

Richmond
Valley
Council



AGENDA

Extraordinary Council Meeting

I hereby give notice that an Extraordinary Meeting of Council will be held on:

Date: Thursday, 29 June 2023

Time: 6pm

**Location: Council Chambers
10 Graham Place, Casino**

**Vaughan Macdonald
General Manager**

**THIS PAGE IS
INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK**

ORDER OF BUSINESS

1	ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY	5
2	PRAYER	5
3	APOLOGIES	5
4	DECLARATION OF INTERESTS	5
5	GENERAL MANAGER	6
5.1	Draft Community Strategic Plan 2040 and Draft Delivery Program 2023-25.....	6
6	ORGANISATIONAL SERVICES	10
6.1	Draft Operational Plan 2023/2024 (including draft financial estimates 2023/2027), Draft Revenue Policy 2023/2024 and Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2023/2033	10

1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Mayor will provide an Acknowledgement of Country by reading the following statement on behalf of Council:

"Richmond Valley Council recognises the people of the Bundjalung Nations as Custodians and Traditional Owners of this land and we value and appreciate the continuing cultural connection to lands, their living culture and their unique role in the life of this region in the past, present and future."

2 PRAYER**3 APOLOGIES****4 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

5 GENERAL MANAGER

5.1 DRAFT COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN 2040 AND DRAFT DELIVERY PROGRAM 2023-25

Author: Vaughan Macdonald

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Richmond Valley Council has been developing its new Community Strategic Plan and supporting documents since October 2022, following delays due to the Covid pandemic and Northern Rivers floods. The draft documents were placed on public exhibition for the required 28-day period and a total of 66 community submissions were received in relation to the CSP. No submissions were received in relation to the Delivery Program. This report addresses the key issues raised in the community submissions and presents the final plans for Council's endorsement.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Notes the public exhibition of the Draft Community Strategic Plan and Draft Delivery Program for the required 28-day period
2. Notes community feedback in response to the exhibition and the issues raised in the 66 submissions received
3. Endorses the Richmond Valley 2040 Community Strategic Plan, as presented
4. Adopts the 2023-25 Delivery Program, as presented.

DELIVERY PROGRAM LINKS

Sustain - Objective 10: Lead and advocate for our community

10A Strengthen engagement between Council and the community

10A2 Complete the Community Strategic Plan review in consultation with the community

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program identify a wide range of community projects and programs, many of which will be funded directly by Council. Other major works will require funding support from Federal and State governments and Council will be actively seeking this funding over the next two years.

REPORT

The *Local Government Act 1993* requires all local councils in NSW to prepare a long-term Community Strategic Plan (CSP), identifying community priorities and goals for at least the next 10 years. The CSP is supported by a Delivery Program and annual Operational Plans, outlining how each council will deliver the community's goals and priorities during its term of office. Together, these documents serve as the key point of accountability between local councils and their communities.

Richmond Valley Council has been developing its new Community Strategic Plan and supporting documents since October 2022, following delays due to the Covid pandemic and Northern Rivers floods. The draft documents were presented to Council's May 2023 Ordinary Meeting for public exhibition, with the required 28-day exhibition period being completed on 14 June 2023. A total of

66 community submissions were received in relation to the CSP and no submissions were received in relation to the Delivery Program. This report addresses the key issues raised in the community submissions.

Community Strategic Plan development

The new Community Strategic Plan considers future growth in the Richmond Valley to 2040. It reflects the key directions of the Richmond Valley Growth Management Strategy and Sustainable Communities Strategy, as well as future priorities identified by the community.

The Plan sets ambitious growth targets for the Valley, based on the planning and projections undertaken for the Growth Management Strategy and the Regional Jobs Precinct initiative. The next 20 years will see an additional 4000 residents, with 2000 new homes provided and 2000+ jobs created. The Regional Jobs Precinct will create at least 600 direct new jobs and further employment growth is expected through expanding support and service industries.

Major initiatives in the Plan include:

- Completing the Richmond Valley's flood recovery process
- Activating the Regional Jobs Precinct
- Securing long-term water supplies for Casino and the Mid-Richmond
- Unlocking new residential development sites
- Continuing to strengthen and diversify the local economy, with further growth in tourism and service industries
- Delivering wide-scale community greening programs, with 15,000 additional shade trees by 2040
- Replacing major infrastructure, including a new \$60m sewage treatment plant for Casino and completion of Stage 2 of the Evans Head STP
- Completing and showcasing regionally significant projects, such as the Northern Rivers Rail Trail and Casino Showground and Equine Centre.

Community consultation to support development of the Plan showed strong support for well-planned, sustainable growth within the Richmond Valley, acknowledging that future greenfield housing developments would generally be confined to the Casino district due to flooding constraints in the Mid-Richmond. Measured growth that enhanced local character was the preferred approach for the four Mid-Richmond villages.

All communities acknowledged the importance of building resilience in a changing climate and improving disaster preparedness. There was also strong support for continued improvements to essential infrastructure, including the ongoing program of flood repairs for local roads, bridges and drains. Continuing to support flood-affected communities through advocacy and the Richmond Valley Recovery Plan was a high priority.

Delivery Program Priorities

Usually, the Delivery Program provides for four years of activity, in support of the Community Strategic Plan. However, due to the reduced council term and impact of the floods, the new Delivery Program addresses the two financial years, 2023 – 2025.

Due to the short timeframe, the Program focuses on three key areas:

- Finishing the signature projects that are currently underway
- Continuing to fix flood-damaged infrastructure and support flood recovery
- Commencing some of the major initiatives for the future.

Priorities in the Delivery Program include:

- Finalising the Regional Jobs Precinct Masterplan and supporting studies
- Completing Place Plans for the Mid-Richmond communities to guide future growth and improvements
- Completing the Casino Memorial Pool upgrade and Casino Showground upgrade
- Finalising designs for rebuilding Richmond Terrace, Coraki
- Completing the Casino-Bentley section of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail and finalising designs for the Mid-Richmond's Three Villages Cycleway
- Fixing the Naughton's Gap and Bentley Road landslips
- Continuing to upgrade the Woodburn-Casino Road
- Continuing habitat restoration programs and launching the Community Greening Program
- Commencing Stage 2 of the Evans Head Sewage Treatment Plant
- Identifying the preferred option for Casino's future water security, and
- Commencing design work for the new Casino STP.

CONSULTATION

The Draft Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program were exhibited for 28 days for community feedback, with submissions closing on 14 June 2023.

A total of 66 submissions were received. Of these submissions:

- 48 were from residents of the Richmond Valley
- 2 were from local groups/associations
- 12 were from persons living outside the Richmond Valley
- 2 were from Government Agencies and
- 2 did not provide sufficient information (email address only) to determine where they lived.

Councillors have been provided with copies of the submissions for information.

Main issues

The majority of submissions (60) expressed opposition to Energy from Waste facilities. There were eight duplicate submissions within this group. Of the total submissions received:

- 53 focused solely on Energy from Waste issues
- 7 opposed Energy from Waste but also addressed other issues, including the Rail Trail and other environmental concerns
- 4 focused solely on the Rail Trail, calling for the reinstatement of trains along the rail corridor
- One submission supported Council's direction on providing healthy outdoor activities and encouraged further development of open spaces and green infrastructure
- One was a query from a government agency regarding the location of the local World Heritage Area referenced in the Plan.

Responses to Objective 9 of the CSP

Objective 9 of the CSP outlines Council's plans to transition to a circular economy and develop solutions for future management of residual waste. The Plan outlines Council's current policy

position on whether an energy from waste facility may form part of future waste management solutions. It also acknowledges that the Richmond Valley Regional Jobs Precinct is one of four sites identified by the NSW Government where an energy from waste facility may be permissible.

The majority of public submissions opposed energy from waste facilities, identifying numerous concerns with potential impacts on human and animal health and the environment. There were also concerns for potential impacts on local industries, including food production, agriculture and tourism. Some submissions expressed concerns that an EfW facility may damage the Valley's reputation as a clean, green place to live and discourage future investment. Many submissions called for council to explore emerging technologies for disposal of residual waste, such as biological treatment of plastics, and to take a more active role in opposing EfW.

Objective 9 of the CSP reflects Council's current policy position on energy from waste, including:

- That Council acknowledges the Regional Jobs Precinct site has been identified by the NSW Government as a permissible site for EfW, subject to approval and consultation with the community and environmental regulators to obtain a social licence for any proposed facility
- That RVC has no commitment to building an energy from waste facility
- That it is keeping an open mind on options for disposal of the 9000 tonnes of residual waste it currently produces each year, and continues to explore other options, such as additional landfill and use of new technologies.

While the concerns of residents are acknowledged, it should also be acknowledged that the Plan proposes many of the actions raised in the submissions – such as continuing to explore new technologies and future options for landfill.

Council's current policy position is reflected in the draft plan and it is therefore recommended that it be adopted unamended.

Responses regarding the Rail Trail

The majority of submissions relating to the Northern Rivers Rail Trail were received from residents of other Northern Rivers local government areas. They expressed concern with the ongoing development of the Rail Trail and called for reinstatement of a train service – many suggesting that the cycleway could be established alongside the existing tracks. Given that successive NSW governments have indicated no intention to reinstate rail services in the Northern Rivers – and the legislative amendments enabling the Rail Trail require Council to return the rail corridor to the Government should trains be reinstated in the future - it is proposed that the draft plan be adopted unamended.

CONCLUSION

Council has prepared its new Community Strategic Plan – Richmond Valley 2040 and supporting Delivery Program 2023-25 and completed the required period of public exhibition for both draft documents. A total of 66 submissions were received in response to the exhibition, with the majority expressing opposition to energy from waste facilities. Copies of all submissions have been provided to Councillors for information and it is recommended that the draft documents provided with this report now be endorsed and adopted by Council.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. **Richmond Valley 2040 - Community Strategic Plan (under separate cover)**
2. **Delivery Program 2023-25 (under separate cover)**

6 ORGANISATIONAL SERVICES

6.1 DRAFT OPERATIONAL PLAN 2023/2024 (INCLUDING DRAFT FINANCIAL ESTIMATES 2023/2027), DRAFT REVENUE POLICY 2023/2024 AND DRAFT LONG TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2023/2033

Director: Ryan Gaiter

Responsible Officer: Hayley Martin

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At its Ordinary Meeting on 16 May 2023, Council resolved to place the Draft Operational Plan (including Financial Estimates), Draft Revenue Policy and Draft Long-Term Financial Plan on public exhibition.

This report provides information regarding public submissions received by Council during the exhibition period and details minor amendments that have been made to the Draft Financial Estimates.

RECOMMENDATION

That

1. Council adopts the Draft Operational Plan 2023/2024 (including Financial Estimates 2023/2027), Revenue Policy 2023/2024 and Long-Term Financial Plan 2023/2033 the subject of this report.
2. In respect to the general land rates contained in the 2023/2024 Draft Revenue Policy, Council in accordance with Sections 535 and 537 of the *Local Government Act 1993* makes the following General Rates for the 2023/2024 financial year:

Rating Category	Base Amount	% Yield from Base Amount	Rate in Dollar (Ad Valorem)
Residential	\$310.00	24.91%	\$0.00332
Rural Residential (sub-category)	\$310.00	28.17%	\$0.00232
Business	\$360.00	9.66%	\$0.01104
Farmland	\$360.00	17.94%	\$0.00259

3. In relation to interest on overdue rates and charges, Council makes and imposes the maximum charge for interest, as determined by the Minister for Local Government and in accordance with Section 566 (3) of the *Local Government Act 1993*, as follows:
 - (i) for the 2023/2024 financial year; 9.0% per annum
4. In respect of annual charges and user charges for Waste Management, Water, Sewerage and Stormwater Management Service Charges, in accordance with Section 535 of the *Local Government Act 1993*, Council makes these charges as detailed in the 2023/2024 Draft Revenue Policy to apply to the 2023/2024 financial year.

DELIVERY PROGRAM LINKS

Sustain - Objective 11: Manage community resources and provide great service

11A Manage resources responsibly

11A1 Undertake long-term financial and asset management planning

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

As outlined in the report.

REPORT

The Draft Operational Plan (including Financial Estimates), Draft Revenue Policy and Draft Long-Term Financial Plan were placed on public exhibition following the Ordinary Meeting of Council on 16 May 2023. The exhibition period closed 4:30pm Wednesday 14 June 2023.

Council's Long-Term Financial Plan 2023/2033 has been reviewed as part of the development of the Operational Plan 2023/2024 (including Financial Estimates 2023/2027).

During the public exhibition period, further information has been received, requiring changes to be made to the 2023/2024 budget. These changes are detailed below:

Operating Income – increase of \$8,671

- Updated supplementary land values and the number of assessments and services has resulted in a net increase in rates and annual charges of \$8,671.

Operating Expenditure – increase of \$158,465

- Revised budgets for Councillor and Mayoral fees, resulting in an increase in operating expenditure of \$969 based on fees determined by the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal.
- An increase in the award rates of pay from an estimated 4%, up to 4.5% in line with the proposed new Local Government (State) Award 2023, resulting in a net increase in operating expenditure of \$57,496.
- Adjustments as approved in the March Quarterly Budget Review of \$10,000 for the Coastal Zone Management Plan project and \$50,000 for asset valuations.
- Increase in interest on loans of \$40,000 for the proposed stormwater borrowing

Capital Grants and Contributions – increase of \$2,029,868

- Increase in capital grants as approved in the March Quarterly Budget review.
 - Woodburn Riverside Jetty \$63,393
 - Casino Showground Upgrade \$1,500,000
 - Northern Rivers Rail Trail \$300,000
- Increase due to Council being notified of its Repair Grant allocation for 2023/2024 of \$166,475

Capital Expenditure – increase of \$4,774,875

The main changes are as a result of a review of the current year's capital works program at 31 March 2023 including:

- Woodburn Riverside Jetty \$63,393
- Casino Showground Upgrade \$2,100,000.
- Sewer Relining Program \$792,400
- Kerb & Gutter projects \$130,000
- Evans Head Compactor Bin Facility Upgrade \$15,000
- Illawong Lane Drainage \$1,452,673
- Increase due to Council being notified of its Repair Grant allocation for 2023/2024 of \$166,475.

The changes resulted in no change to the unrestricted cash surplus of \$212,574. The revised budget projections are summarised below:

Budget Estimates	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	2026/2027
Total Operating Revenue	72,799	75,369	77,939	79,654
Total Operating Expenditure	74,427	76,307	77,908	80,351
Operating Result before Capital Grants and Contributions	(1,628)	(938)	31	(697)
Add: Capital Grants and Contributions	13,804	7,165	37,385	9,192
Operating Result including Capital Grants and Contributions	12,176	6,227	37,416	8,495
Add: Non-Cash Expenses	18,649	19,074	19,510	19,958
Add: Non-Operating Funds Employed	6,283	7,654	6,858	25,466
Less: Capital Expenditure	43,879	33,089	60,153	46,097
Less: Loan Repayments	3,599	3,892	3,428	3,068
Estimated Funding Result – Surplus/(Deficit)	(10,371)	(4,025)	203	4,755
Restricted Funds – Increase/(Decrease)	(10,584)	(4,138)	(106)	4,438
Unrestricted Funds – Increase/(Decrease)	213	113	309	317

Draft Revenue Policy

The Statement of Rates and Charges has been updated with the latest supplementary land values along with movements in the number of assessments and services. Annual charges for waste, water, sewerage and stormwater increased by \$9,895.

Council was notified during the notice period that development application fees contained in Schedule 4 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021* are to increase in line with CPI from 1 July 2023 and as such these fees were adjusted.

CONSULTATION

Council advertised the Draft Operational Plan (including Financial Estimates 2023/2027), Draft Revenue Policy 2023/2024 and Draft Long-Term Financial Plan 2023/2033 from 17 May 2023, with public submissions closing at 4:30pm Wednesday 14 June 2023.

Advertising included coverage on Council's Facebook page, website and community radio interviews. Copies of the draft documents were also made available at Council's administration offices in Casino and Evans Head.

There were no submissions received during the exhibition period.

CONCLUSION

Following the public exhibition period 17 May to 14 June 2023, some amendments have been made to the Operational Plan Financial Estimates 2023/2027 as detailed in the report. Council did not receive any public submissions during the exhibition period.

It is recommended that Council adopts the draft plans as presented with this report.

ATTACHMENT(S)

- 1. Draft Operational Plan 2023-2024 (including financial estimates 2023-2027) (under separate cover)**
- 2. Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2023-2033 (under separate cover)**
- 3. Draft Revenue Policy 2023-2024 (under separate cover)**