

Richmond  
Valley  
Council



# **AGENDA**

## **Ordinary Council Meeting**

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

**Date: Tuesday, 16 April 2024**

**Time: 6pm**

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

**Vaughan Macdonald  
General Manager**

## Statement of Ethical Obligations

In accordance with Clause 3.23 of the Model Code of Meeting Practice, Councillors are reminded of their Oath or Affirmation of Office made under section 233A of the *Local Government Act 1993* and their obligations under Council's Code of Conduct to disclose and appropriately manage conflicts of interest.

### Oath or affirmation of office

The Oath or Affirmation is taken by each Councillor whereby they swear or declare to:

*Undertake the duties of the office of Councillor in the best interests of the people of the Richmond Valley and Richmond Valley Council, and that they will faithfully and impartially carry out the functions, powers, authorities and discretions vested in them under the Local Government Act 1993 or any other Act to the best of their ability and judgment.*

### Conflicts of interest

All Councillors must declare and manage any conflicts of interest they may have in matters being considered at Council meetings in accordance with Council's Code of Conduct.

All declarations of conflicts of interest and how the conflict of interest was managed will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting at which the declaration was made.

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**1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

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

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

**2 PRAYER****3 PUBLIC ACCESS****4 APOLOGIES**

## **5 MAYORAL MINUTES**

### **5.1 MAYORAL MINUTE - ACKNOWLEDGING LOCAL HERITAGE ON THE NORTHERN RIVERS RAIL TRAIL**

**Author: Robert Mustow**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

That Council explores further opportunities to celebrate local heritage and stories along the Rail Trail, in consultation with the community, as funding becomes available.

#### **REPORT**

The Casino to Bentley section of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail has been a wonderful success in its first few weeks, with more than 3,000 people enjoying this unique experience. I've had the opportunity to ride and walk the new Rail Trail section several times and have been surprised by just how far some visitors have travelled to try out the new track. I've also had time to talk with many locals along the way who shared their memories of holiday journeys on the train, or their recollections of the early days in the farming districts surrounding the line.

This started me thinking, as I was winding my way along the Trail, about opportunities to acknowledge and celebrate the rich connection between our local history on the Casino to Bentley section of the line. The Rail Trail project is not just about a new visitor experience for our Valley, it's also a focal point for locals to come together, have a yarn, enjoy the experience and reflect on the people, places and events that have helped to shape our community.

The Richmond Valley is a place of many cultural connections, but one of the stories that is not often told involves the early experiences of the Valley's Italian migrant communities and their long-standing connection with the farming districts around Naughton's Gap.

A large influx of Italian immigrants came to the Naughtons Gap area in the post-World War II resettlement period. The book *'Memories of Life at Naughton's Gap'* tells the story of migrant families from 1945 to the 1970s and the close-knit community they created in this area. Although the view from the Rail Trail now features sweeping grasslands and open fields, this area was once filled with a rich array of bananas, tomatoes, peas, pineapples and other small crops cultivated by local Italian settlers. These were difficult years, leaving the hardship of post-war Italy and travelling across the world to a new country, and a new language. Yet from this small settlement has grown a tradition of Italian culture, food and friendship, which continues to enrich our community today.

The story of the Italian Naughtons Gap settlers is just one of many tales from our local history and I hope that, as the Rail Trail continues to develop and grow in popularity, we will find other opportunities to acknowledge these memories and connections along the length of the Trail, from Old Casino Station, past Spring Grove and North Casino over Naughtons Gap and onto Bentley.

In the meantime, Council will continue to seek funding to develop more features and experiences along the Casino to Bentley section, in preparation for the opening of the next stage of the track, extending on to Lismore, by early 2025.

#### **ATTACHMENT(S)**

**Nil**

**6 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

**6.1 MINUTES ORDINARY MEETING HELD 19 MARCH 2024**

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council confirms the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 19 March 2024.

**REPORT**

Refer attached Minutes.

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

- 1. Unconfirmed Minutes 19 March 2024 (under separate cover)**

**7 MATTERS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES**

**8 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

(Councillors to specify details of item and nature of interest)

**9 PETITIONS**

Nil



**10 NOTICE OF MOTION****10.1 NOTICE OF MOTION - CR DEBRA MCGILLAN, REPAIRS TO RICHMOND TERRACE, CORAKI**

**Author: Debra McGillan**

I, Councillor Debra McGillan, give notice that at the next Ordinary Meeting of Council to be held on 16 April 2024, I intend to move the following motion:

**NOTICE OF MOTION**

That Council:

1. Notes the special Anzac Day celebrations to be held at Coraki, including commemoration of Distinguished Flying Cross recipient, Mr Gordan James Percy.
2. Ensures that the Richmond Terrace civic precinct is well presented for the ceremony.

**RATIONALE**

On Anzac day this year, Coraki will welcome a special guest Mr Peter Percy, who is the nephew of our local Distinguished Flying Cross recipient, Mr Gordan James Percy. The (DFC) is the highest flight award for heroism or extraordinary achievement and it will be a great honour to have Peter join the march, wearing his uncle's medals. Mr Gordan Percy's family will be coming from all over the world to celebrate this wonderful event.

Coraki is a small community and we are about to be showcased to the world, so we need to be sure that our town is well presented for this important day on our annual calendar.

I am concerned for the presentation and state of repair of our museum building where this gentleman's history and medals are on display. Family will be visiting the museum as part of the experience.

Our community also marches past the park on Richmond Terrace, towards the cenotaph, and it would be good to see the planned repairs to the children's playground completed before the ceremony, so the area is well presented.

I commend this Notice of Motion to Council.

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

**Nil**

**11 MAYOR'S REPORT****11.1 MAYORAL ATTENDANCE REPORT 14 MARCH - 9 APRIL 2024****Author: Robert Mustow****RECOMMENDATION**

That Council receives and notes the Mayoral Attendance Report for the period 14 March – 9 April 2024.

**March**

- 14<sup>th</sup> Seniors' Week Concert and luncheon Casino
- 15<sup>th</sup> Fr Peter celebration as Casino Parish Priest 20 years
- 18<sup>th</sup> Northern Rivers Community Leaders Forum
- 18<sup>th</sup> Northern Rivers Joint Organisation workshop
- 19<sup>th</sup> Richmond Valley Council Ordinary meeting
- 20<sup>th</sup> Richmond Valley Seniors' Expo Evans Head
- 20<sup>th</sup> Rous County Council Information session
- 21<sup>st</sup> Fire Ant Information session Casino
- 21<sup>st</sup> Dancing with the Stars launch
- 23<sup>rd</sup> Official Opening Northern Rivers Rail Trail – Casino to Bentley section
- 25<sup>th</sup> NRJO Vision for Regional and Disaster Adaptation Planning
- 25<sup>th</sup> Installation of Totem Poles at Evans Head foreshore
- 26<sup>th</sup> Mid-Richmond Neighbourhood Centre and Qantas computer distribution event.
- 27<sup>th</sup> Productivity Commissioner visit - Casino
- 27<sup>th</sup> Productivity Commissioner meeting - Lismore

**April**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Mercy Centre St Mary's Catholic College opening
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting with Senator Jenny McAlister – Ride section of Rail Trail
- 7<sup>th</sup> New Italy Museum event
- 8<sup>th</sup> United Hospital Auxiliaries Regional Conference - Coraki
- 9<sup>th</sup> Casino Public School Anzac Day service

**ATTACHMENT(S)****Nil**

**12 DELEGATES' REPORTS**

Nil

**13 MATTERS DETERMINED WITHOUT DEBATE**

Each Councillor is given the opportunity to indicate which items they wish to debate or question. Item numbers identified for debate or questioning will be read to the Meeting.

Following identification of the above items a motion will be moved in regard to the balance of items being determined without debate.

**13.1 MATTERS TO BE DETERMINED WITHOUT DEBATE****RECOMMENDATION**

That items identified be determined without debate.

**14 GENERAL MANAGER****14.1 CASINO SHOWGROUND AND RACECOURSE UPGRADE****Author: Vaughan Macdonald****EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Richmond Valley Council has been working on a vision to upgrade and revitalise the Casino Showground and Racecourse since 2018, with the project receiving a major funding boost from the NSW and Federal Governments in November 2020. A total of \$12.8m was provided under the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund to help transform the site into a regional centre for equestrian activities and major community events. Combined with additional funding from the NSW Showground Stimulus Program, Drought Communities Funding, Crown Lands and Council, this brought the total investment in the redevelopment to \$14.4m.

The upgrade is now nearing completion with an opening event planned for Saturday 20 April 2024 and Council looks forward to the many benefits it will bring to the community and the local economy. The upgrade project includes:

- A 40m x 80m undercover multipurpose arena
- An outdoor turf equestrian warm up/pony club area
- 40m x 40m outdoor sand warm up area
- 60 undercover event day horse stalls
- 80 racehorse training stables
- Centre Arena improvements including surface, lighting and stock yard improvements
- Race track and sand training track upgrades and a 50m equine exercise pool
- Amenities, truck and float accesses and associated carparking
- Power upgrades including overnight camping
- Fire safety improvements
- Internal road, landscaping and signage upgrades.

The site has huge potential for a range of activities centred around the Richmond Valley's agricultural heritage and combined with the opportunity for the Casino Race Club to expand its operations, it is set to become a major drawcard for the Northern Rivers region.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council:

1. Notes the significant progress on the Casino Showground and Racecourse upgrade project and the benefits this \$14.4 million investment will bring to the Richmond Valley;
2. Reaffirms its vision to position the showground and racecourse as the premier equine facility in the Northern Rivers, and a leading centre for community events and activities;
3. Writes to the Prime Minister, Premier and our local Members of Parliament to acknowledge the Federal and NSW Governments' funding contributions of \$12.88 million under the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund, to this regionally significant project;
4. Extends an invitation to the Richmond Valley community and showground and racecourse stakeholders to attend the official opening at 10am on Saturday 20 April 2024;
5. Endorses the proposed collaborative arrangements with all existing stakeholders at the facility for the initial 12 months of operations, as well as promoting the opportunity for new community organisations and commercial entities to utilise the facility.

**DELIVERY PROGRAM LINKS**

Objective 2: Establish the Richmond Valley as a regional growth centre

2E Deliver regionally significant projects

2E2 Establish Casino Showground as the premier equine facility in the Northern Rivers

**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

Funding for this project was provided from the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund, Drought Communities Funding, Showgrounds Stimulus Funding Programs, Flood Recovery Works and a Council contribution, realising a total investment of \$14.435 million for the showground and racecourse upgrade.

**REPORT****Casino Showground and Racecourse upgrade – March 2024**

Richmond Valley Council has been working on its vision to upgrade and revitalise the Casino Showground since 2018, with the project receiving a major funding boost from the NSW and Federal Governments in November 2020. A total of \$8.2 million was provided under the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund to help transform the site into a regional centre for equestrian activities and major community events. This was followed by a further \$4.6 million allocated in 2023 towards the project from the same funding source due to its advanced progress in comparison to other projects funded in this program. Combined with additional funding from the NSW Showground Stimulus Program, Drought Communities Funding, Crown Lands programs, Flood Recovery program and Council, this brought the total investment in the redevelopment to \$14.4 million

The Casino Showground and Racecourse Master Plan – adopted by Council in 2018 following consultation with showground user groups and the community - aims to position the facility as the premier equestrian centre in the Northern Rivers, opening the way for new major events and attracting visitors from throughout the region and interstate. The site has huge potential for a range of activities centred around the Richmond Valley's agricultural heritage and combined with the opportunity for the Casino Race Club to expand its operations, it is set to become a major drawcard.

The Showground upgrade is now nearing completion and Council looks forward to the many benefits it will bring to the community and the local economy. The upgrade project includes:

- A 40m x 80m undercover multipurpose arena
- An outdoor turf equestrian warm up/pony club area
- 40m x 40m outdoor sand warm up area

- 60 undercover event day horse stalls
- 80 racehorse training stables
- Centre Arena improvements including surface, lighting and stock yard improvements
- Race track and sand training track upgrades and a 50m equine exercise pool
- Amenities, truck and float accesses and associated carparking
- Power upgrades including overnight camping
- Fire safety improvements
- Internal road, landscaping and signage upgrades.

The extra funding received has allowed us to enhance a number of facilities included in the upgrade including increasing the seating capacity of the covered multi-purpose events arena to 2,500 people, improving access arrangements and internal roads and car parking, as well as building an equine pool to support the racehorse training facilities.

The governments' decision to allocate additional funding to this project is a testament to our council's successful management of the works. The extra funding has ensured that we can complete the upgrade to the highest standard. Many local contractors have been involved in the delivery of this project. However, Council was recently advised that the contractor for the major component of the upgrade AGS Commercial has unfortunately been placed into Voluntary Administration and this has resulted in some delay. Council officers are reconciling the project and are in discussions with the Administrator to determine what can be done to finalise the outstanding works. The project is at a stage of completion that we can proceed with the opening as planned on 20 April 2024. It is anticipated that the remaining components to be completed can be finalised by the end of the financial year to enable full use of the facility.

### **Racing industry facilities**

The improvements to the racing industry facilities provide the biggest changes and opportunities for economic stimulus. A new licence agreement is in place with the Casino Race Club, on the same terms as the previous arrangement with a commitment to continue to work in collaboration as the new facilities commence being used. Council has expanded the licenced area to include the new stables, day stalls, walkers, round yards and equine pool.

Council will continue to work in partnership with the Race Club to capitalise on the exciting opportunity these new facilities provide for the industry and the local economy. Inquiries have been fielded from racehorse trainers outside our region which is positive for the future use of the facility.

With the support and input of the Race Club we have created a facility that is unique. No other regional facility has the Council, Showground, Racecourse, Race Club dynamic of the Casino site, so it will be important that we manage the transition process well.

### **Equestrian and other facilities**

The other equestrian facilities at the site will provide a wide range of usage options. Council will continue to offer licence agreements for the pre-existing user groups for an initial 12-month period based on their previous agreements and facilities used. The previous arrangements identify the areas that each user group can use, the number of events/activity days and the annual cost for the following groups:

- Casino Show Society
- Casino Pony Club
- Little Ranch Pony Club
- Richmond Valley Riding Club
- Casino Men's Shed
- Northern Rivers Cutting Club

This will enable the experience of the first year's usage to inform decisions regarding the longer term governance and/or management arrangements that would position the facility to the best

advantage. We will also be working with existing and potential new users to attract new events to the facility.

It should also be noted that there are two current users of The Pavilion, being Miss Sophie's Dance School and Casino Rhee Taekwondo.

### **Management arrangements and future business planning**

The Showground is a community facility generally used by not-for-profit community-based organisations for their recreation, events and leisure pursuits. The fees for the available facilities will be included in Council's annual Revenue Policy process which will be considered at its May 2024 meeting along with the Draft Budget for 2024/25. A public exhibition and submissions period then follows, as required under the Local Government Act, which provides an opportunity for further comment and ideas.

This asset is a community facility subsidised by Council for the benefit of the user groups and community members who participate and attend events. It should be noted that with an investment of \$14.4m in the facilities provided at the Racecourse/Showground, depreciation will increase for the 2024/25 financial year. With income over the last five years hovering around \$20,000 per year, and expenses increasing to over \$500,000 in 2022/23 with \$314,000 of that depreciation, it highlights the challenge of managing this facility in a financially sustainable manner.

It is important to recognise that the facility provides significant economic stimulus through attracting visitors to the Richmond Valley to attend events who then spend money on accommodation, hospitality, retail goods, fuel and more. This was a key driver for our success in securing the funding to upgrade the facility under the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund (BLERF). Increasing the facility usage and number of events will be a key focus over the coming year. To keep fees and charges as low as possible for community groups, we need to increase usage of the facility by other revenue-generating activities, such as special events.

Council is establishing a new Invest & Live team focused on economic development and liveability projects. The team will be in place by the end of April which is well timed to enable the team to become established, understand the operations and develop relationships.

Given the number of variables and uncertainties with operating the new facilities, Council will continue with the existing model of the Casino Race Club managing the racing facilities, and Council responsible for managing all other facilities and user groups through renewing licence agreements for interested user groups for the initial 12 month period of the facility's operations. A Stakeholder User Group will be convened to ensure regular communication and coordination of events and opportunities with all stakeholders.

### **CONSULTATION**

Recent meetings have been held with all Showground and Racecourse User Groups invited, to provide an update on the finalisation of the project and to outline the arrangements for the first 12 months of operation of the facility.

There are many operational issues and arrangements that will need to be worked through, which will be best done through a collaborative process led by our Invest & Live team with all existing and new user groups who embrace the opportunities this upgrade will provide.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Casino Racecourse and Showground upgrade will provide a great opportunity for Casino and the Richmond Valley to attract a wide range of equine and community events. It will also create a responsibility for Council to ensure the management and resources allocated are of a standard befitting such a high-quality venue.

More detailed business planning and ongoing consultation and liaison with all stakeholders will be essential throughout the first 12 months of operations and beyond.

### **ATTACHMENT(S)**

Nil



## **15 COMMUNITY SERVICE DELIVERY**

### **15.1 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY AND FRAMEWORK 2024-2025**

**Director:** Angela Jones

**Responsible Officer:** Sharon Davidson

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Council recognises the importance of providing opportunities for our community to be informed and encouraging input into decisions which affect local residents' lives, community and place. Informed decision making is essential to good governance.

Like most regional communities, the Richmond Valley is a mix of different lifestyles, interests, ages and stages of life. Stakeholders also include government departments and authorities, educational institutions, community organisations, and businesses.

The 2024-2025 Richmond Valley Council Community Engagement Strategy and Framework is a guide for how Council will work with the community to engage on important projects. The Community Engagement Strategy and Framework outlines what community engagement is and how Council talks to and, importantly, listens to its community.

The engagement approach taken, including the combination of activities, is determined to be the most effective in reaching the communities and stakeholders affected.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

That Council adopts the 2024-2025 Richmond Valley Council Community Engagement Strategy and Framework and ensures that the document is available on its website.

#### **DELIVERY PROGRAM LINKS**

Objective 10: Lead and advocate for our community

10A Strengthen engagement between Council and the community

10A1 Develop and deliver the Richmond Valley Community Engagement Strategy

#### **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

Nil

#### **REPORT**

##### **The Richmond Valley Council Community Engagement Strategy and Framework**

Richmond Valley Council believes in open and accountable governance. Council is passionate about the future of the region, and harmonising the needs of the community, stakeholders and policy directions from State and Commonwealth governments is key to achieving balanced decision making and delivering the community's vision for the future.

In 2022 Council adopted its Community Strategic Plan Engagement Strategy. This strategy described how Richmond Valley Council would engage with the community and acknowledged the desire of Council to share information and experiences to develop a shared vision for the future.

Following changes to the *Local Government Act 1993*, all councils in NSW were required to adopt a new Community Engagement Strategy and Framework, which extends engagement activities beyond the Community Strategic Plan.

The new Community Engagement Strategy and Framework (attached) aims to strengthen Council's commitment to community engagement by providing a best practice approach in all engagement activities.

Our engagement process recognises diversity within the community and incorporates a variety of tools and techniques to reach our wide range of community members and stakeholders.

Council is also required to provide a Community Participation Plan under Section 2.23 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (the Act) to set out when and how it will engage its community across the range of town planning functions it performs under the Act.

The Richmond Valley Council Community Participation Plan, adopted in 2020, identifies:

- The mandatory community engagement requirements of the Act, including variations to those requirements (where permitted);
- How community engagement will be undertaken;
- The minimum period for community engagement; and
- How the community can make submissions

Community engagement does not replace the final decision-making power of Council, however, provides valuable opportunities for the community to be involved in designing key directions.

It is proposed to combine the CPP and community Engagement Strategy in future iterations of the Framework.

## **Objectives**

The primary objectives of the 2024-2025 Richmond Valley Council Community Engagement Strategy and Framework are as follows:

- Enhanced communication - improve communication channels to ensure community members are informed about our initiatives, projects and events;
- Increased participation - encourage greater participation from community members in decision-making processes, events and activities.
- Building relationships - establish and nurture strong relationships with key stakeholders, including residents, local businesses, non-profits and government agencies; and
- Addressing community needs - identify and address the specific needs and concerns of the community through proactive outreach and collaboration.

## **Key components**

The 2024-2025 Richmond Valley Council Community Engagement Strategy and Framework comprises several key components designed to achieve Council's objectives effectively:

- Multi-channel communication - Council will utilise a variety of communication channels, including social media, email newsletters, community forums, and traditional media outlets, to disseminate information and engage with community members;
- Interactive workshops and forums - Council will organise regular workshops and forums to facilitate two-way communication between the organisation and the community. These events will provide opportunities for community members to voice their opinions, ask questions, and provide feedback on relevant issues; and

- Collaborative projects and initiatives - Council will actively seek opportunities to collaborate with local organisations, businesses and community groups on projects and initiatives which address shared goals and priorities. By working together, we can leverage collective resources and expertise to achieve meaningful outcomes for the community.

**CONCLUSION**

The 2024-2025 Richmond Valley Council Community Engagement Strategy and Framework represents a proactive approach to strengthening Council's relationship with the communities it serves. By fostering open communication, encouraging participation and collaborating with stakeholders, Council aims to create a more inclusive and vibrant community where everyone has a voice and a stake in our collective success.

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

1. **Community Engagement Strategy and Framework 2024-2025 (under separate cover)**

**15.2 DRAFT SECTION 7.12 CONTRIBUTIONS PLAN (AS AMENDED)**

**Director:** Angela Jones

**Responsible Officer:** Tony McAteer

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Council has undertaken a review of its current Section 94A Contributions Plan to ensure consistency with statutory requirements, update the legislation, including the title of the plan, and to update the schedule of works to enable the delivery and maintenance of local infrastructure and facilities as identified. As a result, the *Draft Richmond Valley Council Section 7.12 Contributions Plan (As Amended)* (Draft Plan) has been prepared.

The Draft Plan is proposed to be exhibited in accordance with the Richmond Valley Council Community Participation Plan 2020 for a minimum of 28 days with written submissions being received. A post exhibition report will be presented to Council for adoption and implementation of the final plan.

This report seeks Council's in principle endorsement of the Draft Plan so it can be publicly exhibited.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council endorses the *Draft Richmond Valley Council Section 7.12 Contributions Plan (As Amended)* for public exhibition.

**DELIVERY PROGRAM LINKS**

Objective 6: Provide infrastructure that meets community needs

6C Provide a network of safe, well-constructed local roads, bridges, footpaths and cycleways

6C1 Deliver local infrastructure maintenance and renewal programs

**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

The review of the contributions plan and new schedule of works will assist in acquiring developer contributions to facilitate the delivery of public amenities and public services identified in the Draft Plan.

**REPORT**

The Section 7.12 Contributions Plan (formerly 94A) is a public document which forms an important part of Council's Planning and Development framework. The Contributions Plan enables Council to levy contributions from development works that are subject to a development consent or complying development certificate issued under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (the Act).

These development contributions enable Council to fund public amenities and public services such as parks, community facilities, local roads, footpaths, stormwater drainage and traffic management.

Richmond Valley Council's current Section 94A Contributions Plan was a ten-year plan adopted by Council in August 2013. It is therefore timely to review the Contributions Plan to reflect legislative changes since its adoption, review the estimated income from the annual contributions collected, and to adopt a new schedule of works for expenditure of the levies.

While the projects identified in the works schedule have been adopted with estimated completion dates over the next 10 years, there is an element of flexibility within the plan to implement these projects outside these timeframes given access to additional funding, changed priorities and budgetary constraints. Furthermore, the plan can be amended at any time, subject to community

engagement and adoption by Council, which enables projects to be added, amended or removed as the case may be. This allows for large unforeseen projects, such as solar farms, to be accommodated into the plan as increased contributions income to fund a new or amended schedule of works.

A range of planning instruments were used to inform the review and amendment of the Plan including, the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021, the Environmental Planning and Assessment (Development Certification and Fires Safety) Regulation 2021, Draft Department of Planning and Environment Practice Note for Section 7.12 Levies (Dec 2023), and the Richmond Valley Growth Management Strategy.

## **CONSULTATION**

The Draft Plan will be placed on public exhibition and seek input from the community and other key stakeholders.

The Draft Plan must be exhibited for a minimum of 28 days, in accordance with Council's Community Participation Plan. As set out in Clause 4.3(3) of the Community Participation Plan, the following community engagement strategies will be used:

- Published Notice on Council's website (including digital copy of the Draft Plan);
- Social Media post; and
- Display Notices in Council's Customer Experience Centres including paper copies of the Draft Plan.

## **CONCLUSION**

A review of Council's Section 94A Contributions Plan has been undertaken, resulting in amendments and the production of the *Draft Richmond Valley Council Section 7.12 Contributions Plan (As Amended)*. It is proposed to place the Draft Plan on public exhibition for a minimum of 28 days. Following consideration of any written submissions, a post exhibition report will be presented to Council seeking the adoption of an amended 7.12 Contributions Plan.

This report seeks Council's endorsement to exhibit the draft plan for public feedback.

## **ATTACHMENT(S)**

- 1. Section 7.12 Contributions Plan (under separate cover)**

**16 PROJECTS & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

Nil

## 17 ORGANISATIONAL SERVICES

### 17.1 FINANCIAL ANALYSIS REPORT - MARCH 2024

**Director:** Ryan Gaiter

**Responsible Officer:** Rylee Vidler

#### 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 March 2024 is shown below:

Bank Accounts	Term Deposits	Floating Rate Notes	Fixed Rate Bonds	TCorp IM Funds	Total
\$15,223,353	\$30,000,000	\$6,750,390	\$4,500,000	\$16,551,294	\$73,025,037

The weighted average rate of return on Council's cash and investments at 31 March 2024 was 7.69% which was above the Bloomberg AusBond Bank Bill Index for March of 0.37%, which is Council's benchmark.

#### RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopts the Financial Analysis Report detailing the performance of its cash and investments for the month of March 2024.

#### DELIVERY PROGRAM LINKS

Objective 11: Manage resources responsibly

11A Manage finances responsibly and provide value for money

11A1 Undertake long-term financial planning and ensure compliance with financial regulation

#### BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

As at 31 March 2024, Council has earned \$2,303,100 in interest, \$19,020 in fair value gains from fixed rate bonds and \$1,213,970 in fair value gains from funds held in TCorp, for a total investment income of \$3,536,090. This equates to 260.99% of the annual budget for interest and investment income of \$1,354,861. Council currently receives a net return of 4.70% on its Macquarie CMA Account after Council's financial advisors receive their commission of 0.05%. Commissions for the 2023/2024 financial year to 31 March total \$2,049.

Future fair value gains or losses will continue to be monitored and reported to Council.

#### REPORT

##### Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) Cash Rate Update

The RBA held the cash rate to 4.35% per annum at its March meeting.

##### Rate of Return

The weighted average rate of return on cash and investments in March was 7.69%, an increase in 58 basis points from the previous month. The rate of return is 732 basis points above the Bloomberg AusBond Bank Bill Index of 0.37% which is Council's benchmark.

Council's NSW Treasury Corporation IM Funds returned net gains of \$231,682 during the month of March. The Medium-Term Growth Fund (MTGF) returned a gain of \$160,396 and the Long-Term Growth Fund (LTGF) returned a gain of \$71,286.

During March, bond yields fell, and equity markets rose further as investors became more confident that central banks will start cutting rates soon. Australia's economy remains weak, growing only 0.2% in the December 2023 quarter.

The MTGF has a recommended investment timeframe of seven or more years (original investment was October 2018) and the LTGF has a recommended investment timeframe of 10 or more years (original investment was June 2021) during which time it is expected that there will be ups and downs in fair value gains. However, it should be noted that, despite the variation in returns, there has been no impact on the principal sum originally invested by Council.

Term deposits and floating rate notes continue to offer increasing rates of return, which is positive, however, some banking institutions are still limiting the number of deposits they will accept, and others are not accepting any deposits at present.

### Council's Cash and Investments Portfolio

Council held cash and investments of \$73,025,037 at 31 March 2024. This was made up of Council's Business Online Saver Account (\$4,530,000), Macquarie Cash Management Account (\$8,028,459), Term Deposits (\$30,000,000), Floating Rate Notes (\$6,750,390), Bonds (\$4,500,000), NSW Treasury Corporation Investments (\$16,551,294) and other bank accounts (\$2,664,894).

Council's investment portfolio had maturity dates ranging from same day up to 1,742 days. Term deposits, floating rate notes and bonds of \$41,250,390 represented 56.50% of the total portfolio as at 31 March 2024.

Council made the following new investments during March 2024:

Banking Institution	Investment Type	Environmentally Sustainable Investment	Amount Invested	Investment Term	Interest Rate
Southern Cross Credit Union	Term Deposit	Y	\$2,000,000	3 months	5.05%
Illawarra Credit Union	Term Deposit	Y	\$2,000,000	3 months	5.10%
Auswide Bank	Floating Rate Note	Y	\$1,500,000	36 months	3m BBSW +1.60%
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$5,500,000</b>		

Council had the following investment maturities during the month of March 2024:

Banking Institution	Investment Type	Environmentally Sustainable Investment	Amount Invested	Interest Earned
Southern Cross Credit Union	Term Deposit	Y	\$2,000,000	\$25,679
Illawarra Credit Union	Term Deposit	Y	\$2,000,000	\$25,679
Southern Cross Credit Union	Term Deposit	Y	\$2,000,000	\$26,178
Auswide Bank	Floating Rate Note	Y	\$1,500,000	\$119,492*
Auswide Bank	Term Deposit	Y	\$2,000,000	\$34,192
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$9,500,000</b>	<b>\$231,221</b>



\*Total interest earned across the life of the investment. Interest was paid quarterly whilst held.

Council had \$16,532,305 in longer term investments being the MTGF and LTGF held with NSW Treasury Corporation as at 31 March 2024. The investment values and fair value returns are shown below:

Investment Holding	Fair Value 31 March 24	Fair Value Gain/(Loss) at 31 March 24	Fair Value Gain/(Loss) YTD	Fair Value Gain/(Loss) Life of Investment
Medium Term Growth Fund	\$13,118,503	\$160,396	\$871,486	\$2,113,474
Long Term Growth Fund	\$3,432,791	\$71,286	\$342,484	\$432,791
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$16,551,294</b>	<b>\$231,682</b>	<b>\$1,213,970</b>	<b>\$2,546,265</b>

### Environmentally Sustainable Investments (ESI's)

Council's cash and investments portfolio of \$73,025,037, at 31 March 2024 includes \$38,801,294 or 53.1% with no direct investment in the fossil fuel industry.

These percentages include Council's investments with NSW Treasury Corporation and Northern Territory Treasury Corporation.

NSW Treasury Corporation has a stewardship approach to ESIs which focuses on managing environmental, social and governance (ESG) risks and opportunities, particularly climate change which is expected to impact portfolios over the long term. The stewardship policy states NSW Treasury Corporation believes incorporating these principles into investment decisions results in better risk-adjusted financial outcomes. Even though NSW Treasury Corporation takes this stewardship approach, its monthly reporting only highlights the different asset classes, not individual investments, and the level of investment in the fossil fuel industry.

Northern Territory Treasury Corporation utilises funds to assist with its infrastructure requirements such as housing, transport, health, and education services. While no statement has been provided on its investment strategy, it has been assumed that providing funding towards its own infrastructure will not involve direct investment in the fossil fuel industry.

### CONCLUSION

During the month of March 2024, Council's investments have been made in accordance with the Act, the Regulations and Council's Investment Policy.

As at 31 March 2024 Council's cash and investments totalled \$73,025,037 with \$15,223,353 of this being funds held in bank accounts. The weighted average rate of return was 7.69% and total investment revenue equals 260.99% of budgeted revenue for the year to 31 March 2024.

### ATTACHMENT(S)

- RVC Investment Pack - March 2024 (under separate cover)**

**18 GENERAL BUSINESS**

Nil

**19 MATTERS FOR INFORMATION****RECOMMENDATION**

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

**19.1 DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS DETERMINED UNDER THE ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT ACT FOR THE PERIOD 1 MARCH 2024 - 31 MARCH 2024**

**Director:** Angela Jones

**Responsible Officer:** Andy Edwards

**RECOMMENDATION**

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

**REPORT**

This report provides a summary of development activity on a monthly basis. All Development Applications determined in the month are outlined in this report, including Section 4.55 approvals, applications which were refused and withdrawn, and applications with no development value, such as subdivisions.

Council receives a fortnightly summary of the status of applications (including all received) and notifications of all determinations of Development Applications are included in the Community Newsletter on a monthly basis.

The total number of Development Applications and Complying Development Applications determined within the Local Government area for the period 1 March 2024 to 31 March 2024 was sixteen (16), applications with a total value of \$5,158,021.80.

The graph below shows the number of development applications processed by Council over five financial years.

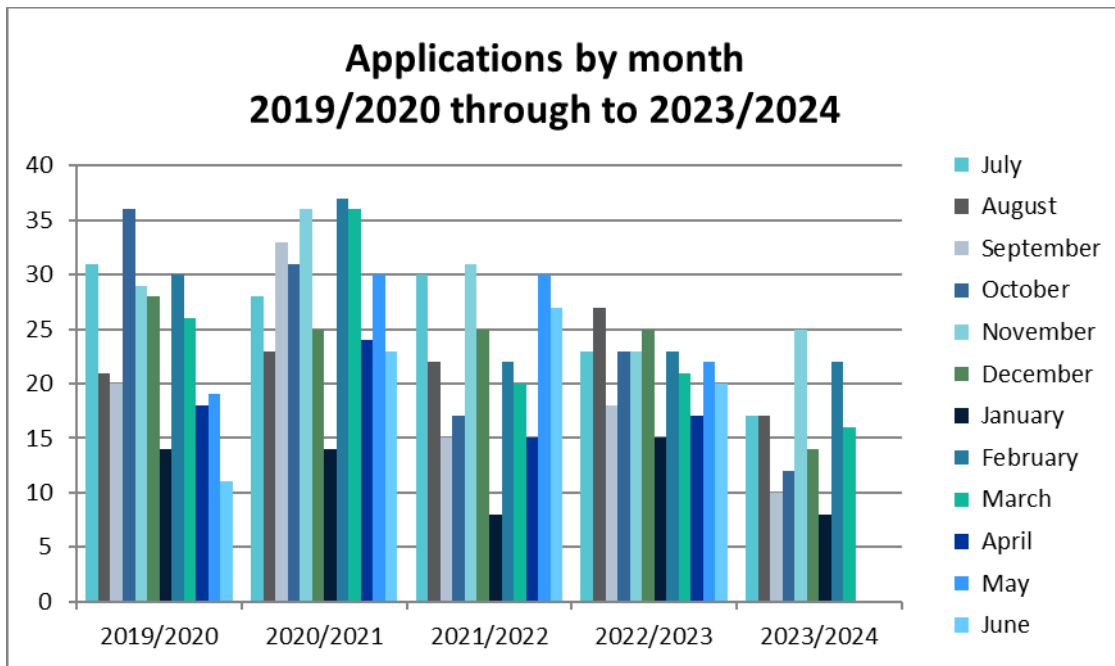


Figure 1: Monthly number of development applications and CDC's processed by Council over five financial years.

Figure 2 provides the annual value of Development Consents including CDC's issued by Council over five financial years and Figure 3 provides a detailed review of the value for the reporting month of March 2024.

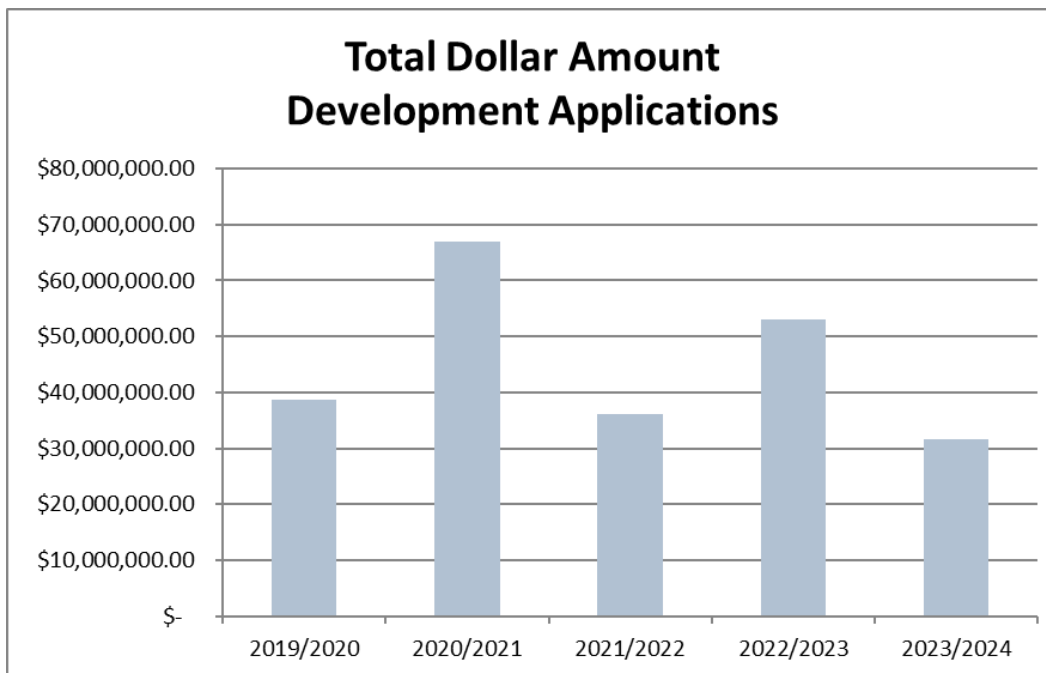


Figure 2: Annual value of development

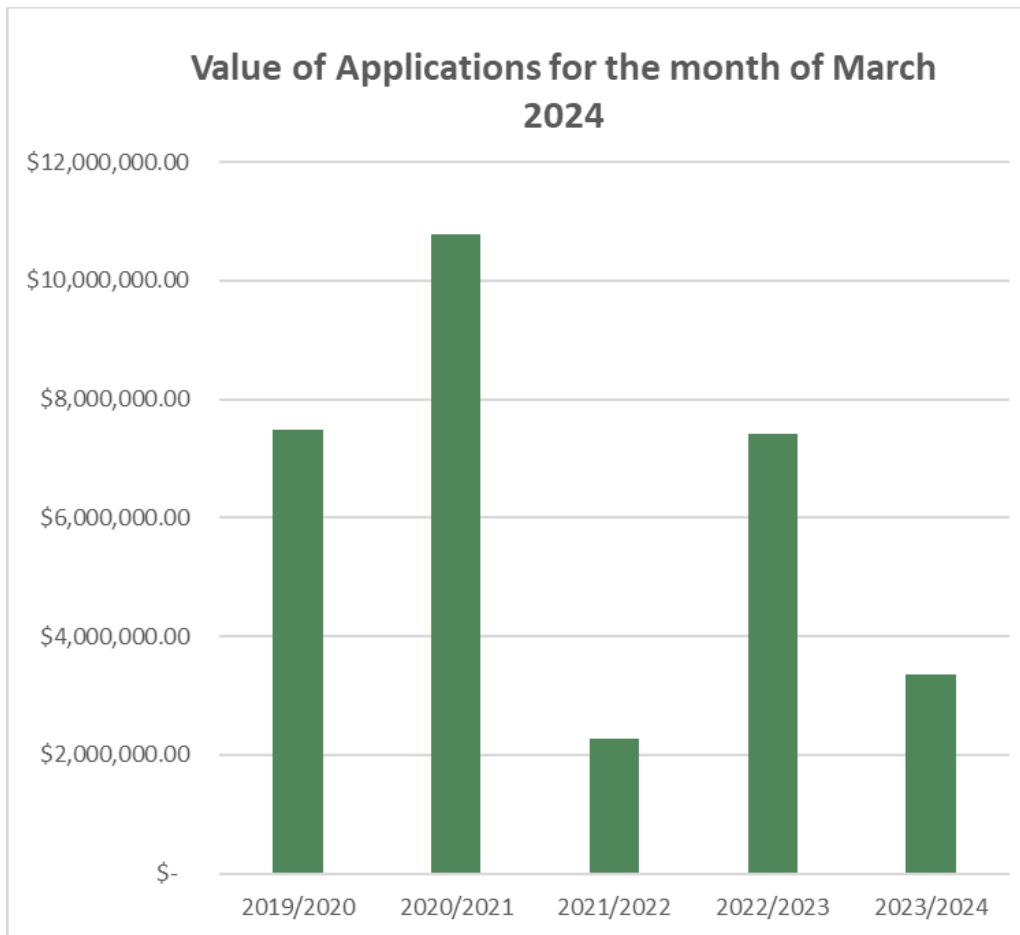


Figure 3: Value of development for the month of March 2024

**Number of Development Applications**

The number of applications received by Council does not necessarily reflect the value of developments, as single large developments can be equivalent in value to a large number of more standard type developments such as sheds, dwellings and small commercial developments.

Figures 4 and 5 detail the number of applications determined by Council over the past five years.

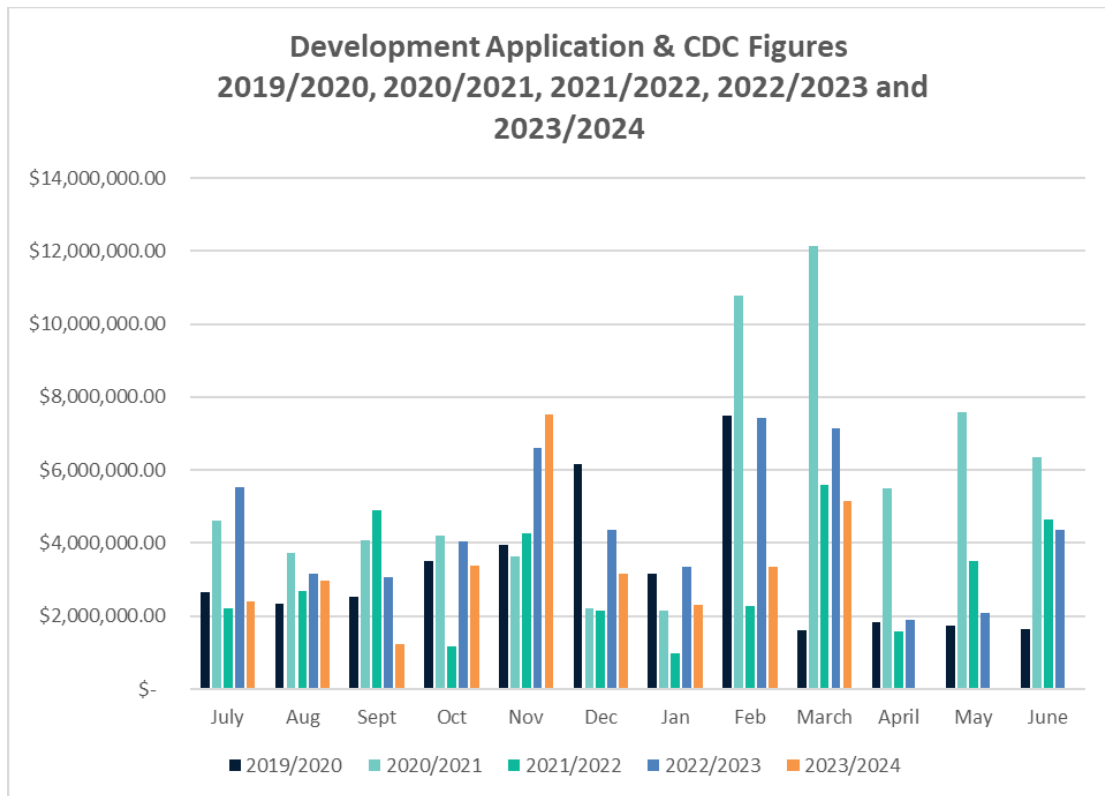


Figure 4: Value of development applications per month over five financial years.

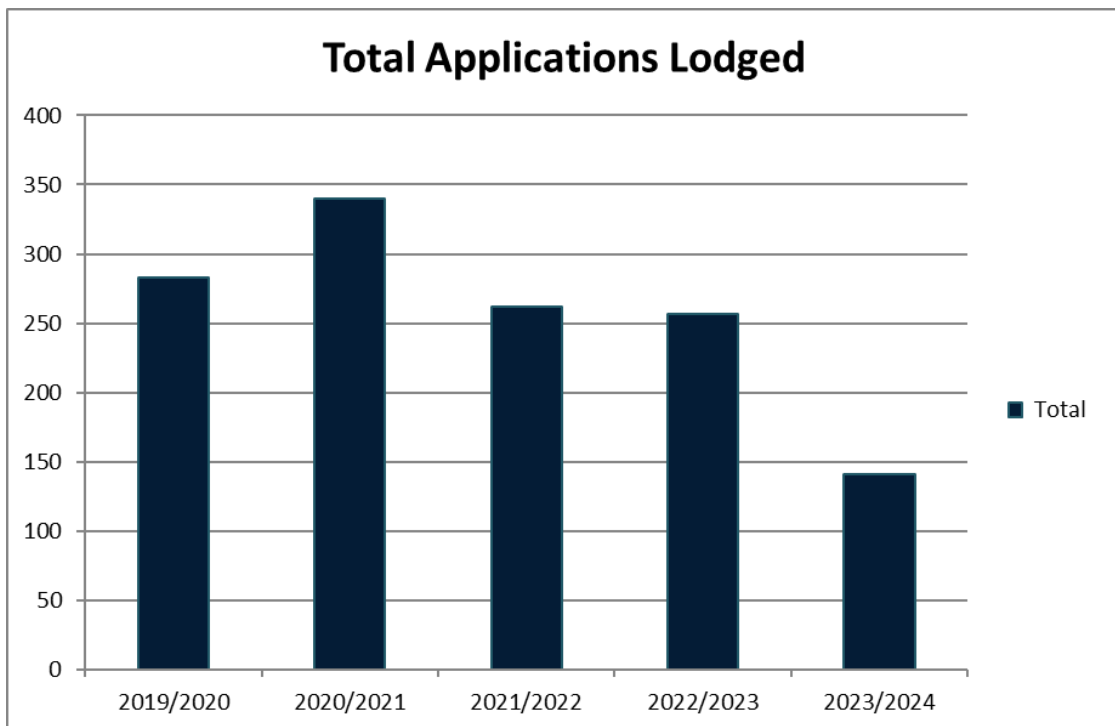


Figure 5: Number of Development Applications & CDC's per annum over five financial years

**Activity for the month of March 2024**

General Approvals (excluding Subdivisions, Section 4.55)	10
Section 4.55 amendments to original consent	2
Subdivision	3
Refused	0
Rejected	0
Withdrawn	0
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS DETERMINED (Excluding withdrawn applications)</b>	<b>15</b>
Complying Development (Council Approved)	1
Complying Development (Private Certifier Approved)	0
<b>Average assessment days for applications determined in March 2024 (Planning &amp; Building Combined)</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>No. of Integrated development applications determined in March 2024</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>No. of Designated development applications determined in March 2024</b>	<b>0</b>

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

Nil

Summary of Development Applications determined under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act for the period 1 March 2024 to 31 March 2024								
Application ID	Applicant	Owners	Location	Development	Date Received (in Portal)	Date Accepted (In Portal)	Determination Date	Estimated Cost
DA2022/0233	Newton Denny Chapelle	D W Bennett	75 Gregors Road, Spring Grove	Development consent is sought to undertake a subdivision to create 19 lots with associated roadworks including the intersection of Gregors and Spring Grove Roads, civil works, and vegetation removal	2/06/2022	14/06/2022	26/03/2024	\$2,154,440.00
DA2024/0018	Newton Denny Chapelle	Koker Investments Pty Ltd	7A Bruton Street, Casino	Residential subdivision to create fourteen (14) lots including associated civil works and vegetation removal	27/07/2023	28/07/2023	7/03/2024	\$0.00
DA2024/0069	Newton Denny Chapelle	J A & K A Dougherty	25 Gregors Road, Spring Grove	Proposed Torrens Title subdivision to create two (2) lots with associated variation to Clause 4.6 of RVLEP	27/11/2023	30/11/2023	5/03/2024	\$0.00
DA2024/0072	The Shed Company	P D McDonald	6 Union Street, Coraki	Colorbond Shed 5m x 12.5m including a variation request to the DCP in regard to the total gross floor area	30/11/2023	1/12/2023	22/03/2024	\$28,500.00
MA2024/0001	Newton Denny Chapelle	Pevara Pty Ltd	68 Centre Street, Casino	**S4.55(1A)**Proposed extension to building footprint including changes to approved floor layout (smoking area, gaming room, TAB, bar & cool room, kitchen, office and bathroom areas).	13/12/2023	22/12/2023	14/03/2024	\$1,588,021.80
DA2024/0082	J D Larcombe	J D & C F Larcombe	32 Barker Street, Casino	Construction of a freestanding single story lightweight double garage and concrete driveway connecting to the existing driveway.	17/12/2023	4/01/2024	7/03/2024	\$13,950.00
DA2024/0088	Newton Denny Chapelle	Kidzco Australia Pty Ltd	1 Teak Street Casino & 22 Short Street, Casino	Change of use from a dwelling to a childcare centre at 1 Teak Steet and increase in the number of student places at the existing childcare centre at 22 Short Street. The application is inclusive of alterations and additions to the existing building located on 1 Teak Street, provision of eight (8) parking spaces, demolition of an existing inground swimming pool, vegetation management works, and associated landscaping and civil works	9/01/2024	17/01/2024	21/03/2024	\$350,000.00
MA2024/0003	J A Bowles	J A Bowles	16 Parkes Street, Coraki	**S4.55(1A) Modification** to DA2023/0015 - Alter the previously approved master bedroom addition to reduce the GFA of the master bedroom from 49m2 to 30m2 (including removal of Ensuite).	25/01/2024	30/01/2024	12/03/2024	\$42,906.00
DA2024/0100	Hayes Building Consultancy	K A & A M Powell	6 Coral Street, Evans Head	Demolition of an existing outdoor covered area and the addition of a new outdoor entertaining area to the existing residence and associated works	31/01/2024	5/02/2024	8/03/2024	\$45,700.00
DA2024/0101	Newton Denny Chapelle	J A & J A Courtney	127 Savilles Road, North Casino	Construction of a dwelling	31/01/2024	13/02/2024	22/03/2024	\$344,850.00
DA2024/0106	R J Hayes	D P Sly	66 Woodburn Street, Evans Head	Demolition of existing carport, additions and renovations to the existing lockable shed including a toilet and request for variation to the DCP with regard to the maximum building footprint.	13/02/2024	19/02/2024	25/03/2024	\$45,100.00



Summary of Development Applications determined under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act for the period 1 March 2024 to 31 March 2024								
Application ID	Applicant	Owners	Location	Development	Date Received (in Portal)	Date Accepted (In Portal)	Determination Date	Estimated Cost
DA2024/0116	R J Hayes	Mid Richmond Neighbourhood Centre Inc	4/2 Oak Street, Evans Head	Change of use for an existing building that was used as a retail clothes shop. This proposal intends to change the use to offices and meeting rooms and includes the installation of partition walls, doors and storage cupboards	22/02/2024	12/03/2024	26/03/2024	\$7,480.00
DA2024/0121	The Shed Company	D M & P E Barrett	1 Ocean Street, Evans Head	9.5m x 9.5m Colorbond Shed	5/03/2024	12/03/2024	27/03/2024	\$45,325.00
DA2024/0062	E J Lohman	G R & G McLean	4 Sunset Place, Casino	Construction of a flyover roof and outdoor area with a concrete slab under insulated roof panels	9/11/2023	21/11/2023	12/03/2024	\$15,000.00
Summary of Council Certified Complying Development Applications determined under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act for the period 1 March 2024 to 31 March 2024								
Application ID	Applicant	Owners	Location	Development	Date Received (in Portal)	Date Accepted (In Portal)	Determination Date	Estimated Cost
CDC2024/0020	R J Hayes	K M & F Giacobetti	46 Cherry Street, Evans Head	Demolition of existing buildings and clean up site	20/02/2024		11/03/2024	\$45,000.00
Summary of Flood Affected Development Applications determined under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act for the period 1 March 2024 to 31 March 2024								
Application ID	Applicant	Owners	Location	Development	Date Received (in Portal)	Date Accepted (In Portal)	Determination Date	Estimated Cost
DA2024/0083	Newton Denny Chapelle	NSW Sugar Milling Cooperative	117 Baraang Drive, Broadwater	Installation of a molasses tank to replace flood damaged tank.	18/12/2023	3/01/2024	7/03/2024	\$364,429.00
Summary of Privately Certified Applications determined under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act for the period 1 March 2024 to 31 March 2024								
Application ID	Applicant	Owners	Location	Development	Date Submitted to Council for Registration	Date Accepted	Determination Date	Estimated Cost
Nil								

Summary of Development Applications determined under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act with a Clause 4.6 Variation for the period 1 March 2024 to 31 March 2024								
Application ID	Applicant	Owners	Location	Development	Date Received (in Portal)	Date Accepted (In Portal)	Determination Date	Estimated Cost
Nil								
Summary of Development Applications Refused under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act for the period 1 March 2024 to 31 March 2024								
Application ID	Applicant	Owners	Location	Development	Date Received (in Portal)	Date Accepted (In Portal)	Determination Date	Estimated Cost
Nil								
Summary of Development Applications Deferred Commencement under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act for the period 1 March 2024 to 31 March 2024								
Application ID	Applicant	Owners	Location	Development	Date Received (in Portal)	Date Accepted (In Portal)	Determination Date	Estimated Cost

**19.2 CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE REPORT 1 JANUARY - 31 MARCH 2024**

**Director:** Angela Jones

**Responsible Officer:** Sharon Banning

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council receives and notes the Customer Experience Report for the period 1 January – 31 March 2024.

Council is committed to providing a high-level of customer service to the community. The Customer Service Charter and Standards were adopted by Council at the 25 June 2019 meeting and reviewed at the 19 April 2022 meeting. As a result, quarterly reporting on Council's performance against the Customer Service Standards is prepared and tabled for Council. This report also contains details on the resolution of customer requests made through the contact centre. Analysis is undertaken to determine what strategies or areas of improvement may be required.

**REPORT**

**Customer Service Contact Centre Data - Key Statistics**

**Call Statistics**

A total of 8732 calls were handled by the contact centre team during the reporting period, which is a 9.7 percent decrease for the same period of the previous year, and a 26.2 percent decrease on the previous quarter's volumes. The contact centre has exceeded all service targets for the reporting period, including 84.74 percent of calls answered within industry standard of 20 seconds, average time each caller spends in the queue is 19 seconds and the percentage rate for calls abandoned is less than one percent and average call time 3.15 minutes.

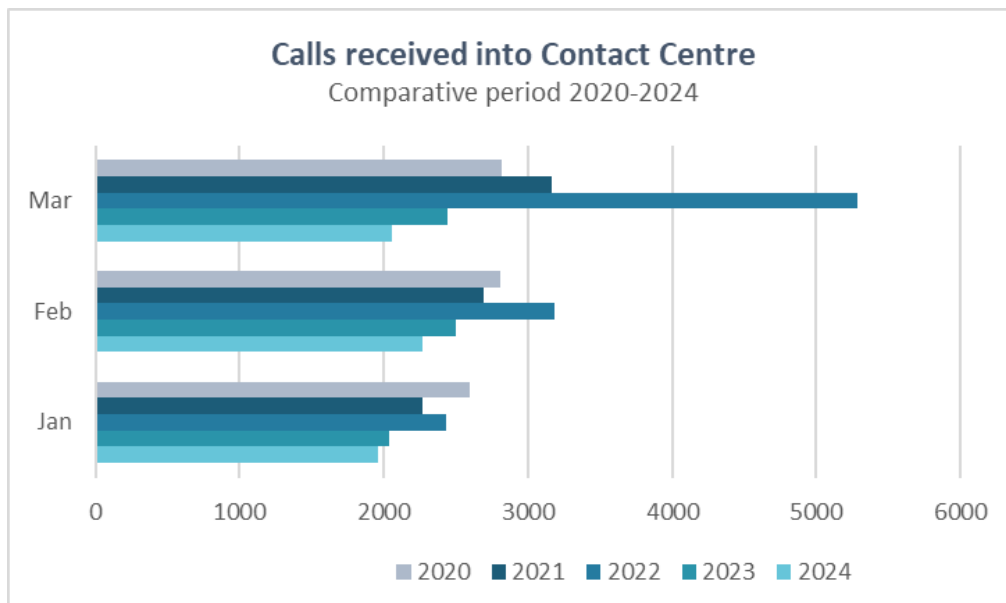


Figure 1: Calls received into the call centre, comparison year on year

**Receipt and Administration Statistics**

A total of 2738 receipts were processed for the reporting period, a .77 percent increase for the same period the previous year. February saw an increase in the number of receipts processed, which can be attributed to the rates instalment period.

Customer preferred payment methods are as follows: 57% EFTPOS, 27% as cash payments, 7% by cheque, and the remaining 10% were paid via direct bank transfer.

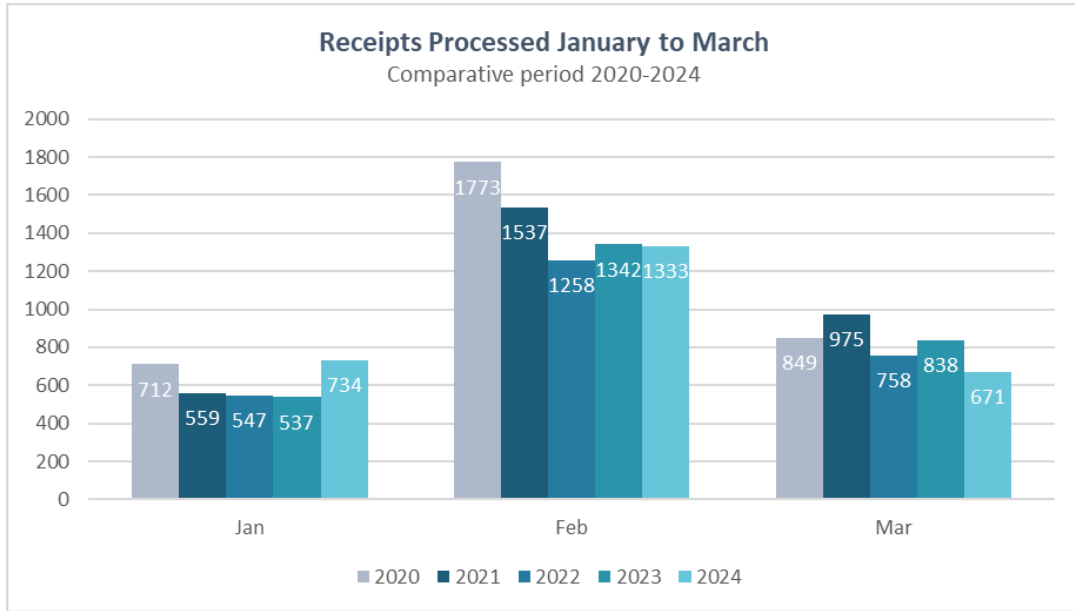


Figure 2: Total number of receipts

**Certificates and Customer Requests**

97.4 percent of Section 735A, 10.7 and 603 certificates were completed within set timeframes in accordance with Council’s service standards. Of the certificate applications received, 61.5 percent were 10.7 planning certificates, 26.8 percent 603 rates certificates and 44.5% were outstanding notice searches. Real estate enquiries have resumed with a 32% increase in requests for 10.7 certificate searches, when compared to the last quarter of 2023.

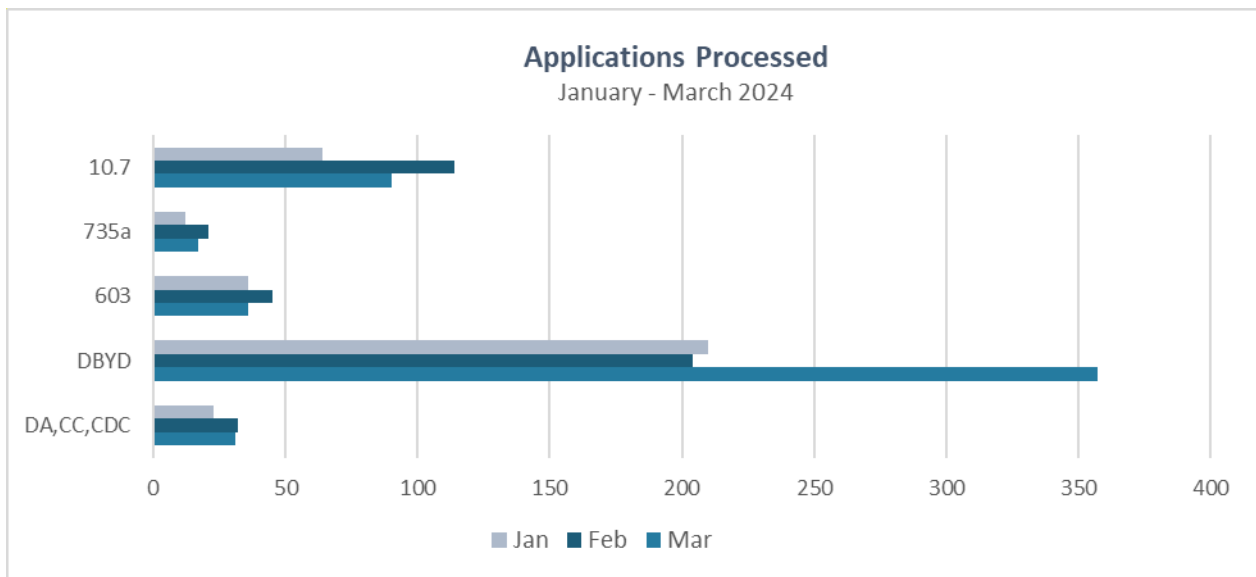


Figure 3. Applications received

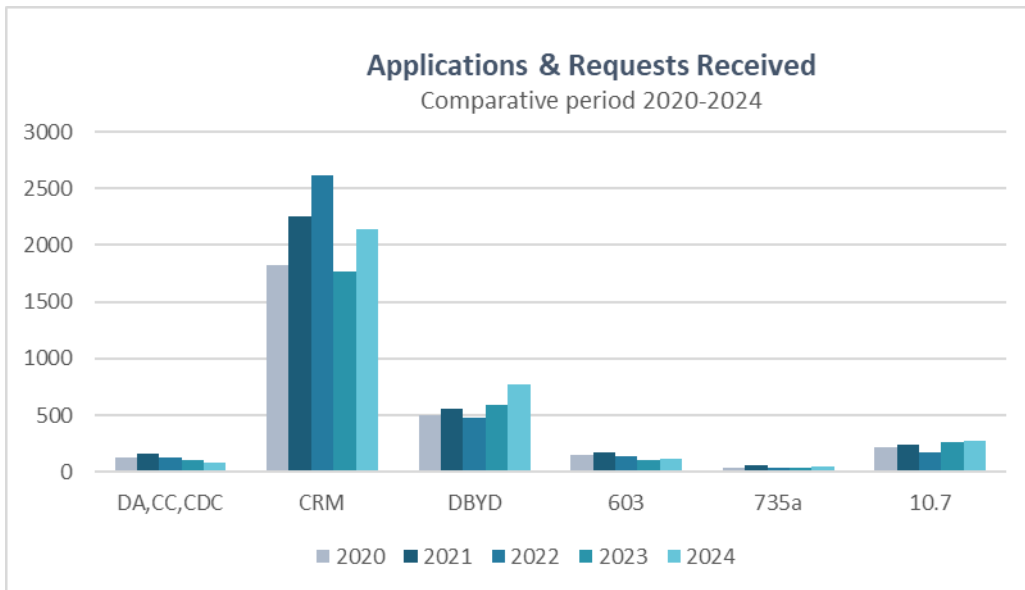


Figure 4. Applications comparison

**Customer Request Management System - Key Statistics**

During the reporting period, 2150 new requests were logged, a significant increase of 62% compared to the previous quarter and 21.0% increase on the same reporting period of the previous year. February saw an increase in water / sewer CRMS due to Revenue Department monitoring households registering zero water consumption. The majority of the properties have been flood affected and require investigation by the water meter reading team to ascertain if the water meter was damaged and is faulty or if the property is still unoccupied.

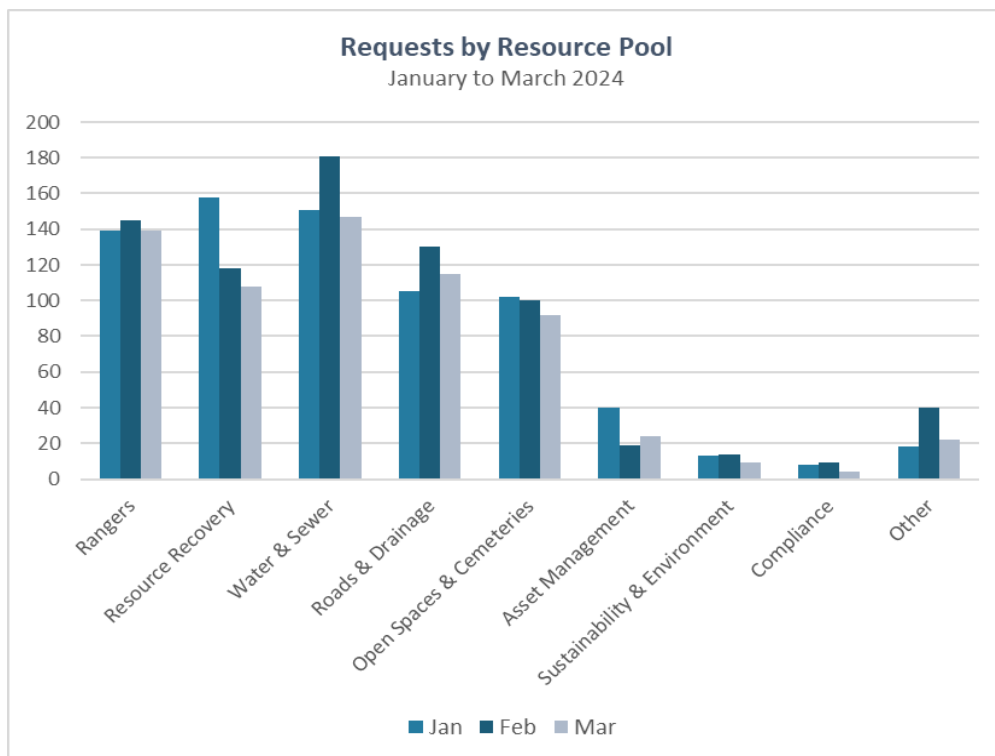


Figure 5: Number of requests

**Development Concierge**

The development concierge fielded 256 enquiries during the reporting period, the majority of the enquiry relating to alterations and additions including dwelling extensions and swimming pools installation. Increase enquiries of new sheds construction, with a focus on maximum build size permissible for the lot.

A common line of enquiry is the documentation required to submit a development application and the process to lodge via the NSW planning portal. Customers are supported with a prompt return phone call and follow-up step-by-step email and link to our website providing the customer with a library of comprehensive information sheets and required forms specific to their proposed development type. Customers are offered ongoing support during the application process.

The development section of the website continues to be reviewed, the most recent updates include essential fire safety measures and driveway guidelines and specifications.

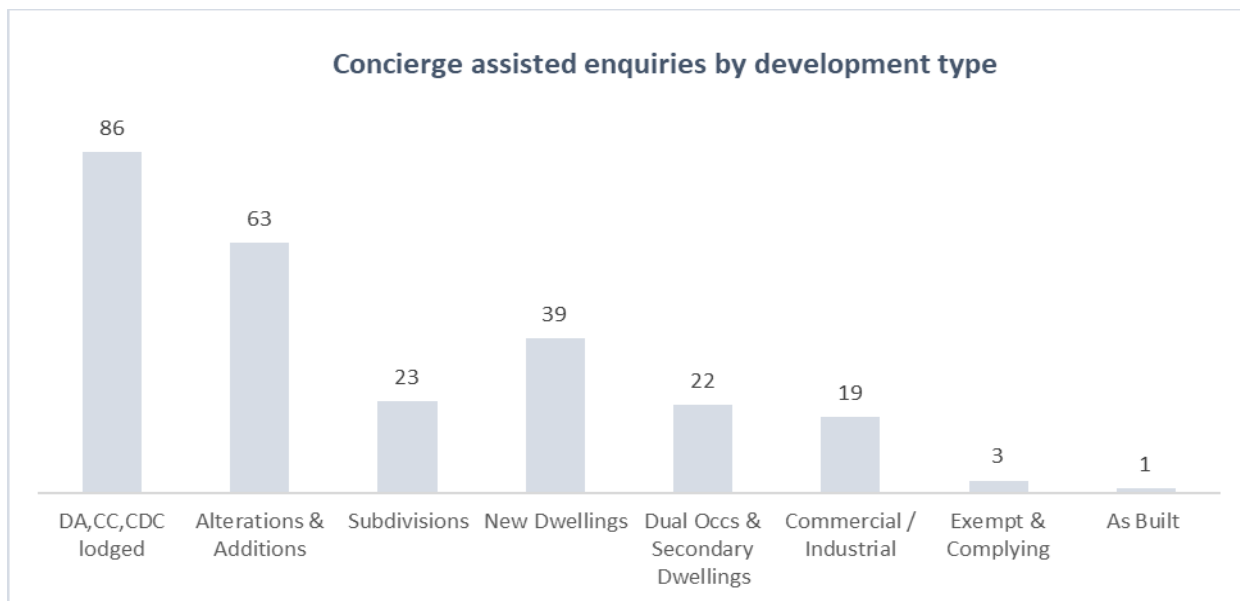


Figure 6: Concierge enquiries by type

**e-Planning Portal – Key Statistics**

Council Summary											
Development Applications (DAs, Mods & Reviews)											Last Refreshed Date
											30/03/2024
	57	46	32	14	76	31	\$8M	7	59		
	Submitted	Lodged	Determined	Avg Days to Lodge	Avg Days to Determine	Approved	Cost of Dev Approved	Dwellings <sup>†</sup> Approved	Under Assessment (*)		
OLG Classification	Submitted	Lodged	Avg Days to Lodge	Determined	Avg Days to Determine	Median Days to Determine	Approved	Cost of Development Approved	Dwellings <sup>†</sup> Approved	Applications Under Assessment	Dwellings <sup>†</sup> Under Assessment
Regional City Councils	57	46	14	32	76	64	31	\$8,263,995	7	59	35
RICHMOND VALLEY COUNCIL	57	46	14	32	76	64	31	\$8,263,995	7	59	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>\$8,263,995</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>35</b>

Figure 7: RVC planning portal summary

Application Type	Totals	January	February	March
Total DA Received	57	18	21	18
Total CC Received	26	4	12	10
Complying Development	6	4	2	0
Subdivision Certificate	6	4	1	1
S138 - Road Reserve Activities	8	1	3	4
S68 - Plumbing Permits & Events	58	18	17	23
PC Appointment	17	7	5	5
Occupation Certificate	21	3	9	9
Building Certificate	5	1	2	2
Private Certificate	10	3	5	2

Figure 8: Applications received via the NSW Planning Portal

**OneRoad – Key Statistics**

Members of the Customer Experience team collaborate with Roads & Drainage, Events and Assets teams, as well as Emergency Services to ensure all scheduled and unplanned road incidents are entered through the One Road portal in a timely manner. Road users can be confident conditions and closures on Live Traffic app, are current and regularly updated and includes details of expected delays and provides alternate routes to minimise disruptions.

Richmond Valley Council has been recognised by the One Road Project Team as a key user consistently and effectively utilising the platform to its fullest capacity. RVC has been invited to participate in the testing of dashboard and reporting upgrades in the next phase of the OneRoad development.

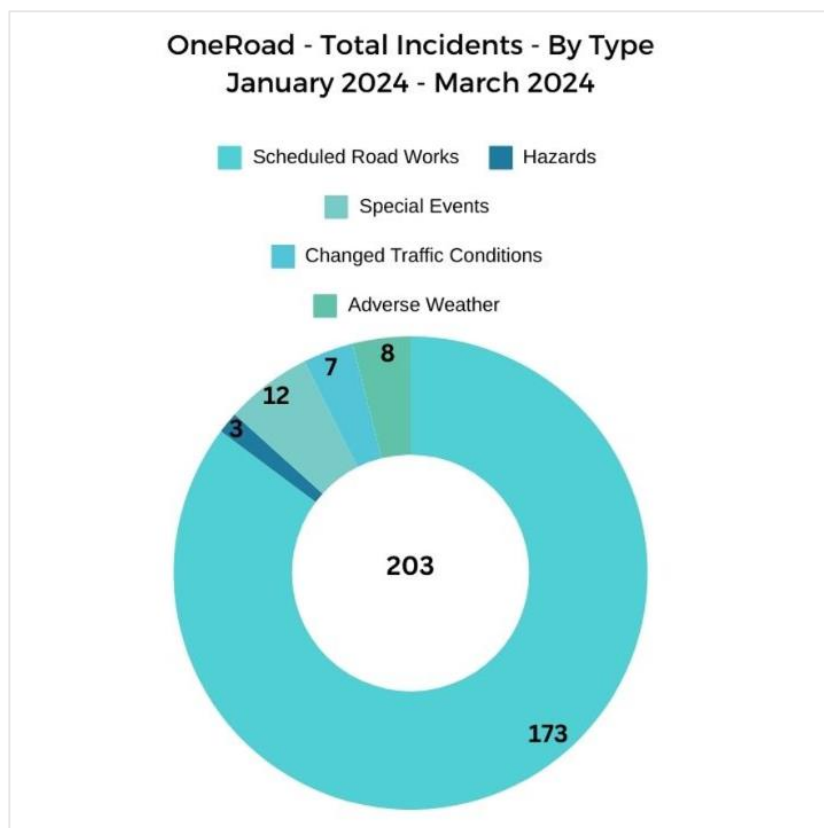


Figure 9: Total planned and unplanned road incidents recorded

**Opportunities for Improvement**

Following a review of the report results, an opportunity for improvement has been identified. These areas as highlighted below will be the focus of the Customer Experience team in the coming months.

- Continue to work closely with customers lodging applications via the e-planning portal to ensure submission to lodgement timeframes are maintained to required standards.
- Continue to review and update public access (web) information guides and factsheets to ensure their relevance and accuracy.
- Work with operational teams to review service level targets and monitor outcomes and adjust as required.

**CONCLUSION**

The information contained in this report demonstrates the significant volume of tasks and actions which are required to be completed by Council's frontline Customer Experience staff. The Customer Service Standards are met and, more often than not, exceeded.

Analysis of Customer Service Contact Centre data, Customer Request Management System and the Development Concierge statistics enables identification of opportunities to improve Council's customer service and ensure processes are efficient and effective.

In accordance with Council's Customer Service Framework, staff continue to strive for high standards of customer service to the community, to monitor performance and implement efficiencies and improvements to process.

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

**Nil**



**19.3 GRANT APPLICATION INFORMATION REPORT - MARCH 2024**

**Director:** Ryan Gaiter

**Responsible Officer:** Rylee Vidler

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council receives and notes the Grant Application Information Report for the month of March 2024.

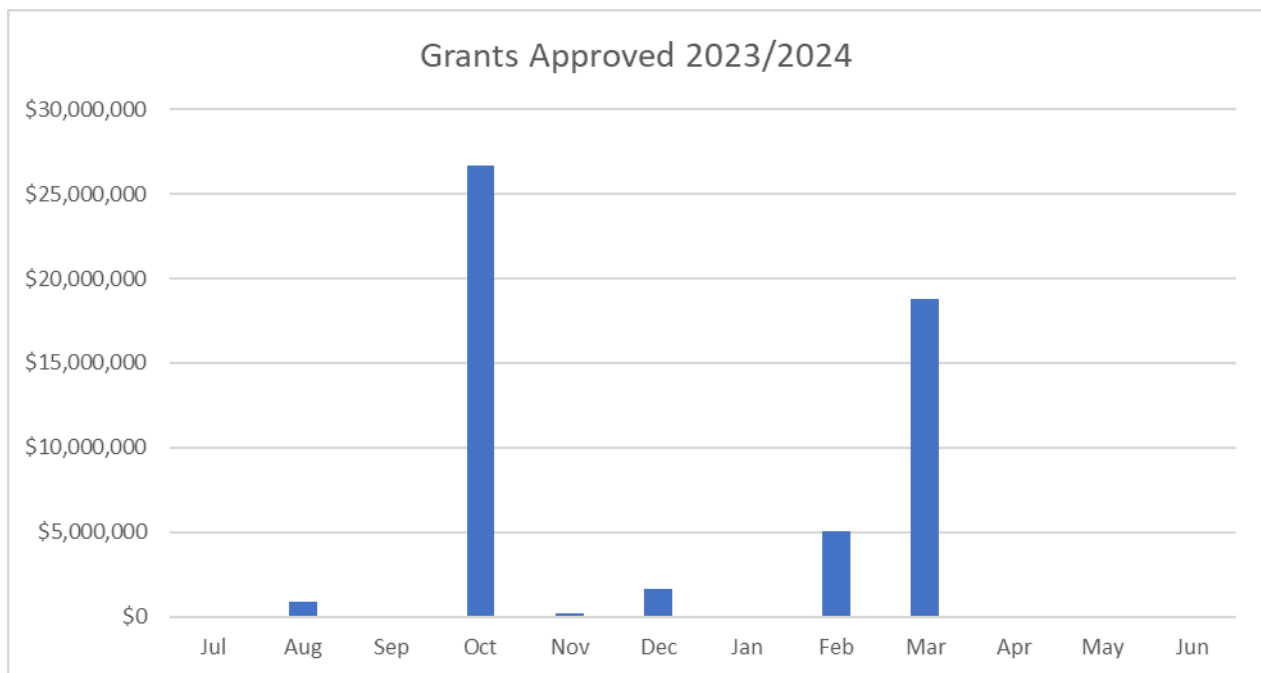
**REPORT**

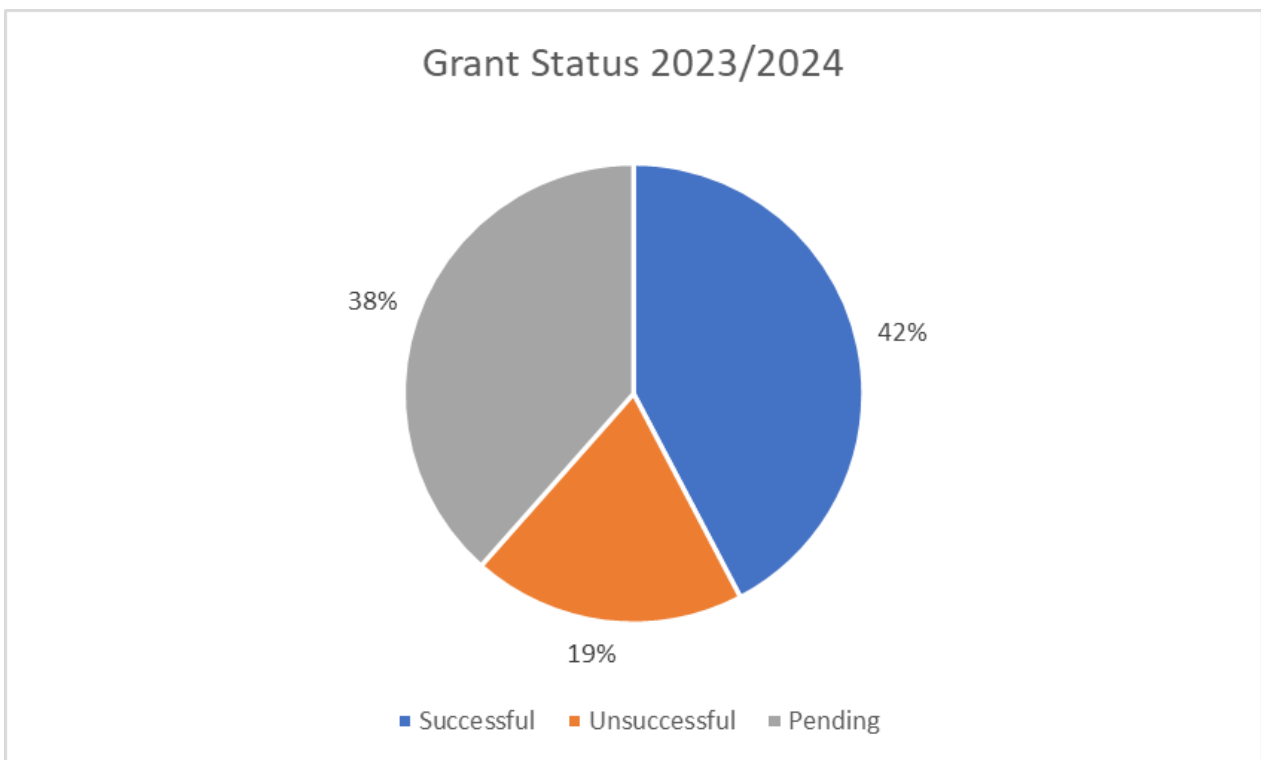
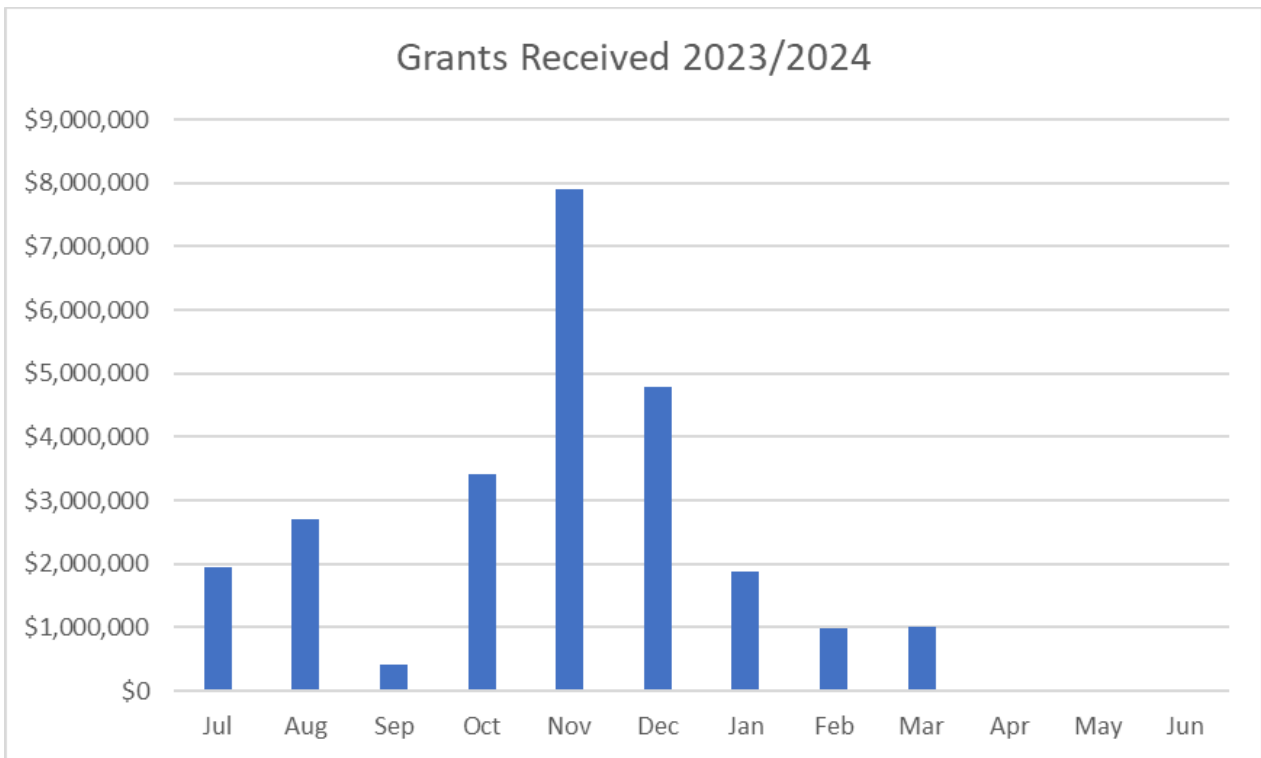
This report provides information on grant applications that have been approved, grants that have been received, grant applications that were unsuccessful and grant applications that were submitted for the month of March 2024.

During the reporting period, there were two grants approved and one submission made. Council was not notified of any unsuccessful grant applications.

Council received funding for five grants totalling \$1,011,258.

A summary of grants approved and received, as well as the status of applications for the current financial year to 31 March 2024 is shown below:





**Grants that have been approved**

Project Name	Funding Body	Funding Name	Project Value	Grant Funding	Council Funding	Application Submitted	Date Approved
NSW Severe Weather and Flooding from 22 February onwards - AGRN 1012 EPAR Works	Transport for NSW (State)	Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA)	\$21,094,844	\$21,094,844	\$ -	N/A	Various
<p>Comment: Council has been approved for the following new EPAR projects: Cassia St, Memorial Airport Dr, Currajong St, Cypress St, Evans Rd, Flame St, Fletts Ln, Upper Mongogorie Landslip, MR145 minor slip and Old Tenterfield Rd Causeway.            Note: This is a cumulative total for all EPAR projects approved, previously reported \$20,276,433. There are currently 23 EPAR submissions approved.</p>							
Tatham Bridge Raising	NSW Reconstruction Authority (State)	Emergency Response Fund - Northern Rivers Recovery and Resilience Program 2022-23	\$18,000,000	\$18,000,000	\$ -	N/A	22 March 2024
<p>Comment: This funding will be used to raise both Tatham Bridges to increase the flood resilience of the road, improve access during larger flood events and provide a better evacuation pathway from Coraki to Casino.</p>							

**Grant Applications Submitted**

Project Name	Funding Body	Funding Name	Project Value	Grant Funding	Council Funding	Application Submitted
Richmond Valley Regional Jobs Precinct	Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (Federal)	Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program - Stream One	\$ 5,571,694	\$5,000,000	\$ 571,694	5 March 2024
<p>Comment: If successful, this funding will allow Council to develop a concept design and pretender works for critical water and sewerage infrastructure to support the Regional Jobs Precinct and housing development.</p>						

**Grants that have been received**

Project Name	Funding Body	Funding Name	Project Value	Grant Funding	Council Funding	Application Submitted	Date Received	Total Received
Revitalisation of Community Playspace at Crawford Square Regional Park	Department of Regional NSW (State)	Stronger Country Communities Fund Round 4	\$ 398,963	\$ 248,963	\$ 150,000	24 June 2021	\$ 49,793 4 March 2024	\$ 248,963
Comment: Final 20% received for completed project.								
Roads to Recovery 2019/20 to 2023/24	Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications (Federal)	Roads to Recovery Program	\$ 5,011,072	\$ 5,011,072	\$ -	N/A - annual allocation of \$1,002,214	\$ 501,107 15 March 2024	\$ 4,509,966
Comment: First instalment for 2023/2024 financial year.								
Betterment of Woodburn Pony and Tennis Clubhouse	Regional NSW (State)	Community Assets Program	\$ 840,000	\$ 840,000	\$ -	27 March 2023	\$ 336,000 25 March 2024	\$ 336,000
Comment: Milestone 1 payment (execute funding deed)								
Betterment of Woodburn Memorial Hall Carpark	Regional NSW (State)	Community Assets Program	\$ 234,647	\$ 234,647	\$ -	27 March 2023	\$ 93,859 25 March 2024	\$ 93,859
Comment: Milestone 1 payment (execute funding deed)								
Broadwater Evans Head Road Shared Pathway (Design)	Transport for NSW (State)	Get NSW Active Program	\$ 172,000	\$ 122,000	\$ 50,000	28 February 2022	\$ 30,500 27 March 2024	\$ 122,000
Comment: Milestone Payment (Project Completion Report)								

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

**Nil**

**19.4 INFRASTRUCTURE RECONSTRUCTION UPDATE****Director:** Ben Zeller**Responsible Officer:** Kim Anderson**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council receives and notes the information provided in the Infrastructure Reconstruction Update.

**REPORT**

The natural disaster flood event of March 2022 caused damage to approximately 75% of the Richmond Valley's 1065km road network. Following the event, emergency and immediate reconstruction works were undertaken to restore road access for the community at a cost of \$15.36M. Funding is provided to Council for expenses incurred to complete works considered urgent, and essential to support immediate recovery of a community. The table below provides the expenditure cost for the initial stages on the road network.

	Emergency Works (EW)	Immediate Reconstruction Works (IRW)
Local Roads	\$ 5,668,077	\$ 8,180,420
Urban Roads	\$ 185,972	\$ 40,748
Regional Roads	\$ 819,851	\$ 123,681
Crown Roads	\$ 83,693	\$ 258,344
<b>Total Spent</b>	<b>\$ 6,757,592</b>	<b>\$ 8,603,192</b>

The natural disaster restoration program transitioned to the essential public asset reconstruction (EPAR) working phase commencing 1 April 2023. This process involves activities to fully reconstruct an essential public asset to pre-disaster capacity and condition. This requires Council to submit estimated reconstruction costs for approval prior to the commencement of any physical works.

Transport for NSW (TfNSW) appointed industry consulting firm Indras in August 2023 to assess and evaluate existing disaster management processes performed by Council and to embed new processes to be followed for all future disaster events. This was a pilot program that is now gaining traction with other local Councils.

Managed under the Asset Systems and Planning Department of Council, the pilot program has dedicated a team of seven staff either full time or part time to work on a range of duties ensuring all repairs from disaster events are claimed. Administration processes are now in place that can be activated for all future events which help ensure the funding claimed is approved and we receive the best outcome for the Richmond Valley.

**Key Dates and Timelines relating to Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA):**

- EW were extended from 30 September 2022 to 31 December 2023.
- IRW expired on 31 December 2022.
- All IRW's were converted to EPARs by mid November 2022.
- The deadline for submission of EPARs has been extended from 31 December 2023 to 30 June 2024.

**Funds spent to date**

The table below identifies funds spent to date (as of 31 March 2024) on the reconstruction effort:

Emergency Works (EW)	Immediate Reconstruction Works (IRW)	Essential Public Asset Restoration (EPAR)	TOTAL
\$ 6,757,592	\$ 8,603,192	\$ 5,476,648	\$ 20,803,980

**Transport for NSW Applications and Claims**

Application Status	EPAR Projects
Number of claims in preparation phase	30
Number claims under assessment by TfNSW	21
Approved claims by TfNSW	24
Approved total value	\$ 21,236,135

The Infrastructure Recovery team is working on compiling submissions for the remaining claims whilst working with TfNSW during the assessment and approvals phase. These approvals are critical to the overall reconstruction effort to ensure there is sufficient time for project planning and design and to ensure there is a pipeline of works for contractors and Councils' Asset Delivery Teams to proceed with. At this stage, the estimate of the total cost of restoring and improving our road network will be approximately \$100m made up of EW, IRW, EPAR's and Betterment.

**Approved Projects Scheduling:**

Project	Details
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bentley Road Landslip,</li> <li>Upper Cherry Tree Road Landslip and</li> <li>Upper Mongogarie Road Landslip</li> </ul>	Scope of works is approved, tender being prepared for total upper limit approval for funding. Reports to be presented to Council prior to June 2024.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Naughtons Gap Road</li> </ul>	Claim approved, tender finalised, preferred contractor appointed, and works have commenced. Project due for completion December 2024.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spring Grove Road,</li> <li>Bentley Road pavement repairs</li> </ul>	Claim approved, works commenced. Pavement repairs due for completion by end of April.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manifold Road</li> </ul>	Works to commence early May 2024.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MR145 Shoulder repair,</li> <li>James Lane,</li> <li>Pickapene Slip,</li> <li>Evans Head footpath Ocean Street,</li> <li>Ainsworth Road</li> </ul>	Project completed, pending project closure for whole of life costings.

Council is undertaking the development of a delivery program for EPAR projects which is expected to have works scheduled until December 2025 across the whole network. Council has focused on providing efficiencies through incorporating the capital program, grant funding, and EPAR works with an aim to improve the overall road network. The delivery works will be completed using approved qualified suitable contractors as well as Councils internal roads and drainage staff.

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

Nil

**19.5 WASTE MANAGEMENT UPDATE****Director:** Ben Zeller**Responsible Officer:** Alasdair Lawrence**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council receives and notes the Waste Infrastructure Update.

**REPORT**

In anticipation of the impending closure of the Nammoona landfill Cell 4 in 2014, the design of a new landfill cell, Cell 5 was undertaken. Cell 5 was to be located to the north of Cells 1-4. The design for Cell 5 was abandoned in 2016 as the small footprint rendered the capital costs of void space prohibitive and recognised that the area would be better suited to future leachate management infrastructure.

As Cell 4 approached capacity, the remaining void space was set aside for asbestos and animal carcasses which are unsuitable for transport to other facilities. Residual waste was transported to Queensland for disposal due to the waste levy imposed being less than here in NSW. In recent years, this waste levy has been brought close to parity with NSW, rendering any cost advantage to waste transfer to Queensland minimal, particularly when transport costs are factored in. These arrangements have remained in place since this time.

In 2017 Council engaged Tonkin Consulting to prepare a design for Cell 6, including how Cell 6 would interface with Cells 1-4. Cell 6 has 250,000 m<sup>2</sup> of void space. Based on present waste volumes with consideration for future changes in waste disposal behaviour, population growth and CPI this would give Council over a decade of security for its residual waste disposal.

The commitment to the Cell 6 project was outlined in Council's Strategy for Resource Recovery and Waste Management 2020 – 2030. The Strategy set the guiding principles and actions for our Resource Recovery and Waste Management service. It ensures consistency with regional, state, and federal frameworks and Council's Community Strategic Plan. The strategy was adopted by Council in July 2020, following community consultation.

In August 2021 the Environment Protection Agency (EPA) approved the Cell 6 design and amended the Environment Protection Licence to allow construction to commence. In mid-2022, and after managing the immediate impacts of the flood event, industry leader Synergy was appointed as the construction contractor.

Construction commenced in April 2023 with the new leachate pond completed and approved for use by EPA in late 2023. The cell 6A earthworks, liner and leachate drainage system is now complete. Full construction completion is scheduled for mid-April 2024. Tonkin's Quality Assurance process will be carried out concurrently. Application will then be made to the EPA for final approval and licence amendment. The EPA process will take in the order of four weeks. Commissioning of Cell 6 will commence in mid-May. The final capital costs will be slightly over \$6 million.

The security of the cell liner and management of leachate requires that the whole floor be covered with a 2 metre 'lift' of waste. The first 'lift' based on current disposal rates is anticipated to take six months. Once this 'lift' is complete, Council then has a range of options for use of the remaining void space:

1. Continue to transport material to Queensland for disposal

As waste disposal options diminish, the value of void space will increase. This option enables 'banking' the void space to reduce Council's long term waste disposal risk and provides a future financial asset. This is countered by this being the most expensive option costing \$255 per tonne (including transport, void space, handling costs and levy).

2. Use the cell for waste collected by Council and from local contractors and residents



This was the basis of the original Cell 6 design. It provides Council with over a decade of waste disposal security. The development of new waste disposal capacity takes six to eight years, so this gives Council ample time to enact a longer-term waste disposal solution. The cost of this option is \$135 per tonne (including handling costs and levy). This is a saving of approximately \$1 million annually compared to current costs.

3. Sell void space to the market (open to stakeholders from Option 2 as well as neighbouring councils and contractors)

This gives Council the opportunity for an additional revenue stream, capitalising on the shortage of void space in the region. By taking 5,000 tonnes a year (at a price competitive with the cost of transport and disposal in Queensland), a profit of \$500k could be realised while diminishing the void space available to Council. This increases the urgency of enacting a longer-term waste disposal solution and puts Council at risk of not having future landfill capacity.

From both an immediate operational and longer-term strategic perspective, the approach outlined in Option 2 will provide the best outcome for Council and the residents of the Richmond Valley. A decision on this will be made when the initial cell lift is completed.

A full mid-term update of the Strategy for Resource Recovery and Waste Management 2020 – 2030 will be undertaken in 2025 and will include:

- updating the commissioning and operation of Cell 6 with a focus on disposal rates and estimates of remaining void space.
- responding to State targets for waste reduction and resource recovery.
- incorporating Circular Economy principles, ensuring that Council is taking all steps necessary to minimise the volume of residual material requiring disposal.
- outlining long term residual disposal options including future landfill site identification.

#### **ATTACHMENT(S)**

**Nil**

**20 QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Nil

**21 QUESTIONS FOR NEXT MEETING (IN WRITING)**

**22 MATTERS REFERRED TO CLOSED COUNCIL****RECOMMENDATION**

That Council considers the confidential report(s) listed below in a meeting closed to the public in accordance with Section 10A(2) of the Local Government Act 1993:

**22.1 Tender VP391513 - Supply and Delivery of Quarry Products**

This matter relates to (d)(i) commercial information of a confidential nature that would, if disclosed prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied it.

**22.2 Loan Borrowing Program 2023/2024**

This matter relates to (d)(i) commercial information of a confidential nature that would, if disclosed prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied it.

These matters are considered to be confidential under Section 10A(2) - (d)(i) of the Local Government Act, and the Council is satisfied that discussion of this matter in an open meeting would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest as it deals with commercial information of a confidential nature that would, if disclosed prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied it.

**23 RESOLUTIONS OF CLOSED COUNCIL**