

Richmond Valley Council

Richmond
Valley
Council



Annual Report 2022-2023





Richmond Valley Council recognises the people of the Bundjalung nations as custodians and traditional owners of this land. We value and appreciate the continuing cultural connection to lands, their living culture and their unique role in the life of this region.

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CONTENTS

Message from the Mayor and General Manager	4
About the Richmond Valley	8
Richmond Valley Councillors	9
Flood Advocacy	10
Staffing Profile	14
Our Vision	15
Our Values and Behaviours	16
Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework	17
Highlights of Signature Projects	18
Collaborations	26
Festivals and Events 2022/2023	28
Section 1: Delivery Program Progress	30
Our Achievements Snapshot 2022/2023	31
Recover	33
Prevent and Prepare	43
Sustain	45
Section 2: Financial and Asset Reporting	50
Income Statement	50
Balance Sheet	50
Indicators	51
Assets Held	53
Section 3: Statutory Reporting	54
Overseas Visits by Councillors, Council Staff or other persons representing Council	54
Councillor Fees, Expenses and Facilities	54
Contracts Awarded by Council	55
Legal Proceedings	56
Financial Assistance	58
External Bodies Exercising Function Delegated by Council	59

Corporations, Partnerships, Trusts, Joint Ventures, Syndicates or Other Bodies in which Council held a Controlling Interest	59
Corporations, Partnerships, Trusts, Joint Ventures, Syndicates or Other Bodies in which Council participated in during the year	59
North East Weight of Loads Group (NEWLOG)	59
Richmond-Upper Clarence Regional Library	59
Northern Rivers Joint Organisation	59
North East Waste	59
Modern Slavery	60
Development Contributions	61
Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan	62
General Manager and Senior Staff Remuneration	63
Stormwater Management Service Charge	64
Companion Animals	65
Rates and Charges Written Off	66
Special Variations to General Income	66
Swimming Pool Inspections	67
Councillor Induction and Professional Development	68
Environmental Upgrade Agreements	69
Planning Agreements in Force	69
Labour Statistics	69
Disability Inclusion Action Plan	70
Section 4 – Appendices	71

MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR AND GENERAL MANAGER

The 2022-2023 year was a landmark year for Richmond Valley Council as it continued to rebuild after the 2022 floods, with one of the largest-ever infrastructure programs, including significant road reconstruction and asset repairs across the Richmond Valley.

As a Council we were quick to adapt and work hard to ensure support was provided to our community where it was needed, that our services and facilities were not disrupted more than necessary, and that we maintained our long-term focus on investing in the future.

Rebuilding the Richmond Valley

Amongst the challenges brought by the flooding events, it ignited many positive changes too. Most notably Council's long-term plan to help guide it through the next three years of recovery. The Rebuilding the Richmond Valley Recovery Plan was adopted in June 2022, with the first year of the plan serving as its Delivery Program for 2022-2023. Having a clear plan, with allocated responsibilities and priority actions, helped Council engage with funding providers and secure much-needed support for our community. In the first year, more than \$36 million in government funding was secured through Council's advocacy and its proven capacity to deliver major works.



Robert Mustow

Vaughan Macdonald

The immediate focus was on fixing essential services and helping people to recover and get back on their feet. This included advocating for government support and ensuring the day-to-day services Council provides for the community continued to be available. The plan recognises that flood recovery works will take at least three years to complete, with extensive damage to the Valley's road network and sewerage systems, as well as community facilities such as the Casino Indoor Sports Stadium, community halls, emergency services buildings and sports fields.

Roads are one of Council's biggest priorities, year in, year out. Council's road network is 1064km long. The task of maintaining these roads has been made more challenging by the 2022 floods, which affected more than 75 percent of the road network. The estimated repair bill stands at \$100 million, not including the cost of repairing major landslips north of Casino. Key roads include: Bentley Road; Bungawalbin-Whiporie Road; Naughtons Gap Road; Rappville Road; Upper Cherry Tree Road; Woodburn-Coraki Road; and Woodburn-Evans Head Road. Council made the restoration of flood-damaged roads a high priority over the past year and will continue to work hard both on the ground, and lobbying government to return our roads to a high standard.

Apart from flood recovery work, more than \$20 million in signature projects were also finalised in 2022-2023, including the opening of the Rappville Hall. Significant progress was made on the Casino Memorial Pool upgrade, Casino Showground redevelopment, and the Casino to Bentley section of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail.

Supporting our community

Council continued to support the community through the Event Support Scheme and Community Financial Assistance Scheme. Twenty-five community groups shared funding through the Community Financial Assistance Scheme, totalling over \$79,000. A further seven community groups benefitted from just over \$38,000 as part of the Event Support Scheme. Successful applicants under the Event Support Scheme included:

- Australian Fishing Tournaments: \$5000 cash \$770 in-kind
- Casino Show Society: \$5000 cash \$3072 in-kind
- Evans Head-Casino Surf Life Saving Club: \$5000 cash \$715 in-kind
- Evans Head Malibu Club: \$1500 cash \$900 in-kind
- Mid Richmond Neighbourhood Centre: \$7500 cash \$1514 in-kind
- Southview Orchard: \$2000 cash \$185 in-kind
- Woodburn Event Team: \$5000 cash \$657 in-kind.

A full listing of funding under the Community Financial Assistance Scheme is provided in Section 3 of this Report.



Council was allocated \$1 million as part of the Stronger Country Communities program for the overhaul of the Albert Park tourist stopover in Casino and \$213,000 to revitalise Shark Bay at Evans Head. The beautification of these areas will entice visitors and help meet tourism needs, which in turn will assist in the area's economic recovery.

A magnificent granite monument honouring our Diggers was the centrepiece of the final stage of the Casino Drill Hall Precinct upgrade project, which was officially opened in September. The \$5.4 million redevelopment was made possible thanks to the Australian Government's Building Better Regions Fund and Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Fund, where Council was successful in obtaining \$2.7 million for the first stage, followed by \$885,000 to build a memorial walk and a further \$405,000 for much-needed upgrades at Coronation Park. The project also received \$252,000 from the NSW Government's ClubGRANTS scheme, which helped fund the construction of the Casino Visitor Information Centre, and a \$1.2 million contribution from Richmond Valley Council.

Council secured \$1,579,506 in grants from the NSW Government's Sport Priority Needs Program to help restore and improve facilities across the Richmond Valley. Successful projects included: Woodburn Oval - \$152,574 for underground irrigation; Colley Park - \$495,205 to restore playing surfaces, replace the basketball court, and upgrade lighting and irrigation; Queen Elizabeth Park - \$436,199 for new cricket nets and field and drainage upgrade and \$163,169 for a new shed; Stan Payne Oval - \$179,456 for new cricket nets and field upgrades; Windsor Park - \$118,146 for field upgrades and new bollards; Casino Croquet Club - \$34,757 to upgrade playing services and safety improvements.

A \$2.1 million Fixing Local Roads grant paved the way for Council to upgrade Coraki-Ellangowan Road. The project involves sealing 2.7km from Ellangowan Road to Emu Park Road.

Casino's skyline became a little bit brighter in November as renowned artists The Brightsiders put the final touches to their four-panel mural, transforming the iconic structure into what has become a major drawcard for locals and visitors alike. The water tower is the centrepiece of a scenic and heritage trail, with interpretative signage showing off key points of interest and historical architecture featured throughout Casino and South Casino. The project was funded by a \$125,000 Australian Government Regional Tourism Bushfire Recovery grant.

Right across the Richmond Valley, Council combined with our local communities to celebrate the Christmas season. Starting off with our amazing annual Richmond Valley Christmas Street Party, the streets of Casino came alive. We then moved onto Broadwater and Evans Head, followed by Rappville and finally Coraki and Woodburn in celebrating the Christmas spirit. The crowd was dazzled by amazing fireworks displays in Casino and Evans Head, and spectacular laser shows in Broadwater and Rappville.

“ THE COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN SETS AN AMBITIOUS GROWTH AGENDA FOR 2040, INCLUDING MORE PEOPLE, HOUSING, JOBS AND GREEN SPACES.



Planning for the future

Council sought community feedback on four key strategic documents – the Community Strategic Plan, the Richmond Valley Growth Management Strategy, Casino Place Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy – and will continue to liaise with both the Federal and State governments, as well as the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation, to seek funding support to realise the growth path these documents set, which will go a long way to easing the housing crisis currently gripping the Northern Rivers region.

The Community Strategic Plan sets an ambitious growth agenda for 2040, including more people, housing, jobs and green spaces. These plans were created through extensive consultation with the community and set key directions to ensure our communities are sustainable, that we protect our environment and use our natural resources wisely.

The Urban Growth Management Strategy identifies Casino's critical role in anchoring and advancing the regional economy and disaster proofing the Northern Rivers, given the constraints on land in the Coraki, Woodburn, Broadwater, Rileys Hill and Evans Head areas. With a population of 23,550, this Growth Strategy sets a target of 4100 additional people by 2041. This can be achieved by a combination of strategic government investment and attracting willing investors to our Valley, supported by reliable and progressive Council decision making and investment.

The Casino Place Plan is the first of several for the urban centres of the Richmond Valley and is the starting point for a program of work which will respond to future changes, as well as helping the community embrace opportunities and respond to challenges. The Place Plan looks at Casino and its surrounds in a holistic way to identify measures to be prioritised in the short-term, as well as establishing next steps to support longer-term change.

“ MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT WITH THE COMMUNITY WE SERVE IS ESSENTIAL TO COUNCIL'S WORK.

The Sustainable Communities Strategy 2023-2028 aims to protect the Richmond Valley's natural environment and provide a beautiful place to live, work, play and invest for the future. Our Valley has a rich environmental heritage, including extensive waterways, conservation areas, national parks, wilderness areas and a world-heritage site. As the climate continues to change, the region could experience further challenges, with the possibility of increased periods of drought, higher temperatures, rising sea levels, more frequent floods and storms and a greater risk of fire. The Strategy addresses these challenges by building community awareness and resilience and achieving a healthy balance between growth and sustainable living.

Meaningful engagement with the community we serve is essential to Council's work, and we would like to acknowledge everyone who took the time to participate in community engagement activities and community advisory committees to inform Council's decision-making throughout the year.

We continue to be inspired by the way our community pulls together during tough times to support one another and come out the other side stronger.

We hope the next financial year is not as challenging but if it is, the organisation is well placed to meet the needs of the community and continue to support the Richmond Valley as a thriving place to live, work and play.


Robert Mustow


Vaughan Macdonald

ABOUT THE RICHMOND VALLEY



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

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

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

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

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

The Richmond Valley has the platform to support significant growth in our local economy, which in turn will contribute to growth in the Northern Rivers regional economy. As the Beef Capital, we have the Casino Food Co-op, a major contributor toward the local economy and Richmond Dairies, who export to numerous countries. Along with this we have Australia's largest beef jerky producers in New World Foods - all located in Casino.

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

The Valley is full of unique places, people and produce, all shaped by the local environment. This is what makes the Richmond Valley area so special.



RICHMOND VALLEY COUNCILLORS



L to R (standing): Cr Stephen Morrissey (Deputy Mayor), Cr Robert Hayes, Cr Patrick Deegan, Cr Sam Cornish
L to R (seated): Cr Sandra Humphrys, Cr Robert Mustow (Mayor), Cr Debra McGillan

FLOOD ADVOCACY AND ASSISTANCE

Council continued to advocate strongly for flood affected communities in the Richmond Valley throughout 2022-23, successfully completing the first year of its Rebuilding the Richmond Valley Recovery Plan.

The 2022 floods changed the face of the region and left a trail of destruction across the Richmond Valley that will take many years to repair. After the immediate emergency response to the floods, Council set about preparing a long-term plan that would guide it through the next three years of recovery. It adopted the Rebuilding the Richmond Valley Recovery Plan in June 2022, with the first year of the plan serving as its Delivery Program for 2022-2023. This approach proved successful, with Council's key activities being directed towards recovery works. More than \$36m in government funding was secured through Council's advocacy during Year 1 of the Plan. Remaining actions for Years 2 and 3 of the Plan have been incorporated into Council's new 2023-25 Delivery Program, adopted in June 2023. This will ensure that we continue to build back better after the floods and secure the Richmond Valley's place as a growing regional centre.



Activity during the first year of recovery focussed on:

- Understanding the scale of the damage and how long it would take to rebuild
- Completing emergency repairs to essential infrastructure, such as water supply sewerage services and road networks
- Getting people back into their homes wherever possible
- Fixing essential facilities, such as halls and sports grounds, so that communities could restart local activities
- Supporting the long-term recovery of the environment
- Advocating for support and funding from state and federal governments to complete the recovery process.

Throughout the year, Council continued to build strong relationships with the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation and key government agencies to secure funding and support for our community. Key advocacy and assistance efforts included:

Rate relief

Council wrote to the NSW Premier in March 2022, seeking support to provide additional rating relief to flood affected communities, on a similar basis to the 2019 bushfire rating relief arrangements. The NSW Government responded with more than \$2 million in rating subsidies for local families and businesses in the 2022-23 rating year, and Council continues to advocate for this scheme to be extended for a further 12 months. This funding has provided great support for those who are living in temporary accommodation while trying to repair and rebuild their flood-damaged homes. Council supported the government subsidy by also waiving interest on all overdue rates and water/sewer charges for nine months and continues to implement its rates hardship policies for flood-affected families.

Temporary housing

Within days of the floods, Council had contacted key government agencies, identifying suitable sites to establish temporary housing for flood victims. This led to the establishment of the Caravan at Home program for residents of Woodburn and surrounding areas, with more than 153 caravans provided.

Two temporary housing sites were also established at Evans Head and Coraki, providing accommodation for up to 310 people. Council continues to work with State Government agencies regarding the ongoing management of the temporary housing sites and the ultimate relocation of residents to permanent homes.

House-raising and buy-backs

Council has also been advocating strongly for government programs to help flood affected families restore their homes, and has written to the Premier, voicing its concerns with the Resilient Homes program and the lack of further support for the 500+ local residents who were unsuccessful in receiving a buy-back offer, assistance with house raising or flood resilience works. We will continue to advocate for further funding and assistance and to work with the NSW Reconstruction Authority to ensure that the buy-back scheme is appropriately managed in local communities.

Council has also been supporting those residents undertaking their own house raising or flood resilience works to ensure their development applications are processed quickly. In the first year of the Recovery Plan, more than 20 DAs for works on flood affected properties in Broadwater, Woodburn, Coraki and surrounding areas have been approved. This includes house replacement, house-raising and restoration works for flood-affected businesses.

Fixing local facilities

The floods damaged 17 community buildings, including halls, cultural facilities and emergency services buildings and significantly impacted 14 sports and recreation facilities. Council received strong support from its insurer, CivicRisk Mutual, with sufficient funds to complete repairs to most of the damaged facilities within Year 1 of the Recovery Plan. We have also been actively seeking government grants to prepare master plans and build back better with our sports facilities. Major works completed in Year 1 include:

- Repair and re-opening of the Casino Indoor Sports Stadium, with a new flood-resilient floor.
- Repairs to Woodburn swimming pool and restoration of the amenities, change room and lighting at Woodburn Oval
- Restoration of the Woodburn Visitor Information Centre and riverside park
- Improved drainage, repairs to damaged footpaths and surface works at Stan Payne Oval, Evans Head
- Upgrades to lighting and drainage at Colley Park, Casino
- Major restoration of the temporary holding site for flood waste in Queen Elizabeth Park, Casino, with a new carpark, improved drainage and replacement cricket nets.

Disaster recovery funding for local roads and bridges

With more than \$200 million in damage to local roads, bridges, sewerage and water infrastructure, Council has been advocating strongly for Disaster Recovery Assistance funding for the Richmond Valley. Over the past year, we have been working closely with Transport for NSW to prepare funding applications for flood-damaged roads and bridges and have lodged claims for more than 800 repair projects. Successful claims so far include more than \$10m funding to repair the Naughton's Gap landslip, as well as landslips at Pikapene and Bentley. A further highlight was completion of interim restoration work for Richmond Terrace Coraki. Council is committed to long-term restoration of this road and is currently preparing detailed designs and actively seeking further funding for the works.

Council has also worked directly with the Northern Rivers Resilience Initiative to secure \$26m in funding from the National Emergency Management Authority for flood resilience works on the Woodburn-Casino Road, including repair and raising of the Tatham Bridges. This work will commence in 2023-24.

Restoring the environment

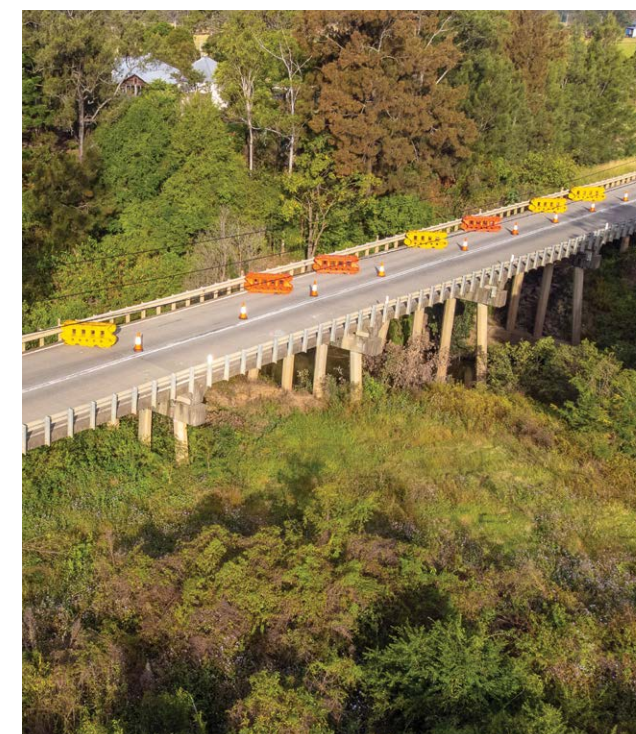
The 2022 floods also caused significant damage to the environment, including major riverbank erosion, loss of native habitat and contamination of land and waterways. Council has so-far been successful in securing some \$300,000 in habitat restoration funding for riverbank areas in Casino and partnered with Rous County Council and NSW Fisheries on habitat restoration at Coraki. Council has also actively supported the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) with its clean-up and remediation programs following the flood. This included monitoring underground petroleum storage systems and reporting flood-related chemical and biological hazards. Work also continues on monitoring river water quality after the flood, in partnership with State Agencies and Rous County Council. As part of its long-term planning for the Valley, Council has prepared a Sustainable Communities Strategy, which includes ongoing programs to improve biodiversity and waterway health. The strategy was adopted at Council's March 2023 meeting.

Advocating for our community

Council has been a strong advocate for community recovery since the 2022 flood. This has helped to secure substantial government funding and raised awareness of community flood recovery priorities. Key activities over the past year have included:

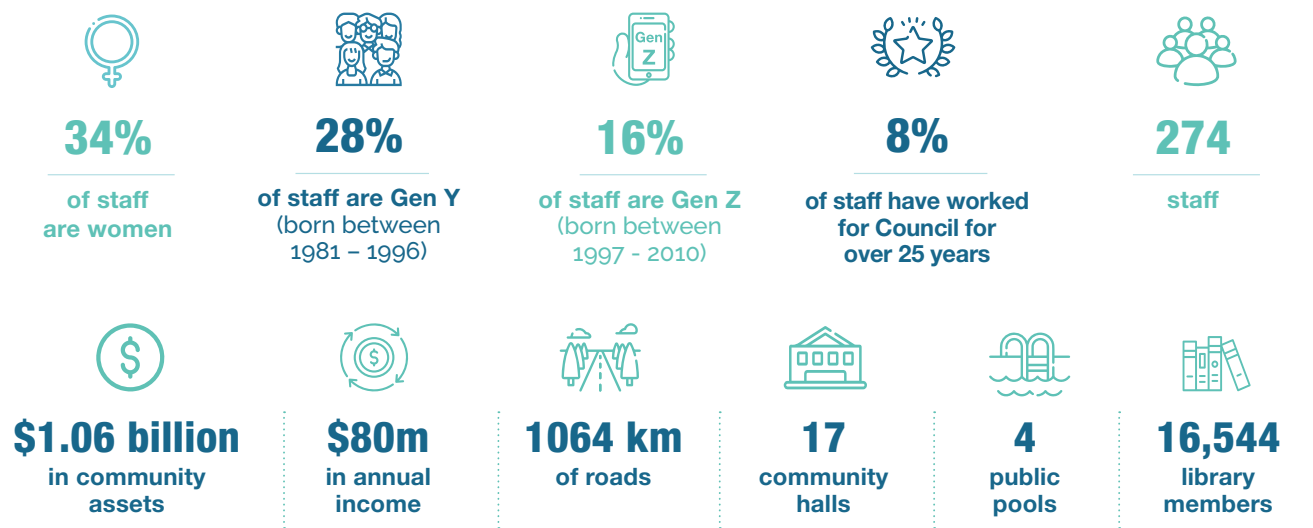
- Representations to the NSW Government for restoration of the Bungawalbin Levee
- Representations to the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation for further support for flood-affected businesses in Woodburn
- Representations to the Attorney General to expedite flood repairs to the Casino Courthouse
- Letters to the Premier and Minister for Emergency Services highlighting local flood recovery priorities
- Regular meetings with the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Authority and Transport for NSW to expedite flood repair approvals.

Council also continues to work directly with flood-affected communities, through its Recovery Team and our local advisory groups.



STAFFING PROFILE

Council employs 274 staff (full time equivalent) under the leadership of the General Manager, with services delivered under the following structure in the 2022/2023 year.



OUR VISION

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

A new CSP was adopted for the 2023/2024 year and we look forward to meeting the new goals set in consultation with the community.



OUR VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS

Richmond Valley Council's organisational values are **Integrity and Passion**.

In 2019/2020, Council adopted the following set of behaviours which aimed to reflect how we handled the challenges Council and the community faced during this time, including drought, bushfires, floods and the COVID-19 pandemic.

We lead by example

We take responsibility

We do what we say

We embrace change

We are community focused

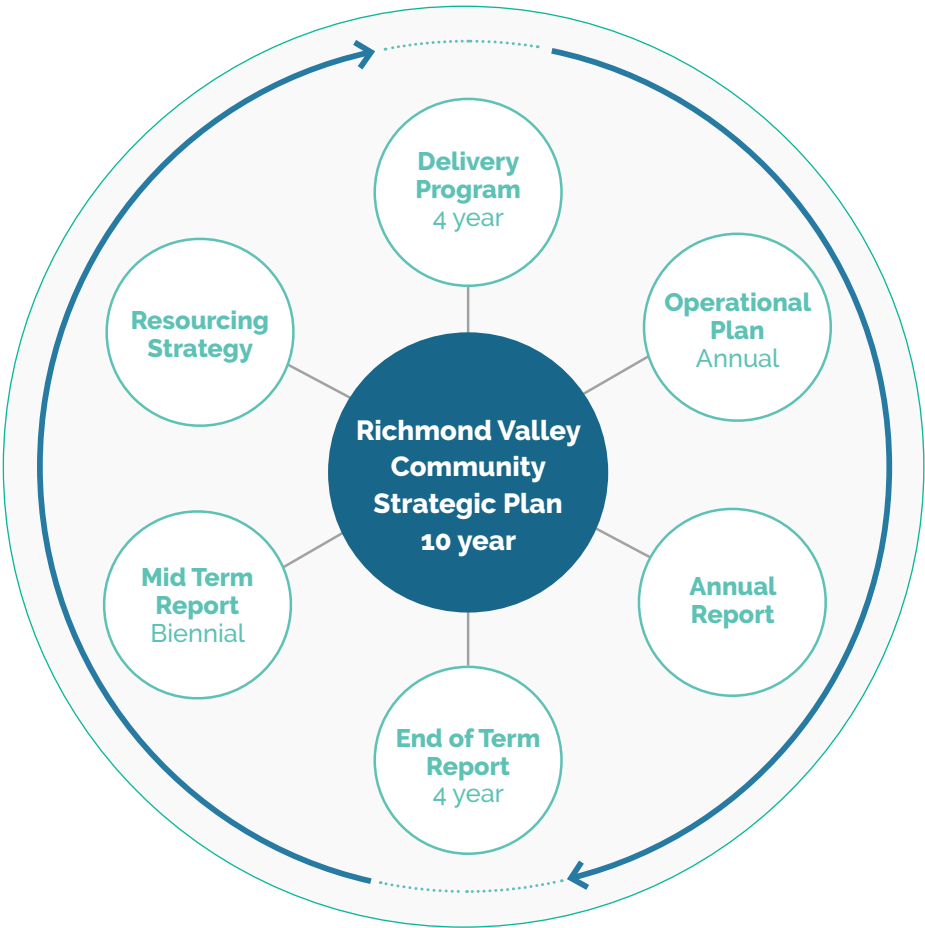
We are in this together

INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING FRAMEWORK

Councils in NSW are required to operate within the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework. The framework encourages councils to draw all their plans together to gain an understanding of how they interact and to get maximum leverage through a holistic approach to planning for the future.

The framework consists of a hierarchy of documents which ultimately aim to provide greater accountability and transparency in local government, by strengthening Council's strategic focus, streamlining reporting processes and making it easier for the community to understand and track Council's progress on achieving its objectives.

COMMITMENT TO ONGOING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION



HIGHLIGHTS OF SIGNATURE PROJECTS

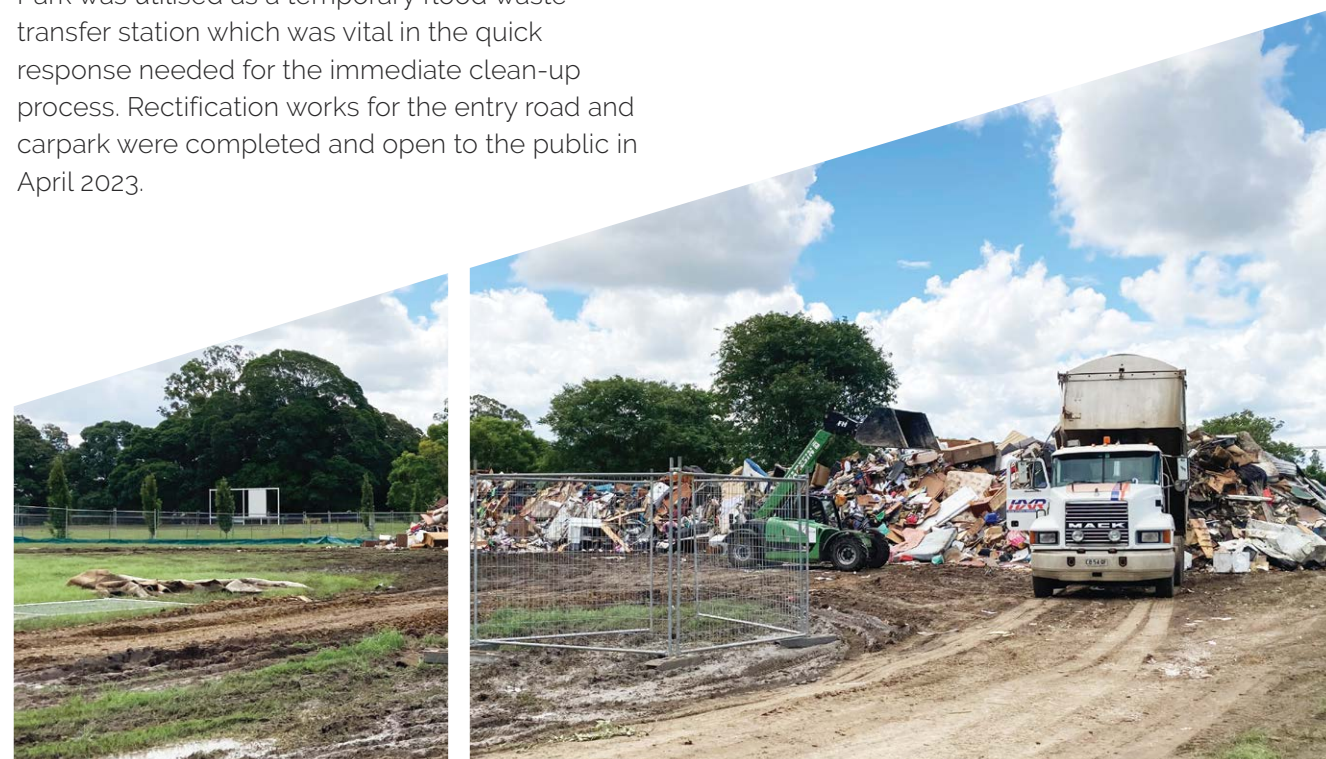
Council has overseen the delivery of over \$52million in flood repair and capital works throughout the 2022-2023 financial year and continues to support our community by advocating for further funding. Council's completed and upcoming projects include the Rappville Hall, Northern Rivers Rail Trail, the Casino Memorial Pool Upgrade, the Casino Showground and Racecourse redevelopment, upgrades to MR145 Woodburn Coraki Road and the Barker Street Green Space development.

Projects in the planning stage that will be realised next year include the Albert Park Stopover Upgrade to transform this facility into an inviting rest place for travellers and the Woodburn Streetscape Design to bring the Woodburn CBD Activation Project to a shovel ready stage in readiness for funding opportunities.

FLOODS

Repairs /Queen Elizabeth Park

During the 2022 flood event, Queen Elizabeth Park was utilised as a temporary flood waste transfer station which was vital in the quick response needed for the immediate clean-up process. Rectification works for the entry road and carpark were completed and open to the public in April 2023.



Amenities

Following from the extreme weather and flooding events of February and March 2022, Council identified the need for mobile emergency facilities, such as kitchens and amenities, in preparation for a future disaster. The mobile amenities and kitchens will become an essential resource for Council which can be easily deployed in times of emergency (such as flood and bushfire) to provide compliant sanitary and cooking facilities for affected communities. It will increase Council's preparedness for future disasters and provide better disaster resilience and emergency response for the Richmond Valley Community. The amenities can also be used regularly during large scale events throughout the Richmond Valley. Amenities and kitchen vans are booked in for delivery September/October 2023.

Halls /Community Facilities

The Yorklea Community Centre flood repairs were completed in October 2022. This included all flood damaged items removed, new kitchen cupboards and floor coverings installed, and a new septic tank installed. Repairs are continuing on the Broadwater Hall with works going ahead on the flooring and the Woodburn Hall is currently undergoing painting with floor sanding and polishing with a contractor scheduled to commence works in the September 2023 School Holidays.

Council staff have worked on replacing all flood damaged BBQs in various locations across the Mid Richmond area with all being upgraded to double units and installations complete by August 2022. These are a great amenity for the local community as well as visitors to the area.

TOURISM

Rail Trail

The Northern Rivers Rail Trail (NRRT) is 130 kilometres of proposed recreational trail that follows the disused Casino to Murwillumbah rail corridor. The trail is a significant recreational infrastructure project that has been modelled to bring a wide range of economic, environmental, and health benefits to the Northern Rivers community. The 13.4km Casino to Bentley section represents part of Stage Two of the NRRT (the first stage being a 24km section from Crabbes

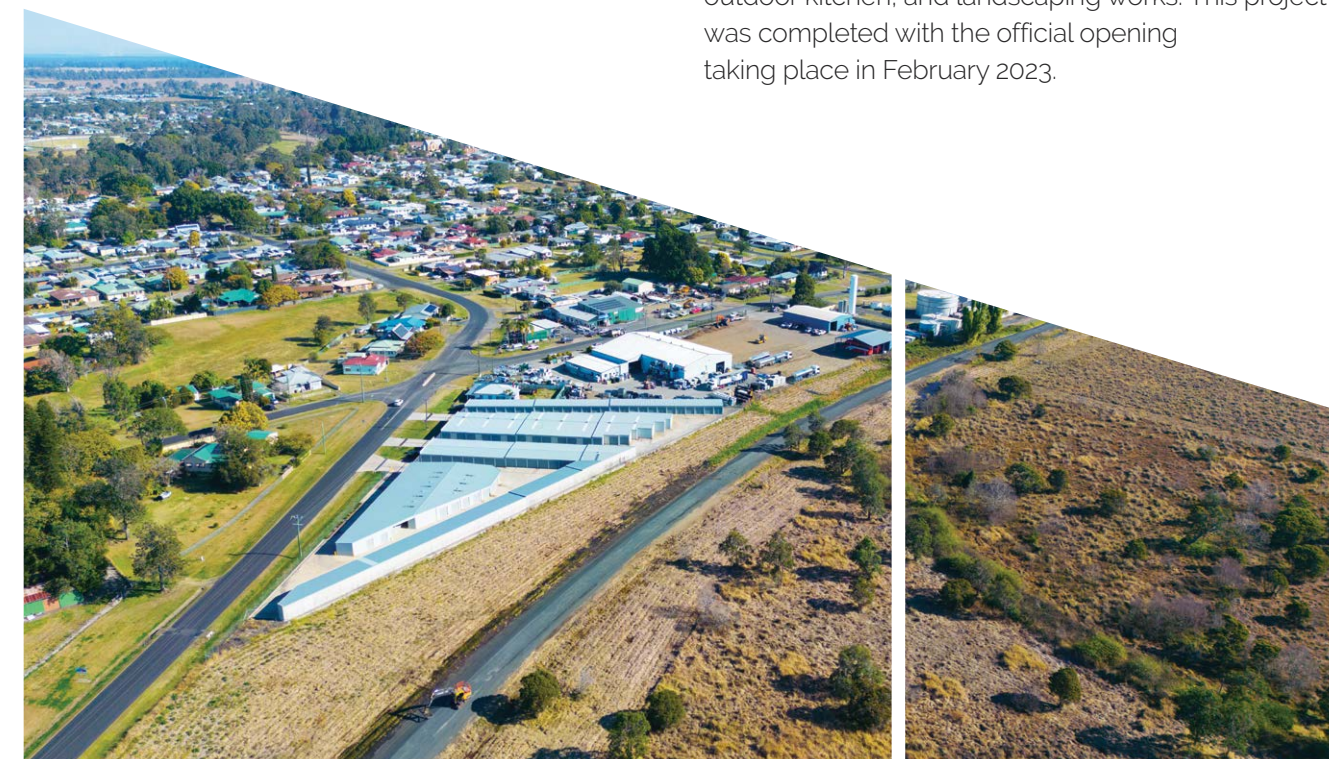
Creek to Murwillumbah, recently open to the public) and has received Federal funding of \$7.5 million through the Australian Government Tourism Icons Program.

With alignment designs now completed, we have undertaken the first stages of construction. This includes work completed on the Old Casino Railway Station entry and a pavement trial section constructed. The rail corridor has been cleared, access and maintenance tracks are nearing completion, and further construction program starts in July 2023. Tendering for the bridge work goes to market in July 2023, with construction on these structures due to start in September 2023. The construction program runs through to December 2023.

BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES

Rappville Hall

The existing community hall was destroyed during the devastating 2019 bushfires. The hall was identified as being a key element providing a sense of community connection for the village. Council received insurance funds for the building, as well as grant funding under BizRebuild and contributions from Council to construct a new multi-use facility. Local contractor, Bennett and Robertson, were awarded the contract for construction which included hall replacement, outdoor undercover community area, playground equipment, car parking, BBQ and outdoor kitchen, and landscaping works. This project was completed with the official opening taking place in February 2023.



Showground – Sand Arena, Sand Horse Training Track, Race Club Area Toilet Block

In November 2020, Council received \$8 million from the NSW Government Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund for the redevelopment of the Casino Showground and Racecourse in line with the adopted Master Plan. This project is being delivered internally with different parts of the project being managed by Council and others by tender. AGS was awarded the major structural design and construct elements of the project.

Contract works include:

- Full Design and specification of all project elements in the Master Plan
- Civil works including site establishment, demolition, earthworks, stormwater, and plumbing
- Electrical services upgrade
- The construction of an undercover equestrian arena including surface material, irrigation, lighting and arena kickboards, concreted areas & sun screen
- Upgrade of the racing stable complex to stable 80 horses
- Outdoor arena
- 22 multi-purpose outdoor day yards
- Ancillary works including manure bays, wash bays, fencing etc.

Council engaged Steve Ryan Builder Pty Ltd to complete works on the Casino Showground Toilet Block to provide much needed additional toilets to the Race Club area. This part of the project was completed in June 2023.

The renovation of the sand and grass track at the Casino Showground has been completed with the sand track open for use in November 2022 and construction of the grass track completed in March 2023. Maintenance continues to support the growth of the grass track. The improvements to the sand and grass track will support the future training at the complex by providing an all-weather sand training track with new drainage, new compliant sand and new irrigation.

QE Park – From Flood to Cricket Nets, Storage Shed and Carpark

Council was successful in receiving funding through the Sport Priority Needs Program. This funding was utilised to install cricket nets and construct a 12m x 9m Colorbond storage shed to increase secure storage capacity at Queen Elizabeth Park. This also included the concrete slab, installation of a battery powered solar system and installation of 4 water tanks and associated plumbing. These works were completed in early 2023.



Barker Street Green Space

This project saw a vacant block of Council owned land central to the CBD developed into a community open space, catering to recreational activities, markets, food vendors as well as everyday use by the community. The development of the Barker Street Green Space will be addressing the need for more open accessible space within our rural community, and aim to increase economic stimulus in the town, along with increased foot traffic and time spent in the CBD. All works have been completed with the official opening taking place in December 2022.

Casino Library Courtyard

Casino Library Courtyard reopened to the public in February 2023 following refurbishment which included shade sails, furniture (seating decks, seating pods, reading table, chess table and totem sign poles), planting, concrete/pathways, turfing, mulch, along with the demolition and relocation of the existing awning. An official opening of the Casino Library Courtyard was held in June 2023 with the State Librarian and members of the Library Council attending.



WASTE

Cell 6

Construction of a new landfill cell at the Nammoona Waste & Resource Recovery Facility has significantly advanced, and is on schedule for commissioning in early 2024. Once operational, the cell will have capacity for Richmond Valley's residual waste for over a decade.

RICHMOND VALLEY POOLS

Woodburn Pool – Painting and Plant Room

Council's contractor completed flood damage works on Woodburn Pool. This involved reconnecting electricity, refurbishment of the Plant Room, installation of new pumps, new chlorine tank and chemical controllers, and repair of the retaining wall. All works were completed in September 2022.

Following the recent repairs after the pool was damaged by the 2022 floods, the pools were repainted by specialists Paul's Painting Services in the off-season. Council received \$60,000 in LRCIP Grant Funding (Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program) for the repainting of the two pools at the Woodburn Swimming Centre. This is the first repaint for the facility in 10 years and will extend the life of this much loved community facility. Painting works were completed in May 2023.



Coraki Splash Pad

Council was successful in receiving a grant through the Stronger Country Communities Fund (SCCF) for the installation of a Water Play Space at Coraki Pool. This project will see a splash pad constructed at the Coraki Swimming Pool and is aiming to increase community usage and satisfaction by pool users of the facility. The new facility will have tipping buckets, a water bubble post, a splash blaster, a number of floor jets and will be covered by a shade structure.

Construction works have commenced, and it is anticipated to be operational for the October long weekend.

Casino Memorial Olympic Swimming Pool

The Casino Memorial Olympic Swimming Pool is a key community facility which was built in the 1950's and is currently going through major upgrades to provide a modern and safe aquatic experience for users. Council was successful in obtaining funding in 2019 through the Female Facilities and Water Safety Stream Program which has been utilised to complete a master plan and design for the entire swimming centre with construction of stage one of the upgrade of Casino Memorial Olympic Swimming Pool nearing completion. It is expected to be open to the public for the September 2023 school holidays.

Stage one works include:

- Expansion/renovation to the existing 50m pool including the replacement of the filtration system
- Construction of a new water play space and Learn to Swim (LTS) Pool
- Construction of a new plant room and independent filtration system for the water play space

- Construction of an electrical switch room (suitable for the entire expanded facility)
- Installation of an electrical substation specifically for the swimming centre
- Renovation of the existing amenities.

The 50m pool structure is nearing completion along with the LTS pool, plant room, amenities block and internal electrical and stormwater works. Shade structures have been installed and works on the garden beds completed. Site restoration works have commenced. Council continues to work closely with the contractor, Momentum Built, to find ways to keep this important project on track. We continue to seek further funding to complete all stages of the master plan.

ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

MR145

A major priority for Council is to continue the repairs and upgrade of MR145 Woodburn Coraki Road as it is a major regional link road and has been severely damaged due to increased truck movements from the Pacific Highway Upgrades. Council was successful in receiving \$10 million to be programmed over three years (\$1 million in 20/21, \$2 million in 21/22 and \$7 million in 22/23). Council has successfully delivered \$7 million of works over this past year.

Works are continuing to be programmed. Council currently has two crews working on MR145, with contractor Synergy working on the Skinners Flat section and Council crews working at the intersection of MR145 and Myall Creek Road.

Naughtons Gap

Council has received the Geotechnical Report to guide solutions of the reconstruction of Naughtons Gap Road. This report provides a path forward for Council in partnership with the State Government to proceed to source a suitably qualified contractor to undertake the design and reconstruction of Naughtons Gap Road. Once we have a positive outcome in securing the right contractor to deliver these works, construction can start immediately. The reconstruction works will coincide with the approved betterment funding for Naughtons Gap Road of \$3 million to secure the pavement from future events. The construction program will take nine months to complete. Council is aiming to have Naughtons Gap Road open to the public by August 2024.

Simpsons Parade Carpark

The Simpsons Parade Carpark project finished construction in June 2023. This project formalised the important Council owned parking area adjacent to Simpsons Parade and will provide additional easy parking for locals and visitors wishing to use Casino's CBD. Works for this project included:

- Rehabilitation and formalisation of the parking area
- Construction of garden beds between the parking aisles
- Reconstruction of the concrete kerb along Simpsons Parade
- Line marking and signage
- Cattle tie-up fencing for events such as beef week (total of 130m).

Benns Road Stage 3

Benns Road facilitates a mixed use of local rural and residential properties along with significant heavy freight numbers servicing the grain processing business. Council was successful in receiving \$1,039,500 funding through TfNSW Fixing Local Roads along with a \$346,500 contribution from Council. This project involves repairing and rehabilitating 2.3km of Benns Road. The works will include pavement rehabilitation, sealing, drainage, heavy patching, line marking and signage.

Benns Road Reconstruction Project is on track with the planned works for 2022/2023 completed and open to the public with more sections designed for the 2023/2024 financial year.

Richmond Terrace, Coraki

Council recently undertook emergency pavement reconstruction works on Richmond Terrace, Coraki. These emergency works allow the public a safer passage through Coraki while Council continues Geotechnical investigations to aid in designing a permanent solution to the continuation of a land slip along Richmond Terrace. Regional Geotechnics have been engaged to complete these works and have completed the first series of geotechnical investigations.

BRIDGE INFRASTRUCTURE

JTR Smalls Bridge

Council obtained \$362,346 through Fixing Country Bridges Program for the design and construction of a replacement bridge (JTR Smalls) over Four Mile Creek on Old Tenterfield Road, Wyan. The existing timber bridge was at its end of design life with structural damage and required replacing with a concrete structure. This project has been completed and opened to the public in September 2022.



Elliott's Road Bridge

Council obtained \$410,000 through Transport for NSW for Elliotts Road Bridge Replacement. The existing timber bridge had significant structural damage and required replacement with a modular concrete structure. The replacement of the old timber bridge was achieved with new three cell box culverts designed to meet DPI fisheries requirements. This project was complete in early 2023.

FORWARD PROJECT PLANNING

Rappville Sewer

The Rappville Sewer Project is moving forward with design of the reticulation system in the township completed and tenders currently being sought. The investigation work for the Sewerage Treatment Plant is now complete with designs currently being finalised. The overall aim of the project is to provide a cost-effective solution, easy to operate and provide a long lifespan low operating cost asset for Council and the community. Public Works Advisory has provided a number of similar projects across NSW and will manage this project on Council's behalf due to the specialist nature of a sewage system.

Albert Park Stopover

Council was successful in obtaining funding through the Stronger Country Communities Fund for the upgrade of Albert Park Stopover. Albert Park is located at the entrance to Casino from the East and provides a place for travellers to stop for a break. This upgrade aims to make this park a focal point to the entry of Casino and an inviting facility for travellers to take a break. This project will include upgrading the existing carpark to formalise the parking, provide a sealed surface, improve the drainage, renew the existing toilet and picnic structures and install improved lighting. Survey and design works have commenced with construction due for completion in June 2024.

Woodburn Riverside Streetscape

Council has engaged a consultant to complete a detailed design of the Woodburn Streetscape including engineering survey to develop construction level plans ready for implementation. This will bring the Woodburn CBD Activation Project to a shovel ready stage in readiness for funding opportunities.

Willox Bridge

Council received \$1 million of funding through the Fixing Country Bridges Grant for the design and construction of Willox Bridge replacement on MR145 – Woodburn Coraki Road with Council contributing \$330,000 to this project. The existing bridge has significant structural damage and requires replacement with a concrete structure. The new bridge structure will be wider and will be raised to improve reopening time periods where this road has been closed following flood events. Bridge works are expected to commence in September 2023 with construction complete by June 2024.

Completion of Casino Showgrounds

Council continues to work closely with the contractor AGS Commercial, to deliver this project and remain on track with timelines. Construction is expected to be complete, and the facility open to the public in March 2024. There are a number of works scheduled over the coming months.

August — November 2023 will see:

- Electrical underground services continue
- Stable concreting to stable block 1, roofing and cladding, electrical and plumbing rough ins and internal linings
- Outdoor day yards roofing, steel and cladding, plumbing rough in
- Roofing and cladding to stable block 3

- Undercover equestrian arena installation of electrical and lighting, irrigation, commencement of kickboard installation and preparation of arena subgrade
- Outdoor sand arena underground services (electrical and plumbing).

December 2023/January 2024:

- Overall site stormwater and swales will be formalised and completed
- Commence construction of emergency vehicle access
- Installation of accessible pathways
- Commencement of civil carpark works
- Installation of equestrian pathway network
- Commission and testing of services.

February/March 2024:

- Civil carpark works continuing
- Landscaping and planting where required
- Site tidy and clean-up
- Compliance inspections and certification
- Undertake any works to meet certification requirements.



COLLABORATIONS

NORTHERN RIVERS FLOOD RECOVERY PROGRAMS

Councils in the Northern Rivers have been working closely with the NSW Government to support flood impacted communities to recover and rebuild following the catastrophic floods of February/March 2022. Richmond Valley Council has been an active member of the Northern NSW Regional Recovery Committee and its various subcommittees to address emergency housing, flood relief funding, health and wellbeing, and agricultural, animal welfare and environmental support programs. Council worked closely with the NSW Reconstruction Authority to progress Disaster Recovery Funding and repairs for local roads, bridges, water and sewerage infrastructure damaged in the floods.

Additionally, we have an established Recovery Team, working directly with NSW Reconstruction Authority, the National Emergency Management Agency and flood affected communities within the Richmond Valley. This includes establishing and supporting Local Advisory Groups to ensure that residents' concerns are addressed. Council continues to advocate to all levels of government for additional support for flood affected communities, particularly for temporary housing, assistance programs and house-raising/buy-back schemes.

NORTHERN RIVERS JOINT ORGANISATION (NRJO)

Council continues to be an active member of the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation (NRJO), which represents the Ballina, Byron, Kyogle, Lismore, Richmond Valley and Tweed NSW local government areas. With representation by the mayors and general managers of each Council, NRJO's role is to facilitate and lead advocacy, political representation and cooperative action on matters of regional significance.

During the year, the NRJO has undertaken a number of initiatives, including advocacy for increased social housing and improved insurance options for flood affected communities, exploring opportunities to protect biodiversity within the region and explore opportunities for sustainable energy and waste management.

To learn more about NRJO, visit www.northernriversjo.nsw.gov.au

RICHMOND VALLEY REGIONAL JOBS PRECINCT

The Richmond Valley has been declared one of four Regional Job Precincts in NSW, providing a welcome boost for investment and employment opportunities in our local government area. The Job Precincts are part of the NSW Government's 20-year Economic Vision for Regional NSW and Council has been working closely with Regional NSW to progress this initiative.

Job Precincts are designed to deliver faster planning approvals for significant projects in specially designated areas, to generate employment while ensuring that the local appeal of the area is maintained. This will help to create new jobs in agriculture, manufacturing, renewable energy and other emerging industries in the Richmond Valley, while also supporting existing businesses and local producers to diversify and expand their operations.

INVESTIGATING REGIONAL SOLUTIONS FOR WASTE MANAGEMENT

Recent developments in waste disposal and recycling - and the growing logistical, environmental and financial challenges of treating municipal wastes - have prompted North Coast councils to investigate other approaches to waste management. In collaboration with the NSW Government, North Coast councils, led by Richmond Valley Council, undertook a review of existing waste management practices within their LGAs and identified opportunities for a regional collaborative response to waste management. This led to an Expression of Interest (EOI) process, on behalf of nine North Coast Councils (including RVC) to identify a sustainable waste management solution for the region, which may include alternative technologies for waste treatment and processing.



FESTIVALS AND EVENTS 2022/2023

From seaside festivals, to sporting fixtures, farmers' markets and the celebration of our wonderful agriculture industry, we were fortunate enough to enjoy quite a few community events across the Richmond Valley throughout 2022-2023.

Our signature events the Casino Beef Week Festival and Primex Field Days attracted large crowds. The inaugural Buckin' by the Beach was a hit with holidaymakers and locals. The Casino Truck Show, Super Sunday Family Funday and the many Christmas events were also well embraced by residents and visitors alike.

- Evans Head Fishing Classic
- NAIDOC Week celebrations across the Richmond Valley
- Casino Truck Show
- Hotel Cecil Casino Gold Cup
- Casino Farmers Market
- Evans Head Farmers Market
- Casino Golf Club Markets

- Richmond Valley Careers Expo
- Coraki Family Fun Day
- Woodburn Riverside Festival
- Woodburn Spring Orchid Show
- 100th Anniversary Evans Head Casino Surf Life Saving Club
- Evans Head Malibu Classic
- Peach Festival
- Casino Show
- Richmond Valley Heroes and Community Race Day
- Casino Fun Run
- Casino West Art Show
- Beef Feast
- Coraki Art Prize
- Primex Field Days
- Richmond Valley Made Paddock-to-Plate Feast
- Remembrance Day across the Richmond Valley
- Richmond Valley Christmas Street Party
- March Against Violence

- Casino Lions Christmas Carols
- Rotary Christmas Parade and Carols
- Cassino Art Gallery Christmas Markets Tree Light Up
- Woodburn Christmas Celebrations and Tree Light Up
- Broadwater Christmas Celebrations and Tree Light Up
- Rappville Christmas Celebrations and Tree Light Up
- Buckin' by the Beach
- Skate Mate
- Super Sunday Family Fun Day
- Richmond Valley Australia Day Celebrations
- Seniors Week Activities
- Active Fest
- International Women's Day
- Hudson Circus
- Richmond Valley Anzac Day
- Youth Week activities

- Casino Beef Week including:
 - Casino Beef Week Opening Night
 - Casino Beef Week Hoedown
 - Casino Beef Week Fashion Parade
 - Casino Beef Week Wednesday Cattle Spectacular
 - Casino Beef Week Rural Ladies High Tea
 - Casino Beef Week Breakfast with the Butchers
 - Casino Beef Week Saturday
 - Casino Beef Week Rodeo
 - Casino Beef Week Car Show and Shine
- Richmond Valley Reconciliation Ball
- Legacy Torch Relay



SECTION 1: DELIVERY PROGRAM PROGRESS

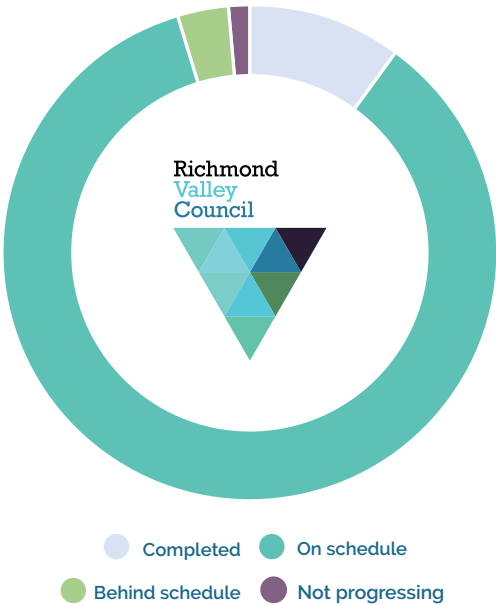
Richmond Valley Council has completed the first 12 months of its Rebuilding the Richmond Valley interim Delivery Program, with substantial progress in all areas of flood recovery. The recovery journey from the catastrophic 2022 floods is expected to take at least three years, with activity during the first year focused on:

- Understanding the scale of the damage and how long it will take to fix
- Completing emergency repairs to essential infrastructure, such as water supply, sewerage services and road networks
- Fixing essential facilities, such as halls and sports grounds, so that communities can come together again.

At the end of the first year, we have seen positive progress in these areas. Council has now completed its emergency infrastructure repairs and the majority of restoration works for community buildings and sporting facilities. More than \$36m has been secured in government funding to support recovery works. However, continued delays with regional buy-backs, relocation and house resilience programs remain a major concern for the community and Council will continue to advocate strongly for further assistance.

Actions for the remaining two years of the program have been incorporated into Council's 2023-25 Delivery Program. This will concentrate on continued repairs and reconstruction of flood damaged roads and bridges, major infrastructure upgrades, improving preparedness for natural disasters and supporting long-term economic growth and prosperity for the Valley.

The Plan is divided into three Key Focus Areas – Recover, Prevent/Prepare and Sustain - with 11 Strategic Objectives and 88 Principal Activities.



Of the 88 Principal Activities:

- 9 have now been completed
- 75 are currently on schedule
- 3 are running behind schedule
- 1 is not progressing at this stage

The "on schedule" activities include projects and recovery programs, as well as Council's ongoing activities, such as development assessment, governance, regulatory functions and maintenance of community assets and services.

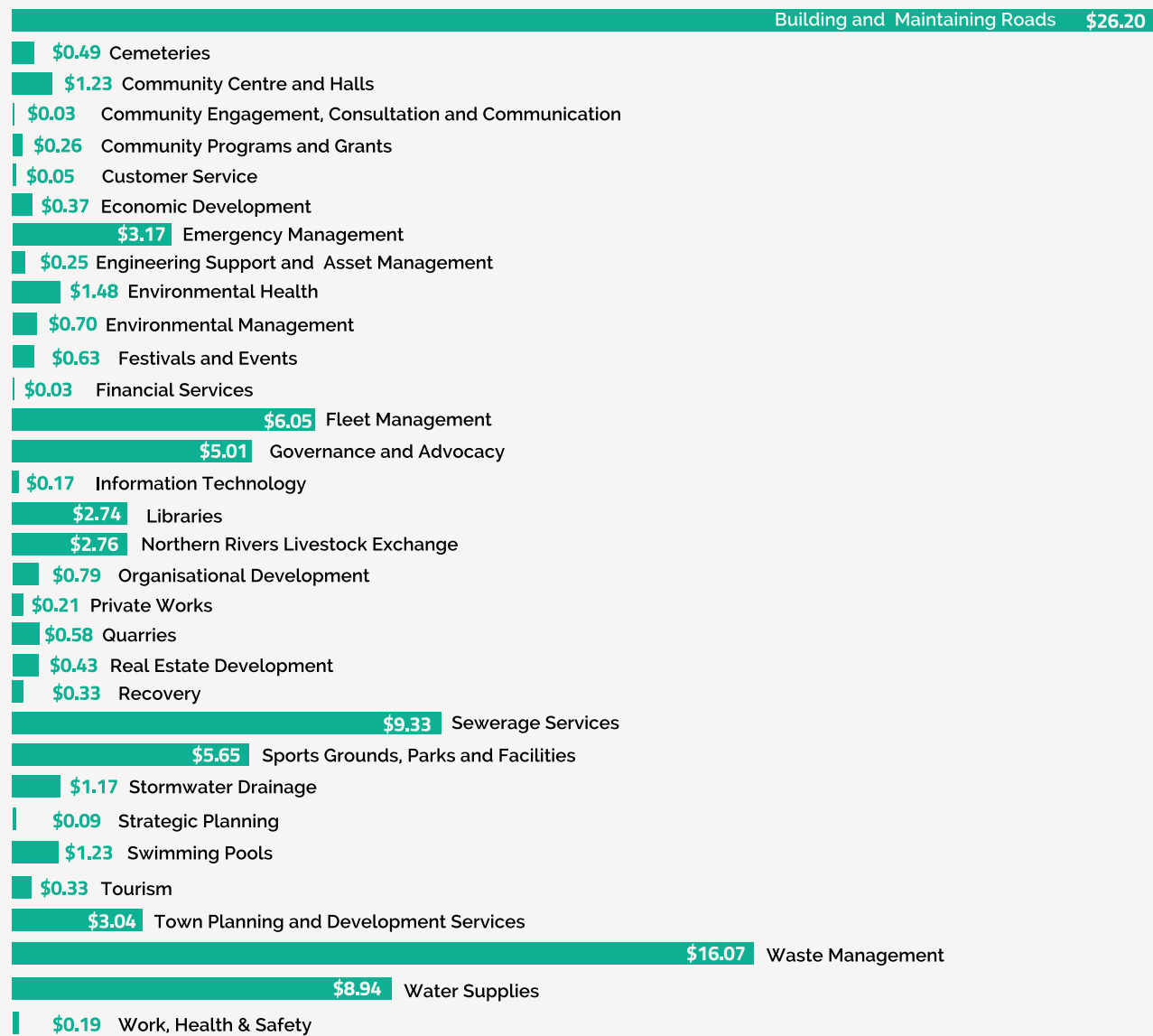
To view the full progress report (period ending 30 June 2023), Delivery Program, Operational Plan and the Community Strategic Plan, visit the Integrated Planning and Reporting pages on the Richmond Valley Council website:
<https://richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au/council/governance/integrated-planning-and-reporting/>

ACHIEVEMENTS SNAPSHOT

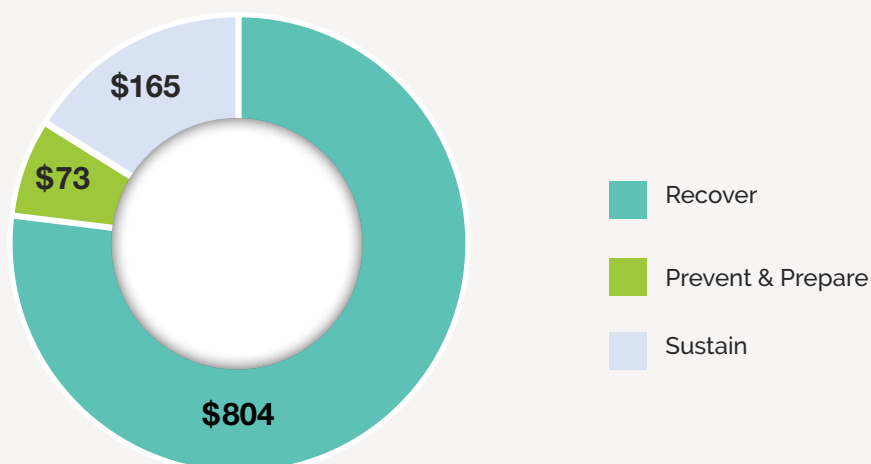
ROAD MAINTAINED	1,064 km
POTHOLE REPAIRS	39,980
WATER USAGE – DAILY AVERAGE CONSUMPTION (CASINO)	5.51 ML
WATER TREATED	2012.66 ML
SEWERAGE TREATED (ACROSS FOUR TREATMENT PLANTS)	1767.06 ML
RECYCLED WASTE	5,635 t
E-WASTE	29.5 t
COMMUNITY RECYCLING CENTRE (CRC) ITEMS RECOVERED	16,273kg
BINS LIFTS	
– KERBSIDE BIN LIFTS	628,101
– PUBLIC PLACE BIN LIFTS	22,918
RATEABLE PROPERTIES (INCLUDING STRATA)	10797
RATEABLE INCOME RAISED	\$15,629,060
CALLS RECEIVED	28,365
DAs ASSESSED	218
DAs ISSUED	211
CRMs ISSUED	6,902
NRLX CATTLE TRADED	117,131
NRLX CATTLE SALES VALUE	\$142,204,732
GRASS MOWED	13,785ha
TREES PLANTED	5,054
LIBRARY MEMBERS	16,544
LIBRARY LOANS	153,818
CATS & DOGS REGISTERED	422
STRAY/LOST ANIMALS	281



COUNCIL SPENDING PER \$100 (BEFORE OVERHEAD ALLOCATIONS AND PRE-CONSOLIDATION)



TOTAL ASSETS BY FUNCTION \$M



RECOVER

OBJECTIVE 1: HELP COMMUNITIES TO RECOVER AND RECONNECT

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS | LIBRARIES | COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND GRANTS

- Richmond Valley Jobs Fair and Careers Expo was held in September. The event attracted more than 200 high-school students and members of the public from across the Northern Rivers. More than 30 local businesses, as well as employment and training providers, gave information on traineeships and job opportunities on offer within the Richmond Valley area. Council had 10 displays on show, promoting the Youth Employment Strategy (YES) program for 2023.
- Woodburn Riverside Festival was held on 17 September with more than 400 people lining the riverbank to enjoy the festival. The event included loads of kids' events, family activities and entertainment. There was live music and a spectacular fireworks display.
- The Richmond Valley community honoured Queen Elizabeth II in a service held on 22 September at Queen Elizabeth Park, Casino, following the Queen's passing on 8 September 2022, aged 96. The service involved the laying of floral tributes, a minute's silence and a flag-raising ceremony.
- The Evans Head Malibu Classic's 30th annual competition was held on 30 September to 3 October, an event to watch some of the best longboard surfers take on the waves.
- Casino Racecourse hosted a community race day to honour local heroes. The event, held in October, was embraced as an opportunity to bring the community together following several years of natural disasters in the region.
- The Casino Fun Run had more than 240 people brave the rain to hit the streets of Casino in October with a vibrant and family-friendly event that brought people from across the region. There was something for everyone, from running through our wonderful town, across the iconic Irving Bridge, and even past some of our famous beef cattle.

- The Casino Show and Heritage Machinery Weekend was held in October. There were poultry shows, displays of cars, trucks and tractors and a Show 'n Shine, as well as markets, kids' entertainment and plenty of food to enjoy. The Show also played host to a rodeo, with lots of bull-bucking action.
- The Peach Festival was held at the Southview Orchard, Hogarth Range in October. Attendees picked their own peaches and watched the show put on by the Wildlife Twins. It included activities for kids as well as live music, BBQ, coffee, ice cream and stalls with local produce from the Hogarth Range and the Richmond Valley area.
- The inaugural Casino West Art Show was held in Casino in October, with the purpose being to showcase local primary, high school, and adult artists. First place winning artworks were displayed at Windara in November.
- Richmond Valley's newest event, Casino Beef Feast was held in October at Windara with our region's amazing local produce being showcased.
- The Coraki Art Prize returned after two years and was held in November at Evans Head. All artists were welcome to enter, with categories for youth art in any medium and open sections in painting, works on paper, sculpture, and photography.

- Following its cancellation in 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Casino Truck Show exceeded all expectations – around 370 trucks and 8000 attendees, generating just under \$1 million. Feedback indicated the event was on track to become the nation's number one truck show, with an even bigger show occurring in 2023.
- Producers from the Richmond Valley and surrounds staged a gourmet experience to put them squarely on the culinary map. The Richmond Valley Made Paddock-to-Plate Feast was held under the stars in the gardens of Windara, Casino, in November. From a Whiporie-Lismore beef business to Richmond Valley pastured poultry producers, dryland rice farmers, olive and cheese producers, and flower farmers, the paddock-to-plate evening featured some true gems of the region.
- The community Christmas fun didn't end with the Casino Community Christmas Street Party in December, the cheer kept coming with successful events taking place around the area. Broadwater, Woodburn Rappville, Coraki and Evans Head all held Christmas Tree light up events with great success.

- Buckin' By The Beach in Evans Head was held in January with more than 3000 people packing Stan Payne Oval witnessing some of the best bull riders in the country. Council was a major sponsor of the event, providing seed funding from the NSW Government Reconnecting Regional NSW – Community Events Program.
- The Super Sunday Family Fun Day, Casino's biggest party was held at Queen Elizabeth Park Casino in January. The big day of country music with headliners the Wolfe Brothers being joined by Catherine Britt, local favourites Billy Gudgeon Band and rising star Jarrod Hickling. On site also were food trucks, rides, market stalls, a show and shine – plenty of entertainment for the whole family.
- The region celebrated Australia Day in Woodburn. There were market stalls, kids' entertainment, food and lots to do for the hundreds that attended.
- Richmond Valley showed off its sights and sounds by featuring on Channel 10's What's Up Downunder in February and March. Host Macca was joined by singing star and now Ellangowan resident Shannon Noll as he and his family took a tour of the Richmond Valley in a caravan.
- Council has again thrown its support behind two of the area's most iconic events with the renewal of its significant sponsorship of the Primex Field Days and the Casino Beef Week

Festival. Council has committed to a new three-year deal for both events, with an annual cash sponsorship of \$25,000 to Primex and \$30,000 to Casino Beef Week. Casino Beef Week is the cornerstone event for Casino, known as the Beef Capital, with more than 100 events spread over the 11 days of the festival, bringing people from across the country to celebrate our thriving agriculture industry. Primex is one of the leading agribusiness exhibitions in Australia, bringing more than 25,000 to the area each year and generating an estimated \$47 million in sales for exhibitors.

- Anzac Day Services were held across the Richmond Valley in April. Dawn and Day Services were held in Broadwater, Casino, Coraki, Evans Head, Rappville, Rileys Hill and Woodburn with thousands turning out across the Richmond Valley to commemorate the day.
- The renowned Harvest Food Trail was held in May. The Harvest Food Trail allowed visitors and locals to jump in their car and visit some of the Northern Rivers region's best farms, distilleries, breweries, and restaurants and enjoy distinct provenance of our region. Richmond Valley Council supported three local businesses to be part of the food trail and align with some of them most high-profile food and beverage producers and providers in our region and to open their doors to new customers and markets.



- The Reconciliation Ball and Awards were held in June, in Casino. The Ball celebrated reconciliation and the achievements of individuals and organisations in our community. Featuring an awards ceremony, two course meal, local speakers and live music by The Jacks Band.
- The library team joined forces with Evans Head Living Museum to produce a catalogue of reference material and books. This will be an invaluable resource for all genealogists, researchers and historians Australia-wide.
- Following the February/March 2022 flood events, Council's Library Programs and Events Coordinator put a call out for volunteers to assist in making quilts for affected families. The fabric for the quilt tops was donated by library staff. Volunteers worked weekly at the library to make the quilts, with the first of the quilts donated to families of children who attend the Casino Baptist Preschool.
- The Casino Library underwent an upgrade with work on its courtyard project commencing in October 2022. The work was funded by a \$192,830 NSW Government Public Library Infrastructure Grant and increased the floor space of the library by 180 square metres and created a modern entrance and welcoming exteriors. Features include educational gardens, a variety of seating and creative areas for an

increased number of programs and events to be held. The key elements of the project were the construction of three meeting rooms that will provide private space for individual or collaborative work/study, modern teleconference facilities suitable for online meetings and recording equipment to record oral histories and other activities.

- Funding received from the Good Things Foundation, has enabled our libraries to have Samsung tablets available for loan. The tablets come with data and can be loaned by library members aged over 50. The goal of these tablets is to improve digital skills and reduce social isolation.
- Casino Youth Support Network held its first meeting in November, organised by Council. The meeting provided an opportunity for schools, government departments, agencies, and not-for-profits to collectively share information, promote services and resources, collaborate on projects and work on a coordinated approach to raise awareness of local youth issues and opportunities. The first meeting had representatives from all schools, Headspace, Social Futures, Momentum Collective, Office of Sport, Office of Regional Youth, Police, Ngunya Jarjum and Council. The network plans to meet at least once per school term.

- Flood-impacted commercial property owners and landlords in the Richmond Valley had the opportunity to apply for support to get businesses back up and running, thanks to new Northern Rivers Commercial Property – Return to Business grants. The \$30 million program aimed to repair commercial premises so businesses could reopen their doors as soon as possible.
- Council was allocated \$1.2M as part of the Stronger Country Communities program. Council resolved to seek to use the grant to upgrade the highly used Albert Park visitor stopover in Casino. The upgrade will include a formalised entry way, more infrastructure, upgraded amenities and drainage. The Project will include beautification that will entice visitors to the area and help meet tourism needs and assist in the area's economic recovery.
- Council received a \$400,000 grant from the NSW government to encourage healthy lifestyles and connecting community. The funds were used to design a new pathway along Broadwater-Evans Head Road, connecting the existing pathways at each end.

- A \$200,000 grant from ClubGRANTS Program was received for a synthetic turf bowling green at Coraki Memorial Bowling Club. Recent floods destroyed the club's grass greens, with the new green to future-proof the facility from future damage.
- The NSW Government announced funding for a \$250,000 upgrade for the New Italy Museum. The upgrade, funded by the Creative Capital program, allows renovation of the Italian Pavillion. This building is not only part of local history but an important cultural and heritage asset for the Richmond Valley.
- 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 in which the community can come together in the CBD, support businesses and revitalise the streetscape.

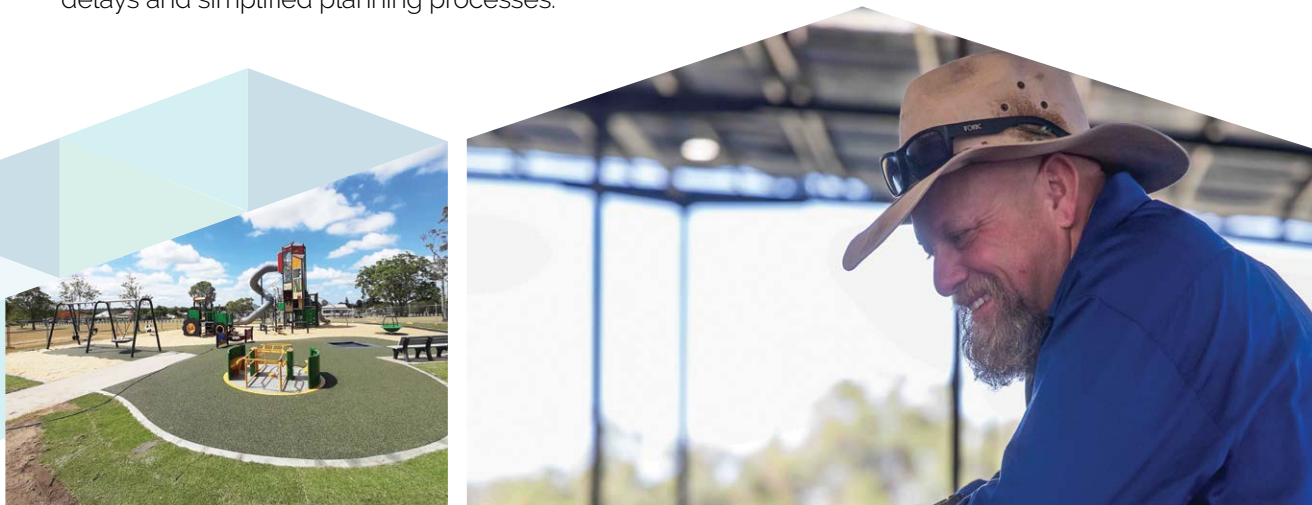


RECOVER

OBJECTIVE 2: SUPPORT FAMILIES AND BUSINESSES TO REBUILD

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT | TOURISM

- The 2022-2023 Budget included a significant \$50,611,790 capital works program to assist the community to recover from the devastating February-March 2022 flood events. A further \$124,120,310 was earmarked for 2023-2024 projects. Council's other priority actions for flood-affected communities included simplifying and fast-tracking approvals for rebuild and restoration works, advocating for temporary housing and repairs to community facilities, as well as repairs to sewage pump stations and treatment plants.
- Temporary housing villages in Evans Head and Coraki were established to house residents who could not return home due to flood damage.
- Council completed the development of nine industrial zoned lots, ranging in size from 5000m² to 5 ha, located at Reynolds Road Casino. Council developed the land as an initiative to attract employment-generating industries to the Richmond Valley. The land is contained within the Richmond Valley Regional Job Precinct, which should offer improved planning pathways, underpinned by prior technical studies and assessment, reduced delays and simplified planning processes.
- Local resident, Brenda Armfield, was recognised for her support of Richmond Valley events and tourism by being named a Local Tourism Hero. The announcement was made at the North Coast Tourism Symposium and Awards Gala Dinner in July. Brenda is a well-deserved winner and remains passionate about promoting the Richmond Valley and all it offers.
- Council encouraged local businesses to be part of the 2023-2025 official visitor guide. The vibrant A5 booklet highlights key destinations, experiences and local businesses to thousands of visitors. The official Discover Richmond Valley Visitor Guide is available online and in print and is published to high traffic locations such as our visitor information centres, local libraries, the railway station, and local businesses.
- The Casino water tower is complete, with its four panels shining out over the town. The mural was created by artists Brightsiders who began painting the 975 square metre mural in February 2022 before the floods and rains halted them after one panel. They returned in September to complete the work. The project, which includes detailed signage as part of a heritage walk, was funded by a \$125,000 Australian Government grant through the Regional Tourism Bushfire fund. The water tower will be listed on silo art websites across the country and is sure to be a draw card for the Richmond Valley for visitors and from across the nation.
- The Woodburn Visitor Information Centre reopened in November. The centre was damaged extensively in the floods of February and March 2022.



RECOVER

OBJECTIVE 3: RESTORE THE RICHMOND VALLEY'S ROAD NETWORK

BUILDING AND MAINTAINING ROADS

- Council continues to work on a solution to Naughtons Gap Road landslip. Staff have met with geotechnical experts and continue to liaise with these organisations and Transport for NSW for a permanent solution.
- Mayor Robert Mustow and General Manager Vaughan Macdonald met with NSW Minister for Regional Transport and Roads Sam Farroway and Member for Clarence Chris Gulaptis in March for the announcement of the Regional Roads and Transport Recovery Package. The \$312.5m program, funded jointly by the NSW and Australian Governments, will ensure infrastructure will be rebuilt to a higher standard, making it more resilient to future disasters. Minister Farroway announced Richmond Valley Council was successful in receiving \$3.02m for design solutions and construction of catch fencing, removal of debris and improving drainage on the northern upside of Naughtons Gap Road. The road rebuild is expected to be at least \$13m with Council seeking Natural Disaster Recovery funding. Council received \$1.98M to design and construct the installation of culverts at Dairy Flat on Woodburn-Coraki Road.
- Funding from the NSW Government's Fixing Country Bridges Program was announced to fix 14 timber bridges across the Northern Rivers including 2 in the Richmond Valley. The announcement held at the Reynolds Road Bridge, where more than \$1.2 million will be spent to replace the current crossing with a widened, dual lane concrete structure. A further \$583,902 will be spent on repairing the Lollback Bridge, on Old Laurence Road at Busbys Flat. The upgrades provide both safety improvements and increased load limits for the bridges and the surrounding area.
- Richmond Valley residents are set for safer, bump free driving following the NSW government's announcement of a \$2.1m grant to upgrade Coraki-Ellangowan Road. Funded by the NSW Government's Fixing Local Roads Program, the grant will allow the upgrade of 2.7km of bitumen from Ellangowan Road to Emu Park Road.
- Flood recovery work continues across the Richmond Valley. Council continues to make the repair of flood-damaged infrastructure across the area one of its highest priorities. Work continues across the region on our roads, drainage and other essential infrastructure with Council continuing to advocate to government for continuing funds for these projects.



RECOVER

OBJECTIVE 4: RESTORE ESSENTIAL INFRASTRUCTURE

SPORTS GROUNDS, PARKS AND FACILITIES | COMMUNITY CENTRES AND HALLS | SWIMMING POOLS | WATER AND SEWER SERVICES

- Barker Street, Casino has its very own park, thanks to a \$340,000 NSW Government's Streets as Shared Spaces grant. Borne out of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Streets as Shared Spaces 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. Council took the opportunity to apply for funding to provide the community with an enhanced amenity, known as The Greens on Barker.
- A magnificent granite monument honouring the community's diggers is the centrepiece of the final stage of the Casino Drill Hall Precinct upgrade project, which was officially opened in September 2022. The final stage includes the addition of a memorial walk, reflection pool and granite monument, which stands alone as a

major feature of the site, while also integrating the Drill Hall with the newly completed Coronation Park. The unique poppy-themed playground at Coronation Park is complemented by a shaded picnic and BBQ area, new landscaping, boardwalk and a viewing platform set above the banks of the Richmond River.

- Work on the main project elements of the Casino Showground upgrade commenced in November, features of the update include:
 - o Electrical services upgrade
 - o Water management and rainwater harvesting
 - o Water, sewer, trade waste and essential fire safety measures
 - o Undercover arena
 - o Training stables
 - o Outdoor arena.
- In December, Council was successful in obtaining \$1,579,506 from the NSW Government Sports Priority Needs Program to restore and improve flood-hit sporting infrastructure. Council identified the need for upgrades to a number of local sporting fields and this funding will help refresh these much-used community facilities. The funding will be utilised on the following projects:
 - o Woodburn Oval \$152,574 for underground irrigation
 - o Colley Park \$495,205 to restore playing surfaces, replace basketball court, upgrade lighting and irrigation

- o Queen Elizabeth Park \$436,199 for new cricket nets and field and drainage upgrade as well as \$163,169 for a new shed
- o Stan Payne Oval \$179,456 for new cricket nets and field upgrades
- o Windsor Park \$118,146 for field upgrades and new bollards
- o Casino Croquet Club \$34,757 to upgrade playing services and access/safety improvements.
- A new accessible playground was opened at Crawford Square in Casino. The centrepiece of the playground is a custom tower which pays tribute to the Beef Capital. The park also includes a toddler play unit, swings, seesaw and tipi carousel and provides a space where all ages and abilities can play. The space was funded by the NSW Government Stronger Communities Fund.
- Three projects in the Richmond Valley are set to share in almost \$1.65 million under the Nationals in NSW Government's Stronger Country Communities Fund (SCCF). Council has been successful in securing \$1 million for the overhaul of the Albert Park Tourist Stopover in Casino and \$213,000 to revitalise Shark Bay at Evans Head. Casino Neighbourhood Centre, which provides a range of support and services for the local community, also fared well with a \$433,239 grant to open up more space on the second storey of the building which is not currently utilised.

- In March, the Casino Indoor Sports Stadium reopened its doors after major flood repairs, and Council is keen for it to become a focal point for sporting and community activities. Competitions in basketball, netball, futsal and volleyball have recommenced. The floor was severely damaged by the floods of February 2022, and now has a Pulastic floor which will be more resilient to future flooding.
- The new Rappville Community Hall was officially opened in February. Mayor Robert Mustow, former Governor General Sir Peter Cosgrove and Federal Member for Page Kevin Hogan officially opened the stunning new facility in front of a large crowd. The rebuilding of the hall has been described as a major milestone for the ongoing recovery efforts following the 2019 bushfire disaster. The construction of a new hall was one of Council's key priorities in the wake of the devastating bushfire, which tore through Rappville and its surrounds in October, destroying the original hall and homes. In developing the plans for the new hall, located on what is now call the Rappville Common, Council was fortunate to work with RizBuild, a bushfire recovery initiative of the Business Council of Australia.
- The upgrade of the Casino Memorial Swimming Pool project is a \$6.68 million investment by Council and the Australian Government, who contributed \$3.2 million to this stage of the project. The pool is set to reopen in time for summer.



RECOVER



OBJECTIVE 5: RESTORE THE ENVIRONMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

- The new Draft Sustainable Communities Strategy 2023-2028 was on public exhibition in January/February. The Strategy aims to protect the Richmond Valley's natural environment and provide a beautiful place to live, work, play and invest for the future. As the climate continues to change, the region could experience further challenges, with the possibility of increased periods of drought, higher temperatures and, rising sea levels, more frequent floods and storms and a greater risk of fire. The Strategy aims to address these challenges by building community awareness and resilience and achieving a healthy balance between growth and sustainable living.

- You can now purchase a three-day NSW fishing licence from the Evans Head Visitor Information Centre. Anyone over the age of 18 needs to pay a recreational fishing fee and carry the receipt showing proof of payment in order to legally fish in freshwater or saltwater. Fees collected from NSW fishing licences are reinvested back into fisheries research, management and monitoring programs. This helps keep our rivers, creeks and estuaries healthy for both the fish species which inhabit them and the recreational fishers who enjoy them.
- In August, Council launched a public place food organics green bin trial in specific targeted areas, including Evans Head Surf Club, Oak Street Evans Head and Barker Street Casino. Council trialled these bins for a three-month period. The trial aimed at helping Council understand the best way to reduce the amount of food waste that ends up in landfills and look at all different types of takeaway containers. Council receives funding from the EPA through the Better Waste and Recycling Fund to support projects and programs which deliver improved recycling.



PREVENT AND PREPARE

OBJECTIVE 6: IMPROVE THE DISASTER RESILIENCE OF PUBLIC ASSETS

STORMWATER | ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT | EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

- Following the severe rain events of early 2022, a group of Landcare networks are working together to support landholders to stabilise slips, prevent soil erosion and minimise the impact of landslips on threatened species and ecological communities. The Landslip Recovery project is funded by North Coast Local Land Services.

- Council staff participated in the Richmond Valley Disability Inclusive Emergency Planning Forum in June. At the workshop participants collaborated on various issues, including
 - o People-centred approaches to emergency management
 - o Factors that increase risk for people with disability in emergencies
 - o Strategies to reduce risk and increase the resilience of people with disability to disaster
 - o Local community resources that can be shared before, during and after an emergency to keep people safe.



PREVENT AND PREPARE

OBJECTIVE 7: BUILD RESILIENCE IN A CHANGING CLIMATE

RECOVERY

- A series of videos were produced, telling the stories of families in our area who live on the banks of the Richmond River, and who experienced devastating flooding. The families in Woodburn, Coraki and Casino shared their experiences of the flood and talked of their fears of the erosion of the riverbank and the ongoing effect it has on their long-held properties. The videos attracted widespread attention from within our community and have also generated media interest for the ongoing recovery effect. These videos were sent to government agencies to show the extent of what is needed in the recovery process.

- Casino joined the NRMA's program of EV fast-charging stations, following the launch in September of the free EV fast-charging service located in the Casino Community Centre car park. Once completed, the NRMA network will link up with major routes in Queensland, Victoria and South Australia, meaning EV motorists will be able to travel through these states within most cases with no more than 150 kilometres from a charging station.
- Council welcomed the release of the NSW Flood Inquiry response, which highlighted many of the concerns raised by Council in its submission to the independent expert inquiry.



SUSTAIN



OBJECTIVE 8: STRENGTHEN THE REGIONAL ECONOMY

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT | NORTHERN RIVERS LIVESTOCK EXCHANGE (NRLX) | QUARRIES | PRIVATE WORKS

- Council hosted visitors from Argentina who were looking to diversify their business and invest in the agricultural industry in Australia. The Argentinian guests were shown through the Casino Food Co-op, visited the Northern Rivers Livestock Exchange and inspected the new Regional Job Precinct industrial development on Reynolds Road and were impressed with what the Richmond Valley has to offer.
- Planning is underway for a new strategy to strengthen the Richmond Valley's economy and support existing and emerging industries. The Economic Development Strategy will set out a plan for how Council will support long-term economic growth and prosperity for its community. A discussion paper is intended to prompt conversations about how to make our economy more resilient.

It proposes five strategic directions to achieve that vision

1. Increase economic scale through the flood rebuild
2. Foster lifestyle and tourism markets for stronger local services
3. Secure agriculture's supply chains and pursue growing markets
4. Broaden the Valley's manufacturing and industrial base
5. Grow the population and labour force through new precincts.



SUSTAIN



OBJECTIVE 9: ADDRESS LONG-TERM HOUSING NEEDS

- The Richmond Valley Growth Management Strategy (GMS) and Casino Place Plan were adopted by Council in April 2023 and endorsed by the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) in August 2023.
- The DPE will incorporate GMS recommendations and actions into its next review of the North Coast Regional Plan's Urban Growth Boundaries.
- Council committed to the preparation of Place Plans for the Mid Richmond and Coastal communities within the 2023/24 Operational Plan.
- Council continues to work with proponents to progress planning proposals, although this process has often been difficult because of Government bureaucracy particularly around the NSW Government's interim policy on flood planning controls.
- The NSW Reconstruction Authority released its Resilient Lands Strategy and identified a site at Fairy Hill for short term housing release. Council will continue to work with the Authority and Proponent to advance this urban growth area and address Council's current housing crisis.
- Council continues to work with Regional NSW to develop a Regional Jobs Precinct Master Plan for Casino. This body of work includes preparation of servicing strategies which will go a long way towards ensuring infrastructure and services can be delivered to meet future urban growth. The servicing strategy also provides Council with the opportunity to seek funding to deliver infrastructure in a timely manner.



SUSTAIN

OBJECTIVE 10: LEAD AND ADVOCATE FOR OUR COMMUNITY

GOVERNANCE AND ADVOCACY | COMMUNITY CONNECTION

- Council partnered with The Lift Project to provide tools and tips to support the mental health and wellbeing of individuals, families and community groups living in the Richmond Valley area. The course commenced in September for a 10-week duration, equipping individuals with the skills to take charge of their own well-being, build resilience and live a happier life.
- A small wreath laying service was held at Council's Chambers to recognise Legacy Week and highlight the wonderful work undertaken by Legacy branches in the area and across the country.
- Council's animal shelter works extensively with animal rescue homes across the Northern Rivers to ensure a good outcome for lost or unwanted animals. An animal adopted from the shelter, will come microchipped, vaccinated, desexed and wormed. This helps reduce the number of animals without a home in our state, reducing the overpopulation of animals.
- Richmond Valley residents braved the rain at Queen Elizabeth Park, Casino, for the National Day of Mourning for the passing of Queen Elizabeth II. Formerly known as Carrington Park, the park was renamed for Her Majesty following her visit to Casino in 1954, with the ceremony taking place under the two Bunya pines The Queen and Prince Philip planted during the official civic reception.
- In November, Council took part in Pink Tradie Tuesday to raise funds for the National Breast Cancer Foundation. A BBQ breakfast was held at the Casino depot and a BBQ lunch at Evans Head. Both sites were open to the public with great support.
- Three staff from Council participated in the North Coast Female Leadership Forum, hosted by the Department of Regional NSW. The theme was Going Beyond Resilience: Building strength, extending adaptability and learning new capabilities.
- The Black & White Ball held in July saw around 200 people in attendance. It was great to be able to come together to celebrate our Aboriginal community, with the NAIDOC flag-raising ceremony, street march and family fun day also attracting a large crowd.
- Council joined NSW Minister for Regional Health and Mental Health, Bronnie Taylor MLC to open a pop-up Safe Haven on the site of the Woodburn Visitor Information Centre. The Centre provides a welcoming, caring environment for people needing mental health support.
- The Insurance Council of Australia and insurers travelled to Northern NSW flood-impacted communities throughout September for in-person meetings with residents affected by the February/March 2022 flood events.





OBJECTIVE 11: MANAGE COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND PROVIDE GREAT SERVICE

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE | INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY | PEOPLE AND CULTURE | WORK HEALTH AND SAFETY | ENGINEERING SUPPORT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT | FLEET MANAGEMENT | CEMETERIES | WASTE

- Council's Customer Experience team made the transition to OneRoad, a NSW Government initiative, which has replaced a multitude of road condition reporting platforms used by councils across NSW. OneRoad ensures a consistent reporting format and messaging of scheduled and unplanned road incidents to the public via the Live Traffic app. The Customer Experience team worked with the OneRoad developers, providing feedback of the current MyRoadInfo platform and relayed feedback of customer's experience of traffic apps during the major weather events. The team's input assisted with simplifying navigation, interpretative icons and messaging of road conditions for display upon customer's mobile devices. The new system was put to use in the recent heavy weather flooding events.
- Five local women participated in the Try a Trade program, completing a civil skillset and White Card with TAFE and performing work experience with Council.
- Council took delivery of its first electric vehicle. The Kia Niro BEV is being utilised as a training tool and aid in the understanding of what infrastructure will need to be put in place for when most of Council's fleet becomes battery electric. It will be an interesting experiment and will answer a lot of questions we have about how we manage in the future as internal combustion power cars are phased out.

- Council rolled out four new waste collection trucks. 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.
- North-East Waste commissioned a regional community recycling centre survey where 506 residents across seven Northern Rivers local government areas were surveyed to gain insight into the community's management, attitude and behaviours related to household hazardous waste.
- With more than one billion disposable coffee cups used nationwide each year, Council has partnered with Australian reusable cup maker Huskee, to tackle the waste issue. The Council Green Business Project, funded by the NSW EPA Waste Less, Recycle More initiative, will support up to 30 cafes and coffee service providers within the Richmond Valley Council local government area to implement HuskeeSwap, a reuse model that helps cafes transition to a waste-free service. Advantages of the HuskeeSwap system are:
 - o A simple opt-in system with no ongoing costs
 - o Easy to implement and designed to be easy on cafe workflows
 - o Customers can swap multiple sizes of HuskeeCup, the world's first coffee cup made from coffee husk, a vast waste by-product of the coffee industry
 - o Customers don't have to wash their cups or even remember to bring them (if they use the app)
 - o Both cafes and customers can play a part in a positive community impact.

A new landfill cell under construction at the Nammoona Resource Recovery Facility will be commissioned early in 2024. In recent years, Council has transported over 10,000 tonnes of red bin material to Queensland for disposal each year. Disposing of the material locally will remove the transport costs and reduce Council's carbon footprint. The money saved will be used to provide education services to the community to increase recycling. Landfill space on the Northern Rivers is diminishing, and the new cell gives us over a decade of disposal capacity. Securing long term red bin material disposal routes is a complex process, so Council will continue investigating options through the course of 2024.



SECTION 2: FINANCIAL AND ASSET REPORTING



During 2022/2023 Richmond Valley Council continued to provide services and facilities to the community in accordance with the adopted estimates (as amended each quarter).

The expenses incurred and revenue raised by Council during 2022/2023 in respect of its principal activities are summarised below.

It should be noted that the expenditure indicated has generally been carried out within the approved allocation and the revenue indicated raised in accordance with the adopted rates, fees and charges.

The audited financial statements for Richmond Valley Council for 2022/2023 are available in the Financial Statements section of Council's website www.richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au.

INCOME STATEMENT

	INCOME	EXPENDITURE	NET COST
Function/Activities	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Recover	68,181	50,668	17,513
Prevent & Prepare	19,842	20,366	(524)
Sustain	37,303	10,035	27,268
Operating Result from Continuing Operations	125,326	81,069	44,257

BALANCE SHEET

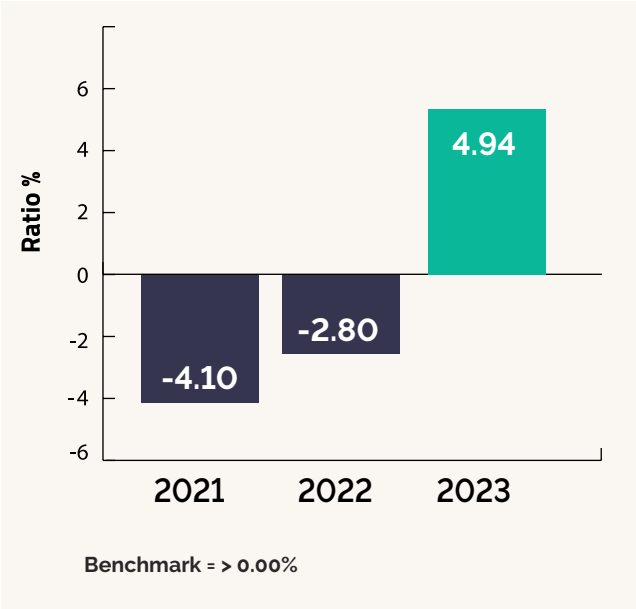
\$'000	ACTUAL 2023	ACTUAL 2022
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	55,497	49,572
Investments	27,338	22,330
Receivables	9,677	9,667
Inventories	2,274	4,907
Contract assets	5,557	2,647
Other	361	520
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	100,704	89,643
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Investments	7,750	6,750
Receivables	1,263	2,458
Inventories	1,154	815
Infrastructure, property, plant and equipment	930,309	831,155
Right of use assets	1,029	1,099
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	941,505	842,277
TOTAL ASSETS	1,042,209	931,920

INDICATORS

- RATIO IS OUTSIDE BENCHMARK
- RATIO ACHIEVES BENCHMARK

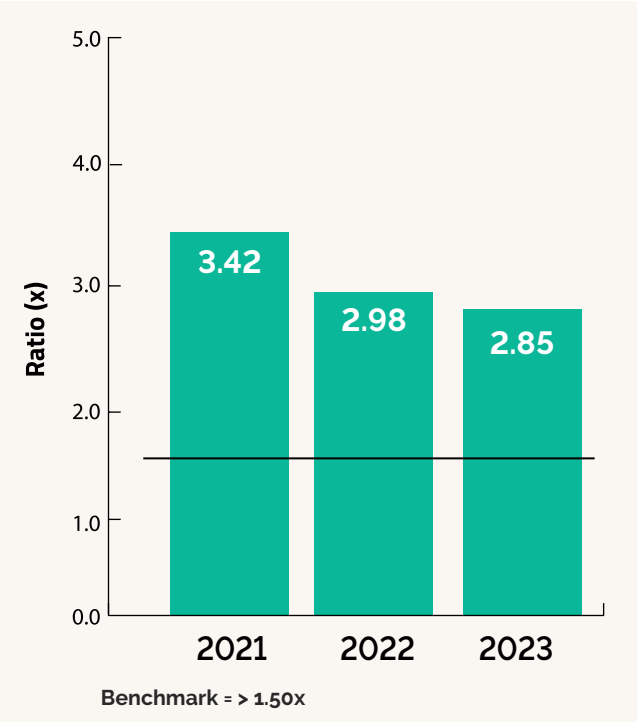
OPERATING PERFORMANCE RATIO

Council's operating performance ratio has improved slightly to 4.94% for 2022/2023. This ratio has been impacted due to an increase in interest and investment income as well as an additional advance payment of the financial assistance grant for 2023/2024 from the Federal Government.



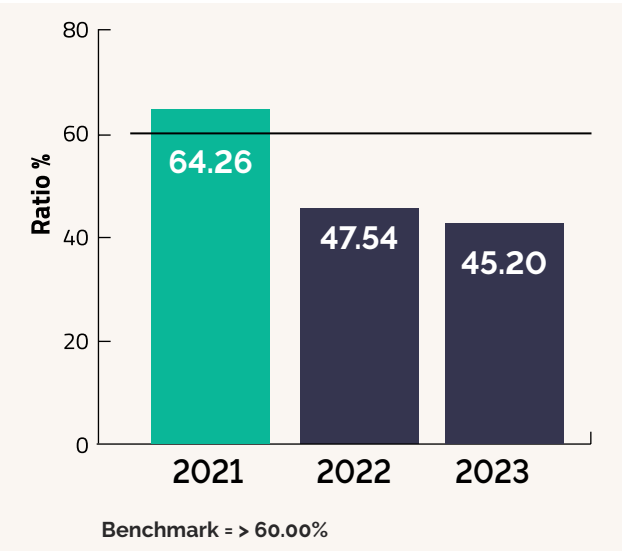
UNRESTRICTED CURRENT RATIO

Council's unrestricted current ratio has decreased slightly to 2.85 and remains well above the benchmark of 1.50.



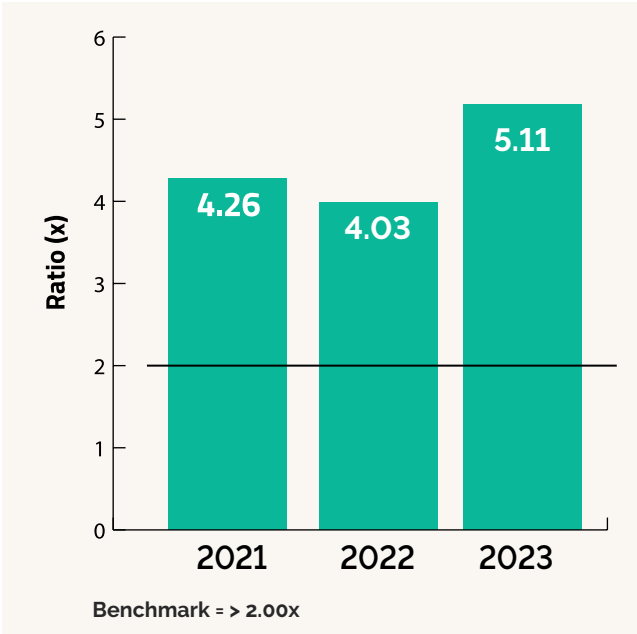
OWN SOURCE OPERATING REVENUE RATIO

Council's own source operating revenue ratio has fallen to 45.20%, below the benchmark of 60%. This is largely due to an increase in operating revenue as a result of Council receiving insurance and natural disaster funding as a result of the February 2022 flood event.



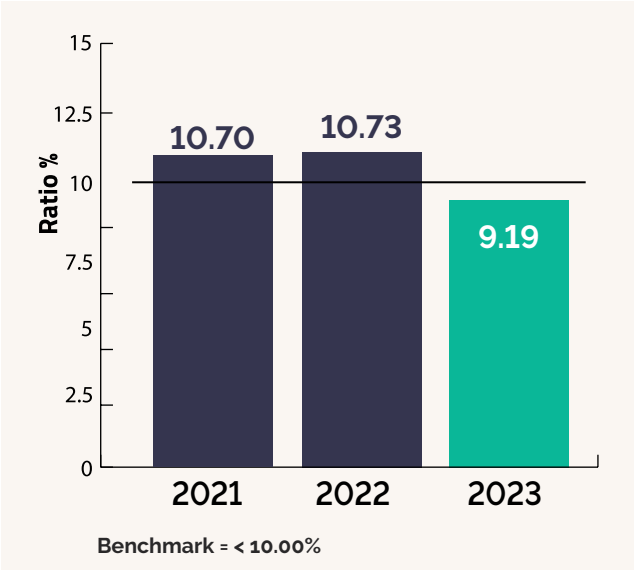
DEBT SERVICE COVER RATIO

Council's debt service cover ratio has increased to 5.11 and remains well above benchmark of > 2.0. This is due to an improved operating result meaning there was more cash available to service the repayment of debt.



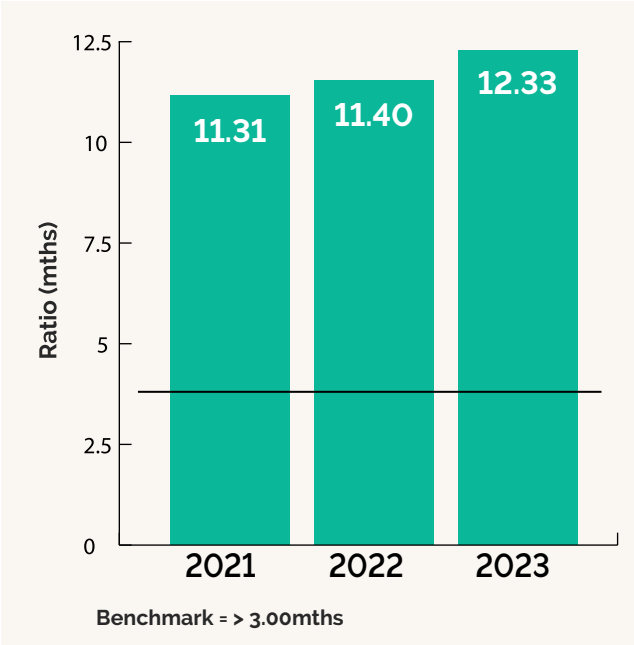
**RATES AND ANNUAL CHARGES
OUTSTANDING PERCENTAGE**

Council's rates and annual charges outstanding percentage has improved to 9.19% and is below the benchmark of 10%. On a fund basis it has improved to 3.21% for general fund. The consolidated ratio is impacted by the fact that Council levies its water and sewerage annual charges in arrears. Council actively monitors and pursues outstanding balances through its debt recovery practices.



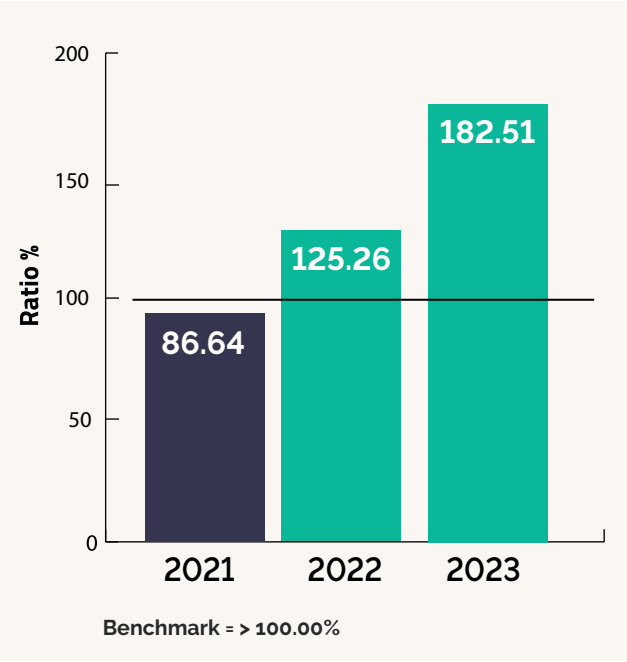
CASH EXPENSE COVER RATIO

Council's cash expense cover ratio has increased to 12.33. This is due to Council holding a high level of cash and cash equivalents. This ratio is well above the benchmark of > 3 months.



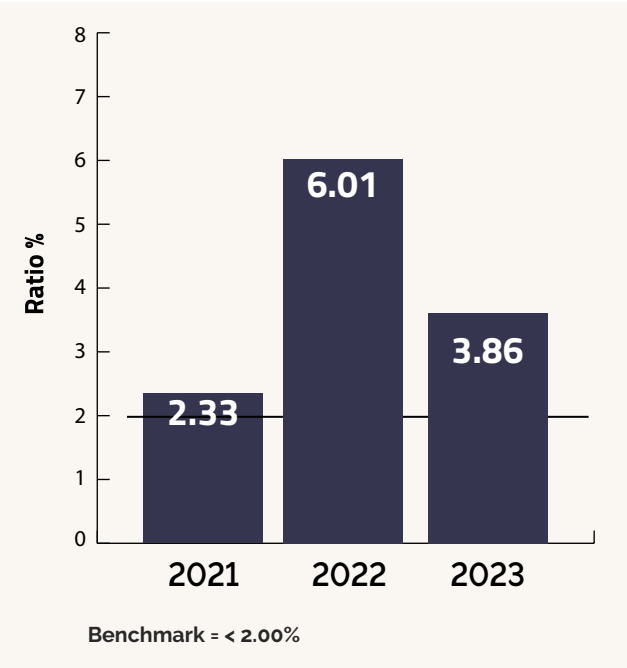
**BUILDINGS AND INFRASTRUCTURE
RENEWALS RATIO**

Council's buildings and infrastructure renewals ratio improved to 182.51% which is well above the benchmark of 100%. Council has been successful in receiving a number of capital grants over the past couple of years, resulting in much higher renewals.



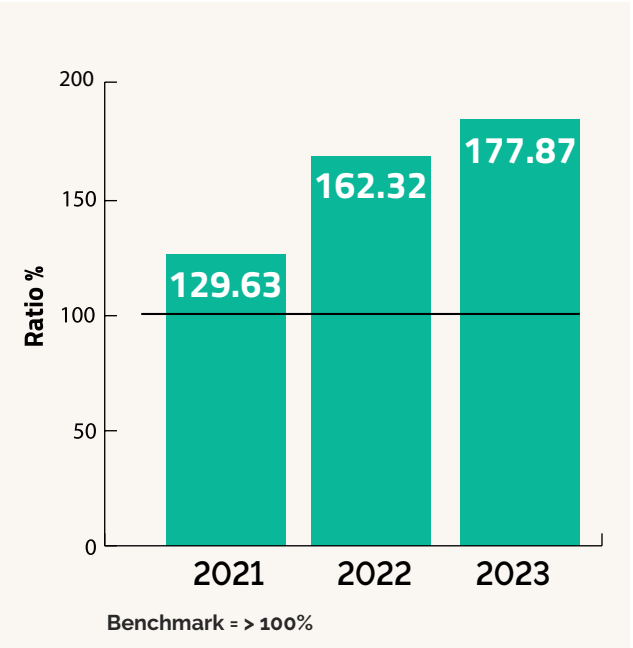
INFRASTRUCTURE BACKLOG RATIO

Council's infrastructure backlog ratio has decreased to 3.86. This is due to a reduction of the impaired infrastructure assets from the previous year due to natural disaster.



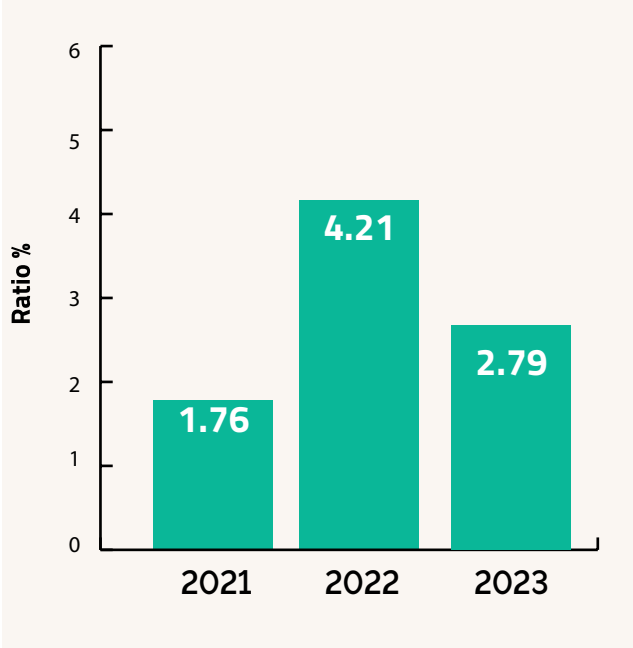
ASSET MAINTENANCE RATIO

Council's asset maintenance ratio has improved to 177.87 which is above the benchmark of 100%.

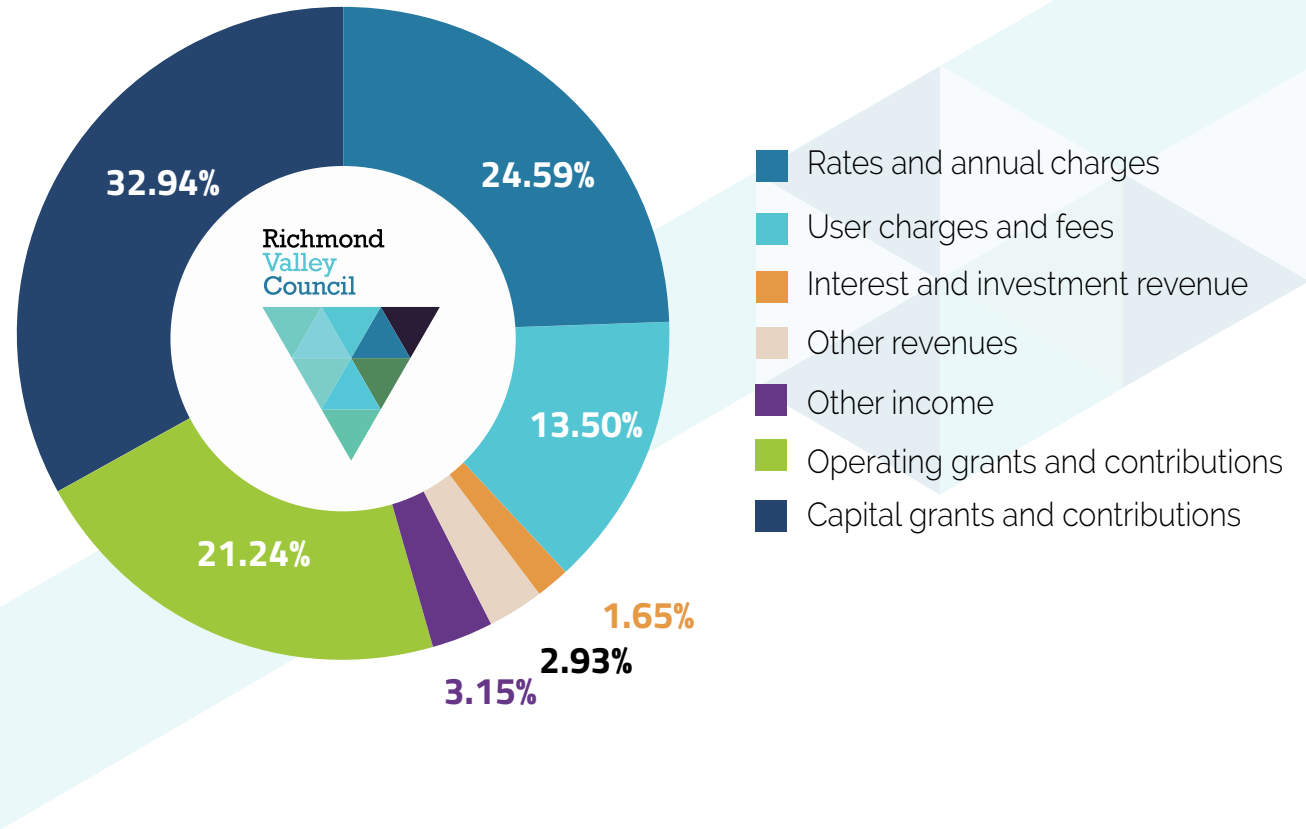


**COST TO BRING ASSETS TO AGREED
SERVICE LEVEL**

Council's outstanding renewals ratio is 2.79%. This is mainly as a result of a reduction in impaired infrastructure assets from the previous year as a result of the natural disaster restoration works.



SOURCE OF COUNCIL FUNDS



SECTION 3: STATUTORY REPORTING

OVERSEAS VISITS BY COUNCILLORS, COUNCIL STAFF OR OTHER PERSONS REPRESENTING COUNCIL

Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 – Clause 217 (1)(a)

No overseas travel was undertaken by Councillors, Council staff or other persons representing Council during the 2022/2023 financial year.

COUNCILLOR FEES, EXPENSES & FACILITIES

Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 – Clause 217 (1)(a1)

Council's Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy sets out acceptable expenses to be paid for the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors in the carriage of their civic office duties. The policy allows for the provision of dedicated office equipment allocated to Councillors on a personal basis such as laptop computers, mobile phones, iPads, telephones and internet installed in the Councillors' homes. In addition, the policy makes provision for payment of travelling costs and costs relating to seminar, conference and training attendance.

A copy of the policy is available on Council's website. The table below is a summary of the expenses incurred by Councillors during the financial year.

COUNCILLOR FEES, EXPENSES AND FACILITIES 2022/2023

Expense Type	\$ (exc GST)
Mayoral Fee	46,040.00
Councillor Fees	147,700.00
Mayoral Expenses:	
Communication expenses	445.35
Conferences, seminars, training & civic function attendance	17.14
Interstate Travel	39.09
Intrastate Travel	388.11
Overseas Travel	0.00
Mayoral vehicle expenses	19,137.53
Spousal expenses	231.94
Other expenses	2,826.65
Councillor Expenses	
Communication expenses	3,030.42
Conferences, seminars, training & civic function attendance	6,962.65
Interstate Travel	3,380.24
Intrastate Travel	3,606.65
Overseas Travel	0.00
Other expenses	7,491.50
Total Expenses	241,297.27

CONTRACTS AWARDED BY COUNCIL

Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 – Clause 217 (1)(a2)

During 2022/2023 the following contracts for amounts greater than \$150,000 were awarded by Council, as defined by the provisions of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

Contractor	Nature of Project	Contract Reference	Value of Contract (inc GST)
Boyds Bay Landscaping Pty Ltd	Urban Green Space – Development of Vacant Block – 153 Barker Street Casino	VP307993	\$231,606.05
Engineering and Civil Contractors Pty Ltd	Design and Construct JackyBulbin Bridge Replacement – Unsealed Road, Bungawalbin Whiporie Road	VP311535	\$957,000.00
AGS Commercial Pty Ltd	Upgrades to Richmond Valley Council's Four (4) Sewer Pump Station Switchboard Platforms	VP314224	\$613,978.99
Boyds Bay Landscaping Pty Ltd	Construction of the Casino Library Community Courtyard	VP315357	\$248,258.24
Thearle Electrical	Woodburn Rileys Hill Sewer Pump Station Switchboards Installation	VP277724	\$185,093.05
Computer Systems (Australia) Pty Ltd	RVC Server and Storage Refresh	VP333226	\$232,193.50
Work Caravans Pty Ltd	Deliver 2 x Mobile Amenities Vans & 1 x Mobile Office and Lunchroom	VP339938	\$313,090.91
Somerville Excavator Hire	Halstead Drive – Stage One	VP351367	\$311,119.00
Greg Clark Building	Upgrades to Rileys Hill SWT Switchroom	VP310144	\$237,270.00
Steve Ryan Builder	Design and Construct Amenities Block at Casino Showground	VP308265	\$375,120.00
Solo Resource Recovery	Transport and Disposal of Mixed Waste	VP212865	\$250,000.00
Aura Sports	Replacement of Flooring at Casino Indoor Sports Stadium	VP308248	\$711,053.00
Urban Play Pty Ltd	Crawford Square Regional Play Space	VP287805	\$464,352.90
Synergy Resource Management	Nammoona Waste and Resource Recovery facility Cell 6A Construction	VP284690	\$2,907,010.70

LEGAL
PROCEEDINGS

Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 –
Clause 217 (1)(a3)

During 2022/2023 Council was involved in a number of legal proceedings, a summary of which is shown below:

Matter	\$ Amount (Excl GST)
Planning & Development <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Development assessment- Development prosecutions	47,740.35 51,857.50
Debt Recovery <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Rates, charges and other debtors	17,042.15
Infrastructure & Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Contract works- Lease preparation	59,183.51 11,497.67
Real Estate Development <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Property matters	3,488.18
Corporate Services <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Litigation- Public Liability- Other	19,171.50 14,856.64 22,418.91
Out of Court Settlement <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Deeds of Release	30,945.45
TOTAL	278,201.86

Following is further information pertaining to some of the matters included in the table above.

Rates and Charges

Council retains a debt recovery service for the recovery of outstanding rates and charges. All charges incurred to Council through the use of this service are recovered against the ratepayer. Cost for 2022/2023 was \$18,284.45.

Legal Action Against Council

1. Richmond Valley Council ats Mead

District Court Proceeding Number: 2022/00125651. Council is the defendant in proceedings initiated in May 2022 pertaining to negligence / personal injury. The matter is ongoing, at a cost of \$13,489.23 (excl. GST) in 2021/2022 and a further \$4,692.59 (excl. GST) in 2022/2023. This cost represents the insurance deductible of \$20,000. Further costs have thus far been met by Council's insurer in place at the time of the incident. The matter is scheduled for mediation mid-late 2023.

2. Richmond Valley Council ats Richards

District Court Proceeding Number: 2022/00190655. Council is the defendant in proceedings initiated in June 2022 pertaining to negligence / personal injury. With the plaintiff's Statement of Claim lodged on 30 June 2022, costs pertaining the defence of this matter are within the 2022/2023 financial year.

The cost to Council as at 30 June 2023 was \$12,500. This cost represents the insurance deductible. Further costs have thus far been met by Council's insurer in place at the time of the incident. The matter is scheduled to appear before the District Court in February 2024.

3. Richmond Valley Council ats Goldcoral Pty Ltd

Land and Environment Court of NSW Class 1 Proceeding Number: 2022/00279591. Council is the respondent in proceedings initiated in October 2022 pertaining to a Class 1 Action. The cost to Council as at 30 June 2023 was \$47,911.59. The matter was listed for a Motion Hearing in July 2023.

PRIVATE WORKS

Local Government (General) Regulation
2021 – Clause 217 (1)(a4)

Council did not subsidise any private works during 2022/2023 in accordance with Section 67 of the Local Government Act 1993.



FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 – Clause 217 (1)(a5)

During the year, Council resolved to make contributions/grants totalling \$79,086.16. These were allocated to the following organisations:

Community Group	\$ amount (exc GST)
Broadwater Rileys Hill Community Centre	\$241.73
Casino Bulls Rugby Union Club	\$5,000.00
Casino Community Kitchen Inc	\$4,788.00
Casino Community Men's Shed	\$3,079.70
Casino Cricket Club	\$3,943.50
Casino Netball Association	\$1,198.00
Casino's Own Wireless Association Inc.	\$3,107.45
Casino Pony Club Inc	\$3,500.00
Casino RSM Junior Rugby League Football Club	\$5,000.00
Casino RSM Cougars Junior Rugby League Football Club	\$3,000.00
Coraki CWA Preschool	\$1,199.00
Evans Head Living Museum	\$2,450.00
Evans Head Men's Shed	\$3,746.54
Evans Head-Casino Surf Life Saving Club Inc	\$5,000.00
Evans River R.S.L. Day Club	\$2,400.00
Evans River Rugby Union Club	\$3,000.00
Fairy Hill Hall Committee	\$2,300.00
Greenridge Memorial Hall and Social Activities Club	\$2,620.00
Mid Richmond Neighbourhood Centre	\$1,000.00
Northern Rivers Flood Action Group Inc	\$2,500.00
Pacific Coast Railway Society Inc t/a Casino Miniature Railway & Museum	\$4,987.74
Platypus RSL Day Club	\$4,600.00
Stan Payne Memorial Oval Committee	\$800.00
Scout Association of Australia NSW Branch – 2nd Casino Scout Group	\$4,624.50
Westpac Rescue Helicopter	\$5,000.00
TOTAL	\$79,086.16

EXTERNAL BODIES EXERCISING
FUNCTION DELEGATED BY COUNCIL

Local Government (General) Regulation
2021 – Section 217 Clause 1 (a6)

Richmond Valley Council has not given any delegation to external organisations during 2022/2023.

CORPORATIONS, PARTNERSHIPS,
TRUSTS, JOINT VENTURES,
SYNDICATES OR OTHER BODIES
IN WHICH COUNCIL HELD A
CONTROLLING INTEREST

Local Government (General) Regulation
2021 – Section 217 Clause 1 (a7)

Council has not given any delegation to any corporations, partnerships, trusts, joint ventures, syndicates or other bodies in which council held a controlling interest during 2022/2023.

CORPORATIONS, PARTNERSHIPS,
TRUSTS, JOINT VENTURES,
SYNDICATES OR OTHER BODIES
IN WHICH COUNCIL PARTICIPATED
IN DURING THE YEAR

Local Government (General) Regulation
2021 – Section 217 Clause 1 (a8)

NORTH EAST WEIGHT OF LOADS
GROUP (NEWLOG)

NEWLOG are an organisation of seven North Coast Councils which operate, with the cooperation and participation of the Transport for NSW, as a Weight of Loads Group, under the authority of the *Roads Act 1993*. NEWLOG commenced operation in 1995 due to concern from local Councils regarding the damage from overloading heavy vehicles on local road networks. NEWLOG aims to preserve road assets and promote road safety, by encouraging heavy vehicles to comply with weight regulations on local and classified roads.

The member Councils are Tweed, Byron, Ballina, Kyogle, Richmond Valley, Lismore City, and Clarence Valley. The group is administered by Ballina Shire Council. NEWLOG's equity as at 30 June 2023 was \$492,672.

View the [NEWLOG Annual Report](#).
[www.ballina.nsw.gov.au](#)

RICHMOND-UPPER CLARENCE
REGIONAL LIBRARY

Richmond Valley Council has an agreement with Kyogle Council to operate a regional library service known as the Richmond-Upper Clarence Regional Library.

Richmond Valley Council is the Executive Council for the Regional Library service and all financial reporting for Richmond-Upper Clarence Regional Library is consolidated into Council's financial statements.

In the event Council withdrew from the Regional Library service, its share of regional library assets and liabilities would be determined by the NSW State Library.

Both councils signed a new library agreement in June 2022 for a further five-year term so that the business model to operate the Regional Library is contemporary and meets the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1993* and *Library Act 1939*.

View the [Regional Library Annual Report](#).
[www.richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au/council/governance/annual-reports/](#)

NORTHERN RIVERS JOINT
ORGANISATION

The Northern Rivers Joint Organisation (NRJO) represents the Ballina, Byron, Kyogle, Lismore, Richmond Valley and Tweed NSW local government areas. With representation by the mayors and general managers of each council, NRJO's role is to facilitate and lead advocacy, political representation and cooperative action on matters of regional significance.

Details on projects and priorities, meeting minutes, news and media releases can be viewed on the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation Website.
[www.northernriversjo.nsw.gov.au](#)

NORTH EAST WASTE

Richmond Valley Council, in conjunction with Ballina Shire, Byron Shire, Clarence Valley, Lismore City, Kyogle and Tweed Shire councils, is a member of North East Waste, a group of councils working together towards cost-effective waste management solutions.

View the [North East Waste Report](#).
[https://www.newwaste.org.au/](#)

MODERN SLAVERY

Local Government Act 1993 s 428(4)(d)

INTRODUCTION

This Modern Slavery Statement is provided by Richmond Valley Council in accordance with Section 428 (4) of the *NSW Local Government Act 1993*.

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

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND SUPPLY CHAIN

Richmond Valley Council is a regional council located in the Northern Rivers area of NSW comprising an area of approximately 3050 square kilometres and total population of 23,490 people. Council has adopted a decentralised procurement structure where most council staff are able to raise a purchase order request which is then approved by the person or team responsible for the budget allocation the funds are derived from. In the 2022/2023 financial year Richmond Valley Council's overall spend for materials and services was \$31,574,000.00.

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

Our supply chain includes local suppliers who conduct business within the Council LGA, suppliers located in neighbouring LGA's, and all states and territories of Australia. Many of these suppliers operate internationally and import materials or manufactured goods from companies based outside of Australia. In some cases, Council itself may deal directly with overseas based suppliers but in most cases, Council is dealing with a local representative based in Australia or a local company appointed as an agent to supply goods from a manufacturer based overseas.



Focus Activity	Amount \$
Roads	11,391,029.95
Waste	10,727,457.81
Water	4,650,271.66
Sewer	3,621,551.54
Governance	3,091,222.95
Fleet	3,043,433.59
Sports Grounds & Parks	1,644,347.85
Town Planning & Development	1,259,778.61

Council's highest categories of spend

POLICY

Richmond Valley Council has adopted a Modern Slavery Prevention Policy outlining Council's commitment to preventing and addressing modern slavery in all its procurement activities. A copy of this policy available on Council's website.

OUTCOMES

Steps taken by Council in the reporting period include:

- Adoption of a Modern Slavery Prevention Policy
- Communication to all staff regarding modern slavery obligations and general awareness raising
- Supplier risk assessment – purchasing from LGP Contracts and utilising modern slavery risk ratings
- Modern slavery contract clauses are being developed, with modern slavery criteria included in tender documentation.

DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS

Local Government Act 1993 s 428(4)(d)

Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021 section 218A

Contribution Plan - Section 7.11					
PROJECT	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	AMENITY/ SERVICE AREA	AMOUNT (\$)	% OF TOTAL PROJECT COSTS FUNDED BY CONTRIBUTIONS	PROJECT STATUS
830146	Parks - Casino Drill Hall Walk	Open Spaces	30,897.78	3.47%	Completed
390012	Quarry Roads Maintenance	Road	204.73	100.00%	Completed
410050	MR145 East Coraki-Woodburn Maintenance	Road	2,139.07	100.00%	Completed
841055	MR145 Woodburn-Coraki Road Major Upgrade	Road	855,658.00	7.54%	Completed
837303	Richmond Terrace Rehab	Road	4,800.00	100.00%	Completed
830125	Crawford Square - Playspace	Open Spaces	76,584.97	18.55%	Completed
			970,284.55		
Contribution Plan - Section 7.12					
830146	Footpath Whyaratta and Woodburn Street	Footpath	23,398.06	92.75 %	Completed
			23,398.06		
TOTAL EXPENDED			993,682.61		
Total value of all contributions and levies received for the period 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023					
Section 7.11				224,886.19	
Section 7.12				794,462.18	
				1,019,348.37	
Total value of all contributions and levies expended for the period 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023					
Section 7.11				970,284.55	
Section 7.12				23,398.06	
				993,682.61	

Value of material public benefits contributed (other than land or money) for example, works in kind: Nil.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT
OPPORTUNITY MANAGEMENT PLAN

Council works with agility when it comes to diversity and inclusivity, we are proud of our continuous improvement approach to initiatives alongside our programs that have been labelled 'best practice' with the State Government actively promoting our success to other councils in the pursuit of our programs being rolled-out across the state.

The Youth Employment Strategy is one of the biggest, most acknowledged, and awarded employment programs, our statistics show that this program has increased the employment of women, Aboriginal men and women and those with disabilities.

We are very proud to support our diverse community and have a workforce that reflects best employment practices. In this last term Richmond Valley Council has proudly:

- ✓ Applied for and obtained multiple grants from the State Government to be more inclusive of women in the workplace resulting in greater employment, acknowledgement, and promotion of women in Council.
- ✓ Try-a-Trade continues each year, aimed at offering women opportunities in trades.

- ✓ Implemented multiple Try-a-Trade campaigns targeted at school students, single mothers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women resulting in full-time employment for women in the field.
- ✓ Increased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment through the YES program.



GENERAL MANAGER AND
SENIOR STAFF REMUNERATION

Local Government (General) Regulation
2021 – Clause 217 (1)(b) & (1)(c)

The General Manager's remuneration package consists of:

1. Salary component
2. Bonus/Performance/Other payments
3. Employer's contribution and/or salary sacrifice to a superannuation scheme
4. Non-cash benefits (motor vehicle), and
5. Amount payable by Council by way of Fringe Benefit Tax for non-cash benefits.

The total remuneration paid to the General Manager in 2022/2023 was \$387,294.75.

Component	\$
Salary	358,419.67
Bonus/Performance/ Other payments	0.00
Superannuation	28,875.08
Non-cash benefits	0.00
Total Remuneration	387,294.75

In addition, fringe benefits tax payable by Council amounted to \$7,623.72.

Council had one other senior staff position (as defined by the *Local Government Act 1993*) during 2022/2023. This position was held by the Director Community Service Delivery.

The remuneration package of senior staff consists of:

1. Salary component
2. Bonus/Performance/Other payments
3. Employer's contribution and/or salary sacrifice to a superannuation scheme
4. Non-cash benefits (motor vehicle), and
5. Amount payable by Council by way of Fringe Benefit Tax for non-cash benefits.

The total remuneration paid to senior staff in 2022/2023 was \$254,049.67.

Component	\$
Salary	230,939.51
Bonus/Performance/ Other payments	0.00
Superannuation	23,110.16
Non-cash benefits	0.00
Total Remuneration	254,049.67

In addition, fringe benefits tax payable by Council amounted to \$6,762.24.



STORMWATER MANAGEMENT
SERVICE CHARGE

Local Government (General) Regulation
2021 – Clause 217 (1)(e)

Contained in the Operational Plan applicable for 2022/2023 was provision for Council to undertake various urban stormwater drainage works and services estimated to cost \$404,985.00. These works included the following items:



Works	Cost Planned in Operational Plan	Actual Works	Actual Expenditure
Casino			
Casino Drainage Improvements	\$10,000	Casino Drainage Improvements	\$0
Increase drainage points Hotham St	\$30,000	Increase drainage points Hotham St	\$0
		Casino Immediate Reconstruction Works	\$10,368
Coraki			
Replace concrete pipes Church Lane	\$10,000	Replace concrete pipes Church Lane	\$0
		Coraki Immediate Reconstruction Works	\$101,700
Evans Head			
Illawong Lane Drainage improvements	\$324,985	Illawong Lane Drainage improvements	\$6,586
Currajong Street - CDS unit rehabilitation	\$15,000	Currajong Street - CDS unit rehabilitation	\$811
		Stan Payne Oval Drainage improvements	\$69,903
Woodburn			
Increase drainage points Richmond Street	\$15,000	Increase drainage points Richmond Street	\$0
		Woodburn Immediate Reconstruction Works	\$111,483
Broadwater			
		Broadwater Immediate Reconstruction Works	\$82,232
Total	\$404,985	Total	\$383,083

Unspent funds of \$397,588 have been carried forward to the 2023/2024 financial year to add to the reviewed scope of works to be undertaken due to realignment of priorities with flood recovery works.

COMPANION ANIMALS

Local Government (General) Regulation
2021 – Clause 217 (1)(f)

The following statistics are reported to the Office of Local Government (OLG) in accordance with the Companion Animals Guidelines.

Companion Animals Statistics	Number
Impounds	281
Dogs Euthanised	23
Cats Euthanised	17
Dog Attacks	63
Animals Returned Home	97

Note: Of the 97 animals returned home, 33 were repeat 'offenders', with the owners either fined or a nuisance order imposed on them (in some cases, both actions were taken).

Off Leash Areas

Richmond Valley Council has four off-leash areas in Casino, two in Coraki and two in Evans Head. In Evans Head the off-leash area at Airforce Beach was extended to 1.68 kms of beach.

Community Education

Managing companion animals in our Local Government Area is an important component of Council's business and generates one of the biggest workloads of all duties carried out by Council's Rangers and garnered the highest number of enquiries/complaints to Council from the community.

Three full-time Rangers are employed by Council whose duties largely involve administering the requirements of the *Companion Animals Act 1998* and *Public Spaces (Unattended Property) Act 2021*. However, Rangers also carry out a number of other duties such as investigating garbage dumping, littering and minor pollution incidents, abandoned vehicles, parking enforcement, straying stock and illegal camping.

Within the reporting period 904 dogs and 140 cats were microchipped within Council's LGA with only 308 dogs and 43 cats registered.

In 2022/2023 Council received 883 complaints about companion animals, the majority of which were for dogs. These varied from issues relating to barking dogs, straying dogs, nuisance dogs, dog attacks and injured dogs on Council land. Our Rangers' primary focus when dealing with people while investigating a complaint is to educate them to get a positive outcome. Taking the time to stop and engage people and discuss their issue and the legal requirements often results in a better outcome than enforcement. Rangers also utilise a variety of educational pamphlets and handouts covering issues from registration through to barking problems.

The animal shelter run by Council focuses on rehousing companion animals that come into our care. Regular liaison occurs with a number of animal welfare/rescue groups and other contacts on the Northern Rivers in an attempt to rehouse the dogs and cats.

The majority of animals from Council's impounding facility that have not been claimed by owners and/or rehoused by Council are taken by these groups for rehousing. Council euthanises some animals, however this is generally due to animals being completely unsuitable for rehousing due to previous poor treatment, being aggressive or the animals being of poor health or injured.

Richmond Valley Council prioritises the wellbeing of the animals in care. Dogs receive regular walks, thanks to the efforts of staff.

Council continues to promote and offer its "Companion Animals Vet Desex Pack", with the cooperation of local veterinary clinics. This is for dogs released from Council's impounding facility ensuring the animals are microchipped, registered, vaccinated and de-sexed at a discounted rate for people wishing to rehouse animals from the impounding facility. Animals are both registered and micro-chipped in accordance with the requirements of the *Public Spaces (Unattended Property) Act* and *Companion Animals Act* and also de-sexed which will ensure that problems such as unwanted breeding and litters do not continue to present in the area.

RATES AND CHARGES
WRITTEN OFF

In accordance with clause 132 of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021, Council reports that the following general rates and water/ sewer charges have been written off during 2022/2023:

Write off-type	\$
General Rates	30,026.01
Water/Sewer Rates	59,421.70
Total	89,447.71

YEAR OF APPROVAL 2019/2020

SPECIAL VARIATIONS TO
GENERAL INCOME

Richmond Valley Council has 1 reportable special variation of general income approved by the Minister for Local Government under Section 508A of the *Local Government Act 1993*. Part of the approval process by Ministerial Order is a requirement of Council to report each year in its Annual Report on outcomes associated with the Special Variation to General Income.

Specific details on the Special Variations to General Income is as follows:

Purpose	Council intends to use the proposed Special Variation funds to enhance its financial sustainability, maintain existing services, and maintain and renew infrastructure.	
Amount of approval as a % of income (inclusive of rate peg of 2.7%)		5.50%
Amount of approval in monetary terms (2022/2023)		\$1,658,594
Expenditure during 2022/2023	Funding existing service levels:	
	Maintain annual riverbank maintenance budget	\$50,000
	Maintain additional annual budget for road maintenance	\$50,000
	Maintain additional annual budget for maintenance of public toilets	\$15,000
	Funding of depreciation and improvements to Operating Performance Ratio	\$1,318,594
	Capital Renewals:	
	Maintain current annual renewal budget for community amenities	\$191,913
Total expenditure		\$1,625,507
Amount unexpended as at 30 June 2023		\$33,087



SWIMMING POOL
INSPECTIONS

Legislation in relation to swimming pool fencing requirements has been strengthened in recent years in response to concerns about children drowning in swimming pools. Inadequate pool fencing is a major contributing factor in the rate of drowning among children less than five years of age. Part of the legislation introduced to protect children under the age of five around backyard swimming pools included a requirement that from 29 April 2016 anyone who is selling, buying or leasing a property with a pool must have a certificate of compliance, a relevant occupation certificate or a certificate of non-compliance.

Councils are responsible for implementing requirements of the legislation. In addition to the above, Councils must also have a swimming pool fence audit program and properties with swimming pools categorised as being high risk (such as properties with more than two occupancies and a shared pool, i.e. units in strata complexes or community schemes, motels, etc.) are required to be inspected every three years.

There are over 1,000 swimming pools in the Richmond Valley LGA. Council staff, under the leadership of the Manager Development & Certification, administer the *Swimming Pools Act 1992* and *Swimming Pools Regulation 2018* and ensure swimming pool fencing complies with the legislation.

In 2022/2023 the following were carried out as part of the program:

Category	Number of inspections
Number of inspections of tourist and visitor accommodation	1
Number of inspections of premises with more than 2 dwellings	4
Number of inspections that resulted in issuance of a certificate of compliance under s22D of the <i>Swimming Pools Act 1992</i>	209
Number of inspections that resulted in issuance of a certificate of non-compliance under Clause 21 of the <i>Swimming Pools Regulation 2018</i>	150
Total	364

Note: the above statistics do not include the 19 inspections carried out that resulted in pools being removed or filled.



COUNCILLOR INDUCTION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Councillor Induction and Professional Development Policy CPOL1.14 and Office Local Government Guidelines 2018.

Council's Councillor and Professional Development Policy was adopted in June 2019. The Policy allows for the provision of an induction program and ongoing professional development program to be implemented in accordance with the Office of Local Government Councillor Induction and Professional Development Guidelines. Council maintains a dedicated budget for Councillor Induction and Professional Development.

Date	Description	Attendees
October 2022	The art and science of deep listening Locale Learning Zoom presentation	Cr Mustow
April 2023	Speed Reading LGNSW Interactive Webcast	Cr McGillan
May 2023	Chairing and Effective Meeting Procedures for Councillors LG NSW Interactive Webcast	Cr McGillan
	Business Excellence in Local Government LG NSW Interactive Webcast	Cr Deegan
June 2023	Taxation Considerations for Councillors LG NSW Interactive Webcast	Cr Morrissey
	Communicating Council Information – Priorities and Initiatives LG NSW Interactive Webcast	Cr Morrissey
	Water Management Conference LGNSW	Cr Mustow Cr Humphrys

ENVIRONMENTAL UPGRADE AGREEMENTS

Local Government Act 1993 – s 54P(1)

Council has not entered into any Environmental Upgrade Agreements in 2022/2023

PLANNING AGREEMENTS IN FORCE

Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 – s 7.5(5)

There are no reportable planning agreements in force for the 2022/2023 period.

LABOUR STATISTICS

Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 – s 217

The following labour statistics relate to staff employed as at Wednesday 23 November 2022 (the nominated 'relevant date'):

- the number of persons directly employed by the council:
 - 232 on a permanent full-time basis
 - 20 on a permanent part-time basis
 - 15 on a casual basis
 - 7 under a fixed-term contract
- the number of persons employed by the council who are "senior staff" for the purposes of the Local Government Act 1993 is 2
- the number of persons engaged by the council, under a contract or other arrangement with the person's employer, that is wholly or principally for the labour of the person is 12
- the number of persons supplied to the council, under a contract or other arrangement with the person's employer, as an apprentice or trainee is 21.



DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN (DIAP)

Richmond Valley Council has had a strong year of actions against the Disability Inclusion Action Plan. Council's goals:

Focus Area 1

- Changing attitudes and behaviours towards people with disabilities in the community
- To ensure public events are accessible

Focus Area 2

- Making our community liveable and accessible for all
- Providing continuous accessible paths of travel between facilities and services in town centres and public areas

Focus Area 3

- Improving employment opportunities for people with disabilities
- Changing people's attitudes

Focus Area 4

- Improving accessibility of systems and processes
- Ensuring all information is available in different formats for all abilities

Highlights have included:

- Accessible elements included in playground upgrades
- Analysis of key events to improve accessibility
- Continuous accessible paths of travel included in new master planning exercises and continue to increase in regular maintenance of current paths

Council has commenced community consultation in the development of the latest version of the DIAP, to be published in November 2023. Initial internal consultation has commenced with the following departments of Council: Planning and Development, Governance, Assets, Community Connection, People and Culture, Regional Libraries, Resilience and Community Grants.



SECTION 4 – APPENDICES

The following reports support the activities of Richmond Valley Council and are required by legislation to be made available as appendices to this annual report. The names and locations of these reports on Council's website are listed below:

Appendix 1: Delivery Program Progress Report Q4 to 30 June 2023

<https://richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au/council/governance/integrated-planning-and-reporting/>

Appendix 2: Audited Financial Statements

<https://richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au/council/governance/budgets-and-financial-reports/>

Appendix 3: 2022/2023 Government Information (Public Access) Act Annual Report

<https://richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au/council/governance/annual-reports/>

Appendix 4: 2022/2023 Public Interest Disclosure Annual Report

<https://richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au/council/governance/annual-reports/>

Appendix 5: 2022/2023 Richmond Upper Clarence Regional Library Annual Report

<https://richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au/council/governance/annual-reports/>

Appendix 6: End of Term Report 2016-2021

<https://richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au/council/governance/integrated-planning-and-reporting/>

Appendix 7: State of the Environment Report

<https://richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au/services/environmental-health/>



**RICHMOND VALLEY COUNCIL
ANNUAL REPORT**

2022-2023