

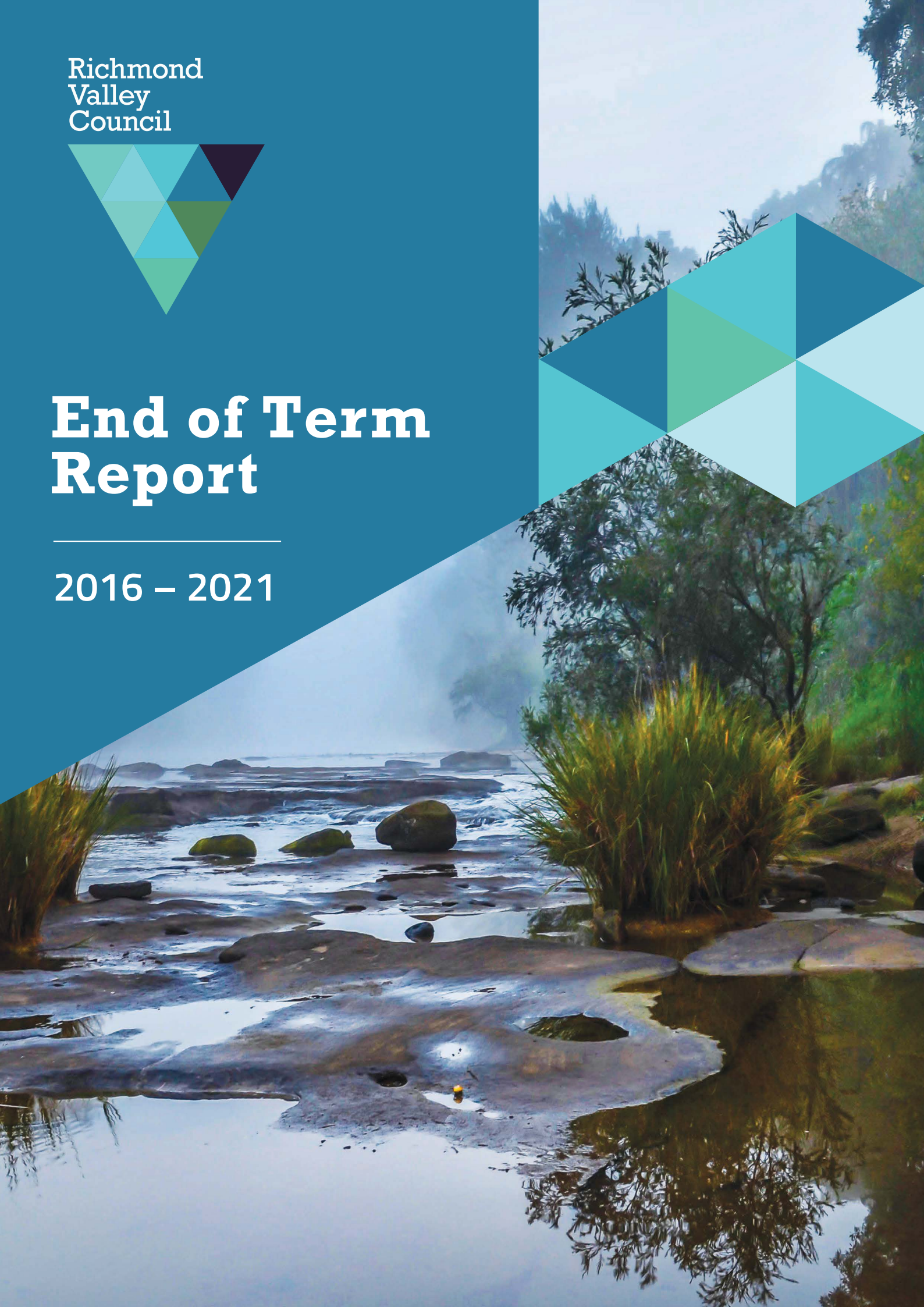
Richmond  
Valley  
Council



# End of Term Report

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2016 – 2021





Council would like to acknowledge all of the traditional custodians of land within the Richmond Valley Council area and show respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

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# YOUR COUNCILLORS

At the Richmond Valley Council Local Government Election held on 10 September 2016, the following councillors were elected to represent the Richmond Valley for the Council term which will conclude in December 2021.

- Cr Robert Mustow (Mayor)
- Cr Stephen Morrissey (Deputy Mayor)
- Cr Sam Cornish
- Cr Robert Hayes
- Cr Sandra Humphrys
- Cr Jill Lyons
- Cr Daniel Simpson

As outlined in the Richmond Valley Made 2030 Community Strategic Plan (CSP), the community vision is identified as being:

“A GREAT COMMUNITY WITH A RELAXED LIFESTYLE, BEAUTIFUL ENVIRONMENT AND VIBRANT ECONOMY”.

The CSP identifies the following community values developed through community consultation:



Leadership



Good Service



Accessibility



Sustainability



Transparency



Innovation

L to R (standing): Cr Sam Cornish, Cr Stephen Morrissey (Deputy Mayor), Cr Robert Hayes, Cr Daniel Simpson  
L to R (seated): Cr Jill Lyons, Cr Robert Mustow (Mayor), Cr Sandra Humphrys



# ABOUT THE RICHMOND VALLEY

Welcome to the Richmond Valley, where the bush meets the beach, and some of Australia's best farming country and fertile river plains gives way to majestic and unspoiled coastlines.

The area known today as the Northern Rivers was occupied by the Bundjalung speaking people, made up of an estimated 20 different language groups. The traditional custodians of the land surrounding the Casino area, or Djanangmum as it is known to Aboriginal people, are the Galibal people. The Mid Richmond is home to the Bandjalang people, and Rappville is home to the Birihi people.

The Richmond Valley Council local government area covers 304,737 hectares and extends from the coastline at Evans Head to the foothills of the Great Dividing Range to the west, interspersed with State forests, national parks and nature reserves. The largest town is Casino, with other communities including Broadwater, Rileys Hill, Coraki, Evans Head, New Italy, Woodburn and Rappville, as well as rural areas.

The Richmond Valley is accessible by rail, coach and road from a variety of major cities and centres. With airports located at Lismore, Ballina, Coolangatta and Brisbane, Casino is readily accessible. The Pacific Motorway, the major arterial coast road, is complemented by the interior Summerland Way, linking Casino to South East Queensland in the north and Grafton in the south.

With an estimated population of 23,490 people, the area has a steady economy and a large number of natural assets including beaches, significant rivers, creeks and hinterland areas. This natural beauty and the relaxed and friendly atmosphere of the community has been a major draw card for sea changers and tree changers in recent years.

As of the December 2020 quarter, the estimated unemployment rate in the Richmond Valley was 5.9 percent. There are 1,700 businesses providing employment for 8,635 people. Food product manufacturing is the largest single employment industry, comprising 2,134 jobs, or 24.7 percent of the workforce. Combined with the 800 jobs in the agriculture, forestry and fishing industries, this accounts for 30 percent of total employment in the local government area, which is a significantly higher percentage than seen in other areas of NSW.

The Richmond Valley's gross regional product was \$998 million as of 30 June 2020, with manufacturing being the most productive industry, generating \$238 million. Agriculture, forestry and fishing contributes \$79.9 million. Health care and social services are also significant sectors of the Richmond Valley economy with a total annual contribution of around \$58 million.

The Richmond Valley has the platform to support significant growth in our local economy, which in turn will contribute to growth in the Northern Rivers regional economy. As the Beef Capital, we have the Casino Food Co-op, which employs more than 800 locals and contributes around \$65 million towards the local economy each year. Richmond Dairies exports to numerous countries, followed by Council's own Northern Rivers Livestock Exchange, which had a \$143.2 million turnover in 2020/2021. Along with this we have Australia's largest beef jerky producers in New World Foods - all located in Casino.

But it's not just beef the Richmond Valley produces. We also have sugar cane growers supporting the Broadwater Sugar Mill and emerging industries such as Blue Dog tea tree, Mara Foods and OzRice, to name a few. The diversity in our economy is exemplified by the tourism influxes experienced in our coastal regions, and there are many opportunities to be developed to draw more tourists inland.

The Valley is full of unique places, people and produce, all shaped by the local environment.

This is what makes the Richmond Valley area so special.

Data source: id Economy, National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR)

# OUR VISION

To guide in the delivery of the Richmond Valley Made Community Strategic Plan (CSP), a vision and set of values were identified, through consultation with the community, to provide a clear and complete picture of what the community wanted to achieve in the future. The vision sets the scene to guide Council in planning the future and setting its direction in delivering the communities' priorities and objectives.



# OUR VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS

Richmond Valley Council's organisational values are Integrity and Passion. In 2019/2020, Council adopted the following set of behaviours which aimed to reflect how we handled the challenges Council and the community faced during this time, including drought, bushfires, floods and the COVID-19 pandemic. The behaviours were retained for the 2020/2021 year, which proved to be a challenging year in itself.

1. We lead by example
2. We take responsibility
3. We do what we say
4. We embrace change
5. We are community focused
6. We are in this together



# MESSAGE FROM COUNCIL

**We are proud to present Richmond Valley Council's End of Term Report, which is designed to provide a snapshot of achievements during the past five years of the current elected Council.**

Together, the elected body and the organisation have achieved many things during this Council term through team work, hard work and focus.

Over the course of the term we have invested more than \$100 million on capital works which have included a number of high-profile infrastructure projects which have improved our region's liveability and will benefit our community and economy for decades to come.

Looking back, we have continued our progress as a Council in serving the needs of our growing community. Our key areas of focus are guided by the priorities in our Community Strategic Plan, including economic development, advocacy and partnerships, and civic pride. We are also driven by our ongoing commitment to customer service excellence - whether it's at the front desk, over the phone, via email or when we meet you on the street.

We have developed professional, independent and transparent external relationships, and have sound working relationships with government agencies, and our "can-do" attitude is recognised by our local Members of Parliament and their colleagues. These relationships have helped Richmond Valley Council gain significant grants and support to build and renew essential community assets.

Council took a proactive role in seeking to understand, respond to and recover from the devastating 2019 Busbys Flat Road and Myall Creek Road bushfires. This included the implementation of a number of proactive initiatives which saw a Community Advisory Group formed, a Recovery Officer employed, and direct support provided to affected community members and organisations.

Richmond Valley residents, businesses and communities were impacted significantly by the COVID-19 pandemic. To deal with the complexities of COVID-19, Council closed certain public-facing services, while others were required to work remotely. During this time no staff were stood down. Throughout the pandemic Council's decision to close and reopen facilities and services was made in line with advice from NSW Health.

Despite the many setbacks forced by COVID-19 public health orders, we have continued to support local events, festivals and celebrations, and have encouraged further involvement in arts and culture. We continued to recognise and support the tourism industry and promote tourism opportunities, as well as encouraged major investment to the area.

As part of our Youth Employment Strategy, we offered traineeship programs across a range of services. Over the program's eight-year history, 97 young people have been given a valuable start to their career.

We have created a council which is more efficient and effective, and have ensured Council's actions and decisions are honest, transparent, and financially sustainable.

Council began live streaming its meetings in April 2020 and saw an increase in viewer activity throughout the forced COVID-19 shutdown of the Chamber.

Our management of development across the Valley has ensured growth is sustainable, in keeping with the character of our unique villages, and does not significantly impact on the ecological value of our natural environments.

We continue to improve our local roads network and related infrastructure and have invested heavily to improve waste management.

We have provided more attractive and user-friendly urban environments, particularly town centres, entrances to townships and our foreshore environments.

We are proud of our community and how as one we have dealt with natural disasters and the COVID-19 crisis.

The outcomes highlighted in this report are testament to the vision, innovation and resilience of people in our community to make the most of its assets to be an enviable place to live, work and invest.



# WHAT IS AN END OF TERM REPORT?

The End of Term Report is a legislative requirement under the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework and must be tabled at the last Council meeting of the 2016 – 2021 Council term. It provides a summary of the progress on the implementation and effectiveness of the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) in achieving its objectives, together with providing a comprehensive summary of the outcomes achieved by this Council.

In 2017, Richmond Valley Council adopted its Richmond Valley Made 2030 Community Strategic Plan. This Plan created a long-term vision for the Richmond Valley Council area, in partnership with the community, to guide future planning and decision making. To achieve the community's priorities, rolling four-year delivery programs identify Council's priorities and annual updates provide ongoing opportunities for community feedback to ensure Council is on track for the future.

The priority areas of the Community Strategic Plan were established on the basis of community input and provide for and include strategic objectives that address social, environmental, economic and civic leadership issues.



The priority areas are:

## Connecting People and Places

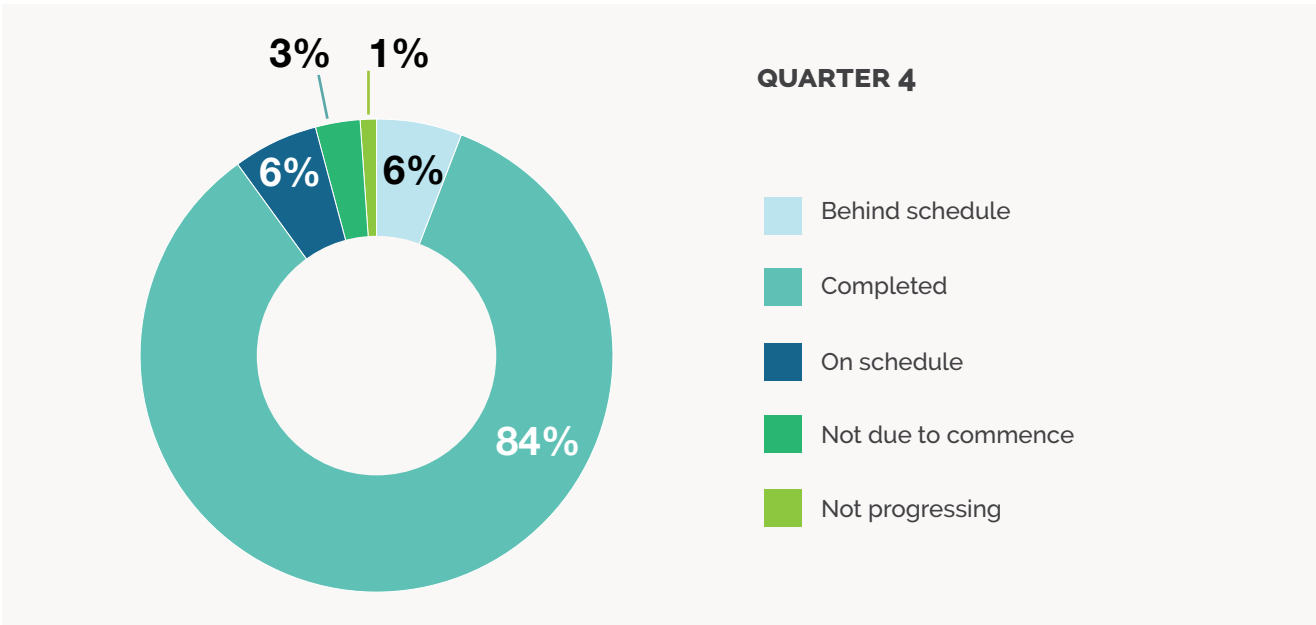
## Growing our Economy

## Looking after our Environment

## Making Council Great

Council's performance against the Plan's objectives in these areas are reported twice-yearly. At the end of the fourth year of the current 2017/2021 Delivery Program, Council has demonstrated a strong performance towards achieving the outcomes detailed in the four-year program. As a result of the delayed local government election due to COVID-19 restrictions, the current delivery program will cover an additional 12-month period, concluding in June 2022.

A summary of RVC's progress at the end of the fourth year of the program is shown below.



# WHERE ARE WE NOW?

**The 2016-2021 Council term has seen many challenges for our community, as we worked together to recover from the impacts of drought, fire, flood and storm and respond to a global pandemic. The Richmond Valley has seen five natural disaster declarations over a period of just 18 months.**

Through all these challenges, Council has embraced the opportunity to 'Build Back Better' and create a positive and resilient future for our community. We have continued to support our farmers by investing in industry leading facilities, such as the Northern Rivers Livestock Exchange, and ensuring that regional freight routes, roads and bridges are a key priority. We have also commenced the process of strengthening our town water security and building resilience to future drought through a comprehensive study into future water supply options.

Another key priority has been to work with those communities directly affected by the devastating 2019 bushfires to help rebuild and reclaim their future. The Richmond Valley was severely impacted by the fires, with nearly 50% of our local government area burnt and some 350 homes and outbuildings affected. To help lead the recovery process, Council prepared a community revitalisation plan, Rebuilding the Richmond Valley, and continues to implement this strategy, partnering with all levels of government to replace damaged infrastructure and rebuild and improve community facilities. So far, the recovery works have included the new Rappville Community Hall, currently in the design and construction phase, improvements to the Rappville Sportsground and plans for a new sewerage system for the village. Council has also worked directly with those who lost their homes to ensure they receive the help they need and have a chance to rebuild as quickly as possible.

Helping the community to be better prepared for natural disasters is a key focus for the future, as the Richmond Valley continues to recover not only from the fires but from three significant flood and storm events in the past 12 months. Council has successfully partnered with other levels of government to obtain much-needed funding to repair roads, bridges and other infrastructure damaged in the floods and these works are continuing throughout the Valley.

Supporting the community to recover from the economic impacts of natural disasters has also been a high priority for Council, with RVC successfully attracting economic stimulus grants from the NSW and Australian governments. These grants will help to further develop our industrial regions and will also provide a welcome boost for tourism and key community facilities, such as the Casino Showground. Through Council's continued advocacy, we have also been successful in obtaining \$10 million in government funding to upgrade the Woodburn-Coraki Road over a period of three years. The first stage of these works has been completed and further stages are due to commence shortly. This road provides a vital connection between the Casino and Mid-Richmond communities and the upgraded Pacific Motorway.

Another major milestone for the Richmond Valley was the recent announcement by the NSW Government that the area has been selected as a Regional Job Precinct, in response to Council's plans and advocacy. This will help to provide much-needed employment for our community and support the economic recovery process.

Local jobs and business growth was identified as a top priority in the Community Strategic Plan and Council has been working hard to develop these opportunities. The Regional Job Precinct will open the way for a renewed conversation on the type of employment opportunities our community wants, and the supporting infrastructure we need to attract new employers and residents to the Richmond Valley. This will include a new study on local housing needs and development options, to be completed by mid 2022.

The Regional Job Precinct will help to prepare the Richmond Valley for its next stage of growth, as we continue to recover from the challenges of the past five years. Drought, flood, fire and pandemic may have tested our strength and determination, but we have emerged from these trials as a stronger, more resilient community. Council will continue to lead the way as we work together to create a positive and prosperous future.



# SNAPSHOT

## 2016 to 2021



### INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES/ASSETS

**130km** of road resealing

**47.85km** of road renewal, plus 12km of heavy patching repairs

**11.6km** of new shared pathways

**104,895** Pavement repairs

**17,800m** Lines marked

**68,925ha** Grass mowed

**2,659** Trees planted

**5076 l/d** Water use per connection

**10,764 ML** Water treated



### NRLX

**546,164** head of cattle traded

**\$508,967,608** dollar turnover



### ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH & SUSTAINABILITY

**7,637** residents receive Resource Recovery and Waste Tool Kit

**800** trees planted for flying-fox habitat, Richmond River Casino

**22** new waste and recycling dual enclosures installed in Evans Head, Broadwater and Coraki

**4** contactless refill water stations installed - **2** x Evans Head, **2** x Casino

**3** new portable community recycling centre stations installed at Casino and Evans Head administration centres, and Casino Library



### FINANCE

**10,751** rateable properties

**\$60,258,000** rates income received

**\$114,279,00** grants received



### REGULATORY SERVICES

**2,517** dogs registered

**101** cats registered

**2,981** stray/lost animals



### WASTE & RESOURCE RECOVERY

**39,797** tonnes of waste collected from kerbside service

**2,950,496** bins lifted from kerbside service

**93,823** tonnes self-hauled waste to RVC facilities

**137,876** visits self-hauled waste to RVC facilities

**138.2** tonnes of e-waste recovered for recycling

**36,903** tonnes of other waste recovered for recycling and reuse



### CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

**146,895** calls received

**31,956** customer requests logged

**1,574** development applications assessed. (DAs only. Does not include construction certificates, complying developments, building certificates)



### RUCRL

**554,867** members and visitors

**762,811** loans

**74,030** Internet bookings

**69,551** wi-fi usage

**55,937** satisfied reserves

**4,127** programs delivered

**3,125** Justice of the Peace services



# SIGNATURE PROJECTS



Over the past five years, Richmond Valley Council has secured government funding commitments of more than \$100 million for vital community projects and programs.

So far \$86.4 million has been received, with more funding to come as projects such as the Casino Showground and Racecourse, industry activation precincts and the Northern Rivers Rail Trail move towards construction.

Council's success in obtaining these grants has been due to its work in preparing long-term plans and 'shovel ready' projects and building a reputation with funding providers as an organisation that delivers projects on time and within budget. Council has invested in developing its in-house capabilities to ensure that it has the best chance of competing for funding opportunities and is well prepared to manage disaster recovery claims for community infrastructure. This has resulted in 123 successful applications for community projects over the past five years, and commitments of more than \$19 million in natural disaster funding to repair assets damaged in bushfires and floods.



## NORTHERN RIVERS LIVESTOCK EXCHANGE

Agriculture and food production account for around 30 percent of employment within the local area. On average it is also responsible for 45 percent of the area's total economic output. Given the importance of this sector to the region, Council actively pursued funding towards the upgrade of the Northern Rivers Livestock Exchange (NRLX). In total, the full upgrade would cost \$14.25 million.

In December 2015 Federal Member for Page Kevin Hogan announced the Australian Government would contribute \$3.5 million to stage one of the NRLX development from its National Stronger Regions Fund. The funding was matched by Richmond Valley Council via borrowings under the NSW Government's Local Infrastructure Renewal Scheme.

In July 2017 NSW Premier Gladys Berejiklian committed a further \$7 million of funding to the NRLX for stage two. This was funded from the Restart NSW Growing Local Economies Fund.

The two-staged \$14 million upgrade of the NRLX has marked a new era for livestock selling in Northern NSW. The modern facility has contributed to the continued growth of the NRLX business while also opening the facility to additional business initiatives such as online selling and transit yards.

The upgrade included a roof over the entire selling and delivery pens, with a roof area of 24,300 sqm. The roofed area has allowed for soft flooring in the selling pens. Some other important inclusions were automated drafting systems, new LED lighting, improved IT infrastructure, specialised bull wash pens, improvements to the weighbridge and scale area and specialised transit yards. Tanks with a capacity of 1,144KL were also installed to allow for the harvest and reuse of rainwater.

As a result of these important upgrades, the NRLX has become an industry leader in animal welfare, ensuring the stress on livestock is minimised meaning cattle are presented in the best possible condition. Additionally, the upgrade has minimised human-animal contact, ensuring best practice safety principals.

This modern facility was officially opened by NSW Deputy Premier John Barilaro in September 2019.

Operating from a state-of-the-art facility has proven to be a bonanza for the local cattle industry, with 2020-2021 sales revenue at the NRLX jumping \$30 million to reach a record high of just over \$143 million for the 2020-2021 financial year.



Premier Gladys Berejiklian visits the NRLX



Northern Rivers Livestock Exchange Stage 2



## CASINO INDUSTRIES ACTIVATION PROJECT

Council was successful in obtaining \$9,969,000 from the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund, co-funded by the NSW and Australian governments, to provide major upgrades to its Casino industrial precinct.

A separate \$1.54 million grant from the Australian Government's Building Better Regions Fund kick started civil construction works at Council's Reynolds Road industrial site, while the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund money is providing further activation of land at Casino's existing industrial area, which will enable more than 46 hectares meet current and forecasted demand for new industries. The money is being spent on road, water, sewer and power infrastructure upgrades to facilitate significant economic, social and environmental outcomes for the Richmond Valley.



## EVANS HEAD COMMUNITY HUB

Evans Head residents and those from surrounding Mid Richmond communities, such as Broadwater, Woodburn, and Coraki, are experiencing improved health and library services, as well as new visitor experiences, thanks to the establishment of a community hub on Woodburn Street and the relocation of the Living Museum and Visitor Information Centre to the Reflections Holiday Park.

The Health One facility in Evans Head opened in 2020 and offers integrated care through general practice and community health. During the construction of the Health One facility, two Council buildings were relocated, including the Evans Head Living Museum. The other was repurposed into a new Visitor Information Centre.

Council was successful in receiving \$480,000 from the NSW Government's Public Library Infrastructure Grant to modernise and expanded the Evans Head Library to three times the current space. Improvements include: removal and replacement of both the internal and external toilet areas with the inclusion of a public shower; removal of the existing loft area to enhance the space and light of the main area; and a new car park.



## WOODBURN RIVERSIDE PARK

When the Pacific Highway upgrade was announced Council quickly recognised the potential impact of the bypass, and following community consultation invested in a comprehensive master plan to upgrade the Riverside Park, taking advantage of the town's best asset – the Richmond River.

Woodburn now has a landmark attraction for locals and visitors alike with the opening of the first stage of the upgraded Woodburn Riverside Park in October 2019. Stage two works to the eastern end of Woodburn Riverside Park were completed in April 2021. Stage two consisted of an upgrade to the lawn area and extension of pathways, installation of a new picnic shelter and a refurbishment of the existing War Memorial.

Jointly funded by the Australian and NSW governments and Richmond Valley Council, the \$2.2 million project features a new Visitor Information Centre and function room with elevated views over the Richmond River, an adventure playground with adjoining barbecue and picnic areas, and a new boating pontoon, beach and timber boardwalk.



The project received \$700,000 from the Australian Government's Building Better Regions Fund and \$110,000 from the Supporting Water Sports Fund, an additional \$551,000 from the NSW Government's Stronger Country Communities Fund and \$103,466 from NSW Boating Now, and \$761,752 from Richmond Valley Council.

\$177,000 was spent on stage two works, which was funded by Richmond Valley Council.

## CORAKI RIVERFRONT PRECINCT

Council has invested \$997,820 in Coraki's scenic riverside precinct to provide valuable new recreational infrastructure for residents and visitors. New elements of the park include a pontoon and boat ramp for recreational fishers, a 570m long path linking the boat ramp to the Coraki Riverside Caravan Park and Camping Grounds, an upgraded beach area featuring a sandstone retaining wall, and the installation of outdoor furniture, barbecues, shelters, and Aboriginal art installations. Council also developed an extensive nature walk to the south of town, which connects to the riverside precinct and vastly extends public access to the riverbank.

Council was successful in obtaining an Australian Government grant worth \$550,000 for the construction of a new amenities block for the Coraki Riverside Caravan Park, which was completed in November 2020. The new amenities will boost visitor numbers to the increasingly popular caravan park and continue to build Coraki's reputation as a go-to precinct for fishing, boating, swimming, sailing and bird watching.





## CASINO DRILL HALL AND RIVERSIDE PRECINCT

The southern gateway to Casino has an iconic new public space for visitors and the local community with the opening of the revitalised Drill Hall precinct in October 2019.

Set on the banks of the beautiful Richmond River, the \$2,580,579 Drill Hall site redevelopment includes a new visitor information centre, a contemporary amphitheatre for community events, an RV and caravan capable carpark, extensive footpaths and landscaping, while the original Drill Hall building is now home to the Northern Rivers Military Museum.

The precinct is connected with the walking and cycle paths along the south side of the Richmond River, such as to Queen Elizabeth Park, and across the Richmond River Bridge to the CBD and residential areas on the north side of the river.

Further project work involves the establishment of a Memorial Walk with a reflection pool along with upgrades to Coronation Park, including a new playground and viewing platform, totaling \$1.2 million thanks to the Australian Government's Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program.

Contributions thus far have included \$1,337,500 from the Australian Government, \$991,079 from Richmond Valley Council, and \$252,000 from the NSW Government.



Casino Drill Hall Precinct

## BROADWATER RILEYS HILL COMMUNITY HALL AND MEMORIAL PARK REDEVELOPMENT

In March 2018, Council sought community views to design a master plan for the Broadwater Rileys Hill Community Hall and Memorial Park redevelopment. The end result is a community hub in Broadwater which is accessible to everyone, and meets the community's desire to maintain open space and active facilities for local residents, as well as provide improved amenities for passing tourists.

In line with community aspirations, the site allows for a variety of community uses for all ages. The open space includes the community hall, new playground equipment, tennis and basketball courts, a skate area, as well as two BBQ areas and public toilets.

Now completed, the site provides somewhere for people from Broadwater and Rileys Hill and surrounding areas to come together to benefit from activities which strengthen the community, such as art exhibitions, community and civic events, as well as providing a relaxing outdoor facility for the community and visitors.



Broadwater Youth Space

## CASINO SHOWGROUND AND RACECOURSE

Richmond Valley Council received \$8.2 million from the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery fund, plus an additional \$1 million through Crown Lands Showgrounds Stimulus Funding Program. Predating these announcements, RVC received \$420,000 through the Drought Communities Program for the construction of undercover day stalls and new camping infrastructure, including an RV short stay area to deliver the master plan for the showground and racecourse precinct. As trustee of the site, Council began planning for a major overhaul of the showgrounds in 2018, and welcomed the November 2020 funding announcement.

Two tenders were issued seeking submissions from suitably qualified contractors in May 2021 for the design of the building and facility upgrades and the design and construction of the sand and grass tracks. The tenders are yet to be finalised. Key elements include:

- Undercover equestrian arena, turf event spaces, improved warm up areas, parking areas

- Improved public toilet facilities, betting ring, canteen and bar and spectator areas, float and truck parking at the southern access
- Stable areas, parking areas, landscape screening, wayfinding signage, agistment yards
- Mural on the day stalls, signage, landscaping and wayfinding infrastructure
- Electrical design, power consolidation, new services and extension to service camping area
- Full renovation of the sand training track including new subgrade and replacement of sand suitable for a fast sand track
- Remediation of grass race track to improve levels and cambers for drainage and grass renovations to improve and promote healthy grass growth
- Drainage improvements
- Irrigation solutions to service both the sand and grass tracks

A new and improved showground and racecourse will help put Casino on the map as the destination to host major competitions and community events, which will lead to more visitors in town, spending with local businesses.



Casino Showground



Casino Racecourse



## NORTHERN RIVERS RAIL TRAIL

The Northern Rivers Rail Trail is the proposed conversion of 130km of disused rail corridor into a functional rail trail that will wind through the Northern Rivers. The rail trail will connect many towns, villages and cities within the region. It will pass through Lismore, Bexhill, Eltham, Bangalow, Byron Bay, Mullumbimby and other small villages. Casino and Murwillumbah are the start and finish points for the full rail trail.

In 2019 in conjunction with Lismore City Council and Northern Rivers Rail Trail Inc, Richmond Valley Council jointly funded the Casino to Eltham Northern Rivers Rail Trail Business Case. Casino to Eltham is a 45km stretch of potential rail trail which winds its way through some of the most scenic pastoral locations in the country.

The Australian Government has since committed funds of \$7.5 million to complete construction of the 13km Casino to Bentley section of rail trail, out of its National Tourism Icons Program. The Casino to Bentley section will be the southern trail head for the full Northern Rivers Rail Trail. The rail corridor is public land, managed by Transport for NSW.

The Tweed section of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail was the first stage of the full rail trail to receive funding. This is a 24km section stretching from Murwillumbah to Crabbes Creek and will be the northern trail head.

In June Tweed Shire Council awarded an \$11.8 million contract to complete the design and construction for its 24km section of rail trail. This stage takes users through the Tweed Valley and includes two tunnels and 26 bridges. The Tweed section has been jointly funded by both the Australian and NSW governments. The Australian Government has provided funding under its Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Package Fund, with the NSW Government funding coming from its Restart NSW program.

The Northern Rivers Rail Trail is a significant recreational infrastructure project which has been modelled to provide a wide range of economic, environmental and health benefits to the region. It will also be a valuable education tool for locals and visitors. The rail trail will help support economic growth, as it has in other regions where rail trails have been established. The historical value of the rail corridor will also be preserved, with the Old Casino Station to be refurbished as part of this project, offering a tribute to the corridor's past uses.



Northern Rivers Rail Trail

## CASINO MEMORIAL SWIMMING POOL

The Casino Memorial Swimming Pool is a key community facility which was built in the 1950s and now needs major upgrades to provide a modern and safe aquatic experience for the users. Estimated cost for a full modernisation is around \$15 million.

Council engaged industry experts to identify the safe operational requirements of the pool and also turned to the community for their ideas and feedback on what they want the site to provide. Following the compilation of this information, Council adopted a master plan. This project will be delivered in stages in line with available funding. Council has secured a \$3.2 million grant from the Australian Government to:

- Replace the filtration systems
- Expand the 50 metre pool to an eight-lane pool with an additional all-abilities access ramp
- Include a splash pad
- Upgrade the change room facilities
- Remove redundant structures

Future stages to realise the full potential of this project include an indoor 25m heated pool, new water slide facilities, and a revitalised kiosk and entry.



Casino Memorial Swimming Pool

## REHABILITATION OF WOODBURN-CORAKI ROAD

After completing \$2.4 million worth of road reconstructions in 2017-2018, Council is continuing to coordinate works relating to the \$10 million, three-year upgrade of Woodburn-Coraki Road. Work began on the southern side of the road at the Woodburn end, which was widened, with soil from the new road shoulders excavated and replaced with quality selection fill and a road-based upper layer. Multiple drainage works have also been carried out including subsoil drainage and lasered longitudinal surface drainage. Council is also working with a contractor to deliver a new box culvert on the side of the road.

The Woodburn-Coraki Road has pulled its weight in supporting the construction of the Pacific Motorway, with thousands of trucks carrying large volumes of quarry material. It is an increasingly important link to and from the Pacific Motorway for residents, tourists and industries across the Richmond Valley, Kyogle, Tenterfield and beyond.



Woodburn-Coraki Road



## RAZORBACK LOOKOUT REDEVELOPMENT

The redevelopment of Razorback Lookout is underway thanks to a \$400,000 grant from the Australian Government's Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program with Council co-contributing \$20,000 toward the project.

Council developed a master plan for the site in 2020, which proposed a range of upgrades to improve access, aesthetics, facilities, and the overall experience for locals and tourists. There will be improvements to car parking and landscaping, as well as better pedestrian pathways, new picnic shelters, barbecues, and toilets to replace the old facilities, plus new entry signage, and upgraded Ocean Drive stair access.

## RAPPVILLE COMMON

Construction of the new Rappville Hall is one step closer after the consolidation of two parcels of land Richmond Valley Council acquired to progress the project.

At its 15 September 2020 meeting, Council voted unanimously to consolidate the two lots at 3 Lyons Street (the St John's Anglican Church site) and 10 Murray Street, into a single lot, and classify the consolidated lot as operational land. The siting of the proposed Rappville Common will incorporate sections of both lots.

Designed by architect Virginia Kerridge, the proposed new Rappville Common includes a spacious hall, outdoor deck, a separate communal kitchen, along with a covered outdoor dining area and storage and amenity facilities, and garden spaces designed by landscape architect Jane Irwin.

Council received funding for this project from both the Australian Government's National Bushfire Recovery Agency and the Business Council of Australia's BizRebuild bushfire recovery initiative, which have combined with Council's insurance payment from the loss of the original hall.

## BROADWATER SHARED PATHWAY

The Broadwater shared pathway, opened in October 2018, provides a much safer, more accessible and connected cycling and walking link between Broadwater village and the beach. The \$1 million dollar project, funded from the NSW Government's Active Transport Program, saw stage one of the pathway starting on Little Pitt Street, going down George Street, onto the Broadwater-Evans Head Road, and into Broadwater Beach Road. An extension, which got underway in 2021, has the pathway going along McDonald Street, from George Street, to the Pacific Motorway.

The construction included a pedestrian refuge island on Little Pitt Street and kerb blister islands on George Street. These provide safe crossing points for pedestrians and will assist with traffic calming. Drainage works included the installation of box culverts and stormwater pipe extensions to accommodate the 2.5m wide shared path.

The pathway was designed to be universally accessible wherever possible, ensuring sufficient width to accommodate wheelchairs, prams, and walking aids. It also features retaining walls and bike racks.



Broadwater Shared Pathway

# COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

In developing Council's Delivery Program and committing funding to key signature projects identified by the community, Richmond Valley Council considered the priorities and expected levels of service which were expressed by the community during ongoing engagement efforts. To continue to involve as many community members as possible in the development of RVC's planning processes, and to ensure the long-term success of the Richmond Valley Made 2030 Community Strategic Plan, a Community Engagement Strategy was adopted in 2016/2017.

## HOW WE INVOLVE YOU WITH OUR DECISIONS

As a local authority, RVC works at the level of government closest to the people, where it is easy for residents to become involved in activities and decisions. RVC provides opportunities for the community to take part in Council's ongoing decision-making processes by:



In June 2021, Council undertook a survey of community members to gain an understanding of what is important to residents. The telephone survey, conducted by independent researchers Micromex, was designed to provide important insight into the local community's priorities and satisfaction levels with regard to service delivery, facilities and future planning. The information collated will be used to guide Council's decision making over the next 10 years and will aim to ensure

priorities are set according to the community's needs. The survey involves a sample of 400 people, with representation across the entire region, and across all age brackets.

Two additional ways in which Council has consulted with the community include the Local Strategic Planning Statement and master plan consultation.

## RICHMOND VALLEY COUNCIL LOCAL STRATEGIC PLANNING STATEMENT

The Richmond Valley Council Local Strategic Planning Statement: Beyond 20-20 Vision outlines the Richmond Valley Local Government Area's town planning priorities and strategic direction to address planning and development issues of importance to a vibrant and sustainable future.

It investigates the unique attributes of the local area, and its community values, and provides a rationale for decisions about how land use patterns will evolve to achieve the community's broader expectations over the next 20 years.

The Statement is primarily informed by the North Coast Regional Plan 2036 (NCRP) and Richmond Valley Council's Community Strategic Plan (CSP), as well as having regard to a range of state, regional and local plans, policies and strategies.

## MASTER PLAN CONSULTATION

Council has invested in community consultation in the development of master plans. Of note, Council has widely consulted in its development of master plans for the Broadwater Youth Space, Civic Hall, Crawford Square, Casino Drill Hall, Casino Showgrounds, Queen Elizabeth Park, Coraki Community Infrastructure, Woodburn Riverside and Razorback Lookout at Evans Head.

Consultation has taken the form of compiling information from facility managers and user groups to produce a draft, to then be developed further by the key stakeholders through workshops, submissions, site visits and architectural input.

Sessions were held at the various venues with the focus groups to develop the plans, with the final drafts being placed on public display for commentary and input, usually for 28 days.

The final drafts were then adopted by Council and circulated to the key stakeholders to inform them of the strategic direction of the facility into the future. The process has been successful in ensuring opportunity for community input into these valuable facilities and infrastructure.



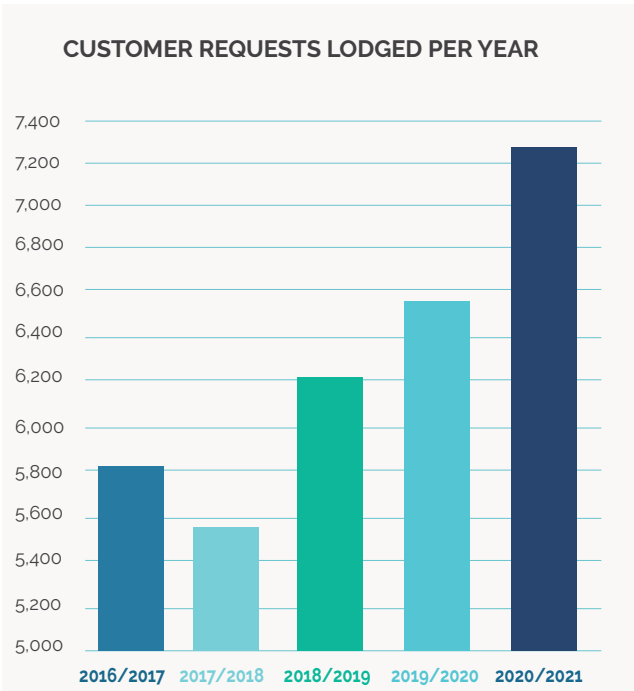
# MONITORING AND MEASURING

## ASSESSING PERFORMANCE AND RESPONDING TO OUR COMMUNITY'S NEEDS

In addressing the needs of the community, Richmond Valley Council responds to service requests relating to activities which are the responsibility of Council. Council monitors the types of request, complaint or enquiry and is able to track progress and outcomes.

Each request has a particular timeframe allocation for completion according to the type of request and our response is monitored against this timeframe. Primarily, issues and community contact via this system involve those related to companion animals, water services, waste services and road maintenance.

The outcomes of Council's Customer Experience team are monitored and reported to Council on a quarterly reporting basis. This allows for a transparent measure of one aspect of Council's service delivery.



## COMPARATIVE DATA

Each year, the Office of Local Government (OLG) reports on the performance of local councils across NSW on the Your Council website <https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/public/about-councils/comparative-council-information/your-council-report/>.

The OLG groups similar councils together, so it is easier to compare like for like. Richmond Valley Council is in Group 4, along with 22 other councils in regional NSW. The table below shows how RVC currently compares with other councils in the group on community leadership measures.

MEASURE	RVC	GROUP 4 AVERAGE
No. of Councillors	7	10
Population per councillor	3343	4009
Code of Conduct complaints	0	4
Cost of dealing with Code of Conduct complaints	\$0	\$17,061
Councillor expenses	\$14,000	\$62,275
Total mayoral and councillor fees	\$182,000	\$234,385
Mayoral and councillor conference expenses	\$2000	\$12,281

# COMMUNITY SURVEYS

Richmond Valley residents were asked to share their views on Council's future direction, with a community survey taking place across the region in June and July 2021. The telephone survey, conducted by independent researchers Micromex, was designed to provide important insight into the local community's priorities and satisfaction levels when it comes to Council activities, its service delivery, available facilities, and future planning.

This is the third survey undertaken by Micromex, the first in 2013, and the second 2016. The surveys involved contacting a sample of 400 people by phone, with representation across the entire region, and across all age brackets from 18 years and over. Survey questions covered topics such as: housing; transport; infrastructure services; tourism; arts and cultural activities; as well as Council leadership. Those residents wishing to contribute to the process but were not contacted during the survey period were given the opportunity to request a hard copy of the survey.

## Key findings from 2016 included:

- Overall satisfaction with the performance of Richmond Valley Council was high, with 94 percent of residents stating they were at least "somewhat satisfied" with the performance of Council over the past 12 months, significantly increasing from 2013. Notably, five areas including car parking, 'financial management, protecting the natural environment, stormwater, and festivals and events, had significantly increased in satisfaction since 2013.
- Maintaining local roads and community consultation were identified as key drivers of overall satisfaction with Council, with community consultation in particular having a strong impact on overall satisfaction.
- Residents had high levels of agreement with community-related statements, with 81 percent agreeing the Richmond Valley Council area was a good place to live. Furthermore, residents strongly valued their community spirit, and the friendliness in the area. The location and the access to services it provided, as well as the peace and quiet in the area were also highly valued by residents.
- Though residents had an overall positive outlook on living in Richmond Valley, they expressed concern for local employment and road maintenance/infrastructure.

As per past surveys, the 2021 information will be used to inform Council's decision making over the next 10 years and will ensure priorities are set according to the community's needs, most particularly around service levels, programs and policies, as well as community expectations.

All feedback is critical to Council's work and will help address the concerns or challenges identified by the community.



## Key findings from 2021 included:

- Overall satisfaction with the performance of Richmond Valley remained high, with 86 percent of residents stating they were at least "somewhat satisfied". Resident satisfaction with Council performance and communication had softened since 2016, however, is on par with the Micromex Regional Benchmarks.
- Importance and satisfaction of Council services and facilities were largely in-line with 2016 results, although there had been significant improvements with the satisfaction of areas such as local employment and maintaining footpaths.
- Satisfaction with stormwater (gutters and drainage) decreased, whilst importance had increased. This result was not surprising, however, given the floods which adversely impacted the region earlier in 2021.

The top priority areas over the next five years as identified by the community are roads, provision of quality services/facilities, housing, local employment and attracting businesses and industry.

There is overwhelming support to position Richmond Valley as a Regional Jobs Precinct, with 95 percent at least "somewhat supportive". The community supports the development of local jobs and employment, with the benefit of creating more opportunities for young people and attracting and retaining people to the region.

However, whilst the community is generally supportive of economic growth and development, it is important there is infrastructure in place to support the growth of the Richmond Valley, particularly with regards to housing. Concerns about housing have heightened since 2016, with only 19 percent agreeing that housing in the area is available and affordable (vs 53 percent in 2016).

## KEY FINDINGS - COMMUNITY EXPERIENCE

**83%** of residents agree that the Richmond Valley area is a good place to live.



**70%** of residents feel part of their local community.

**60%** agree that Richmond Valley is a harmonious, respectful and tolerant community.



**19%** of residents agree that housing in the area is available and affordable.

**58%** of residents like to attend events and festivals in the Richmond Valley area.



**62%** of residents agree that they have enough opportunities to improve their health and wellbeing.

## OPEN AND COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP

### COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS

Our aspirations are for high levels of community participation and for our residents to be informed and empowered by open, accountable and democratic leadership which supports ethical and robust decision making. Our decision-making is based on collaborative, transparent and accountable leadership, active citizen engagement in local planning and decision-making processes, and a shared responsibility for achieving our goals. Council is an employer of choice, with a highly-skilled and motivated workforce committed to providing the community with a high level of service.

### COMMUNITY ADVOCACY

Richmond Valley Council is a strong advocate for the local community, working to help make sure the local area gets a fair go and a fair share of government investment. A critical role of Council is to advocate to State and Federal governments and work with industry, business and community leaders to ensure residents can access high-quality services, programs and infrastructure.

Council acknowledges that successful advocacy occurs when Council and the community work together towards shared goals. A key example of Council's advocacy includes the support of the many people in the Richmond Valley community who participate and love the greyhound racing industry. Council acted quickly to assess the impact the proposed ban would have on its community. Talks were held with the Casino Greyhound Racing Club, local trainers and supporting businesses to identify that a ban would hit the local economy hard. Council's leadership and advocacy was highly valued by our community and the quick actions Council took on this issue highlighted what the organisation does to support its people.

Other examples include Council's support of the \$4 million Coraki Campbell HealthOne, and the securing of a HealthOne facility for Evans Head, as well as the introduction of shark nets and drone trials taking place along our coastline.





## COMMUNICATION WITH OUR COMMUNITY

Council's Communications team works to inform the community of Council activities, programs and achievements and to provide information and opportunities which encourage community participation and feedback. Key corporate communications activities include: publishing Council's monthly newsletter Valley Views, which is delivered to 10,778 letterboxes in the local government area; sending regular eNewsletters and alerts to 15,300 recipients; producing informative videos on Council's capital works program, as well as other key projects; managing Council's websites and social media channels; and managing Council's brand and style guide.

Over the past term there have been several major communications campaigns. These include the information campaign during and after the October and November 2019 bushfires and a campaign to increase awareness of Council's delivery of five priority projects – the Northern Rivers Livestock exchange upgrade, Woodburn Riverside Park renewal, Coraki Riverfront Precinct revitalisation, development of the Casino Drill and Riverside Precinct, Broadwater Rileys Hill Community Hall and Memorial Park redevelopment, and the reconstructing of the Woodburn-Coraki Road. These campaigns included media coverage, social media campaigns, designated webpages, and showcase videos for each project.



Casino Ambulance Station

## GETTING SOCIAL

Council's social media presence has grown substantially over the past term and now has 7000 followers on its corporate Facebook page. Other Council-managed pages include Richmond Valley Animal Shelter (3808 followers), Discover Richmond Valley (2091), the Northern Rivers Livestock Exchange (1179) and the Northern Rivers Rail Trail - Casino to Bentley (1066). Building our social media audience is a positive way to create brand awareness and build relationships with our community.

## WEBSITE REDESIGNS

Council launched its new corporate website in 2018, as well as sites for Discover Richmond Valley and the Northern Rivers Livestock Exchange.



Regional Prospectus announcement

# OUR ECONOMIC VITALITY

**Richmond Valley Council has a strong and proactive approach to economic development across the local area, where the attraction of new business and new jobs is the result.**

Through proper management of community assets, Council is reinforcing and expanding what are – and will continue to be – the building blocks of prosperity: employment; opportunity; and a strong community.

Opportunities don't just have to take place in Brisbane and Sydney. They can happen right here in the Richmond Valley.

During our many community engagement sessions, Richmond Valley residents identified economic development as the cornerstone for a prosperous future, which is why Council welcomed Deputy Premier John Barilaro's announcement in 2021 that the Richmond Valley would be the location for a Regional Job Precinct, one of four precincts which are part of the NSW Government's bush-led recovery from drought, floods, bushfires and COVID-19.

Regional Job Precincts are designed to streamline red and green tape with a 30-day target for planning approvals. Each precinct will maintain the local appeal and amenity of the area so economic and job growth doesn't compromise the lifestyle locals love.

The Job Precinct provides Council with the opportunity to show local and regional-wide leadership, and highlight the important and vital role councils can play in job creation, and future-proofing local economies.

The Precinct will provide opportunities for employers looking to expand operations, and for new investors looking to invest in the region. Best of all, it complements the goals in Council's Guide to Economic Development in the Richmond Valley, the Imagine - 2020 and beyond Supporting Progress in the Mid Richmond booklet, and our Community Strategic Plan to create long-term job growth in the local area.

Council is focused on creating an environment which encourages new business and supports existing operators.

The Richmond Valley already is a leader in primary industries and food manufacturing enterprises, with the Sunshine Sugar Mill located at Broadwater and Casino Food Co-op and Richmond Dairies at Casino, however, much more can be achieved with Council, governments and businesses working together.

Council has worked hard to cultivate the right conditions for local employment opportunities and growth, and is now in a position to start securing future investment.





Council was successful in getting a \$9.969 million grant, from the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund, co-funded by the NSW and Australian governments, which is being spent on the construction of road, water, sewer and power services to develop 46ha of industrial land in Casino. Known as the Casino Industries Activation project, it will establish a strong case for businesses to locate to the Richmond Valley, in particular manufacturing businesses.

Council is also working with proponents on a number of exciting proposed projects which will leverage the Valley's strengths. These include:

**SANA Nutraceuticals \$220m medicinal cannabis project, which will create up to 300 new jobs and has the capacity to make a turnover up to \$1 billion. With Office of Drug Control licences now secured for cultivation, manufacture and research, this project represents a significant step-change opportunity for the regional economy.**

**A site for an alternate waste treatment facility to service the region's landfill waste.**

**Terra Hemp Co - \$5.25m hemp food and oil hub for the cultivation, production and manufacture of hemp-related products.**

**A state-of-the art bio-energy generator at the Casino Food Co-op, the North Coast's largest meat processor.**

**270ha Casino Rail Freight Terminal for integrated agricultural commodities, logistics and agri-business.**

**Pacific Intermodal rail and road integrated industrial park.**

**Activating new residential developments across the Valley.**

**Reynolds Road industrial subdivision to be marketed early 2022.**

Council will continue to work closely with the Federal and State governments, along with existing and interested investors, to deliver projects and capitalise on investment opportunities.

## VISITOR ECONOMY

Council has an important leadership role in strategic destination management across the Richmond Valley local government area. This includes funding support and coordination of destination marketing initiatives, events and visitor information services, as well as strategic planning, and infrastructure development to support sustainable tourism development.

The Richmond Valley visitor economy has been growing incrementally over the past five years, in line with other Northern Rivers local government areas, and now with a new Richmond Valley Destination Management Plan 2021-2025 in place local tourism has an exciting future.

The Richmond Valley Destination Management Plan 2021-2025 was release in 2020 and sets an overall strategy to guide the work of Council and local stakeholders to support the sustainable growth and development of the Richmond Valley visitor economy as an appealing tourism region within the Northern Rivers region of NSW.

One of its key aims is to encourage tourism business investment in the area to support the ongoing development of diverse tourism offerings right across the Valley, from the coast to the rural hinterland.

Tourism is estimated to contribute around \$78 million in direct visitor expenditure to the Richmond Valley economy per year. Domestic day trips account for 59 percent of visitors to the region, and domestic overnight visitors account for 40 percent of visitors.

With our popular year-round coastal destination of Evans Head, and the rural heritage heartland destination of Casino, as well as the villages of Broadwater, Coraki, New Italy, Rappville and Woodburn, the Richmond Valley offers a huge range of visitor experiences.

### VISITOR INFORMATION SERVICES

As part of the 2017-2019 Tourism Development Plan, Council aimed to improve tourism information and further develop tourism across the Richmond Valley.

From August to September 2019 Council opened three new visitor information centres in Casino, Evans Head and Woodburn. This bucked the general trend, because we believe nothing beats face-to-face contact with a passionate local spruiking the hidden secrets of their region. The VICs also stock a range of local handmade crafts and fine foods, adding to a unique Richmond Valley experience.

The Casino Visitor Information Centre is located at the Casino Drill Hall Precinct which includes the Northern Rivers Military Museum, accessible toilets, parking, event space and amphitheatre. The space will soon be home to a remembrance walk and viewing platform over the Richmond River as the final stages of the Casino Drill Hall Precinct Master Plan are put into place. The centre is operated by a full-time staff member with the assistance from a dedicated team of volunteers. The centre provides quality visitor information seven days a week including, local, regional and national information. The centre includes a promotional screen, lounges for visitors to relax and free WIFI. The centre also has a large range of locally-made produce and handmade gifts, most of which are created by our talented volunteers.

### DRIVER REVIVER IN CASINO

In 2020, Driver Reviver encouraged expressions of interest for visitor centres interested in participating in the program to fill the gaps where volunteer run Driver Reviver stops had closed. On long weekends and during school holidays the Casino VIC participates in the Driver Reviver initiative, providing free tea/coffee, biscuits and fatigue information to travellers. This program is run with the help of Driver Reviver, Destination NSW and Transport for NSW. Transport for NSW was recently successful in grant funding to purchase permanent signage at the entrances to Casino which indicate when the Driver Reviver is open at the Casino Visitor Information Centre. This will further encourage visitors to stop in Casino and take a look around.

### EVANS HEAD VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE

The Evans Head Visitor Information Centre is located on the Evans River just a short walk from the main street, caravan park and beach. The centre has its own history, as it is housed in a refurbished school building relocated from the original old Evans Head Public School site in 2019. The centre is run by a full-time staff member and team of dedicated local volunteers. Open seven days a week, the centre provides quality visitor information including local, regional and national information, and has a large range of locally-made produce and handmade gifts.





## WOODBURN VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE

The Woodburn Visitor Information Centre is set on the Richmond River, on the former Pacific Highway. The centre forms part of the Woodburn Riverside Park, a major upgrade to facilities for locals and visitors to enjoy including the visitor centre and community building, new public toilets, BBQ facilities, playground, man-made beach and pontoon. The centre is run by a full-time staff member with the assistance of volunteers. The centre is currently open four days a week. It provides quality visitor information including local, regional and national information, and a large range of locally-made produce and handmade gifts.

## MODIFIED DRIVER REVIVER IN WOODBURN

In 2020 and 2021 the Woodburn Visitor Information Centre participated in handing out free drink vouchers to passing travellers. This was a Transport for NSW initiative where all businesses were encouraged to participate, and were reimbursed the vouchers at the end of each long weekend. This was a small economic boost to the town and encouraged travellers using the visitor centre amenities to stay in town longer.

## POP-UP VISITOR DISPLAY AT NEW ITALY

Richmond Valley Council has a pop-up visitor display at the New Italy Museum Complex on the Pacific Motorway. The display includes information, maps and brochures for the local, regional and state areas. The display is self-serve and services visitors who call into the complex and are looking for information on nearby travel opportunities or future planning.

## INVOLVEMENT AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

Council is proactive in its commitment to enhancing tourism at a local, regional and State level, regularly attending Northern Rivers tourism meetings, Destination North Coast and Destination NSW meetings and conferences.

We are also closely involved in the Northern Rivers Tourism Managers Group and form part of the executive, holding the secretary role. Members of the tourism team attend a bi-monthly meeting with other councils in the Northern Rivers to discuss

tourism issues, talk to key stakeholders, which include NSW National Parks and Wildlife Services, and Ballina-Byron Gateway Airport. The Destination Richmond Valley team has been involved in the development of maps and brochures to assist travellers and enhance the tourism experience for visitors.

## KEY TOURISM INITIATIVES – BUILDING OUR VISITOR EXPERIENCES

Richmond Valley online paddle guides – A paddle expert was engaged to develop a guide for the Richmond Valley area. This initiative has produced digital guides to 13 paddle routes, which cover the Richmond River and smaller creeks and rivers in the Valley. This has enhanced the experience for visitors looking to kayak or canoe in the region, and provided those who have never tried river kayaking with a great incentive to do so.

## EXPERIENCE EVANS HEAD

Council works with the Evans Head Business and Community Chamber to help with its ongoing tourism campaign 'Experience Evans Head'. Council's Destination Richmond Valley team assists with the managing of the Experience Evans Head social media pages, design and payment of the Evans Head street banners and input into the Evans Head Visitor Guide.

There are several projects Council has either started or is planning which aim to improve tourism and visitor experiences in the Richmond Valley. These include the Evans Head foreshore upgrade, the Casino scenic walk and Casino water tower mural project, supporting the development of mountain bike trails, development of the Paddock to Plate program and the Northern Rivers Rail Trail Casino to Bentley development. Council also provides resources and buildings to three museums - the Northern Rivers Military Museum, Coraki Museum and Casino Historical Museum.

## BALLINA BP DIGITAL VISITOR HUB

Richmond Valley Council is a gold affiliate of the Ballina BP Digital Visitor Hub in partnership with Ballina and Lismore councils. The hub features an interactive visitor information display, rolling Instagram photos from @discovernorthernriversnsw, an interactive habitat game and an interactive waterfall photo opportunity.

## EVENTS AND FESTIVALS

As one of seven local government areas within the Northern Rivers region, the Richmond Valley boasts a diverse calendar of events, including agricultural/primary industry events, large outdoor events and intimate, local community festivals and celebrations. These events span from Evans Head on the coastline to the towns of Coraki and Woodburn on the Richmond River and inland regional centres like Casino. Small villages like Broadwater, Rileys Hill, Ellangowan, Rappville and New Italy also play a part in shaping the annual events calendar for the Richmond Valley.

The scale, number and sophistication of events have evolved over a number of years, although the need to improve and grow the event schedule has now been identified through various consultations at the community level. These resulted in the Richmond Valley Event Strategy and the Community Strategic Plan, which now guide the objectives and actions of the Events Strategy.

## EVENTS STRATEGY

Increasingly, the purpose of many events has changed. While entertainment remains a priority, enhancing the image of the Richmond Valley as an exciting place to work, live, do business and visit are now equally important. The liveability and quality of life for those who live in the region is a priority. Correspondingly, visitors to the region must be supported as they contribute to the economic development of the region. The positive economic and social impacts of many events are now more widely known and accepted by the community.

## WHAT ARE OUR EVENT OPPORTUNITIES IN THE RICHMOND VALLEY?

There are some significant opportunities for the Richmond Valley with events, proposed infrastructure developments and proposed facility upgrades. These pieces of infrastructure help leverage the festivals and are the key for securing future major events by establishing a strong competitive advantage for organisations looking to hold an event in the Richmond Valley, in particular corporate events with international and national markets.

The annual Richmond Valley events calendar lists around 100 events, with half being medium to large scale affairs. Agricultural festivals and shows, field days, water-based events and commemorative events are the Richmond Valley's five biggest event types.

Council's Event Support Scheme encourages and supports a range of events, from local community events to commercially significant State, national and international events. Council's signature event sponsorship program has a long history in providing financial assistance to support the Casino Beef Week Festival and Primex Field Days. Beef Week receives \$30,000 a year, and Primex \$25,000. Council also provides in-kind support, including staff and machinery, before, during and after both events. Beef Week and Primex not only give a boost to local businesses, but also broaden exposure for the whole Richmond Valley.

The events sector was hit hard by COVID-19 and this included a host of events presented by Richmond Valley Council. In an effort to prevent the virus from taking hold in our community, many events were cancelled, rescheduled, or modified.





Council's Events team took to thinking outside the box to create new ways to bring some events safely into the living rooms of our community. These include the Virtual Casino Fun Run and Melbourne Cup Tour, and virtual Christmas tree light-ups.

We were lucky to have a small window of opportunity at the start of 2021 to plan and deliver three key events – Australia Day, Primex Field Days and the Casino Beef Week Festival, which were well-embraced by community.

Although COVID-19 restrictions were in play for many other local events, a good number still took place, such as:

St Mary's Cup

Virtual Casino Fun Run

PUMA Rugby League Camp

Virtual Melbourne Cup Tour

Casino Family Carnival

Remembrance Day

Evans Head Drive In Air Show

Casino Miniature Rail Halloween Night

Craig Shepherd Memorial Ski Race

Casino Virtual Christmas Tree Light-up

Evans Head Virtual Christmas Tree Light-up

Open Air Cinema – Casino

Open Air Cinema – Evans Head

NSW DPI Kids School Fishing Holiday Workshop

Australia Day in Coraki

International Women's Day celebrations

Melinda Schneider Farewell to Doris Day tour

Casino Carp Muster

Woodburn Trash and Treasure Sale

Aero Modellers Fly In

Beechies at the Bowlo

NSW Seniors Festival events

Food Truck Festival Evans Head

Rileys Hill Outdoor Movie Night

Richmond Valley Bushfire Recovery Ride

Hudson Circus

Anzac Day across the Richmond Valley

Primex Field Days

Casino Beef Week including

- Casino Beef Week Fashion Parade

- Casino Beef Week Races

- Casino Breakfast with the Butchers

- Casino Beef Week Saturday

- Casino Beef Week Rodeo

- Casino Beef Week Car Show

Evans Head Breast Comp Ever

Youth Week events

Evans Head Malibu Classic

Casino Poultry Show

Casino Cutting Show

Casino Campdraft

Casino Golf Club Markets

Evans Head Markets

# VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

Richmond Valley Council is just one of the many contributors to progressing our community's vision. Positive collaborations are greatly valued in directly contributing to the achievement of the Community Strategic Plan's outcomes.

- Adopted Council's footpath, pedestrian crossings and related infrastructure program to provide better local infrastructure for residents.
- Adopted the Richmond Valley Destination Management Plan 2021-2025 to guide the work of Council and local stakeholders to support the sustainable growth and development of the visitor economy.
- Produced Rebuilding the Richmond Valley - Community Revitalisation Plan from 2019 Bushfires, which is a comprehensive bushfire recovery plan developed in conjunction with community input, as well as Imagine - 2020 and Beyond, Supporting Progress in the Mid Richmond, to help promote and leverage opportunities for the Mid Richmond villages of Broadwater, Rileys Hill, Woodburn, Evans Head, Coraki and New Italy.
- Hosted 554,867 patrons and visitors to our libraries. Loaned 762,811 items, undertook 4127 programs, Internet bookings 74,030, wifi usage 69,551 and Justice of the Peace services 3125. Implemented a new, state-of-the-art library management system providing an interactive customer-focused interface,

increasing browsing capabilities and bringing all resources, hard copy and digital together in one place. Implemented self-service kiosks and automated return chutes across all libraries giving residents after-hours access. As it was for the rest of the world, 2020 was a different year for the Richmond-Upper Clarence Regional Library. COVID-19 had a major impact on library services. All libraries were closed for a 10-week period from 24 March to 1 June. A Click and Collect Service was greatly appreciated by members, with 11,007 Items borrowed, 62 new members joined, and 3339 reserves were satisfied during this period.

- Supported the Primex Field Days, Casino Beef Week Festival and Casino Truck Show, which attracted many thousands of attendees.
- Supported the Casino and Evans Head Men's Sheds to provide many seniors the opportunity to channel their energy and experience into producing something for the community.
- Hosted International Women's Day and Seniors Week events with a great success, attracting more than 1000 residents to various events and activities across the Valley.
- Welcomed a number of new Australian citizens to the Richmond Valley through citizenship ceremonies.
- Implemented the Explore Next Door campaign to help restart tourism in the region following bushfires and COVID-19.





## QUEEN ELIZABETH PARK

The Queen Elizabeth sporting complex caters for several sports with many stakeholder groups taking an interest in the future development of the sporting precinct. The primary users of the site are senior and junior cricket, senior and junior rugby league, athletics, archery and the greyhound racing club. After a successful grant application through the NSW Government's Stronger Country Community Fund, Council has completed substantial improvements to the Queen Elizabeth Park sporting complex. The scope of works, totalling \$480,000, included: upgraded water connection to QE2 and QE5 including a mobile irrigator; electrical upgrade to QE5 including the installation of new lights at QE3, QE4 and QE5; amenities and canteen upgrade QE2; grandstands for use at the QE Park precinct; relocation of turf cricket pitch from QE5 to QE7.

## WINDSOR PARK, CORAKI

Coraki's Windsor Park received \$95,053 for a much needed facelift to its hockey/football field and clubrooms. The renewal brought the facilities up to standard for Coraki's 1300 residents to use for sports and recreation.

## WOODBURN RECREATIONAL OVAL

Woodburn Recreational Oval, the home ground of Woodburn Wolves Soccer Club, received \$98,714 for a number of improvements including a canteen upgrade, refurbishment of outdated amenities, improved lighting to its fields and shade cloth over the adjacent playground, which will modernise the facilities, reduce graffiti and foster community pride.

## STAN PAYNE OVAL

Upgrades were carried out to the Stan Payne Oval playground in Evans Head. The works included approximately 60 metres of replacement footpath linking the nearby sealed carpark with the playground, three new picnic tables, a bench, barbecue area and a new disability access ramp from the carpark. There were also drainage improvements across the area and an additional footpath from the grandstand to cafeteria. Council worked with Evans Head Tennis Club and contractors to construct four new tennis courts, as well as a clubroom.

## BROADWATER MEMORIAL PARK

The Broadwater Memorial Park is a focal point for the community. The upgrade included new BBQ shelters, a new youth play space featuring a basketball semi court and skate park, as well as drainage and toilet renewals.

## NEW ITALY MOUNTAIN BIKE PARK

The New Italy Mountain Bike Park, the Northern Rivers' first major mountain bike park, was unveiled at the Doubleduke State Forest, Tabbimoble, in 2016. A team of volunteers from the Northern Rivers Dirty Wheels Mountain Bike Club continue to work hard maintaining and building on the 30km of purpose-built, single-track mountain bike trails.

## RAPPVILLE SPORTSGROUND

A valuable community asset, the Rappville Sportsground is undergoing renewal. The canteen and toilet block has been fully renovated, including a concrete pathway around the canteen, a new septic system has been installed, new fencing surrounds the grounds, and bollard fencing on the front boundary has been put in.

# MAJOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS ON THE RICHMOND VALLEY

Ten natural disasters and a pandemic have taken their toll on the Richmond Valley over the past five years, starting with flooding events in March, April and June 2017, February and December 2020, a storm in February 2021, and another flood in March 2021. Drought struck in 2018 and 2019, followed by the Busbys Flat Road and Myall Creek Road bushfires in 2019, and the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021.





## STORMS AND FLOODS

Millions of dollars worth of damage to roads occurred during two flooding events in March and April 2017, which severely impacted Coraki, Bora Ridge, Bungawalbin, Moonem and Swan Bay. A third event in June 2017 affected dozens of local roads in and around Casino. Most common damage from the March and April events had been to sealed and unsealed roads, bridge approaches, and causeways and culverts. Fifty of Council's unsealed roads and 21 sealed rural roads were inundated with water, or suffered significant scouring on steep sections and along shoulders and road edges during the events. This equates to more than 53 kilometres of Council's road network. A full claim was lodged under the jointly-funded Commonwealth-State Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA) to allow work to be carried out on Rambaldinis, Hogarth Range, Busbys Flat, Stones, Caniaba and Fig Tree roads, as well as restoration of the Myall Creek Road, Boggy Creek Road, Reardons Lane, Swan Bay-New Italy, Moonem-New Italy and Coraki-Ellangowan roads.

Richmond Valley Council received a second Natural Disaster Declaration from the NSW Government following the damaging flash floods of 12-13 February 2020, paving the way for extensive repair works on the Valley's 530km unsealed road network. The total cost of repairs from heavy rainfall caused by ex-Tropical Cyclone Uesi came in at \$4 million. Roads most affected included the Pikapene section of Busbys Flat Road, Old Dyraaba Road, Coraki-Ellangowan Road, Upper Mongogarrie Road, Upper Cherry Tree Road, and the Bulmers Mill section of Busbys Flat Road. Funded under the NSW Government's Disaster Funding Recovery Arrangements

In December 2020 the Coraki area, including the village and Coraki Riverside Caravan Park, was again inundated by flood water, as was Casino in February 2021 when a storm cell struck the town. Richmond Valley was one of 64 local government areas to be impacted by storms and floods in March 2021. Affected residents were entitled to receive an Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment. Recovery grants were also available for eligible primary producers, small business and not-for-profit organisations.

## DROUGHT

The Richmond Valley Council local government area was one of many NSW regions determined to be eligible for government drought support in 2018 and 2019. Due to the low rainfall in the catchment areas and falling river levels residents who receive a town water supply were subjected to level one water restrictions from in January 2019. Level three water restrictions were imposed on 13 February. Much-needed rainfall in April 2019 saw the easing of restrictions, however, the ongoing severe drought which impacted much of the Northern Rivers in November 2019 saw restrictions go back to level three, and forced Council to postpone its scheduled unsealed road grading as water is a key ingredient in maintaining unsealed roads.

Richmond Valley Council partnered with Kyogle and Lismore councils to transport hay and make water deliveries to drought-stricken farmers in and around Narrabri in August 2018. Council decided to be part of the convoy after staff came forward wanting to help farmers in the west of the State, which led to talks with local business and community groups to facilitate the best approach. A second run was made in November 2018 to farmers in and around Collarenebri.

## 2019 BLACK SUMMER BUSHFIRES

As the Richmond Valley Council local government area had experienced significant drought and there was widespread dryness in the region, lightning strikes were quick to ignite the Busbys Flat Road bushfire in October 2019, which cruelly impacted the village of Rappville. Unfavourable conditions and remote locations meant the Busbys Flat Road was difficult to contain and in November 2019 the Myall Creek Road fire took off, spreading east, west and south, threatening residents in Bora Ridge, the Bungawalbin, New Italy, Swan Bay, Whiporie, Camira Creek and Mt Marsh areas. Almost 50 percent of the local government area and more than 350 homes, outbuildings and facilities were affected by fire. It burnt 142,741 hectares of land and severely impeded key industries including primary producers and forestry. The devastating event saw homes, businesses, livestock, grazing land, forestry, crops, machinery and infrastructure lost or damaged.

In addition to evacuation centres setting up within the Richmond Valley area, Council assisted the Richmond District Police Command to activate the Emergency Operations Centre in Casino to coordinate the firefighting effort.

A number of Council staff were seconded to the Operations Centre, and many more were working alongside personnel from the RFS, SES, VRA, RMS, Fire and Rescue NSW, Police, St John Ambulance, Essential Energy and Australian Rail and Track Corporation to manage on-ground activity. The firefighting operation, from the command centre in Casino, was the largest coordinated response this area has ever seen.

Within days, Council began working closely with local bushfire-affected communities and government agencies to provide the support needed for clean up and rebuilding, as services move towards a recovery phase. Council's priority is to continue to rebuild stronger and more resilient communities, focussing on the health and wellbeing of our people, as well as the repair of property and restoration of the environment.

## COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Richmond Valley residents, businesses and communities have been impacted significantly by the COVID-19 pandemic. To deal with the complexities of COVID-19, Council closed certain public-facing services, while others were required to work remotely. During this time no permanent staff were stood down. Throughout the pandemic Council's decision to close and reopen facilities and services was done in line with advice from the Chief Health Officer and the NSW Government's public health orders. Council's reopened businesses and services have transitioned to an operating model that observes the Government's social distancing restrictions.

## COMMUNITY REVITALISATION PLAN

Following these events, Council introduced a Rebuilding the Richmond Valley - Community Revitalisation Plan which identified a range of actions and opportunities to ensure recovery was timely and effective. Funding for the projects contained in this plan was anticipated from a range of sources including Federal, State and local governments, State agencies, private charities and private investment or philanthropists. It's a "living" document and is open to refinements as we consult further.

## FINANCIAL HARDSHIP - NATURAL DISASTER POLICY

After the Black Summer Bushfires, Council initiated a Financial Hardship - Natural Disaster Policy to provide assistance to communities and businesses, while minimising the risk to Council's financial sustainability. Beyond providing financial hardship support to ratepayers, and making changes to Council's procurement policy to favour local businesses and fast-track invoice payments - all of which were necessary, immediate levers to pull - the initial response phase and strategic recovery actions included the deferment of the due date for payments of Council rates and charges by two years, as well as the withholding of interest on outstanding monies for that period. Development fees for those properties directly affected by the 8 October and 8 November 2019 bushfires were also waived.

## RECOVERY MANAGER AND DISASTER DASHBOARD

Council has appointed a dedicated Recovery Manager, and has established an online disaster dashboard to provide real-time information to help residents and visitors to the Richmond Valley be aware of, prepare for, and respond to local emergencies. From road conditions and closures, to power outages and river heights, the disaster dashboard is designed as a one-stop-shop for disaster events. The dashboard provides links to emergency news and contacts as well as a direct feed from the Bureau of Meteorology's weather warnings. Other representatives also provide information including Telstra and Health NSW.

Council is heartened by the incredible strength and spirit shown by the communities impacted by these events and continues to support all residents on the road to recovery.



# HIGHLIGHTS & ACHIEVEMENTS DURING THE TERM

## 2016/2017 HIGHLIGHTS

Construction of Casino Men's Shed. The Men's Shed received a \$160,000 NSW Government Grant to help build a new 20x30m American barn-style shed at the Casino Showground. A further \$12,000 was also granted for the installation of solar supply.

\$30,000 contribution for Primex sponsorship.

Free public Wi-Fi installed in Casino, Coraki, Woodburn and Evans Head CBDs.

Evans Head Skate Park and surrounds completed.

Public Art Strategy adopted by Council.

Richmond Valley Council continues to work and partner with Aboriginal organisations to support and promote programs, events and goals in line with the new Community Strategic Plan.

Adoption of master plans for the Woodburn Riverside Precinct and Casino Drill Hall site.

Reconciliation Week Black and White Ball held in May and NAIDOC Week celebrations held at Colley Park in July.

## 2017/2018 HIGHLIGHTS

\$30,000 playground installed at Woodburn Oval.

Construction of new cricket practice nets at Queen Elizabeth Park No 2 completed. The project was funded by the Casino RSM Club, Casino Junior Cricket Association, Casino RSM Cavaliers and Richmond Valley Council.

Master plans for Nammoona landfill and Woodburn Riverside Park adopted by Council.

Concepts for Casino Showground, Casino Memorial Pool and Crawford Square drafted for community consultation.

Inaugural Northern Rivers Local Emergency Management Committee meeting held, involving the local government areas of Lismore, Kyogle and Richmond Valley.

Launch of Richmond Valley Visitors Guide.

Purchase of land for Canning Grove subdivision.

Production of a Guide to Economic Development and a Tourism Development Plan.

Renewal of community facilities throughout the Council area including playgrounds and amenities for Albert Park, Crawford Square, Queen Elizabeth Park, Webb Park and the Showgrounds in Casino.

Landscape improvements to town entrances, median strips and garden beds throughout the Council area.





## 2018/2019 HIGHLIGHTS

Revitalised Coraki riverfront featuring new jetty, pontoon and boat ramp.

Casino Civic Hall upgrade including restumping, reflooring and storage.

Broadwater youth space featuring modern skate park and amenities.

Commencement of work on the \$7M second stage of the Northern Rivers Livestock Exchange.

Weekly food and garden organics collection service provided for all businesses in the Richmond Valley.

Gym stations installed at Casino's Crawford Square and along the Evans Head riverside.

Construction of new Casino and Woodburn visitor centres.

Free community CPR and first aid sessions.

Council support for rezoning proposal to expand the Casino Industrial Estate.

## 2019/2020 HIGHLIGHTS

Upgrade to Queen Elizabeth Park, Casino, following a successful grant application through the NSW Government's Stronger Country Community Fund.

Release of Rebuilding the Richmond Valley: Community Revitalisation Plan from 2019 Bushfires - a comprehensive bushfire recovery plan.

Council consulted with the community in the development of a long-term financial framework for new footpaths, pedestrian crossings and related infrastructure, known as the PAMP (Pedestrian Access Management Plan).

Completion of the two stage \$14 million upgrades to the Northern Rivers Livestock Exchange.

Upgrade to Casino Drill Hall and Visitor Information Centre.

Woodburn Riverside Precinct upgrade.

Renewal of Evans Head Main Beach foreshore including redesigned beach access points and viewing platforms.

\$1 million Australian Government grant to assist with drought relief projects.

Council received a natural disaster declaration from the NSW Government following the damaging flash floods of 12-13 February, paving the way for extensive repair works on the Valley's 530km unsealed road network.

Council approval of a proposed 69-lot residential development in Broadwater and completion of the first stage of the residential housing estate, Canning Grove in Casino, creating 10 new residential building lots.

Stan Payne Oval upgrade including footpath replacement, picnic tables and new access ramp.



Broadwater Youth Space



Coraki Riverside



Gym Stations Evans Head Riverfront



Casino Information Centre & Drill Hall



Woodburn Riverside Precinct



Evans Heads Foreshore



## 2020/2021 HIGHLIGHTS

\$880,000 upgrade of the Evans Head Library completed in August. Council allocated \$480,000 towards the upgrade, with an additional \$400,000 provided by a Public Library Infrastructure Grant.

Casino Showground \$77,000 upgrade project funded under the NSW Government's Showground Stimulus Program.

Funding boost from the Australian Government to upgrade Razorback Lookout, Evans Head and the Casino Drill Hall precinct.

Stage two of the Casino Civic Hall refurbishment project funded by NSW Government's Regional Cultural Fund.

Public exhibition of the Draft Richmond Valley Council Community Participation Plan 2020.

RVC named as a Regional Job Precinct as a part of the NSW Government's bush-led recovery from drought, floods, bushfires and COVID-19.

Council endorses its first ever Resource Recovery and Waste Management Strategy. The strategy will set direction for Richmond Valley Council's waste business for the next decade, with an emphasis on waste avoidance.

\$133,999 grant awarded to RVC to update local flood modelling as part of the NSW Government's Floodplain Management Program. The funding will assist Council to better understand and manage local flood levels, risk and exposure in the community.

Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund to provide for upgrades to local projects, including Casino Showground \$8,200,000.

The enhancement of the Evans Head Cemetery entrance on Woodburn Street was completed in August. Council planted a row of 22 hoop pines, which are native to the area. These were offset between 26 sandstone plinths linked by chain fencing. The \$80,000 project is part of the Evans Head Town Entry Upgrade program.



Casino Showground and Racecourse



Casino Civic Hall



Evans Head Cemetery

## RICHMOND VALLEY COUNCIL AWARDS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Richmond Valley Council was a finalist at the NSW Training Awards for Large Employer in 2016.

Richmond-Upper Clarence Regional Library won the Centre of Excellence Award in 2016.

RVC's school-based Parks and Gardens apprentice awarded the 2016 Richmond Valley Business & Industry Excellence Awards Apprentice of the Year.

Richmond Valley Council was awarded the Outstanding Employer of Choice in the 2019 Northern Rivers Regional Business Awards.

Richmond-Upper Clarence Regional Library won the 2019 Innovation in Outreach Services Award.

Trainee, Theodore Scholl won the People's Choice Award in the NSW Training Awards in 2020.

## YOUTH EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY (YES)

Richmond Valley Council's award-winning Youth Employment Strategy (YES) has provided valuable training opportunities to 97 trainees, apprentices, and scholars since its inception in 2014. Ten Richmond Valley high school students commenced a two-year school-based traineeship in February 2021 with Richmond Valley Council, delivering them a vital kickstart to their young careers. The 10 trainees have undertaken Certificate II courses in a variety of departments, including civil construction, sport and recreation, business, and horticulture. Five new trainees in the 2021 intake are also recipients of the Elsa Dixon Aboriginal Employment Grant, after Council successfully secured funding to support young Aboriginal people in the Richmond Valley with training opportunities. Council recognises that it can make a positive impact by providing genuine career paths and valuable training for young people.

## TRY A TRADE PROGRAM

Council trialled a Try a Trade Week program in 2018 to encourage young local women to consider taking on a trade with Council, or any other local business should the opportunity arise. The uptake to the trial was fantastic, which led to Council making the program an annual one.

In 2021, Richmond Valley Council is offering local women work experience and training for up to two weeks, seeking women both over 25, as well as those aged 17-25. The program includes nine days of certified TAFE training plus two weeks' work experience in trades and outdoor work. The Try a Trade Week project is designed to support and promote local women taking up positions in traditionally male-dominated trades.





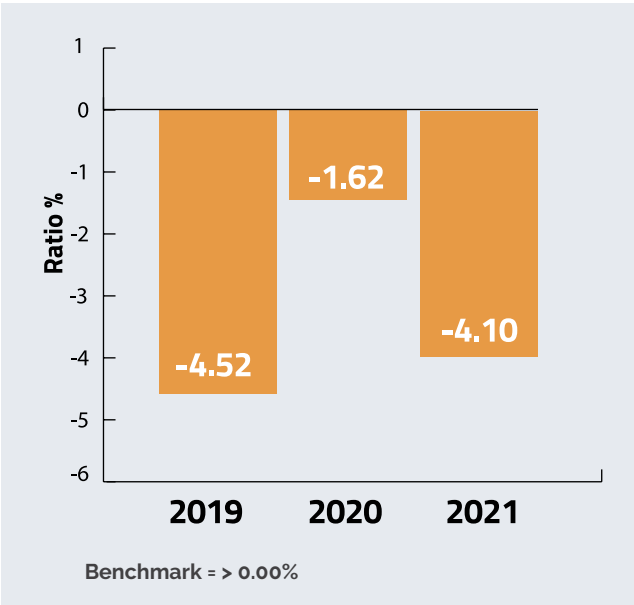
# INDICATORS

RATIO IS OUTSIDE BENCHMARK

RATIO ACHIEVES BENCHMARK

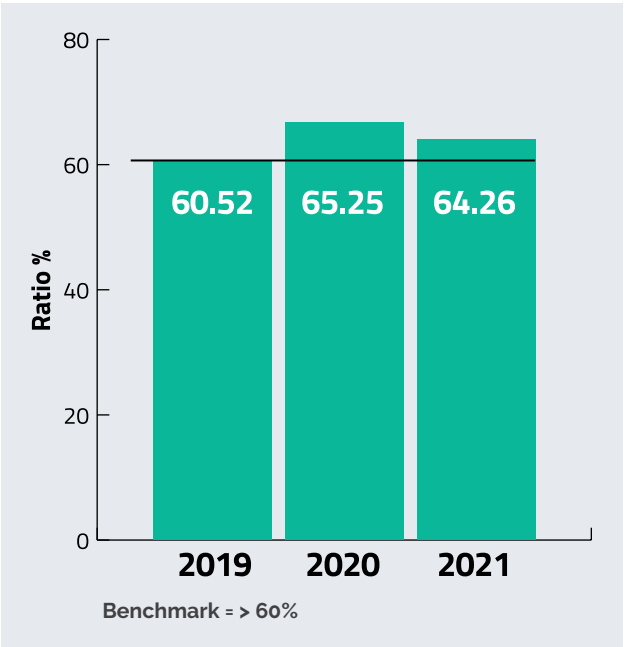
## OPERATING PERFORMANCE RATIO

Council's operating performance ratio has declined to -4.10% for 2020/2021. This ratio excludes fair value gains on investments and capital grants and contributions, both of which increased from 2019/2020. This has led to Council's operating income decreasing comparatively to last year for the purpose of this ratio. In addition, Council's operating expenditure increased comparative to 2019/2020 after the net losses from the disposal of assets are excluded.



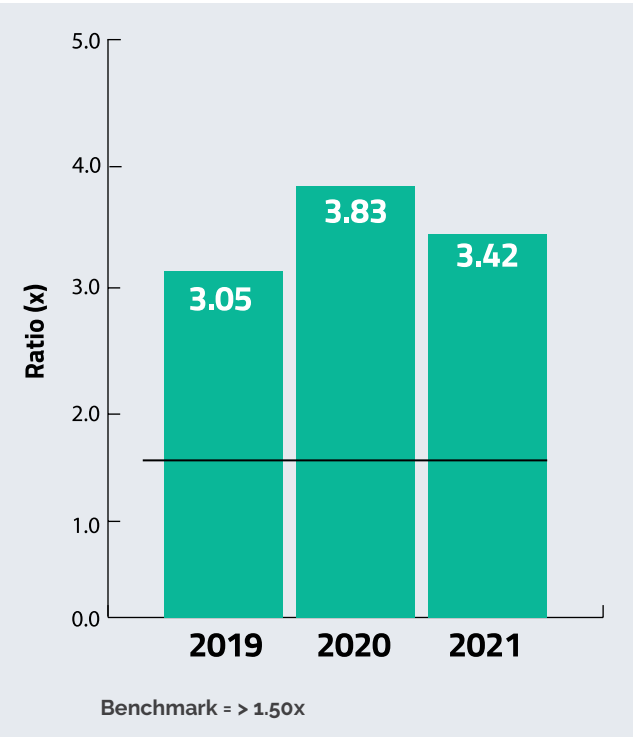
## OWN SOURCE OPERATING REVENUE RATIO

Council's own source operating revenue ratio has fallen slightly to 64.26%, however it remains relatively consistent and above the benchmark of 60%.



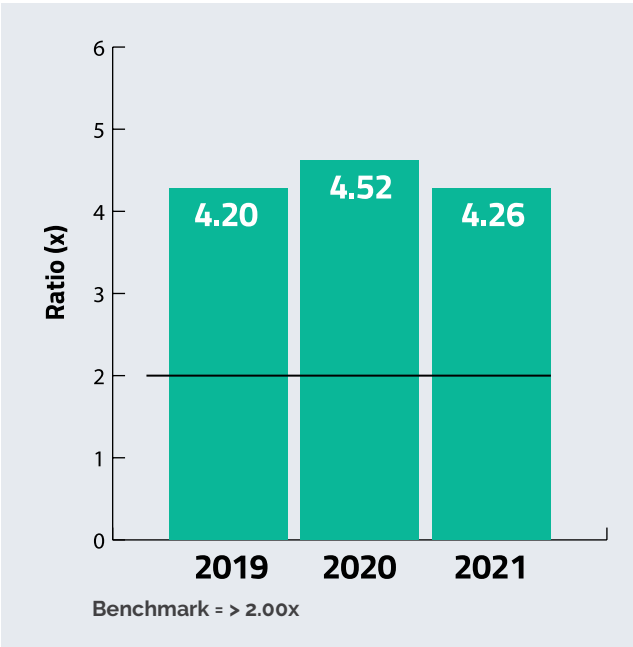
## UNRESTRICTED CURRENT RATIO

Council's unrestricted current ratio has fallen slightly to 3.42, however it remains well above the benchmark of 1.50.



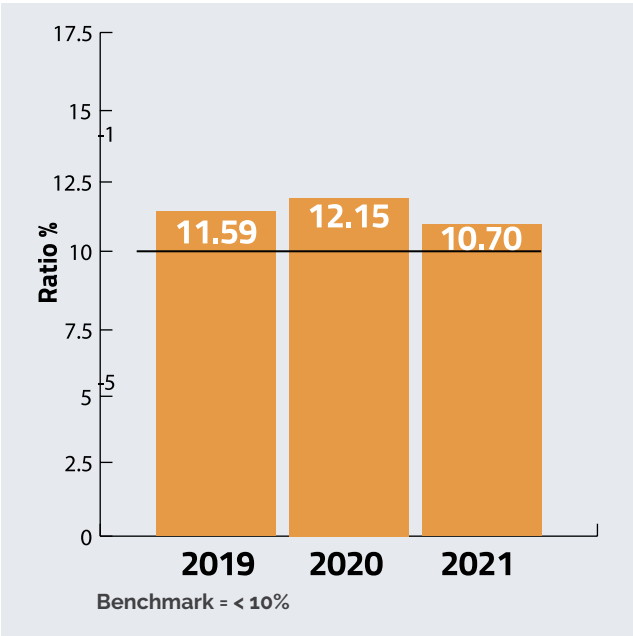
## DEBT SERVICE COVER RATIO

The debt service ratio has decreased slightly to 4.26, however it remains relatively consistent and well above the benchmark of > 2.0.



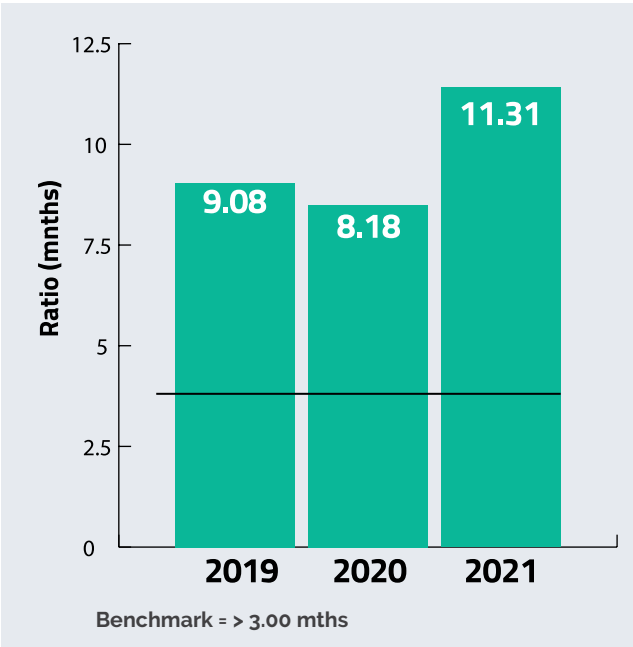
## RATES AND ANNUAL CHARGES OUTSTANDING PERCENTAGE

Council's rates and annual charges outstanding percentage has improved to 10.70% on a consolidated basis and to 5.01% for general fund. The consolidated ratio is impacted the fact that Council levies its water and sewerage annual charges in arrears. Council actively monitors and pursues outstanding balances through its debt recovery practices.



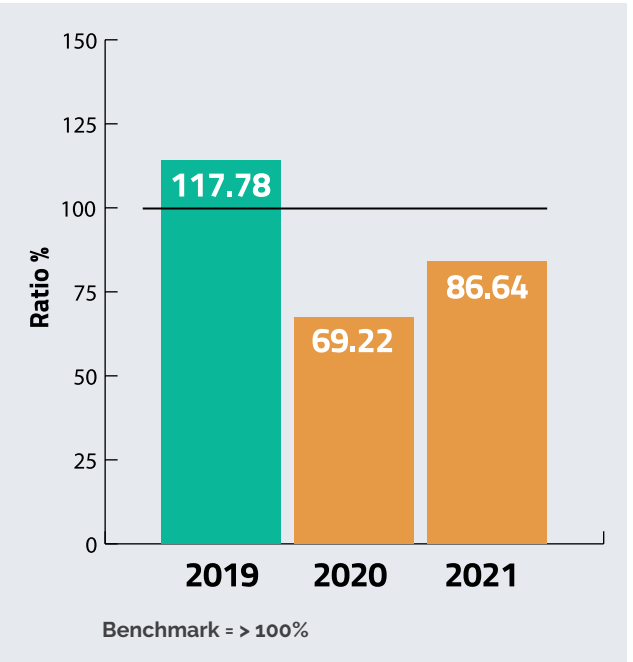
## CASH EXPENSE COVER RATIO

Council's cash expense cover ratio has increased significantly to 11.31 as a result of Council holding a higher level of cash and cash equivalents than the previous year. This ratio is well above the benchmark of > 3 months.



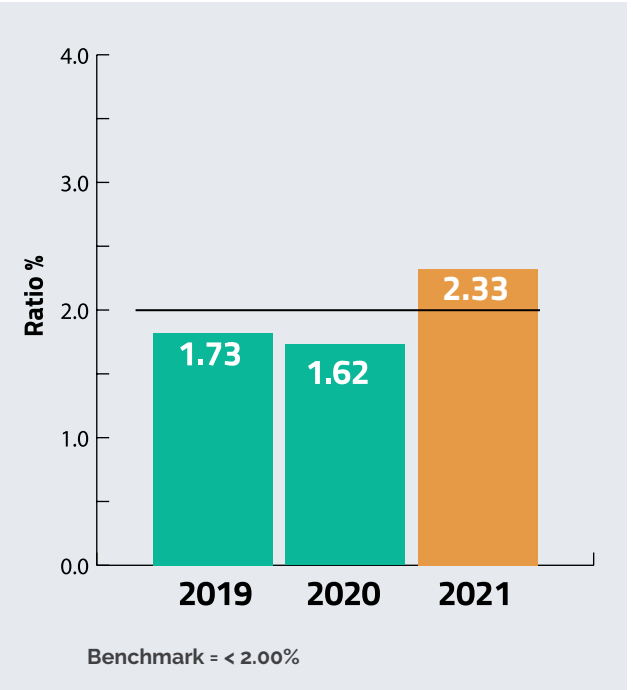
## BUILDINGS AND INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWALS RATIO

Council's buildings and infrastructure renewals ratio improved to 86.64. The 2019 ratio was impacted by Council receiving a significantly higher level of capital grants, resulting in a much higher renewals ratio for that year.



## INFRASTRUCTURE BACKLOG RATIO

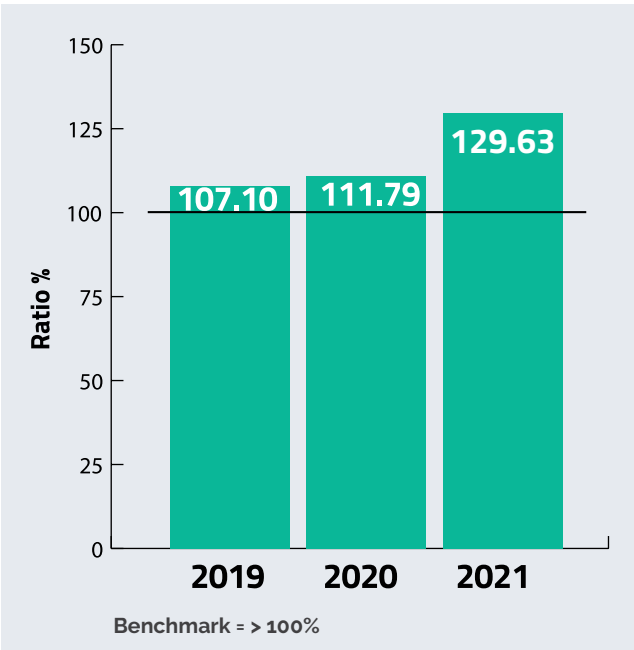
Council's infrastructure backlog ratio has increased to 2.33. This is mainly as a result of impaired roads and bridges assets due to natural disaster events, with approximately \$8m worth of works estimated as being required to restore these assets.





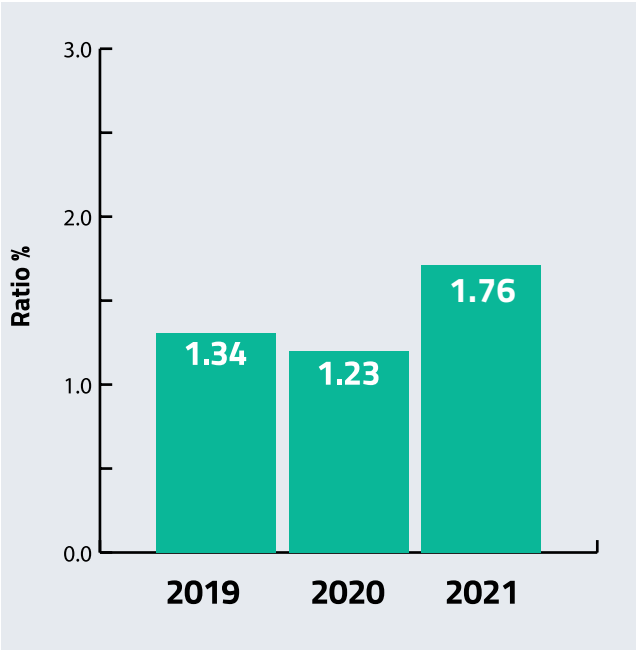
ASSET MAINTENANCE RATIO

Council's asset maintenance ratio has improved to 129.63%, which is above the benchmark of 100%.



COST TO BRING ASSETS TO AGREED SERVICE LEVEL

Council's outstanding renewals remain relatively low at 1.76% of the total replacement cost of its infrastructure assets.



SPONSORSHIP

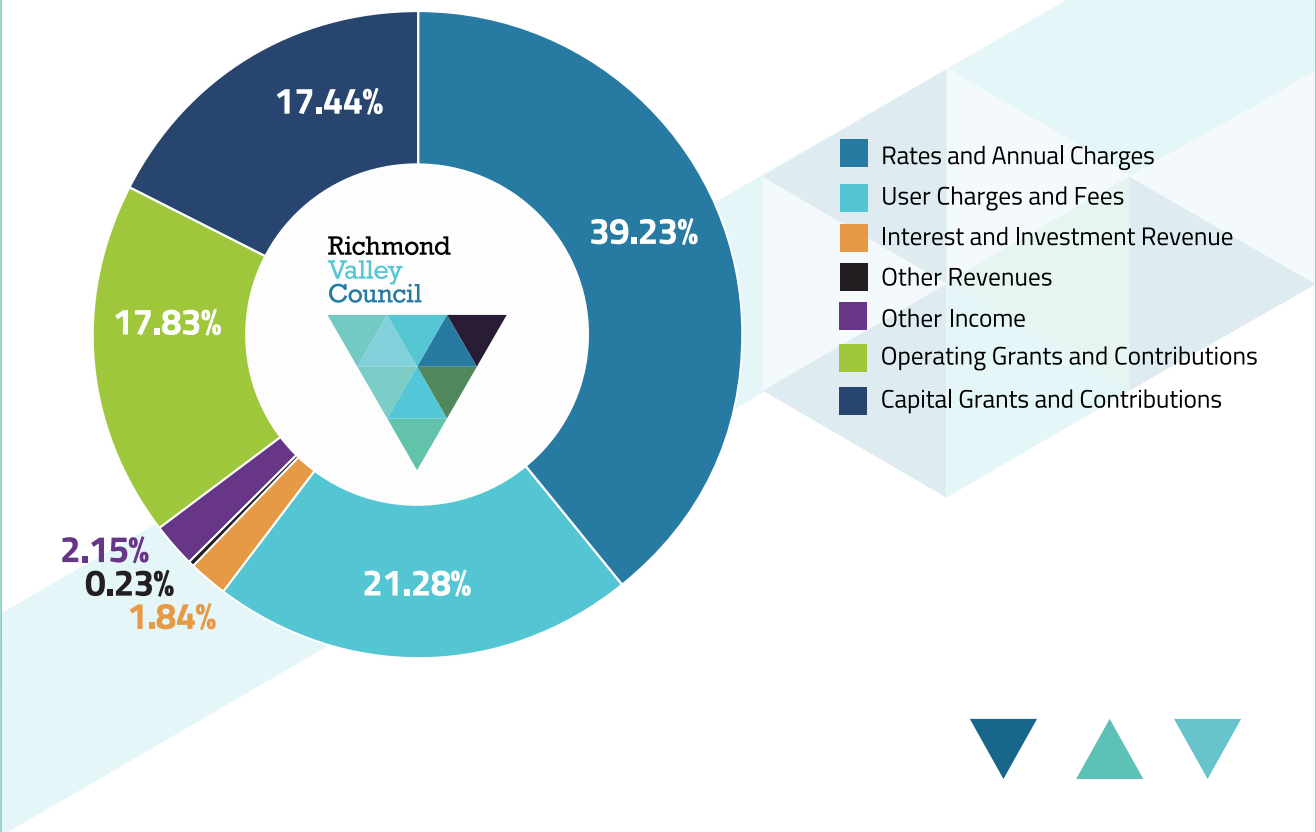
The Richmond Valley is home to some significant regional events, including Casino Beef Week and the PRIMEX Primary Industry Exhibition, attracting some 100,000 visitors between them for their celebration of the beef industry, rural lifestyle and the agricultural produce of our region.

Council has provided funding and in-kind support in excess of \$120,000 each to Beef Week and Primex over the course of the five-year Council term.

In addition to these, RVC hosts an extensive range of events both inland and on the coast.



SOURCE OF COUNCIL FUNDS





Richmond  
Valley  
Council



# End of Term Report

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## 2016-2021

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