

Richmond Valley Council

Annual Report
2023-2024

Richmond
Valley
Council



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

Richmond Valley Council

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MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR AND GENERAL MANAGER

We are pleased to present this year's annual report, highlighting our collective achievements, challenges faced, and the strategic vision which will guide us into the future.

Although the 2023-2024 budget included a sizeable capital works program of \$72.3 million it does not include any essential public asset reconstruction works from the February 2022 flood event as most were still pending approval from Transport for NSW at the time of budget preparation.

Council has not been immune from the challenges of acquiring the number of skilled workers we need to conduct the critical work of delivering our capital and operational plans, nor have we been shielded from supply chain disruption and other inflationary pressures.

Despite these challenges, our capital program continues to move forward, which is all part of our plan for future service delivery requirements and creating economic growth in the Richmond Valley.

Over the past year, Council has made major progress in flood recovery – with significant funding secured for local projects, essential infrastructure repairs completed, community buildings and sporting facilities restored and works underway on major challenges, such as the Naughtons Gap landslip restoration and planning for the replacement of the Tatham bridges.

Council has also taken the first steps towards securing the Richmond Valley's place as an emerging regional growth centre; with more housing, jobs and opportunities for the future.



Robert Mustow



Vaughan Macdonald

“ COUNCIL CONTINUES TO WORK ON ITS LONG-TERM VISION TO ATTRACT MORE INVESTMENT TO THE RICHMOND VALLEY AND PROVIDE MORE JOBS AND HOUSING FOR OUR COMMUNITY. ”



Council's Community Strategic Plan sets an ambitious growth agenda through to 2040; including increasing our population by 4000, opening the way for 1600 additional homes and jobs, and improving public green spaces throughout the community. This vision will be delivered through a combination of strategic government investment, progressive local leadership, and a focus on attracting willing investors to our Valley.

Council has been working in close cooperation with the NSW Government for the past two years to lay the foundations for the Regional Job Precinct. This includes not only supporting the master plan, but also developing a Growth Management Strategy for the whole Valley, identifying where residential and employment precincts will be established and how key environmental and agricultural lands will be protected for the future.

Council, the NSW Government and private landowners have been investigating the opportunity to activate a flood-safe development site at Fairy Hill to accommodate future housing growth. Other potential residential developments are also available for activated landowners and developers to take advantage of this growth. With this population growth will come increased opportunities in service industries such as retail, health care and construction, as well as further employment in tourism with the activation of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail and the Casino Showground and Racecourse equine development.

Under Council's management, the Northern Rivers Livestock Exchange (NRLX) had established itself as the second largest saleyard operation in NSW with further actions for growth and improvement identified in the 2022 Business Plan. Council began to implement the Plan in early 2023, however, an unsuccessful EOI process for new licensing arrangements resulted in the temporary closure of the facility later that year. This led to a review of strategic direction and Council's ultimate decision in December to lease the facility to a private operator, Outcross Agri-Services. The new approach will help to ensure the NRLX can achieve the required financial, operational and work health and safety outcomes envisaged in the Business Plan and will see the saleyards continue on the path to being a leader in the NSW agricultural industry.

Environmental sustainability

Council has implemented several sustainability initiatives, from increasing our recycling programs to launching the Community Greening Program, we are committed to protecting our environment for future generations.

Work continues on our flying-fox habitat restoration programs and further analysis of water consumption across Council's water network is underway to identify high-water users and potential water losses within the system. This data will help to inform future water saving programs. Work will also continue on identifying more community facilities for solar installations, following successful completion of the Council's Casino administration building solar project. This project provided a new 99.6-kilowatt, roof-mounted solar-power system, aimed at substantially reducing the building's dependence on non-renewable energy sources and cutting Council's emissions by an estimated 113 tonnes of CO2 equivalent.

Over the past four years, Council has been exploring key directions for future water supply and sewerage management to ensure it can meet the needs of the Richmond Valley's growing community. The Richmond Valley Water for Life 2050 strategy brings these directions together to deliver more than \$200 million in essential water and sewerage infrastructure over the next 25 years. This will include regionally significant projects, such as the \$65 million replacement of the Casino Sewage Treatment Plant, stage two development of the Evans Head Sewage Treatment Plant, as well as the Rappville Sewerage Scheme.

Continuing to build community resilience in a changing climate is a key focus, with the finalisation of a new Richmond Valley Flood Study in September 2023 and improving Casino's water security, with Council receiving funding through the NSW Government's Safe and Secure Water program to explore options to access more water in the Jabour Weir pool, as well as considering longer-term options for increased storage. Active discussions also continue regarding a possible long-term solution to provide the security of a second water source from Rous County Council's network. Rous is also progressing its plans to improve water security for the Mid Richmond communities.

Vibrant communities

Council has made major progress in flood recovery, with more than \$57 million in funding secured for essential community projects. This included a total of \$4.3 million under the Community Local Infrastructure Program to build a new shared clubhouse facility for Woodburn Pony Club and Woodburn Tennis Club, as well as clubhouses for Casino Rugby League, Casino Netball and Casino Swimming Club.

Council also received funding for upgrades to the Woodburn Hall car park, and a further \$3.6 million to build a new suspension bridge across the Richmond River at Casino, replacing the old low-level walkway which gets regularly damaged in flood events.

Celebrating our community's unique identity and encouraging diversity and inclusion has been a key focus of the past year. Council finalised its new Disability Inclusion Action Plan in December and will continue to work with local service providers and community groups to implement the actions. A key focus will be on providing more opportunities for people with disabilities to gain employment with Council.

We also continued to support key community events, such as NAIDOC Week and community Christmas street parties, as well providing key sponsorship for signature events such as Primex and Beef Week. The Council-managed Casino Truck Show broke all records this year, to position it as the biggest and best truck show in the southern hemisphere.



Infrastructure improvements

Council's commitment to improving the Richmond Valley's infrastructure remains steadfast. We have completed several key projects, including the expansion of the Woodburn-Coraki Road, the replacement of the Jacky Bulbin Bridge, completion of the Coraki-Ellangowan Road upgrade and repairs to the Pikapene landslip and to James Lane at Rappville.

Restoration of Naughtons Gap Road is underway, and funding was secured to replace the ageing Tatham bridges with new flood-resilient structures, as well as upgrading flood-affected sites on the Woodburn-Coraki Road at Thearles Canal and Dairy Flat. The replacement of the storm water infrastructure at Illawong Lane, Evans Head, has started, which will resolve long-standing issues with local flooding from intense rainfall events.

Other projects showcasing our infrastructure program include the modernisation of the Casino Memorial Swimming Pool, the opening of Coraki Swimming Pool's new Splash Pad, the rejuvenation of the Casino Showground and Racecourse precinct, and the opening of the Casino to Bentley section of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail.

Major progress has also been made on the new Nammoona landfill cell, which will provide more than 10 years of landfill capacity for the residual waste which is generated by our community.

Future vision

Council continues to work on its long-term vision to attract more investment to the Richmond Valley and provide more jobs and housing for our community. Completion of the Richmond Valley Growth Management Strategy, Casino Place Plan and Mid Richmond Place Plans was a major step forward in mapping out the vision for future housing and commercial development throughout the Valley.

The Community Strategic plan continues to focus on flood recovery and sets an objective to establish the Richmond Valley as an emerging employment centre in the Northern Rivers. The new 2023-25 Delivery Program also continues a focus on flood recovery and incorporates all the remaining actions from the Rebuilding the Richmond Valley Recovery Plan.

Council has a positive vision for the future, one with growth, improved prosperity and opportunities. Our plans will not only contribute to the betterment of the Richmond Valley, but also the broader Northern Rivers region. We will continue to pursue opportunities to work with the Australian and NSW governments, as building positive partnerships with them helps to raise awareness of local needs and priorities - and deliver great outcomes for our community.



Acknowledgments

We would like to extend our gratitude to councillors, Council staff, community leaders, businesses and residents who have contributed to our successes this year. Your hard work, dedication, and support are the driving forces behind our progress.

Together, we have accomplished much and, together, we will continue to build a brighter future for all.

Robert Mustow

Vaughan Macdonald

ABOUT THE RICHMOND VALLEY



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

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

The Richmond Valley Council local government area covers 304,737 hectares and extends from the coastline at Evans Head to the foothills of the Great Dividing Range to the west, interspersed with State forests, national parks and nature reserves.

The largest town is Casino, with other communities including Broadwater, Rileys Hill, Coraki, Evans Head, New Italy, Woodburn and Rappville, as well as rural areas.

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

With an estimated population of 23,705 people, the area has a steady economy and a large number of natural assets including beaches, significant rivers, creeks and hinterland areas. This natural beauty and the relaxed and friendly atmosphere of the community has been a major draw card for sea changers and tree changers in recent years.

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

But it's not just beef the Richmond Valley produces. Casino is home to one of four NSW Regional Job Precincts, which will facilitate the growth of industry, agribusiness and manufacturing not just in Casino, but across and the North Coast region. The Casino precinct was chosen due to its strong transport linkages and Richmond Valley Council's drive to provide for resilient, future-focused growth and diversification of economic activity. The diversity in our economy is also exemplified by the tourism influxes experienced in our coastal regions, and several signature events which draw tourists inland.

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



RICHMOND VALLEY COUNCILLORS



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

STAFFING PROFILE



A restructure was undertaken in March 2021 to strengthen Council's executive team, in order to support the delivery of priorities such as:

Balancing the need to maintain and renew existing infrastructure with the demand for new infrastructure

Achieving long-term financial sustainability

Driving strategic goals including encouraging the development of new industries in the Richmond Valley and facilitating more housing opportunities

Responding to the challenge of an increasing natural disaster burden.

Council employees 295 staff (full time equivalent) under the leadership of the General Manager, with services delivered under the following structure in the 2023/2024 year.

Director Community Service Delivery

- Development and regulatory services
- Sustainable communities and environment
- Customer experience
- Water, sewer and projects
- Workshops
- Roads and drainage
- Communication, events and tourism
- Emergency management, resilience and recovery

Director Organisational Services

- Financial management
- Fleet and procurement
- Governance
- Information and Technology Services
- People and culture
- Regional libraries
- Casino Indoor Sports Stadium
- Mid Richmond

Director Projects and Business Development

- Asset systems and planning
- Asset delivery and projects
- Invest and Live RV
- Property and economic projects
- Waste and resource recovery
- Infrastructure recovery
- Strategic grants management
- Pools, quarries, showground, rail trail and aerodrome

Chief of Staff

- Community growth planning
- Strategic grants
- Risk management
- Supporting external relationships



WE TAKE CARE OF



\$1.20 BILLION IN COMMUNITY ASSETS



\$110M IN ANNUAL INCOME



1064 KM OF ROADS



17 COMMUNITY HALLS



4 PUBLIC POOLS



16,407 LIBRARY MEMBERS

EMPLOYEE STATISTICS



105

Staff that are women



83

Staff that are Gen Y (born between 1981 - 1996)



64

Staff that are Gen Z (born between 1997 - 2010)



23

Staff that have worked for Council for over 25 years



295

Number of Council staff full-time equivalent

ON EXHIBITION

Over the course of the year, Council placed a number of plans, strategies and development applications on exhibition for the community to provide feedback on. Some of the documents placed on exhibition included:

Richmond Valley Regional Jobs Precinct Masterplan

Mid Richmond Place Plans

Northern Rivers Rail Trail

Richmond Valley Water for Life 2050 Strategy

Operational Plan, Revenue Policy and Long-Term Financial Plan

Section 7.12 Contributions Plan

Section 94A Contributions Plan

Casino Flood Study, Stormwater Study and Inflow and Infiltration Strategy Update

Richmond Valley Flood Study

Richmond Valley Council Disability Inclusion Action Plan

Naming of Unnamed Roads and Bridges

OUR VISION: PRINCIPLES & VALUES

To guide in the delivery of the Richmond Valley Made Community Strategic Plan 2040 (CSP), a set of principles were identified, through consultation with the community.

The six principles form the basis for the key directions we have set in the CSP and the strategies and actions that will help to deliver them.



Everyone in our community should feel safe, valued and respected



Everyone should have a home



People should be proud of where they live



People should be able to live here all their life – they shouldn't have to move away to get an education, find a home or get a job



Everyone should be treated fairly and have the same opportunities in life



All of us should leave this place better than we found it for generations to come



OUR VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS

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

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

We lead by example

We take responsibility

We do what we say

We embrace change

We are community focused

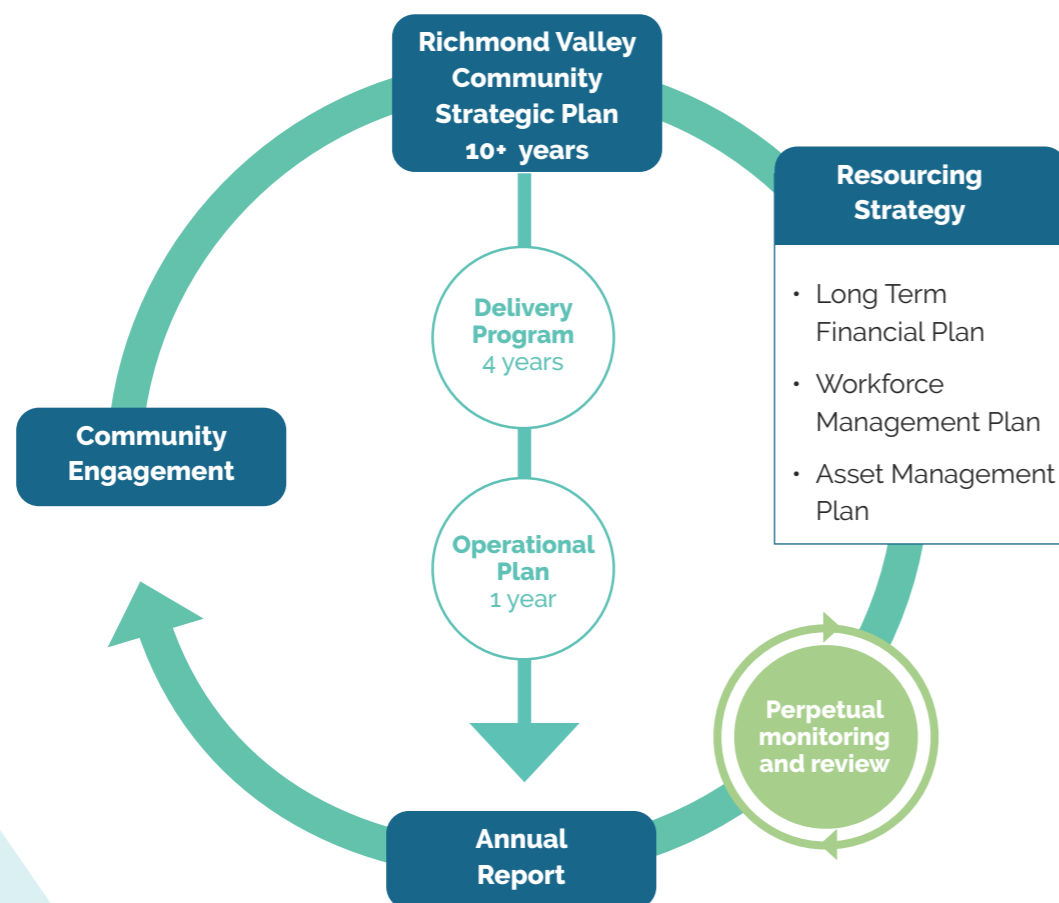
We are in this together



INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING FRAMEWORK

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

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



HIGHLIGHTS OF SIGNATURE PROJECTS

CASINO SHOWGROUND & RACECOURSE

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

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



Casino Showground and Racecourse Upgrade

The Casino Showground and Racecourse upgrade is nearing completion, and its benefits are already being realised based on the events held so far.

The upgraded facility includes:

- 40m x 80m undercover multipurpose arena
- Outdoor turf equestrian warm up and pony club area
- 40m x 40m outdoor sand warm up arena
- 40 undercover event day horse stalls
- 80 racehorse training stables
- Replacement and upgrade of sand track and install new irrigation system
- Centre arena improvements including surface, lighting and stock yard improvements
- Racetrack upgrades and new irrigation 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.

The additional funding received from the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund has allowed Council to increase the seating capacity of the covered multi-purpose events arena to 2,500 people, improve access arrangements and internal roads and car parking, as well as build an equine pool to support the racehorse training facilities.

Other works completed, such as the powered event camping area, will increase the facility's ability to host additional events including, music festivals, car shows, trade shows and markets. These events are expected to boost the local economy by attracting visitors from across NSW to stay in the Northern Rivers and spend money at businesses in the region. Council has also resumed the short stay free camping at Casino Showground to encourage more travelers to stay overnight and aims to benefit the local economy through the purchasing of local goods and services.

The official opening of the Casino Showground and Racecourse Project was held on 20 April 2024 which had a successful community response. The day featured several equestrian activities including cross country, show jumping and jackpot barrel races with an official ceremony taking place. Live music, BBQ and canteen were also provided on the day.

NORTHERN RIVERS RAIL TRAIL

The Casino-Murwillumbah rail line was closed in 2004, with regional planning and advocacy for the rail trail project commencing in 2013. In 2019, Council received \$7.5 million from the Federal Government's National Tourism Icons Program to design and construct the Casino to Bentley section of the Trail, with a trail length of 13.4km. This section will be the 'Southern Trail Head' for the entire Casino to Murwillumbah trail with a total length of 130km.

Funding for the project was delivered in two phases. Phase One, worth \$1 million, included works such as:

- Masterplan
- Concept Design
- Detailed Survey
- Bridge Assessment and 30% Concept Design
- Concept Landscape Treatment
- Heritage Impact Statement
- Biodiversity Assessment
- Preliminary Review of Environment Factors
- Asbestos Management Plan.

Phase Two of the funding was \$6.5 million to complete the final detailed design and construction of the Casino to Bentley section of the trail. With an escalation of construction costs since the funding was secured, additional funding has now been obtained through NSW Government agencies to complete the Back Creek bridge at Bentley to complete the connection with the Lismore section of the Rail Trail.

The key activities of Phase Two completed in March 2024 included:

- Removal of tracks
- Detailed construction drawing for rail trail and ancillary works
- Detailed architectural drawings for Old Casino Station upgrade
- Construction of the rail trail from Old Casino Station to Back Creek Bridge
- Construction of car parks
- Refurbishment of Old Casino Station
- Landscaping
- Educational signage.



Casino to Bentley section of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail

The Casino-Bentley section of the trail offers a shared track for cycling and walking, with an adjoining bridle trail for horse riding. The experience includes seven bridges, changing rural landscapes and panoramic views from the rest area above the railway tunnel. The tunnel is home to a rare colony of microbats which will be carefully protected as part of the project. The Rail Trail also includes a new carpark and refurbishments to the Old Casino Station precinct, as well as parking and facilities at the Naughtons Gap and Spring Grove intersection and Bentley end, which will ultimately connect with Stage Two of the trail, continuing onto Lismore. There are additional components, including a children's playground and primitive campground at the Bentley end of the Trail that are in the Master Plan and funding opportunities will be pursued to secure these additional attractions.

The official opening was held on 23 March 2024, with an emphasis on all ages and abilities enjoying the new facility. Activities at the opening included entertainment by the Byron Taiko drummers, information stalls by Transport for NSW, Northern Rivers Rail Trail Supporters' Group and the Discover Richmond Valley team. Casino Lions held a free BBQ on behalf of Council and numerous other stall holders were set up including a microbat expert giving talks on the endangered microbat species in the tunnel.

In the first four months of operation, the Rail Trail has seen 25,000 trips undertaken so far. The Trail is proving a popular destination for cyclists, walkers, runners and horse-riders, with both locals and visitors keen to use the new trail. Plans to include more attractions, such as events, mobile food vans and pop-up bike hire are currently underway, and patronage is expected to increase as the Bentley-Lismore connection nears completion.

The Casino to Bentley Stage will continue to deliver significant economic, social and environmental outcomes for the local community and the wider Northern Rivers Region. This includes attracting visitor expenditure, providing an active, healthy alternative form of transport and improving safety for pedestrians and cyclists. The project has also preserved key heritage infrastructure and created a natural wildlife corridor to protect the biodiversity of the region whilst strengthening the connection between tourism and conservation.

OLD CASINO STATION PRECINCT

Of the \$7.5 million Council received from the Federal Government's National Tourism Icons Program, \$500,000 of this funding was allocated by the funding body for the Old Casino Station precinct (Southern Trailhead) works.

The project included preservation of key heritage infrastructure to reflect the historical significance of the State heritage listed Old Casino Station building and surrounding precinct. It also included civil works which involved the construction of the access road (from Dyraaba Street, over the rail crossing to Old Casino Station) turn around area, car parking, concrete footpaths, and the trail head.

There is an exciting opportunity to develop the Old Casino Station into a designated tourism destination, by restoring the building structure to its former glory, preserving the rail museum history, and making it more accessible for visitors. Council will continue to pursue funding opportunities for this project.

Pop up activations for bike hire are also being targeted for the Old Casino Station trail head. Applications for food and beverage and pop-up offerings, will be via an expression of interest through Council's existing database, and the opportunity will also be promoted via Council's social platforms to generate enquiry. Bookings and applications will be managed by the Council booking platform to ensure compliance and overall management.

A longer-term strategy for Rail Trail opportunities is to design and develop a designated commercial precinct at the Old Casino Station Trail Head carpark.

This may involve acquiring additional adjacent land and providing commercial amenity to rail trail users, such as a café, bike hire and servicing, permanent amenities and enhanced rest stop opportunities for all ages.

Ongoing trail enhancement opportunities are also being explored such as a trail head entry statement, adjoining landowner activations and increased amenity and marketing opportunities along the trail.



Old Casino Station Precinct Carpark and Landscaping Works



Opening of the Casino to Bentley Section of the Northern Rivers Rail Trail

Welcome to the Richmond Valley section of the
NORTHERN RIVERS RAIL TRAIL

The Northern Rivers Rail Trail is a shared recreation and nature trail where users can walk, ride and explore at their own pace. The Rail Trail preserves and protects the Casino to Murwillumbah section of the former North Coast Railway Line as a community asset for all.

The Richmond Valley (Casino to Bentley) section starts here at the heritage-listed Old Casino Station and connects with the Spring Grove and Naughtons Gap roads carparks. It moves through rich agricultural lands, passes over Naughtons Gap tunnel housing a mixed colony of Bent-winged bats, finishing at the historic Back Creek Bridge.

Legend:

- Rest stop
- Distance from Casino
- Distance between rest stops
- Bridge
- Tunnel
- Road crossing
- Parking
- Toilet
- Water bubbler
- Bike jockey
- Bike repair
- Bridlepath access
- Water trough

Northern Rivers RAIL TRAIL
Walk - Ride - Explore

WOODBURN OVAL SPORTS FIELD RESTORATION

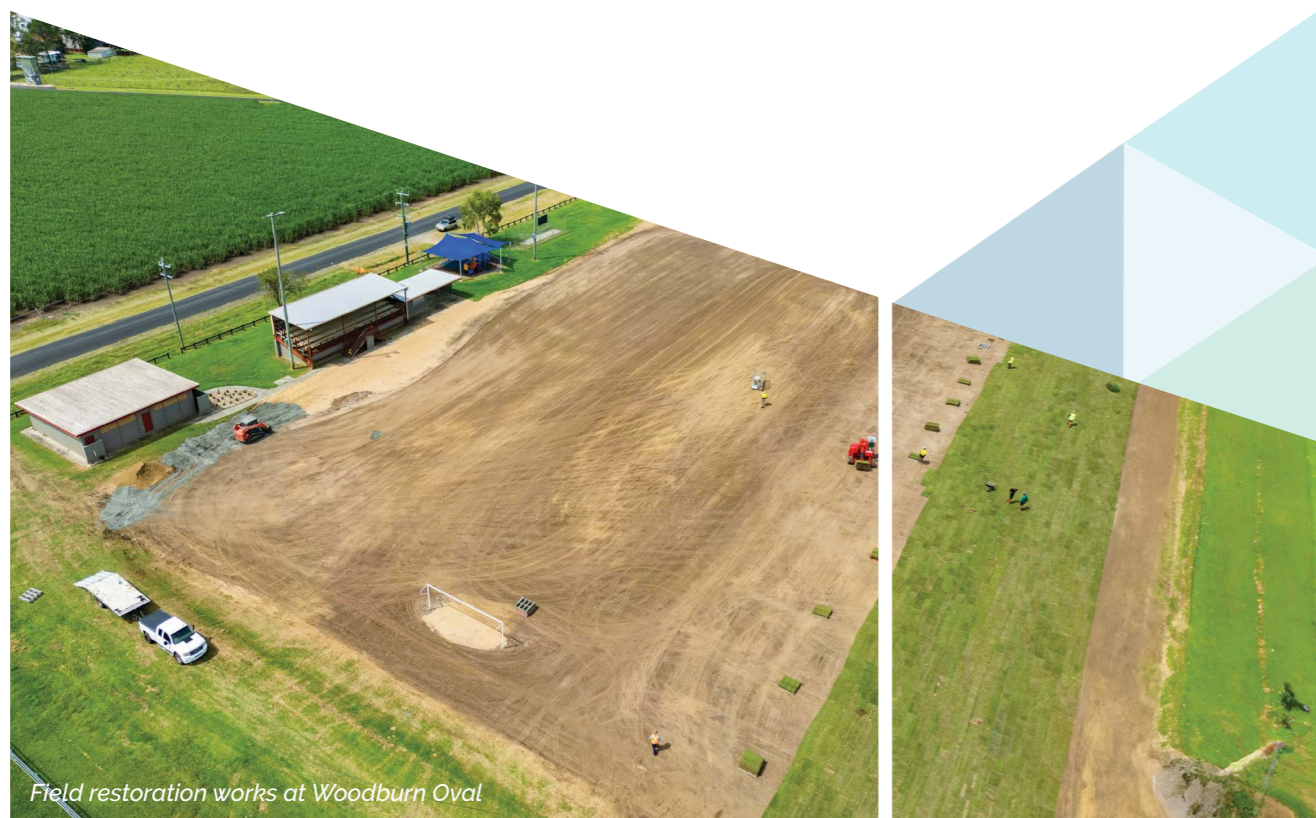
Woodburn Oval suffered severe damage from two consecutive floods in February and March 2022, leading to the entire vicinity being submerged for several weeks. Floodwater caused damage to the infrastructure and amenities as well as the demise of the entire turf surface across the playing fields, resulting in uneven playing surfaces and a significant decline in surface drainage efficiency along with table drains being clogged with excessive silt build up. Addressing these post-flood impacts and restoring Woodburn Oval to its pre disaster, former safe and functional state became a priority for Council. The restoration project required comprehensive remediation efforts to resolve the turf, drainage and safety issues.

Public Works Advisory provided Council with funding of \$272,814 to restore the Woodburn Oval soccer fields and surface drainage to their original condition before the disaster caused by the floods.

The works involved:

- Field One - vegetation removal and decompaction of profile
- Field One - reinstating playing surface field levels
- Field One - supply, deliver and lay TifTuf turf
- Field One - watering and turf establishment
- Herbicide program
- Topsoil
- Distribute and level topsoil, and aerovate to decompact playing surfaces
- Reinstating drainage
- Reset goals.

By prioritising the immediate returfing of Field One, which was the most affected, Council has minimised downtime, expedited the establishment process, and provided the community and club with one functional field while other areas take a longer time to establish and reach the required standard. The works were completed in time for the 2024 soccer season to commence.



Field restoration works at Woodburn Oval

CASINO MEMORIAL OLYMPIC POOL

The Casino Memorial Olympic Pool Upgrade has been a signature project for Council over the past four years. The Masterplan was completed and adopted by Council in February 2021 with a vision of redeveloping the Casino Pool into a state-of-the-art community facility, to be undertaken in three stages. Council has devoted extensive effort and resources to the completion of Stage One, and worked closely with contractor Momentum Built Pty Ltd, to achieve this major milestone for the Richmond Valley community.

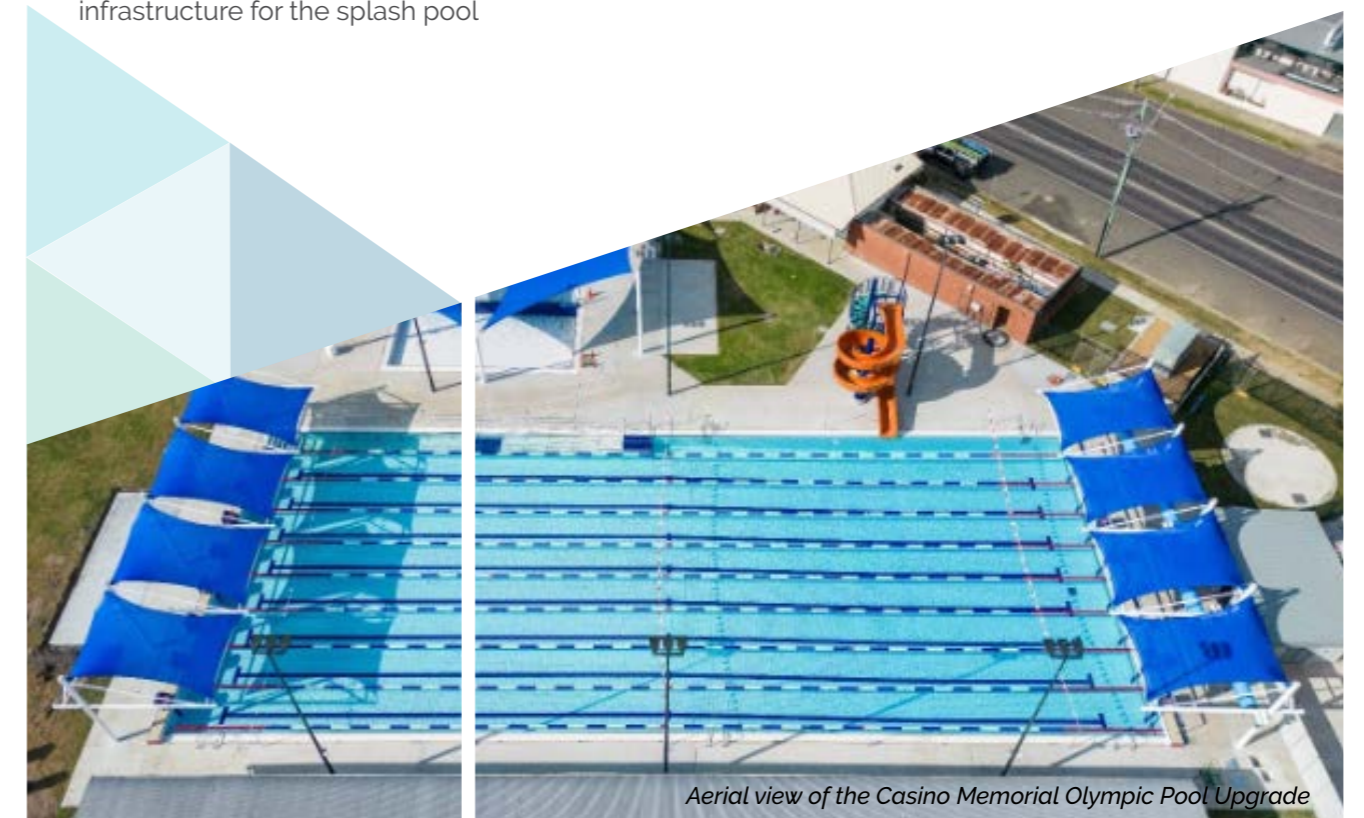
Stage One is valued at \$6.7 million, which was funded by the Australian Government and Council. The Australian Government contributed \$3.74 million from its Female Facilities and Water Safety Stream Program and Council provided the remaining \$2.96 million.

Stage One works included:

- Construction of a new concrete and tiled, eight-lane 50m heated pool with an all-ability access ramp and stairs
- Refurbishment of the plant room and construction of new filtration infrastructure for the 50m pool
- Construction of a new concrete and tiled, multi-purpose toddlers splash pool
- Construction of a new plant room and filtration infrastructure for the splash pool

- Shade structures at each end of the 50m pool and over the toddlers' pool
- Refurbishment of the existing water slide
- A new electrical switch room and the installation of an electrical substation suitable for the full redevelopment of the swimming centre including provisions for the future development of stages two and three
- New flood lighting
- Refurbishment of the shower facilities and change rooms complying with workplace health and safety and mobility access standards, including non-slip flooring, new showers, and plumbing fixtures
- Service lines were also installed to prepare for future stages which included electrical and communications conduits for the indoor pool, water pipes for the proposed water slide behind the grandstand, fire services to the future upgraded entrance and kiosk and hydronic heating of the amenity floors.

The Stage One works were officially opened on 23 September 2023 by Mayor Robert Mustow and Karen Hogan, representing Kevin Hogan MP. A free family fun day was held to mark the official opening, with hundreds of locals keen to enjoy the activities.



Aerial view of the Casino Memorial Olympic Pool Upgrade

Stage Two works

Following on from the completion of Stage One works, Council has also successfully received funding of \$546,875 through the NSW and Australian Government's Community Assets Program (CAP) for the betterment of Casino Pool Clubhouse which forms part of Stage Two of the Casino Memorial Olympic Pool Masterplan. To date, Council has spent \$120,000 of this funding to complete the demolition of the existing clubhouse building and associated fencing, along with completing the design of the new clubhouse and DA modifications process. The remaining budget will be utilised to complete the construction of the clubhouse upgrades which includes raised floor height, servery, three storage rooms, kitchenette, two sets of double door entryways with ramp access, internal fit out and painting and site restoration.

Council continues to seek funding for future stages which will include:

- A new steel framed pool hall incorporating the 25m heated multi-purpose pool, family change room, adult change room, and plant room
- Refurbishment of the facility entrance, control area, kiosk, administration, first aid and staff facilities
- Refurbishment of the gymnasium including the creation of a swim squad room
- Firefighting infrastructure
- Formalised carparking along Richmond Street involving new kerb and guttering, sealing the existing grassed area adjacent to the road and line marking
- 12m high twin flume water slide.

Since the opening, the Casino Memorial Pool has experienced the highest seasonal patronage on record.



CORAKI SPLASH PAD

Council was successful in receiving grant funding through the Stronger Country Community Fund program. The total amount received for this facility was \$212,500 with Council also contributing an additional \$50,000 for the shade structure.

The works involved:

- Installation of a 6000-litre underground balance tank and 5sqm Colourbond shed plant room
- Provision of water filtration equipment including pumps, chemical tanks, and UV treatment componentry
- Construction of a concrete slab and collection sump for the play space; this area is covered in suitable rubber "Life Floor" tiles
- The provision of 3 water toy features and several floor jets
- Provision of an all-abilities access ramp
- Provision of fencing between the play space and the filtration equipment and perimeter fencing to secure the filtration equipment from the public
- The installation of a shade structure over the play space area.

The creation of this inclusive water play space at Coraki Swimming Pool was officially opened to the public in December 2023 with Council holding a free family fun day. The new water play space includes a zero depth splashpad area with a variety of water play elements, encouraging inclusive and interactive play for toddlers and children to enjoy. This project has delivered a safe, low-cost, active water feature for families in the Richmond Valley, and greatly enhanced the facilities at Coraki Pool.



PADDON PARK RESTORATION

Council received \$130,000 of grant funding through the Office of Local Government to restore Paddon Park, Evans Head after the flood events of 2022. The aim of this project is to increase resilience of the impacted community of Evans Head and revitalise the area after the natural disaster. Further, it aims to provide an improved recreational space for use by the community and visitors and attract more visitors to the area, boosting the local economy and assisting with recovery.

The works were completed in June 2024 and included:

- Construct upright concrete kerb and dish gutter
- Construct two flexible carparks with asphalt seal
- Asphalt corrections and 50mm overlay over the existing bitumen seal
- Installation of replas bollards.



WOODBURN STREETScape DESIGN

In 2017, Council completed a tender for the Woodburn Riverside Precinct Master Plan - Design Report. The report identified the need to assist the town to reduce the impacts of the by-pass and establish attractive and usable facilities that meet future needs of tourism, economic development and liveability.

The Masterplan was adopted by Council at the June 2017 Ordinary Council Meeting. Significant funding was secured from all levels of government for the upgrade and rejuvenation of the riverside park element of the Masterplan with construction completed several years ago. This upgrade has been very well received by the public and, as intended, has become an important stopover point for Pacific Motorway travellers.

Following significant damage to the CBD precinct in the 2022 floods, Council allocated funding to design the streetscape portion of the Masterplan to the value of \$120,000 which was provided through the Office of Local Government. Key elements of the project included:

- Provision of a project plan including timelines and milestones
- Consultation with stakeholders, Council, Community and Transport NSW to compile information relating to features required in any proposed redevelopment of the streetscape
- Draft concept of the streetscape, including "artist impressions" of the proposals to be approved by Council prior to progressing to survey and design stage
- Survey and design of required section of River Street and adjoining intersections in Woodburn, including cost estimate of proposed construction works
- Complete package of engineering design drawing suitable for tender and construction.

Ennismore Field Pty Ltd were awarded the contract and have since completed the Woodburn Riverside Streetscape Design which was informed by stakeholder consultation forums and considerable research and background of Woodburn's status and rebuild progress. The completion of this detailed design brings the Woodburn CBD Activation project to a shovel ready stage in readiness for funding opportunities.



Concept of Woodburn Streetscape Design – River Street

NAMMOONA CELL 6

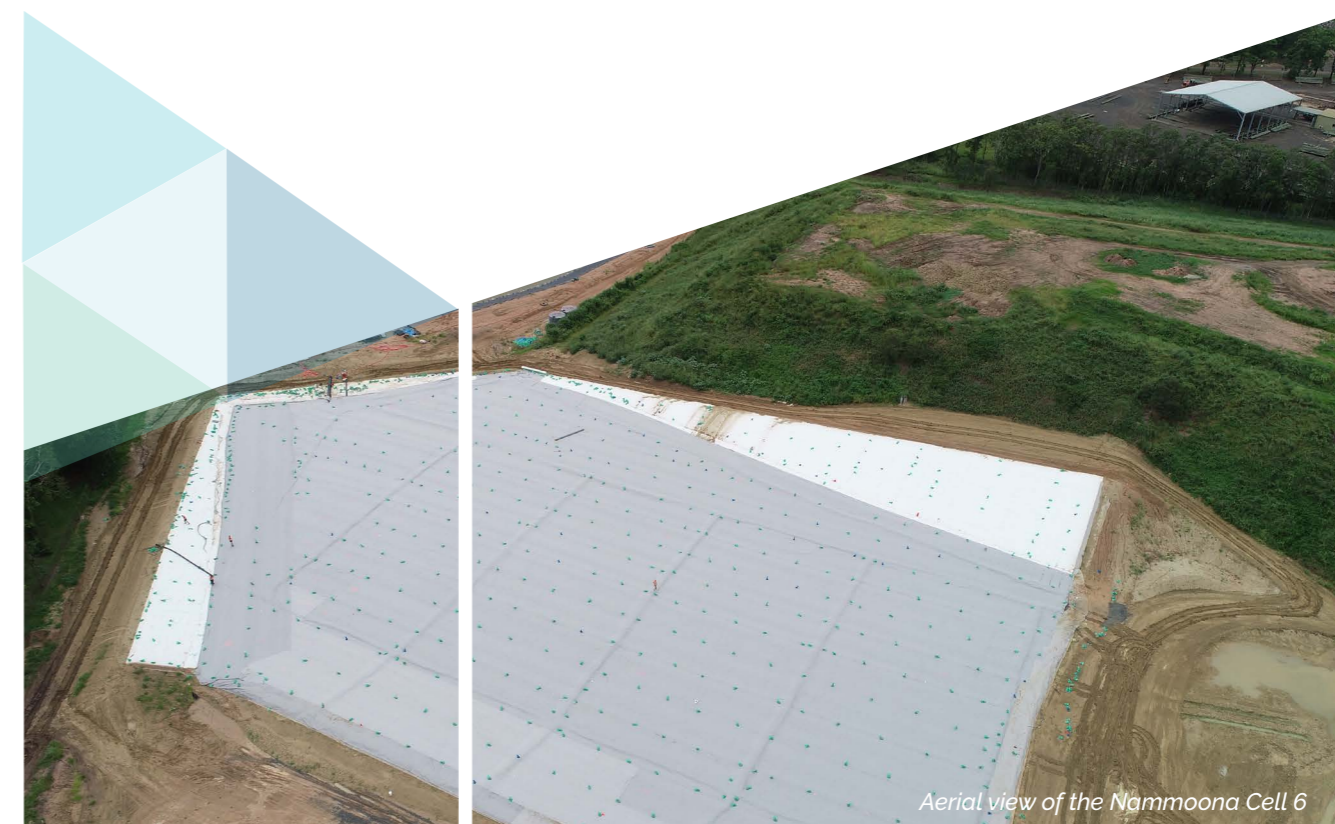
Council, with the support of Synergy Resource Management and local contractors, have completed the construction of a new landfill cell and the associated leachate and stormwater retention ponds for the waste facility at Nammoona. This project was originally scoped in 2016 with an estimated cost of \$3.4 million but unresolved issues around leachate, stormwater and capping existing cells resulted in a design not being finalised until 2020. A revised budget of \$6.15 million for the Cell 6 construction was adopted in 2021. Delays in commencing the project with flooding and contractor availability resulted in a final revised cost for Cell 6A to be estimated at just over \$6 million with an additional \$1.4 million proposed in the draft LTFP in years 2027-2029 for completion of Cell 6B. The spend to date has been financed by a \$1.9 million loan, with the balance being funded from the Waste Reserve.

The commissioning of a new landfill cell (known as 'Cell 6') at the Nammoona Waste and Resource Facility is a milestone in the provision of Council's resource recovery service, and a significant long-term asset for Council. It will provide nearly 250,000 m³ of void space, comparable with the scale of other rural facilities. Cell 6 is intended to

be used for residual waste arising in the Richmond Valley, providing around 13 years of disposal capacity.

Cell 6 has been a significant achievement for Council as it is the first project of this type that it has undertaken. Construction of the new cell has provided a solution to a looming risk and places the Richmond Valley in an enviable position when it comes to its residual waste management compared to other local government entities.

A strategic approach is critical for mitigating future risks with waste management. The planning for the Richmond Valley's next waste disposal option is underway, in readiness for a transition after the 13-year life of this cell has occurred. While the Cell 6 project from concept to completion has taken a significant amount of time, it now provides Council with the necessary planning time to consider future landfill options which will be a key outcome for the updated Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy, due for review and consultation in 2025.



Aerial view of the Nammoona Cell 6

TOWN ENTRY SIGNAGE

In 2021, Council received funding under Round Four of the Stronger Country Communities Fund to upgrade the existing town entry signs in Casino, Coraki, Woodburn, Broadwater and Evans Head, to pay respect to and acknowledge the traditional landowners in the Richmond Valley. Consultation with the Aboriginal community was undertaken in 2019 with letters of support received prior to the lodgement of the funding application.

After extensive damage due to consecutive weather events, it was determined that Council should remove the existing town entry and boundary signs (including frames) and progress with alternative designs.

Design concepts were developed in house and presented to Councillors in early 2023 and feedback was sought. In late 2023, Council staff began working with design consultant Jasmine Phillips of Wild Honey Creative, who was engaged to design both town entry and boundary signage. A presentation was provided to the December 2023 Information Session showcasing the new signage concepts and a further update presentation was provided at the February 2024 Information Session, with alterations to preferred concepts based on the feedback received.

The designs have built on the successful Discover Richmond Valley tourism branding which Wild Honey Creative designed for Council. The final design concepts and dimensions were presented to the February 2024 Ordinary Meeting for final approval. Design considerations included the need for the signs to:

- be a visual ambassador for the Richmond Valley
- promote local landmarks and identify Richmond Valley towns and the local government area boundary
- acknowledge the traditional landowners
- be resilient to vandalism
- align with the Discover Richmond Valley Brand
- be more appropriate in size and scale than the existing signs.

Casino based sign company Signarama was awarded the contract based on its quotation response and began manufacturing the signs in April 2024 which were ready for installation in May. Local contractor Bennett and Robertson Construction installed the Casino Town Entry Signs in time for the influx of tourists coming to the Richmond Valley for Primex and Beef Week with the remaining signs being installed in mid to late 2024.



COLLEY PARK CLUBHOUSE UPGRADE

Council received \$1,074,303 of funding through Phase 3 of the Federal Government's Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program for the replacement of the existing soccer clubhouse.

Council adopted the Colley Park Masterplan in 2023 where key elements were noted including construction of a new soccer clubhouse incorporating toilets, change rooms, canteen and storage rooms. Council preferred a modular type building solution for the clubhouse replacement, due to the project funding being time sensitive and the site being in a stormwater basin zone where the structure is to be built above flood levels on a pier and beam system. Included in the scope for delivery was four change rooms, canteen, public toilets, referees' room, all access ramps and storage facilities with a veranda facing east.

The new modular building has replaced the ageing and damaged block change room and amenities which has been identified for replacement both due to its condition, but also due to the growing trend to accommodate female players and junior teams.

On 13 April 2024 the official opening of the new modular soccer clubhouse building was held. It was a great day celebrating this milestone with Casino Cobras FC, with a full day of competitive games, food and community spirit.



New Modular Soccer Clubhouse Facility installed at the Colley Park site.

COLLEY PARK NETBALL & BASKETBALL COURTS

Netball Courts

Council received \$320,000 through the Office of Local Government to demolish and replace the ageing netball courts. Courts 8 and 9 were at the end of their lifespan and this project will deliver safer playing courts for the club and community. Works commenced at the end of 2023 with the disposal of the old courts, pouring of the concrete slab and installation of new goal posts. The project is expected to be completed in August 2024 with the application of the non-slip surfacing and line marking work remaining.

Basketball Courts

Council received \$154,000 through the NSW Government's Sports Priority Needs Program 2022 to demolish and replace the basketball court. This project was identified in the Colley Park Masterplan as the existing basketball court is over 30 years old and is no longer safe to play on. The asphalt had oxidized and cracked creating an uneven surface, and it was important to provide a much-needed safe playing court for the community.

Works commenced on this project in November 2023 which included the demolition of existing court, earthworks to level ground, pouring of concrete slip, application of non-slip surfacing, installation of basketball towers, restoration of playing surfaces, and installation of sandstone blocks and bollards. The basketball court has been open to the community since the end of May 2024 and has been inundated with users.



Basketball Court Upgrade, Colley Park, Casino

COLLABORATIONS

NORTHERN RIVERS FLOOD RECOVERY PROGRAMS

Councils in the Northern Rivers have been working closely with the NSW Government to support flood impacted communities to recover and rebuild following the catastrophic floods of February/March 2022. Richmond Valley Council has been an active member of the Northern NSW Regional Recovery Committee and its various subcommittees to address emergency housing, flood relief funding, health and wellbeing, and agricultural, welfare and environmental support programs. Council works closely with the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation (established on 1 July 2022) to progress Disaster Recovery Funding and repairs for local roads, bridges, water and sewerage infrastructure damaged in the floods.

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

NORTHERN RIVERS JOINT ORGANISATION (NRJO)

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

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

To learn more about NRJO, visit <https://www.northernriversjo.nsw.gov.au>



Work starts on Naughtons Gap Road

RICHMOND VALLEY REGIONAL JOBS PRECINCT

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

Job Precincts are designed to deliver faster planning approvals for significant projects in specially designated areas, to generate employment while ensuring that the local appeal of the area is maintained. This will help to create new jobs in agriculture, manufacturing, renewable energy and other emerging industries in the Richmond Valley, while also supporting existing businesses and local producers to diversify and expand their operations. Council endorsed the Draft RJP Master Plan and are awaiting Ministerial approval which is expected by the end of 2024.



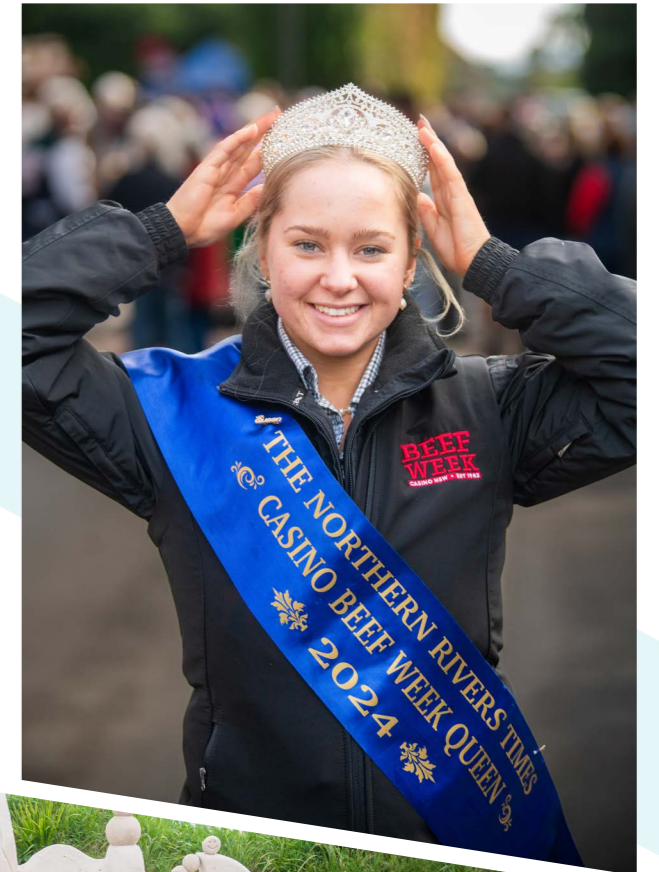
FESTIVALS AND EVENTS 2023/2024

The Valley was awash with festivities and events during the 2023-2024 year, including:

- NAIDOC Week celebrations across the Richmond Valley
- Casino Truck Show
- Markets including Evans Head Farmers Market, Casino Golf Club Markets and Casino Lions Farmers Market
- Woodburn Riverside Festival
- Evans Head Malibu Classic
- Primex Field Days
- Christmas Celebrations and Tree Light Up in Coraki, Woodburn, Broadwater and Rappville
- Buckin' by the Beach
- Skate Mate
- Australia Day celebrations
- Seniors Week Activities
- International Women's Day
- ANZAC commemoration
- Youth Week activities
- Casino Beef Week



- Reconciliation Week
- Northern Rivers Rail Trail Opening
- Rappville/Kyogle Cup - Casino Racecourse
- Casino Showground Opening
- Casino Cow Country Music Muster
- Harvest Food Trail
- Casino Stars – Dance for Cancer
- The Festival of Small Halls
- The Festival of the Waters
- Flavour Fest
- Family movie night – Stan Park Oval



SECTION 1: DELIVERY PROGRAM PROGRESS

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.

The majority of the Flood 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 \$100 million 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.

The Delivery Program is divided into four key directions:

1. Strengthening our role in the region
2. Creating great places to live
3. Protecting our unique environment
4. Delivering for our community.

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 during the 2023-2024 year are outlined in the 'Highlights of Signature Projects' section of this Report, with additional achievements against the Program shown on the following pages.

To view the full Progress Report (period ending 30 June 2024), Delivery Program, Operational Plan and the Community Strategic Plan, visit the Integrated Planning and Reporting pages on the Richmond Valley Council website:

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

STRENGTHENING OUR ROLE IN THE REGION

OBJECTIVE 1: REBUILD AND RECONNECT OUR COMMUNITIES

In June, Mayor Robert Mustow joined Minister for Emergency Management, Senator Murray Watt, who announced 20 new projects across the North Coast worth \$100 million. These programs included funding to raise the two low-set bridges at Tatham to improve access between Casino and Coraki during flood events and the improvement of town drains at Woodburn and Coraki to minimise property damage and allow for quicker recovery following floods. This announcement came on top of a \$50 million announcement previously, which included work at Dairy Flat on Woodburn-Coraki Road.

Work was completed on Stage One of the Halstead Drive restoration project in Casino. The first stage consisted of clearing up the concrete from the riverbanks and restoring access for the following stages. Stage Two consists of a survey, geotechnical assessment and engineering design plans. Stage Three (currently unfunded) would see the construction of the new Halstead Drive concrete accessway. This project is being managed by Council after receiving funding through the Crown Lands Council Grants Flood Recovery Program.

A \$3.5 million suspension bridge across the Richmond River in Casino was one of six projects to get the tick of approval under the 2022 Community Assets Program, which is part of the Community Local Infrastructure Program. This is co-funded by the NSW and Australian governments to support communities impacted by the 2022 flood events. \$13,870,864 has been provided to Council under two programs to construct a number of key community facilities and to rebuild and improve the resilience of infrastructure after disasters. Included in this funding is \$4,380,450 to build a facility at Parker Fields to be shared between the Woodburn Pony Club and Woodburn Tennis Club and clubhouses for Casino Rugby League, Casino Netball and Casino Memorial Pool Swimming Club. A car park will also be built at the Woodburn Memorial Hall for \$234,647.



Council awarded the design and reconstruction contract to Civil Mining & Construction Pty Ltd for the Naughtons Gap landslip reconstruction. Council conducted significant work and advocacy for the reconstruction of this vital transport route, working with the NSW Government to secure the funds to repair the road twice severely impacted by landslips and flooding. More than \$3 million in additional transport betterment recovery funding was received to conduct work above the road to provide further resilience to the route from future events following its reconstruction. In addition to the ongoing restoration work on the landslip at Naughtons Gap, Council completed 400m betterment work on the northern section of Naughtons Gap Road. It involved a full pavement replacement, excavation of existing material, improved drainage, installation of guard rail and widening of the lanes to improve safety in the area. The work was funded by the NSW Government Fixing Local Roads program. Work on the reconstruction is on track to reopen by the end of 2024.

Works were completed to replace the Jacky Bulbin Bridge on Bungawalbin-Whiporie Road. The bridge was extensively damaged by flooding and was load limited to five tonnes. The bridge is a vital link for the Bungawalbin community and provides a critical detour when closures of the Summerland Way or Casino-Coraki Road occur.

Construction of a new culvert system at Dairy Flat was underway to improve road access between Coraki and Woodburn, particularly to Bungawalbin, Coraki and Woodburn residents. The \$4.2 million project was funded by the Australian Government through the Emergency Response Fund under the Northern Rivers Recovery and Resilience Program (NRRRP) 2022-2023. Funding for this program is administered by the NSW Reconstruction Authority. The NRRRP is a \$150 million program supporting the Northern Rivers region to drive long-term resilience. Projects such as the Dairy Flat improvements aim to mitigate the impact of disasters and create a better position to recover from future disasters.

OBJECTIVE 2: ESTABLISH THE RICHMOND VALLEY AS A REGIONAL GROWTH CENTRE

Council introduced its new Invest and Live RV Team in April, created to promote positive economic development of the Richmond Valley.

The draft master plan for the Richmond Valley Regional Job Precinct was on display for public review and comment during February/March 2024. This plan aims to provide a clear planning framework for industrial growth in Casino, at Nammoona and surrounding the Casino Co-op and existing Casino Drive industrial estate. The aim is also to provide greater certainty for a range of new industries, including manufacturing, agribusiness, and food processing, to promote new employment opportunities in Casino and the Richmond Valley.

Draft place plans for Coraki, Woodburn, Broadwater, Rileys Hill and Evans Head were released for public exhibition in May-June. Developed in consultation with Council's Mid Richmond communities, the plans aim to identify key priorities for future growth, economic development and signature projects. The draft place plans propose a range of innovative options for the Mid Richmond communities, including key directions for revitalising town centres and public spaces, improving active transport links and providing more housing options.

Up to 1500 flood resilient homes could be developed at a new estate at Fairy Hill, thanks to \$245,000 in funding from the NSW Government's \$100 million Resilient Lands Program. The NSW Government provided funding to Richmond Valley Council to complete important infrastructure investigations and technical reports to support the planning and feasibility of the project. The area was identified in Council's Housing Strategy because it sits well above the floodplain, allowing for flood-resilient homes to be constructed, bringing people, jobs and growth to the region.



OBJECTIVE 3: DIVERSIFY AND GROW OUR ECONOMY

Richmond Valley Council, in partnership with Lismore City Council, held its first business engagement workshop in November to bring together industry experts and entrepreneurs to explore innovative strategies to capitalise on the Northern Rivers Rail Trail. The workshop, facilitated by leading regional tourism expert Dr Meredith Wray, attracted 30 participants, and provided a platform for attendees to engage in interactive discussions, gain valuable insights and establish important networks.

In August, Council received its first DA to establish a business in the Reynolds Road Industrial Precinct, allowing it to develop the nine industrial-zoned lots as an initiative to attract employment-generating industries to the Richmond Valley.



CREATING GREAT PLACES TO LIVE

OBJECTIVE 4: CELEBRATE OUR LOCAL IDENTITY AND LIFESTYLE

Popular Aussie artists headlined a new Richmond Valley event, The Festival of the Waters. Funded under the NSW Government's Reconnecting Regional NSW – Community Events Program, the event was a celebration of the resilience and passion of our Mid Richmond communities. In January more than four thousand people gathered at the two-day events in Coraki and Woodburn. Starting at Coraki with Splashfest, around 1200 people gathered at Windsor Park for a day filled with live entertainment, children's activities, food and companionship. Celebrations continued with around 3000 people braving the heat in Woodburn's main street the day after with an array of attractions complementing our talented musicians. There was plenty of family-friendly entertainment, with a jet pack water show, roving pirate performances and a circus workshop, sand sculpting, drumming performances and workshops, as well as market stalls, food vans and a show 'n' shine. The day was capped off by an impressive fireworks display.

July saw hundreds of people take to the streets to mark the start of NAIDOC week in the Richmond Valley. The week started with a flag-raising ceremony and march through the Casino CBD, followed by a family fun day with a free lunch, activities and entertainment. It was one of many events throughout the Richmond Valley.

The 2023 North Coast Petroleum Casino Truck Show celebrated its 10th anniversary in July, claiming the title of the biggest truck show in the southern hemisphere. The official number of trucks judged was 580, equating to more than \$300,000,000 in value. Calculating attendees via the density check method found the 2023 NCP Casino Truck Show has eclipsed all records for attendance at a Richmond Valley single-day event, attracting a record turnout of 14,000.

A donation of \$5,000 was presented by Council to the Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service following the North Coast Petroleum Casino Truck Show, to help the Helicopter Service to continue saving lives.



Renowned agricultural field day Primex celebrated its 40th anniversary on 16-18 May. More than 400 exhibitors and 1200 suppliers, regenerative agriculture and industry hubs and machinery, primary producers and local produce was on show. A paddock-to-plate experience was enjoyed by visitors across three days. Council is a long-term major sponsor of Primex and the event program boasted an impressive line-up of live entertainment and family activities.

Casino Beef Week 2024 took a nostalgic turn with this year's theme "Retro Rewind", inviting attendees to step back in time and celebrate the rich history of Australia's beef industry in a week-long festival held 18-26 May. The event was a unique blend of past and present, featuring classic car displays, fashion parades, food and traditional beef competitions. The highlight of the festival was Beef Week Saturday and crowds came out to watch a vibrant Brenda Armfield Street Parade. Council is a long-time principal partner of the festival and is proud to support this event.

Australia's largest regional music tour supported by Richmond Valley Council, The Festival of Small Halls, is a unique celebration of music which brings talented artists to intimate venues in small towns and rural communities. Whiporie was the venue selected for this special event.



Richmond Upper Clarence Regional Library received a Diversity and Inclusion Award. Forward-thinking by the library cataloguing team was recognised with the announcement of the library as the winner of the 2023 Knosys Libero Diversity and Inclusion Award. The library made a connection with the Evans Head Living Museum and catalogued their book collection into the library catalogue. This has provided visibility and connection between the library and the museum.

Regional Library Manager, Gary Ellem was honoured in June as he finished his last official day, after 45 years of service. Gary joined Council and the Richmond Upper Clarence Regional Library in 1979 as a trainee, then being appointed as the Regional Library Manager in 1997. Gary was an integral part of the transformation from manual library circulation to an automated library management system. In addition, the library celebrated 45 years as a regional library service and the mobile library marked 20 years of operation.

Council hosted two free community grant writing workshops in February and March in Evans Head and Casino. These workshops included information on Council's Community Financial Assistance Program and helpful grant writing tips for beginners.

Three totem poles representing aspects of Evans Head were installed on the foreshore in March. Council was approached by the Evans Head Progress Association to commission a public artwork important to the area's identity. This artwork consists of three individual totems, each representing different aspects of the area. The three totems commemorate the place, its cultural histories, significant events and ancestries. The sculptors used animal-based metaphors such as the osprey, snapper and tiger prawn, as well as capturing the Bandjalang three brothers' story.

OBJECTIVE 5: LIVE SUSTAINABLY IN A CHANGING CLIMATE

The Richmond and Wilsons rivers flood warning improvement project aims to support the implementation of improvements to the flood warning network on a priority basis. The project involves reviewing the existing flood warning services and flood warning improvement recommendations from various existing studies to identify potential improvements to the service. The intended outcome of this review is to make recommendations and expedite priority improvements to the current flood warning service. This may involve upgrades to existing and new gauges and flood warning service locations. It will also support community awareness of any changes to the flood warning service and their need to understand and respond to changed warnings. The project is being led by NSW Department of Planning and Environment – Environment and Heritage Group in consultation with the Bureau of Meteorology, NSW State Emergency Service, and the relevant local councils within the study area.

Fire agencies are developing a new Bush Fire Risk Management Plan for communities within the Richmond Valley. The Northern Rivers Bushfire Management Committee invited the community to have a say on managing bush fire risk.

The Richmond Valley Flood Study 2023 was adopted at the September Council meeting. This study will form the basis of a flood risk management study and plan and will help inform future planning decisions throughout the area.

Richmond Valley Council's Disaster Dashboard located on Council's homepage, provides a place where you can go to get accurate information on all incidents within our area. It covers fire, flood and weather warnings, road closures and other incident reports. The site also provides general preparedness information and support services needed in an emergency.



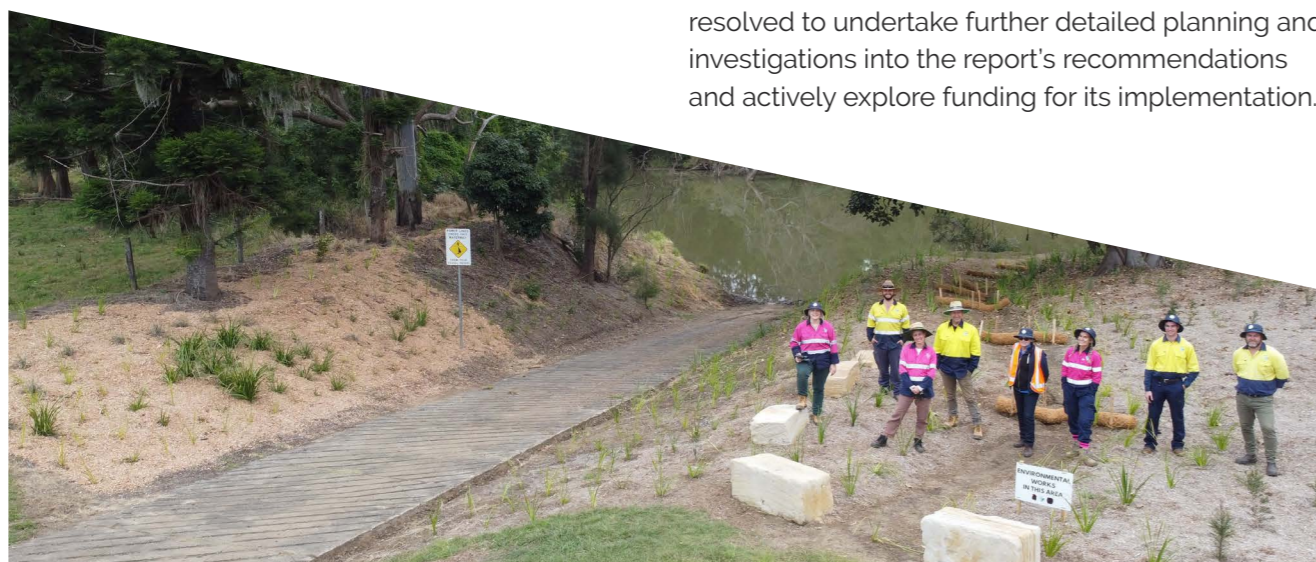
OBJECTIVE 6: PROVIDE INFRASTRUCTURE THAT MEETS COMMUNITY NEEDS

Work on the Coraki Woodburn Road was completed. This road is a critical transport link for the Richmond Valley, connecting essential freight routes, supporting the visitor economy and preserving community connections between Casino and the Mid Richmond. Council was successful in receiving \$10 million from the NSW government over three years to upgrade the Coraki to Woodburn section, which has been delivered. Council will invest almost \$25 million in the next few years in continued upgrade projects.

Council along with Transport for NSW has completed the first two stages of a three-stage safety improvement project west of Casino at Piora. The project involved shoulder-widening both sides of the 6.4km road to 1.2m wide, replacing shoulder material with new gravel, compaction and a two-coat seal. Funding came from the NSW Government Saving Lives on Country Roads Program, and the third stage will be completed following the installation of new guard rails.

Council carried out a heavy patching program across its road network early in the year, with work completed on Spring Grove Road, Bentley Road and Manifold Road. This work was part of Council's commitment to rebuilding its road network, with bitumen reseals, gravel re-sheeting, hot mixing and restoration of road and drainage infrastructure taking place right across the Valley on key roads such as Broadwater-Evans Head Road, Casino-Coraki Road, Woodburn-Coraki Road, Woodburn-Evans Head Road and Spring Grove Road. Other roads which have works completed include Rappville Road, Sextonville Road, Benns Road, McDonald's Bridge Road, Tuckombil Road, Coraki Ellangowan Road, Court Street Woodburn, Knoetzeches Road and Crawfords Road.

Council engaged Ardill Payne & Partners to develop a stormwater hydraulic model to study the impacts of stormwater flooding issues in Casino and the surrounding area. Increased rain frequency, quantity, urban surface density and development have placed increasing pressure on the system, which was developed in the 1950s, and some areas of Casino are experiencing localised flooding from minor events. The Casino Stormwater Flooding Mitigation Options Evaluation Report 2023 provided six mitigation options and consideration of improvements in the overland flow paths. Council resolved to undertake further detailed planning and investigations into the report's recommendations and actively explore funding for its implementation.



PROTECTING OUR UNIQUE ENVIRONMENT

OBJECTIVE 7: PRESERVE NATIVE BUSHLAND AND BIODIVERSITY

Council invited participation in the Community Greening Program Survey. Council committed to plant at least 15,000 new community shade trees over the next two decades. This program acknowledges the significance of trees in enhancing the beauty of streets and parks, offering shade during summer and safeguarding the environment. Collaboration plays a crucial role in determining the direction of our Community Greening Program and influencing decisions on tree planting, maintenance and community involvement.

National Fire Ant Eradication Program representatives provided an overview of identifying fire ants, their nests and the actions being taken to reduce the likelihood of spreading this invasive pest at an event held in Casino in March. Fire ants are highly aggressive and have the potential to affect the way we live. The presentation shared the threat to health, environment, economy, society and lifestyle if not eradicated.

The flying fox camp habitat restoration project made significant strides towards enhancing biodiversity and supporting native species. The site had more than 5,500 native trees and shrubs planted 12 months ago and it has grown significantly due to ideal weather and site preparation. These plantings not only provide essential food and shelter for flying foxes but also benefit a range of native fauna, from birds to butterflies and bees. Additionally, this initiative will aid in the removal of invasive species that were deposited following the 2022 flood, replacing them with native vegetation. These plantings will play a crucial role in stabilising the banks and mitigating the effects of future extreme weather events. The second stage of planting is underway, introducing more than 6,000 additional plants, which aims to continue enhancing the ecosystem and support local biodiversity.

North East Waste and Richmond Valley Council are working with Australia's official battery recycling scheme, B-cycle, to encourage Australians to recycle used batteries, including power tools and toys correctly. The Newaste or B-cycle websites can be accessed for information on how to dispose of used batteries safely.

To celebrate World Environmental Day, Richmond Valley Council, in partnership with Brunswick Valley Landcare, launched the second edition of the Climate Resilient Landscapes booklet. The booklet includes information tailored to inland flood plains and towns, providing enhanced coverage for the Richmond Valley region. The guide can strengthen community knowledge to know what to expect, better understand the effects of climate change and learn actions to take to be prepared and resilient. The booklet also provides a list of local endemic native plants which are drought resistant, fire retardant, flood tolerant, sequester carbon and provides habitat and food for a wide range of native mammals, birds, reptiles and insects.

OBJECTIVE 8: MAINTAIN HEALTHY RIVERS, BEACHES AND WATERWAYS

FISH HABITAT REGENERATION

The Richmond River at Coraki supports brackish fish species such as mullet and bream, in addition to being a popular fishing spot for Australian bass. However, desnagging, land use practises and riparian clearing have degraded fish habitat in this area, which was compounded during the 2022 flood. Managing the area for the exclusion of livestock and improved riparian vegetation will result in better bank stability and the ability to withstand wave, flooding and other erosion processes. Around 2.8ha and 500m of riverbank will be protected from stock via fencing. As well, 200m of riverbank will be rehabilitated through vegetarian rehabilitation on an under-vegetated riparian strip which is also a known koala habitat. Weed management of the immediate riparian area (approximately average 30m wide, 200m long) will provide riverbank stabilisation through the planting of native trees, shrubs and grass species. The re-establishment of native riparian species will provide immediate water quality benefits, in addition to bug fall, temperature regulation, and future snags – contributing to the health and functioning of coastal and estuarine habitats for the benefit of fisheries and local recreational fishers.

OBJECTIVE 9: TRANSITION TO A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Council has installed a 99kW solar power system on the Casino Administration building, marking a significant move towards sustainability. This initiative is a demonstration of Council's commitment to environmental responsibility and serves as a positive example for others to follow. The solar system is expected to substantially impact by reducing up to 113 tons of CO₂ emissions, contributing to global efforts to combat climate change. In addition to its environmental benefits, the installation is a strategic decision to cut down on internal bills. Solar power is clean and cost-effective, providing long-term financial savings. This initiative also offers an opportunity for community awareness and education, encouraging residents and businesses to consider the benefits of renewable energy. By actively embracing solar power, Council leads by example and builds a more sustainable tomorrow for the entire community.

A new landfill cell at the Nammoona Resource Recovery Facility has been completed. The new landfill cell will provide capacity for more than 10 years of residual waste from the Richmond Valley. In recent years, Council has transported more than 10,000 tonnes of red bin material to Queensland for disposal each year. Disposing of the material locally will remove the transport costs and reduce Council's carbon footprint. The money saved will be used to provide more education services to the community to help increase recycling.



DELIVERING FOR OUR COMMUNITY

OBJECTIVE 10: LEAD AND ADVOCATE FOR OUR COMMUNITY

In September, staff from Council's Governance and Open Spaces teams attended a Youth Justice Conference at the request of the Department of Communities and Justice. The matter involved a young offender involved in graffiti within the Richmond Valley. Council was invited to participate in order to express to the offender the impact that graffiti has upon Council and to the wider community. It was an opportunity to assist the young offender to take responsibility for their actions and develop a plan to make amends for their behaviour. Youth Justice Conferences focus on repairing the harm caused and on restoring relationships within the family and community.

Richmond Valley Council joined with other councils in the Northern Rivers and The Lift Project to offer a free course. The Lift Project is a lifestyle-based wellbeing adventure that is delivered online, providing learning and experience with evidence-based ways to feel better, build resilience, live more and take charge of your own wellbeing.



Council has developed the Richmond Valley Disability Inclusion Action Plan to explore what we can do, as a local government organisation, to support people with disability to share in our community's vision for the future and participate fully in community life. The Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2023-2025 continues our focus on improved community infrastructure and services and builds on Council's commitment to open further employment opportunities within our workforce.

Casino Courthouse reopened on 9 May, following two years of repair and restoration works for damage sustained in the 2022 flood. Council advocated strongly for the reopening of the courthouse by writing to the NSW Government and the Member of Clarence, seeking assistance to expedite the repair work and allow the facility to reopen. Local member, Richie Williamson advocated strongly for the repairs to be given top priority. It was pleasing to see the advocacy delivered results for the community, with the \$2.4 million repair and restoration project completed.

The Richmond Valley has a strong volunteering culture. To recognise this valuable contribution, on International Volunteers Day an event was hosted at the Casino RSM Club. Our volunteers span all ages and all areas of our community and help make our area the wonderful place it is. Council alone has more than 50 volunteers, and our tourism and information centre volunteers were recognised in late 2023 with lunch in Woodburn.

OBJECTIVE 11: MANAGE RESOURCES RESPONSIBLY

Council held a staff Health and Wellbeing Day at Colley Park, with activities such as basketball, volleyball and laser tag, to get the blood-pumping, while chill-out zones were spread across the precinct to allow rest and relaxation for all involved. The event raised \$170 for charity.

Council's Movember team took part in the Movember fundraising event. Movember is a global effort to make a difference in mental health and suicide prevention, prostate and testicular cancer. As an opportunity to bring all staff together, the team held a breakfast in November at the Casino Civic Hall, together with an evening of trivia.

Staff from Council's finance department attended a Local Government Finance Conference in Sydney in December in order to keep up to date with key topics and themes across the local government finance sector.

Council's interest revenues generated on investments for the year ended 30 June 2024 was more than double the original budget set for the year meaning Council was able to invest more funds into the community.

OBJECTIVE 12: PROVIDE GREAT SERVICE

Council delivered a high level of service over the reporting period, managing over 12,000 customer calls and over 7,000 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 during this six month period concluding 30 June 2024. 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 stated six month period, 605 programs were delivered to more than 3,800 children and adults. The Casino Indoor Sports Stadium and swimming pools at Casino, Evans Head, Coraki and Woodburn continued to be popular and valued services for our community.



ACHIEVEMENTS SNAPSHOT

Road maintained	1,064 km
Water usage – daily average consumption (Casino)	6.23ML
Water treated	2276ML
Sewerage treated (across four treatment plants)	1737ML
Recycled waste	4157t
E-waste	22.1t
Community Recycling Centre (CRC) items recovered	15750kg
Bins lifted annually	
- Excluding public place bins	600910
- Including public place bins	623983
Rateable properties (including strata)	10,876
Rateable income raised	\$16,314,625
Calls received	12,360
DAs assessed	166
DAs issued*	176
CRMs created	7,174
Grass mowed	13,785ha
Trees planted	9,612
Library members	16,407
Library loans	148,771
Cats & dogs registered	414
Stray/lost animals	194
Number of venue and park bookings	531
Number of development applications referred to Council's Heritage Advisor	9
Number of newsletters distributed throughout the Richmond Valley	132,000

*Note: this figure includes applications lodged in the previous financial year yet determined in the current year.



SUSTAINABILITY SNAPSHOT



1200 native trees planted on the Richmond River as part of the Coraki Riparian Restoration project.



99kW solar system installed at Casino Administration building, reducing the demand of kWh's from the grid by 50%.



795 native trees and **1167** native grasses planted at McDonald Park as part of the river restoration and fisheries habitat project.



47 - page booklet "Climate Resilient Landscapes: A Planting Guide" produced for the Richmond Valley community.



6,450 native trees and grasses planted for flying fox habitat along the Richmond River at Queen Elizabeth Park.



4 compliance and environmental audits undertaken.

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SNAPSHOT



LIQUID TRADE WASTE
60 inspections | 30 approvals



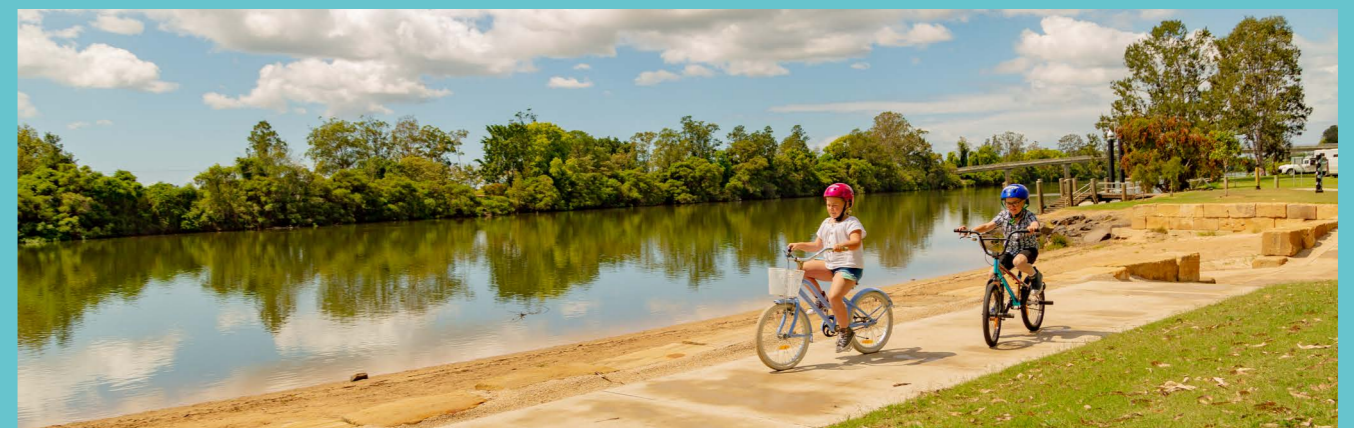
FOOD PREMISE INSPECTIONS

100% of all high to medium food premises inspected

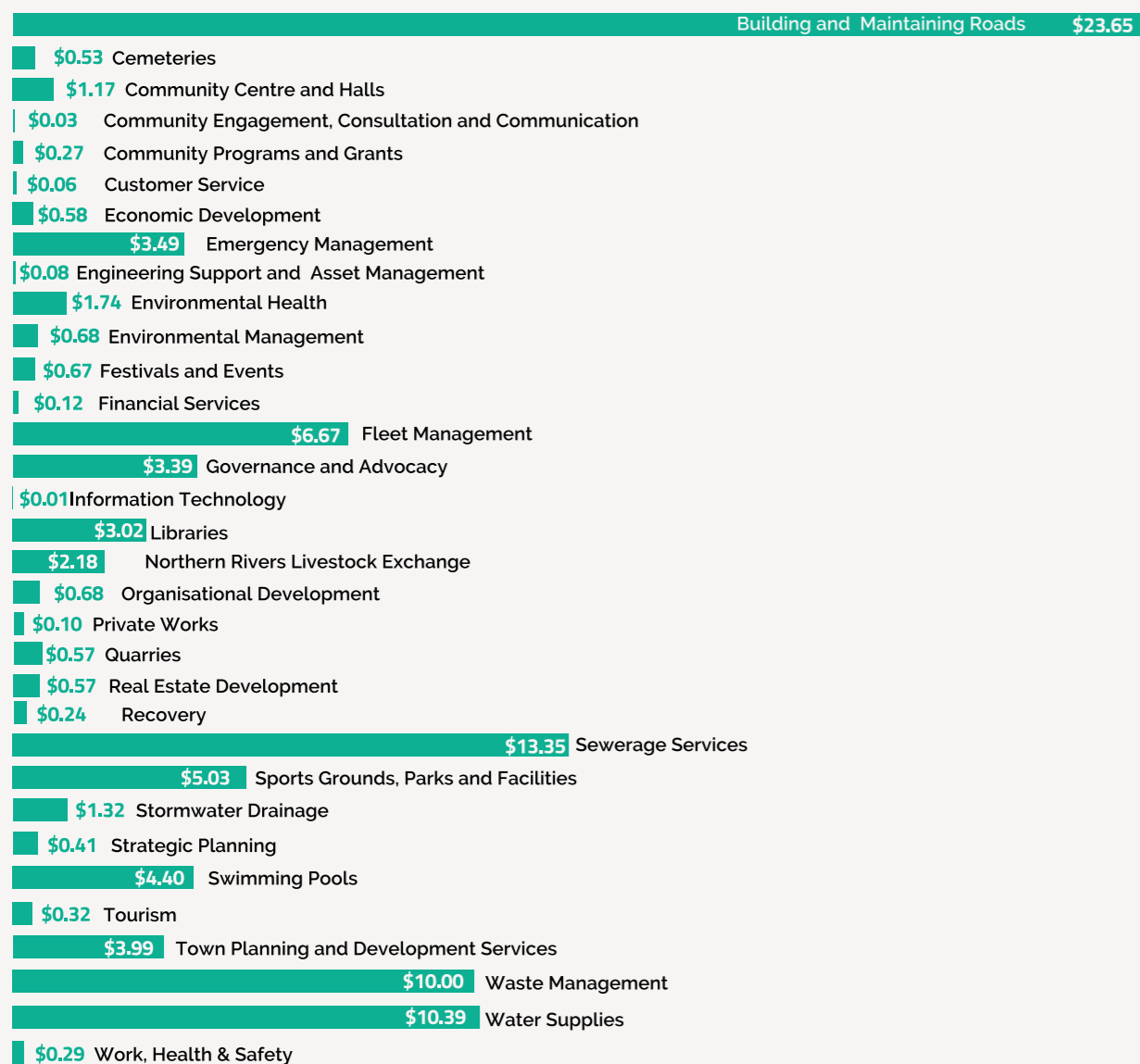


ON SITE SEWERAGE MANAGEMENT

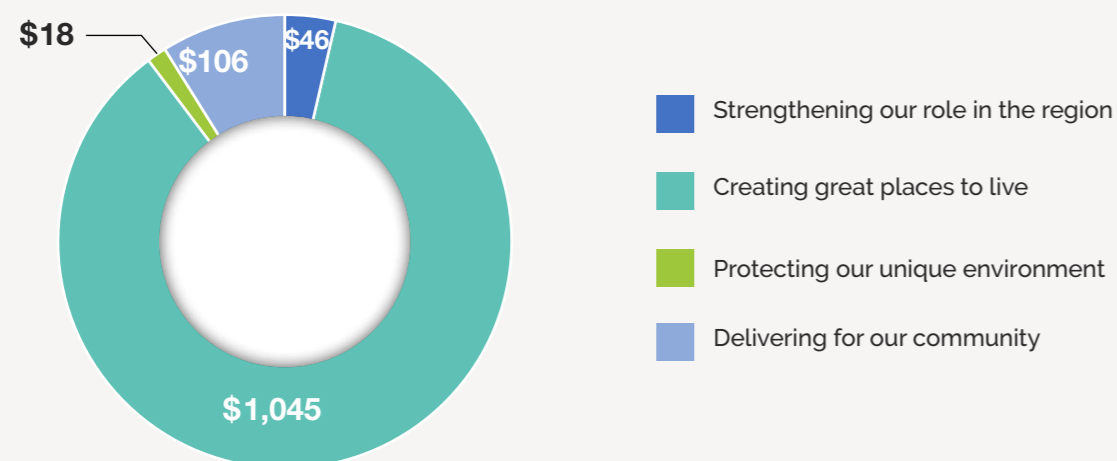
546 routine inspections | 49 approvals to operate issued | 8 pre-purchase inspections



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



TOTAL ASSETS BY FUNCTION \$M



SECTION 2: FINANCIAL AND ASSET REPORTING

During 2023/2024 Richmond Valley Council continued to provide services and facilities to the community in accordance with the adopted estimates (as amended each quarter). The expenses incurred and revenue raised by Council during 2023/2024 in respect of its principal activities are summarised below.

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

The audited financial statements for Richmond Valley Council for 2023/2024 are available as a separate document in the Annual Report or Financial Statements sections of Council's website www.richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au.

INCOME STATEMENT

Function/Activities	INCOME \$'000	EXPENDITURE \$'000	NET COST \$'000
Strengthening our role in the region	6,875	3,903	2,972
Creating great places to live	65,724	62,515	3,209
Protecting our unique environment	9,594	10,978	(1,384)
Delivering for our community	27,589	5,431	22,158
Operating Result from Continuing Operations	109,782	82,827	26,955

BALANCE SHEET

\$'000	ACTUAL 2024	ACTUAL 2023
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	37,600	55,497
Investments	33,446	27,338
Receivables	12,037	9,677
Inventories	2,261	2,274
Contract assets	4,146	5,557
Other	356	361
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	89,846	100,704
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Investments	11,250	7,750
Receivables	1,655	1,263
Inventories	1,374	1,154
Infrastructure, property, plant and equipment	1,110,949	930,309
Right of use assets	699	1,029
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	1,125,927	941,505
TOTAL ASSETS	1,215,773	1,042,209

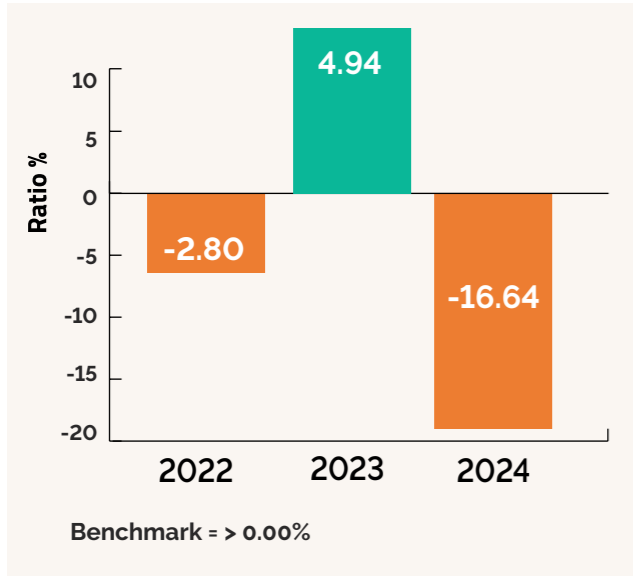
INDICATORS

■ RATIO IS OUTSIDE BENCHMARK
■ RATIO ACHIEVES BENCHMARK

Source of benchmark: Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting

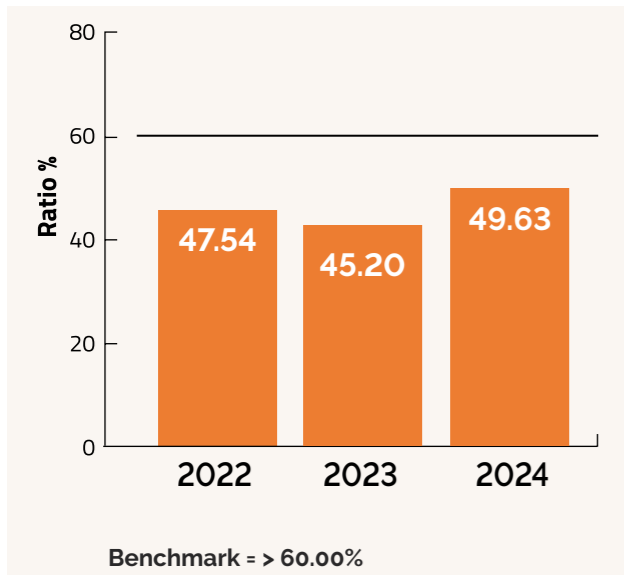
OPERATING PERFORMANCE RATIO

Council's operating performance ratio has decreased to -16.63% for 2023/2024. This ratio excludes fair value gains on investments and capital grants and contributions, both of which increased from 2022/2023. This has led to Council's operating income decreasing comparatively to last year for the purpose of this ratio. In addition, Council's operating expenditure increased comparative to 2022/2023 after the net losses from the disposal of assets are excluded.



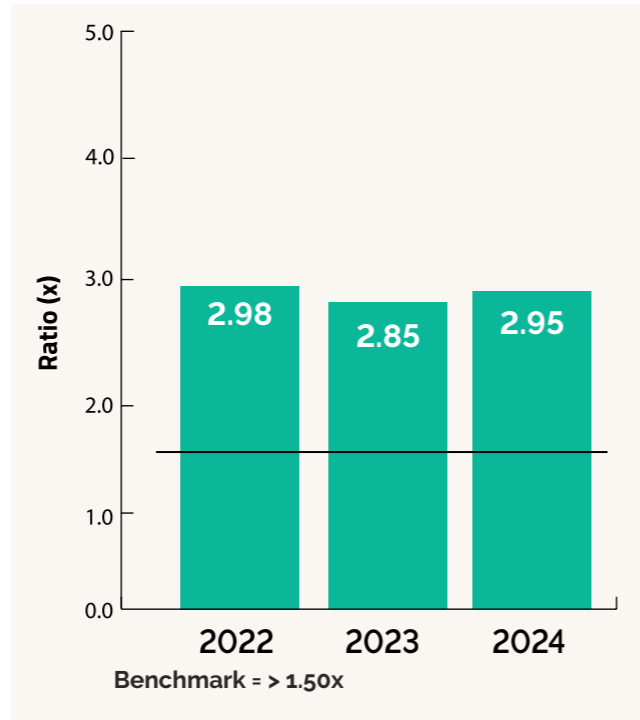
OWN SOURCE OPERATING REVENUE RATIO

Council's own source operating revenue ratio has increased slightly to 49.63%, remaining below the benchmark of 60%. This is largely due to a decrease in overall grants and contributions in comparison to previous years.



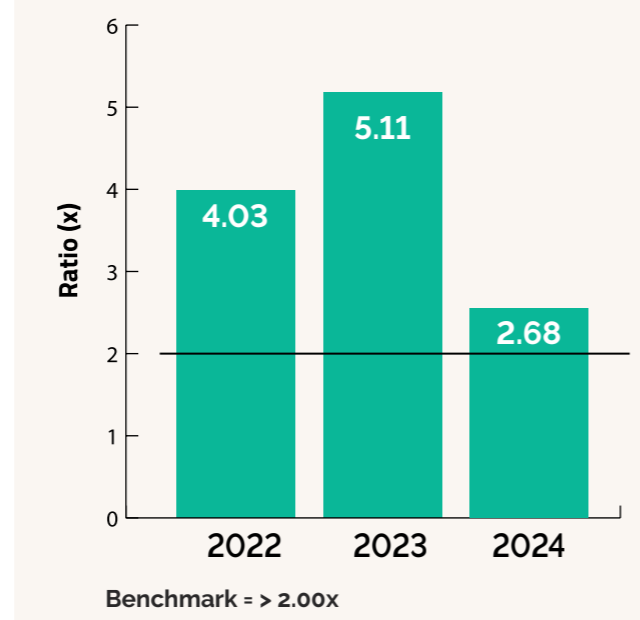
UNRESTRICTED CURRENT RATIO

Council's unrestricted current ratio has increased to 2.95 and remains well above the benchmark of 1.50 and consistent with previous years.



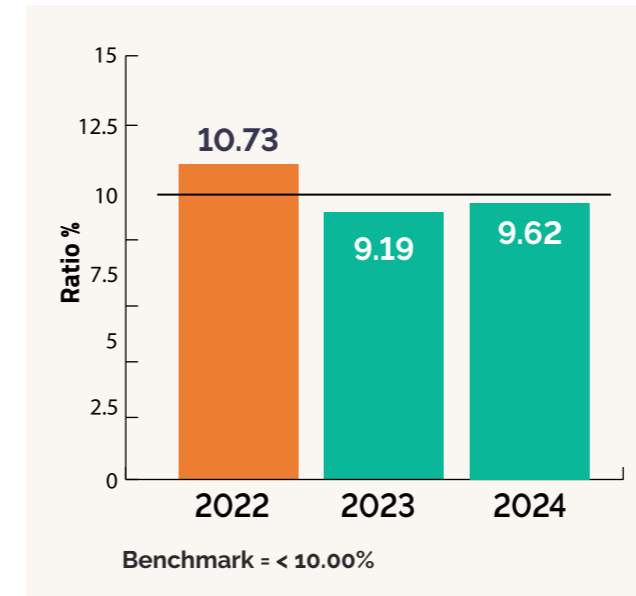
DEBT SERVICE COVER RATIO

Council's debt service cover ratio has decreased to 2.68 and remains above the benchmark of >2.0. This is due to a decrease in the operating result in comparison to previous years, meaning there was less cash available to service the repayment of debt.



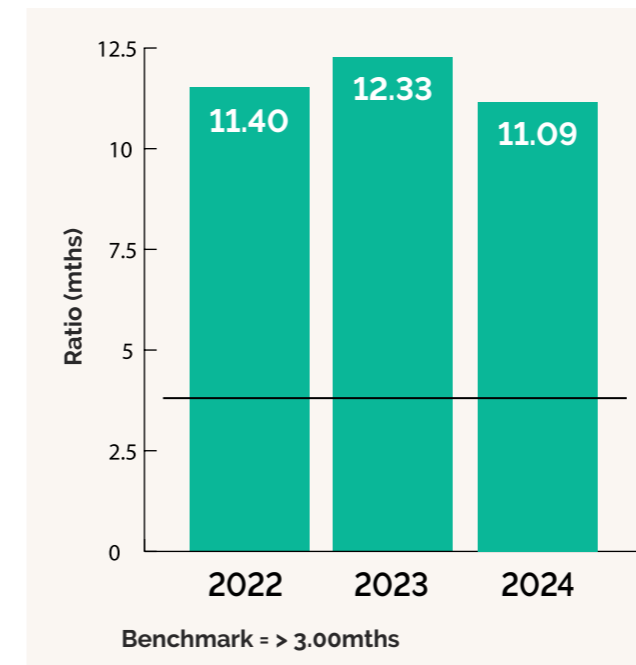
RATES AND ANNUAL CHARGES OUTSTANDING PERCENTAGE

Council's rates and annual charges outstanding percentage has increased slightly to 9.62% but remains below the benchmark of 10%. The consolidated ratio is impacted by the fact that Council levies its water and sewerage annual charges in arrears. Council actively monitors and pursues outstanding balances through its debt recovery practices.



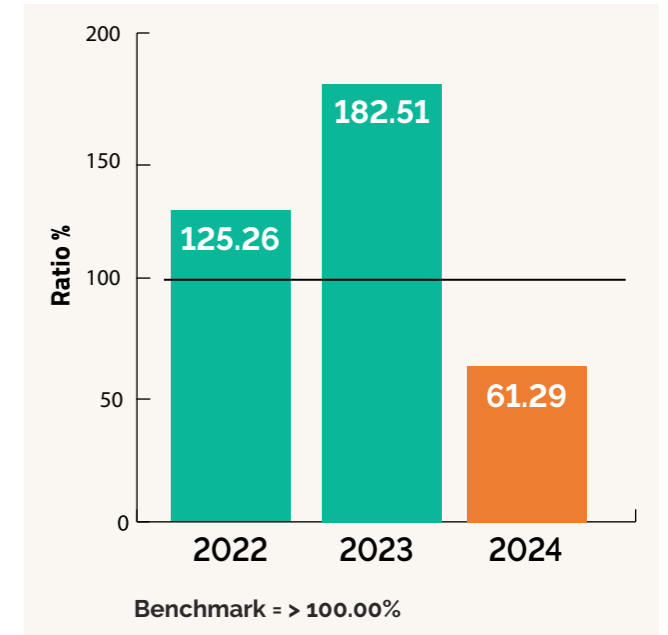
CASH EXPENSE COVER RATIO

Council's cash expense cover ratio has slightly decreased to 11.09. This illustrates Council continues to hold a high level of cash and cash equivalents. This ratio is well above the benchmark of >3 months.



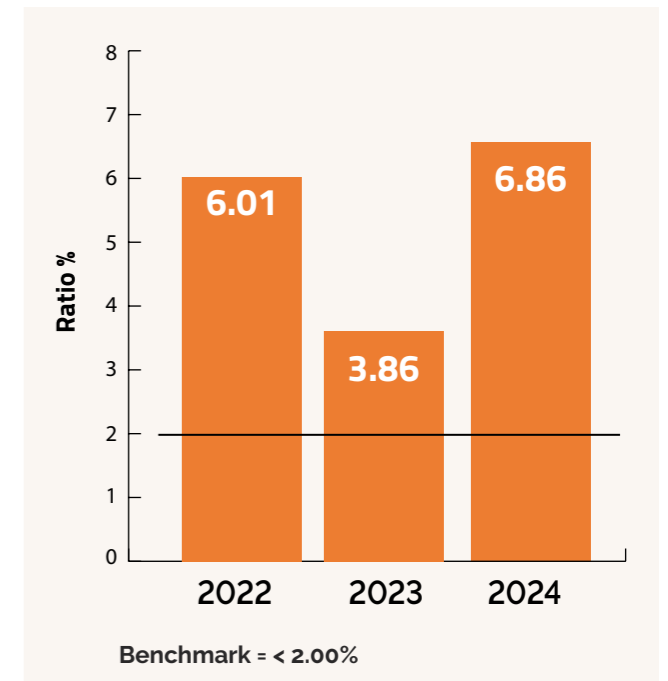
BUILDINGS AND INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWALS RATIO

Council's building and infrastructure renewal ratio decreased to 61.29%. This is largely due to a number of new assets being constructed as Council has been successful in receiving capital grants over the past couple of years, along with an increase in impairment of infrastructure assets due to disaster restoration works.



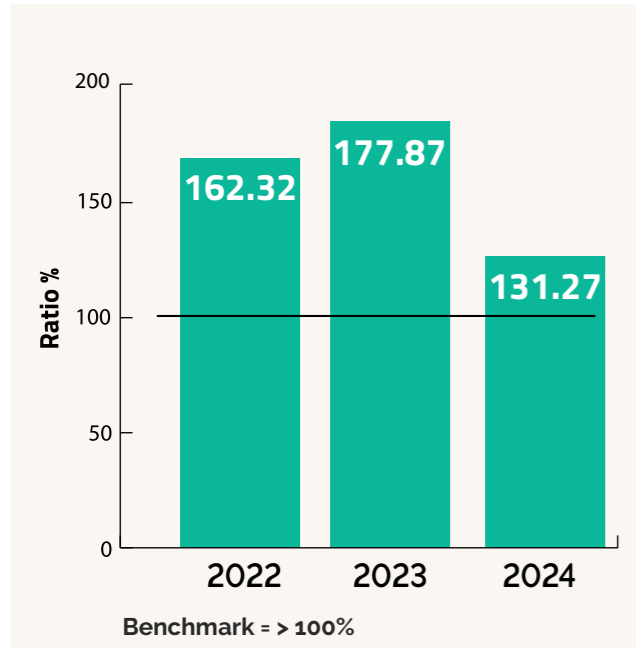
INFRASTRUCTURE BACKLOG RATIO

Council's infrastructure backlog ratio proportion has increased to 6.86. This is due to a revised amount of impairment of infrastructure assets due to disaster restoration works.



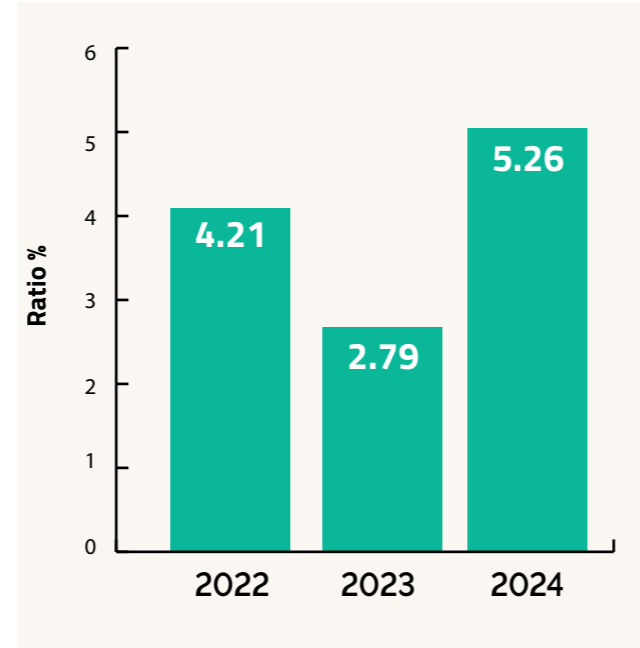
ASSET MAINTENANCE RATIO

Council's asset maintenance ratio has decreased slightly to 131.27, however remains above the benchmark of 100%.

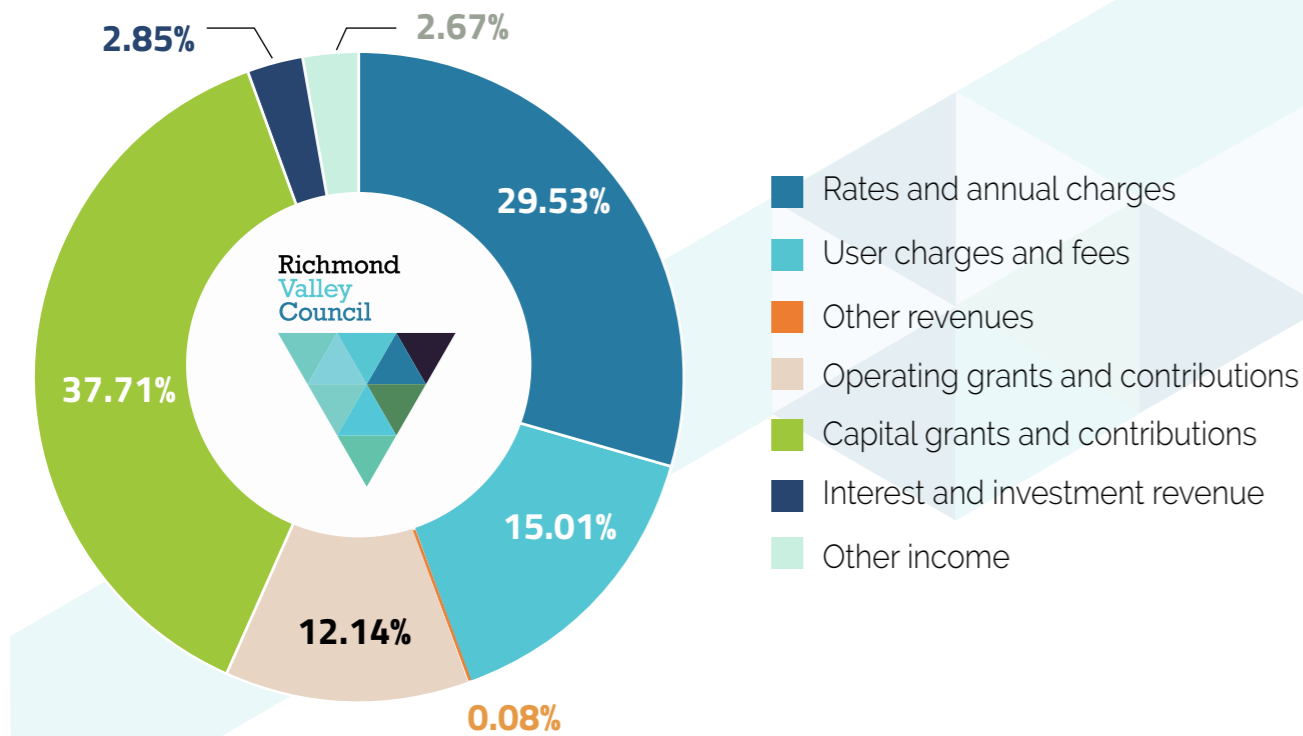


COST TO BRING ASSETS TO AGREED SERVICE LEVEL

Council's outstanding renewals ratio is 5.26%. This is an increase from the previous year due to a revised amount of impairment of infrastructure assets due to disaster restoration works.



SOURCE OF COUNCIL FUNDS



SECTION 3: STATUTORY REPORTING

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

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

No overseas travel was undertaken by Councillors, Council staff or other persons representing Council during the 2023/2024 financial year.

COUNCILLOR FEES, EXPENSES & FACILITIES

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

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

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

COUNCILLOR FEES, EXPENSES AND FACILITIES 2023/2024

Expense Type	\$ (exc GST)
Mayoral Fee	\$47,420.00
Councillor Fees	\$152,110.00
Mayoral Expenses:	
Communication expenses	\$389.95
Conferences, seminars, training & civic function attendance	\$3,200.89
Interstate Travel	\$424.62
Intrastate Travel	\$915.18
Overseas Travel	\$0.00
Mayoral vehicle expenses	\$17,645.60
Spousal expenses	\$139.85
Expenses involved in the care of a child or immediate family member	\$0.00
Other expenses	\$2,594.92
Councillor Expenses	
Communication expenses	\$2,596.13
Conferences, seminars, training & civic function attendance	\$6,221.42
Interstate Travel	\$424.62
Intrastate Travel	\$1,732.48
Overseas Travel	\$0.00
Spousal expenses	\$0.00
Expenses involved in the care of a child or immediate family member	\$0.00
Other expenses	\$12,130.91
Total Expenses	\$247,946.57

CONTRACTS AWARDED BY COUNCIL



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

During 2023/2024 the following contracts for amounts greater than \$150,000 were awarded by Council, as defined by the provisions of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

Contractor	Nature of Project	Contract Reference	Value of Contract (inc GST)
Civil Mining & Construction Pty Ltd	Design and construct Naughtons Gap Road landslip reconstruction	VP291058	\$10,925,576
Marathon Group Pty Ltd	Supply and installation of the Colley Park Facility Building	VP333465	\$1,175,817
Ozwide Bridge Rail & Civil Pty Ltd	Replace two timber bridges, Reynolds Road Bridge and Lollback Creek Bridge	VP359745	\$1,494,075
Cleaning Neways	Cleaning of Council offices and buildings	VP362381	\$341,857
Herne's Security Solutions Pty Ltd	Provision of security patrols and related services	VP362383	\$292,125
Boyd's Bay Landscaping Services	Works pertaining to Old Casino Station	VP374503	\$395,601
JMFC Fencing	Queen Elizabeth Park fencing upgrades	VP375416	\$420,343
McNamara & Tierney Pty Ltd	Dairy Flat Culvert Construction - Woodburn-Coraki Road	VP384759	\$1,448,984
Somerville Excavator Hire	Woodburn Coraki Road - Thearles Canal Culvert Upgrade	VP384760	\$763,824
McNamara & Tierney Pty Ltd	Albert Park Carpark Construction	VP387562	\$592,187
The Trustee for Santin Trust	Upper Cherry Tree Landslip remediation works	VP407583	\$1,130,907
The Trustee for Santin Trust	Design and Construct Upper Mongogarrie Road Landslip	VP408338	\$533,616
See Civil Pty Ltd	Design and Construct MR145 Landslip	VP408552	\$898,929
Insituform Pacific	Rehabilitation of Sewer Mains	VP366581	\$1,141,283
McNamara & Tierney Pty Ltd	Ainsworth Road Embankment & Culvert Work	VP262610	\$595,708
Frontier Assembly Pty Ltd	Design and Construction of Casino to Bentley Rail Trail Bridges	VP368772	\$1,737,301
Richmond Waste	Bulk recyclables transport and processing	N/A	\$342,000
Clarence Valley Council	Bulk FOGO processing	N/A	\$380,000
Newlands Civil Construction Pty Ltd	Construct South Casino Sewage Transfer Station	VP367264	\$1,677,717
Datacom Systems Pty Ltd	Microsoft Enterprise Agreement 2023-2026	N/A	\$880,807
Irwin Fencing Pty Ltd	Replace Guardrail Padua to Piora	N/A	\$465,550
Colourworks	Supply and maintenance of multi-function print devices	VP389461	\$336,201

LEGAL PROCEEDINGS

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

During 2023/2024, Council was involved in a number of legal proceedings, a summary of expenditure is shown below:

Matter name	Initiated by	Status	Outcome	Cost to Council 2023/2024 (excl GST)
Goldcoral Pty Ltd v Richmond Valley Council	Applicant (Goldcoral Pty Ltd)	Underway	Matter heard in the Land and Environment Court in June 2024. Judgment to be delivered within three months of hearing date.	\$296,025.75
Land and Environment Court Class 1 Proceedings			In addition, Council incurred court attendance costs of \$10,581.39	
Case Number: 2022/00279591				
Lisa MacLean v Richmond Valley Council	Plaintiff (MacLean)	Underway	Matter listed for Status Conference in July 2024.	Matter referred to Council's insurer under PPL/PI policy.
District Court				Erosion of insurance excess thus far \$9,599.23.
Case Number: 2023/00458473				
Christopher Mead v Richmond Valley Council	Plaintiff (Mead)	Finalised	Matter referred to Council's insurer under PPL/PI policy. Erosion of insurance excess \$20,000 in 2022/2023 financial year. Settled at mediation in May 2024 for \$800,000 inclusive of costs. Resolved by way of Consent Judgment in favour of the plaintiff.	\$0
District Court				
Case Number: 2022/00125651				
Stephen Totterman v Richmond Valley Council	Applicant (Totterman)	Finalised	Withdrawn by applicant in February 2024. In addition, Council incurred tribunal attendance costs of \$2,845	\$77,000.42
NCAT				
Case Number: 2023/00273215				

Matter name	Initiated by	Status	Outcome	Cost to Council 2023/2024 (excl GST)
Y v T Local Court Application for personal violence order	Applicant (Y)	Finalised	Council complied with terms of subpoena for production.	\$11,265.90
Kara Richards v Richmond Valley Council District Court Case Number: 2022/00190655	Plaintiff (Richards)	Finalised	Matter referred to Council's insurer under PPL/PI policy. Erosion of insurance excess \$12,500 in 2022/2023 financial year. Settled in November 2023 for \$50,000 inclusive of costs, in favour of the plaintiff.	\$0
Ayr Investments Pty Ltd v Richmond Valley Council Land and Environment Court Class 1 Proceedings Case Number: 2024/00049344	Applicant (Ayr Investments Pty Ltd)	Finalised	Notice of Discontinuance filed by Applicant in April 2024.	\$18,376.13
Broadwater Riley Pty Ltd v Richmond Valley Council Land and Environment Court Class 1 Proceedings Case Number: 2023/00328656	Applicant (Broadwater Riley Pty Ltd)	Finalised	Notice of Discontinuance filed by applicant in May 2024.	\$59,487.99
Ironfish 99 Pty Ltd v Richmond Valley Council Land and Environment Court Class 1 Proceedings Case Number: 2023/00009204	Applicant (Ironfish 99 Pty Ltd)	Finalised	Notice of Discontinuance filed by applicant in February 2023. Legal costs incurred in 2023/2024 year.	\$3,870.59

Matter name	Initiated by	Status	Outcome	Cost to Council 2023/2024 (excl GST)
R v Sheehy Local Court – fine contention Case Number: 2023/00356872	Applicant (Sheehy)	Underway	Court date scheduled for August 2024. Fees will be incurred in 2024/2025	\$0
R v Whitty Local Court – fine contention Case Number: 2024/00096981 2024/00108597 2024/00108598	Applicant (Whitty)	Underway	Court date scheduled for July 2024. Fees will be incurred in 2024/2025	\$0
R v Pancakes and Ice Cream Pty Ltd Local Court – fine contention Case Number: 2023/00262775 2023/00262706 2023/00262777 2023/00262776	Applicant (Pancakes and Icecream Pty Ltd)	Finalised	Matter withdrawn by Richmond Valley Council.	\$760
R v Watts Local Court – fine contention Case Number: 2023/00026052	Applicant (Watts)	Finalised	Hearing held in November 2023, with the applicant found not guilty; with the matter duly dismissed by the Magistrate.	\$5,718
R v Churchill Local Court – fine contention Case Number: 2023/00286068 2023/00284619 2023/00284604 2023/00286108 2023/00324202 2023/00324200 2023/00324201 2023/00324199 2023/00335961	Applicant (Churchill)	Finalised	Heard before Local Court in November 2023. Plea of guilty to all nine fine contention PINs. Convicted and fined \$700 (also incurring court levy fees).	\$2,885

Matter name	Initiated by	Status	Outcome	Cost to Council 2023/2024 (excl GST)
R v Pyteltek Local Court – fine contention Case Number: 2023/00237441	Applicant (Pyteltek)	Finalised	Matter withdrawn by Richmond Valley Council.	\$640
R v Bkassini Local Court – fine contention Infringement No: 3240493035 3240493044	Applicant (Bkassini)	Finalised	Matter withdrawn by Richmond Valley Council.	\$0
R v Phelps Local Court – fine contention Infringement No: 3240492018 3107063998	Applicant (Phelps)	Finalised	Matter withdrawn by Richmond Valley Council.	\$0
			TOTAL	\$485,629.01

Council has incurred additional legal expenditure, including:

Details	Cost to Council (excl GST)
Debt recovery action Council retains a debt recovery service for the recovery of outstanding rates and charges. All charges incurred to Council through the use of this service are recovered against the ratepayer.	\$12,715.92
NRLX leasing arrangements – due diligence and lease preparation	\$15,771.20
Generalist legal advice (including advice pertaining to subpoenas, code of conduct matters, policies/procedures and operational matters)	\$46,691.00
Water/sewer property matters	\$12,841.90
Deeds of release (out of court settlement)	\$9,043.64
TOTAL	\$97,063.66

PRIVATE WORKS

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

Local Government Act 1993 s 67

Council did not subsidise any private works during 2023/2024 in accordance with Section 67 of the *Local Government Act 1993*.



FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

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

Local Government Act 1993 s 356

During the year, Council resolved to make contributions/grants totalling \$84,585. These were allocated to the following organisations:

Community Group	\$ amount (exc GST)
Bentley Community Preschool	\$1,000
Border Ranges Richmond Valley Landcare Network	\$2,360
Broadwater Community Hall	\$3,998
Broadwater Koala Reserve Trust	\$1,610
Casino Community Men's Shed Inc.	\$3,909
Casino Kings Basketball Association	\$2,405
Casino RSL Sub-Branch	\$1,000
Casino Senior Citizens Centre Incorporated	\$1,500
Casino's Own Wireless Association Inc.	\$830
Clovass McKees Hill Soldiers Memorial and Community Hall Incorporated	\$5,000
Coraki Community Gardens	\$1,000
Coraki Golf Club	\$4,404
Coraki Rural Transaction Centre	\$500
Evans Head Bombers JRLC	\$7,500
Evans Head Living Museum	\$4,228
Evans Head Men's Shed	\$1,299
Evans Head Recreation Hall Committee	\$2,017
Evans River Rugby Union Club	\$3,000
Northern Rivers Dirty Wheels MTB Club	\$4,000
Pacific Coast Railway Society Inc trading as Casino Miniature Railway & Museum	\$1,918
Platypus RSL Day Club	\$2,500
Rotary Club of Casino Inc	\$5,000
Stan Payne Memorial Oval	\$2,140
Stan Payne Memorial Oval Committee	\$3,000
The Scout Association of Australia NSW Branch	\$5,000
The Scout Association of Australia NSW Branch 2nd Casino Scout Group	\$967
Upper Richmond Rotary Club	\$2,500
Westpac Helicopter Service	\$5,000
Woodburn Wolves Football Club	\$5,000
TOTAL	\$84,585

EVENT SUPPORT SCHEME ALLOCATION

Council resolved to make the following contributions under the Event Support Scheme:

Event	Requested allocation	Event description	Amount allocated
Casino Show	\$10,000 cash \$2763 in-kind	A three-day agricultural event containing entertainment, demonstrations, and competitions, showcasing the agriculture sector of the Richmond Valley and surrounding areas.	\$5000 cash \$500 in-kind
Casino Gymkhana 2023	\$1084 in-kind	A two-day pony club gymkhana hosted by Casino Pony Club for all members within Zone 15. Participants from all zones will camp at Casino over the two days and participate in the gymkhana activities.	\$500 in-kind
Woodburn Riverside Festival	\$5000 cash \$3750 in-kind	A full day of inexpensive family-oriented activities and entertainment based in Woodburn Riverside Park	\$3000 cash \$0 in-kind
Casino Campdraft	\$1870 in-kind	A two-day event of camp drafting, food, drinks and entertainment will be available in the night.	\$500 in-kind
Ellangowan Hall Centenary	\$2200 cash	An afternoon tea in the grounds of the hall with the older residents of the Ellangowan area, which will include the cutting of a cake by the oldest living resident that can attend plus local councillors that can attend. Then later in the night, live music and a BBQ dinner.	\$2200 cash
Evans Head Fishing Classic	\$5500 cash \$745 in-kind	A seven-day fishing competition held in Evans Head.	\$2500 cash \$745 in-kind
Peach Festival*	\$3850 cash \$185 in-kind	A celebration of peach harvest with entertainment and long table lunches.	\$1500 cash \$185 in-kind
Evans Head Malibu Classic	\$1500 cash \$824 in-kind	A seven-day surfing competition held in Evans Head.	\$1500 cash \$824 in-kind
Evans Head Christmas Parade and Carols	\$5500 cash \$285 + staff costs in-kind	A parade through Evans Head Oak Street to Kirkland Court. A stage in the park for carol singers and PA system, food vendors and market stalls.	\$3000 cash \$285 + staff costs in-kind
		TOTAL	\$22,239

* Note: The Peach Festival did not proceed - accordingly, no contributions were made for this event.

EXTERNAL BODIES EXERCISING FUNCTION DELEGATED BY COUNCIL

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

Richmond Valley Council has not given any delegation to external organisations during 2023/2024.

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

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

Council has not given any delegation to any corporations, partnerships, trusts, joint ventures, syndicates or other bodies in which council held a controlling interest during 2023/2024.

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

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

NORTH EAST WEIGHT OF LOADS GROUP (NEWLOG)

NEWLOG are an organisation of seven North Coast Councils which operate, with the cooperation and participation of the Transport for NSW, as a Weight of Loads Group, under the authority of the *Roads Act 1993*.

NEWLOG commenced operation in 1995 due to concern from local Councils regarding the damage from overloading heavy vehicles on local road networks. NEWLOG aims to preserve road assets and promote road safety, by encouraging heavy vehicles to comply with weight regulations on local and classified roads.

The member Councils are Tweed, Byron, Ballina, Kyogle, Richmond Valley, Lismore City, and Clarence Valley. The group is administered by Ballina Shire Council.

NEWLOG's equity as at 30 June 2024 was \$685,349. View the [NEWLOG Annual Report](#). <https://www.ballina.nsw.gov.au>

RICHMOND-UPPER CLARENCE REGIONAL LIBRARY

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

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

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

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

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

NORTHERN RIVERS JOINT ORGANISATION

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

Details on projects and priorities, meeting minutes, news and media releases can be viewed on the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation Website. <https://www.northernriversjo.nsw.gov.au>

NORTH EAST WASTE

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

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

MODERN SLAVERY

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

INTRODUCTION

This Modern Slavery Statement is provided by Richmond Valley Council in accordance with Section 428 (4) of the NSW *Local Government Act 1993*. This statement outlines Richmond Valley Council's commitment to combatting modern slavery and the measures we have implemented during this reporting period to reduce the risk of our procurement activities resulting in or contributing to human rights violations.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND SUPPLY CHAIN

Richmond Valley Council is a regional council located in the Northern Rivers area of NSW comprising an area of approximately 3050 square kilometres and total population of 23,705 people. Council has adopted a decentralised procurement structure where most council staff are able to raise a purchase order request which is then approved by the person or team responsible for the budget allocation the funds are derived from. In the 2023/2024 financial year Richmond Valley Council's overall spend for materials and services was \$25.2 million.

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

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



Council's highest categories of spend include:

Focus Activity	Amount \$
Roads	\$9,052,000
Waste	\$5,326,000
Water	\$5,218,000
Sewer	\$4,494,000
Fleet	\$3,093,000
Sports Grounds & Parks	\$2,063,000
Town Planning & Development	\$1,955,000
Governance	\$1,521,000

POLICY

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

OUTCOMES

Steps taken by Council in the reporting period include:

- Roll out of the Modern Slavery Prevention Policy.
- Updated Purchasing Policy with reference to Councils commitment to Modern Slavery Prevention.
- Communication to all staff regarding modern slavery obligations and general awareness raising.
- Supplier risk assessment – purchasing from LGP Contracts and utilising modern slavery risk ratings.
- Modern slavery contract clauses included in tender documentation.

DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTIONS

Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021 ss 218A (1), (2)(a) - (g) and (3)

Contribution Plan - Section 7.11

PROJECT	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	AMENITY/ SERVICE AREA	AMOUNT (\$)	% OF TOTAL PROJECT COSTS FUNDED BY CONTRIBUTIONS	PROJECT STATUS
390012	Quarry Roads Maintenance	Road	10,364.94	100.00%	Completed
410050	MR145 East Coraki-Woodburn Maintenance	Road	3,590.25	100.00%	Completed
841055	MR145 Woodburn-Coraki Road Major Upgrade	Road	554,844.25	4.86%	Completed
837264	Dyrabba/East Street Asphalt Works	Road	124,212.20	100.00%	Completed
			693,011.64		

Contribution Plan - Section 7.12

845166	Footpath River Street (Centre St to Walker St)	Footpath	85,324.03	100.00%	Completed
845305	Footpath Adam Street (Bridge to Richmond)	Footpath	31,887.50	100.00%	Completed
845413	Footpath Woodburn Street (Wattle to Booyong)	Footpath	25,581.33	57.57%	Completed
			142,792.86		
TOTAL EXPENDED			835,804.50		

Total value of all contributions and levies received for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024

Section 7.11	116,023.31
Section 7.12	293,638.57
	409,661.88

Total value of all contributions and levies expended for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024

Section 7.11	693,011.64
Section 7.12	142,792.86
	835,804.50

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

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY MANAGEMENT PLAN

Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 s 217(1)(ag)

Council works to continually grow our workforce and treat all our employees and prospective employees fairly, regardless of race, gender, age, disability or other characteristics and promote a diverse and inclusive workplace. We are proud of our continuous improvement approach to initiatives and recruitment practices to continue this pathway.

The Youth Employment Strategy (YES) continues to be one of the biggest, most acknowledged, and awarded employment programs, our statistics show that this program has increased the employment of women, Aboriginal peoples and those with disabilities for our LGA.

We are very proud to support our diverse community and have a workforce that continues to reflect best employment practices.

In this last term Richmond Valley Council has proudly:

- ✓ Applied for and obtained small grants from the State Government to continue our pathway for growth and development opportunities for women in the workplace resulting in greater employment, acknowledgement and promotion of women in Council.
- ✓ Met and exceeded skills, training and employment diversity targets for our flood recovery projects with the Reconstruction Authority contract terms, aligned with the Infrastructure Skills Legacy Program (ISLP), Aboriginal Procurement Policy, Women in Construction and the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Workforce targets.
- ✓ Try-a-Trade program once again continued offering women opportunities to learn and experience a variety of trades within local government.
- ✓ Continued Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment opportunities through the "YES" program and assistance from Elsa Dixon funding.



GENERAL MANAGER AND SENIOR STAFF REMUNERATION



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

The General Manager's remuneration package consists of:

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

The total remuneration paid to the General Manager in 2023/2024 was \$408,122.31.

Component	\$
Salary	380,652.31
Bonus/Performance/Other payments	0.00
Superannuation	27,470.00
Non-cash benefits	0.00
Total Remuneration	\$408,122.31

In addition, fringe benefits tax payable by Council amounted to \$7,208.40.

Council had one other senior staff position (as defined by the *Local Government Act 1993*) during 2023/2024. This position was held by the Director Community Service Delivery.

The remuneration package of senior staff consists of:

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

The total remuneration paid to senior staff in 2023/2024 was \$288,857.49.

Component	\$
Salary	\$261,933.49
Bonus/Performance/Other payments	\$0.00
Superannuation	\$26,924.00
Non-cash benefits	\$0.00
Total Remuneration	\$288,857.49

In addition, fringe benefits tax payable by Council amounted to \$6,346.91.



STORMWATER MANAGEMENT SERVICE CHARGE

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

Contained in the Operational Plan applicable for 2023/2024 was provision for Council to undertake various urban stormwater drainage works and services estimated to cost \$2,209,189. These works included the following items:



Works	Cost Planned in Operational Plan	Actual Works	Actual Expenditure
Casino			
Casino Drainage Improvements	\$10,000	Casino Drainage Improvements	\$5,733
Increase drainage points Johnston Street	\$27,000	Increase drainage points Johnston Street	\$0
Replace concrete pipes River Street/Walker Street	\$58,000	Replace concrete pipes River Street/Walker Street	\$0
		Drill Hall Stormwater Replacement	\$8,646
Evans Head			
Illawong Lane Drainage improvements	\$2,100,000	Illawong Lane Drainage improvements	\$548,260
Currajong Street - CDS unit rehabilitation	\$14,189	Currajong Street - CDS unit rehabilitation	\$0
Broadwater			
		Broadwater Echidna Place drainage improvements	\$49,811
Total	\$2,209,189	Total	\$612,450

Unspent funds totalling \$1,565,929 (comprised of Illawong Lane \$1,551,740 and Currajong Street \$14,189) have been carried forward to the 2024/2025 financial year to add to the reviewed scope of works to be undertaken due to further investigations being required prior to work commencing. Remaining \$30,810 has been returned to reserves.

Revenue from the Stormwater Levy for 2023/2024 amounted to \$206,364.93.

COMPANION ANIMALS

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

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

Companion Animals Statistics	Number
Microchipped dogs not registered	760
Microchipped cats not registered	101
Dogs Impounded	307
Cats Impounded	150
Dogs Euthanised	29
Cats Euthanised	29
Dog attacks	31
Animals Returned Home	80

Having regard to the administrative and operational needs that relate to animal management, it is estimated that these activities account for 70 percent of annual expenditure for the Rangers Team. In addition, this figure includes one FTE Customer Experience Officer.

In this regard, the following is the estimated funding spent for the 2023/2024 year:

Expense category	Amount
Employee Costs	\$345,234.20
Pound Expenses	\$19,176.23
Animal Control - Materials	\$9,643.03
Animal Control - Administrative Expenses	\$4,390.55
Vehicle and Plant Costs	\$38,152.15
Total	\$416,596.16

Note: Funds from the Companion Animal Fund received in 2023/2024 equate to \$29,855.

Off Leash Areas

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



Community Education

Managing companion animals in our Local Government Area is an important component of Council's business and generates one of the biggest workloads of all duties carried out by Council's Rangers.

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

In 2023/2024 Council received 883 complaints about companion animals, the majority of which were for dogs. These varied from issues relating to barking dogs, stray dogs, nuisance dogs, dog attacks and injured dogs on Council land. Our Rangers' primary focus when dealing with people while investigating a complaint is to educate them to get a positive outcome. Taking the time to stop and engage people and discuss their issue and the legal requirements often results in a better outcome than enforcement. Rangers also utilise a variety of educational pamphlets and handouts covering issues from registration through to barking problems.

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

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

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

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

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

RATES AND CHARGES WRITTEN OFF

In accordance with Clause 132 of the Local Government (Regulation) 2021, Council reports that the following general rates and water/sewer charges have been written off during 2023/2024:

Write off-type	\$
General Rates	\$0
Water/Sewer Rates	\$22,653

This figure is made up of 25 separate write-offs.

SPECIAL VARIATIONS TO GENERAL INCOME

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

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

YEAR OF APPROVAL 2019/2020

Purpose	Council intends to use the proposed Special Variation funds to enhance its financial sustainability, maintain existing services, and maintain and renew infrastructure.	
Expenditure during 2023/2024	Capital Renewals:	
	Maintain current annual renewal budget for community amenities	\$33,087
	Total expenditure	\$33,087
Amount unexpended as at 30 June 2024		\$0



SWIMMING POOL INSPECTIONS

Swimming Pools Act 1992 – Section 22 F(9)(2) *Swimming Pools Regulation 2018 – Clause 23*

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

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

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

In 2023/2024 the following were carried out as part of the program:

Category	Number of inspections
Number of inspections of tourist and visitor accommodation	3
Number of inspections of premises with more than 2 dwellings	5
Number of inspections that resulted in issuance of a certificate of compliance under s22D of the <i>Swimming Pools Act 1992</i>	257
Number of inspections that resulted in issuance of a certificate of non-compliance under Clause 21 of the <i>Swimming Pools Regulation 2018</i>	161
Total	426

Note: the above statistics do not include the 35 inspections carried out that resulted in pools being removed or filled.



COUNCILLOR INDUCTION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 s 132

Councillor Induction and Professional Development Policy CPOL1.14

Office Local Government Guidelines 2018

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

Date	Description	Attendees
25 July 2023 - 27 July 2023	Agrinuous AusSaleyards Expo Gold Coast, QLD	Cr Mustow Cr Humphrys
17 August 2023	Planning 101 for Councillors Webcast	Cr Morrissey
1 September 2023	Chairing and Effective Meeting Procedures for Councillors Webcast	Cr Morrissey
6 September 2023	Understanding LG Finances for Councillors Webcast	Cr Morrissey
3 August 2023 - 4 August 2023	Local Government Week Awards and Country Mayors Meeting Sydney, NSW	Cr Mustow
12 November 2023 - 14 November 2023	LGNSW Conference Sydney, NSW	Cr Mustow
28 November 2023	Community and Stakeholder Engagement Webcast	Cr Morrissey
28 February 2024	Cyber Security Awareness Training - Essentials for Councillors Webcast	Cr Mustow

ENVIRONMENTAL UPGRADE AGREEMENTS

Local Government Act 1993 – s 54P(1)

Council has not entered into any Environmental Upgrade Agreements in 2023/2024.

PLANNING AGREEMENTS IN FORCE

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

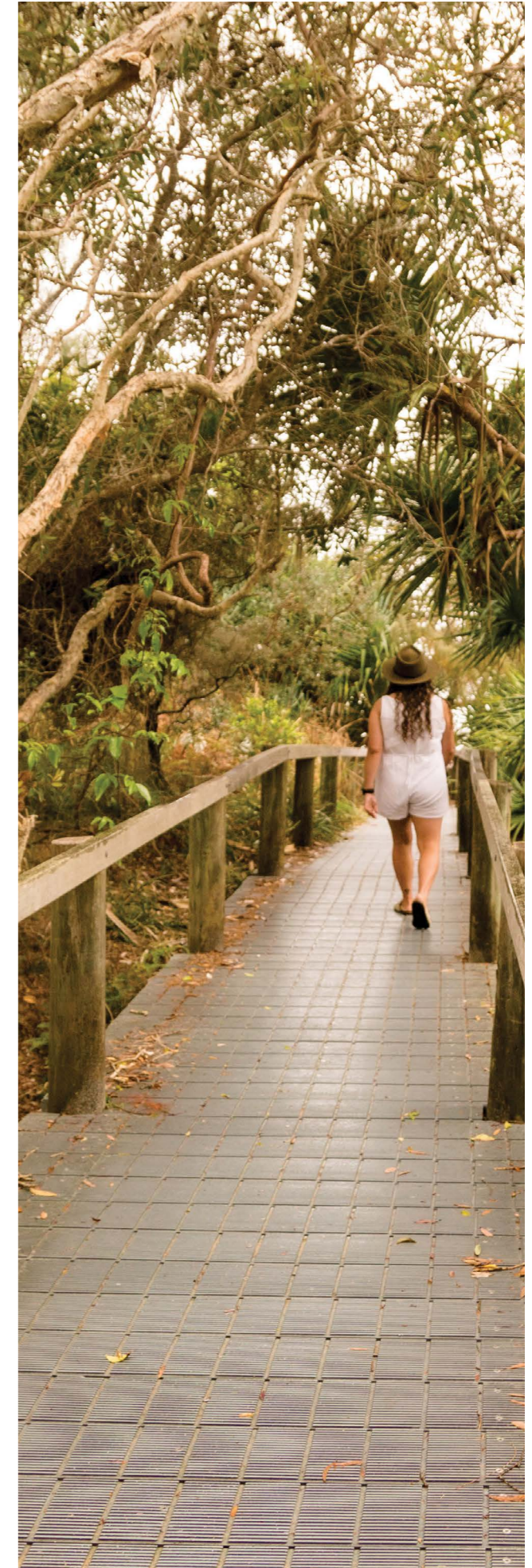
There are no reportable planning agreements in force for the 2023/2024 period.

LABOUR STATISTICS

Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 – s 217

The following labour statistics relate to staff employed as at 14 February 2024 (the nominated 'relevant date' issued by the Office of Local Government:

- the number of persons directly employed by the council:
 - on a permanent full-time basis = 243
 - on a permanent part-time basis = 22
 - on a casual basis = 4
 - under a fixed-term contract = 3
- the number of persons employed by the council who are "senior staff" for the purposes of the *Local Government Act 1993* = 2
- the number of persons engaged by the council, under a contract or other arrangement with the person's employer, that is wholly or principally for the labour of the person = 4
- the number of persons supplied to the council, under a contract or other arrangement with the person's employer, as an apprentice or trainee = 22.



DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN (DIAP)



Disability Inclusion Act 2014 – s 13(1)

Richmond Valley Council is committed to the Richmond Valley being inclusive and accessible for people of all abilities. The Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2023-2025 (DIAP), adopted at the December 2023 Ordinary Meeting, guides Council's planning and actions to promote accessibility in our community.

COUNCIL'S GOALS:

Focus Area 1 Improving attitudes and behaviours

1. Encourage participation in awareness programs, such as White Cane Day.
2. Provide disability awareness training for Council staff.
3. Invite people with disability to share their experiences of interacting with council services and assets, so we can improve design and service delivery.
4. Ensure Council's communications, social media and publications promote positive images of those with disability and promote messages of inclusion.
5. Encourage people with disability to stand for election as Councillors.

Focus Area 2 Creating liveable communities

1. Continue to implement Council's Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan.
2. Involve people with disability in the design of major public assets and spaces, including the CBD upgrades for Casino and Evans Head, and design of public playgrounds.
3. Plan for a diverse range of housing in the Richmond Valley and support options for accessible housing near key services.

4. Provide more opportunities for people with disability to participate in Council's community events.
5. Continue to provide programs and resources through our regional library service and consulting on new proposals.
6. Provide opportunities for people with disability to be involved in community greening programs and habitat restoration.
7. Support people with disability to be better prepared for emergencies, such as bushfire and flood through community education programs.

Focus Area 3 Increasing employment opportunities

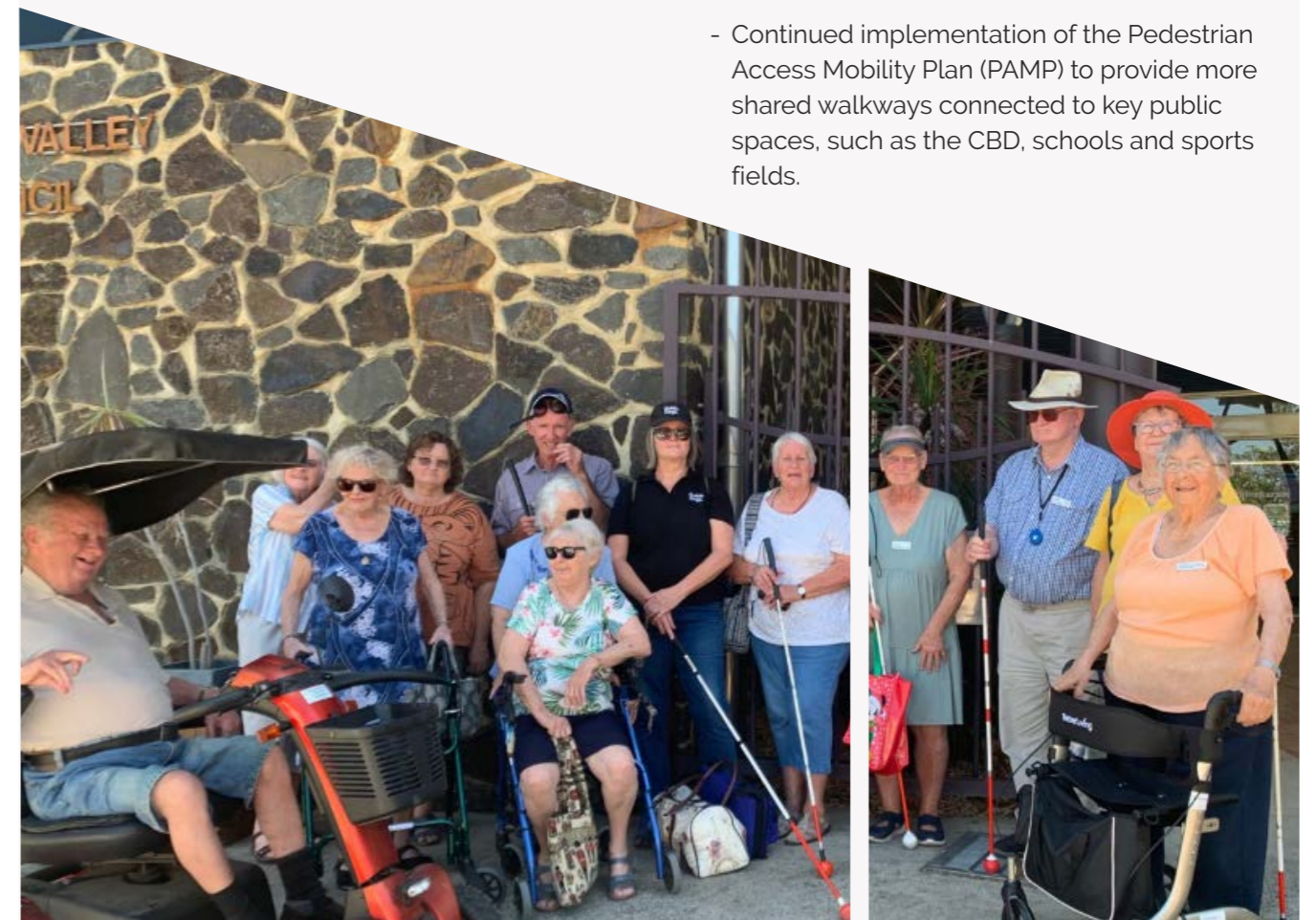
1. Proactively increase employment opportunities within Council for people with disabilities.
2. Support people with disability to work effectively and safely with dignity and mobility across the workplace through appropriate workplace adjustments.
3. Improve our recruitment practices to make it easier for people with disability to engage with our processes.
4. Partner with Disability Services and Recruitment Agencies to provide people with disabilities greater opportunity within the workplace to continually develop their careers.
5. Promote a safe and inclusive environment where employees feel comfortable to disclose their disability and discuss workplace adjustments.
6. Proactively apply the Local Government Tendering provisions to support more opportunities for purchase of goods and services from approved Disability Employment Organisations.

Focus Area 4 Improving Council systems and processes

1. Review our Customer Service Charter to ensure it recognises the needs of people living with disability.
2. Extend and improve Council's online services.
3. Invite customer feedback from those engaging with our services and processes.
4. Consider the needs of those living with disability when designing our community consultation activities.
5. Review our website and corporate communications to improve accessibility.
6. Consider the needs of those with disability during planned and unplanned service disruptions.
7. Improve accessibility at our customer service centres.

Highlights have included:

- Providing wheelchair accessible picnic tables
- Upgrading facilities to include accessible toilets
- Providing Tactile Ground Surface Indicators at major pedestrian crossings
- Providing an all-ability access ramp to the 50m pool, accessible amenities and play areas at the upgraded Casino Memorial Pool
- Introduction of automated subtitles for council meeting broadcasts, to assist those with hearing impairment
- Providing library services such as programs for socially isolated people, specialist software, large print and audio books for people with impaired vision and home delivery services
- Providing customer experience direct assistance with tasks, such as completing forms and accessing services
- Designing accessibility into all new assets and major upgrades
- Continued implementation of the Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan (PAMP) to provide more shared walkways connected to key public spaces, such as the CBD, schools and sports fields.



SECTION 4 – APPENDICES

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

Appendix 1: Delivery Program Progress Report Q4 to 30 June 2024

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

Appendix 2: Audited Financial Statements

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

Appendix 3: 2023/2024 Government Information (Public Access) Act Annual Report

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

Appendix 4: 2023/2024 Public Interest Disclosure Annual Report

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

Appendix 5: 2023/2024 Richmond Upper Clarence Regional Library Annual Report

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

Appendix 6: State of the Valley Report

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

Richmond
Valley
Council



**RICHMOND VALLEY COUNCIL
ANNUAL REPORT**

2023-2024