

Richmond
Valley
Council



AGENDA

Ordinary Council Meeting

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

Date: Tuesday, 20 August 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**

Nil

6 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

6.1 MINUTES ORDINARY MEETING 16 JULY 2024

RECOMMENDATION

That Council confirms the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 16 July 2024.

REPORT

Refer attached Minutes.

ATTACHMENT(S)

- 1. Ordinary Minutes 16 July 2024 (under separate cover)**

6.2 MINUTES EXTRAORDINARY MEETING 6 AUGUST 2024

RECOMMENDATION

That Council confirms the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held on 6 August 2024.

REPORT

Refer to attached Minutes.

ATTACHMENT(S)

- 1. Extraordinary Meeting Minutes 6 August 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

Nil

11 MAYOR'S REPORT**11.1 MAYORAL ATTENDANCE REPORT 9 JULY - 15 AUGUST 2024****Author: Robert Mustow****RECOMMENDATION**

That Council receives and notes the Mayoral Attendance Report for the period 9 July – 15 August 2024.

July

- 11th NAIDOC Celebrations Evans Head
- 12th Fishing Classic Presentation Evans Head
- 13th Coraki Bowling Club - New Synthetic Bowling Green
- 13th Bentley Art Show
- 15th Northern Rivers Community Leaders Forum
- 16th Naughtons Gap Road project site visit
- 16th Richmond Valley Council Ordinary meeting
- 17th Rous Council Workshop
- 17th Rotary Club of Upper Richmond Changeover Dinner
- 19th Achieve Fun Run Launch
- 20th Heritage Weekend, Casino Showground
- 20th Casino Dog Trial sponsors event
- 23rd Platypus Day Club morning tea
- 25th Casino Primary School – NAIDOC celebration
- 25th Sea02 Facility opening Woodburn
- 26th Mid-Richmond Historical Society Annual General Meeting
- 31st Reconstruction Authority, Home NSW and Richmond Valley Council - meeting

August

- 2nd Casino Truck Show Sponsors evening
- 3rd Casino Truck Show Event
- 4th Stars of Casino thank you event
- 5th NSWRA/NRJO Regional Vision Workshop Ballina
- 6th Casino Historical Society meeting
- 6th Richmond Valley Council Extraordinary meeting
- 10th Casino Gold Cup Races
- 10th Cassino Art Gallery Exhibition – Calligraphy
- 13th Platypus RSL Day Club – 12th Birthday celebration
- 14th NSWRA/NRJO Regional Vision Workshop – Outputs

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 RECOVERY PLAN AND DELIVERY PROGRAM PROGRESS REPORT JANUARY - JUNE 2024**

Author: Vaughan Macdonald

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Richmond Valley Council has now completed the first year of its 2023-2025 Delivery Program and the second year of its Rebuilding the Richmond Valley 2022-2025 flood recovery plan, with substantial progress being achieved in all areas. This report outlines progress under both plans.

So far, the majority of the Recovery Plan actions have been finalised, with Council attracting more than \$61 million in community flood recovery grants for local sports facilities, community buildings, infrastructure replacement, and community events. This is in addition to some \$100m in Disaster Recovery Funding applications currently in progress, to repair local flood damaged roads and bridges. These repair works will continue over the next 2-3 years. Of the 80 Principal Activities in the Delivery Program 5 have been completed within the first year, with the remaining 75 Activities all on schedule to be completed within the life of the Program.

Signature projects delivered over the past six months include completion of the Casino-Bentley section of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail, completion of Cell 6 to expand the Nammoona Resource Recovery Facility, opening of the newly upgraded Casino Showground facility and completion of the combined Mid Richmond Place and Adaptation Plans for flood-affected communities.

Council also continued to support growth and economic development within the Richmond Valley, with endorsement of the Regional Jobs Precinct Masterplan, support for new industries and investment, and further progress on plans for major residential expansion in Casino. Significant progress was also achieved in Council's sustainability and greening programs, with more than 12,000 community trees and shrubs planted since the program began and 50% reductions in energy consumption at key public buildings through solar installations. Work also progressed on planning and delivery of essential infrastructure, with Council endorsing a \$200m investment plan for water and sewerage assets over the next 25 years as part of its Water for Life 2050 Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Receives and notes the January – June 2024 Progress Report on the 2023-2025 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.

DELIVERY PROGRAM LINKS

2 - Establish the Richmond Valley as a regional growth centre

2A3 - Deliver the Community Strategic Plan

2A3.1 - Develop, deliver and report on Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plans.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The Delivery Program activities are being funded via a number of sources including Council's own resources, Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements and government grants and assistance programs.

REPORT

Richmond Valley Council has now completed the first twelve months of its 2023-2025 Delivery Program and the second year of its Rebuilding the Richmond Valley Recovery Plan, with substantial progress across all areas.

Recovery Plan progress

Most of the Recovery Plan actions have now been finalised, with the remaining road repair program to be completed over the next 2-3 years. Council has advocated strongly to support flood recovery across the Richmond Valley, successfully attracting more than \$61 million in government funding for community recovery projects. This includes:

- \$18m to replace the Tatham bridges with more flood resilient structures
- \$3m for betterment works at Naughton's Gap Rd (this is in addition to the \$13m approved for repairs to the landslip under Disaster Recovery funding)
- \$4.1m to improve flood resilience of the Woodburn-Coraki Rd at Dairy Flat.
- \$3.5m to replace the Richmond River footbridge crossing at Casino with a new suspension bridge
- A total of \$7.2m for four new sports clubhouses and repairs and improvements to sports fields and recreation facilities in Casino and the Mid Richmond.
- And \$1.4m to replace the South Casino Sewage Transfer system, which was damaged in the flood.

The sewage transfer system and Dairy Flat projects are nearing completion and Council recently awarded tenders for replacement of the Tatham bridges and construction of the sports clubhouses, with these projects scheduled to be delivered in 2024-25.

Council also continues to work with Transport for NSW to progress some \$100m in Disaster Recovery Funding claims to repair local flood-damaged roads and bridges, with some \$26m of works already completed including repairs to the rural gravel road network, Spring Grove Rd, Bentley Rd, Woodburn-Coraki Rd and Manifold Rd.

Work continues on the major landslip repairs at Naughton's Gap with a total of \$16m received for repair and betterment works. So far Council has completed most of the piling works, the drainage pits, upslope stabilisation, and downslope earthworks. Initial works for the installation of the betterment component being the catch fence have been undertaken and the project remains on schedule for a December 2024 opening.

Another highlight of the Recovery Plan was development of new Place Plans for flood affected communities in the Mid Richmond, to support recovery and identify future growth and investment opportunities and community projects. Council partnered with the NSW Reconstruction Authority to undertake a pilot project for the communities of Coraki, Woodburn, Broadwater/Rileys Hill and Evans Head, combining traditional place planning with disaster adaptation planning strategies. Specialist consultants were engaged to undertake more than six months of development work and community consultation to complete the draft plans, which were placed on public exhibition in May-June. Council adopted the final plans in July and these will help to inform future land use planning and signature projects for these communities, including further development of the Three Villages Cycleway.



Consultation sessions at Broadwater and Coraki for the Mid Richmond Place Plans.

Delivery Program progress

Of the 80 Principal Activities within the 2023-25 Delivery Program 5 have been completed and the remaining 75 actions are all on schedule to be delivered within the life of the program.

Highlights of the January- June 2024 period include:

- Completion of the Casino-Bentley section of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail which attracted \$7.5m of Federal Government funding.
- Completion of the \$6m Cell 6 expansion of Nammoona Resource Recovery Centre, which will provide 12-15 years of waste disposal security for our community.
- Opening of the \$14.4m Casino Showground upgrade, with the final works to be completed in the coming months.
- Endorsement of the Richmond Valley Regional Jobs Precinct Masterplan and continued activation of Council's industrial development projects.
- Further progress on plans to deliver up to 1600 new homes on flood-safe lands at Fairy Hill near Casino, with a Reconstruction Authority grant to prepare feasibility and infrastructure studies.
- Continued progress on major road repair projects, including the Naughton's Gap landslip, Bentley Road rockfall and flood resilience works on the Casino-Woodburn Rd, such as replacement of Willox Bridge, planning and procurement for the Tatham bridges and culvert improvements at Dairy Flat and Thearles Drain on the Woodburn Coraki Road.
- Endorsement of a \$200m investment plan for critical water and sewerage infrastructure over the next 25 years, with substantial progress on pre-construction planning for replacement of the Casino STP and Stage 2 of the Evans Head STP.
- Continued progress on Council's sustainability initiatives, including community greening and energy saving programs. The first year of the program has seen more than 12,000 community trees planted and achieved reductions of up to 50% in energy usage through solar installations at key public buildings.
- Successful support for signature community events, such as Beef Week and Primex and Council's Casino Truck Show 2024 seeing a record crowds in Casino's CBD.
- Continued development of Council's library services, with 605 programs delivered for more than 3,800 children and adults, and 500 new members joining the library service.



Official opening of the Casino section of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail

Delivering signature projects

The past six months saw the successful delivery of three long-term projects that will provide economic security and ongoing community benefits for the Richmond Valley. The Casino-Bentley section of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail was officially opened in March and is already experiencing high usage, with 25,000 trips recorded in the first four months of operation. The Trail is proving a popular destination for cyclists, walkers, runners and horse-riders, with locals and visitors keen to use the new facility. Plans to include more attractions, such as events, mobile food vans and pop-up bike hire are currently under way and patronage is expected to increase as the Bentley-Lismore connection of the Trail nears completion with it expected to be open before Christmas. Council has been working closely with other Northern Rivers councils to help deliver the final vision of a 130km rail trail from Murwillumbah to Casino.

Work on the \$14.4m upgrade of the Casino Showground and Racecourse also entered the final stages, with the facility being opened to the public in April. Final works will be completed over the new few months. Interest has been strong from all forms of the equine industry since the official opening, with event promoters keen to make use of the new 40m x 80m covered arena, with seating for 2,500 people. Major events conducted so far, with support from Council, have included the Cow Country Music Muster, The Beef Week Rodeo, the NSW Championships Dog Trial and the Casino Truck Show Rodeo. Council also continues to work with local community groups to support their use of the new showground facility for activities such as the Casino Show, Pony Club, dance school, camp drafting and the Casino Men's Shed.

Work on the \$6m expansion of the Nammoona Resource Recovery Centre was also completed, with the new Cell 6 commencing operations. This new cell will provide waste management security for the community for the next 12-15 years, while Council continues to strengthen local recycling opportunities and waste reduction initiatives and develop longer-term solutions for waste management. Activation of Cell 6 will result in annual savings of up to \$1m for the community, by reducing the need to transport waste to Queensland for disposal.



Planning for future growth and infrastructure

Another major milestone was achieved in June, with Council's endorsement of the final Richmond Valley Regional Jobs Precinct Masterplan. This project, led by Regional NSW, in consultation with Planning NSW, has been under development for the past two years, supported by extensive technical studies and consultation with state agencies and Council. The RJP Masterplan will deliver 335 ha of employment lands and support creation of 1900 new local jobs. The draft plan was placed on public exhibition in February-March 2024, with 63 public submissions received. Following amendments to the document, in response to the feedback, the final plan was endorsed by Council in June and is now awaiting approval from the Minister for Planning. Meanwhile, Council is continuing with its industrial activation projects in the Precinct 1 and 3 of the RJP, which will attract new industries to the area, including establishment of the first solar panel recycling facility in NSW.

Council also continued with its long-term plans for residential growth, endorsing a \$200m investment plan to provide essential water and sewerage infrastructure over the next 25 years. The Water for Life 2050 Strategy will help to secure long-term water supplies for Casino and the Mid Richmond communities, and complete essential upgrades to sewage treatment facilities in Casino, Evans Head, Coraki and Rileys Hill. Completion of the new Rappville sewerage scheme is included in the plan, along with strategies to improve catchment protection and environmental performance of water/sewer networks and reduce water consumption.

Plans to provide up to 1600 new homes on flood-safe lands at South Fairy Hill also took a major step forward with the NSW Reconstruction Authority providing funding for essential feasibility and infrastructure studies to help support the next phase of the planning process. Council is actively seeking funding of up to \$28m to provide essential services, such as water and sewer to this area and these studies will help to support future applications for government grants. Council will continue to work with the proponents and the Reconstruction Authority to support the activation of this site, which will increase Casino's population by some 4000 people over the next 15 years.



Flying fox habitat plantings in Queen Elizabeth Park, Casino.

Protecting the environment

Work continued on habitat protection and greening programs over the past six months, with Council well ahead of its 2040 target to deliver 15,000 additional community shade trees. So far, 11,450 trees and shrubs have been planted for the Flying Fox habitat program in Queen Elizabeth Park, 795 trees and 1167 native grasses planted to stabilise the riverbank and protect fish habitat at McDonald Park and 259 mature trees planted in streets and parks throughout the Mid Richmond and Casino. Council has received strong community interest in its street tree planting program and is currently partnering with local schools and community groups through its Growing On program to nurture young trees for future street plantings.

Work also continued on measuring and reducing Council's carbon footprint. With current annual emissions of 18,381 tCO²-e, Council is focusing on four key areas of electricity, fleet, landfill and sewerage systems to actively reduce its emissions. So far, solar installations at key facilities, such as the Casino Administration Centre have produced savings of up to 50% in energy consumption. Council also completed plans to pilot two new electric vehicle charging stations, one at Evans Head and one in Casino, and these will be installed in the coming months. Work also continued on reducing Council's water usage, with a focus on system leak reduction, retrofitting public facilities with water-saving taps and toilets, and planting more drought resilient species in public spaces.

Growing our economy

Council's new Invest and Live Team has made great progress over the past few months, building relationships with key local businesses and organisations, liaising with potential new businesses and investors and developing plans for more local activities to boost the economy. A key focus for the new team will be maximising income opportunities through the Northern Rivers Rail Trail, as well as actively developing the vision to position the upgraded Casino Showground and Racecourse facility as the premier equine centre on the North Coast.

Council also continued to actively support tourism and community events, providing ongoing sponsorship and support for signature events such as Beef Week and Primex and finalising plans for the 2024 Casino Truck Show. This event has grown to be one of the leading truck shows in the Southern Hemisphere, bringing an economic boost of \$3.9m to the community and attracting 600 entries and over 30,000 people on the day.



Childrens activity programs at the Library.

Providing services to the community

Council continued to deliver a high level of service over the past six months, managing 17,633 customer calls and 4,151 customer requests for issues such as road repairs, waste collection and ranger services. The majority of callers (80%) spent less than 20 seconds waiting for their call to be answered – an enviable record compared to other service providers – and the customer experience team continued to achieve its performance standards for response and processing times. Council's library service also continued to grow with 500 new members joining the service in the past six months. The library's community outreach programs continue to be popular, ranging from tech savvy sessions for seniors to children's reading, art and craft programs. Over the past six months, 605 programs were delivered to more than 3,800 children and adults. The Casino Indoor Sports Stadium and our swimming pools at Casino, Evans Head, Coraki and Woodburn all continue to be popular and valued services for our community.

CONSULTATION

The 2023-2025 Delivery Program was developed through community consultation and adopted by Council in June 2023. Council continues to consult on major activities within the Program.

CONCLUSION

The January – June 2024 period has seen major progress in completing Council's Rebuilding the Richmond Valley Recovery Plan and the 2023-25 Delivery Program. All Activities are currently on schedule, with a number of key projects being completed in the period. Council continued to deliver a high standard of service across its wide range of activities and finalised plans for investment and growth that will secure the Richmond Valley's future for the next 25 years.

ATTACHMENT(S)

- 1. 2023-25 Delivery Program Progress Report Q3-4**

14.2 REVIEW OF FUNDING MODELS FOR LOCAL WATER UTILITIES - NSW PRODUCTIVITY AND EQUALITY COMMISSION

Author: Vaughan Macdonald

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 24 July 2024 the Productivity and Equality Commission released the Final Report '*Review of funding models for local water utilities*', Council made a detailed submission to this Review.

A total of 21 recommendations were put forward by the Commission in its review report across three major areas of reform for the whole of the LWU sector:

1. Fit for purpose regulation
2. Working to develop a common understanding and strategic development of priorities
3. Development of a Local Water Utilities Funding Policy, including the establishment of a Community Service Obligation (CSO) funding mechanism

The Commission recommended that the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) should lead the LWU reform through a Sector Reform Implementation Steering Committee and working groups and should consult widely. Council officers will continue to be engaged with DCCEEW and the Water Directorate to contribute to the suggested implementation plan which is recommended to start in September 2024 and conclude in July 2026.

Council's detailed submission was referenced in the Final Report on multiple occasions including on the challenge of securing the required intergenerational investment, as Council needs to invest up to \$100m in capital projects over the next five years. Current borrowing restrictions from lenders of 20 years, does not enable a Council to secure the investment required in assets that will serve a community for the next 80-100 years.

With Richmond Valley Council's recently adopted Water for Life 2050 Strategy now completed it will be very important that Council continues to apply for and access funding to assist with the forward program of works.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Receives and notes the outcome of the NSW Productivity and Equality Commission review of funding models for NSW Local Water Utilities;
2. Writes to the NSW Productivity Commissioner Peter Achterstraat AM, thanking him for his visit to the Richmond Valley and consideration of Council's detailed submission with multiple references to it in the Report.

DELIVERY PROGRAM LINKS

Objective 6: Provide infrastructure that meets community needs

6D Manage water supply, sewerage and drainage effectively

6D1 Plan for future water/sewer services and upgrades

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Council's Water For Life 2050 Strategy includes a \$200m investment plan for critical water and sewerage infrastructure over the next 25 years. Funding support from the Federal and NSW Governments is being pursued.

REPORT

In August 2023, the Honourable Rose Jackson MLC, Minister for Water requested the NSW Productivity and Equality Commission to undertake a review into the funding arrangements for Local Water Utilities (LWU) across New South Wales. The Terms of Reference for the review were for the Commission to consider:

- The current funding arrangements for the 89 council-owned local water utilities in NSW and strategies that could better optimise the current funding approaches, including:
 - NSW Government funding programs
 - Existing requirements for user charges and levies.
- The minimum level of service for water supply and sewerage services.
- The diversity of local water utility performance, financial performance and business models and unresolved service risks.
- The extent to which alternative funding arrangements could lift the performance of the most poorly performing, smaller utilities to minimum performance without creating disincentives to the efficient operation of good performers.
- Pathways to transition to a new approach over time, including different levels of NSW Government funding or opportunities to reduce risks by better leveraging the State Government's existing investments in publicly owned state-owned corporations.
- Pensioner rebates, noting this part of the review spans regional and metro settings.

The Commission published an Issues paper for the Review in February 2024 and followed this with consultation with councils, LWU's, Joint Organisations of councils, industry groups, NSW Government agencies and the community. The Commission invited interested parties to lodge written submissions by the 28 March 2024. Council lodged a submission on 28 March 2024 and it has been provided as an attachment to this report.

On 24 July 2024 the Productivity and Equality Commission released the Final Report '*Review of funding models for local water utilities*', which can be accessed through the link: <https://www.productivity.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-07/20240725-review-of-funding-model-for-local-water-utilities-final-report.pdf>

Throughout the review the Commission respected the NSW Government's policy position that there will be no forced amalgamations and that councils will continue as the owners of their water and sewerage assets, which is a fundamental principle agreed to by council because LWU's are essential to the well-being of regional communities, ensuring the provision of safe, reliable water and sewerage services.

The Review recognised that LWU's are council-owned businesses, with responsibility for their management and financial sustainability squarely falling on local councils. This requires councils to ensure that these essential services are effectively managed to meet their communities' needs and circumstances.

The Commission found that many LWU's, particularly those in smaller and remote communities, face significant challenges, including water security risks, financial instability, and aging infrastructure and that these issues are further compounded by the costs of evolving regulatory standards, population changes, and the impacts of climate change.

As such, the Review report promotes an ongoing role for well targeted NSW Government funding to the LWU sector. This funding should be more clearly defined and should focus on improving the capacity of councils to operate efficient water and sewerage businesses, consistent with community expectations and statutory requirements, where they cannot fund this from their own revenue base.

The Commission also formed the view that future challenges are expected to have significant cost and price implications for local communities. Responding to changes in regulatory standards, population changes, increasing water security and climate change risks, replacing ageing infrastructure and increases in costs were all emerging concerns for LWUs and local councils.

It was also told that LWU's are facing a shortage of skilled people to effectively manage water and sewerage operations and that LWUs are competing for the same, limited labour pool placing further pressure on costs. They concluded that LWU's will need to generate higher own source funding in the future to ensure ongoing financial viability.

The Commission stated that it recognised the existing and future challenges faced by LWU's and the need to provide targeted funding to those LWU's which are not financially sustainable and noted that it is important that LWU's demonstrate that their operations are as efficient as possible and that customers are making a reasonable level of contribution for the services they receive.

The Commission has formed the view that the current funding model for LWU's is not effectively working and needs urgent reform. The Review outlines a new approach to strategic planning and funding which the Commission believes is fairer, more transparent and will foster more efficient and financial sustainable LWU's able to meet future challenges.

The recommended approach is based on a partnership between the NSW Government and LWU's and will create a framework for setting strategic priorities to ensure that the financial resources are allocated in a transparent and consistent way to optimise the effectiveness of finite government resources.

A total of 21 recommendations were put forward by the Commission in its review report across three major areas of reform for the whole of the LWU sector:

- **Fit for purpose regulation** – the NSW Government should ensure that the water quality, security and environmental requirements that it places on the LWU sector are based on identified problems and that any proposed response is thoroughly considered to ensure that money is spent wisely.
- **Working to develop a common understanding and strategic development of priorities** – the NSW Government should work with LWU's to develop a new strategic understanding of the LWU sector and identify state-wide priorities so that funding addresses the most urgent problems facing the sector.
- **Development of a Local Water Utilities Funding Policy, including the establishment of a Community Service Obligation (CSO) funding mechanism** – to ensure that NSW Government funding is provided to those LWU's who need it the most and partnerships can be agreed where required.

The Commission recommended that the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEE) should lead the LWU reform through a Sector Reform Implementation

Steering Committee and working groups and should consult widely. An implementation plan, including allocated responsibilities and timeframes was included as part of the report. The suggested implementation timeline starts in September 2024 and concludes in July 2026.

Of some concern is the Commission's belief that no further funding should be provided to the LWU sector until the proposed reforms are implemented, however it does recommend that these be implemented as a matter of urgency. With Richmond Valley Council's recently adopted Water for Life 2050 Strategy now completed ([Strategies - Richmond Valley Council \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.rvc.nsw.gov.au/strategies)) it will be very important for our community that we continue to apply for and access funding to assist with the forward program of works.

While there is always some trepidation when recommendations are put forward for major reviews of LWU's, it should be seen as an opportunity to work with DCCEEW to achieve outcomes that are beneficial for council and the community for our critical water and sewerage infrastructure.

CONSULTATION

Council consulted on its Water for Life 2050 Strategy and current Delivery Program which includes significant investment in water supply and sewerage infrastructure.

CONCLUSION

Council's submission to this review has made an important advocacy contribution which we will continue to pursue as the Government makes decisions on how it plans to respond to the review's recommendations.

ATTACHMENT(S)

- 1. Letter - Submission to NSW Productivity Commissioner, 28 March 2024**



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council@richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au
www.richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au

ABN 54 145 907 009

28 March 2024

Mr Peter Achterstraat AM
NSW Productivity Commissioner

By email: LWUReview@treasury.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr Achterstraat,

NSW Productivity Commission Review of Local Water Utility Funding Models

Thank you for visiting the Richmond Valley this week and enabling us to give you some insights into the challenges faced by many Councils to manage infrastructure that is approaching 100 years of age. We also welcome the opportunity to participate in the Productivity Commission's current review of local water utility funding models. Richmond Valley Council commends the NSW Government for commissioning the review and trusts that it will give due regard to the local government sector's feedback and the Commission's recommendations. This is a critical issue for regional NSW that requires urgent resolution and investment.

It is clear that the traditional policy, regulatory and funding models for local water utilities in regional NSW are no longer fit for purpose, nor achieving the priorities of the communities they serve. However, there is opportunity for positive change through improved strategic focus and collaboration, and a fresh approach to funding that acknowledges inter-generational equity.

While the NSW Government has focused, with increasing complexity, on the day-to-day regulation of water utilities, it has failed to address the emerging strategic crisis within the industry. Despite the historic efforts of the Best Practice Framework, the Town Water Risk Reduction Program (TWRRP) and other policy initiatives, the fundamental issues impeding progress within the industry have continued to grow. As a result, local water utilities across NSW are now facing infrastructure and resourcing challenges that threaten their long-term sustainability. New thinking and a willingness to embrace meaningful change is required at all levels of government to resolve these challenges and ensure the long-term health and development of thriving regional communities. This should include reshaping governance, resourcing, structural and regulatory frameworks within the sector, with a focus on delivering practical outcomes in improved water management and funding arrangements that are flexible and fit for purpose.

All local water utilities within regional NSW face their own unique challenges and it is important that they are supported with funding solutions that are appropriate to their regional context and scale of operations. While Council notes the review's limitations regarding ownership and boundary change, it has concerns with any proposed funding

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models that would see resources directed away from high-growth regional communities to provide perpetual subsidisation of LWUs that are unwilling to embrace reform to improve their long-term sustainability. Resolving this issue will require a working partnership between local and state government and a willingness to embrace new operating models.

Current challenges for water utilities

There are a number of key challenges for local councils within regional NSW in providing water and sewerage services to their communities. These include:

- Historic patterns of settlement, infrastructure investment and population growth;
- The current impacts of the post-COVID economy, resettlement patterns and ongoing skills shortages within the industry;
- The limitations of the Local Government Award and local government financing and investment regulations;
- Resourcing and lead-time impacts of water utility regulation, monitoring and reporting;
- Impacts of climate change and disaster adaptation.

Historic patterns and current changes

The history of regional NSW has been dominated by slow, steady population growth, with occasional spikes of investment in response to government-led programs. For example, post-war resettlement programs and the decentralisation initiatives of the 1970s saw an increase in water and sewer infrastructure investment in regional communities. Most of these assets were constructed by Public Works, with councils having limited input into the design, construction and commissioning phases. The slow population growth that followed much of this investment meant that augmentation often consisted of small scale “bolt on” initiatives with a mismatch of technologies i.e. coupling extended aeration systems with tickling filters and various tertiary treatment options in a sewage treatment plant. Much of this core infrastructure is now reaching the end of its asset life and requires major redevelopment to bring it up to date with current technologies and environmental performance requirements.

Casino’s aging sewage treatment plant (STP) is an example of this paradigm, with the original structure developed in 1932, with subsequent additional trickling filters in the 1960s-70s and bolt-on EAT systems in the ‘90s, in response to slow, steady growth within the town. The STP has reached the end of its asset life, following additional damage in the catastrophic floods of 2022. It requires total replacement as the mismatch of technologies can no longer meet modern workplace safety, environmental and sewage treatment standards. In an ideal world, councils such as Richmond Valley would have had time, over the years, to collect development contributions and build up reserves for the plant’s ultimate replacement. The post-COVID economy has then intervened, with materials and labour pricing escalating exponentially, compared to population and wage growth. Council had planned that the replacement of this plant would cost some \$30m – which was achievable within its resources. However, within three years, the estimated cost of the STP has escalated to \$65m – which is no longer affordable for our community, without recourse to substantial government funding. Councils throughout regional NSW are facing the same challenge.

Additionally, Casino is facing the impacts and opportunities of sudden, accelerated growth, following the establishment of the NSW Government’s Regional Jobs Precinct initiative. With Casino at the centre of an emerging regional employment hub and boasting a

generous supply of flood-safe residential land, it is expected that the town's population will grow by an additional 4000 EP by 2040 (twice its previous growth rate). While Council welcomes this growth and continues to work with the NSW Government to activate the Regional Job Precinct, this issue reinforces the importance of supporting government-led regional employment and housing initiatives with investment in critical infrastructure.

Competing for diminishing resources

Rural and regional councils are generally not of a sufficient scale that they can quickly mobilise resources to adjust to sudden changes in growth, or economic shocks. This is exacerbated by the regulatory requirement for councils to separately manage their water and sewer fund, and the limitations on council borrowing and investment options. Our council is currently unable to borrow beyond a 20-year term, to construct infrastructure with an 80-100 year asset life. There is limited capacity for inter-generational debt within the local government system. In these situations, local councils traditionally compete for the funding provided through state and federal grants programs to make up the shortfall. There is no certainty that they will be successful in this bid, nor any certainty that these programs will be available in the future, as state and federal resources are challenged by the same pressures that are impacting local councils. This makes it difficult to deliver long-term infrastructure planning and investment. To build financial resilience, Councils need a more reliable safety net to deal with sudden, unexpected change and more flexible options to plan for inter-generational investment.

Sustained under-investment in water industry training programs within NSW over the past decade, and the impacts of the post-COVID labour market are also creating the perfect storm for local water utilities in obtaining sufficient resources to maintain and operate their water and sewerage services. There are currently 90 council-owned water utilities, competing for a diminishing pool of some 2,800 qualified and experienced water operators, engineers and technicians, when an estimated 3,200 employees are required to safely and efficiently operate regional systems. Councils do not have the resources to compete on a level playing field with the state-owned utilities and private enterprise water/sewer operations, which dominate the employment market. The limitations of the current industrial award add further complexities to recruitment and affordability. While it is acknowledged that both the Town Water Risk Reduction Program and the NSW Water Directorate have actively attempted to resolve the industry's training and recruitment challenges, the resourcing shortfall continues to grow.

Previous reviews of the future sustainability of regional water utilities have predicted that infrastructure failure and replacement costs would ultimately drive a sustainability crisis within the sector, however it now seems more likely that human resourcing issues will be the catalyst. The day is fast approaching when there will be insufficient qualified operators to run the regions' water and sewer treatment systems. This will substantially increase public health risks and severely impact service reliability. Sadly, simply providing councils with more funding will not resolve the labour shortage, however it could help with addressing increasing employment costs.

Regulatory burden

Local water utilities in regional NSW are currently subject to a disproportionate amount of regulation, monitoring and reporting, compared to their scale of operations. Consistently state regulators appear to have struggled to appreciate the difference between regulatory oversight and vicarious management of local water utilities, imposing complex processes, design rules and analysis on business operations with fewer than 10 employees. Although the TWRRP attempted to roll back some of the excesses of the Best Practice Framework, these gains are progressively being eroded by increasingly complex bolt-on guidelines and

gateway requirements. Since the Best Practice Guidelines were introduced in 2008, along with associated LWU performance reporting requirements, local councils have devoted thousands of hours and resources to painstakingly measuring and monitoring more than 350 aspects of their operation to satisfy mandatory reporting.

Unfortunately for our communities, this endless introspection has done little to address the broader sustainability issues currently facing the industry. There is a persistent culture within the NSW water/sewer regulatory space that fails to fully appreciate the resourcing constraints, project delivery imperatives and statutory authority of local government water utilities. The focus should return to outcomes-based, appropriately scaled regulation.

Historic 'one size fits all' requirements for local water utilities have left a legacy of resourcing impacts. Examples include the 75/25% split in water usage and access fees - which has resulted in consistent under-resourcing of major infrastructure renewal - and the 5-10-10 Design Rule, which has prompted millions of dollars in investment in water security infrastructure to achieve a service standard that has never been tested with the NSW community. The open-ended interpretation of the Local Government Act Section 60 approval process has also led to infrastructure design changes and delays that increase Councils' investment costs and liabilities. As a result, the average lead-time to replace major infrastructure such as a sewage treatment plant has increased to 10 years, when it should be possible to undertake this process in less than five.

The introduction of Health Based Targets will ultimately see increased complexity, lead-time and capital investment in water treatment barriers for local water utilities. Council welcomes the shift away from the rigid frameworks of the past through the most recent water reform initiatives. However, it is important that we preserve these gains by ensuring the spirit of the streamlined Regulatory and Assurance Framework continues.

Put simply, regulatory and reporting requirements eat up resources that councils desperately need to run their water and sewer operations. It is essential that regulation and reporting should be meaningful, risk-based and at an appropriate scale for LWU operations.

Impacts of climate change

The impacts of a changing climate, with extended periods of drought and increased frequency of flooding is also taking its toll on the financial sustainability of local water utilities. Following the worst drought in 130 years, in 2019, some 50 regional water supplies were identified as at high risk of failure. It is increasingly difficult for councils to plan for and resource sufficient infrastructure resilience against climate impacts. For example, providing the safety net of a second water source for Casino by connecting to the Rous Water network could require up to \$80m in capital investment. Similarly, increasing frequency and severity of flood events is impacting significantly on councils' sewerage networks.

Following the 2022 floods, Richmond Valley Council is facing a \$50m investment to repair and improve the resilience of its sewerage network. Councils are unable to insure against this level of damage and traditionally Disaster Relief Funding Arrangements (DRFA) have not been available to repair local government water and sewerage infrastructure. Following the 2022 floods, a one-off program (Water and Wastewater Repair and Recovery Program) was initiated to assist flood-impacted LWUs in the Northern Rivers was trialed, however, the lack of framework and processes around the trial created challenges with equitable distribution of available funds.

Richmond Valley Council would strongly support the permanent extension of DRFA funding arrangements to local water utilities impacted by natural disasters, with a standard application and allocation process for the funding. This would ensure that local government

water/sewer reserves for infrastructure renewal and augmentation are not eroded by funding emergency infrastructure repairs.

Funding model considerations

Off-setting operational costs

The Review discussion paper seeks to identify the typical cost of providing water and sewerage services in a well-run LWU. This is an impossible question to answer, as every local water utility is different and faces constraints and advantages that are unique to its locality. For example, Richmond Valley Council is able to effect savings in large scale capital investment by sourcing its water supply for the Mid Richmond communities from Rous County Council. However, this is offset by the higher cost of bulk water from the County and its strategic capacity to compete more successfully in the regional employment market.

Each council has its own geographical and climatic challenges, its own settlement patterns, resourcing challenges and legacy infrastructure issues. There are also widely varying social considerations throughout regional NSW. For example, many regional utilities provide subsidised water pricing to major high-usage industries, such as abattoirs and mines because of the employment benefits they bring to the community. In this regard, attempts to estimate typical costs may see the range of variation so broad that the measure would have little meaning and limited benefit as an indicator for funding mechanisms.

Similarly, imposing minimum levels of service beyond the basic legislative requirements outlined in the Terms of Reference, may see some councils unduly disadvantaged because of their unique operating environment. Service levels can vary within an LWU's operating area because of available water sources, the size of the settlement and the capacity/willingness of its customers to pay. This makes it challenging to link LWU operating costs and service levels to a standardised funding model.

Councils currently receive funding under the Australian Government's Financial Assistance Grants program (FAGs) that is based on a series of complex financial, social and demographic considerations. This funding includes a roads component, that is also calculated based on the individual circumstances of each council. If the NSW Government wants to consider a model of annual operational funding for local water utilities, then the FAGs system may provide an avenue to develop an appropriate formula. However, due to the complexities of the operating environment, it would be essential to consult extensively with councils on appropriate methodology. This would ultimately ensure that small-scale LWUs who do not have capacity to recoup their operational costs from their limited customer base, could receive ongoing assistance – essentially a CSO payment.

However, Council strongly believes that each utility has a responsibility to ensure its operations are as cost effective and efficient as possible before accepting subsidies. To this end, small utilities that would benefit from voluntary structural reform, shared services or other arrangements should be required to explore these measures before receiving a CSO payment.

Off-setting capital costs

Achieving the increasing scale of capital investment required for water and sewerage infrastructure is one of the greatest challenges that local water utilities currently face. With construction costs escalating faster than the community's capacity to pay, councils need funding solutions that provide pathways for inter-generational investment. At present,

Council is generally limited to loan periods of 20 years, with lending institutions adopting a cautious approach to debt servicing. While the extension of the TCorp borrowing facility to councils was a step forward, the corporation's conservative perspective on council investment policies has limited the overall benefit of its services.

It is encouraging that TCorp is now revising some of its views on councils' investment strategies, but the limitations on borrowing terms remain. Ultimately, councils are attempting to fund an asset that lasts for 80-100 years through a 20-year investment pathway. This means that the current generation carries the cost of infrastructure that benefits the next. Providing a longer-term lending facility, with low interest rates, would allow councils to spread the cost of inter-generational investment. More innovative options, such as infrastructure bonds and opportunities for superannuation funds to invest in community infrastructure, should also be explored. Many councils are not averse to borrowing for infrastructure investment, however the lack of suitable lending options currently impedes their ability to do so.

Options for direct capital funding from State and Federal governments should also continue to be provided. Ultimately, local water utilities are providing catalyst infrastructure that supports regional development and improved productivity. Much of the food production that sustains city families is supported through capital investment by regional water utilities – investment in servicing abattoirs, dairy and other food processing facilities. It is reasonable to expect that the broader community should help to fund the cost of this infrastructure when the regional, state and national economy ultimately benefits from the industries it supports.

In the current funding climate, councils generally seek to secure a hybrid of federal and state funding to support their water/sewer infrastructure investments. This is challenging when there is no synchronicity between state programs, such as Safe and Secure, and Federal programs, such as National Water Grid. Developing funding pathways between the two levels of government would allow for strategic co-investment in regional water/sewer projects that have wider economic benefits and ensure that these projects can be delivered within a reasonable timeframe.

Reliance on state funding programs alone does not provide sufficient levels of investment for the escalating costs of infrastructure. Replacement of the NSW Country Towns Water Program with the Safe and Secure Water Program has seen a shift from competitive grant applications to risk-based funding opportunities. However, there are anomalies within the risk ranking system for the Safe and Secure program that require further consideration. Lead-times for this program also need to be reduced, with participants progressing through multiple gateways, with multiple requirements attached to each phase. Richmond Valley Council is currently developing a number of water and sewer projects with support from the SSWP. While Council values and appreciates the funding opportunity, it is yet to commence construction on any infrastructure funded through this program after some four years of studies, consultation and pre-tender investigations. Reducing lead-time for infrastructure development is a key consideration in reducing the capital investment ultimately required. It is important that government funding programs should be as streamlined and efficient as possible in partnering with councils in shared investment opportunities.

Streamlining delivery models

Over the years, the NSW Government has experimented with a number of delivery models for LWU water and sewerage infrastructure. The old Public Works delivery model saw standardised infrastructure that was not always cost effective or fit for purpose delivered to communities, with councils carrying the cost of ongoing operation and maintenance. The Water Infrastructure NSW experiment followed a similar delivery model, with the authority

ultimately being disbanded by the State a few years after its inception. Other models have included linking State funding with mandatory project management by Public Works. Council's experience of this particular model is that it has greatly increased project costs and delivery times.

Ultimately, the most appropriate delivery model for infrastructure is the council-managed model, with sufficient technical support from external consultants commensurate with the scale and complexity of the asset. For example, Council is current using a hybrid model of in-house management, supported by expert consultants and advisors to undertake the pre-construction work for its \$65m Casino sewage treatment plant replacement. This will enable us to achieve an accelerated delivery timetable. Our challenge is that the construction phase of this project remains unfunded. Council is investing in the pre-construction works to ensure this essential community project is "shovel ready" to take advantage of any funding opportunities that arise.

Ideally, funding for catalyst infrastructure, such as the Casino STP replacement, that supports regional investment should be provided through a negotiated pathway between local, state and national funding partners. This would ensure that the community's investment in the pre-construction phase delivers tangible outcomes, within an appropriate timeframe. Council would welcome the development of shared funding pathways that allow all levels of government to contribute to the cost of providing essential infrastructure under a standard funding agreement. After all, without safe, sustainable and efficient water supply and sewerage services, there is no point building hospitals, schools and other essential Government services.

Opportunities for regional collaboration

Ideally, water supply management should occur on a regional scale, as water catchments extend beyond the boundaries of most local water utilities. However, there are challenges with adopting regional models. This includes the current lack of a whole of catchment governance model to effectively reduce water quality risks. The lack of a governance model was highlighted in the Far North Coast Regional Water Strategy, but as yet there has been no progress towards addressing whole of catchment issues. This limits the benefits that can be achieved through regional water/sewer investment.

Traditionally, councils have used the County Council model as an option for regional water services. There are currently four water supply counties – Rous (of which RVC is a member) Goldenfields, Riverina and Central Tablelands. The only County Council offering both water and sewerage services (Mid-Coast Water) was subsequently amalgamated following mandatory structural reform of its constituent councils. This was a retrograde step, as the County had made significant improvement in infrastructure investment and operations for the region. Had an alternative governance model been available at the time, the cost and disruption of forced amalgamation could have been avoided and the community benefits retained.

The recent introduction of Joint Organisations for regional NSW provided a statutory authority with potential to support regional management of water/sewer services, however the legislative amendments to support the formation and operation of JO's fell short of providing reliable long-term management models, such as capacity to form council-owned corporations. Councils have been reluctant to embrace regional models, such as county councils because they are subject to the same uncertainties and regulatory oversight as their constituent members and the benefits of long-term planning can be lost through short-term policy change, often driven by changing politics. For example, Rous County Council invested substantially in responsible long-term water security planning for the Northern Rivers through its Future Water strategy. However, one of the foundational elements of this

strategy – development of the Dunoon Dam – was subsequently overturned following the 2021 local government elections. This affected not only Rous' long-term planning and investment strategy, but also Richmond Valley's, as Council was relying on the Dunoon Dam proposal to support an affordable second source option for the Casino water supply.

If councils are to have confidence in committing to long-term regional-scale planning and investment in water/sewer management, then an alternative governance model to the County Council option may be required. This would allow groups of councils to share in infrastructure investment costs, but also to share in the benefits of that investment through dividends that are returned to the communities they serve. Council would support further exploration of governance models for regional water management that retain local government ownership of assets and provide community benefit.

Improving community outcomes – summary of recommendations

Richmond Valley Council believes there is considerable opportunity to improve funding models for local water utilities in regional NSW. However, it is important to ensure that funding is not directed away from high-growth regional areas to perpetually subsidise CSO payments for small LWUs that are unwilling to embrace voluntary structural reform or shared service models to improve their long-term sustainability. To support more flexible and fit-for-purpose funding models for regional water and sewerage investment, Council makes the following recommendations:

1. Ensure that investment in catalyst water and sewerage infrastructure is an intrinsic part of government-led regional development initiatives, such as Special Activation Precincts, Regional Job Precincts and NSW Reconstruction Authority adaptation initiatives.
2. Consider an extension of Disaster Relief Funding Arrangements to local water utilities in regional NSW impacted by natural disasters.
3. Increase national and state investment to address the current skills shortage in the water industry.
4. Reduce regulatory impacts on local government and ensure that regulation is risk-based and appropriate to the scope of operations of LWUs.
5. Consider options for improved operational funding models for regional LWUs, potentially through the FAGs system.
6. Provide options for greater access to inter-generational funding of water-sewer infrastructure, including longer-term, low-interest loans from TCorp, or use of infrastructure bonds.
7. Continue government funding programs to support capital investment in water/sewer infrastructure, with options to negotiate agreed funding partnerships between federal, state and local government for regionally significant projects.
8. Support council-led delivery models for infrastructure design and construction, with appropriate technical support.
9. Continue to explore alternative governance models, such as council-owned corporations to support regional collaboration on water management.

We look forward to the next steps in your review and would welcome involvement in further discussions to explore solutions that will enable local water utilities to be successful in providing services for our communities.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vaughan Macdonald". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'V'.

Vaughan Macdonald
General Manager

14.3 COUNCIL APPROVED HEIGHT VARIATION DEVELOPMENT CONSENT OUTCOMES

Author: Vaughan Macdonald

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council has worked continuously to support development for the Richmond Valley community and businesses by supporting development opportunities through the NSW planning system which stimulates growth, more jobs and housing options.

Three recent developments required council approval of a variation to the height of the buildings as they are more than 10% of the maximum height allowable under the Richmond Valley Local Environment Plan.

These were for commercial/industrial developments as follows.

- Industrial building for a Transport Depot, Warehouse and Distribution Centre at 35 Cassino Drive Casino
- Industrial building for a Warehouse and Distribution Centre at 7&9 Dyraaba Street Casino
- Shop top Housing development at 17 McDonald Place Evans Head.

The proponents of these developments are now in a position to progress with their planned investments in the Richmond Valley.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Notes the Development Applications outlined in this report have now been determined.
2. Acknowledges the Development Assessment team in supporting the efficient planning process for these important developments for our community.

DELIVERY PROGRAM LINKS

Objective 6: Provide infrastructure that meets community needs

6A Undertake whole-of life planning for community infrastructure

6A1 Develop and maintain asset management systems

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Nil.

REPORT

During the last 3 months and Pursuant to Clause 4.6 of Richmond Valley Local Environmental Plan 2012, three height variations were determined by Council in respect of Clause 4.3 Height of Buildings.

The objective of the Height of Buildings standard is to ensure the building complements the streetscape and character of the area and minimises visual impacts, disruption of views, loss of privacy and loss of solar access to existing and surrounding developments.

Clause 4.6 of the Local Environmental Plan provides a degree of flexibility that enables a consent authority to vary a development standard in certain circumstances where the environmental planning objectives can be satisfied.

Development standards were varied for the following three development applications demonstrating Council's ongoing commitment to supporting growth, more jobs and housing for the community. Community consultation and submissions received were considered prior to consents being issued.

INDUSTRIAL BUILDING AT 35 CASSINO DRIVE, CASINO

DA2024/0158 – 35 Cassino Drive, Casino

- Received – 24/04/2024
- Accepted – 10/05/2024
- Community notification – 23 May 2024 to 21 June 2024
- External referrals sent – 3/6/2024
- Tabled at Council Meeting – 25/06/2024 as per council resolution
- Determined by Council's Development Assessment Panel – 01/08/2024
- Total number of assessment days – 84

A development application seeking consent for a proposed Transport Depot, Warehouse (cold storage) and Distribution Centre, and Signage at 35 Cassino Drive, Casino.

The proposal provides a variation to the height of building development standard of 8.5 metres applying to the site in accordance with the Richmond Valley Local Environmental Plan 2012 (LEP).

As the proposed exceedance of the height standard is greater than 10%, it had to be referred to Council for determination.

The subject site of the proposed development is located within an established industrial area, is of similar bulk and scale compatible with industrial development and is therefore considered to be consistent with the established character of land zoning and locality.

In addition, the site is identified within the Regional Job Precinct (RJP) and is included within the Richmond Valley RJP Draft Master Plan (Draft Plan) which proposes to remove the building height limit in this precinct.

SHOP TOP HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AT 17 MCDONALD PLACE, EVANS HEAD

DA2024/140 – 17 McDonald Place, Evans Head

- Received – 2/04/2024
- Accepted – 7/05/2024
- Community notification – 17/05/2024 to 15/06/2024
- External referrals sent – 14/05/2024
- Sent to independent consultant for review – 25/06/2024
- Tabled at Council Meeting - 16/07/2024 as per council resolution
- Determined at DAP - 8/08/2024
- Total number of assessment days – 94

The development involves construction of a three-storey building comprising ground floor commercial space, awning and carparking with ten residential units located on the upper two levels and a roof top terrace. The development is inclusive of demolition of all existing buildings and vegetation, kerbside dining on the McDonald Street frontage and Strata Subdivision.

The proposal seeks a variation to the 9.5 metre height of building development standard identified for the land under clause 4.3 of the Richmond Valley Local Environmental Plan 2012 (LEP).

The proposed development site is visually prominent in Evans Head and unique, in that it does not immediately adjoin any existing buildings and interfaces with both commercial and residential land uses. Overall, the building complies with the 9.5m building height with the non-conforming elements being limited to the rooftop lift/stair enclosure, services enclosure, glass balustrade and rooftop landscape features.

Council obtained expert architectural advice in relation to the proposal which supported the building height variation.

INDUSTRIAL BUILDING AT 7 AND 9 DYRAABA STREET, CASINO

DA2024/0176– 7-9 Dyraaba Street, Casino

- Received – 30/05/2024
- Accepted – 03/06/2024
- Community notification – 11 June 2024 to 9 July 2024
- External referrals sent – 07/06/2024
- Tabled at Council Meeting - 16/07/2024 as per council resolution
- Determined at DAP - 08/08/2024
- Total number of assessment days – 67

Development application seeking consent for alterations to an existing general industrial development (staff amenities block, store and plant room), the construction of a warehouse (cold storage) and distribution centre, a car park and signage, at 7 and 9 Dyraaba Street Casino, and 90-94 Colches Street, Casino.

The proposal seeks a variation to the 8.5 metre height of building development standard identified for the land under clause 4.3 of the Richmond Valley Local Environmental Plan 2012 (LEP).

The proposed new building (warehouse and distribution centre) on 9 Dyraaba Street Casino is part of an existing industrial development, which is located within an established industrial area, has similar bulk and scale to other modern industrial developments and is therefore considered to be consistent with the established character of land in this zone and locality.

CONCLUSION

Council provides ongoing support for development across the Richmond Valley where a degree of flexibility exists within Council's planning policies. This has enabled Council to make informed community focussed decisions, supporting these important investment opportunities to contribute to the future growth of the Richmond Valley.

ATTACHMENT(S)

Nil

15 COMMUNITY SERVICE DELIVERY

15.1 CASINO TRUCK SHOW 2024

Director: Angela Jones

Responsible Officer: Sharon Davidson

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The annual North Coast Petroleum Casino Truck Show was again an outstanding success for our community, showcasing an impressive lineup of trucks and attracting more than 30,000 attendees. The Casino Truck show continues to grow exponentially since Richmond Valley Council took over the management of the event 3 years ago.

The Casino Truck Show stands out as one of the biggest single-day events in regional NSW and is now cemented as one of the most important truck shows in Australia.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council writes to sponsors, volunteers, local members of parliament and Destination NSW to thank them for their support of the 2024 Casino Truck Show, contributing to its outstanding success.

DELIVERY PROGRAM LINKS

Objective 4: Celebrate our local identity and lifestyle

4A Provide opportunities to learn, create, share and celebrate

4A2 Support and deliver local events and festivals

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Nil.

REPORT

The annual North Coast Petroleum Casino Truck Show reached unprecedented heights of success this year, drawing a record crowd and showcasing an impressive array of trucks and entertainment.

Known as one of the biggest truck shows in the southern hemisphere, the event, held in the Casino CBD on Saturday 3 August, saw people from as far afield as the Barossa Valley, Bundaberg, Darwin, Hobart, Japan, Mareeba, Melbourne, Moree, New Zealand, Perth and South Africa join thousands of residents and other visitors, highlighting the community's passion for trucks and automotive excellence.

The Casino Truck Show has grown exponentially since Richmond Valley Council took over its management three years ago, strengthening its place as a cornerstone event in the local community calendar.

With more than 30,000 attendees, surpassing previous records and establishing the event as a must-visit for truck enthusiasts and families alike, this year's event generated an estimated \$3.9 million, with local accommodation, hospitality and food businesses reporting extraordinary demand. Many other Northern Rivers businesses also benefited from the Truck Show, with many attendees seeking accommodation in surrounding towns and villages, giving a much-needed boost to these local economies.

With this year's record crowd, the Casino Truck Show stands out as one of the biggest single-day events in regional NSW and is now cemented as one of the most important truck shows in Australia.

The organising team, made up of Richmond Valley Council staff and industry volunteers, was thrilled with the success of this year's show. A post-event survey of around 460 people was overwhelming positive, with almost all saying they would be back next year.

Council was successful with its application for a \$20,000 grant from Destination NSW to help with the promotion of the 2024 Casino Truck Show. Nine Network and Seven Network featured 15-second ads across the Far North Coast and New England channels. These ads were displayed one week prior to the event during the Olympic commercial breaks. Radio stations ZZZ/2LM and 2GF had 30-second ads played across the Far North Coast, Clarence and Mid North Coast two weeks prior to the event. Local newspapers also featured full-page advertisements in the lead up to the Truck Show.

This year's event also saw a significant uptick in engagement and brand visibility across all social media platforms. TikTok in particular has become the go-to platform, with an audience reach of 212,200, and the highest viewed video attracted 54,000 followers. Instagram profile visits increased by 57.7 percent, while Facebook visits were up 15.9 percent.

Tiktok

Video views:	297,616	+339.22%
Reached audience:	212,200	+339.89%
Profile views:	5,905	+292.62%
Highest viewed video:	54,400	
Likes:	20,913	+453.99%
Comments:	997	>999.09%
Shares:	1,681	+586.12%

The Casino Truck Show is popular because it offers something for everyone. This year's event featured a diverse range of trucks, from vintage classics to high-tech models, live music performances, food stalls, industry exhibitors and activities for children - the family-friendly environment ensured residents and visitors of all ages had a memorable experience.

Congratulations to all winners and participants at this year's show, in particular Andrew Salter of A&J Salter Oversize Transport & Pilot Service for their win of the Tiny Lollback Rig of the Show with their Kenworth K200.

Full winners list can be viewed here <https://casinotruckshow.com.au/2024-results/>

Photos of the day, including the presentation and the parade, can be viewed here <https://casinotruckshow.com.au/gallery-new/>

CONSULTATION

The success of the 2024 Casino Truck Show was the result of consultation with key industry experts, as well as NSW Police, Transport for NSW, Council staff and the local community. This involved face-to-face meetings, letterbox drops and social media posts.

CONCLUSION

Measured by numbers alone, the 2024 Casino Truck Show surpassed any other in its 11-year history, setting a convoy of records, including now being recognised as the biggest truck show in the southern hemisphere with 600 registered entrants, having the most attendees at a single-day event in the Richmond Valley, leading to it becoming one of the largest single-day events in regional NSW - all resulting in an estimated \$3.9 million boost to the local economy.

The passionate and dedicated organising team is committed to staging another world-class show in 2025 and is well advanced on opportunities to grow and improve the event. All stakeholders will be consulted as part of the review process and strategic planning for next year's show.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. **2024 Casino Truck Show Survey Report (under separate cover)**
2. **Social Media Statistics (under separate cover)**

16 PROJECTS & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Nil

17 ORGANISATIONAL SERVICES

17.1 FINANCIAL ANALYSIS REPORT - JULY 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 July 2024 is shown below:

Bank Accounts	Term Deposits	Floating Rate Notes	Fixed Rate Bonds	TCorp IM Funds	Total
\$24,876,533	\$30,000,000	\$6,750,390	\$4,500,000	\$16,787,347	\$82,914,270

The weighted average rate of return on Council's cash and investments at 31 July 2024 was 8.88% which was above the Bloomberg AusBond Bank Bill Index for July of 0.36%, 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 July 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 July 2024, Council has earned \$218,227 in interest and \$341,079 in fair value gains from funds held in TCorp, for a total investment income of \$559,306. This equates to 23.83% of the annual budget for interest and investment income of \$2,347,506.

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 cash rate remained at 4.35% per annum as the RBA did not hold a July meeting.

Rate of Return

The weighted average rate of return on cash and investments in July was 8.88%, an increase in 394 basis points from the previous month. The rate of return is 852 basis points above the Bloomberg AusBond Bank Bill Index of 0.36% which is Council's benchmark.

Council's NSW Treasury Corporation IM Funds returned net gains of \$341,079 during the month of July. The Medium-Term Growth Fund (MTGF) returned a gain of \$243,669 and the Long-Term Growth Fund (LTGF) returned a gain of \$97,410.

During July, bond yields in most developed economies declined and equity markets rose as investors prepare for central banks to begin the rate cutting cycle. The RBA remains concerned that inflation will remain higher for longer, however the June inflation data was mostly aligned with the RBA's forecasts and is continuing to decrease.

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 \$82,914,270 at 31 July 2024. This was made up of Council's Business Online Saver Account (\$21,860,000), Macquarie Cash Management Account (\$2,008,387), Term Deposits (\$30,000,000), Floating Rate Notes (\$6,750,390), Bonds (\$4,500,000), NSW Treasury Corporation Investments (\$16,787,347) and other bank accounts (\$1,008,147).

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 49.75% of the total portfolio as at 31 July 2024.

Council made the following new investments during July 2024:

Banking Institution	Investment Type	Environmentally Sustainable Investment	Amount Invested	Investment Term	Interest Rate
Judo Bank	Term Deposit	Y	\$1,000,000	3 months	5.15%
National Australia Bank	Term Deposit	N	\$2,000,000	3 months	5.10%
National Australia Bank	Term Deposit	N	\$3,000,000	6 months	5.30%
Total			\$6,000,000		

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

Banking Institution	Investment Type	Environmentally Sustainable Investment	Amount Invested	Interest Earned
Judo Bank	Term Deposit	Y	\$2,000,000	\$24,658
National Australia Bank	Term Deposit	N	\$2,000,000	\$50,860
National Australia Bank	Term Deposit	N	\$3,000,000	\$37,397
Total			\$7,000,000	\$112,915

Council had \$16,787,347 in longer term investments being the MTGF and LTGF held with NSW Treasury Corporation as at 31 July 2024. The investment values and fair value returns are shown below:

Investment Holding	Fair Value 31 July 24	Fair Value Gain/(Loss) at 31 July 24	Fair Value Gain/(Loss) YTD	Fair Value Gain/(Loss) Life of Investment
Medium Term Growth Fund	\$13,271,213	\$243,669	\$243,669	\$2,266,094
Long Term Growth Fund	\$3,516,224	\$97,410	\$97,410	\$516,223
Total	\$16,787,347	\$341,079	\$341,079	\$2,782,317

Environmentally Sustainable Investments (ESI's)

Council's cash and investments portfolio of \$82,914,270 at 31 July 2024 includes \$42,037,347 or 48.3% 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 July 2024, Council's investments have been made in accordance with the Act, the Regulations and Council's Investment Policy.

As at 31 July 2024 Council's cash and investments totalled \$82,914,270 with \$24,876,533 of this being funds held in bank accounts. The weighted average rate of return was 8.88% and total investment revenue equals 23.83% of budgeted revenue for the year to 31 July 2024.

ATTACHMENT(S)

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

17.2 AUDIT, RISK AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE

Director: Ryan Gaiter

Responsible Officer: Hayley Martin

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Under Section 428A of the Local Government Act, Council is required to have an Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee which consists of at least three positions held by members external to the organisation. In August 2022, Council appointed its current Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC) with their terms for the current elected period.

It is recommended that the ARIC members have their terms extended until 30 June 2025, to enable their important work to continue and allow the newly elected Council to consider the membership of the ARIC for the next term of Council.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Notes the progress being made since the commencement of the new ARIC arrangements; and
2. Offers an extension to the current Audit Risk and Improvement Committee members' term of appointment to 30 June 2025.

DELIVERY PROGRAM LINKS

Objective 10: Lead and advocate for our community

10C Lead with integrity

10C1 Provide representative and accountable community governance

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The budget for the internal audit committee is \$18,000 per annum, covering five meetings a year, \$1,282.35 for the chairperson per meeting and \$961.76 for each committee member plus superannuation.

REPORT

Council resolved at its 16 August 2022 to appoint the current Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC) which consisted of three independent members, who were subsequently appointed on a 2-year contract to align the with the current Council term.

At the commencement of the member term, Council had a very basic internal audit framework and over the course of the previous 2 years, the ARIC have been prudent in working with Council to further develop this in respect of the Office of Local Government's *Guidelines for risk management and internal audit for local government in NSW* to ensure compliance with the *Local Government Act 1993* and *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021*. This involved implementing numerous improvements to our internal audit model, including developing an Internal Audit Plan and ARIC Terms of Reference and providing oversight in the development of Council's strategic risk register which will be aligned with the Strategic Internal Audit Plan to be developed for the following term of ARIC.

The current ARIC has also been working with Council to commence the development of a four-year workplan covering all of the Committee's responsibilities contained within the terms of reference along with other priorities identified by the ARIC to be undertaken in the coming 12 months.

In August 2022, at the commencement of the current ARIC, Council had 67 outstanding audit action points from previous audits, with an additional 42 added from audits completed during the term. As at August 2024, Council have 18 audit action items in progress/outstanding, with 91 items being completed during the previous 2 year period which is an outstanding result for council. The ARIC has supported Council in its decision to limit the number of reviews undertaken over the course of the previous 2 year to ensure all outstanding audit action points were addressed which is evident in the result above.

Given the strong progress and achievements made throughout the previous 2-year appointment of members and with the original contracts due to expire, it is proposed to offer the committee an extension to 30 June 2025 to allow the newly elected Council the opportunity to review the performance of the existing members prior to longer term appointments being offered. As per the ARIC Terms of Reference, members can be reappointed for a further term so long as the total period of continuous membership doesn't exceed eight years. All existing members have sought re-appointment to their positions on the ARIC to commence on 1 October 2025.

In line with the ARIC Terms of Reference, any future extensions should be offered to the members on a staggered basis to ensure only one member retires from the ARIC because of rotation in any one year and to preserve the ARIC's knowledge of the Council, which will be proposed by the June 2025 Council Meeting.

CONSULTATION

All existing ARIC members have sought reappointment to their positions on the committee.

CONCLUSION

Council is required to have an Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee, which includes at least three positions held by officers external to the organisation. It is recommended to extend the appointment of the existing members to 30 June 2025.

ATTACHMENT(S)

Nil

18 GENERAL BUSINESS

Nil

19 MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

RECOMMENDATION

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

19.1 RICHMOND-UPPER CLARENCE REGIONAL LIBRARY ANNUAL REPORT 2023/2024

Director: Ryan Gaiter

Responsible Officer: Ngarie Macqueen

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the Richmond-Upper Clarence Regional Library Annual Report 2023/2024.

REPORT

In accordance with Clause 4.7 of the Richmond-Upper Clarence Regional Library Agreement authorised in 2022, between Richmond Valley Council (the administering council) and Kyogle Council (the delegating council), an Annual Report is required to be prepared for the Regional Library Service.

In accordance with the agreement and as the administering council, Richmond Valley Council has prepared a report and provided a copy to Kyogle Council as the delegating council.

The report includes details of the Regional Library Service and a report outlining the services provided throughout the 2023/2024 financial year.

A copy of the audited statement of accounts will be consolidated into the Richmond Valley Council Financial Statements which will be available at a future Council meeting.

The report outlines the highlights during the 2023/2024 period as summarised below:

- The Manager Regional Library Gary Ellem, retired after 45 years of service. During his time, he wrote 38 successful grants to the value of 2.3 million dollars, which facilitated the building of new libraries, library refurbishments, and the delivery of new resources and technology to the community.
- The regional library had 129,049 members and guests walk through the doors to use the library facilities, which is an additional 11,125 people on the previous year.
- There are 16,407 members, including 1,044 new members joining during this period.
- The libraries ran 1,044 programs for all ages, which is close to a 20% increase and the highest number held in the library's history.
- Library loan items increased by 9% over the period to 148,771.
- A monthly book club was established in Evans Head.
- The Mobile Library continued to be an important service with 39% of its membership being children under the age of 14, highlighting its importance to language and learning for young people in regional locations.
- Kyogle Library hosted 190 children's programs and events during the year with 1,721 attendees, a 91% increase on the previous year.
- 3D Printing services were established in the library with 10 designs printed to date.

The library remains a widely utilised, inclusive, and welcoming space in our community, positively affecting many lives and offering programs for all age groups. Whether it's offering resources for personal growth, educational programs, or just a comfortable place to read and reflect, the library plays a significant part in enhancing our community's wellbeing.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. **Richmond-Upper Clarence Regional Library Annual Report 2023/2024 (under separate cover)**

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

Director: Angela Jones

Responsible Officer: Andy Edwards

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the Development Application report for the period 1 July 2024 to 31 July 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 July 2024 to 31 July 2024 was twelve (12) including one (1) privately certified Complying Development Certificate with a total value of \$12,322,132.40.

One application being DA2024/0087 - Broadwater Public School - 9 Byrnes Street, Broadwater was withdrawn by the applicant as the NSW Reconstruction Authority have approved the rebuild.

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

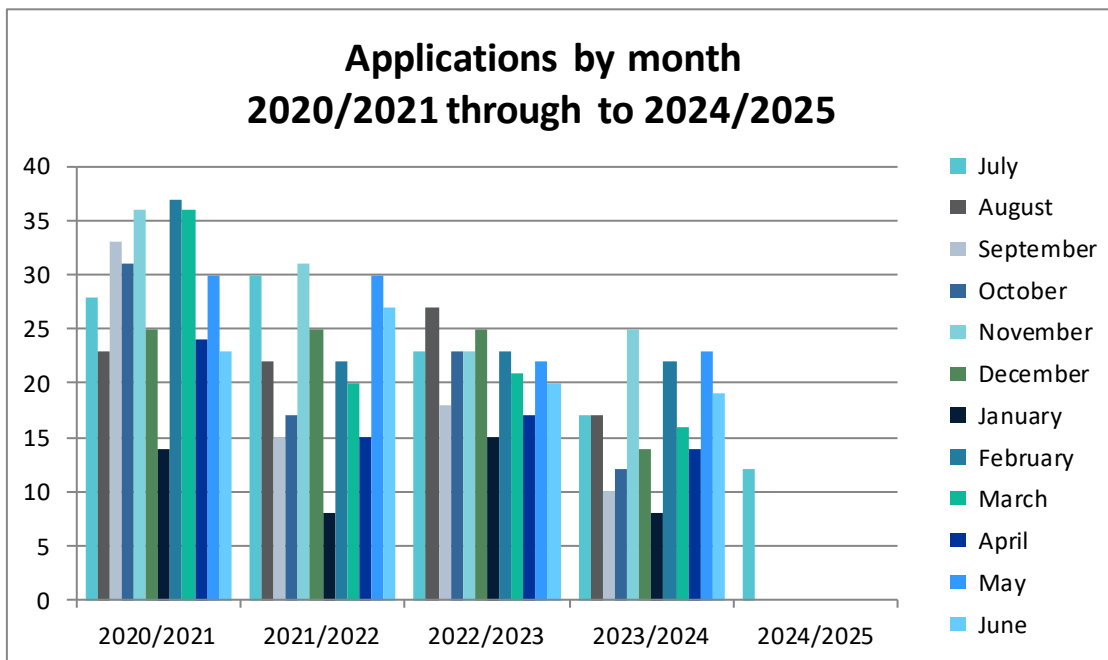


Figure 1: Monthly number of development applications and CDC’s processed by Council over five financial years.

Figure 2 provides the annual value of Development Consents including CDCs issued by Council and private certifiers over five financial years. Figure 3 provides a detailed review of the value for the reporting month of July 2024.

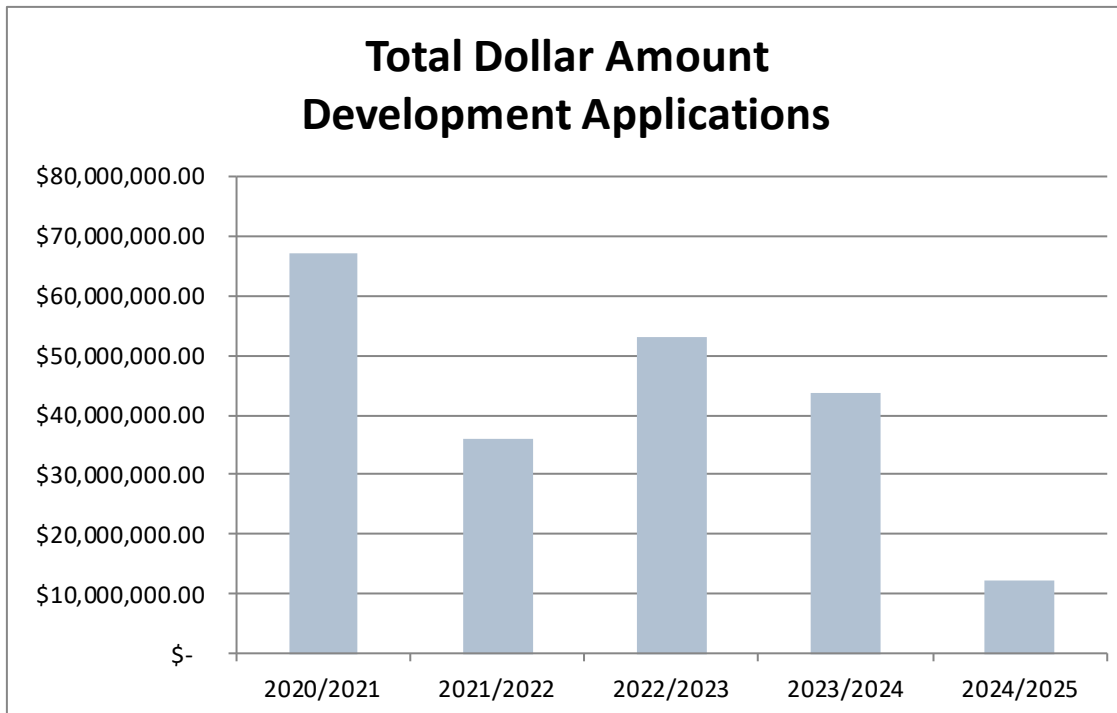


Figure 2: Annual value of development

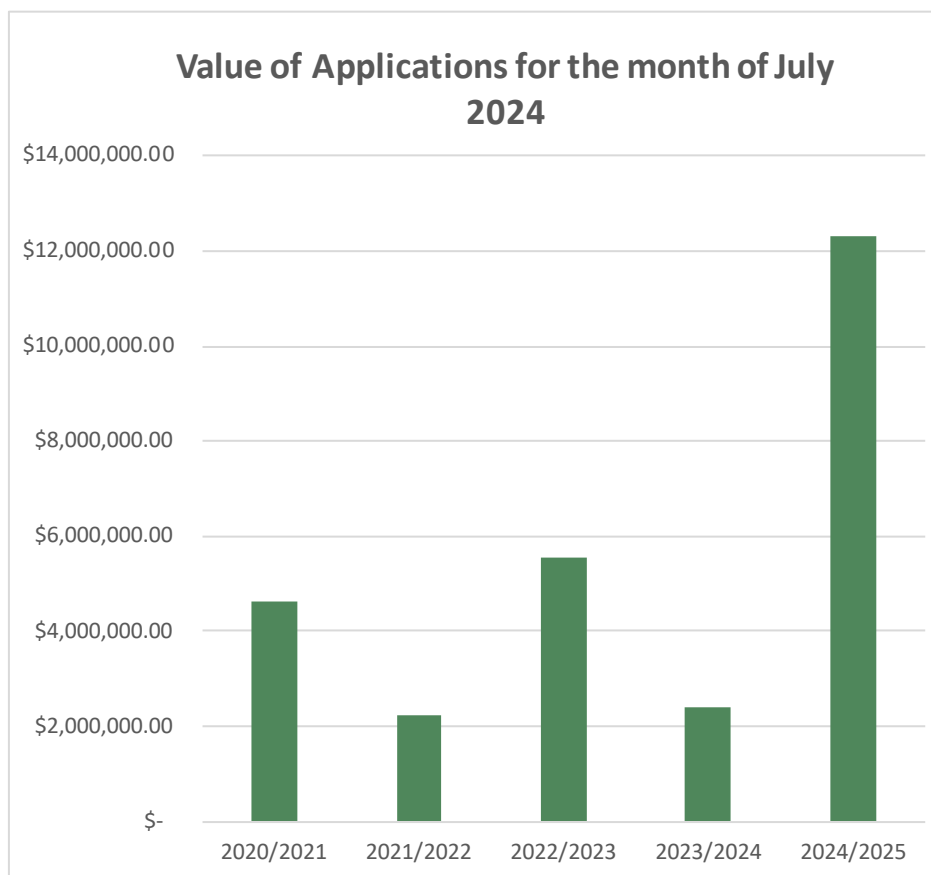


Figure 3: Value of development for the month of July 2024

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.

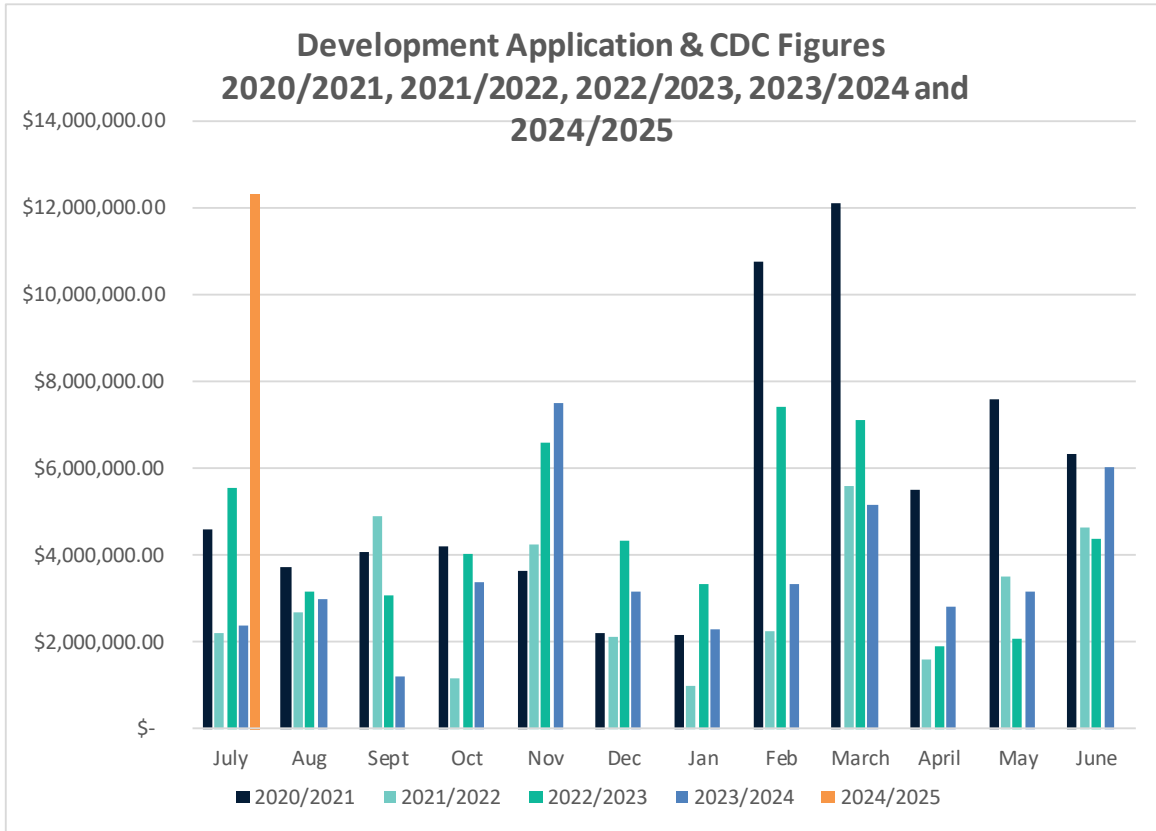


Figure 4: Value of development applications per month over five financial years.

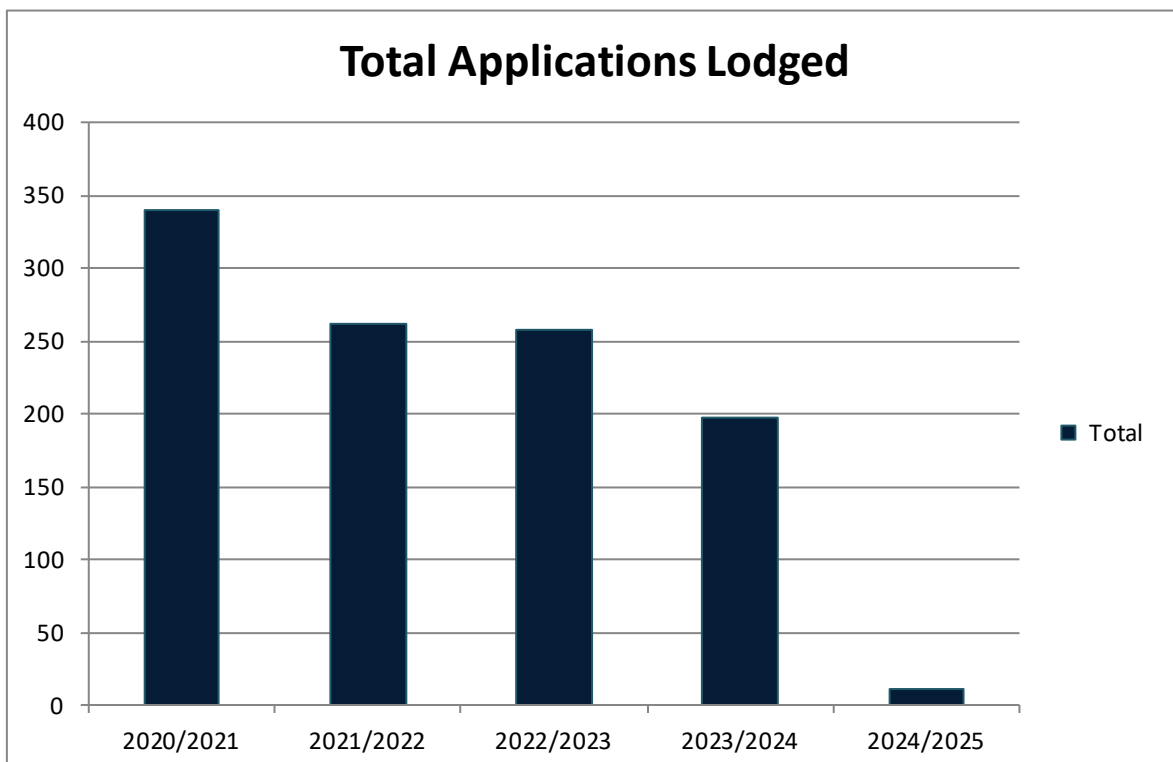


Figure 5: Number of Development Applications & CDCs per annum over five financial years

Activity for the month of July 2024

General Approvals (excluding Subdivisions, Section 4.55)	11
Section 4.55 amendments to original consent	0
Operational Consent	0
Subdivision	0
Refused	0
Rejected	0
Withdrawn	1
TOTAL NUMBER OF DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS DETERMINED (Excluding withdrawn applications)	11
Complying Development (Council Approved)	
Complying Development (Private Certifier Approved)	1
Amended Complying Development (Private Certifier Approved)	
Average assessment days for applications determined in July 2024 (Planning & Building Combined)	35
No. of Integrated development applications determined in July 2024	1
No. of Designated development applications determined in July 2024	0

ATTACHMENT(S)

Nil

Summary of Development Applications determined under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act for the period 1 July 2024 to 31 July 2024								
Application ID	Applicant	Owners	Location	Development	Date Received (In Portal)	Date Accepted (In Portal)	Determination Date	Estimated Cost
DA2024/0096	Newton Denny Chapelle	Third Sector Australia Limited (3SA)	146-152 Johnston Street, Casino	Proposed construction of shop top housing comprising of a ground floor commercial space and four (4) units, group home development comprising of three (3) units, and multi-dwelling housing comprising of six (6) units utilised as infill affordable housing. The development is inclusive of parking, waste management, landscaping, associated civil works and removal of existing vegetation.	24/01/2024	15/02/2024	30/07/2024	\$8,530,662.00
DA2024/0103	C J Pethers	C J & C E Pethers	26 Angus Place, North Casino	As built carport/machinery shed	1/02/2024	7/02/2024	19/07/2024	\$9,965.40
DA2024/0148	Ardill Payne & Partners	O J Linton-France, K J Watson & T J Linton-France	22 George Street, Broadwater	Construction of a detached dual occupancy with 2 x in-ground swimming pools	11/04/2024	29/04/2024	2/07/2024	\$710,000.00
DA2024/0150	R J Hayes	M W & J L Robson	126 Langs Way, Woodburn	As-built conversion of a shed to a dwelling creating a dual occupancy	12/04/2024	15/05/2024	2/07/2024	\$205,500.00
DA2024/0162	Barker Studio Pty Ltd	M I Couldrey	46 Ocean Drive, Evans Head	Construction of two storey attached dual occupancy, strata subdivision and associated works	29/04/2024	13/05/2024	30/07/2024	\$1,570,250.00
DA2024/0168	North Coast Petroleum	McKinlay Properties Pty Ltd	60 Hare Street, Casino	Proposed remediation works for the removal of existing underground fuel storage tanks, and works associated with the installation of a 70KL double walled fibreglass underground fuel tank and stormwater treatment system	15/05/2024	7/06/2024	30/07/2024	\$274,000.00
DA2024/0170	R J Hayes	R J Hayes	2 Seamist Lane, Evans Head	Enclose existing carport to create a bedroom and construct a single carport forward of the building line	19/05/2024	24/05/2024	8/07/2024	\$35,750.00
DA2024/0175	R J Hayes	I L Saul	8 Heath Street, Evans Head	Renovate existing house , add front and rear open decks, extend and renovate the existing shed to contain a games room, bathroom/laundry area and associated works	29/05/2024	11/06/2024	19/07/2024	\$398,200.00

Summary of Development Applications determined under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act for the period 1 July 2024 to 31 July 2024								
Application ID	Applicant	Owners	Location	Development	Date Received (In Portal)	Date Accepted (In Portal)	Determination Date	Estimated Cost
DA2024/0177	R J Hayes	R Jakupec	35 Tomki Tatham Road, Clovass	Above-ground portable steel framed swimming pool with associated fencing	2/06/2024	28/06/2024	24/07/2024	\$1,299.00
DA2024/0178	S D Henderson	D J T Braak	1/2 Oak Street, Evans Head	Change of use as health consulting rooms comprising alterations and additions to an existing building including installation of an accessible sanitary facility, new signage and associated works	5/06/2024	14/06/2024	11/07/2024	\$15,000.00
DA2024/0180	S D Henderson	R J & G A O'Neill	13 Pratts Road, Spring Grove	Alterations and additions to the existing dwelling including master bedroom, ensuite, WIR, butler's pantry, laundry and outdoor area extension	21/06/2024	26/06/2024	23/07/2024	\$155,000.00

Summary of Council Certified Complying Development Applications determined under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act for the period 1 July 2024 to 31 July 2024								
Application ID	Applicant	Owners	Location	Development	Date Received (In Portal)	Date Accepted (In Portal)	Determination Date	Estimated Cost
CDC2025/0001	Buildcert Certification Pty Ltd	JR & DI Hansen	14 Mangrove Street, Evans Head	Alterations & Additions to a Dwelling	10/07/2024	10/07/2024	10/07/2024	\$416,506.00

Summary of Development Applications Withdrawn under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act for the period 1 July 2024 to 31 July 2024								
Application ID	Applicant	Owners	Location	Development	Date Received (In Portal)	Date Accepted (In Portal)	Determination Date	Estimated Cost
DA2024/0087	Adco Constructions Pty Ltd	Department of School Education	Broadwater Public School - 9 Byrnes Street, Broadwater	Demolition of existing buildings and ancillary structures such as COLA, playing courts, covered walkways, vegetation removal and construction of a new elevated school building with at grade (undercroft) amenities and storage, and new hard and soft landscaping including replacement playing field and playground.	8/01/2024	26/02/2024	N/A	\$18,821,741.00

19.3 GRANT APPLICATION INFORMATION REPORT - JULY 2024

Director: Ryan Gaiter

Responsible Officer: Rylee Vidler

RECOMMENDATION

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

REPORT

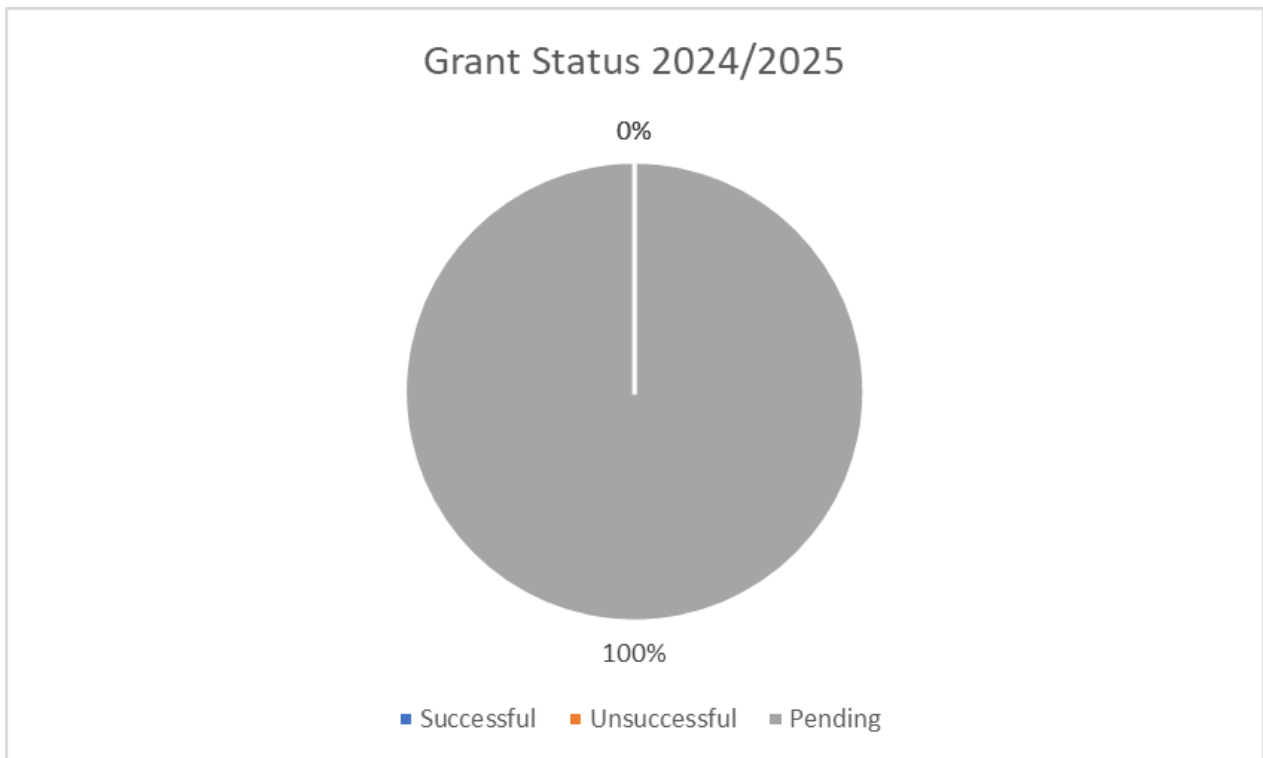
This report provides information on grant applications that have been approved, grants that have been received, grant applications that were unsuccessful and grant applications that were submitted for the month of July 2024.

During the reporting period, there was one grant approved with no new submissions made. Council was not notified of any unsuccessful grant applications.

Council received funding for 8 grants totalling \$6,562,364.

A summary of grants approved and received, as well as the status of applications for the current financial year to 31 July 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)	\$ 25,843,599	\$25,843,599	\$ -	N/A	Various
Comment: Council has been approved for the following new EPAR projects: Coraki Town Roads, MR145 Minor Slip and Rifle Range Road. Note: This is a cumulative total for all EPAR projects approved, previously reported \$25,482,504. There are currently 40 EPAR submissions approved.							

Grants that have been received

Project Name	Funding Body	Funding Name	Project Value	Grant Funding	Council Funding	Application Submitted	Date Received	Total Received
Betterment of Casino Netball Clubhouse	Regional NSW (State)	Community Assets Program	\$ 1,385,750	\$ 1,385,750	\$ -	27 March 2023	\$ 554,300 8 July 2024	\$ 554,300
Comment: First milestone payment received for executing agreement.								
Richmond Park Weed Treatment Program	Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (State)	Crown Reserves Improvement Fund - Weeds	\$ 40,744	\$ 32,640	\$ 8,104	17 November 2023	\$ 32,640 8 July 2024	\$ 32,640
Comment: Total funding received to commence works.								
Richmond Valley Street Fair	Transport for NSW (State)	Open Streets Program	\$ 21,500	\$ 21,500	\$ -	29 April 2024	\$ 17,200 11 July 2024	\$ 17,200
Comment: First milestone payment received for executing agreement.								
Thearles Canal culvert upgrade to improve drainage	National Emergency Management Agency (Federal)	Northern Rivers Resilience Initiative Phase 1	\$ 1,478,414	\$ 1,478,414	\$ -	N/A	\$ 312,000 17 July 2024	\$ 942,000
Comment: Milestone 3 payment.								

Project Name	Funding Body	Funding Name	Project Value	Grant Funding	Council Funding	Application Submitted	Date Received	Total Received
Casino Industrial Precincts	Public Works Advisory (Joint Federal and State)	Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund	\$ 13,333,000	\$ 9,969,000	\$3,364,000	N/A	\$ 3,718,245 24 July 2024	\$ 3,826,434
Comment: Progress payment for works completed on Casino Industrial Precinct.								
Rappville Sewer Augmentation	Public Works Advisory (Federal and State)	Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund	\$ 5,985,000	\$ 5,985,000	\$ -	N/A	\$ 340,439 24 July 2024	\$ 418,268
Comment: Progressive claim received for works performed on the Rappville Sewer network.								
Casino Showgrounds and Racecourse Upgrade	Regional NSW (State)	Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund	\$ 12,880,868	\$12,880,868	\$ -	N/A	\$ 1,180,868 29 July 2024	\$12,880,868
Comment: Final payment received following grant acquittal.								
Naughtons Gap Road Dilapidation Repairs and Maintenance	Transport for NSW (State)	Fixing Local Roads Round 1 2019	\$ 851,155	\$ 751,155	\$ 100,000	27 November 2019	\$ 396,671 29 July 2024	\$ 751,155
Comment: Final payment received following grant acquittal.								

ATTACHMENT(S)

Nil

19.4 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS - ANNUAL DESIGNATED PERSON RETURNS

Director: Ryan Gaiter

Responsible Officer: Kate Ailder-Conn

RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes that all required disclosure of interest returns have been received for the period ending 30 June 2024.

REPORT

In accordance with Council's Code of Conduct and Disclosure of Interest Procedure, Councillors and Designated Persons are required to lodge their completed disclosure of interest returns by 30 September annually.

A Councillor or Designated Person must make and lodge with the General Manager a return in the form set out in Schedule 2 of the Code of Conduct, disclosing the Councillor's or Designated Person's interests as specified in Schedule 1 of the Code within three months of:

- becoming a Councillor or Designated Person;
- 30 June each year; or
- the Councillor or Designated Person becoming aware of an interest they are required to disclose under Schedule 1 of the Code that has not been previously disclosed in a return.

All of the required disclosures have now been received from Councillors and Designated Persons. The disclosures are tabled for the information of Council and will be made available on request to any member of the public at Council's Casino Administration Office.

Returns will be published on Council's website in accordance with Office of Local Government requirements. In situations where Council believes there is an overriding public interest against the disclosure of some of the information contained in the returns, redactions will be applied prior to publishing. The decision to redact personal information is made on a case-by-case basis following application of the public interest test.

ATTACHMENT(S)

Nil

19.5 CORRESPONDENCE: TRAFFIC AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY CENTRE STREET ROUNDABOUT**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council receives and notes the correspondence provided to Minister for Regional Transport and Roads the Hon. Jenny Aitchison MP, State Member Richie Williamson MP and Federal Member Kevin Hogan MP and the response received from Richie Williamson MP.

SUMMARY OF CORRESPONDENCE

A copy of the correspondence provided together with a response letter follows;

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Letter to Hon Jenny Aitchinson MP
2. Richie Williimanson - response



8 July 2024

The Hon. Jenny Aitchison, MP
GPO Box 5341
SYDNEY NSW 2001

10 Graham Place Casino NSW 2470
Postal: Locked Bag 10 Casino NSW 2470
t: 02 6660 0300 f: 02 6660 1300

council@richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au
www.richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au

ABN 54 145 907 009

Dear Minister

I write, once again, to raise our community's serious concern with the safety of three intersections, along the Bruxner Highway in the town of Casino. Over the past 10 years, Richmond Valley Council has advocated to all levels of government to highlight this ongoing safety issue and, at its June 2024 meeting Council resolved the following:

That Council writes to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads the Hon. Jenny Aitchison MP, State Member Richie Williamson MP and Federal Member Kevin Hogan MP to reiterate the community's ongoing serious concerns with traffic and pedestrian safety along Centre Street (Bruxner Highway) at the Richmond and Canterbury Street intersections, and request that roundabouts and/or traffic lights be provided at these two intersections, and a safer pedestrian crossing facility at the Centre/Barker Street intersection, as a matter of urgency.

The area referenced in the resolution is a 1,445m section of road, adjacent to the Casino CBD, containing three critical intersections. Two of the intersections are give way intersections, with the third having a roundabout, with a pedestrian crossing immediately south of the exit. This section of the highway has a high traffic and pedestrian movements, as it serves local schools, the Casino CBD, a number of fast-food outlets and the Casino Memorial Swimming Pool.

This road marks the convergence of two major regional freight routes – the Bruxner Highway and the Summerland Way – and at peak periods it is heavily congested with local traffic, including school buses, and through-traffic, including heavy vehicles and B doubles. There have been multiple low-speed crashes on this section of the highway and numerous pedestrian safety incidents over the past 10 years.

However, repeated attempts to have intersection improvements funded through the Federal Government's Black Spot program have consistently failed to meet the funding criteria, because no-one has been seriously or fatally injured in these traffic incidents, as yet. Council believes this should not be the benchmark for road safety improvements and seeks your urgent support to proactively address these issues before serious injury occurs to the many children and elderly pedestrians who utilise this area on a daily basis.

Council has approached the former RMS and now TfNSW on a number of occasions to address the concerns at these intersections, however we have been unable to advance any commitment from these agencies to provide a long-term solution. Over the past 10 years, traffic numbers on this road have continued to increase, and a further increase is expected in the coming years, as the NSW Government's Richmond Valley Regional Jobs Precinct initiative is activated at Casino.

Love where we live and work



While Casino welcomes this growth, it is important that we should plan for the long-term safety of key traffic routes within the town and proactively address these issues. We again request that these intersections be considered for roundabout and/or traffic lights and pedestrian upgrades to reduce the risk to our community.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Should you require any further information, please contact Council's General Manager, Vaughan Macdonald, at vaughan.macdonald@richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Mustow', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Clr Robert Mustow
Mayor



9 August 2024

Ref:6932

Cr Robert Mustow
Mayor
Richmond Valley Council
Locked Bag 10
CASINO NSW 2460

Dear Cr Mustow

Thank you for providing me with a copy of Council's letter sent to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, Jenny Aitchison regarding ongoing concerns with traffic and pedestrian safety along Centre Street, Casino (Bruxner Highway) at the Richmond and Canterbury Street intersections.

I certainly share Council's commitment to ensuring the safety of the local community, particularly at these critical intersections.

I understand that repeated attempts to secure funding for intersection improvements through the Federal Government's Black Spot program have been unsuccessful due to the lack of serious or fatal injuries. However, I agree that waiting for a tragedy to occur before taking action is not an acceptable approach to road safety.

I fully support Council's request for the installation of roundabouts and/or traffic lights at the Richmond and Canterbury Street intersections, and a safer pedestrian crossing at the Centre/Barker Street intersection. These measures are critical to reducing the risks associated with the current traffic conditions and ensuring the safety of all road users.

To assist, I have written to the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads, Jenny Aitchison, advocating on behalf of the Council and the local community. I will emphasise the urgency of these upgrades and the need for proactive measures to address the safety concerns before a serious incident occurs.

Thank you once again for bringing this important issue to my attention. I am committed to supporting Council's efforts and will keep you updated on any progress.

Yours sincerely

RICHIE WILLIAMSON, MP
Member for Clarence

RW.dn

11 Prince Street, Grafton NSW 2460

02 6643 1244

clarence@parliament.nsw.gov.au

THE NATIONALS
for Regional NSW

19.6 CORRESPONDENCE: NSW RECONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY - MID RICHMOND PLACE PLANS**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council receives and notes the correspondence provided to the NSW Reconstruction Authority and the response received in relation to the letter.

SUMMARY OF CORRESPONDENCE

It was resolved at the July Ordinary meeting,

That Council;

1. Notes the outcome of the community consultation process for the draft Mid Richmond Place Plans and the detailed feedback received in response to the public exhibition;
2. Acknowledges the support of the NSW Reconstruction Authority in the Place Plan development process, which includes Disaster Adaption Planning options for the future of these communities;
3. Adopts the Coraki Place Plan; and
4. Adopts the Mid Richmond Place Plan (including the communities of Woodburn, Broadwater, Rileys Hill and Evans Head).

The following letter was provided, and the response received is included.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. **Letter to NSWRA**
2. **Response - NSWRA**



10 Graham Place Casino NSW 2470
Postal: Locked Bag 10 Casino NSW 2470
t: 02 6660 0300 f: 02 6660 1300

council@richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au
www.richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au

ABN 54 145 907 009

22 July 2024

Mr Mal Lanyon APM
Acting Chief Executive Officer
NSW Reconstruction Authority

Via email: Mal.Lanyon@reconstruction.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr Lanyon

Mid Richmond Place Plans project

On behalf of Richmond Valley Council, I would like to thank you for the NSW Reconstruction Authority's support in developing the Mid Richmond Place Plans project for the communities of Coraki, Woodburn, Broadwater, Riley's Hill and Evans Head. Council adopted the final plans at its 16 July Ordinary Meeting and acknowledged the valuable role this project will play in supporting ongoing flood recovery and building long-term resilience within these communities.

The funding and assistance received from the Authority, supported by a matching contribution from Council, has helped to develop combined place planning and disaster adaptation strategies for each village, in the wake of the 2022 flood event. The project was delivered with support from consulting firms Place Design Group and Meridian Urban. It explored the application of the CSIRO's 'Maintain, Modify, Transform' framework at the local level to help our flood-affected communities address future challenges and constraints. Council found that this model was very effective in engaging the community in identifying adaptation strategies over the short, medium and longer term and exploring the roles that residents, Council and the NSW Government could play in delivering these outcomes.

The work closely referenced the NSW Disaster Mitigation Plan actions, to be delivered during 2024-26. In this regard, completion of State plan actions, such as improvement of the flood gauge network and early warning systems (actions 8 & 9), as well as clarification of strategic planning controls addressing tolerable natural hazard risk (action 7) are critical components in successfully implementing the local strategies. The Place Plan project will also serve as a valuable contribution to the Northern Rivers Regional DAP and Council looks forward to working with the Reconstruction Authority to progress this project and to share the lessons learned from our local adaptation pilot with other Northern Rivers councils.

In adopting the Mid Richmond Place Plans, the Council resolution for this item publicly acknowledged the contribution of the Reconstruction Authority, and I would like to particularly acknowledge the support we have received from the A/Executive Director of the Northern Rivers Adaptation Division, Ms Kristie Clarke and the Director Resilience and Adaptation, Ms Nerida Buckley and her team in progressing this work.

Love where we live and work



Thank you once again for investing in the resilience of our Mid Richmond Communities. Council appreciates not only the opportunity to develop our future adaptation strategies, but also the Authority's swift response in delivering practical assistance for these communities with much needed recovery works, such as reconstruction of the Broadwater Public School. I look forward to a continued partnership with the NSW Reconstruction Authority as we complete the remaining flood recovery works for the Mid Richmond and plan for a more sustainable and resilient future.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vaughan Macdonald', written in a cursive style.

Vaughan Macdonald
General Manager

NSW Reconstruction Authority



Our Ref: D24/13893

Mr Vaughan MacDonald
General Manager
Richmond Valley Council
E: council@richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au

Mid Richmond Place Plans project

Dear Mr MacDonald,

Thank you for your correspondence of 22 July 2024, regarding the Mid Richmond Place Plans project.

I would like to thank you for your kind words of acknowledgement of the contribution of the Reconstruction Authority, and the support Council received from the A/Executive Director of the Northern Rivers Adaptation Division, Ms Kristie Clarke and the Director Resilience and Adaptation, Ms Nerida Buckley, and her team in progressing this work.

We look forward to continuing to work closely with Richmond Valley Council.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mal Lanyon".

Mal Lanyon
A/Chief Executive Officer
NSW Reconstruction Authority

23 July 2024

19.7 CORRESPONDENCE: ASSISTANT MINISTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER THE HON PATRICK GORMAN; CASINO SHOWGROUND AND RACECOURSE UPGRADES**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council receives and notes the correspondence from the Assistant Minister to the Prime Minister regarding Casino Showground and Racecourse upgrades.

SUMMARY OF CORRESPONDENCE

A copy of the correspondence received together with Council's letter to the Prime Minister follows;

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Letter from The Hon Patrick Gorman MP regarding Casino Showground and Racecourse upgrades
2. Letter to the Australian Prime Minister 28 May 2024

10 JUL 2024



SCANNED

10 JUL 2024

ASSISTANT MINISTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER Doc. No.
ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR THE PUBLIC SERVICE
MEMBER FOR PERTH
The Hon Patrick Gorman MP

Reference: MC24-080806

Mr Vaughan Macdonald
General Manager
Richmond Valley Council
10 Graham Place
CASINO NSW 2470

Dear Mr Macdonald

Thank you for your letter dated 28 May 2024 to the Hon Anthony Albanese MP, Prime Minister, regarding the recent upgrades to the Casino Showground and Racecourse. The Prime Minister has asked me to respond on his behalf.

I am pleased to hear that the joint funding from the Australian and New South Wales Governments under the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund has had such a positive impact for the Richmond Valley community. I would like to congratulate Richmond Valley Council and the community in bringing these projects to fruition following the devastation of the 2019–20 Black Summer bushfires and the 2022 Northern Rivers floods.

I would also like to acknowledge the work the Richmond Valley Council has done to ensure the Casino Showground and Racecourse can support the community during future disasters, with the showgrounds doubling as an evacuation centre for families and livestock. Increasing community preparedness is critical in building long-term resilience, and the Australian Government is committed to supporting communities like Richmond Valley in this endeavour.

Thank you again for writing.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Patrick Gorman'.

PATRICK GORMAN

01 / 07 / 2024



10 Graham Place Casino NSW 2470
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t: 02 6660 0300 f: 02 6660 1300

council@richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au
www.richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au

ABN 54 145 907 009

28 May 2024

The Hon Anthony Albanese MP
Prime Minister
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister

Casino Showground and Racecourse Upgrade

Richmond Valley Council resolved at its 16 April Ordinary Meeting to write to you to express our community's appreciation for the \$12.88m contribution Council received from the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund to upgrade the Casino Showground and Racecourse facility. This essential funding, provided jointly by the Australian and NSW Governments, has helped to deliver a high-quality facility for equestrian activities and community events that will serve as a major drawcard for the Northern Rivers.

The economic stimulus provided through the construction and ongoing operation of the Showground will support our community's continued recovery from the devastating bushfires of 2019 and subsequent natural disasters, including the 2022 flood. Council officially opened the new facility last month and is already receiving keen interest from organisations through NSW to stage new equestrian events at the site. We look forward to seeing activities at the Showground and Racecourse growing from strength to strength, as we continue to celebrate the Richmond Valley's agricultural heritage and explore new opportunities for community events.

Consecutive allocations from the BLER Fund, of \$8.2m in 2020 and a further \$4.6m in 2023 have allowed us to go beyond Council's original vision for the upgrade and, combined with additional funding from the NSW Showground Stimulus Program, Drought Communities Funding, Crown Lands programs, Flood Recovery program and Council, this has brought the total investment in the redevelopment to \$14.4 million.

Central to the new facility is a 3,200 m² undercover multipurpose arena, with seating for up to 2,500, which will open opportunities for a wide range of equestrian events and community activities. Other features of the upgrade include:

- 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.

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The BLERF funding has helped to create a regionally significant facility which will continue to provide economic stimulus and employment opportunities for the Richmond Valley for many years to come. Council is proud of the new facility and the benefits it will bring to our community and we thank you for your support in helping to deliver this exciting project.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vaughan Macdonald', written in a cursive style.

Vaughan Macdonald
General Manager

cc. The Hon Kevin Hogan, MP, Federal Member for Page

20 QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Nil

21 QUESTIONS FOR NEXT MEETING (IN WRITING)