

## Workforce Strategy and Equal Opportunity Employment

### Workforce Strategy

Councils Workforce Strategy responds to Council’s Community Strategic Plan – Bellingen 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.

#### Key Metrics 30 June 2024



During the reporting period, three (3) people were employed by the council under senior staff contracts.

Our Workforce Strategy is supported by an action plan articulated under three key objectives to prepare our workforce for both immediate and long-term community needs:

- 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 2023/24, Council implemented several initiatives related to workplace culture, diversity, and equal employment opportunities. These initiatives are aligned with our Workforce Strategy and contribute to achieving our core 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 2023 with 22 employees receiving recognition for 5 to 45 years of service with council.

## Learning & Development

Throughout 2023/24, Council employees participated in a range of training programs aimed at reinforcing their responsibilities to uphold the highest standards of behaviour in the workplace. These initiatives ensure that our communities continue to place their trust and confidence in local government.

- Basic Felling
- Chainsaw Training
- Consultative Committee
- Cultural Awareness Training
- Disability Awareness Training
- Disaster Managers Masterclass
- Due Diligence Training
- Emerging Leaders in Construction
- Vehicle Hygiene Training
- Outlook, Emails, Newsletters
- Park and Playground Training
- Performance Review Training
- Pole Saw Training
- PowerPoint Productivity
- Prepare Traffic Management Plans
- Weeds Training

## Workplace Relations

The Local Government (State) Award 2023 mandates the establishment of a Consultative Committee to facilitate consultation and participation. Council's Staff Consultative Committee (SCC) is made up of elected staff representatives and managers who meet regularly to collaborate on issues covered under 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.

- ChemCERT AQF3
- Collector Training
- Conduct Lifting Operations
- Confined Space Refresher Training
- Dangerous Dog Management
- De-Escalation and OVA Training
- Driver Safety Training
- Fire Extinguisher Training
- First Aid
- Locate Underground Services
- Manual Handling Training
- Mental Health and Menopause
- Mental Health First Aid
- Psychosocial Hazards in the Workplace for People Leaders
- Safe Working at Heights
- Warden Training
- White Card
- Workers on Foot – Plant Separation



There has been a big focus on safety training during 2023/24 with the following training programs delivered:

- 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.
- Monthly Safety sessions are provided to outdoor staff promoting a range of initiatives including tips to stay safe onsite, preventative messaging and health and wellbeing material is also circulated throughout Council's office 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
- Movember
- Adopt-a-Family
- Fitness Passport discount gym membership initiative

## **Health and Wellbeing**

A Health and Wellbeing Strategy has been developed as part of StateCover self-audit requirements. Various initiatives have already taken place and will continue as part of our overarching strategy.

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 meets regularly to discuss health and safety matters in the workplace. Council employs a dedicated Employee Safety and Wellbeing Coordinator.

The appointment of a dedicated Return to Work and Wellbeing Coordinator has resulted in a significant reduction in Workers' Compensation premium costs. Additionally, this role has contributed to an improvement in workplace culture and the overall health and wellbeing of our employees.

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.

Council has facilitated training to establish dedicated Mental Health First Aid Officers in the workplace to provide support and assistance for mental health-related matters.

## **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.

## Labour Statistics

Wednesday 14 February 2024 has been chosen as the “relevant day” for councils to report on their labour statistics in their annual reports under section 217 of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021.

The “relevant day” for the purpose of reporting labour statistics under section 217 is required to be fixed by the Secretary of the Department of Planning and Environment after the end of each financial year. This date is to be a different day to the one fixed by the Secretary for the previous year. The following table outlines the statistics as required.

THE NUMBER OF PERSONS DIRECTLY EMPLOYED BY COUNCIL	
Permanent full-time basis	99
Permanent part-time basis	18
Casual basis	12
Fixed-term contract	30
The number of persons employed by the council who are "senior staff" for the purposes of the Local Government Act 1993	3
The number of persons engaged by the council, under a contract or other arrangement with the person's employer, that is wholly or principally for the labour of the person	
The number of persons supplied to the council, under a contract or other arrangement with the person's employer, as an apprentice or trainee.	0

## Mayor or Councillor Training

The elected Council has undertaken a series of workshops, professional development and training to inform their responsibilities and roles. These programs are tracked to ensure that our elected members are provided the appropriate development necessary to perform their civic duties. Ongoing professional development activities currently being coordinated are recorded and stored in a portal to ensure that councillors always have access to the information. During the reporting period Councillors attended 40 sessions including workshop briefings and Council meetings and the following training programs were facilitated and attendance recorded.

TRAINING SESSION	CODE OF CONDUCT / CODE OF MEETING PRACTICE TRAINING	CULTURAL AWARENESS TRAINING
<b>Date</b>	August 2023	June 2024
Cr Allan (Mayor)	✓	✓
Cr Brotherton	✓	✓
Cr Cook	✓	✓
Cr Fenton	x	✓
Cr Glyde	✓	✓
Cr King	x	✓
Cr Tree	✓	✓

COUNCILLOR	ATTENDANCE AT BRIEFINGS AND COUNCIL MEETINGS %
Cr Allan (Mayor)	100%
Cr Brotherton	98%
Cr Cook	83%
Cr Fenton	75%
Cr Glyde	98%
Cr King	68%
Cr Tree	98%

### Rates and Charges Written Off

The total value of rates and charges written off for the year 2023/2024 was \$ 485,096.17 as follows:

RATES AND CHARGES WRITTEN OFF	2022/23 \$	2023/24 \$
General Rates	211,124.85	216,707.48
Water Annual Charges	77,739.00	88,945.00
Sewer Annual Charges	68,775.00	70,537.00
DWM Charges	105,077.00	106,736.52
	<b>462,715.85</b>	<b>482,926.00</b>
Rates-Residential	7,478.77	1,651.56
Rates-Business	-	-
DWM	-	0.01
Non DWM	2,513.00	444.00
Water-annual Charges	-	-
Water-usage Charges	10.53	0.60
Sewer-annual Charges	-	-
Sewer-usage Charges	0.07	-
Liquid Trade Waste Usage Charges	-	-
Interest-rates	4,895.71	74.00
Interest-water	0.92	-
Legal Fees/Costs	2,655.11	-
	<b>17,554.11</b>	<b>2,170.17</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$480,269.96</b>	<b>485,096.17</b>

## Companion Animals Act - Compliance

### Companion Animals Act – Compliance Pound

- Fifty-five (55) dogs were seized, surrendered, or found roaming free during the 2023/2024 year.
- Eighteen (18) of these dogs were returned to their owners prior to being impounded.
- Thirty-seven (37) of these dogs were transferred to Council's animal shelter.
- Twenty-seven (27) were returned to owners.
- Ten (10) impounded dogs were re-homed.
- No (0) dogs remained in the pound from the previous year.
- One (1) dangerous dog was euthanised at the request of the owner.
- Seven (7) cats were seized, found abandoned or stray,
- Five (5) were re-homed, one (1) cat was sold and one (1) cat was euthanised due to illness.

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 cannot be adopted 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 have 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
2022 - 2023	29	9	2 (Dangerous)
2023 - 2024	55	37	1 (at owner's request)

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
2022 - 2023	20	20	0
2023 - 2024	7	7	0 1 (illness vet)

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

Council's Ranger Services review the Companion Animals Register monthly and send notices to owners of unregistered dogs in the Shire. Following the final notice if the animal is still not registered a Penalty Notice (PN) is issued for non-compliance.

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.

The barking dog investigation and response procedure continues to be implemented to deal with dog noise nuisance. The process places more emphasis on the persons involved (complainant and dog owner) to resolve the matter themselves prior to Council intervening with regulatory actions. This approach is consistent with that utilised by other local councils and after one year since inception it is working efficiently and effectively. Minor updates were put in place to streamline the procedure for both the public and Council

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:

- Three (3) Dangerous Dog Orders.
- Five (5) Menacing Dog Orders.
- Nil (0) Nuisance Dog Orders were issued.
- Nil (0) Nuisance Cat Orders were issued.

### Dog Attack data

Sixteen (16) dog attacks were reported and after investigation all sixteen (16) were lodged with the Office of Local Government through the Companion Animals Register. Three (3) were recorded as dangerous and Five (5) were declared menacing.

COMPANION ANIMAL MANAGEMENT FUNDING		2023/24
		\$
Registration (146) - commissions		\$4,372
Impounding fees, charges		\$8,908
Fines		\$8,360
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$21,640</b>

### 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.

### Off leash areas provided in the council area

Council provides three (3) dog off-leash exercise areas across the Bellingén Shire. Dogs can run, exercise, and socialise leash-free with other dogs and visitors at the following locations:

- **Dorrigo:** Polocrosse fields in Ash Street
- **Bellingén:** Jarrett Park west of Lavenders Bridge
- **Urunga:** The beach south of the river mouth to the four wheel drive access point known as sand mines

### Private Swimming Pool inspections

PRIVATE SWIMMING POOL INSPECTIONS		2023/24
Number of inspections of tourist and visitor accommodation		
	Total	0
Number of inspections of premises with more than 2 dwellings		
	Total	9
Number of inspections that resulted in issuing a certificate of compliance under s22D of the SP Act		
	Total	0
Number of inspections that resulted in issuing a certificate of non-compliance under cl21 of the SP Reg		
	Total	0

## Planning Agreements

The below table outlines the planning agreements entered into and or are ongoing with Council during 2023/24.

PARTIES TO PLANNING AGREEMENT	DATE AGREEMENT MADE	LAND	PARTICULARS	EFFECTS OF COMPLIANCE WITH DURING 2023-2024
Bellingen Shire Council (Council) & Shaul Rubinstein Pty Ltd (Developer)	14/9/2020	Lots 1 & 2 DP 900116, known as 84-90 Hyde Street, Bellingen.	<p>Requires developer to undertake public works including the reconstruction of Halpins Lane, construction of 36 on street car parks on Oak Street and upgrade of footpath areas.</p> <p>Requires Council to contribute towards the cost of the upgrade of Halpins Lane and the footpath.</p> <p>Pertains to Development Consent 2018/DA-00025 - Demolition, Remediation &amp; Construction of Shop Top Housing on the land.</p>	Agreement remains in place. Relevant works triggering provisions in agreement have not yet commenced
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	<p>Provide car parking in William Street and contribute towards upgrading of infrastructure in Halpins Lane.</p> <p>Pertains to Development Consent 2020/DA-0091 – Subdivision of land into 3 lots and construction of professional office suites and residential dwellings.</p>	<p>Agreement remains in place.</p> <p>Council has received \$42,178.26 via Tax Invoice 906 on 8/6/21 in respect of the Halpins Lane Contribution.</p> <p>Other relevant works triggering provisions in agreement have not yet commenced.</p>
Bellingen Shire Council and 105 North BNK Rd Pty Ltd	22/11/2022	105 North Bank Road, Bellingen	<p>Requires Developer to construct and dedicate a public park to Council, construct sewer infrastructure, contribute towards monitoring of septicity and contribute towards future sewer infrastructure if septicity remains an issue.</p> <p>Requires Council to monitor septicity.</p>	<p>Sewer Pump Station &amp; Rising Main constructed in association with completion of civil works for DA2022/00021 as per Sch 1 (Item 5)</p> <p>Public park constructed and transferred to Council as public reserve as per Sch 1 (Item 4).</p> <p>Existing sewer line pipe upgraded as per Sch 1 (Item 6) and Invoices paid.</p> <p>No houses connected to sewer at time of preparing report so no septicity monitoring undertaken to date.</p>

PARTIES TO PLANNING AGREEMENT	DATE AGREEMENT MADE	LAND	PARTICULARS	EFFECTS OF COMPLIANCE WITH DURING 2023-2024
<p>Bellingen Shire Council and Urunga Developments Pty Ltd</p>	<p>24/8/2023</p>	<p>Lot 3 DP 513358 (known as 4056 Giinagay Way, Urunga) and Lot 20 DP 1259737 (known as 4040 Giinagay Way, Urunga)</p>	<p>Agreements regarding upgrades of water and sewer infrastructure necessary to service subdivision in the locality.</p> <p>Pertains to Development Consent 2014/DA-129 – Subdivision of 3 lots into 263 lots &amp; associated works.</p>	<p>Certain infrastructure required by the Planning Agreement has been completed, including the Sewer Pump Station and non-potable water supply infrastructure for Stages 1A and 1B. Progress on the Water Delivery System (Sch 2, Item 3) includes the Pressure Reduction Valve and approximately 80% of the Main. A tender has been awarded for the Kalang River bridge crossing, with work expected to begin in October 2024.</p> <p>The following Contributions from the Developer to Council have been received to date;</p> <p>Payment of \$20,247.60 Sewer Pump Station Contribution on 19/10/23 for 18 lots for 2017/DA-192 as per Sch 2 (Item 2).</p> <p>Payment of \$57,188.70 Ultimate Sewerage Network Contribution on 19/10/23 for 18 lots as per Sch 2 (Item 2) for 2017/DA-192.</p> <p>Payment of \$120,061 Water Delivery System Contribution to Council on 31/8/23 as per Sch 2 (Item 3) for 44 lots in stages 1A &amp; 1B.</p> <p>The following Contributions have been paid to the Developer by Council to date.</p> <p>Payment of \$295,310.40 Sewer Pump Station Contribution on 26/10/23 as per Sch 2 (Item 2).</p> <p>Payment of \$170,179.74 non-potable water contribution on 26/10/23 as per Sch 2 (Item 1).</p>



PARTIES TO PLANNING AGREEMENT	DATE AGREEMENT MADE	LAND	PARTICULARS	EFFECTS OF COMPLIANCE WITH DURING 2023-2024
Bellinghen Shire Council (Council) & Shaul Rubinstein Pty Ltd (Developer)	14/9/2020	Lots 1 & 2 DP 900116, known as 84-90 Hyde Street, Bellinghen.	<p>Requires developer to undertake public works including the reconstruction of Halpins Lane, construction of 36 on street car parks on Oak Street and upgrade of footpath areas.</p> <p>Requires Council to contribute towards the cost of the upgrade of Halpins Lane and the footpath.</p> <p>Pertains to Development Consent 2018/DA-00025 - Demolition, Remediation &amp; Construction of Shop Top Housing on the land.</p>	Agreement remains in place. Relevant works triggering provisions in agreement have not yet commenced
Bellinghen 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, Bellinghen	<p>Provide car parking in William Street and contribute towards upgrading of infrastructure in Halpins Lane.</p> <p>Pertains to Development Consent 2020/DA-0091 – Subdivision of land into 3 lots and construction of professional office suites and residential dwellings.</p>	<p>Agreement remains in place.</p> <p>Council has received \$42,178.26 via Tax Invoice 906 on 8/6/21 in respect of the Halpins Lane Contribution.</p> <p>Other relevant works triggering provisions in agreement have not yet commenced.</p>

## 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 2023/24 Council processed two hundred and seven (207) informal access for information requests, removing the need to make a formal application in most cases.

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

Section 7(3) of the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 requires each agency to review, at intervals of not more than 12 months, its program for the release of government information under this section to identify the kinds of government information held by the agency that should in the public interest be made publicly available and that can be made publicly available without imposing unreasonable additional costs on the agency.

Council's program for the proactive release of information involves reviewing 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, Council reviewed this program by:

- analysis of the types of requests made to Council; and
- what proportion could be answered through open access means.

Our agency received five (5) formal and valid access applications during the reporting period. Our agency has received and processed two hundred and seven (207) informal access applications during the reporting period.

The information is provided in accordance with Clause 8 of the "Government Information (Public Access) Regulation 2018". Annual reporting requirements under section 125 of Act

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

#### TOTAL NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

5

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

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 of the Act (information for which there is a conclusive presumption of overriding public interest against disclosure).

NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS REFUSED	WHOLLY	PARTLY	TOTAL
	0	0	0
% of Total	0%	100%	



**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	1	0	0	0	0	1	33.33%
Not for profit organisations or community groups	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Members of the public (by legal representative)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	33.33%
Members of the public (other)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	33.33%
Total	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	3	
% of Total	33.33%	0%	0%	33.33%	0%	0%	0%	33.33%		

\* 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.

<b>TABLE B: 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
Personal information applications*	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	33.33%
Access applications (other than personal information applications)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	66.67%
Access applications that are partly personal information applications and partly other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Total	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	3	
% of Total	33.33%	0%	0%	33.33%	0%	0%	0%	33.33%		

\* 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)	7	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	7	100%
Invalid applications that subsequently became valid applications	2	28.57%

**TABLE D: CONCLUSIVE PRESUMPTION OF OVERRIDING PUBLIC INTEREST AGAINST DISCLOSURE: MATTERS LISTED IN SCHEDULE 1 OF ACT**

	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.*

**TABLE E: OTHER PUBLIC INTEREST CONSIDERATIONS AGAINST DISCLOSURE: MATTERS LISTED IN TABLE TO SECTION 14 OF ACT**

	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)	2	100%
Decided after 35 days (by agreement with applicant)	0	0%
Not decided within time (deemed refusal)	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</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	0	0	0%
Review by Information Commissioner*	0	0	0	0%
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>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>% of Total</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>0%</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)	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</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>

### 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.



## Public Interest Disclosures Reporting

Organisations are required under the Public Interest Disclosures Act 2022 (PID Act) to collect and report on information about public interest disclosures (PIDs).

The Public Interest Disclosures Regulation 2022 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 2023 to 30 June 2024 Council received no Public Interest Disclosures.



## Disability Action Plan

Aln alignment with Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan, notable progress has been made across the plan's four priority areas over the past 12 months, reflecting our commitment to inclusivity and accessibility.

### Promoting Positive Attitudes and Behaviours

Council organised various community awareness initiatives, including dementia and mental health sessions, and celebrated events like R U OK? Day and the Seniors Festival. We supported LGBTIQ inclusivity with "Welcome Here" stickers, Pride Month displays, and launched the Respect campaign, while also providing device support for seniors in Urunga and Dorrigo. Council's Community Awards and social media initiatives further promoted diversity and inclusion within our Shire.

### Creating Liveable Communities

Accessibility was improved in key public spaces through the completion of footpath projects, upgrades to the Mylestom pontoon, and installation of AUSLAN signs at playgrounds. Accessibility audits led to enhancements in lighting, amenities, and access at locations like Bellingen Citizens Centre and Connell Park. We also commenced bus shelter upgrades and installed a Hearing Loop at Bellingen Memorial Hall.

### Supporting Access to Meaningful Employment

Council provided targeted training for staff on inclusive hiring, disability awareness, and psychological safety. Flexible work options for employees with disabilities and carers were promoted, and a community services student from TAFE gained work experience. A review of Council's Equity and Access Policy, along with engagement with BlueSky Communities, helped further improve inclusivity in our workforce.

### Improving Access to Systems and Processes

Council enhanced accessibility with large print keyboards in libraries, a new point-of-sale system at the Visitor Information Centre, and a Homelessness Support card. Our website now includes a Toolkit for Accessible Events, and quarterly updates on DIAP outcomes are shared with the community. Shire Speaks sessions and weekly Duty Planner outreach in Dorrigo provided additional engagement and feedback opportunities.

Through these efforts, Council continues to build a more inclusive and accessible community, enriching the lives of residents and visitors alike. A report will be prepared for the Minister providing details of specific actions for 2023/24. 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 Services operate within the legislative requirements of the Carers (Recognition) Act 2010. Dorrigo Support Services has policies and procedures in place which recognise and acknowledge the valued role of carers and their diverse needs, taking into consideration culture, age, disability, religion, socio-economic status, gender identify and sexual orientation.

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

Each carer's involvement in a participant's support plan development and review, is paramount to 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 the services required.

The important role of Carers is recognised and acknowledged in Bellingen Shire Council's Ageing Well Strategy 2023 -2027, which is aligned to key activities within Council's Operational Plan 2023 – 2024.



David Helfgott Artwork Unveiling - Memorial Hall



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



COUNCIL@BELLINGEN.NSW.GOV.AU  
33 HYDE ST BELLINGEN NSW 2454 | 02 6655 7300

**BELLINGEN.NSW.GOV.AU**