



REBUILDING THE RICHMOND VALLEY

PROGRESS REPORT

JANUARY - JUNE 2023



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 third and fourth 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.

Council has now completed the first year of the Recovery Plan and the remaining actions of the three-year program have been incorporated into the new 2023-25 Delivery Program, endorsed at Council's 29 June 2023 meeting.

RECOVER

OBJECTIVE 1: Help communities to recover and reconnect

1A: Work with the community to revitalise our towns and villages
Principal Activity 1A1: Prepare Place Plans for towns and villages
<p><i>Work has commenced on Place Plans for Woodburn, Broadwater, Evans Head and Coraki. Requests for quotations will be issued in August 2023. The Place Plan project will involve extensive community consultation over the next six months.</i></p> <p>On Schedule</p>
Principal Activity 1A2: Help community groups to recommence activities
<p><i>All clubhouses throughout the Valley have been repaired. Regular communication is happening with Clubs sending through any grant opportunities available to restock equipment and upgrade facilities. Rappville Hall and the Casino Indoor Sports Stadium are examples of community assets that have been re-established to assist community groups in recovery. Upcoming works on the Woodburn Oval, Colley Park, Queen Elizabeth Park, Windsor Park, and Stan Payne Oval will also enable sporting and community groups to build on their membership bases.</i></p> <p><i>Further rounds of the RVC Community Grants Program were offered where Council allocated \$75,000 in the 2022/23 budget for this program. Two equal funding rounds of \$37,500 were provided with 42 eligible applications receiving partial or full funding for their requests.</i></p> <p><i>Council also ran its Event Support Program which supported 18 events with \$120,773. RVC supported events included; Evans Head Fishing Classic, Casino Show, Evans Head Malibu Classic, Evans Head Casino Surf Life Saving Club 10 Years, Peach Festival, Woodburn Riverside Festival, Casino West Art Show, Coraki Art Prize, March Against Violence, Woodburn Spring Orchid Show, Breast Comp Ever, Casino All Blacks, Evans Head Rodeo, Casino Beef Week, Primex Field Days, Evans Head Christmas, Broadwater Christmas, Coraki Christmas and Casino Fun Run</i></p> <p>On schedule</p>
1B: Lead local resilience and recovery programs
Principal Activity 1B1: Establish Local Recovery Advisory Groups
<p><i>Woodburn, Broadwater, Coraki and Rappville advisory groups are ongoing. Depending on location, they meet every 6-8 weeks. The advisory groups provide Council with an opportunity to keep the community informed of support services, grant programs and recovery initiatives. These groups continue to provide valuable insights and information on each community's needs during the recovery journey. Council acts as a conduit by ensuring these insights are shared with Federal and NSW Government MPs and agencies.</i></p> <p>Completed</p>

1C: Deliver community events to encourage reconnection

Principal Activity 1C1: Support the Richmond Valley's Signature Events program

Council's Events team continues to work with organisers to build business and event capability to ensure there is strong community involvement and support. Our signature events - Beef Week and Primex - are closely linked to our lifestyle, culture and history.

Primex 2023 saw 370 exhibitors, 795 companies and 1850 industry group representatives, attracting 24,000 visitors over three days.

The economic impact from visitors and exhibitors to the region was \$3.8 million.

79% of visitors came from the Northern Rivers; 8% from interstate.

76% of visitors are planning to attend the 40th anniversary in 2024.

48% of visitors were primary producers

16% of visitors bought major purchases at the event averaging \$18,517

Beef Week 2023 saw an estimated 25,000 people attend the event over the 11 days. 85% of attendees were from the North Coast, with Queenslanders being the next biggest group. The two biggest days were Breakfast with the Butchers and Main Saturday.

New three-year sponsorship agreements have been signed between Council, Primex and Beef Week. The agreements are set down as cash sponsorship to the annual value of \$30,000 (ex GST) for Beef Week and \$25,000 (ex GST) for Primex. We also commit to continuing to provide in-kind support, such as waiving of some fees, and the expertise of our Events team. As per previous years, all other expenses (plant, waste fees and field staff wages) will be invoiced in line with agreed resourcing levels

On schedule

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

Through the advisory groups across the local government area (LGA) and also working with the recovery hubs, recovery events have been held across the LGA. Future events are being planned such as a DIEP (Disability Inclusive Emergency Planning) forum, health and wellbeing sessions, nutrition demonstrations and Auslan training.

A Disability Inclusive Emergency Planning forum was held on the 26th June which was attended by community members, first responders, community groups and government agency staff. Hosting this forum in partnership with the University of Sydney, means that support can be provided for everyone in our community, regardless of age or ability and can assist in equipping them with the skills we all need to better prepare, respond and recover from disaster. At the forum participants learnt about:

- People-centred approaches to emergency management*
- Factors that increase risk for people with disability in emergencies*
- Strategies to reduce risk and increase the resilience of people with disability to disaster*
- Local community resources that can be shared before, during and after an emergency to keep people safe*

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 great eResource collection as well as online databases which is assisting communities to recover and reconnect. These resources are available 24/7 and are especially important to those who are isolated. In 2022/23 there were 22,987 loans of eBooks, eAudio and eMagazines. The library is also part of 3 consortiums which greatly increases the number of items available. Other resources available are film and music streaming. The library also has an online computer database where people can practice or improve their IT skills.

On schedule

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

Assistance is still being provided, however, there has been a decrease in requests. The libraries are serving members who have relocated to our communities. Libraries continue to provide safe and welcoming spaces.

On schedule

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

The library provided programs both within the library and Outreach. Programs targeted members of the community from Baby Bounce to Seniors with Tech Savvy programs. During 2022/23, 872 programs were conducted, including 404 children's programs with 6,078 children attending. These were held both in the libraries and as part of the outreach program and play an important role in early literacy. There were 329 one-on-one tech savvy programs which helped people improve their IT skills, and 614 attended 112 Adult education craft sessions. These play an important role in easing social isolation and assisting with mental health.

On schedule



The new library courtyard, Casino was officially opened in February 2023.

Rappville Hall opening

Council completed another milestone in its recovery from the 2019 bushfires with the opening of the new Rappville Hall. Mayor Robert Mustow, former Governor General Sir Peter Cosgrove and Federal Member for Page Kevin Hogan officially opened the new facility on 27 February 2023.

The construction of a new hall was one of Council's key priorities in the wake of the devastating bushfire of October 2019, which destroyed many homes in Rappville, as well as the original hall.

In developing the plans for the new hall, located on what is now called the Rappville Common, Council was fortunate to work with BizRebuild, a bushfire-recovery initiative of the Business Council of Australia.



Federal Member for Page Kevin Hogan, former Governor General and BizRebuild Chair Sir Peter Cosgrove, Rappville Hall Committee president Dave Newby and Richmond Valley Council Mayor Robert Mustow.

The \$1.5 million project was funded by BizRebuild's Community Rebuilding Trust, the Australian Government's National Bushfire Recovery Agency and Richmond Valley Council, resulting in a much-improved space for the community to use.

The new hall includes a generous sized hall and outdoor deck, a separate building housing a communal kitchen and supper room, along with a covered outdoor dining area, as well as storage and amenities areas.

As part of the project, Council purchased Rappville's St John's Anglican Church and surrounding land from the Anglican Diocese of Grafton. The historic church will remain available for services.

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

Significant support has been provided to Resilience NSW 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 now been established and are now operational. The Coraki site has been established on NSW Health land which was formally the Coraki Hospital site. This site supports pod dwellings and includes site/security office, amenities buildings, open spaces and playground. The site in Evans Head is on Crown Land and adjacent to the Reflections Holiday Park. This site has been established with caravan sites which are homing flood impacted people.

Completed

Principal Activity 2A2: Support rehoming and fostering of pets for displaced families

Following the 2022 flood events, Council Rangers were engaged with assisting flood impacted residents and their animals. This need has declined; however, support is always available. Council Officers have built strong relationships with rehoming organisations and charities which significantly contributed to the successful rehoming and arranging foster care for companion animals following the flood.



Regulatory staff raising Adopt-a-Pet awareness

Completed

2B: Support flood-affected residents and businesses through the development approval process

Principal Activity 2B1: Provide development concierge services to support flood affected properties

Council's Development Concierge has been working directly with owners of flood affected properties to help them explore options to restore their homes and access Council's hardship provisions, as appropriate.

Fact sheets have been prepared to assist owners with key issues, such as house raising options and use of relocatable homes for temporary accommodation, emergency works and repairs, rebuilding after floods and options for tiny homes.

Further work is underway on a full range of updated development fact sheets to be made available on Council's website in the near future.

On schedule

Principal Activity 2B2: Explore options to improve flood resilience through building design and location
<p><i>Council has been actively supporting flood-affected residents to improve the resilience of their homes through house raising and redevelopment options. In the past six months, 10 development applications for flood-affected properties have been determined. This included six house-raising proposals, one replacement home and three applications relating to flood-affected businesses.</i></p> <p><i>Completion of the new Richmond Valley flood study will provide Council with improved flood data to support development decisions. Council plans to commence its Floodplain Risk Management Plan in early 2024, subject to funding being available.</i></p> <p>On schedule</p>
2C: Restore central business districts and town centres
Principal Activity 2C1: Ensure CBD precincts in Casino and the Mid-Richmond are well maintained
<p><i>CBD precincts in all locations are subject to regular inspections and maintenance as per established service levels in accordance with budget allocations.</i></p> <p>On schedule</p>
2D: Support recovery of key industries
Principal Activity 2D1: Advocate for government assistance for local businesses and employees
<p><i>This 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 continues to work with the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation to assist where relevant in their charter to rebuild the Northern Rivers and has recently made introductions for new businesses to establish in the RV which would complement and strengthen existing businesses. These new businesses are from the recycling, mechanical and building supply industries.</i></p> <p>On schedule</p>
Principal Activity 2D2: Partner with Regional NSW, Regional Development Australia (RDA) and local business organisations to support business recovery
<p><i>The Department of Regional NSW has 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. Council has provided support in resolving issues with these programs.</i></p> <p>On schedule</p>

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 Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) and other options

Inspections of all road infrastructure have been completed. The Reconstruction team is actively submitting claims for Essential Public Asset Restoration (EPAR) works. Other grant funding opportunities are being explored and applied for as they arise. Most of the unsealed road network has been made safe and gravel replacement and grading works are complete. EPAR submissions are being assessed by Transport for New South Wales and the lack of approvals is constraining works on the ground and the ability to plan for projects. At 30 June, 29 EPAR's had been submitted to the value of \$133million while 15 EPAR's were being prepared for submission valued at \$12million. Council has received formal approval for 2 EPAR's being Naughtons Gap Road and Busby's Flat Road, Pickapene landslips.

On Schedule

3B: Restore critical regional transport corridors and freight links

Principal Activity 3B1: Support restoration works for Summerland Way and Bruxner Highway

We continue to liaise with TfNSW, which controls State roads, and to 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. Access issues on the Summerland Way and Bruxner Highway were all resolved expediently in the aftermath of the floods, with further works recently completed.

On Schedule



Council has secured federal funding for the replacement and raising of the Tatham Bridges and this project will progress later in 2023.

Principal Activity 3B2: Advocate to upgrade Woodburn-Casino Rd (MR145) as a key regional link road and complete restoration works

After completion of the recent four year \$10million plus program of work on MR145, future funding has been secured for the replacement of the Tatham Bridges (\$18m), The Dip (Dairy Flat) and Thearles Culvert. For the full future restoration of this critical transport route, further funding of over \$40million will need to be sourced.

On schedule

Principal Activity 3B3: Restore essential freight links and community access roads

There has been significant effort by staff 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 several 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. Council will be strongly advocating for additional funding to undertake betterment works. Funding has recently been secured for the Tatham Bridges, The Dip (Dairy Flat) and Thearles Culvert which will complement the already completed 16km of upgraded sections on this road.

Another key transport link which will be restored as a result of over \$15million in funding is the Naughtons Gap Road.

On schedule

3C: Remediate landslips and develop long-term solutions for North Casino link roads

Principal Activity 3C1: Complete Naughtons Gap Road realignment

Council staff have been very active in advocating to all levels of government for a solution to this significant transport link issue. Council's own funds were invested in investigation and options reports to identify the best solution possible to reopen the Naughtons Gap Road. Officers from Transport for NSW have clearly stated the government's preference for a repair solution, and not a realignment. The issue was escalated to the Minister for Transport. Meanwhile, Council had followed the recommendation of TfNSW and lodged a disaster claim for damage, but also an application to the significant road asset betterment grant fund. Council was successful for the betterment funding for the retaining wall component and additional disaster claim funding was awarded for the road repair component. A Tender is currently out to the open market for the reconstruction works which will be provided to a future Council meeting for approval.

Behind Schedule

Principal Activity 3C2: Complete Bentley Road landslip restoration

The Infrastructure Reconstruction team is actively engaged with TfNSW to progress this project. While negotiations continue, interim works have been completed to improve safety and reopen the road to two lanes of traffic. Negotiations to finalise the scope of works have taken some time to resolve. A revised scope is currently pending on the outcomes of an assessment by a geotechnical engineer, following which a revised EPAR application will be submitted to TfNSW.

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 team and Roads and Drainage team has been actively working on drafting a three-year program for restoration works across the road network now that road inspections have been completed. EPAR funding approvals and the speed at which these are happening will result in changes to the program on an ongoing basis. Recent structural adjustments will see the Assets team be active in setting future capital works programs and providing direction for delivery teams.</i>
On Schedule
Principal Activity 3D2: Develop & deliver three-year maintenance and inspection program for roads, bridges & culverts
<i>Council recently adopted the new set of Asset Management Plans which include the Roads Asset Management Plan. These plans provide strategic direction, and recent resource additions to the asset team will own the development and actioning of future inspection programs. Work on these programs is underway.</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>All water supply assets are functioning normally with emergency repair works completed.</i>
Completed
Principal Activity 4A2: Design, secure approvals & funding for Casino Water Treatment Plant upgrade
<i>The intent of this project is to improve drinking water production in the short and long term through process improvements to the plant, which will increase its reliability and better allow it to treat the variable quality of raw river water. An Options Assessment proposal by City Water Technologies, to conduct a process review and recommend optimisation and potential upgrades, has been accepted by the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) and a funding deed has been issued to Council for the project. The catchment has a high-risk score for pathogens, resulting in an overall Risk Score of 5 being awarded to the plant. As a result, DPE has agreed to 50% fund any works through the Safe and Secure Water Program. Work can now proceed on the detailed process and optimisation review of the plant.</i>
On schedule
Principal Activity 4A3: Deliver quality water supply services
<i>Council continues to deliver water supply services to our community that meets the required service standards and are NSW Health compliant.</i>
On schedule
4B: Repair/rebuild sewerage networks
Principal Activity 4B1: Complete urgent repair works to sewerage system assets
<i>All sewerage assets are functioning normally with emergency repairs completed.</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 by the Department of Planning and Environment in December 2022. The Stage 2 concept design is on schedule to be issued to Council for comment and consideration in early September so it can be finalised in late September.</i>
<i>The detailed design will commence once the concept design has been approved and deemed to be satisfactory. NSW Public Works has been engaged to complete the Review of Environmental Factors and the Business Case for the project, the latter of which is required for the Safe and Secure Funding.</i>
On Schedule

Principal Activity 4B3: Construct Rappville Sewerage Scheme

This project is funded under the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund and has progressed toward the conclusion of the planning and design stage. Land acquisition for the site of the main infrastructure is almost concluded and is located South of Rappville. Procurement for the construction of the project is imminent. With most projects, cost indications are higher when tested by the market than when first scoped several years ago.

On schedule

Principal Activity 4B4: Design, secure approvals & funding for Casino STP upgrade

A procurement process for the assembly of a panel of consultants to assist with the delivery of the STP project is due to conclude in July. A primary project management consultant will be appointed from the panel with the aim of assisting Council to deliver the project over the next five years. An application for funding from the Regional Growth Fund (Growing Regional Economies Fund) was submitted in May and the Stage 1 result was expected to be announced in early July. GHD has provided the final draft report of the Casino STP Options and Costing and the final Condition Assessment Report. The Balmoral Group is on schedule to deliver the Business Case for replacement of the plant in September.

On Schedule

Principal Activity 4B5: Deliver efficient sewerage services

Council continues to deliver sewerage services to the community that meet the required service standard while being efficient and Environment Protection Authority (EPA) compliant under normal operating conditions.

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 cleanup effort. These works were completed and open to the public in April 2023.



Reopening of the Casino Indoor Sports Stadium

Community halls, parks, sporting fields and cycleways across the Richmond Valley have all been assessed and repairs have been completed.

A highlight of the repair program was the re-opening of the Casino Indoor Sports Stadium in March. Council has also been awarded funding for the top soiling of all sports fields which is scheduled to be completed by December 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 (Customer Request Management system) are tasked to the Assets team. Post flood event, many of Council's buildings have required increased repair and maintenance effort, some funded by insurance. The flood event has required Council to make difficult decisions regarding the rebuilding of damaged buildings, with some requiring demolition.

The Strategic Asset Planning & Asset Management Strategy and updated set of five Asset Management Plans, adopted in 2022/2023, will inform the maintenance and renewal program of community buildings in future years and will be incorporated into business as usual.

On schedule



*Rebuilt Rappville Hall,
opened February 2023*

The Greens on Barker

Casino's CBD came alive after being granted \$334,000 from the NSW Government's Streets as Shared Spaces Program to beautify the main street. Council also contributed \$30,000 to create The Greens on Barker Street project that involved transforming an underutilised block of land into a newly created green space for the community.

The site features accessible pathways, shade structures, sandstone seating with landscaping, pavement stencilling and artwork and has already attracted wide praise from the community.

The Streets as Shared Spaces program was born out of the COVID-19 pandemic. The program provides one-off grant funding to support local councils to test and pilot new and innovative ideas for streets as safe, shared public spaces.



Official opening of the new space



Concept drawing of The Greens on Barker project

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
<p><i>Council's successful Flying Fox Habitat Restoration grant for Casino riverbank (\$299,992 over 5 years) is well under way with over 4000 trees planted this financial year. The Coraki Riparian Project Partnership for Coraki Riverbank (with Rous County Council and NSW Fisheries) is also well underway with a koala being sighted in the area of the plantings. The restoration work commenced September 2022 on the Casino Riverbank. The Coraki grant works now include support from the Friends of the Koala funding along the riverbank in priority locations.</i></p> <p><i>Council applied for a recreational fishing habitat grant for McDonald Park Casino in 2022, but unfortunately was not successful in securing this funding. However, the Sustainable Communities and Environment team have a small amount of funds allocated to carry out some restoration works.</i></p> <p><i>Local Land Services offer advice, recommendations and funding opportunities to private rural landowners and encourage riverbank restoration. Council Officers continue to actively seek funding for environmental restoration works in the Richmond Valley.</i></p> <p>On schedule</p>
5B: Restore riparian habitat zones in Casino and the Mid-Richmond
Principal Activity 5B1: Seek funding to design and deliver riparian habitat restoration programs
<p><i>The Northern Rivers Regional Partnership Steering Group is advocating for the planting of koala food trees, including significant riparian areas. Council applied for Fish Habitat grants supporting riparian restoration but was unsuccessful on this occasion. The Flying Fox habitat program is also a riparian habitat restoration program. Council was successful in securing a grant of \$299,992 under this program for physical works to be undertaken over a 5-year period with further 3 years to the term covering establishment and maintenance. Council will continue to seek and advocate for additional funding for habitat restoration.</i></p> <p>On schedule</p>
5C: Finalise flood clean-up and incident management
Principal Activity 5C1: Complete inspections of underground petroleum storage systems (UPSS) and develop remediation plans
<p><i>UPSS inspections occur as required and remediation plans are required where appropriate. The EPA has finished its involvement with the flood impacted premises at Broadwater and has carried out further assessment on some Council managed land potentially impacted by flood related fuel spills and provided feedback on future remediation options. Council Officers provided assistance to the EPA when required and engage with them regularly.</i></p> <p>On schedule</p>

Principal Activity 5C2: Partner with EPA to address flood-related chemical and biological hazard incidents
<p><i>The EPA was the lead agency for the 'Clean up flood debris on private land program'. Council partnered with the EPA and assisted throughout the duration of the program by reporting events and communicating with EPA in regard to progress. In addition, Council released a number of communications, including community newsletters and social media, regarding the services available to assist the community on the appropriate pathway for the disposal of flood related waste during the program. This clean-up program has now concluded. There are opportunities available for the community by seeking guidance through Service NSW on potential contamination matters. This clean up and assessment process has been a significant and important program ensuring waste was handled and disposed of correctly and responsibly to reduce the potential risk to the natural environment and hazard to human health.</i></p> <p>Completed</p>
Principal Activity 5C3: Manage high risk on-site sewage management systems (OSMS)
<p><i>The Environment and Health team actively inspect OSMS systems throughout the year. OSMS systems that are not operating as intended pose a risk to the environment and human health due to inappropriately treated effluent entering local waterways. These OSMS inspections include high risk systems, flood impacted systems, new installations and upgrades. In May 2023, Council selected an OSMS and Liquid Trade Waste (LTW) Officer to join the team to ensure delivery of Council's responsibilities.</i></p> <p>On schedule</p>
5D: Manage water quality risks
Principal Activity 5D1: Partner with State agencies to support Richmond River water quality monitoring
<p><i>Council participates in the NSW Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) Beachwatch Program which includes monitoring of water quality. Council Officers work with NSW Fisheries, Local Land Services, Public Works Authority and Rous County Council to monitor the ongoing impacts of the 2022 floods. Rous County Council is the lead agency monitoring river health and regularly report 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.</i></p> <p><i>Blue Green Algae, which is natural in the environment generally, blooms sometimes during warm weather and when other environmental conditions occur. Elevated levels were present in the Richmond River catchment during the summer months and this continues to be monitored, in consultation with WaterNSW.</i></p> <p>On schedule</p>
Principal Activity 5D2: Manage compliance with environmental licences
<p><i>The Sustainable Communities and Environment team provides 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 maintains a solid working relationship with the EPA and seeks guidance if necessary. The required audits have been completed and include recommended actions to reduce or remove non-compliance risk.</i></p> <p>On schedule</p>

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 Rural Fire Service (RFS) and State Emergency Service (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 required repair works to SES Broadwater, Tomki RFS and Coraki SES completed. Discussions are being held regarding permanently relocating the Broadwater SES as it is one of the first areas to be inundated in Broadwater and until a new location can be found, repairs have been made to the current structure. Council's assets team recently managed the project to establish an RFS facility at Fairy Hill.</i>
Completed
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 commissioned the Casino Aerodrome Review 2022 which provided a detailed assessment and future actions list for the future direction of the aerodrome. Several recommendations involved 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. Of these recommendations, a fuel facility has been commissioned and has been welcomed by stakeholders and has even attracted new users to the facility due to the convenient location of the Casino Aerodrome.</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 are currently being investigated (as well as the costs of these solutions) by the consultant and a proposal is to be developed for Council to consider. Following the delivery of the final report for the Casino Study funds will be committed to an Evans Head Study and a Request for Tender will be issued to the market.</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
<p><i>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" in the weir pool; raising the weir; and creating off-line storage. Once this body of work is finalised, Council will determine the most appropriate measure/s to pursue to secure Casino's long-term water supply. The bathymetric survey data relating to the dead storage investigation of Jabour Weir pool is due to be provided by the CSIRO in July 2023.</i></p> <p><i>Rous County Council is the supplier of bulk water to the Mid Richmond and Council will continue to liaise with Rous to ensure appropriate strategic planning and capital works are being undertaken to facilitate the projected future population growth of the Mid Richmond.</i></p> <p>On Schedule</p>
Principal Activity 6C2: Complete automation and telemetry upgrade for water/sewer assets
<p><i>Automation upgrade of the Casino WTP is continuing as part of the plant upgrade works. Other water/sewer assets are being upgraded as part of the flood reconstruction works where possible. Rileys Hill STP upgrade is due to be commissioned in July. South Casino water booster pump station has been temporarily repaired, with further restoration works to follow</i></p> <p>On Schedule</p>
Principal Activity 6C3: Reduce inflow/infiltration in sewerage systems
<p><i>Works continue on the ground with contractors completing manhole and junction repairs associated with the inflow and infiltration program. PWA will be issuing a draft assessment report for Coraki inflow and infiltration, with the anticipated delivery date being during July. The Inflow and Infiltration Strategy has been finalised and presented to Council and all the processes surrounding the works have been reviewed and updated.</i></p> <p>On Schedule</p>
6D: Advocate for improved communications networks
Principal Activity 6D1: Assess local flood impacts on telecommunications services
<p><i>Telecommunications were flagged as a crucial issue in the post 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.</i></p> <p>On Schedule</p>

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
<i>The Richmond Valley Flood Study is complete and is within the public exhibition stage. A grant application has been lodged with the Department of Planning and Environment. An outcome on the grant application is anticipated by December 2023.</i>
On schedule
7B: Improve community preparedness and capacity to respond to natural disasters
Principal Activity 7B1: Support safe development in bushfire & flood prone areas
<i>Development proposals are assessed against various planning controls including hazards and risks such as bushfire, flooding, landslip and sea level rise. 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. Council is preparing a new bushfire prone land map in accordance with the latest RFS mapping guidelines that now incorporate grassland as a category of bushfire hazard.</i>
On schedule
Principal Activity 7B2: Support community disaster preparedness education
<i>Council's Resilience and Recovery Team is 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>
On schedule
Principal Activity 7B3: Implement the Richmond Valley Adverse Event Plan
<i>The actions listed in the 2021 Adverse Event Plan are being worked through and actioned. Council's Resilience and Recovery Team is reviewing the Plan to recommend any amendments required to address the implications of the 2022 flood events. The aim is to roll any continuing actions into other emergency and recovery plans of Council which are currently being reviewed.</i>
On Schedule

7C: Support local food production

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

A number of Council-led programs have assisted local farmers to increase sales and connect with visitors and locals. New experiences were created, supporting the agriculture, food and tourism sectors.

The Richmond Valley Paddock to Plate Collaborative project set out to create a supportive environment for the development of new visitor products and experiences within the Richmond Valley region. Regionality Pty Ltd was engaged to deliver its Agritourism/Agri-Innovation Business Development Program (ABDP) to a cohort of agri-food enterprises, as well as engage with local industry.

Council sponsored three local food businesses with free participation in the 2023 Harvest Food Trail and one-year membership of Northern Rivers Food. Council also supported the Hogarth Range Peach Festival, which was a sold-out event last year, as well as the Casino Lion's Farmers' Markets.

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. Council was also successful in being approved to participate in the Department of Planning and Environment's Network Leak Detection Program, which is due to commence in July 2023. This will assist Council in understanding where reticulation leaks exist and lead to appropriate repairs being performed resulting in less water loss.

On Schedule

Principal Activity 7D2: Explore options for alternative energy initiatives

Council has actively promoted renewable energy 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 with gas capture opportunities.

This year Council adopted the Sustainable Communities Strategy which identifies investigating and implementing renewable energy opportunities on Council infrastructure such as solar installations. This is a key target area to ensure our organisation participates responsibly and leads by example. Recent solar feasibility studies show there are significant financial savings for Council with short pay back periods on the investment. These solar proposals if installed will reduce Council's carbon footprint.

On schedule

7E: Explore alternative waste management options

Principal Activity 7E1: Work with North Coast councils on regional waste solutions

Council is an active member of NEWaste and Waste and Resource Recovery staff maintain relationships with colleagues across other Councils to facilitate best practice outcomes. Richmond Valley Council has been working with other North Coast councils to help resolve regional waste management issues and find a better solution to landfill. Further, Council maintains ongoing participation in Southern Cross University's ReCirculator program (a program designed to conduct, publish and facilitate world-leading research to enable adoption of circular economy principles in the Northern Rivers region.)

On schedule

Richmond Valley Flood Study 2023

The Draft Richmond Valley Flood Study 2023 has been completed and is being exhibited throughout July. The study aims to provide an improved and more accurate understanding of flood behaviour and hazard for the Richmond Valley Council LGA by replacing at least four existing studies with a single comprehensive model.

The new digital flood model has been calibrated to a number of historic flood events, including the February/March 2022 flood, and simulates flooding for almost 85% of the LGA's floodplains for a range of 'design flood' events, including the:

- 2% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP) (previously referred to as a 1 in 50 year Average Recurrence Interval (ARI))
- 1% AEP (or 1 in 100 year ARI),
- 1% plus Climate Change Scenario 3,
- 0.2% AEP (or 1 in 500 year ARI), and
- Probably Maximum Flood (PMF).

At the completion of the Flood Study, Council will commence the next phase of Floodplain Management, with the preparation of a Floodplain Risk Management Plan for the LGA.

As part of the community consultation program for the draft study, Council hosted community drop-in information sessions in both Casino and Evans Head in July. The sessions were attended by representatives from BMT Consulting, who prepared the Study. The consultation period will conclude on 13 August 2023.



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
<p><i>Regional economic development is being supported 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 continues to field regular enquiries from all types of businesses regarding setting up in the Richmond Valley.</i></p> <p>On schedule</p>
Principal Activity 8A2: Finalise and implement the Richmond Valley Regional Jobs Precinct (RJP) masterplan
<p><i>There have been delays with the RJP masterplan and Council is currently discussing the flood assessment impacts of the area surrounding the Casino Industrial Estate. At this stage, the draft masterplan is scheduled for exhibition around November 2023.</i></p> <p>Behind Schedule</p>
Principal Activity 8A3: Work with Regional NSW to attract investment to RJP precincts and the Richmond Valley
<p><i>Council worked with the Office of Regional Economic Development to produce Richmond Valley RJP Investment Opportunities Analysis. In conjunction with Office of Regional Development engagement with the relevant industries identified within the document is ongoing. Council's economic development team continues to field regular enquiries from all types of businesses regarding setting up in the Richmond Valley. Council has developed its own industrial precinct with several lots under in principle agreement to be sold for the sole purpose of business establishment.</i></p> <p>On schedule</p>

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 been fortunate to have collaborated with Tweed Council from the inception of our Rail Trail project. Earlier funding approval for Tweed has seen them pass on their knowledge and experience in all facets of the trail build including governance models and construction and design methodology. RVC is well advanced in the planning and design stage of the southern part of the trail with continued on the ground works having commenced in 2023. Lismore has received funding for its part of the trail and RVC is supporting them with the project, as it is critical that the trail links up in its entirety.

Works on the project continue to be undertaken, with monthly meetings occurring with relevant parties.

On schedule

Principal Activity 8B2: Complete Casino memorial pool upgrade

This challenging project is nearing completion after an 18 month construction process that has been hampered by weather. It is expected that the upgraded pool, featuring a widened 8 lane heated pool, a learn to swim pool and all new plant room and filtering systems will open to the public in September 2023.

Behind Schedule

Principal Activity 8B3: Complete Casino showground upgrade

The Casino Showground and Equestrian Centre project is expected to be completed in March 2024. This project is on time and on budget and will have as its centrepiece an undercover events arena which will provide a major draw card for equestrian and general events to the precinct.

On Schedule



Progress on the Casino Showground redevelopment.

8C: Support local businesses to recover and prosper

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

Since the flood event of 2022, Council has increased engagement with local businesses to support their recovery. 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 seeking to establish in the Richmond Valley.

On schedule

Principal Activity 8C2: Strengthen the visitor economy

The Tourism team continues to think outside the box when it comes to Explore Next Door campaigns. We have used Empty Esky, Buy from the Bush, fishing guru Laura Gallagher, and the What's Up Down Under TV series. We are a gold affiliate of the Ballina BP Digital Visitor Hub in partnership with Ballina and Lismore councils.

We have investigated new tourism industries - agri-tourism and cultural tourism and are aligning with key Destination NSW strategies like the Aboriginal Tourism Action Plan. We are also working with Destination North Coast to attract business events to the area.

The new Discover Richmond Valley Tourism Advisory Committee will be a vital link connecting local businesses and community organisations with Council and the wider tourism network of the Northern Rivers region. Using the Richmond Valley Destination Management Plan 2021-2025 as a base, Committee members will provide strategic insight with regard to the improvement of Council's tourism plans, as well as liaising with community groups and businesses to identify initiatives to enhance the Richmond Valley visitor experience.

On schedule



Beef Week Parade 2023



Casino Fun Run



Buckin' on the Beach

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

Council's business activities are continuing to grow, with the waste management and resource recovery sectors operating efficiently in steady state. Business development initiatives will be developed in tandem with the development of the Waste Strategy which will be delivered in 2024. The NRLX again was the vehicle with which the RV agricultural community generated \$142million in cattle sales revenue and 117,000 cattle passing through the facility. These results made the NRLX the second largest selling facility in NSW.

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. Customer Experience Team has 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 has become 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

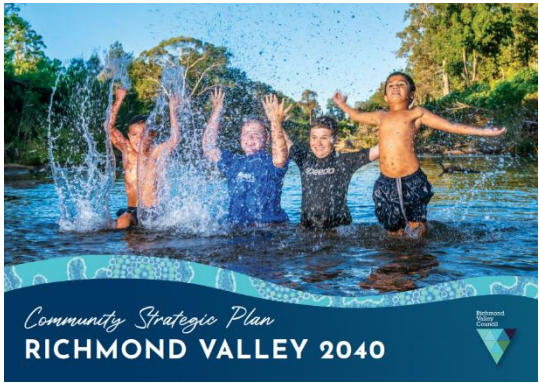
OBJECTIVE 9: Address long-term housing needs

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
<p><i>Community consultation for the draft Growth Management Strategy was carried out in February-March and the final Strategy, along with the Casino Place Plan, was adopted at Council's April meeting. The project has now moved into the implementation phase.</i></p> <p>Completed</p>
Principal Activity 9A2: Work with NSW Planning & Environment to release additional residential land in Richmond Valley growth areas
<p><i>The Urban Growth Management Strategy and Place Plans will identify potential sites for future urban growth. These strategic plans will address long-term housing need and set the future direction for residential growth, commercial and industrial land uses. Land affordability is a key consideration when assessing opportunities for future housing needs. Council staff are liaising with the Department of Planning and Environment (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 both the Richmond Valley and 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 undertaking the planning proposal pathway to facilitate rezoning of residential land. Council is also in discussions with the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation (NRRC) regarding its Resilient Lands Program, which will fast track release of additional residential land to accommodate flood impacted communities.</i></p> <p>On schedule</p>
Principal Activity 9A3: Streamline approvals for rezoning, sub-division and residential developments
<p><i>Council is actively engaging with the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation, NSW Reconstruction Authority and DPE seeking their support for the prioritisation of planning processes which enable faster development assessment and approval to support the planned growth of the Richmond Valley. Streamlining processes will accelerate the rebuilding of the Northern Rivers, especially housing for the people who were impacted and displaced by the 2022 flood events.</i></p> <p><i>Council also undertakes continuous training and upskilling of first point of contact staff, to enable them to provide comprehensive guidance to applicants in preparing quality assessment-ready applications to ensure timely assessment outcomes. Council promotes its development support services to the community, developers and builders.</i></p> <p>On schedule</p>

Principal Activity 9A4: Seek government funding for essential infrastructure to activate new housing areas
<p><i>Council is working closely with the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Authority to activate a major residential development site at Fairy Hill. This site was identified for priority investigation in the Resilient Lands Strategy and council will be actively seeking government funding for essential infrastructure to support this development</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 continues to advocate to the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Authority for activation of Crown Land for affordable housing. A number of suitable sites have been identified within the Richmond Valley and these were included as part of Council's submission to the Resilient Lands program. Council further wrote to the NRRRA in June, expressing its concern that these lands were not included in the Draft Resilient Lands Strategy and we continue to work with the Authority to promote development opportunities on these sites.</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, roads), most of the identified locations for future residential land is adjacent to existing developed residential land. Officers are currently working with a number of proponents who are seeking rezoning and approval to develop residential land which includes a 19 lot sub-division in Spring Grove. Council is fielding numerous enquiries in regard to scoping studies for planning proposals in the North Casino area and a rezoning in the Naughtons Gap 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
<p><i>Some preliminary investigation of sites was undertaken however due to the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Authority's Resilient Lands Program commencing this work was halted as it is envisaged that the Resilient Lands Program will deliver a suitable supply of residential land. If Council identifies any opportunities to develop residential land, it will first look to the market to deliver, but will undertake this itself if that isn't evident.</i></p> <p>Not Progressing</p>

SUSTAIN

OBJECTIVE 10: Lead and advocate for our community

10A: Strengthen engagement between Council and the community
Principal Activity 10A1: Develop and deliver the Richmond Valley Community Engagement Strategy
<p><i>Work has commenced on a new Community Engagement Strategy and Framework. The Communications and Engagement team is working with project managers and relevant Council departments to prepare a whole-of-business community engagement framework. The aim is to have the draft completed by the end of 2023.</i></p> <p>On schedule</p>
Principal Activity 10A2: Complete the Community Strategic Plan review in consultation with the community
<p><i>The Community Strategic Plan: Richmond Valley 2040, was adopted by Council in June 2023, following extensive community consultation. The Plan outlines key strengths, challenges and opportunities, together with our vision of the future.</i></p> <p><i>The Plan details twelve objectives within its four key directions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Strengthening our role in the region</i> <i>2. Creating great places to live</i> <i>3. Protecting our unique environment</i> <i>4. Delivering for our community.</i> <p>Completed</p>

10B: Advocate to federal and state governments for community needs and priorities
Principal Activity 10B1: Advocate for community priorities and actively seek grant funding
<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. 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. This program will deliver more than 600 new jobs supported by much-needed housing growth. 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.</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
<p><i>Council continues to actively support the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation's regional advocacy and programs, including exploring initiatives for renewable energy, increased regional employment, regional flood recovery and housing. The NRJO continues to advocate to the NSW Government and the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation for acceleration of house raising and buy-back schemes and further implementation of the resilient lands program.</i></p> <p>On schedule</p>
10D: Lead with integrity
Principal Activity 10D1: Provide representative and accountable community governance
<p><i>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.</i></p> <p>On schedule</p>

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
<p><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. In the preparation of next year's programs and plans, Council has undertaken a full review of all asset management plans. A revised long-term financial plan, revenue policy, operational plan and delivery program were adopted by Council on 29 June 2023.</i></p> <p>On schedule</p>
Principal Activity 11A2: Ensure resources are managed transparently and responsibly
<p><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 grant funding with applications submitted, approved grants and unsuccessful grants, is presented to Council on a monthly basis.</i></p> <p><i>Council also has an Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee that meets five times a year. This committee consists of three independent members and monitors Council's risk and audit functions.</i></p> <p>On schedule</p>
Principal Activity 11A3: Enhance procurement systems
<p><i>Improvements to the tender information available on Council's website (as referred to in the previous Progress Report) are now complete. Updates are posted to the website by Council's Procurement Officer and bring Council into line with the latest changes to the Local Government Act, as they relate to procurement.</i></p> <p><i>Council's Procurement Officer has undertaken further training and commenced training of Council staff involved in procurement activities to address compliance issues. A register of contracts expiring in the next 12 months has also been developed to create a procurement plan of when and how Council goes to market to replace these contracts. Expected development in the next phase includes developing TechOne reports to improve visibility of non-compliant purchase orders and purchase orders raised after the invoice is received.</i></p> <p>On schedule</p>

11B: Provide a high standard of customer service
Principal Activity 11B1: Implement the RV Customer Service Charter
<p><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.</i></p> <p><i>The customer service report is presented to Council on a quarterly basis, detailing the organisation's performance against service level agreements and highlighting opportunities for improvement.</i></p> <p><i>The Customer Experience team continues to model and promote a customer service culture across the organisation. Community feedback surveys regularly rank customer contact highly and a positive experience. The Customer Service Charter and Standards have been published on the Council website.</i></p> <p>On schedule</p>
Principal Activity 11B2: Deliver effective and progressive Regional Library and Casino Indoor Sports Stadium services and programs
<p><i>The library has provided a great range of library programs throughout the year. The library team has assisted with advice and knowledge to the Sports Stadium since it re-opened in March 2023 with a new Coordinator appointed. The use of and bookings of the Sports Stadium has continued to increase, and the new leadership is looking at adding to the list of activities already on offer at the stadium.</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>Council continues to implement its Workforce Strategy. This includes the recent introduction of flexible working arrangements, which are being discussed by each Manager with their teams. The Strategy is reviewed as we progress to update policies and procedures and as part of our recruitment and training and development progression.</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. All our recruitment looks at local people to fit vacancies and equal opportunities for our community are prioritised. Council ran a second Try A Trade program to provide opportunities to locals looking for a change in career, we were also part of the regional career expo and have run our annual 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 and without 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 other waste streams. Council is undertaking a major landfill upgrade in Casino that will provide airspace into the mid term future.</i></p> <p>On schedule</p>
Principal Activity 11D2: Deliver consistent regulatory and compliance services
<p><i>Council's approach to regulatory and compliance work is regularly reviewed and discussed in-house. 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. Council Officers aim to deliver a customer focused approach at all times.</i></p> <p>On schedule</p>
Principal Activity 11D3: Provide great corporate support services to improve efficiency
<p><i>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 in September 2023). Council continues to minimise risks should a major disaster impact council operation. This is primarily achieved through migration of key systems to the cloud, so they are no longer subject to localised disasters and efficient backup and recovery procedures.</i></p> <p>On schedule</p>

Fleet initiatives



Council introduced three new waste collection trucks to the fleet. The long-awaited trucks have a design focus on safety and improved driver control. The new trucks have a side arm for picking up bins from the kerbside efficiently and are fitted with state-of-the-art computers and GPS technology.

The trucks include numerous safety features, including a pedestrian detection system which activates when the truck is in reverse. This means that if a person walks behind the truck while reverse gear is engaged, the truck will automatically apply the brakes and stop.

The trucks feature a GPS system known as “waste track”, which monitors:

- the location of the truck
- how many bins it has picked up
- a camera system which records the outside of the address the truck is picking up from
- the contents of the bin as it is unloaded into the hopper
- the road ahead of the truck, and
- rear of the truck.

This monitoring provides Council with accurate information to enable prompt responses to customer enquiries.

