

MINUTES

Ordinary Council Meeting 20 February 2024

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MINUTES OF RICHMOND VALLEY COUNCIL ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING HELD AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 10 GRAHAM PLACE, CASINO ON TUESDAY, 20 FEBRUARY 2024 AT 6PM

Please note: these minutes are subject to confirmation at the next Council Meeting. Decisions recorded in the draft minutes are subject to the Council's Code of Meeting Practice in relation to rescinding decisions.

- **PRESENT:** Cr Robert Mustow (Mayor), Cr Sam Cornish, Cr Robert Hayes, Cr Sandra Humphrys, Cr Patrick Deegan, Cr Debra McGillan
- IN ATTENDANCE: Vaughan Macdonald (General Manager), Angela Jones (Director Community Service Delivery), Ryan Gaiter (Director Organisational Services), Ben Zeller (Director Projects & Business Development), Jenna Hazelwood (Chief of Staff), Hayley Martin (Principal Accountant), Julie Clark (Personal Assistant to the General Manager and Mayor), Simon Breeze (IT Support Coordinator)

1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

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

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

2 PRAYER

The meeting opened with a prayer by the General Manager.

3 PUBLIC ACCESS

Nil

4 APOLOGIES

RESOLUTION 200224/1

Moved: Cr Robert Hayes Seconded: Cr Debra McGillan

That the apology received from Cr Stephen Morrissey be accepted and leave of absence granted.

CARRIED

5 MAYORAL MINUTES

Nil

6 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

6.1 MINUTES ORDINARY MEETING HELD 19 DECEMBER 2023

RESOLUTION 200224/2

Moved: Cr Sandra Humphrys Seconded: Cr Debra McGillan

That Council confirms the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 19 December 2023.

CARRIED

7 MATTERS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

Cr Robert Hayes referred to Item 19.6 Correspondence – Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, Impacts of the Resilient Homes Program on Woodburn and enquiried if Council have made contact with Ms Janelle Saffin MP (Parliamentary Secretary for Disaster Recovery), advocating for Mid Richmond residents in relation to the resilient homes program.

The General Manager advised that many forums and discussions have been held, and continue to occur, with Ms Saffin as Parliamentary Secretary for Disaster Recovery.

A meeting organised by Ms Saffin's office was held today in Ballina, with the Minister for Local Government, the Hon. Ron Hoenig MP, Mayors and General Managers from Northern Rivers councils attending.

Ms Saffin also hosts a regular online community leaders' meeting, which is attended by Council.

NSW Reconstruction Authority staff have offered to meet on 29 February with Richmond Valley Executive staff and Councillors, where community concerns will be raised.

Resilient Homes Program representatives will also be attending the upcoming Community Advisory group meetings scheduled for Coraki, Woodburn and Broadwater.

8 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Nil

9 PETITIONS

Nil

10 NOTICE OF MOTION

Nil

11 MAYOR'S REPORT

11.1 MAYORAL ATTENDANCE REPORT 13 DECEMBER 2023 - 12 FEBRUARY 2024

RESOLUTION 200224/3

Moved: Cr Robert Mustow Seconded: Cr Sandra Humphrys

That Council receives and notes the Mayoral Attendance Report for the period 13 December 2023 – 12 February 2024.

CARRIED

12 DELEGATES' REPORTS

12.1 DELEGATES' REPORT FEBRUARY 2024 - ROUS COUNTY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION 200224/4

Moved: Cr Sandra Humphrys Seconded: Cr Robert Mustow

That Council receives and notes the Delegates' Report – Rous County Council for February 2024.

CARRIED

13 MATTERS DETERMINED WITHOUT DEBATE

13.1 MATTERS TO BE DETERMINED WITHOUT DEBATE

RESOLUTION 200224/5

Moved: Cr Sandra Humphrys Seconded: Cr Sam Cornish

That items 15.3, 16.3, 17.2, 17.3 identified be determined without debate.

14 GENERAL MANAGER

14.1 SUPPORTING THE NEXT STAGE OF GROWTH FOR RICHMOND VALLEY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council's Community Strategic Plan sets a clear direction to establish the Richmond Valley as an emerging growth centre in the Northern Rivers. With the release of the Richmond Valley Regional Jobs Precinct Masterplan for public exhibition, we have taken another major step towards achieving this goal. The RJP Masterplan is a key component of Council's economic strategy for the Richmond Valley, centring housing growth and industry on flood-safe lands in Casino while continuing to support diverse agricultural industries throughout the Valley and increasing service and tourism opportunities in the Mid Richmond communities. The next step in the RJP activation process is to deliver the critical community infrastructure required to consolidate long-term growth. Council has been progressing well with this direction and is now ready to begin the next phase of pre-construction investment.

RESOLUTION 200224/6

Moved: Cr Robert Mustow Seconded: Cr Robert Hayes

That Council

- 1. Notes the NSW Government has commenced the public exhibition of the draft Richmond Valley Regional Jobs Precinct Masterplan;
- 2. Acknowledges the support of the NSW Government in progressing the Regional Jobs Precinct initiative;
- 3. Continues to work in partnership with all levels of government to secure additional funding for planning and construction of critical infrastructure to support the Richmond Valley's growth.

CARRIED

14.2 DELIVERY PROGRAM PROGRESS REPORT JULY - DECEMBER 2023

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Richmond Valley Council has completed the first six months of its 2023-25 Delivery Program and has made significant progress across the four Key Directions and 80 Principal Activities of the plan. Highlights have included successful advocacy for more than \$57m in community grants, continued flood recovery works and completion of major community projects, such as the Casino Memorial Pool upgrade. Work is also nearing completion on the Casino-Bentley section of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail and the Casino Showground upgrade. This report outlines progress in delivering the program for the July-December 2023 reporting period.

RESOLUTION 200224/7

Moved: Cr Robert Mustow Seconded: Cr Robert Hayes

That Council:

1. Receives and notes the July-December 2023 progress report on the 2023-25 Delivery

Program and Rebuilding the Richmond Valley Recovery Plan.

- 2. Notes the significant progress across the Program's four Key Directions and Council's successful advocacy to secure community funding during this period.
- 3. Continues to advocate strongly for government assistance to support the Richmond Valley's ongoing flood recovery.

CARRIED

14.3 NORTHERN RIVERS LIVESTOCK EXCHANGE LEASE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Richmond Valley Council resolved at its December 2023 meeting to progress with leasing arrangements for the Northern Rivers Livestock Exchange (NRLX) and to receive a further report at its February meeting. Following a thorough independent evaluation of leasing proposals for the (NRLX) by renowned agribusiness leader JLL, Council announced on 22 December 2023 that Outcross Agri-Services Pty Ltd secured the facility's management rights for the next five years, with an option in its favour for an additional five years. The new lessees have commenced operations at the facility, with the first sale being held on 2 February 2024.

RESOLUTION 200224/8

Moved: Cr Robert Hayes Seconded: Cr Sam Cornish

That Council:

- 1. Notes that the lease for the management and operation of the Northern Rivers Livestock Exchange (NRLX) has been finalised with Outcross Agri-Services Pty Ltd for the next five years, with an option in its favour for an additional five years in line with previous resolutions.
- 2. Notes that the lease commenced on 1 February 2024 with cattle sales resuming at the facility on 2 February 2024.
- 3. Continues to work with the new lessee of the facility to ensure that its vision to establish the NRLX as the leading cattle saleyards in northern NSW continues to be delivered.

15 COMMUNITY SERVICE DELIVERY

15.1 CASINO SEWER TREATMENT PLANT REPLACEMENT - DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT PHASE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council's 2023-25 Delivery Program includes a commitment to start the planning and design works for a new sewage treatment plant at Casino and to seek further funding for the construction phase. The Casino STP has reached the end of its design life and suffered further damage in the 2022 floods. It currently struggles to treat effluent effectively for its design loading of 12,000 equivalent persons (EP). With Casino's population expected to reach 16,700 by 2041, replacing and expanding the sewage treatment plant is a high priority. The new facility, estimated at \$65m, will allow full activation of the Regional Jobs Precinct, open the way for up to 1600 additional family homes in Casino and improve environmental performance.

To support further planning, design and development work on the project, Council is pursuing a \$5m funding opportunity under the Australian Government's Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program (RPPP). This funding would help to bring the project to "shovel ready" by 2025 and also support design works for associated water and sewer infrastructure for the RJP and housing development.

To take advantage of the funding and ensure the project meets Council's ambitious timeframe of completion by 2028, a further allocation of \$1.1m from the Sewer Fund would be required. It is recommended that Council approves this funding to progress this essential community project.

RESOLUTION 200224/9

Moved: Cr Robert Mustow Seconded: Cr Sandra Humphrys

That Council:

- 1. Notes the progress on planning and design work for the new Casino Sewage Treatment Plant and the current funding opportunity under the Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program to help progress this work.
- 2. Approves the budget transfer of \$1,100,000 from the Sewer Fund to the Sewer Operational Budget to continue funding the planning, design and development works associated with the replacement of the Casino STP and enabling infrastructure for the Regional Jobs Precinct and future housing development.

15.2 OVERHEIGHT REPLACEMENT TANK AT BROADWATER SUGAR MILL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council has received a development application seeking consent for the replacement of a molasses tank at the Broadwater Sugar Mill. The former tank was damaged during the 2022 flood and has been removed from the site. Approval is now sought for a new tank in the same location. The new tank proposes a maximum height of 10.06m which is above the height of buildings standard of 8.5m in accordance with *Richmond Valley Local Environmental Plan 2012*.

The proposal would result in an exceedance of the height standard of more than 10% and therefore it must be referred to Council for determination. The structure is replacing a former tank in the same location, is of lesser height than the former structure, is located within an industrial facility and is of similar appearance and height as other building within the Broadwater Sugar mill site, further it will not have impacts on neighbouring properties the variation is recommended for approval.

RESOLUTION 200224/10

Moved: Cr Robert Mustow Seconded: Cr Sam Cornish

That Council pursuant to Clause 4.6 of *Richmond Valley Local Environmental Plan 2012* approves a variation in respect of Clause 4.3 Height of buildings for DA2024/0083, as outlined in this report.

CARRIED

15.3 SECTION 355 COMMITTEES MANUAL AND POLICY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council's Managing Community Facilities Manual was adopted in May 2007 and requires review and updating. The revised manual complies with current statutory obligations, as well as clearly outlining the responsibilities of Section 355 Committees in managing community facilities on Council's behalf.

The Managing Council's Community Facilities and Hall Policy was adopted in March 2018 and is also due for review. The policy has been replaced with a new draft Section 355 Committees Policy to reflect changes in the revised Section 355 Committee Manual. The revised manual and policy are presented for Council's consideration.

RESOLUTION 200224/11

Moved: Cr Sandra Humphrys Seconded: Cr Sam Cornish

That Council adopts the revised Section 355 Committees Policy and Manual.

16 PROJECTS & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

16.1 TOWN ENTRY SIGNAGE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council received funding in 2021 to contribute to updating its town and boundary sign infrastructure to acknowledge Bundjalung Country. The weather events of 2022 severely impacted most of the valley's town entry and boundary signage, so the project scope has been expanded to replace all signage with updated designs, leveraging off the Discover Richmond Valley Brand. Design concepts have been through several iterations based on Councillor feedback and are in the final stages of approval. Local company Wild Honey Creative which created the Discover Richmond Valley brand was engaged to undertake the design process.

RESOLUTION 200224/12

Moved: Cr Robert Mustow Seconded: Cr Robert Hayes

That Council approves the latest design concepts for town entry and boundary signage, as presented in this report.

CARRIED

16.2 ILLAWONG LANE STORMWATER EASEMENT ACQUISITION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council has finalised design plans for the upgrade/replacement of the storm water infrastructure at Illawong Lane, Evans Head. As part of this project, an easement over NSW Crown Lands needs to be acquired for future access, maintenance purposes and for the legal discharge of stormwater.

The stormwater infrastructure on the Crown Land reserve was originally constructed in the 1940's. An easement has never been formalised over this public infrastructure. Council has been directed to compulsorily acquire an easement for storm water infrastructure as part of the Illawong Lane construction upgrade which impacts on the Crown Land.

Council is required to undertake the acquisition for an easement in accordance with the *Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1993* and the *Local Government Act 1993*. It is recommended that Council proceeds with the acquisition.

RESOLUTION 200224/13

Moved: Cr Robert Hayes Seconded: Cr Sandra Humphrys

That Council

- 1. Proceeds to acquire an easement over Part Lot 549 DP 1091080, Part Lot 550 DP 1091080, and Part Lot 7303 DP1136547 by compulsory acquisition per Section 186 of the *Local Government Act 1993* and in accordance with the requirements of the *Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1993* (NSW).
- 2. Approves the making of an application to the Minister of Local Government for the issue of a proposed acquisition notice under Section 186 of the *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW) and *Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1993 (NSW)* with respect to the subject easement for the purpose of access and services.

CARRIED

16.3 TATHAM BRIDGES LAND ACQUISITION AND ROAD CLOSURES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council has secured funding of \$18.7M through the Northern Rivers Recovery and Resilience Program to replace the two bridges traversing Shannon Brook and Spring Creek on Casino Coraki Road (known as the twin Tatham Bridges).

Part of this work includes land acquisitions and the permanent closure and disposal of unnecessary public road.

Council considered land acquisitions at its September 2023 Ordinary Meeting, and proposed road closures during the October 2023 Ordinary Meeting. This report further outlines details of the road closure following public exhibition and the land to be acquired following the completion of the detailed bridge and road alignment design.

The location of the bridges over the two creeks have changed alignment multiple times with road closure and land acquisitions processes dating back to 1933, 1965, and 2000. The land acquisitions procedures were not finalised following the last realignment in 2000 and as a result the affected landowners have been impacted by a road traversing through private land. The land acquisitions subject to this report will resolve the road alignment of the existing and the new bridge's location resolving the encroachment of public road on private land.

Council has commenced discussions with affected landholders and aims to achieve the land acquisition through genuine agreement of all parties. Council will be required to compulsory acquire this land should negotiations become unachievable. Land that is owned by The State of NSW (Crown Land) must be acquired through the provisions of the *Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991.*

RESOLUTION 200224/14

Moved: Cr Sandra Humphrys Seconded: Cr Sam Cornish

That Council:

- 1. In accordance with Section 38D of the *Roads Act 1993*, resolves to close the Council public Road identified as Lot 27, 29, 31 and part Lot 28 in Deposited Plan 1189548 (shown on Map 1) to be classified as operational land and disposed to the adjoining landowner.
- Acquires the private ownership land by private agreement, acquisition by consent or through the compulsory acquisition process under the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991 by the authority contained in the Roads Act 1993. This being the land identified as needed for public road in attachment 1. The land described as Part Lots 1-8 Section 2 DP1494, Part Lots 20-21 DP1125446, Part Lots 201-202 DP815264, and Part Lots 2-3 DP706888.
- 3. Acquires Lot 16 DP1189548, Lot 32 DP1189548, and part Lot 132 DP726553 by the compulsory acquisition process under the *Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991* by the authority contained in the *Roads Act 1993* (shown on Map 2).
- 4. Approves the making of an application to the Minister for Local Government for the issue of a Proposed Acquisition Notice under the *Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991* with respect to the subject land.
- 5. Authorises the General Manger to:
 - Negotiate the final boundaries of the proposed road closure and land acquisition in

accordance with this report;

- Negotiate the compensation of land acquisition and road closure disposal under the provisions of the *Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991* to achieve genuine agreement between all parties.
- Sign the necessary documentation to implement this resolution, including affixing the Seal of Council as required.
- 6. In accordance with Section 44 of the *Roads Act 1993*, that Lot 32 DP1189548 upon vesting to Council being former public road be provided in compensation to the adjoining landowner for other land acquired for the purposes of the *Roads Act 1993*.
- 7. Dedicates the acquired land, with exception of Lot 32 DP1189548 as public road.

17 ORGANISATIONAL SERVICES

17.1 QUARTERLY BUDGET REVIEW STATEMENT FOR THE QUARTER ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report outlines the proposed adjustments for the 2023/2024 budget for the quarter ended 31 December 2023.

Council's projected operating result from continuing operations for 2023/2024 is proposed to increase by \$2,387,776 to a surplus of \$33,143,349. The net operating result before capital grants and contributions has decreased slightly from a deficit of \$1,929,065 to a deficit of \$1,986,917.

Income from continuing operations has increased by \$3,084,969 from the revised budget, with total income now projected to be \$109,386,737. This is largely due to an increase in grant funding being announced in 2023/2024 for road reconstruction works such as \$2,719,484 for the Regional Emergency Road Repair Fund.

Expenses from continuing operations have increased by \$697,193 to a projected cost of \$76,243,388. Of this, \$210,000 relates to projected operational expenditure increases in line with funding being announced for the Rural Fire Fighting Fund allocation for 2023/2024 and a further \$199,800 to deliver place and adaptation plans for Mid Richmond communities.

Council's capital works program has been reviewed, resulting in a projected program for 2023/2024 of \$70,774,367, decreasing the 2023/2024 programmed works by \$956,826. This program of works continues to be largely focused on disaster recovery works and the restoration of essential public infrastructure following the February 2022 flood event along with key grant funded projects such as the Betterment Community Asset Program announced under the Northern Rivers Recovery and Resilience funding to ensure Council's assets are more resilient for future disasters. The decrease from the revised capital program budget is largely due to a reduction in the Stormwater Management budget of \$1,400,000. The delivery of this program of works will be heavily reliant on the availability of contractors and materials as well as favourable weather conditions for the remainder of 2023/2024. Council will continue to ensure its capital works program is closely monitored, with any adjustments required to be included in future quarterly budget reviews or monthly budget adjustment reports to Council.

Council's unrestricted cash surplus has remained unchanged at \$212,574 as of 31 December 2023.

A detailed Quarterly Budget Review Statement for the second quarter of 2023/2024 has been circulated separately to each Councillor. These changes are disclosed by priority areas on pages 4-8 of the Quarterly Budget Review Statement and detailed explanations are provided on pages 9-14.

A Powerpoint presentation was provided by the Principal Accountant on the Quarterly Budget Review.

RESOLUTION 200224/15

Moved: Cr Robert Mustow Seconded: Cr Sam Cornish

That Council:

- 1. Receives the Quarterly Budget Review Statement as at 31 December 2023; and
- 2. Approves the recommended budget variations.

17.2 FINANCIAL ANALYSIS REPORT - DECEMBER 2023 AND JANUARY 2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to inform Council of the status and performance of its cash and investment portfolio in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993* s.625, Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 cl.212, Australian Accounting Standard (AASB 9) and Council's Investment Policy.

The value of Council's cash and investments at 31 December 2023 and 31 January 2024 is shown below:

Month	Bank Accounts	Term Deposits	Floating Rate Notes	Fixed Rate Bonds	TCorp IM Funds	Total
December 2023	\$18,386,780	\$36,000,000	\$6,750,390	\$4,500,000	\$15,968,206	\$81,605,377
January 2024	\$20,021,585	\$34,000,000	\$6,750,390	\$4,500,000	\$16,111,533	\$81,383,507

The weighted average rate of return on Council's cash and investments at 31 December 2023 was 10.06% which was above the Bloomberg AusBond Bank Bill Index for December of 0.37%, which is Council's benchmark.

The weighted average rate of return on Council's cash and investments for January 2024 was 6.08% which was above the Bloomberg AusBond Bank Bill Index for January of 0.37%.

RESOLUTION 200224/16

Moved: Cr Sandra Humphrys Seconded: Cr Sam Cornish

That Council adopts the Financial Analysis Report detailing the performance of its cash and investments for the months of December 2023 and January 2024.

CARRIED

17.3 REVIEW OF CHILD SAFETY AND WELLBEING POLICY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Councils in NSW have obligations to ensure child safety and wellbeing, as well as mandatory requirements under the NSW Child Safe Scheme. The first step in Council's implementation of the scheme was to adopt a Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy in October 2022. A review of the policy has now been undertaken to ensure ongoing compliance with Council's obligations.

RESOLUTION 200224/17

Moved: Cr Sandra Humphrys Seconded: Cr Sam Cornish

That Council notes its ongoing responsibilities under the NSW Child Safe Scheme and adopts the revised Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

18 GENERAL BUSINESS

Nil

19 MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

RESOLUTION 200224/18

Moved: Cr Sandra Humphrys Seconded: Cr Sam Cornish

Recommended that the following reports submitted for information be received and noted.

CARRIED

19.1 REVIEW OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACT - SUBMISSION

RESOLUTION 200224/19

Moved: Cr Sandra Humphrys Seconded: Cr Sam Cornish

That Council receives and notes the response provided to the Review of Regional Development Act.

CARRIED

19.2 DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS DETERMINED UNDER THE ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT ACT FOR THE PERIOD 1 DECEMBER 2023 - 31 JANUARY 2024

RESOLUTION 200224/20

Moved: Cr Sandra Humphrys Seconded: Cr Sam Cornish

That Council receives and notes the Development Application report for the period 1 December 2023 to 31 January 2024.

CARRIED

19.3 CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE REPORT 1 OCTOBER - 31 DECEMBER 2023

RESOLUTION 200224/21

Moved: Cr Sandra Humphrys Seconded: Cr Sam Cornish

That Council receives and notes the Customer Experience Report for the period 1 October – 31 December 2023.

19.4 GRANT APPLICATION INFORMATION REPORT - DECEMBER 2023 AND JANUARY 2024

RESOLUTION 200224/22

Moved: Cr Sandra Humphrys Seconded: Cr Sam Cornish

That Council receives and notes the Grant Application Information Report for the months of December 2023 and January 2024.

CARRIED

19.5 WRITE OFF OF MONIES UNDER DELEGATION

RESOLUTION 200224/23

Moved: Cr Sandra Humphrys Seconded: Cr Sam Cornish

That Council receives and notes the write-off of monies totalling \$2,973.23 under the General Manager's delegation.

CARRIED

20 QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Nil

21 QUESTIONS FOR NEXT MEETING (IN WRITING)

Nil

The Meeting closed at 7.30 pm.

The minutes of this meeting were confirmed at the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 19 March 2024.

CHAIRPERSON