



**Richmond
Valley
Council**



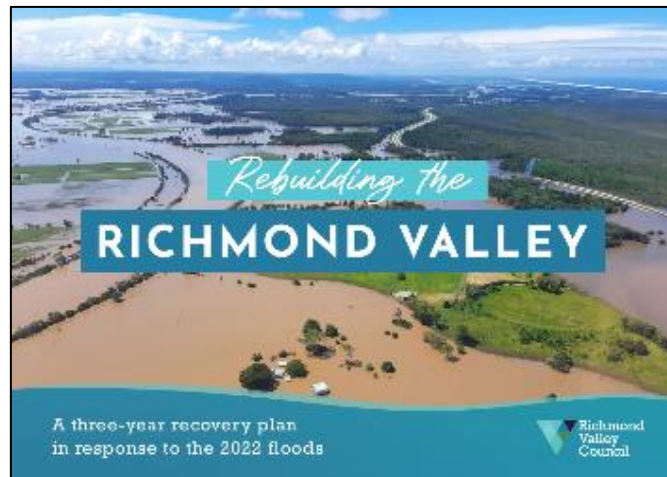
REBUILDING THE RICHMOND VALLEY

Progress Report

July – December 2022

Integrated Planning & Reporting

This Progress Report details action taken against the Rebuilding the Richmond Valley Recovery Plan (Plan), adopted by Council in June 2022. This report relates to the first and second quarters of the 2022/2023 year.



Following the flood event of February-March 2022, Council implemented a revised Integrated Planning & Reporting (IP&R) framework. The Plan detailed Council's vision to help restore the Richmond Valley and to 'build back better'.

The Plan replaces the Delivery Program for the 2022/2023 year, and is structured into three parts:

RECOVER

Council's direct response to the flood is detailed within the 'Recover' actions. This includes actions relating to rebuilding of homes, reconnection of communities and repairs to damaged roads and infrastructure.

Strategies include:

- Working with the community to revitalise towns and villages
- Leading local resilience and recovery programs
- Supporting temporary housing options that keep people connected to their community
- Supporting recovery of key industries
- Documenting the extent of infrastructure damage and identifying funding sources
- Restoring critical regional transport corridors and freight links
- Repairing water and sewerage supply networks
- Restoring riparian habitat zones and managing river water quality risks.

PREVENT & PREPARE

This section focuses on actions that will help to reduce the impact of floods in the future and assist communities with natural disaster preparation. Such as, finalisation of Council's flood studies and redesign of stormwater systems.

Strategies include:

- Restoring and strengthening emergency response infrastructure
- Improving stormwater and drainage networks
- Advocating for improved telecommunication networks
- Improving long-term flood planning and risk management
- Supporting local food production
- Reducing demand on natural resources.

SUSTAIN

The focus within the 'Sustain' actions, is on maintenance of "business as usual" activities, together with continued work on long-term strategies such as the Regional Jobs Precinct.

Strategies include:

- Developing the Northern Rivers Rail Trail and other signature projects for economic stimulus
- Supporting local businesses to recover and prosper
- Attracting new businesses to the Richmond Valley to support a diverse economy
- Providing a range of housing choices for the community
- Identifying, purchasing and developing suitable residential land to support growth
- Strengthening engagement between Council and the community
- Leading with integrity
- Managing resources responsibly and strengthening Council's role as a leading local employer.

RECOVER

OBJECTIVE 1: Help communities to recover and reconnect

1A: Work with the community to revitalize our towns and villages
Principal Activity 1A1: Prepare Place Plans for towns and villages
<i>The draft Casino Place Plan is on exhibition until 28 February 2023. The aim is to have the final Casino Place Plan before Council for adoption at the March Ordinary Meeting. Place Plans for our Mid-Richmond towns and villages will be prepared by early 2024.</i>
On Schedule
Principal Activity 1A2: Help community groups to recommence activities
<i>Work continues to repair and develop community facilities to enable groups to access safe and functional areas to meet and spend leisure/recreational time. Halls, playgrounds, sports grounds and clubrooms have been restored and are available for community use. The Casino Indoor Sports Stadium will be re-opening by early March and the new Rappville Hall opening is scheduled for 27 February 2023. These facilities are examples of community facilities that enable community groups to come together.</i>
On Schedule
1B: Lead local resilience and recovery programs
Principal Activity 1B1: Establish Local Recovery Advisory Groups
<i>Five Advisory groups have been established and meet every 4 - 6 weeks. Each group represents the communities of Rappville, Woodburn, Broadwater, Coraki and a Rural group which has members from Greenridge, Whiporie, Bungalwalbin and New Italy. Council also engages regularly with a range of community groups in Casino. These groups have provided valuable insights and information on each community's needs during the recovery journey which is used to inform Federal and NSW Government MPs and agencies. They also give Council the opportunity to provide the community with up-to-date information on recovery services and grants.</i>
Completed
1C: Deliver community events to encourage reconnection
Principal Activity 1C1: Support the Richmond Valley's Signature Events program
Casino Beef Week Festival <i>Council provides the Casino Beef Week Festival with \$30,000 cash sponsorship, as well as in-kind support. Beef Week was successful last year in securing a \$1 million grant from the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries to assist with its growth. This is the second successful grant in seven years, which has been supported through advocacy by Council.</i>
<i>Council is working with the Beef Week Committee to install cattle wash bays in the Simpson Parade car park and cattle tie rails to support the street cattle events. The NRLX is hosting a three-day Beef Week Calmview Charolais Junior Cattle Education event in March.</i>

Primex Field Days

Council continues to support the Primex Field Days, as it has done since 1985. The 2022 Primex Field Days was a success: 25,000+ attendance over three-days; 1,200 companies represented on-site; \$47 million estimated in sales for exhibitors; 26 percent of consumers bought major purchases (over \$1,000) averaging \$24,700.

The Primex exhibitors and attendees came from a range of industries and businesses across Northern NSW.



Casino Truck Show – August 2022

Now a Council run event with a supportive volunteer committee, feedback from businesses is the 2022 Casino Truck Show was bigger than Beef Week, with most recording their best-ever turnover in quite a while. All motels were booked out however not all retail businesses opened. Many businesses which did open put on extra staff to cope with the demand.

Another interesting fact – trucks like those attending last year cost around \$450,000. There were 370 of them, so we had \$166,500,000 worth of heavy vehicles parked in and around the Casino CBD.

On Schedule

Principal Activity 1C2: Work with communities to develop recovery events

Council has taken a proactive approach by actively seeking ideas and feedback directly from the community through the Advisory Groups regarding resilience and recovery events. Grant funding and allocated funds through the Community Recovery Officer Program have been utilised to support events throughout the Richmond Valley. Council organised a presence at the 2022 PRIMEX Field Days which various State agencies and NGOs also participated in. Preliminary discussions have been held with the Advisory Groups and other community leaders to determine the appetite to hold commemorative events to mark the anniversary of the 2022 flood events. To date, the Broadwater community is the only one who support a commemorative event.

Council Officers are planning a series of resilience/Get Ready workshops in conjunction with Red Cross for early 2023. The first rollout of workshops will target the more vulnerable sectors of our community such as the aged. These types of events had a positive impact when they were rolled out post bushfires and the expectation is that they will once again support the community in their recovery and resilience journey.

On Schedule

1D: Strengthen the role of local libraries in community recovery

Principal Activity 1D1: Increase technology support and digital resources at libraries

The library continues to provide access to a number of online databases as well as continuing to expand eResources. Six Samsung tablets have been purchased to lend to members of our community that are aged 50 years or older to enable them to get experience with technology before going to the expense of purchasing devices. Tech savvy programs continue to be popular with over 130 tech savvy sessions held so far, this financial year.

On Schedule

Principal Activity 1D2: Provide access to recovery and assistance information

Assistance is being provided while noting that there has been a decrease in requests as time goes on. The libraries are continuing to serve members who are in recovering communities. The mobile library has recommenced servicing the communities of both Broadwater and Woodburn on a weekly basis.

On Schedule

Principal Activity 1D3: Develop library-based programs for social connection and wellbeing

The library is continuing to conduct regular programs that are assisting social connection and wellbeing. The library runs various art and craft groups, holds wellbeing days and classes that help seniors keep up with technology. The library was also successful in gaining grant funding to lend devices to those members of the community 50 years and over to assist them engage with the digital age.

On Schedule

Casino Truck Show



Casino came alive in August as the streets filled with some of the best big rigs in the country for the North Coast Petroleum Casino Truck Show. This is the first year Council partnered in organising the show, which saw 375 trucks form a huge parade before parking in the CBD, where a crowd of around 8,000 enjoyed a day of sights, sounds and other thrilling entertainment.

There were more stalls and entertainment than ever before, along with the fact that the show itself was bigger than ever.

Planning for the Casino Truck Show 2023 is already underway following the roaring success of the show in 2022.



RECOVER

OBJECTIVE 2: Support families and businesses to rebuild

2A: Support temporary housing options that keep people connected to their community
Principal Activity 2A1: Support Resilience NSW to establish temporary housing sites
<i>Significant support has been provided to Resilience NSW and the Flood Recovery Housing Taskforce to identify suitable sites to establish temporary housing solutions for the community who have been impacted by the 2022 flood events. Two temporary housing sites have been established and are now operational. The Coraki site has been established on the former Coraki Hospital site. This site supports pod dwellings and includes site/security office, amenity buildings, open spaces and playground. The site in Evans Head is on Crown Land adjacent to the Reflections Holiday Park. This site has been established with caravan sites which are homing flood impacted people.</i>
Completed
Principal Activity 2A2: Support rehoming and fostering of pets for displaced families
<i>Following the 2022 flood events, Council Rangers were very busy assisting flood impacted residents and their animals. This need has declined recently, however support is always available. Council Officers have built strong relationships with a number of rehoming organisations/charities which significantly contributed to the successful rehoming and arranging of foster care for companion animals following the flood.</i>
On Schedule
2B: Support flood-affected residents and businesses through the development approval process
Principal Activity 2B1: Provide development concierge services to support flood affected properties
<i>The Development and Certification department has been providing advice to those persons affected by the February/March 2022 flood events. Advice has been given on a range of issues such as voluntary house raising, flood levels, on-site sewage management, works permitted under complying and exempt codes. Council's Development and Certification staff keep abreast of policy and funding opportunities being released by the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation to ensure we are providing up to date information to the community. Monthly reports on activities are provided to Council meetings.</i>
On Schedule
Principal Activity 2B2: Explore options to improve flood resilience through building design and location
<i>The development of new housing on flood prone land is stringently considered during the development application assessment process. Flood modelling allows staff to determine the suitability of a site for house construction with any proposed development being assessed against strict criteria to ensure risk and safety are acceptable.</i>
<i>Council continues to advocate and is awaiting the details of the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation's Resilient Homes program, to continue to provide advice and support to people recovering from the floods.</i>
On Schedule

2C: Restore central business districts and town centres

Principal Activity 2C1: Ensure CBD precincts in Casino and the Mid-Richmond are well maintained

Council quickly restored our CBDs following the floods and continues to conduct regular inspections and maintenance as per established service levels in accordance with budget allocations. Council's public open spaces, including the CBD precincts have recovered well post the 2022 flood events due to the efforts of our staff. The completion of the new park space in Barker Street, Casino has added to the revitalisation of the Casino CBD area and made it an attractive asset for the community.

Council continues to pursue funding opportunities to enable the upgrade of the Woodburn CBD streetscape in line with the approved Master Plan and work continues on determining an appropriate solution for Richmond Terrace in Coraki to enable improvements to the road and streetscape.

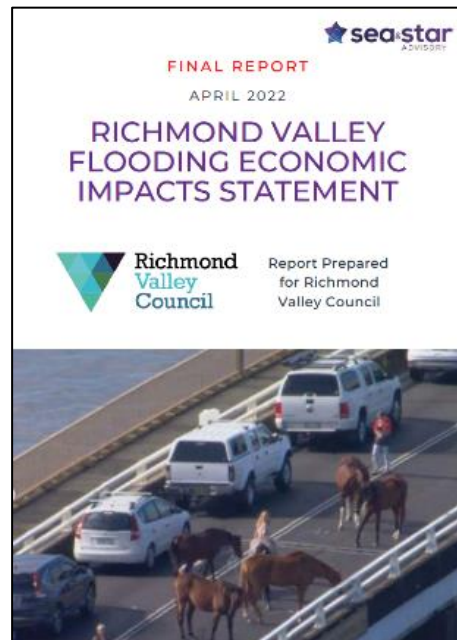
On Schedule

2D: Support recovery of key industries

Principal Activity 2D1: Advocate for government assistance for local businesses and employees

This action is ongoing, working with Service NSW and Office of Regional Economic Development to provide input and feedback on development of grant programs and issues arising from the roll out of programs. Council has been at the forefront in an advocacy role, to highlight the shortcomings and timeliness of support programs. In the initial flood response, Council was active in contacting our register of businesses, both from an immediate support perspective, but also in terms of leveraging the opportunity for some businesses who experienced a significant uplift in trade activity as the impacts of the event became obvious in Lismore and the wider Northern Rivers.

Council has also built on the Richmond Valley Flooding Economic Impacts Statement (April 2022) to prepare a Draft Richmond Valley Economic Development Key Directions document, which will be released for consultation in March 2023.



On Schedule

Principal Activity 2D2: Partner with Regional NSW, RDA and local business organisations to support business recovery

Department of Regional NSW have developed a regional business, industry and tourism flood recovery reference group that Council actively participates in. This forum has been utilised to gain information and provide feedback regarding business recovery initiatives being delivered by the State government.

Council continues to work with the Regional NSW Investment Attraction team to promote all that the Richmond Valley has to offer and to build on the work being done in preparing the Richmond Valley Regional Jobs Precinct Master Plan.

On Schedule

RECOVER

OBJECTIVE 3: Restore the Richmond Valley's road network

3A: Document the extent of infrastructure damage and identify funding sources
Principal Activity 3A1: Complete asset inspection programs and secure funding commitments through DRFA and other options
<i>Inspections of all road infrastructure have been completed. The Reconstruction team are actively submitting claims for Essential Public Asset Restoration works. Other grant funding opportunities are being explored and applied for as they arise. The majority of the unsealed road network has been made safe and gravel replacement and grading works are near complete. It is estimated the full road network damage bill will reach \$150M.</i>
On Schedule
3B: Restore critical regional transport corridors and freight links
Principal Activity 3B1: Support restoration works for Summerland Way and Bruxner Highway
<i>Council Officers continue to liaise with TfNSW who control these state roads and undertake works on behalf of the state to restore these important road networks. Council is playing a key role in advocating for funding to upgrade regionally important transport/freight corridors and make them more resilient.</i>
On Schedule
Principal Activity 3B2: Advocate to upgrade Woodburn-Casino Rd (MR145) as a key regional link road and complete restoration works
<i>Council Officers have advocated for continued funding on the Woodburn-Casino Road for several years in recognition of its role as a key transport link for both residents and commercial / agricultural business. To date, over \$10 million in funding has been secured and the resultant works are ongoing. Recent funding opportunities for culverts at the Dairy Flat flood way has been applied for through the significant NSW Government betterment program with the outcome of assessments due in before March 2023. Council's grants team regularly updates a Priority Projects Prospectus with MR145 identified as a key project to 'finish'. A further \$33 million in funding is needed to adequately upgrade the road to a suitable standard. Where funding is available, design of future sections is completed.</i>
On Schedule
Principal Activity 3B3: Restore essential freight links and community access roads
<i>There has been significant effort to ensure essential freight links and community access roads are all passable to traffic post the 2022 flood events. Additional works are scheduled to be undertaken on a number of key freight links to further add to the initial restoration works. For example, MR145 (Casino to Woodburn) is one of the most significant transport corridors through the Richmond Valley and is often subjected to inundation from flood water. Council Officers are exploring opportunities to improve the resilience of MR145 by identifying key risk areas and determining appropriate measures for betterment to improve resilience of essential freight links.</i>
On Schedule

3C: Remediate landslips and develop long-term solutions for North Casino link roads
Principal Activity 3C1: Complete Naughtons Gap Road realignment
<i>Council continues to advocate to all levels of government for a solution to this significant transport link. Council's funded investigations and options reports to identify the best solution possible to reopen the Naughtons Gap Road. The Transport for NSW preferred option is a repair solution, and not a realignment. A disaster funding claim for the damage has been lodged, along with an application to the significant road asset betterment grant fund. A decision on the success of the grant applications is expected by March 2023.</i>
Behind Schedule
Principal Activity 3C2: Complete Bentley Road landslip restoration
<i>The Infrastructure Reconstruction team is actively engaged with TfNSW on the scope for the repairs to the slip. Negotiations to finalise the scope of works for this project have taken some time to refine and gain acceptance from TfNSW. A revised scope and application were submitted in December 2022. It is expected that the restoration works will take several months to complete once commencement begins. The current estimated value of this reconstruction work is approximately \$1.3M.</i>
On Schedule
3D: Rebuild and repair damaged roads, bridges and culverts
Principal Activity 3D1: Develop & deliver a three-year capital works program for road, bridge & culvert restoration across road network
<i>The Infrastructure Recovery, Assets and Roads and Drainage teams are preparing a three-year program for restoration works across the road network now that road inspections have been completed.</i>
On Schedule
Principal Activity 3D2: Develop & deliver three-year maintenance and inspection program for roads, bridges & culverts
<i>Building on the flood recovery inspections program the Assets team will be preparing this program once the Asset Management Plans are finalised and adopted by Council this financial year. The priority has been to complete emergency works and road inspections to inform Disaster Recovery Funding applications for flood recovery works.</i>
On Schedule

RECOVER

OBJECTIVE 4: Restore essential infrastructure

4A: Repair/rebuild water supply networks
Principal Activity 4A1: Complete urgent repair works to water supply assets
<i>Urgent repair works have been completed to enable all water supply assets to function normally, with emergency repair works completed to ensure our water supply continues to meet the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines. Damage to our water/sewer infrastructure is currently estimated at \$15M.</i>
Completed
Principal Activity 4A2: Design, secure approvals & funding for Casino Water Treatment Plant upgrade
<i>The Powdered Activated Carbon (PAC) dosing system was damaged in the floods and has been restored. Council has signed a funding agreement under the NSW Government's Safe and Secure program to progress to the next stage of preparing proposals for the Casino Water Treatment Plant Review and Options Assessment which includes upgrading of the PAC dosing system have been received and are currently being evaluated. This investigation work has to be completed prior to detailed design work.</i>
On Schedule
Principal Activity 4A3: Deliver quality water supply services
<i>Council continues to deliver water supply services to the Casino community that meet the required service standard while being efficient and NSW Health compliant.</i>
On Schedule
4B: Repair/rebuild sewerage networks
Principal Activity 4B1: Complete urgent repair works to sewerage system assets
<i>Urgent repair works have been completed to allow sewerage services to be restored but we still have significant upgrades/renewals to complete as infrastructure has suffered long-term impacts from the flood. An example of this is the severely damaged comminutor that pumped sewerage from South Casino under the river to the Casino Sewage Treatment Plant. Funding has been secured to upgrade this to a modern pump station solution.</i>
<i>All sewerage assets are functioning normally with the emergency repairs completed, however significant investment and funding support from Governments will be required to upgrade the systems to be more resilient and environmentally compliant.</i>
<i>Damage to our water/sewer infrastructure is currently estimated at \$15M.</i>
Completed

Principal Activity 4B2: Complete Evans Head Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) Stage 2
<i>The Evans Head STP Stage 2 funding application through the Safe and Secure Pathway was approved in December 2022. Council is working with the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) to finalise the options report and associated reports to enable the project to move through the gateways for the Safe and Secure funding program. The original design for Stage 2 is being reviewed with the aim to finalise concept design and move to detailed design and then tender.</i>
On Schedule
Principal Activity 4B3: Construct Rappville Sewerage Scheme
<i>This project received \$3 million funding under the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery program with approval for a contribution by Council if costs exceed that amount. Community members and the advisory group have been regularly updated on progress. A site has been selected, based on consultant research and community feedback with the system design well progressed. A construction start is proposed for by mid-2023 subject to a satisfactory tender response.</i>
On Schedule
Principal Activity 4B4: Design, secure approvals & funding for Casino STP upgrade
<i>A consultant has been requested to provide a proposal for the technical aspects of the design, project management, delivery and regulatory works for a new STP and delivered this in December 2022. A workshop was held in January 2023 with project delivery consultants to provide a roadmap for design, project management and funding pathways to achieve a fast-tracked delivery of a new STP. Through to the end of June 2023 the following tasks will be undertaken in the planning phase of the project: business case development, establishment of a Council project development team, establishment of a Steering Committee, engagement of a project management consultant, preparation of a project management plan including a schedule and financial forecast for the project, drafting a risk register and management plan, drafting a procurement plan, finalising the Council water management strategy, reviewing the DPE risk rating of the Casino STP and engaging a legal team to assist with the delivery of the project. The majority of the documentation produced during the planning phase will be used as required by Council to seek out funding opportunities for a new STP. The fast-tracked program of delivery has the options and concept design stage completed by the end of 2023, detailed design and procurement completed by the end of 2024 with the construction, commissioning and handover of the new STP in 2026.</i>
<i>A preliminary estimate of funding required is in the order of \$60-80 million, depending on effluent outcomes required by environment approval conditions.</i>
On Schedule
Principal Activity 4B5: Deliver efficient sewerage services
<i>Despite ongoing damage impacts to some of our facilities including the Casino STP and Rileys Hill STP, Council continues to deliver sewerage services to the community that meet the required service standard while being efficient and EPA compliant under normal operating conditions.</i>
On Schedule

4C: Restore and maintain community facilities and assets

Principal Activity 4C1: Restore damaged assets, including sporting facilities, parks, recreation areas, cemeteries, footpaths and cycleways

Multiple grant funding commitments, along with insurance funding, has allowed Council teams to restore and upgrade community facilities and assets. Priority has been given to asset restoration from a safety perspective, for example with Queen Elizabeth Park which was used as a temporary waste transfer station at the height of the flood clean-up effort. Community halls, parks, sporting fields and cycleways across the Richmond Valley have all been assessed and prioritised for restoration. This work is on track but subject to the availability of contractors.

The Casino Indoor Sports Stadium floor was significantly damaged in the floods and had to be replaced. A new more flood resilient flooring system has been procured and is being installed with the facility due to re-open by March 2023.

On Schedule

Principal Activity 4C2: Continue to maintain community buildings and assets in accordance with asset plans and programs

Asset and facility maintenance programs are ongoing, with works being scheduled following inspections or when CRMs are tasked to the Assets team. Post flood event, many of Council's buildings have required increased repair and maintenance efforts, some funded by insurance.

The flood event has required Council to make some difficult decisions regarding whether to rebuild damaged buildings, for example, the Leeville Hall which has experienced low patronage over several years and is located in a floodway, will be demolished. The updated Asset Management Plans, due for adoption in the first half of 2023, will inform the maintenance and renewal program of community buildings in future years.

On Schedule



Rappville Hall

Coronation Park



The \$5.4 million redevelopment was made possible thanks to the Australian Government’s Building Better Regions Fund and Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Fund, where Council was successful in obtaining \$2.7 million for the first stage, followed by \$885,000 to build a memorial walk and a further \$405,000 for much-needed upgrades at Coronation Park.

The project also received \$252,000 from the NSW Government’s ClubGRANTS scheme, which helped fund the construction of the Casino Visitor Information Centre, and a \$1.2 million contribution from Council.

Opened in 2019, the first stage included the restoration and expansion of the Drill Hall, now home to the Visitor Information Centre and the Northern Rivers Military Museum, creating an important site for community events with the nearby amphitheatre, and added much-needed parking and landscaping.

A magnificent granite monument honouring the community’s diggers is the centrepiece of the final stage of the Casino Drill Hall Precinct upgrade project, which was officially opened in September 2022. The final stage includes the addition of a memorial walk, reflection pool and monument, which will stand alone as a major feature of the site, while also integrating the Drill Hall with the newly completed Coronation Park. The unique poppy-themed playground at Coronation Park is complemented by a shaded picnic and BBQ area, new landscaping, boardwalk and a viewing platform set above the banks of the Richmond River.



RECOVER

OBJECTIVE 5: Restore the environment

5A: Work with government partners to restore and stabilise damaged riverbanks
Principal Activity 5A1: Advocate for riverbank assessment and restoration programs in Casino, the Mid-Richmond and Bungawalbin
<i>Council has been successful in both the Flying Fox restoration grant for Casino Riverbank (\$299,992 over 5 years) and Coraki Riparian Project Partnership for Coraki Riverbank (with Rous County Council and NSW Fisheries). Restoration work commenced September 2022 on the Casino Riverbank. The Coraki grant launch was held on 24 November 2022. An application for a recreational fishing habitat grant for McDonald Park, Casino was submitted with allocation expected in March 2023. Local Land Services offer advice and recommendations to private rural landowners and encourage riverbank restoration. Council Officers continue to seek funding where available for environmental restoration works in the Richmond Valley.</i>
On Schedule
5B: Restore riparian habitat zones in Casino and the Mid-Richmond
Principal Activity 5B1: Seek funding to design and deliver riparian habitat restoration programs
<i>Northern Rivers Regional Partnership Steering Group are advocating for the planting of koala food trees which includes significant riparian areas. Fish habitat grants supporting riparian restoration have been applied for however will not be announced until March 2023. Flying fox habitat program is also a riparian habitat restoration program. Council was successful in securing a grant of \$299,992 for physical works to be undertaken over a 5-year period with further 3 years to the term covering establishment and maintenance. To date, we have been quite successful in securing grant funding for riparian habitat restoration and will continue to seek and advocate for additional funding for this vital work.</i>
On Schedule
5C: Finalise flood clean-up and incident management
Principal Activity 5C1: Complete inspections of underground petroleum storage systems (UPSS) and develop remediation plans
<i>UPPS inspections occur as required and remediation plans are required where appropriate. The EPA are continuing to take the lead role in addressing the issues with the flood impacted premises at Broadwater. Council Officers provide assistance to the EPA as required.</i>
On Schedule

Principal Activity 5C2: Partner with EPA to address flood-related chemical and biological hazard incidents

EPA are facilitating the 'Clean up flood debris on private land program'. Council is assisting in reporting events and communicating with the EPA with regards to progress. In addition, Council has released a number of communications, including community newsletters and social media, regarding the services available to assist the community appropriately dispose of flood related waste. It is important that waste is handled and disposed of correctly to reduce the potential risk to the natural environment and hazard to human health.

On Schedule

Principal Activity 5C3: Manage high risk on-site sewage management systems (OSMS)

OSMS inspection programs are ongoing, however, flood affected properties have been identified and prioritised. OSMS systems which are not operating as intended pose a risk to the environment and human health due to inappropriately treated effluent entering the environment. Council is currently seeking to recruit an OSMS Officer to assist with the increased workload following the 2022 flood events. This resource will be dedicated to OSMS inspections and funded by inspection fees with the aim to inspect the identified high-risk systems as promptly as possible.

On Schedule

5D: Manage water quality risks

Principal Activity 5D1: Partner with State agencies to support Richmond River water quality monitoring

Council participates in the Beachwatch Program which includes monitoring of water quality. Council Officers are continuing to work with NSW Fisheries, Local Land Services, Public Works Authority and Rous County Council to monitor the impacts of the floods. Rous County Council have taken a lead role in monitoring river health and have regularly reported their findings to stakeholders. Water quality parameters such as dissolved oxygen and turbidity are indicators of the health of the waterway and can signal potential risks such as the formation of blackwater and fish kills.

On Schedule

Principal Activity 5D2: Manage compliance with environmental licences

The Sustainable Communities and Environment team provide internal auditing and monitoring of Council owned sites covered by Environment Protection Licences and supports other teams and managers with advice on achieving environmental compliance. The team maintain a solid working relationship with the EPA and seeks guidance as necessary. A majority of the required audits have been completed and include recommended actions to reduce or remove non-compliance risk. Council has complied with its license conditions during this period.

On Schedule

PREVENT & PREPARE

OBJECTIVE 6: Improve the disaster resilience of public assets

6A: Restore and strengthen emergency response infrastructure
Principal Activity 6A1: Repair flood damage to RFS and SES buildings
<i>Council staff continue to liaise with the relevant representatives of the RFS and SES. Inspections of all facilities in the Richmond Valley have been undertaken, with repair works completed in most cases. The Broadwater SES has been temporarily relocated to an alternative site, while the future of the existing site is re-assessed. Discussions to review this issue have been scheduled as the temporary location is not suitable long term.</i>
On Schedule
Principal Activity 6A2: Maintain Regional Emergency Operations Centre and equip council-owned evacuation centres
<i>An audit of evacuation centres is being led by a working group formed by the Local Emergency Management Committee. Any actions relating to Council owned or managed facilities will be actioned. The Casino RFS Regional Centre remains as the identified Emergency Operations Centre for the Northern Rivers LEMC group. It is well equipped as a result of funding provided by the state government post the 2019/2020 bushfires.</i>
On Schedule
Principal Activity 6A3: Strengthen the role of Casino aerodrome in emergency response
<i>Council recently commissioned the Casino Aerodrome Review 2022, which provided a detailed assessment and future actions list for the future direction of the Aerodrome. The actions will be considered in terms of prioritisation during the budget preparation process for next year. Several recommendations involve the role of the Aerodrome in Council's emergency response, including dedicated areas for helipads, an onsite fuel facility and improved access to the weather station.</i>
On Schedule
6B: Improve local stormwater and drainage networks
Principal Activity 6B1: Develop Casino & Evans Head stormwater models and stormwater risk management works program
<i>Casino stormwater drainage study is well advanced with a report provided by the consultant on the model results. Engineering solutions to the results is currently being investigated by the consultant and a proposal is to be developed for Council to consider. Council continues to review appropriate flood recovery funding options for this work, given the feedback from the community and the need for solutions to the flash flooding events that impact some parts of Casino and the Evans Head CBD. Identified works will be prioritised and undertaken within budget allocations in future capital programs.</i>
On Schedule

6C: Build resilience into our water supply and sewerage networks**Principal Activity 6C1: Secure long-term water supply for Casino & the Mid-Richmond**

Follow up actions from the Casino Water Security Report have commenced. Consultants have been engaged to further explore and scope the three options resulting from the Study being: accessing the "dead storage", raising the weir and creating off-line storage. Once this body of work is finalised, Council will determine the most appropriate measure/s to secure the long-term water supply for Casino. Council Officers will continue to liaise with Rous to inform its strategic planning and capital works programs are being undertaken to facilitate the projected future population growth of the Mid-Richmond.

On Schedule

Principal Activity 6C2: Complete automation and telemetry upgrade for water/sewer assets

Automation upgrade of the Casino WTP is continuing, and other water/sewer assets are being upgraded as part of the flood reconstruction works. Rileys Hill STP, all impacted sewerage pump stations and South Casino water booster pump station are some of the assets which are being upgraded.

On Schedule

Principal Activity 6C3: Reduce inflow/infiltration in sewerage systems

Works continue on the ground with contractors completing manhole and junction repairs associated with the inflow and infiltration program. These works are taking place in selective catchments that have been the subject of previous studies by consultants and will reduce inflow and infiltration in those catchments only. The work of this program will be ongoing.

On Schedule

6D: Advocate for improved communications networks**Principal Activity 6D1: Assess local flood impacts on telecommunications services**

Poor telecommunications during the flood events were flagged as a crucial issue in the after-action review completed by the Local Emergency Management Committee. The Telecommunication Authority is a key stakeholder and are participating in infrastructure reviews. Council will continue to advocate for improved resilience for communication networks at every opportunity.

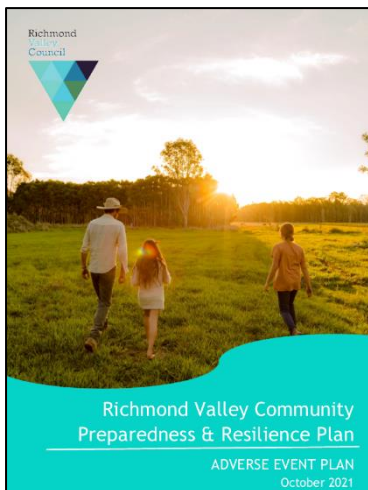
On Schedule

PREVENT & PREPARE

OBJECTIVE 7: Build resilience in a changing climate

7A: Improve long-term flood planning and risk management
Principal Activity 7A1: Complete Richmond Valley Flood Study and Floodplain Risk Management Plans
<p><i>The February/March 2022 floods delayed the new Richmond Valley wide Flood Study and Modelling. The study is due for completion in the first half of 2023 subject to outcomes of neighbouring flood modelling that needs to be considered and integrated. Once the study is completed and adopted, the Floodplain Risk Management Plan can be prepared subject to funding being available. Given the importance of these plans, every effort is being made to finalise them as quickly as possible.</i></p> <p><i>The Flood Study and Risk Management Plan will inform Council and the community which land is appropriate for various land uses including residential, commercial and industrial developments and whether certain planning controls need to be applied to future development to mitigate flooding risk.</i></p> <p>On Schedule</p>
7B: Improve community preparedness and capacity to respond to natural disasters
Principal Activity 7B1: Support safe development in bushfire & flood prone areas
<p><i>Development proposals are assessed against various planning controls including hazards and risks such as bushfire, flooding, landslips and sea level rises. In addition, Council assessment officers utilise legislated controls like the provisions of the Planning for Bushfire Protection Guidelines to ensure development is only supported where it is deemed to be appropriate and safe.</i></p> <p>On Schedule</p>
Principal Activity 7B2: Support community disaster preparedness education
<p><i>Council's Resilience and Recovery Team are collaborating with Red Cross (Get Ready) and other community partners to develop and deliver education programs in 2023. The Team has participated in various community education forums such as workshops, seminars and Primex Field Days with agencies such as CSIRO, Resilience NSW and Department of Primary Industries.</i></p> <p>On Schedule</p>

Principal Activity 7B3: Implement the Richmond Valley Adverse Event Plan



The actions listed in the 2021 Adverse Event Plan are being worked through and actioned. Council's Resilience and Recovery Team are reviewing the plan to recommend any amendments required to address the implications of the 2022 Flood Events.

On Schedule

7C: Support local food production

Principal Activity 7C1: Continue to support farm-based food sales, farmers markets and Paddock to Plate initiatives

The Richmond Valley Made Paddock-to-Plate Feast was held in the gardens of Windara, Casino, in November 2022. From a Whiporie-Lismore beef business to Richmond Valley pastured poultry producers, dryland rice farmers, olive and cheese producers, and flower farmers, the paddock-to-plate evening featured some true gems of the region.

Council is currently liaising with the organisers of the Harvest Food Trail to see how it fits with the Richmond Valley.

On Schedule

7D: Reduce our demand on natural resources

Principal Activity 7D1: Implement demand management programs to reduce water consumption

This project is in its initial phase. Demand Management options will be investigated as part of the actions associated with the Water Security Study. Following the determination of the options, programs will be considered and actioned where appropriate to reduce water consumption.

On Schedule

Principal Activity 7D2: Explore options for alternative energy initiatives

Our region is undergoing a significant period of growth with Richmond Valley being named one of four regional job precincts to drive investment and development opportunities into existing industries in agriculture, manufacturing and renewable and alternative energy solutions.

Council is and has been actively promoting renewable investment into our Local Government area. There has been large scale solar farming interest with a number of state significant solar proposal enquiries. There have been preliminary enquiries for agricultural based bioreactor installations designed for the treatment of waste water and gas capture opportunities.

<p><i>The Sustainable Communities Strategy identifies investigating and implementing renewable energy on Council infrastructure and is a key target area to ensure our organisation participates responsibly and leads by example.</i></p> <p><i>Council's Administration Building is under review for the installation of a potential 90 -100kW solar system to offset our energy usage and we are updating the internal solar network to capture data and demonstrate savings. NRLX roof and Casino Water treatment plant have had solar installations for some time, offsetting their energy usage. The Raw Water Pump Station for the Casino water supply is scheduled for a solar system install in the 2023/2024 year.</i></p> <p>On Schedule</p>
<p>7E: Explore alternative waste management options</p>
<p>Principal Activity 7E1: Work with North Coast councils on regional waste solutions</p>
<p><i>Council is an active member of NEWaste and our Waste and Resource Recovery Manager has relationships with colleagues across other councils.</i></p> <p><i>Council has led a program of investigations with other North Coast councils aimed at finding solutions to regional waste management issues. The recent Alternate Waste Treatment Solutions Expressions of Interest process, conducted by Council in conjunction with other North Coast councils, confirmed there is a level of interest in establishing alternative waste treatment facilities and highlighted the challenges ahead to navigate government policy and regulation to deliver these solutions in an appropriate and timely manner.</i></p> <p>On Schedule</p>

Sustainable Communities Strategy

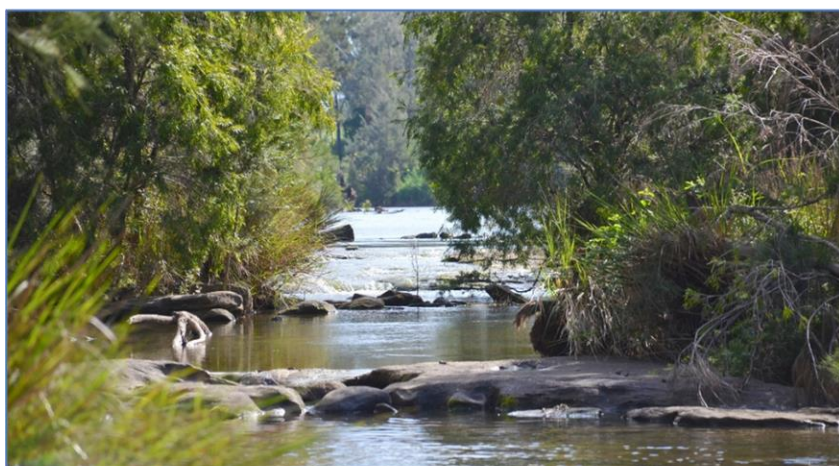
The new Draft Sustainable Communities Strategy 2023-2028 is currently on public display. The strategy aims to protect the Richmond Valley's natural environment and provide a beautiful place to live, work, play and invest in the future.



As the climate continues to change, the region could experience further challenges, with the possibility of increased periods of drought, higher temperatures, rising sea levels, more frequent floods and storms - and a greater risk of fire.

The draft strategy aims to address these challenges by building community awareness and resilience and achieving a healthy balance between growth and sustainable living. It does this with a focus on protecting our unique bushland, biodiversity, rivers and waterways, as well as building resilience in a changing climate and strengthening Council's environmental performance.

The strategy includes opportunities for greening and cooling our communities, reducing Council's energy usage and waste production and attracting additional grant funding for environmental projects.



SUSTAIN

OBJECTIVE 8: Strengthen the regional economy

8A: Establish the Richmond Valley Regional Jobs Precinct (RJP) and support regional economic growth
Principal Activity 8A1: Support regional economic development
<i>Regional economic development is being achieved via maintaining relationships with, and engaging with, both local and regional businesses and relevant State, Federal and non-government organisations. The Regional Jobs Precinct project has taken longer than expected, however, Council and the State Government remain committed to the process and are convinced of the value it will bring to the area in terms of business attraction and economic stimulus. Council's Economic Development team continue to field regular enquiries from various types of businesses regarding setting up in the Richmond Valley including in Council's recently developed industrial precinct with several lots under in-principle agreement to be sold for new business establishment.</i>
On Schedule
Principal Activity 8A2: Finalise and implement the Richmond Valley Regional Jobs Precinct (RJP) masterplan
<i>There have been delays with the RJP masterplan with work still being undertaken to finalise the required technical studies. There were further site visits during January 2023. At this stage, the draft RJP masterplan is scheduled for exhibition by August 2023.</i>
Behind Schedule
Principal Activity 8A3: Work with Regional NSW to attract investment to RJP precincts and the Richmond Valley
<i>Council has worked with the Office of Regional Economic Development to produce a Richmond Valley RJP Investment Opportunities Analysis. In conjunction with Office of Regional Development, engagement with the relevant industries identified within the document is ongoing.</i>
<i>The Regional Jobs Precinct project has taken longer than expected, however commitment remains strong, with Council receiving regular enquiries from multiple business types regarding setting up in the Richmond Valley.</i>
On Schedule

8B: Develop the Northern Rivers Rail Trail and other signature projects for economic stimulus

Principal Activity 8B1: Work with neighbouring councils to support completion of the full length of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail

Council has collaborated with Tweed Shire Council from the inception of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail project. Earlier funding approval for Tweed has seen them share their knowledge and experience in all facets of the rail trail build including governance models and construction and design methodology. Council is well advanced in the planning and design stage of the southern part of the trail with continued on the ground works re-commencing in 2023. Lismore City Council has received funding for their part of the trail and RVC has supported them, as it is critical that the trail links up in its entirety.

We continue to pursue funding opportunities in line with Council's Priority Project Prospectus, which will also inform the new Community Strategic Plan, set to be adopted by Council by 30 June 2023.



On Schedule

Principal Activity 8B2: Complete Casino memorial pool upgrade

The weather events of late 2021 and 2022 have made the delivery of Stage 1 of this project highly challenging. Recent easing of rainfall has allowed the contractors to get a consistent run at the construction program. Both the main 50-metre pool and the new Learn to Swim pool structures have been completed with leakage tests returning positive results. It is expected, at this stage, that the Stage 1 project will be completed in June 2023 with opening planned for August after appropriate testing and landscaping works. Council continues to actively pursue funding opportunities to complete the remaining stages of the project.

Behind Schedule

Principal Activity 8B3: Complete Casino showground upgrade

The lead contractor of the Showgrounds project has commenced major earthworks and construction of the new horse stables. The sand training track is complete and is in use by race trainers. Works have commenced on the grass training track with a target of being ready to host the Beef Week Cup race meeting in May 2023. The entire program of works is expected to be completed by February 2024.

On Schedule

8C: Support local businesses to recover and prosper

Principal Activity 8C1: Enhance existing business networks to support business growth

The flood event of 2022 has necessitated an increased engagement from Council with local businesses. Support has been provided to navigate businesses through the various grant and recovery programs established by all levels of government. Council's Project and Business Development team (which manages the economic development function) has been active with interaction with local businesses and prospective new businesses as the Richmond Valley undertakes the recovery process.

Council has also built on the Richmond Valley Flooding Economic Impact Statement (April 2022) to prepare a Draft Richmond Valley Economic Development Key Directions document, which will be released for consultation in March 2023. The opportunity to comment on the Draft Urban Growth Management Strategy and Casino Plan has also been promoted to all businesses.

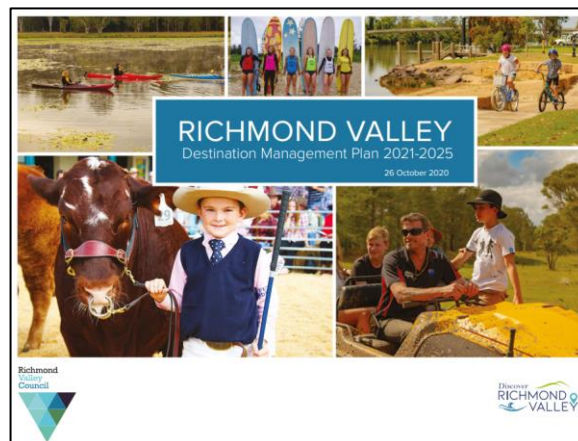
On Schedule

Principal Activity 8C2: Strengthen the visitor economy

Council continues to implement actions in its Destination Management Plan and work with businesses and the tourism sector to promote the Richmond Valley through various mediums.

The Discover Richmond Valley team wrapped up filming in December for the What's Up Down Under summer series shoot, which also involved Shannon Noll and Titanium Caravans. Episodes are due to air 25 February and 4 March.

On Schedule



Principal Activity 8C3: Continue to grow Council’s business activities to benefit the community

Council’s business activities are continuing to grow. The NRLX has achieved a record-breaking result, justifying Council’s decision to invest in multi-million dollar upgrades several years ago. Council’s waste business is in a steady state of service delivery with contracts recently re-negotiated or under negotiation with a view to best community outcomes. Business models for the Aerodrome, Quarries, Showgrounds and Rail Trail will all require consideration in the coming year.

On Schedule

8D: Attract new businesses to the Richmond Valley to support a diverse economy

Principal Activity 8D1: Create a regulatory environment that supports investment

The provision of regulatory advice and information, in a format which can be easily understood, is one of the fundamental elements in supporting business to navigate complex legislation and requirements. The existing suite of development related reference material is continually enhanced and modified to reflect changes to planning and building regulations.

Since the recent introduction of the Planning Portal, a significant effort has been placed on ensuring customers are supported to navigate the required online process. The Customer Experience Team have committed to providing monthly community newsletter content in an effort to inform and educate readers of Council's regulatory requirements and development / planning news.

The Development Concierge is an integral conduit between the applicant and the complexities of planning legislation, able to communicate a succinct interpretation and navigation of planning policy requirements pertaining to an applicant’s development. Customer Experience and the Regulatory Section works closely with the Economic Development Team, taking a case management approach with businesses to support investment.

On Schedule

SUSTAIN

OBJECTIVE 9: Address long-term housing needs

9A: Ensure there is sufficient land and infrastructure to support long-term housing needs

Principal Activity 9A1: Complete the Richmond Valley Urban Growth Management Strategy and start to implement the recommendations

Over the past year, Council has been working in partnership with Regional NSW to prepare pathways to deliver housing and jobs in the Richmond Valley. This will culminate with the production of several bodies of work including the Richmond Valley Growth Management Strategy (GMS), Casino Place Plan and the Richmond Valley Council Regional Job Precinct Master Plan to help deliver these opportunities. The GMS:

- provides evidence regarding the current and future projected demand for and supply of employment and residential land*
- establishes key principles to enable Council to plan for sustainable growth*
- provides clear direction regarding the location and priorities for managing employment and residential land growth.*

The Casino Place Plan has been prepared to guide planning for population and employment growth and place outcomes in Casino at a higher level of detail than has been provided in the GMS. Its preparation is in response to identified planning and urban design issues & opportunities. It aims to coordinate and put in place strategies and enablers to attract and manage employment and population growth at levels above those previously anticipated for Casino.

On Schedule

Principal Activity 9A2: Work with NSW Planning & Environment to release additional residential land in Richmond Valley growth areas

The Draft Urban Growth Management Strategy and Place Plans identify potential sites for future urban growth. These draft plans address long-term housing need and set the future direction for residential growth but also land appropriate for commercial and Industrial land uses. Land affordability is a key consideration when assessing opportunities for future housing needs.

Council is liaising with DPE to investigate land in the Fairy Hill area which has been earmarked for residential purposes in a number of strategic land use plans. Being flood free, the Fairy Hill site offers opportunities for not only the Richmond Valley but the Northern Rivers region. In addition to the Fairy Hill proposal, Council has several other residential planning proposals that are being discussed with DPE with a view to undertake the planning proposal pathway to facilitate rezoning of residential land.

Council is also actively engaging with the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation seeking its support for infrastructure investment to support the planned growth of the Richmond Valley which will contribute to the rebuilding of the Northern Rivers following the 2022 flood events.

On Schedule

Principal Activity 9A3: Streamline approvals for rezoning, sub-division and residential developments
<p><i>Council is actively engaging with the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation and DPE seeking their support for the prioritisation of required planning processes to enable faster development assessment and approvals to support the planned growth of the Richmond Valley which will contribute to the rebuilding of the Northern Rivers following the 2022 flood events.</i></p> <p><i>Continuous training and upskilling of first point of contact staff, to enable them to provide comprehensive guidance to applicants in preparing and submitting quality and complete applications to ensure timely assessment times.</i></p> <p>On Schedule</p>
Principal Activity 9A4: Seek government funding for essential infrastructure to activate new housing areas
<p><i>All reports for infrastructure upgrades associated with the Regional Jobs Precinct (RJP) are currently being finalised by consultants. These reports along with other RJP documentation will inform Council of the quantum of funding required for activating new housing projects and the staging associated with the infrastructure.</i></p> <p><i>Council has been advocating for funds for the replacement and upgrading of infrastructure including a new Casino STP and will continue to do so as the RJP work is being finalised for consultation in the second half of 2023.</i></p> <p>On Schedule</p>
9B: Provide a range of housing choices for the community
Principal Activity 9B1: Partner with the NSW Government to activate Crown Land for affordable housing
<p><i>Council supported Resilience NSW to secure a temporary housing solution on Crown Land in Evans Head to provide housing for people displaced by the 2022 flood events.</i></p> <p><i>Options for housing on developments on Crown Land have been identified and communicated to NSW Government and will require appropriate resourcing and commitment from its agencies for the land to be activated for affordable housing. Most sites will require negotiation of native title and/or Aboriginal Land Claims.</i></p> <p>On Schedule</p>
Principal Activity 9B2: Promote opportunities for additional development in existing residential areas
<p><i>The Urban Growth Management Strategy and Place Plans will identify land which is suitable for residential purposes. Given the financial benefits of locating future residential land close to existing services (water, sewer, electricity and roads), most of the identified locations for future residential land is adjacent to existing developed residential land.</i></p> <p><i>A 45-lot subdivision has been approved on Lennox Street, Casino with the first stage now on the market. Our team continues to work with a number of proponents who are seeking rezoning and approval to develop residential land including a 60-lot sub-division in Broadwater and a 19-lot sub-division in Spring Grove. Council is also fielding numerous enquiries regarding scoping studies for planning proposals in the North Casino area.</i></p> <p>On Schedule</p>

9C: Identify, purchase and develop suitable residential land to support growth

Principal Activity 9C1: Identify suitable sites for council-led residential land development to increase housing availability

Whilst some preliminary investigation of sites has been undertaken, further progress has been put on hold until results of the new flood model are known and also the outcome of the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation's Resilient Lands EOI for potential residential land development. These two projects have the potential to significantly influence the development of residential land within the Richmond Valley and we will continue to liaise with the Corporation closely.

On Schedule



Reynolds Road Industrial Estate development

SUSTAIN

OBJECTIVE 10: Lead and advocate for our community

<p>10A: Strengthen engagement between Council and the community</p>
<p>Principal Activity 10A1: Develop and deliver the Richmond Valley Community Engagement Strategy</p>
<p><i>Council is utilising its existing Community Engagement Strategy to guide engagement activities as we prepare our next Community Strategic Plan by 30 June 2023.</i></p> <p><i>A review of the Community Engagement Strategy and development of a framework for engagement activities has commenced to guide all activities we undertake and will be completed for adoption by Council by 30 June 2023.</i></p> <p>On Schedule</p>
<p>Principal Activity 10A2: Complete the Community Strategic Plan review in consultation with the community</p>
<p><i>Work is progressing on development of the new Community Strategic Plan, including completion of an updated community survey to explore community priorities in the flood recovery period. Major strategies to guide future growth and development in the Richmond Valley are currently on public exhibition. These include the RV Growth Management Strategy, Casino Place Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy. Feedback from this consultation will help to inform the Community Strategic Plan on issues such as sustainable development, future housing options, employment and community resilience in a changing climate. Council has further CSP consultation sessions planned in March - May 2023, including consultation on economic development opportunities.</i></p> <p>On Schedule</p>
<p>10B: Advocate to federal and state governments for community needs and priorities</p>
<p>Principal Activity 10B1: Advocate for community priorities and actively seek grant funding</p>
<p><i>Council continues to advocate strongly for support with flood recovery and investment in economic development. This has so far resulted in: temporary housing options for 310 people being delivered for Coraki and Evans Head; successful implementation of the Caravan at Home program for Woodburn, with 153 vans provided; \$2 million in rating relief for Richmond Valley residents and \$7.4m in government funding to support recovery and flood repairs for community facilities.</i></p> <p><i>Council also continues to work with the NRRC to expedite Disaster Recovery Funding for essential infrastructure repairs. Work also continues on the Richmond Valley Regional Jobs Precinct, in collaboration with Regional NSW. Working in partnership with the NSW Government, Council has also achieved commitments of funding to support major water and sewerage service upgrades in Casino and Evans Head. Funding for road network upgrades has also been secured along with the Disaster Recovery funding that is available.</i></p> <p>On Schedule</p>

10C: Enhance partnerships with Northern Rivers councils and other regional agencies

Principal Activity 10C1: Actively support NRJO shared initiatives

Council continues to actively support the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation's regional advocacy and programs, including exploring initiatives for renewable energy, increased regional employment, alternative waste solutions, regional flood recovery and housing. The NRJO continues to advocate to the NSW Government and the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation for early resolution of temporary housing, house raising and buy-back schemes and further implementation of the resilient lands program.

On Schedule

10D: Lead with integrity

Principal Activity 10D1: Provide representative and accountable community governance

Council meetings are live streamed, and the opportunity is available for Public Access at the start of each meeting. Councillors are available to the community and regularly attend community events and engage with community groups.



Council participates in a number of information sharing and knowledge building processes in order to provide the most representative and community focused governance system possible. Examples include Northern Rivers Risk Management Group, Northern Rivers Safety Group and CivicRisk Mutual Risk and Finance Committees.

On Schedule

SUSTAIN

OBJECTIVE 11: Manage community resources and provide great service

11A: Manage resources responsibly
Principal Activity 11A1: Undertake long-term financial and asset management planning
<i>Council undertakes an annual review of its long-term financial plan as part of the preparation and development of the Operational Plan and Delivery Program each year. The long-term financial plan is also updated each time a Quarterly Budget Review is adopted by Council throughout the year. Council has also, in the preparation of next year's programs and plans, undertaken a full review of all asset management plans.</i>
On Schedule
Principal Activity 11A2: Ensure resources are managed transparently and responsibly
<i>Council annual financial statements were adopted by Council in November 2022 and subject to public consultation and achieved an unmodified audit from the NSW Audit Office. The key performance ratio outcomes were positive, especially given the challenges that Council has endured and had to respond to in recent years.</i>
<i>Council's resources are managed in accordance with relevant laws and regulations. Council's budget is reviewed quarterly and presented to Council and the public. The Financial Analysis Report, detailing Council's investment portfolio, and Grants Report, outlining funding with applications submitted, approved grants and unsuccessful grants is presented to Council on a monthly basis.</i>
<i>Council also benefited from a \$5M insurance payout from the flood events, significantly more than the \$2M received by other Northern Rivers councils who are with a different insurance mutual.</i>
On Schedule
Principal Activity 11A3: Enhance procurement systems
<i>Council continues to utilise Vendor Panel and organisations such as Local Government Procurement and Regional Procurement, to ensure we are getting the best value in our procurement function. Council's tendering documents are regularly reviewed to ensure they meet legislative requirements and allow Council to get the most advantageous result when tendering for goods and services.</i>
On Schedule
11B: Provide a high standard of customer service
Principal Activity 11B1: Implement the RV Customer Service Charter
<i>The Customer Service Standards and Charter was revised and adopted by Council in 2022. Service level agreements are monitored regularly, and discussions held with Coordinators and Managers to ensure customer service provision is being undertaken in accordance with the Customer Service Standards and Charter. The Customer Experience team continue to model and promote a Customer Service culture across the organisation. Community feedback surveys regularly rank customer contact highly and a positive experience.</i>
On Schedule

Principal Activity 11B2: Deliver effective and progressive Regional Library and Casino Indoor Sports Stadium services and programs
<p><i>Council's library services continue to deliver programs for our community. Over 350 programs have been held this financial year with participation numbers of both adults and children in excess of 2,800 attending these programs.</i></p> <p><i>The Casino Indoor Sport Stadium was damaged in the flood events and will return to action in March 2023. The unavailability of this facility has impacted our community and we look forward to it being available again.</i></p> <p>On Schedule</p>
11C: Strengthen Council's role as a leading local employer
Principal Activity 11C1: Implement the Richmond Valley Council Workforce Strategy
<p><i>The Workforce Strategy was finalised in 2023 and is being implemented. A specific focus is on recruitment, retention and recognition given the challenges being faced nationwide in securing the resources we need to deliver our ambitious programs. The Strategy is continually reviewed as we progress to update policies and procedures and as part of our recruitment and training and development progression. We also continue to focus on growing our own talent with many examples throughout our business.</i></p> <p>On Schedule</p>
Principal Activity 11C2: Continue to provide local employment schemes and development opportunities
<p><i>Approximately 85% of our recent employees onboarded are from the local Richmond Valley community. Council ran a second Try a Trade program to provide opportunities to local people looking for a change in career. We were also part of the regional career expo and have run our usual Youth Employment Scheme, which enables Council to give employment and training opportunities to our local youth.</i></p> <p>On Schedule</p>
11D: Deliver quality services for the community
Principal Activity 11D1: Deliver efficient & affordable waste management services
<p><i>Council waste services have been delivered with minimal interruption, even through the flood event, with low budget impacts or significant breaches of environmental or safety legislation.</i></p> <p><i>To deliver efficient and affordable waste services, Council's team have recently re-negotiated waste transport and disposal contracts and are looking to achieve other improved outcomes regarding alternate waste streams.</i></p> <p>On Schedule</p>

Principal Activity 11D2: Deliver consistent regulatory and compliance services

Council's approach to regulatory and compliance work is regularly reviewed and discussed. Council Officers provide education in the first instance when dealing with the community and can use some discretion when considering what action to take. This approach in most instances leads to positive changes in behaviours and compliance. Unfortunately, Council officers are encountering an increasing level of conflict which can have a negative impact on the Officers and make the delivery of a customer focused approach difficult.

On Schedule

Principal Activity 11D3: Provide great corporate support services to improve efficiency

Laptop fleet is being upgraded incorporating greater security controls and giving staff increasing access to Council data when away from the office. Council now uses Microsoft Teams for communication including video conferencing. Technology One is migrating to the cloud (due for completion prior to June 2023). Council continues to minimise risks should a major disaster impact our operations. This is primarily achieved through migration of key systems to the cloud so they are no longer subject to localised disasters and we have efficient backup and recovery procedures.

On Schedule



Council's Customer Experience Team members

Try a Trade Program



Council's first Try a Trade program commenced in 2018. The aim is to provide women with an opportunity to work in non-traditional trade roles. Participants receive:

- General Construction Induction (White Card)
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Work experience in water, sewer, roads, open spaces, waste or workshops.

In 2022/2023, two rounds of the successful program were run, offering even more opportunities to women with an interest in the non-traditional fields.

