

Richmond
Valley
Council



AGENDA

Ordinary Council Meeting

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

Date: Tuesday, 20 May 2025

Time: 6pm

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

**Vaughan Macdonald
General Manager**

Statement of Ethical Obligations

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

Oath or affirmation of office

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

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

Conflicts of interest

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

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

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1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

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

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

2 PRAYER**3 PUBLIC ACCESS****4 APOLOGIES****5 MAYORAL MINUTES**

Nil

6 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

6.1 MINUTES ORDINARY MEETING HELD 15 APRIL 2025

RECOMMENDATION

That Council confirms the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 15 April 2025.

REPORT

Refer attached Minutes.

ATTACHMENT(S)

- 1. Unconfirmed Ordinary Minutes 15 April 2025 (under separate cover)**

7 MATTERS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

8 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

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

9 PETITIONS

Nil

10 NOTICE OF MOTION**10.1 NOTICE OF MOTION - CUSTOMER SERVICE TECHNOLOGY**

Author: Lyndall Murray

I, Councillor Lyndall Murray, give notice that at the next Ordinary Meeting of Council to be held on 20 May 2025, I intend to move the following motion:

NOTICE OF MOTION

That Council investigates the potential operational efficiencies, customer experience improvements and cost-effectiveness of implementing Artificial Intelligence (AI), chatbot and live chat functionalities as part of Council's customer service matrix; and

1. Receives a report outlining:
 - a. Current industry best practice and technology adoption in local government customer service delivery;
 - b. Potential platforms and tools suitable for Richmond Valley Council;
 - c. Projected costs, savings, and service improvements;
 - d. Any workforce or data security implications; and
 - e. Opportunities to pilot or phase-in such technology aligned with the Customer Experience Strategy and Digital Transformation priorities in the Operational Plan.

RATIONALE

Improving the efficiency and productivity of Council's customer service delivery is critical in meeting the evolving expectations of our community. Emerging technologies such as AI-powered chatbots and live chat services have been successfully adopted in the private sector to enhance user experience, reduce wait times, and optimise resource allocation.

As digital service delivery becomes increasingly important, this motion seeks to ensure Richmond Valley Council is proactive in exploring innovation that complements our existing service channels and supports our commitment to customer-focused service.

Importantly, this investigation supports the futureproofing of our customer service systems ensuring we are not only keeping pace with technological advances but actively positioning ourselves to respond to community needs in a scalable, resilient and cost-effective manner. It also presents opportunities to build internal capability and ensure that Council remains adaptive and digitally ready into the future.

I commend this Notice of Motion to Council.

ATTACHMENT(S)

Nil

10.2 NOTICE OF MOTION - YOUTH FORUM

Author: Lyndall Murray

I, Councillor Lyndall Murray, give notice that at the next Ordinary Meeting of Council to be held on 20 May 2025, I intend to move the following motion:

NOTICE OF MOTION

That Richmond Valley Council:

1. Establishes a Richmond Valley Youth Forum to provide young people aged 12 to 18 with a structured platform to engage with Council on matters that affect them.
2. Aligns the Youth Forum with the objectives of the 2025–26 Operational Plan, specifically Item 8 A1.3: “Continue to work with community, business advisory groups and youth networks and develop an ongoing program of listening tours and engagement.”
3. Develops Terms of Reference for the Youth Forum, including:
 - Criteria ensuring diverse representation across the LGA.
 - Meeting frequency and format.
 - Clear mechanisms for reporting outcomes and recommendations to Council.
4. Explores opportunities for mentorship between Councillors and Youth Forum members, drawing on models such as Clarence Valley Council’s Councillors’ Youth Mentoring Program launching in May 2025.
5. Allocates appropriate resources to support the establishment and ongoing facilitation of the Youth Forum, including staffing and administrative support.
6. Engages with community-led youth organisations, high school students, First Nations youth leaders, and students who attend high schools outside of the region.
7. Tasks the Youth Forum, under mentorship, with contributing to the planning and activation of Richmond Valley’s Youth Week 2026 celebrations, to provide leadership experience and elevate youth-led community initiatives.

RATIONALE

Young people constitute a significant portion of the Richmond Valley community. According to the 2021 Census, approximately 3,500 residents aged 12–24 live in the region around 14.8% of the total population. This demographic includes a high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth, and faces unique social and economic challenges, including access to education, employment, and engagement.

Despite their numbers, young people are often under-represented in local decision-making. Establishing a Youth Forum will provide a structured mechanism for them to contribute meaningfully to Council’s plans and policies, while also developing leadership and civic participation skills.

This aligns with the Richmond Valley Council Operational Plan 2025–26 commitment (Item 8 A1.3) to engage actively with youth networks and develop ongoing listening tours and community engagement.

The proposal is consistent with actions by neighbouring councils such as Clarence Valley Council’s launch of the Councillors’ Youth Mentoring Program in May 2025, giving young people a chance to learn how local government works and influence change.

Importantly, this initiative supports the principle of intergenerational equity, a core component of the *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW). Section 8B of the Act requires councils to consider the financial and social impacts of decisions on future generations, ensuring that today's choices do not disadvantage tomorrow's residents. By investing in youth engagement now, Richmond Valley Council demonstrates leadership and long-term thinking in line with these legislated responsibilities.

I commend this Notice of Motion to Council.

ATTACHMENT(S)

Nil

10.3 NOTICE OF MOTION - NSW RECONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY RESPONSES

Author: Lyndall Murray

I, Councillor Lyndall Murray, give notice that at the next Ordinary Meeting of Council to be held on 20 May 2025, I intend to move the following motion:

NOTICE OF MOTION

That Council responds to the NSW Reconstruction Authority's letter tabled at the April 2025 meeting asking it to answer the questions as asked with full transparency:

1. How much of the \$790 million (now \$880m) has been distributed, with a breakdown by local government area, priority level, and the average time taken for approval? To be specific;
 - a) How much has been distributed (i.e. paid out) to date?
 - b) Please provide a breakdown by postcode within the Richmond Valley LGA.
 - c) Please include a breakdown by priority level.
 - d) What is the average time between application and grant approval across each grant stream?
 - e) If postcode-specific data cannot be shared due to confidentiality, please provide aggregated data at suburb or LGA level where possible.
2. Will all priority homes mapped 1-4 receive a grant and what is the timeline to deliver these in full? To be specific:
 - a) Will all homeowners identified in Priority Levels 1 to 4 (as mapped) receive a Resilient Homes Grant, provided they apply and are deemed eligible?
 - b) Is the current \$880 million budget sufficient to deliver grants to all Priority 1 to 4 homes?
 - c) What is the projected timeline for delivering outcomes to these Priority 1 to 4 homes - including assessment, approval, and completion of works?
3. Repair to Return program: If any funds were allocated to the Richmond Valley, what amount was spent and on how many homes? To be specific:
 - a) What portion of the \$5 million Repair to Return program budget has been allocated and spent on homes in the Richmond Valley LGA?
 - b) Were all 102 homes repaired under this specific \$5 million program, or were other funding sources used?
4. GIVIT was announced as the primary fundraising vehicle by the State Government. How much money has been raised for Cyclone Alfred, and how much has been spent in the Richmond Valley? To be specific:
 - a) Of the \$340,000 raised through the Cyclone Alfred appeal, how much was directly distributed to residents in the Richmond Valley LGA?
 - b) The figure of \$2,121,433 in donated funds and 29,665 items appears to include support from both the 2022 flood and Cyclone Alfred events. Could you please provide a breakdown of these figures by event?
5. With the announcement of new funding for the Resilient Homes Program through a delivery

support partnership with Resilient Lismore & Building Advisory Support Service (BASS) specifically for house raising, retrofitting, and relocation can the NSW Reconstruction Authority please confirm:

- a) The total amount of new funding allocated,
- b) The selection criteria being used to determine which homes receive funding,
- c) How homes are being selected and reported across each LGA, and
- d) Whether the NSW Reconstruction Authority will publicly disclose a transparent breakdown of spending, including how much is being directed to industry professionals, trades, materials, project management, and administration costs for each home?





RATIONALE

In relation to question 1

What the question asked:

1. How much of the \$790 million has been distributed (not just allocated)?
2. Breakdown by postcode
3. Breakdown by priority level
4. Average time taken for approval

What the response included:





-  Distributed funds? No, it only states that 60% of the funding has been allocated, which is not the same as distributed (i.e. paid out).
-  Breakdown by postcode? No, explicitly declined on confidentiality grounds. Instead, we request LGA breakdown for transparency.
-  Breakdown by priority level? Not addressed at all.
-  Average time to approval? Not answered, simply says “varies” and that it’s voluntary.

In relation to question 2

What was asked:

1. Will all priority homes (mapped 1 to 4) receive a grant?
2. What is the timeline to deliver these in full?

What was answered:

-  Confirms the program is *voluntary* and operates through an *application process*.
-  Does not confirm whether all Priority 1 to 4 homes will actually, receive a grant.
-  No clear timeline for delivery to Priority 1 to 4 homes, only a general statement that the program will conclude in 2027.
-  States it is working with eligible homeowners within the \$880m budget but does not state if that budget is enough to cover all Priority 1 to 4 homes.

In relation to question 3 – Repair to Return Funding

What was asked:

1. Was any of that funding allocated to Richmond Valley?
2. If so, how much was spent, and on how many homes?

What the response provided:

- ☒ States that 102 homes in Richmond Valley received repairs.
- ☐ Does not specify how much of the \$5 million was spent in Richmond Valley.
- ☐ Avoids transparency by referring to a confidential briefing, rather than publicly disclosing the amount in the written response.
- ☐ No clarity on whether all 102 homes were covered under the \$5M Repair to Return program, or if additional/other programs contributed.

Only half the question is answered:

- Number of homes: ☒ Yes, 102 homes.
- Amount spent: ☐ No, not disclosed.
- Program clarity: ☐ Unclear if these homes were repaired exclusively under the \$5M program.

In relation to question 4

What the question asked:

1. How much money was raised specifically for Cyclone Alfred?
2. How much of that was spent in the Richmond Valley?

What the response says:

- ☒ States the Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred appeal raised over \$340,000.
- ☐ Does not clarify how much of that \$340,000 went specifically to Richmond Valley.
- ☒ States that \$2,121,433 in donated funds and 29,665 items have been delivered to Richmond Valley residents since January 2022 but this combines multiple events (2022 flood and the cyclone) and potentially multiple donation streams, not just the Cyclone Alfred appeal.

Half the question is answered:

- The total appeal figure is provided, ☒
- The local amount spent is mentioned, over a longer period than was asked, ☒
- Meaning, it is unclear how much of the Cyclone Alfred appeal money specifically went to Richmond Valley, ☐
- And the inclusion of combined data from other disasters muddies the clarity of the response, ☐

Question 5

On the 10th of May it has been reported additional funding for Resilient Lismore. While the Repair to Return program delivered by Resilient Lismore has clearly provided much needed support for homeowners in the Lismore area, there remains a significant concern about the lack of

transparency and equity in how all funding including this program has been distributed across the Northern Rivers.

The \$5 million Repair to Return fund was publicly announced as a regional initiative, yet funding allocations, selection criteria, and delivery mechanisms have not been clearly disclosed. Without a breakdown of funding by LGA or per capita based on homes impacted, there is growing frustration among flood-affected communities outside Lismore particularly in the Richmond Valley where residents continue to live in caravans, tents, or partially repaired homes.

The decision to appoint a Lismore-based NGO as the primary delivery partner, without establishing equitable partnerships with other local organisations in similarly affected areas, raises questions of fairness and geographic bias. If Resilient Lismore is to take a regional coordination role, then a transparent and publicly accountable distribution framework must be provided, including subcontracting or formally partnering with trusted local groups embedded in other LGAs.

Unless this funding is shared equitably and visibly across all flood-affected communities, the perception and reality of inequality will continue to erode community trust in the recovery process.

I commend this Notice of Motion to Council.

ATTACHMENT(S)

Nil

11 MAYOR'S REPORT**11.1 MAYORAL ATTENDANCE REPORT 9 APRIL - 12 MAY 2025**

Author: Robert Mustow

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the Mayoral Attendance Report for the period 9 April – 12 May 2025.

April

- 10th Minister for Local Government, Hon Ron Hoenig, Roundtable discussion Grafton
- 15th Richmond Valley Council Ordinary Meeting
- 16th Rous County Council Ordinary Meeting
- 25th Anzac Day Dawn Service Rappville
- 25th Anzac Day morning service Coraki
- 25th Anzac Day luncheon Casino
- 27th Kevin Hogan MP, Election Announcement Stan Payne Oval
- 28th Driving Moke with Brenda, Casino Country Music Muster Promotion
- 28th Citizenship Ceremony
- 28th Northern Rivers Community Leaders Forum
- 30th Northern Rivers Joint Organisation – Operating Model

May

- 1st Casino High School Anzac Day Ceremony
- 2nd 2025 Casino Country Music Muster
- 3rd 2025 Casino Country Music Muster
- 5th Meeting with Coraki constituents
- 6th Meeting with Casino constituents
- 6th Richmond Valley Councillor Information Session
- 6th Country Music and Opera
- 7th Rous County Council – Rocky Creek Dam inspection
- 10th Official Opening Casino Netball Clubhouse
- 10th Harvest Festival dinner Windara
- 11th Woodburn Evans Head Orchid Society Mother's Day show
- 12th Rous County Council Conference

ATTACHMENT(S)

Nil

12 DELEGATES' REPORTS**12.1 DELEGATES' REPORT MAY 2025 - ROUS COUNTY COUNCIL****RECOMMENDATION**

That Council receives and notes the Delegates' Report – Rous County Council for May 2025.

REPORT

Council delegates are required to report on meetings/forums attended on Council's behalf.

Cr Robert Mustow and Cr Sandra Humphrys have provided the following summary of the main items of business for the Rous County Council Ordinary Meeting held on 16 April 2025.

ATTACHMENT(S)

- 1. Summary of Rous County Council Ordinary meeting held 16 April 2025**



Rous County Council meeting 16 April 2025

Summary of main items of business



Notice of Motion to fully fund the \$150M, 15-year Northern Rivers Watershed Initiative (NRWI) Program.

The Northern Rivers Watershed Initiative (NRWI) is a catchment and estuary restoration program devised for the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation (NRJO) footprint to address ecosystem health, water security and flood risk issues across the Tweed, Brunswick, Richmond and Evans River systems.

In 2024, Hon Janelle Saffin MP secured \$5M for the implementation of a package of shovel-ready works, to be completed by Rous and the project partners by October 2026.

Cr. Sharon Cadwallader moved a Notice of Motion that Council write to and lobby the:

1. Hon. Janelle Saffin, MP, Minister for the North Coast;
2. Hon. Tara Moriarty, MLC, Minister for Agriculture; and,
3. Hon. Penny Sharpe, MLC, Minister for the Environment,

to fully fund the \$150M, 15-year Northern Rivers Watershed Initiative (NRWI) Program, highlighting the early signs of effectiveness and to build upon the growing momentum, which when put to a vote the motion was approved.

Reports to Council

- Quarterly Budget Review Statement (at 31 March 2025)
- Draft Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework (incorporating the 2025/26 Budget and Statement of Revenue policy) – adjustments will be included in the Framework on public exhibition for 28 days
- Reappointment of Independent Voting Member – Audit, Risk, and Improvement Committee
- Direct engagement of NSW Soil Conservation Service to restore Bungawalbin Levee

Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee

Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee Council endorsed the reappointment of Andrew MacLeod as Independent Voting Member for a term of four (4) years, which has also been supported by the Committee Chair and the General Manager.

Members may be appointed for two consecutive four (4) year terms. This will be the final consecutive term that Andrew MacLeod will be eligible to serve as a member of the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee.

Council received and noted the resignation of the Committee Chair and approach to seeking a replacement for the position.

NSW Soil Conservation Service to restore Bungawalbin Levee

Bungawalbin Levee is an earthen flood mitigation asset of Council, located between Woodburn and Coraki in the Richmond Valley Local Government Area, which was damaged during the 2022 floods.

Rous received \$6.9M from the Natural Disaster Relief Assistance Program to restore Bungawalbin Levee to its pre-2022 flood condition.

To complete the project by June 2026 (with a possible extension to February 2027), activities need to be outsourced. The NSW Soil Conservation Service (Soil Con) has been identified as a suitable provider, who has the expertise and capacity to deliver the on-ground restoration of Bungawalbin Levee.

Their engagement will also increase the value for money and maximise the benefit to the local community and follows on from their successful completion of other major programs on the floodplain which has earned them the respect of local landowners.

The value of the work exceeds the delegation of the General Manager, and Council approved authorisation for the General Manager to negotiate a contract with Soil Con to complete the work.

Policy Reviews

1. On exhibition: Local Approvals Policy – Water Supply – Retail Customers (for 49 days)

The new policy outlines circumstances in which Rous will allow retail customers to connect directly to its supply network. This is supported by the new Standards and Conditions of Retail Water Supply with mandatory conditions including smart meters and requirements for backflow prevention.

2. On exhibition: Water Account Assistance policy (for 28 days)

Among the proposed changes, the policy will make provision for financial assistance for low-income customers and not-for profit organisations whereby the Backflow Device Management Charge may be reduced to 75% of the standard annual charge (\$196/annum).

3. On exhibition: Debt Management and Financial Hardship policy (for 28 days)
4. Council adopted: Fraud and Corruption Control policy

Reports

Council received and noted various information reports including:

- Investments – February 2025
- Investments – March 2025
- Gallans Road update – 31 March 2025
- Audit Risk and Improvement Committee – meeting updates
- Actions Pending
 - Proposed Dunoon Dam – acquisition of properties
 - Update on interim arrangements for Lismore Levee Scheme

For a copy of the agenda for the meeting click here: <https://rous.nsw.gov.au/about/business-papers-minutes/>

13 MATTERS DETERMINED WITHOUT DEBATE

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

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

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

That items identified be determined without debate.

14 GENERAL MANAGER

14.1 REVISED COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN AND DRAFT DELIVERY PROGRAM

Author: Vaughan Macdonald

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Richmond Valley Council's revised Community Strategic Plan – Richmond Valley 2040, and draft Delivery Program 2025-2029 have been prepared following community consultation and are presented for Council's consideration. The review has confirmed that the Community Strategic Plan's key directions to grow and diversify the Richmond Valley economy, provide more housing and jobs, protect the environment and support continued flood recovery and adaptation continue to receive strong community support. The revised plan includes a number of amendments and refinements to reflect emerging community priorities and streamline the planning and reporting process. The draft Delivery Program 2025-2029 includes one of Council's most extensive capital works programs, to complete disaster recovery road repairs, build future flood resilience and provide essential infrastructure to support long-term growth. This report outlines key changes to the revised CSP and seeks Council's endorsement to publicly exhibit the draft plans for a minimum of 28 days.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Notes the review of the Community Strategic Plan, as required under the *Local Government Act 1993*, and the community engagement program undertaken to inform the draft Plan and draft Delivery Program 2025-2029.
2. Exhibits the draft Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program for further public comment for a minimum of 28 days.
3. Notes that the draft reports will be brought back to Council to consider any feedback received, or amendments proposed, before final adoption at the June Council meeting.

DELIVERY PROGRAM LINKS

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

2A Plan for long-term sustainable growth

2A3 Deliver the Community Strategic Plan

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The Plans have been reviewed and updated within existing budgets. The 2025/26 Draft Budget and Long-Term Financial Plan are included in a separate report to this meeting.

REPORT

The *Local Government Act 1993* requires all local councils in NSW to prepare a long-term Community Strategic Plan (CSP), identifying community priorities and goals for at least the next 10 years. The CSP is supported by a Delivery Program and annual Operational Plans, outlining how each council will deliver the community's goals and priorities during its term of office. Together, these documents serve as the key point of accountability between local councils and their communities.

Following the local government elections, each Council is required to review its Community Strategic Plan and establish a new Delivery Program. Council has undertaken the CSP review

process over the past six months, in consultation with the community, with more than 2600 direct responses received and a further 400 participants in the Community Survey. The community feedback has helped to inform the revised CSP and the new Draft Delivery Program, which are now presented for Council's consideration.

The current Community Strategic Plan was endorsed in 2023, after the review process was delayed by the 2022 floods. Two years into the implementation phase, the 2025 review has confirmed that the Plan's key directions to grow and diversify the Richmond Valley economy, provide more housing and jobs, reduce our impacts on the environment and support continued flood recovery and adaptation continue to receive strong community support. The revised plan includes a number of amendments and refinements to reflect emerging community priorities and streamline the planning and reporting process. Key changes to the revised document are outlined in this report.

Key changes to the revised Community Strategic Plan

The revised CSP, Richmond Valley 2040, retains the four key themes:

1. **Strengthening our role in the region** – focussing on steady, well-managed growth for the Valley over the next 15 years, strengthening and diversifying our economy and providing more housing, jobs and services. This theme also addresses our ongoing challenge to adapt to a changing climate and continue to support flood recovery.
2. **Creating great places to live** – focusing on creating vibrant, liveable and safe communities, providing opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to come together. This theme also aims to ensure that our parks, playgrounds, sports fields and community facilities are well maintained and fit for purpose and that essential infrastructure and services, such as roads, water, sewer and waste management meet community needs
3. **Protecting our unique environment** - focusing on preserving our native bushland and biodiversity, maintaining healthy rivers, beaches and waterways and reducing our impacts on the environment
4. **Delivering for our community** – Focusing on the role that Council will play in helping to deliver the CSP, including Council's civic leadership in engaging with and advocating for our community, as well as its responsibilities for managing community resources and providing great service.



The revised CSP reflects the policy directions previously endorsed by Council in the Richmond Valley Growth Management Strategy, Sustainable Communities Strategy, Water for Life 2050 Strategy and the Casino and Mid-Richmond Place Plans and carries forward most of the Objectives from the previous version. The Objectives in the new version have been streamlined from 12 to nine to improve clarity and remove duplication

Continued flood recovery and adaptation

The revised CSP continues the current strong focus on flood recovery from the 2022 and 2025 events, with further development of long-term adaptation and resilience measures. This includes finalising the Richmond Valley Floodplain Risk Management Plan, exploring flood resilience measures through the CSIRO's floodplain hydrodynamic model, completing the remainder of Council's \$100m disaster recovery road repair program, and continuing to work with the NSW Reconstruction Authority to resolve the future use of buy-back lands, finalise the Resilient Homes Program and complete the Regional Disaster Adaptation Plan.

Supporting growth

Council's key direction to establish the Richmond Valley as a regional growth centre is maintained in the revised CSP, following strong support (94%) for this direction in the 2025 community survey. Objective One of the Plan focuses on providing the housing, jobs and essential infrastructure that will be required for long-term sustainable growth across the Valley. This includes increasing housing options and continuing to activate greenfield housing development on flood-safe lands. Plans to attract more government-led employment to the Valley have been strengthened in this iteration of the Plan, following recent studies that found our local government area was significantly under-supplied with government jobs, compared to other centres in the Northern Rivers. Advocacy for improved health services has also been strengthened, after the most recent North Coast health services assessment confirmed that the Valley has some of the lowest rates of medical specialists and nurses per head of population. The Objective also focuses on ensuring essential infrastructure to support growth is delivered. This includes upgraded water and sewerage networks, working with Transport for NSW on highway and regional road upgrades and identifying a long-term solution for waste management in the Richmond Valley. Major infrastructure works planned for the next four years include a \$65m+ replacement of the Casino Sewage Treatment Plant and completion of the \$13m second stage of the Evans Head Sewage Treatment Plant. This essential infrastructure will ensure that both communities can continue to grow over the next 20 years.

Economic development

Key directions on strengthening and diversifying the local economy have also been carried forward in the revised document, with a stronger focus on creating a business-friendly environment in the Richmond Valley. This includes more direct consultation and collaboration with local businesses, continuing to grow Council's development concierge services and maintaining fast development assessment turn-around times. Plans for CBD and main street revitalizations across the Valley are also included, as well as continued activation of the Regional Jobs Precinct. The Plan also focuses on increasing visitation to the Valley, improving tourist accommodation options and developing a new regional attraction through staged completion of the Three Villages Cycleway.

Community identity

There has also been further development of Objective 4 of the revised CSP - which focuses on local identity, lifestyle and community activities – to reflect some of the key themes emerging from the 2025 community consultation. This includes adding stronger emphasis on community safety, such as safer streetscape designs, lighting and CCTV, as well as advocating for more policing and crime prevention programs. Supporting youth participation in our community is also highlighted in this Objective, including commitments to continue Council's existing youth programs, as well as exploring new ways to engage with young people and encourage them to be involved in decision-making. This Objective also includes continued support for local community and sports groups through Council's grants programs and working with the community to assess future sporting needs.

Essential infrastructure

Maintaining local roads and bridges, managing waste responsibly, improving drainage and investing in water and sewerage services continues to be a strong focus of the CSP in Objective 5. This objective includes Council's largest capital works projects for the next 15 years, such as completing the \$18m replacement of the twin Tatham Bridges, finalizing major repairs to Broadwater Bridge, completing a \$10m upgrade for the Casino Water Treatment Plant and delivering the first stage of the Casino Water Security Project.

Environment

The three previous environmental objectives of the Plan have been combined into two new objectives, with a stronger focus on reducing our environmental impacts, in response to community feedback. These objectives include continuing local habitat restoration and biodiversity programs, a stronger focus on river catchment health and riparian zones and continuation of the Community Greening Program to plant 1000 new shade trees in public spaces every year. Other environmental focus areas include reducing Council's carbon footprint, with additional solar installations at public buildings, continuing water saving programs, with a focus on high-use industries, and a stronger focus on reducing residual waste and boosting recycling rates.

Advocacy and services

The revised CSP streamlines the three former civic leadership objectives into two. These objectives address Council's role in delivering the Community Strategic Plan, managing resources and providing community services. Objective 8 focuses on leadership and advocacy and Objective 9 on responsible resource management and service delivery. These objectives include community engagement, advocacy, governance and managing enterprise risk, as well as financial management, rating, workforce management, customer service, development assessment and regulatory services.

A further addition to the revised CSP has been inclusion of a Delivery Partners section for each Objective, highlighting that successful delivery of the long-term plan will require a shared commitment from many partners, including all levels of government – Federal, State and local - as well as service agencies, the local business community, private investors, community groups and individuals.

CONSULTATION

Council carried out extensive community consultation, over a period of five months, to support the review of the Community Strategic Plan and develop the new Delivery Program. The community was asked to provide input through Wishing Tree activities at the library, an on-line ideas board and surveys, pop-up consultations at community events and the mobile library, and local primary and high school programs. The consultation included a total of 14 events, including two Community Forums, at Casino and Evans Head, where local community, business, sports clubs and schools were represented, as well as Stage agencies, emergency services and Richmond Valley Councillors.



Consultation activities at Evans Head and Casino. Other pop-up events were held at Broadwater, Woodburn and Coraki.

Throughout the consultation, community members were asked what they valued about the Richmond Valley, what they wanted to protect and what they wanted to improve. There were two main streams in the consultation results: Foundation community priorities, and emerging issues.

Foundation issues included long-standing community priorities such as:

- Community connection and local identity
- Housing affordability and availability
- Maintaining roads infrastructure and footpaths
- Economic development
- Protecting local landscapes, beaches and the environment
- Creating more employment
- Improving public transport
- Adapting to a changing climate
- Improving disaster preparedness

Emerging issues in the 2025 consultation included:

- Crime prevention and public safety
- Supporting more community events
- Access to services, including medical
- Youth engagement and services
- CBD accessibility and beautification

More than 2600 community responses were received throughout the consultation program, with a further 400 participants in the Community Survey.

Draft 2025-2029 Delivery Program

Based on the key directions of the revised Community Strategic Plan and the feedback received from the community engagement program, a draft 2025-2029 Delivery Program has been prepared for Council's consideration. The draft program aligns with the nine objectives of the Community Strategic Plan and its long-term vision to support a growing sustainable community, with a relaxed lifestyle, beautify environment and thriving economy. It includes 75 Principal Activities to support delivery of the CSP objectives over the next four years.



This includes one of the largest capital works programs ever undertaken by Council to support flood recovery, build resilience and provide essential infrastructure for future growth. The program will be funded through a combination of Council resources (rates, fees and charges and reserves), borrowings and government funding, including Disaster Recovery funds.

Proposed Signature Projects for 2025-2029 are:

- Casino Sewage Treatment Plant replacement and augmentation - \$65m+
- Evans Head Sewage Treatment Plant Stage 2 - \$13m
- Development of the Three Villages Cycleway - \$20m+
- Continued activation of the Regional Jobs Precinct - \$33m
- Activation of the Summerland Estate major housing project - \$29m

Other priority projects in the draft program include:

- Completing Council's disaster recovery road repair program - \$54m+
- Replacement of the twin Tatham Bridges \$18m
- Stage One of Casino's water security project - \$5m
- Upgrade of the Casino Water Treatment Plant - \$10m
- CBD activation projects for Evans Head and Casino - \$400,000 for Stage 1
- Floodplain management and drainage improvements - \$15m+
- Mobile library service upgrade - \$1m

The program also identifies four projects that are a high priority for the community but are currently unfunded. Council has invested in bringing these projects to the 'shovel-ready' stage to increase their prospects for government funding. These projects include:

- Stages 2 & 3 of the Casino Memorial Pool upgrade - \$12.5m
- Richmond Terrace, Coraki reconstruction - \$9.5m
- Woodburn CBD activation - \$4m
- Council's solar efficiency program - \$1m

Other priorities in the draft program include:

- Delivering civic improvements identified in the Mid-Richmond and Casino Place Plans, including a new river access for Broadwater, RV stop-over for Woodburn, more pathways and a park upgrade for Coraki, further upgrades to the Evans Head foreshore precinct and continued improvements to the Casino Civic Hall.
- Continuing to upgrade local sporting facilities, including completion of new clubhouses at Casino and Woodburn, improvement works for Evans Head Aquatic Centre and Coraki Pool and a proposed upgrade to lighting at Stan Payne Oval
- Continued support for signature events, such as the Casino Truck Show and development of a new event for the Mid-Richmond
- Ongoing development of local library services and programs
- Continued support for Council's youth programs and employment schemes and exploring opportunities for improved youth engagement
- Continuing Council's Community Greening Program, with a commitment to plant 1000 new shade trees in public spaces each year
- Ongoing support for habitat restoration programs for koalas and native fish and the habitat development program to encourage flying foxes to relocate
- Increasing recycling rates, reducing residual waste and identifying long-term solutions for waste management
- Encouraging water saving, with a focus on high-use industries
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from Council's operations

The program also outlines Council's advocacy program for the next four years, with a strong focus on continuing to work with the NSW Reconstruction Authority to support flood recovery and build resilience, and to advocate to Transport for NSW for improvements to the Bruxner Highway and Summerland Way, and resolution of the hand-over of the old Pacific Highway.

Section 3 of the draft Delivery Program outlines the 75 Principal Activities to support delivery of the CSP objectives and the measures Council will use to determine its success in achieving these goals. The *Local Government Act 1993* requires Council to report to the community every six months on its progress in delivering the program.

CONCLUSION

Over the past six months, Council has been working with the community to complete the required review of the Community Strategic Plan, following the local government election, and prepare a new draft Delivery Program for 2025-2029. The revised CSP and draft Program are now presented for Council's consideration. Should Council endorse the documents for public exhibition, they will be exhibited for a minimum of 28 days, before being returned to the June Extraordinary Meeting for final consideration.

ATTACHMENT(S)

Nil

14.2 DRAFT OPERATIONAL PLAN 2025/2026 (INCLUDING DRAFT FINANCIAL ESTIMATES 2025/2029), DRAFT REVENUE POLICY 2025/2026 AND DRAFT LONG TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2025/2035.

Author: Vaughan Macdonald

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following documents have been prepared in consultation with Councillors:

1. Draft Operational Plan 2025/2026 (including Draft Financial Estimates for the period 2025/2029),
2. Draft Revenue Policy 2025/2026, and
3. Draft Long-Term Financial Plan 2025/2035.

It is now proposed to place the documents on public exhibition for a period of at least 28 days.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. The Draft Operational Plan 2025/2026 (including Draft Financial Estimates 2025/2029), Draft Revenue Policy 2025/2026 and Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2025/2035 be placed on public exhibition for a period of at least 28 days.
2. The draft documents be brought back to Council to consider any submissions received, or amendments proposed, before final adoption at the Meeting of Council on 24 June 2025.

DELIVERY PROGRAM LINKS

Objective 11: Manage resources responsibly

11A Manage finances responsibly and provide value for money

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

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

As outlined in the report.

REPORT

Council is required to undertake its planning and reporting activities in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993 and the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 by implementing the Local Government Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework.

The Draft Operational Plan (including Draft Financial Estimates 2025/2029) has been prepared, following community consultation, outlining the actions that Council will undertake in Year One of its Delivery Program to achieve the CSP objectives, and the resources that will be allocated to support these actions.

The draft Plan delivers an unrestricted cash surplus of \$300,507, in 2025/2026, with projected surpluses across the remaining three year forward estimates as shown in the following table:

	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Budget Estimates	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000	\$'000
Total Operating Revenue	80,029	82,136	84,861	87,867
Total Operating Expenditure	88,498	88,977	91,567	91,729
Operating Result before Capital Grants and Contributions	(8,469)	(6,842)	(6,705)	(3,862)
Add: Capital Grants and Contributions	41,228	38,715	19,888	939
Operating Result including Capital Grants and Contributions	32,759	31,873	13,183	(2,923)
Add: Non-Cash Expenses	26,936	26,909	27,399	25,096
Add: Non-Operating Funds Employed	5,176	3,044	22,764	3,631
Less: Capital Expenditure	67,583	59,762	58,053	15,792
Less: Loan Repayments	3,385	2,876	2,081	2,085
Estimated Funding Result – Surplus/(Deficit)	(6,097)	(813)	3,213	7,927
Restricted Funds – Increase/(Decrease)	(6,398)	(1,163)	2,889	7,608
Unrestricted Funds – Increase/(Decrease)	301	351	325	318

While the unrestricted cash result is important - and should be a surplus – the large focus is on Council's operating result before capital grants and contributions. Council's projected operating result before capital grants and contributions for 2025/2026 is a deficit of \$8,468,968, which improves to a projected deficit of \$3,861,669 over the four-year forward estimates. It is pleasing to see Council is moving towards a break-even operating result before capital grants and contributions, which occurs in 2033/2034, year 9 of the 10-year long term financial plan. This continues to be a key objective and is a key performance indicator across NSW Local Government. With significant proposed borrowings for the Casino Sewage Treatment Plant Upgrade in year 3, preparing a budget with improving financial performance is critical in achieving these loan borrowings and needs to continue to be a key focus for Council to demonstrate its ability to repay the debt. Challenges in achieving surplus operating results is sector wide and heightened by growth in expenditure outpacing growth in revenues for a consecutive number of years.

There have been several challenges in forming the 2025/2026 budget and maintaining an unrestricted cash surplus and an improving operating result.

Depreciation expenses have increased \$3.9mil largely due to a revised remaining life of the Casino Sewage Treatment Plant in line with the expected timeframe for replacement. This is intended to reduce future impacts on Council's result when the asset is replaced and reflect the expected remaining useful life of the asset. Similarly, a budget has been factored in for the net loss on disposal of assets. Historically this has not been budgeted for due to the uncertainty around the result as it largely depends on the infrastructure being disposed of or replaced, however has significant impact on the operating result at the end of financial year when the net losses or gains are realised. This, along with the increase in depreciation, have been heightened over recent years due to consistently high indexation rates being applied to asset values in line with accounting standards.

The Local Government State Award that commenced 1 July 2023 included an additional award payment of \$1,000 to staff with at least 12 months' continuous service with Council as at 30 June 2025. This is estimated to cost Council \$259,000 in 2025/2026 which has had a significant impact on Council's operating result and cash surplus for that year.

In addition to the above, Council's approved rate peg for 2025/2026 of 3.90% has been applied, which is a decrease from 4.60% in the 2024/2025 year.

Major Capital Works

The draft budget for 2025/2026 includes a sizeable capital works program of \$67.5 million, which is likely to further increase as adjustments from the March Quarterly Budget Review are processed.

Key projects for 2025/2026 include:

- Sewage Treatment Plant Augmentations (Casino & Evans Head) \$8.2mil
- Property & Economic Projects \$3.8mil
- Disaster Recovery Works \$16.6mil
- Effluent Management Systems Upgrades (NRLX) \$4.5mil
- Rural Local Roads and Bridges \$3.5mil
- Tatham Bridges Replacement (NRRRP) \$10.6mil
- Woodburn Evans Head Shared Pathway \$5.392mil
- Water mains replacements \$2.4mil
- Sewer Relining Program \$800,000
- Drainage Improvements \$695,000 (*additional \$500,000 allocated for 25/26*)
- Fleet Management plant purchases \$2.5mil

Draft Revenue Policy – Fees & Charges 2025/2026

In developing the 2025/2026 income budget, the following increases have been proposed to Rates and Annual Charges:

- General Rates – to increase by 3.90% in-line with Council's IPART determined rate peg
- Domestic Waste Annual Charge – to increase by 5%
- Non-Domestic Waste Annual Charge – to increase by 5%
- Water Annual Charges – to increase by 7%
- Sewerage Annual Charges – to increase by 7%

There have been several challenges in setting the fees and charges for 2025/2026, in particular for water, sewer, waste, and cemeteries.

Following a review of the water and sewer budgets across the forward 10-year long term financial plan (LTFP) there has been a continued increase in operating costs, which includes an increase in depreciation, as mentioned above. The draft programmed capital works in these areas are also substantial with \$30mil projected for water infrastructure works across the forward 10-year LTFP and \$106mil in sewerage, which also incorporates significant borrowings. Taking into consideration the level of future capital works required in these essential service areas, as well as the increase in the cost of operations an increase in charges has been proposed for water and sewer to enable Council to meet the requirement by the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water to promote best practice pricing, the rationale for which includes full cost recovery. To achieve this, a minimum 7% increase is proposed for 2025/2026 across both annual and usage charges, followed by 5% across the remainder of the LTFP to 2035.

The increasing cost of funding infrastructure needs in the water and sewer sector is being felt industry wide with NSWs' largest water utility, Sydney Water, proposing an 18% increase in water bills for next financial year with further increases of 7% annually, plus inflation, for the following four years resulting in a 50% increase over 5 years. Whilst this is pending approval from IPART (Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal), Sydney Water cited the need to fund upgrades to its ageing infrastructure, support population growth and address the impacts of climate change as the reasoning behind the proposed increase. Similarly, Rous Water has factored in 7% increases to its bulk water charges across the forward 7 years of its LTFP, again to improve financial performance, repay debts and fund significant future infrastructure projects.

A review of the waste management budget has resulted in a proposed increase of 5% for domestic and non-domestic charges following a nil increase in the previous year to ensure Council continues

to meet the reasonable cost of providing the domestic waste service in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993*.

As mentioned in the previous year, Cemeteries and Crematoria New South Wales (CCNSW) introduced the Interment Industry Scheme, under the Cemeteries and Crematoria Regulation 2022, constituting a licencing system for all cemetery operators. This new scheme came with added requirements which all operators must adhere to, including increased service levels, maintenance standards and reporting obligations, which results in additional costs to Council. The cemeteries continue to be mildly subsidised by ratepayers and this has only been exacerbated with these newly regulated standards. As such, it is proposed to increase the fees and charges for cemeteries by 5% in order to cover the increasing costs of the new scheme as well as funding future expansion requirements.

Draft Operational Plan 2025-26 Actions

The Draft Operational Plan includes 262 actions to support the 75 Principal Activities in the draft 2025-2029 Delivery Program and ultimately work towards achievement of the nine Community Strategic Plan Objectives. Each action has been assigned to the relevant Manager or Coordinator within Council's revised corporate structure. Draft measures have been prepared for each action to identify how Council will monitor and report on its progress in completing the actions and delivering the Principal Activities. The diagram below shows how the three plans fit together to deliver the CSP outcomes.



Council monitors progress in completing the actions on a quarterly basis and reports every six months to the community on progress in completing the Delivery Program Principal Activities.

The Draft Operational Plan also outlines Council's service review schedule for Year One of the Program, with stormwater management being the focus for 2025-26. As part of the review process, Council will engage with the community and other stakeholders to determine service level expectations, appropriate measures for performance standards and the required level of resourcing to meet community expectations. The recommendations of the review will be reported to the community. The Draft Plan also identifies key focus areas for Council's annual Risk Management Program to improve organisational risk management. The Year One program will include completion of the Continuous Risk Improvement Project commenced in 2024-25, as well as a high-level review of key risk areas with Council's Workforce Safety Management system.

A copy of the Draft Operational Plan 2025/2026 (including Draft Financial Estimates 2025/2029), Draft Revenue Policy 2025/2026 and Draft Long-Term Financial Plan 2025/2035 has been circulated separately to Councillors.

CONSULTATION

In accordance with the Integrated Planning and Reporting requirements the Draft Operational Plan 2025/2026 (including Draft Financial Estimates 2025/2029), Draft Revenue Policy 2025/2026 and Draft Long-Term Financial Plan 2025/2035 will be placed on public exhibition for a period of at least 28 days. During that time public submissions on the documents can be made. A further report

on the documents and submissions received will be presented to the Council meeting scheduled for Tuesday 24 June 2025.

CONCLUSION

The Draft Operational Plan 2025/2026 (including Draft Financial Estimates 2025/2029), Draft Revenue Policy 2025/2026 and Draft Long-Term Financial Plan 2025/2035 have been prepared based on extensive consultation with the community and are presented to Council for consideration. The report recommends that these documents be placed on public exhibition.

ATTACHMENT(S)

Nil

14.3 2025 COMMUNITY SURVEY OUTCOMES

Author: Vaughan Macdonald

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council has been working with research firm, Micromex Research to undertake regular community surveys since 2013. The surveys explore current community priorities, perceptions of life in the Richmond Valley, satisfaction levels with council services and facilities, future expenditure priorities and general satisfaction with Council's performance. The 2025 survey was conducted in February and the results are presented for Council's consideration. The survey was one of the consultation inputs considered when developing Council's draft Community Strategic Plan and 2025-2029 Delivery Program, which is the subject of a further report to this meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council

1. Notes the results of the 2025 Community Survey, the recommendations of the survey report and the proposed response to identified priorities and improvement areas in the draft 2025-2029 Delivery Program.
2. Continues to pursue opportunities for performance improvement in Council services, facilities and advocacy in response to the survey results.

DELIVERY PROGRAM LINKS

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

2A Plan for long-term sustainable growth

2A3 Deliver the Community Strategic Plan

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The survey was funded through existing budget allocations for review of the Community Strategic Plan. The results include recommendations for increased spending on services and facilities that would have future budget impacts should Council wish to explore these options. Two services identified in the survey – stormwater drainage and waste management – have been earmarked for service review in the draft 2025-29 Delivery Program. The review will include options for future long-term funding of these services.

REPORT

Richmond Valley Council has been working with research firm, Micromex Research to undertake regular community surveys since 2013. The surveys have been conducted at various times, including 2016, 2021, 2022 and the most recent survey in February 2025. The research aims to:

- Understand and identify community priorities for the Richmond Valley Local Government Area and desired level of investment for community goals
- Identify the community's overall level of satisfaction with Council performance and communication
- Assess resident support for Council current policies, such as future growth of the LGA or activation of the Regional Jobs Precinct.

A representative sample of the community is selected for voluntary telephone interviews, with participants being asked to rate their responses on a five-point scale from 'not at all satisfied' to 'very satisfied'. A total of 401 resident interviews were completed, with an average interview time of

21 minutes for each respondent. The respondents were selected by means of a computer based random selection process using Australian marketing lists. The sample size chosen provides a maximum sampling error of plus or minus 4.9% at 95% confidence. This means that if the survey was replicated with a new set of respondents each time, 19 times out of 20 it would produce the same results

The survey explores community perceptions of the Richmond Valley, community priorities for the next five years, the level of importance participants assign to various Council services and facilities and the level of satisfaction with these particular services and facilities as well as Council's overall performance. The results are then analysed and compared to responses from previous years and benchmarked against the results of other regional councils undertaking the survey. This provides an indication of how Council's performance is tracking over time, as well as comparing its performance against similar councils in regional NSW. The results are summarised in a research report from Micromex (attached).

Timing of the survey

Over the years, the survey has been conducted in various months and at varying intervals. This year was the first time that Council has attempted to align the timing of the community survey with the review of the Community Strategic Plan (CSP), which is required after each local government election. The survey was timed to coincide with the peak consultation period for the CSP review, in February. Unfortunately, this also coincided with the Cyclone Alfred flood event, with the second week of survey interviews completed during the emergency preparations for the cyclone. This may have influenced some responses regarding perceptions of safety and the importance of emergency management. In future, it is proposed to align the survey with the timing of the State of the Valley report, prepared in the November immediately after each Council election. This will provide more opportunities to test the data through Council's open community engagement program for the CSP review - traditionally conducted from December to March - and avoid potential conflicts with the summer storm season.

Survey results

The survey results were largely aligned with the feedback received through Council's concurrent community engagement program, Our Big Conversation. This provided a level of confidence in preparing the revisions of the Community Strategic Plan and developing key focus areas for the 2025-29 Delivery Program.

Community perceptions

The closest alignment occurred in the community perceptions section of the survey, where respondents were asked whether they thought the Richmond Valley was a good place to live and what they valued most about the area. Community connections, the 'small town vibe' of the Valley, the natural environment, relaxed lifestyle and location - close to major centres and attractions – were all highlighted as valued aspects in the survey. These responses were mirrored in the community engagement exercises conducted for Our Big Conversation. Survey responses have remained stable for the Community Perception questions since 2016, with two notable exceptions:

- The 2025 survey saw a significant change in responses for the statement 'I feel safe living in the Richmond Valley', with only 45% of respondents agreeing, compared to 68% in 2021
- Responses to the statement 'Housing in the area is available and affordable' saw a significant drop and continued low levels in the post-pandemic years. In the 2016 survey, 53% of respondents agreed that housing was available/affordable. This fell sharply to 19% in 2021 and 18% in 2025.

Top community priorities

The survey asked participants to identify community priorities for the next five years. This provides an indication of the issues that are currently of concern and the 2025 survey saw some noticeable shifts from the 2021 results. Top priorities identified were:

- Crime reduction and public safety – 37% (increased from 8% in 2021)

- Road maintenance/infrastructure – 26% (decreased from 33% in 2021)
- Economic development – 21% (decreased from 26% in 2021)
- Disaster preparedness, management and response – 21% (increased from 7% in 2021)

The increase in priority for disaster preparedness, management and response is to be expected, given the timing of the survey, the three major flood events that have occurred since 2021 and the decision to place the Northern Rivers under a Reconstruction Area Order, administered by the NSW Reconstruction Authority. There has been significant change for flood-affected communities in the Valley over the past three years, and a continued focus on flood recovery. With predictions that climate change will increase the frequency and severity of these events, it should be expected that disaster mitigation and response will remain a priority in the future. This was reflected in the feedback received from Council's community engagement for the CSP review and Disaster mitigation and continued flood recovery and been included as a key objective in the Draft Richmond Valley 2040 Community Strategic Plan.

Increased community concern over crime and public safety was also expected, given the noticeable increase in crime rates across the Northern Rivers over the past 12 months, the personal experience of many community members and the increased media coverage of local incidents. This concern was also reflected in the community consultation undertaken by Council for the CSP review. Addressing community safety will require a shared approach between all levels of government, police services, businesses, community groups and individuals. Council has included local strategies in its draft 2025-29 Delivery Program to support this direction, including improved lighting and CCTV options in town centres, advocacy for more police resources and continued support for local youth agencies and programs.

Future planning priorities

The 2025 survey specifically tested Council's current growth management policy, (adopted in 2023) which focuses on steady well-managed growth over the next 15-20 years, including the Richmond Valley's population by approximately 4000 residents. There was continued strong support for this direction, with 75% of respondents being very supportive or supportive and a further 19% being somewhat supporting. Only 6% did not support the direction. The draft Community Strategic Plan and 2025-29 Delivery Program continue to focus on Council's established direction for growth, with the aim of delivering the desired benefits identified by survey participants, such as more jobs, housing and services.

Participants were also asked to nominate key priority areas for investment and future planning, with roads and bridges receiving the highest priority overall (96%) and the most desired area for more investment (78%). This priority is reflected in the draft Delivery Program, with one of Council's largest capital works programs, focussed on disaster recovery road repair and betterment and key projects, such as repairing the Broadwater Bridge and replacing the twin Tatham Bridges (both scheduled for completion in Year 1 of the program).

Local services and facilities

The survey also explored the level of importance and community satisfaction with 32 local services and facilities and compared this to previous survey results and regional benchmarks. In the 2025 survey, respondents placed the highest importance on:

- Emergency management
- Community safety and crime prevention
- Advocating for natural disaster recovery funding and programs
- Providing local employment
- Availability and quality of local parks and playgrounds

Generally, all 32 services were considered important, with scores ranging from 68% (protection of heritage buildings and items) to 93% (emergency management).

Satisfaction with services and facilities was also measured. Council services where there was a high level of community satisfaction, with ratings above 90% included:

- Swimming pools
- Libraries
- Maintenance of beaches
- Presentation of cemeteries
- Availability and maintenance of sporting grounds, ovals and facilities

Across the board, however, the 2025 results recorded a decline in satisfaction for 21 services, on the performance scale of 1-5, with declines ranging from 0.17 to 0.52. Although any decline in satisfaction is concerning, it should be noted that many of these services still recorded strong satisfaction levels overall. For example, development assessment recorded a decline in satisfaction of 0.39 on the 1-5 scale. However, overall satisfaction with development assessment services was still rated at 72%, which was 8% above the regional NSW benchmark and 12% above the survey 'bespoke benchmark', which includes neighbouring councils and those that are similar in scale to Richmond Valley Council.

The greatest variance between the Richmond Valley satisfaction results and the regional benchmarks was in the areas of community safety and crime prevention, riverbanks, household garbage collection and stormwater. While areas such as crime prevention and river management are shared responsibilities with other levels of government, the decline in satisfaction with services directly delivered by Council requires further investigation. Accordingly, stormwater management and waste management have been earmarked for service review in Council's draft 2025-29 Delivery Program. The review will help to identify appropriate service levels and the required level of resourcing to achieve those levels.

Satisfaction with Council communication

In previous surveys, Council has tested satisfaction with 'the *level* of communication from Council'. However, for the 2025 survey, it was decided to apply a higher standard of review to amend the question to gauge satisfaction with 'the *effectiveness* of Council communication'. This was designed to test not only if council was providing enough information to the community, but also that the communication was effective and achieving its aims. Over the previous two surveys, satisfaction rates with the level of communication had seen a decline from 83% in 2016 to 28% in 2021. The 2025 survey saw this level decline to 62%. It is difficult to determine to what extent the refocus of the question affected this result, however results of the 2028 survey, where the revised question is retested, should help to clarify this. Regardless, the reported satisfaction level of 62% is a matter that requires further investigation and review. This will be addressed as part of the scheduled review of Council's Community Engagement Strategy, later this year. One of the particular challenges in improving communication effectiveness is that 72% of survey respondents identified that their main source of information about council was by 'word of mouth'. This would indicate that residents are relying on indirect and potentially inaccurate information channels, rather than going directly to Council sources. Opportunities to improve Council information sources will be included in the Engagement Strategy review.

Overall satisfaction with Council performance

Overall satisfaction with Council's performance saw a decline in the 2025 results, with 74% of respondents at least somewhat satisfied with the performance of Council over the past 12 months.

Overall satisfaction levels have varied over the lifespan of the survey, commencing in 2013 at 82%, rising to a high of 94% in 2016, followed by decline to 84% in 2021 and 74% in 2025.

Residents located in a township (Casino or Evans Head) were significantly more satisfied (79%) than those living in villages (74%) and rural areas (61%).

While decline in satisfaction levels is a common trend across councils in NSW, based on Micromex's broader research, the continued trend from 2016 is a matter of concern.

Opportunities for improvement

As part of the research, Micromex has identified seven key focus areas to help improve overall satisfaction with Council performance. These areas have been considered during the development of the draft 2025-29 Delivery Program and will be addressed in the following ways:

Improvement area	Draft Delivery Program response
Maintaining local roads	<p>Completing Council's \$100m disaster recovery road repair program from the 2022 floods.</p> <p>Completing assessments, funding applications and repairs for damage from the 2025 cyclone event</p> <p>Incorporating disaster resilience and betterment measures into road repair programs wherever possible</p> <p>Continuing annual inspection and maintenance programs for Council's 1064 km road network</p>
Advocating for natural disaster recovery funding & programs	<p>Including recovery in Council's key advocacy priorities in the draft Program</p> <p>Continuing to work with the NSW Reconstruction Authority to complete recovery programs, such as the Resilient Homes Program and resolve the future use of buy-back lands</p> <p>Incorporating 10 specific projects within the Draft Program that will directly contribute to flood recovery, future resilience and economic stimulus for flood-affected communities.</p>
Community engagement/consultation	<p>Including a review of Council's Community Engagement Strategy in Year 1 of the draft program</p> <p>Including a stronger focus on youth engagement and involvement in decision-making in Objective 4 of the draft program.</p>
Financial management	<p>Explaining sources of income and proposed funding strategies in the draft program</p> <p>Including strong measures for financial planning and performance in program's Principal Activities</p> <p>Focussing on how Council communicates financial decisions and allocations in the review of the Community Engagement Strategy</p>
Long-term town planning	<p>Including development of a Richmond Valley Masterplan in the draft Program, which will incorporate all of Council's key directions for future growth and investment attraction</p> <p>Focussing strongly on future planning for growth in Objective 1 of the Community Strategic Plan and draft Delivery Program</p> <p>Including specific actions for activation of future growth areas in the draft Delivery Program</p>
Attractiveness of town centres	<p>Focusing on CBD and main street revitalisation programs in the draft Delivery Program, including master-planning for Casino and Evans Head CBDs, completion of the Woodburn CBD activation and civic</p>

	<p>improvements identified in the Mid-Richmond Place Plans</p> <p>Undertaking a service review of town centre maintenance and cleaning in Year 4 of the draft program</p>
Household garbage collection	<p>Including specific actions to improve efficiency of household collections in the Operational Plan</p> <p>Undertaking a service review of waste management services in Year 2 of the draft program.</p>

CONSULTATION

The survey used a representative sample of the Richmond Valley community, reflecting age, gender and location. Of the 401 participants, 61% were from townships (Casino and Evans Head), 14% from local villages and 25% from rural areas. The survey was conducted concurrently with Council's Our Big Conversation community engagement program and the responses compared, to provide a greater level of confidence in key directions for the draft Community Strategic Plan and 2025-29 Delivery Program. In future, it is proposed to conduct the Community Survey at the commencement of each new Council term, ideally in October-November, to align with the State of the Valley report.

CONCLUSION

The 2025 Community Survey has provided valuable insights into current community priorities and areas for future improvement in Council's services, facilities, advocacy and planning. The draft 2025-29 Delivery Program incorporates actions and directions to directly issues raised in the survey feedback and there are further opportunities to explore improvements through future scheduled service reviews and the review of Council's Community Engagement Strategy.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. **Richmond Valley 2025 Community Survey report (under separate cover)**

15 COMMUNITY SERVICE DELIVERY

15.1 DRAFT BUSH FIRE PRONE LAND MAP - POST EXHIBITION

Director: Vaughan Macdonald

Responsible Officer: Tony McAteer

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Draft Richmond Valley Council Bush Fire Prone Land Map (2 December 2024) was prepared by NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) with the intention of replacing the current Bush Fire Prone Land map from 2015. This Draft Map differs considerably from the current map by-

- including agricultural lands (grazing and cropping) as bushfire hazard
- incorporating an additional hazard category (there are three (3) categories and buffer), and
- changing the colour symbology used to display hazard categories and buffer.

Public Exhibition of the Draft Map has now been completed. Several submissions were received which have been forwarded to the RFS with recommended changes to the Draft Map. The RFS has in turn supplied a final version of the map which incorporates all recommended changes.

This report seeks Council's endorsement of the Final Draft Richmond Valley Council Bush Fire Prone Land map dated 6 May 2025 (the final draft map).

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Notes the outcome of the community consultation for the Draft Richmond Valley Council Bush Fire Prone Land Map (02 Dec 2024); and
2. Endorses the Final Draft Richmond Valley Council Bush Fire Prone Land map (6 May 2025) for certification by the Commissioner of the NSW Rural Fire Service.

DELIVERY PROGRAM LINKS

Objective 5: Live sustainably in a changing climate

5A Improve community preparedness and response to natural disasters

5A1 Support regional disaster planning, response and recovery

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The inclusion of grassland as a bushfire hazard may increase development assessment workloads and potentially increase the number of DA referrals to the NSW RFS, however, this should have limited budgetary implications for Council, noting that consideration for grassland is already embedded in the *Planning for Bushfire Protection Guideline* and the BCA.

REPORT

The Draft Richmond Valley Council Bush Fire Prone Land map (dated 02 December 2024) (the Draft Map) was prepared by the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS), in consultation with Council, and reported to Council's Ordinary Meeting of 18 February 2025. This new map is required as a result of:

- Changes to the Bush Fire Prone Land Mapping Guideline that now capture grassland, comprising cropping and grazing lands, as bushfire hazard, and
- A need to review the 2015 map due to its age.

Council resolved to endorse the Draft Map for the purposes of public exhibition, which has now concluded and resulted in recommended changes to the Draft Map.

CONSULTATION

The Draft Map was publicly exhibited from 28 February 2025 to 31 March 2025. The exhibition was done in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Strategy and included-

- displaying a printed notice at each of Council's Customer Experience Centres in Casino and Evans Head, along with a printed map
- publishing a notice on the Richmond Valley Council "On Exhibition" webpage, including digital publication of the Draft Map, and supported by higher resolution PDF maps and inclusion of digital spatial mapping within Council's online public map system (Intramaps)
- publication of social media posts on Council's Facebook page (having links to the On Exhibition webpage), and
- articles published in each of the March editions of the Richmond Valley Views Newsletter and Community Connection eNewsletter (with the URL/links to the On Exhibition webpage).

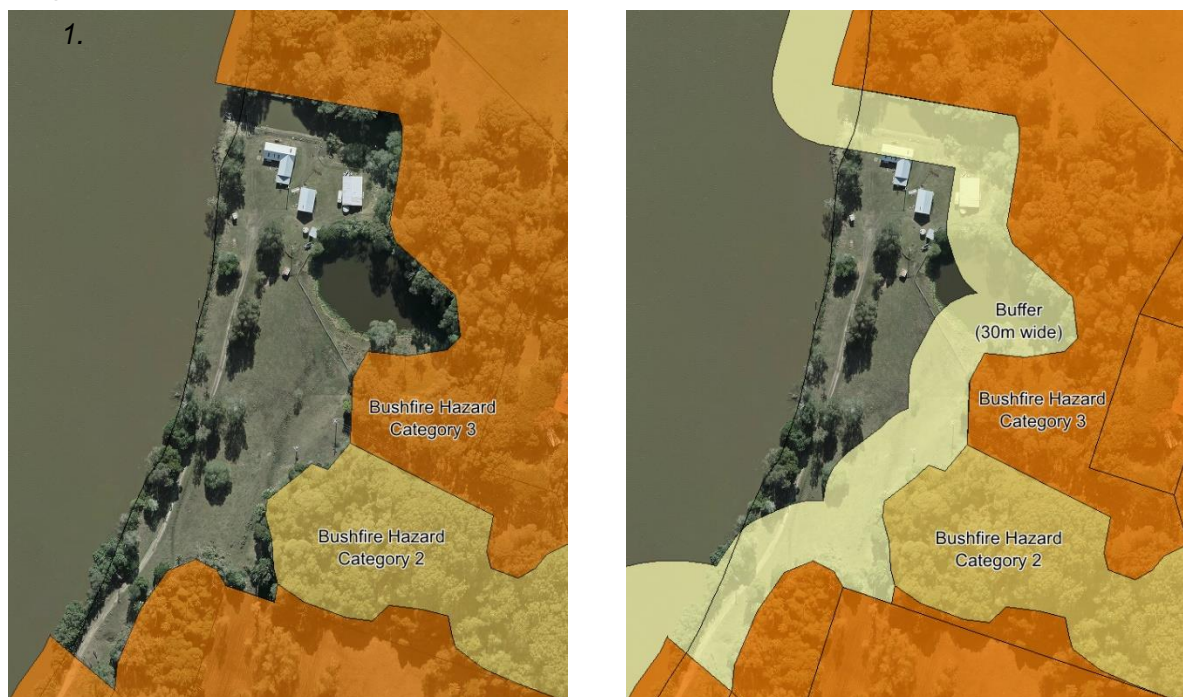
Four (4) written submissions were received which are summarised by the following points-

1. Rileys Hill Dry Dock should be excluded as bushfire hazard as parts of the site are maintained by a Manager as "managed grassland".

Comments

"Managed grassland" is an exclusion within the mapping guideline. Council recommended removal of the hazard mapping over this part of the site. This has been supported by RFS and reflected in the final draft map.

Please note. while hazard mapping has been removed from part of the site, the remainder of the land still has mapped hazard and an applied buffer. The purpose of the map is to trigger assessment of development against the Planning for Bushfire Protection guideline. This trigger occurs when even a small part of the land is mapped with hazard or buffer, and for all development on the land irrespective of whether it is contained within the mapped hazard/buffer. Therefore, removal of this mapped hazard does not change the land's bush fire prone land status.



Rileys Hill Dry Dock – with managed grassland removed as hazard from part of the site (left image) and with buffer applied (right image)

2. The map seems to be a correlation of vegetation type/category with bushfire proneness. How this is achieved is not shown on the map. Why steer away from bushfire risk? What about Bushfire Attack Levels (BAL), using heat flux characteristics of the three vegetation types?

Comments

The purpose of the map is to trigger assessment of development against the Planning for Bushfire Protection. If any part of the land is mapped, with hazard (Cat.1, 2 &/or 3) or buffer, assessment of development against the Planning for Bushfire Protection will be triggered. The map does not form part of the assessment and does not determine the Bush Fire Attack Level (BAL) ratings for individual properties. BAL ratings must be established through site specific assessments conducted independently.

Comments from the RFS indicate these maps are not risk maps. They differ from Bush Fire Risk Management Plans developed under the Rural Fires Act 1997, which assess and manage risk to life, property, and the environment, and are overseen by local Bush Fire Management Committees.

The BFPL map plays a vital role in identifying vegetation hazards that could support a bush or grass fire or be vulnerable to bush fire attack. The preparation of maps is done to RFS guidelines. They identify vegetation communities and assign them to hazard categories, as shown in Table 2 below.

The identification of bush fire prone land is a crucial part of the wider planning and development assessment process. This process is guided by several legislative frameworks and environmental planning instruments, including:

- Planning for Bush Fire Protection (PBP), which is part of the evaluation for proposed developments on bush fire prone land.
- Integrated development under Section 4.46 of the EP&A Act, covering residential or rural residential subdivisions of bush fire prone land, as well as developments for special fire protection purposes (SFPP). These developments require approval from the Commissioner of the RFS to obtain a Bush Fire Safety Authority under Section 100B of the Rural Fires Act.

Table 2: Bush fire prone land vegetation categories*

Category	Description	Vegetation formation (Keith, 2004)
Vegetation class 1	This vegetation category has the highest combustibility and likelihood of forming fully developed fires including heavy ember attack and spot fires. Includes 100 metre (m) buffer.	Dry Sclerophyll Forests
		Wet Sclerophyll Forests
		Grassy Woodlands
		Forested Wetlands
		Heathlands
Vegetation class 2	This vegetation category has lower combustibility and/or limited potential fire size due to the vegetation area shape, size, topography, and management practices. This includes lower risk vegetation like remnant vegetation (see definition in Glossary) or other parcels of land that present a bush fire hazard and are neither Category 1 or 3 and are not excluded (see Section 7.3) Include 30 m buffer.	Rainforest (lower risk remnants could comprise any formations)
Vegetation class 3	This vegetation category is considered medium bush fire risk vegetation. Details of inclusions and exclusions of grasslands are provided in the Glossary. Include 30 m buffer.	Grassland
		Freshwater Wetlands
		Arid Shrublands (Acacia and Chenopod)
		Semi-Arid Woodlands (shrubby and grassy sub-formations)
		Alpine Complex

*Not all vegetation types included in the categories are reflected by the Vegetation Classifications

3. The types of vegetation comprising the categories should be stated in the legend and what the colours stand for. As it stands the colours don't tell the reader much, other than for example red is 'bad'.

Comments

The map has been prepared by the NSW RFS in accordance with its mapping guideline. This is not a risk map but and only serves the purpose of triggering assessment of development against the Planning for Bushfire Protection guideline.

4. The name of the map should use 'Bushfire' as one word.

Comments

The RFS uses "bushfire" and "bush fire" interchangeably throughout its guidelines and literature, albeit with a preference towards "bushfire". However, Section 10.3 of the EP&A Act requires the Commissioner of the NSW Rural Fire Service to "record **bush fire prone land**" on a map. Furthermore, the RFS mapping guideline refers to the preparation of "a **bush fire prone land map**".

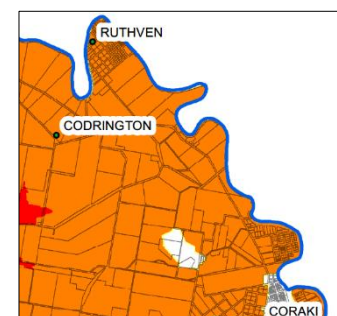
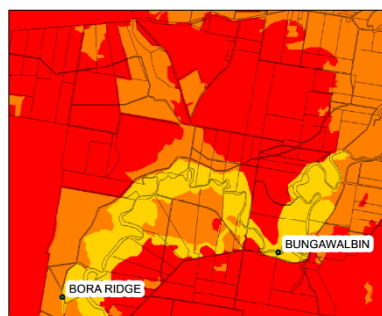
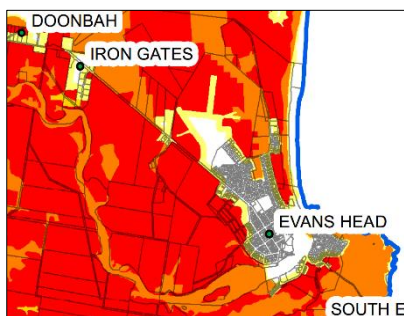
While it would be ideal for consistency to use one or the other phrase, the use of 'bush fire' as two words doesn't undermine the intent of the map and remains consistent with the requirements of the EP&A Act and the mapping guideline.

5. 'IRON GATES' label in wrong location.

Comments

The RFS has used the official NSW Geographic Names Board (GNB) infrastructure/location/NSW locality labels when preparing the Draft Map. These labels have been provided to assist users in identifying areas within the LGA.

A review of these labels found not only the 'Iron Gates' label to be in the wrong location but labels for 'Bora Ridge' and 'Ruthven' are also incorrectly mapped (see following screen shots).



A search of the GNB's register found 'Iron Gates' to be a gazetted Rural Place on 22 February 1974 and replaced 'The Iron Gates'. The Parish Map for Riley has the place labelled within the Evans River (to the south of the property bearing the same name), and the 1976 edition of the 1:25,000 Tabbimoble topographic map also has a label albeit on the south bank of the Evans River adjacent to where the parish map label was positioned. In either case the label appearing on the Draft Map is definitely in the wrong location. A support request has been raised with the GNB to correct this error.

Council has requested RFS to only label locality/suburb names on the final draft map. This will exclude rural place, property or infrastructure names and eliminate the 'Iron Gates' label from the map.

In the case of 'Bora Ridge' and 'Ruthven' these are locality/suburbs. Bora Ridge is labelled outside the locality boundaries and Ruthven is labelled in the wrong local government area

(being a locality from Lismore LGA). RFS has corrected these labelling errors in the final draft map.

6. Pine plantations in Gibberagee State Forest and parts of the pine plantations in Whiporie State Forest are mapped as Category 3. These plantations are highly flammable, which was evident in 2019. Areas that were cleared have now been replanted and should be mapped as Category 1, consistent with other parts of the pine plantations in these State Forests.

Comments

Harvested areas within these State Forest plantations have been mapped as Category 3. Whilst they have been re-planted they are still recognised as currently having a lower hazard compared to established forests.

This is not a bushfire risk map. The maps triggers assessment of development against the Planning for Bushfire Protection guideline irrespective of whether the land is mapped as Category 1 or 3. Notwithstanding, these maps will be reviewed and the hazard category upgraded to reflect growth of the plantations.

7. What is the expected impact these new guidelines will have on applicants wanting to build in flame zones, and does this mean they will have their applications rejected?

Comments

Bush Fire Prone Land maps play a vital role in identifying vegetation hazards that could support a bush or grass fire or be vulnerable to bush fire attack. The map triggers the consideration of bush fire protection measures as outlined in Planning for Bush Fire Protection. This ensures that development in these areas, or at their interface, include adequate measures to address potential bushfire hazard with the ultimate goal to make living within bush fire prone areas safer. It is also important to note that considerations don't automatically mean all measures outlined in the Planning for Bushfire Protection guideline will apply. The specific circumstances, location, and type of development will influence which requirements are relevant.

The inclusion of grassland in the mapping is a catchup on changes already made to Planning for Bushfire Protection and the Building Code of Australia. As such inclusion of grassland shouldn't require any additional assessment than already required.

8. How does a housing estate like the Iron Gates get the approval to build houses without clear felling a huge amount of bushland?

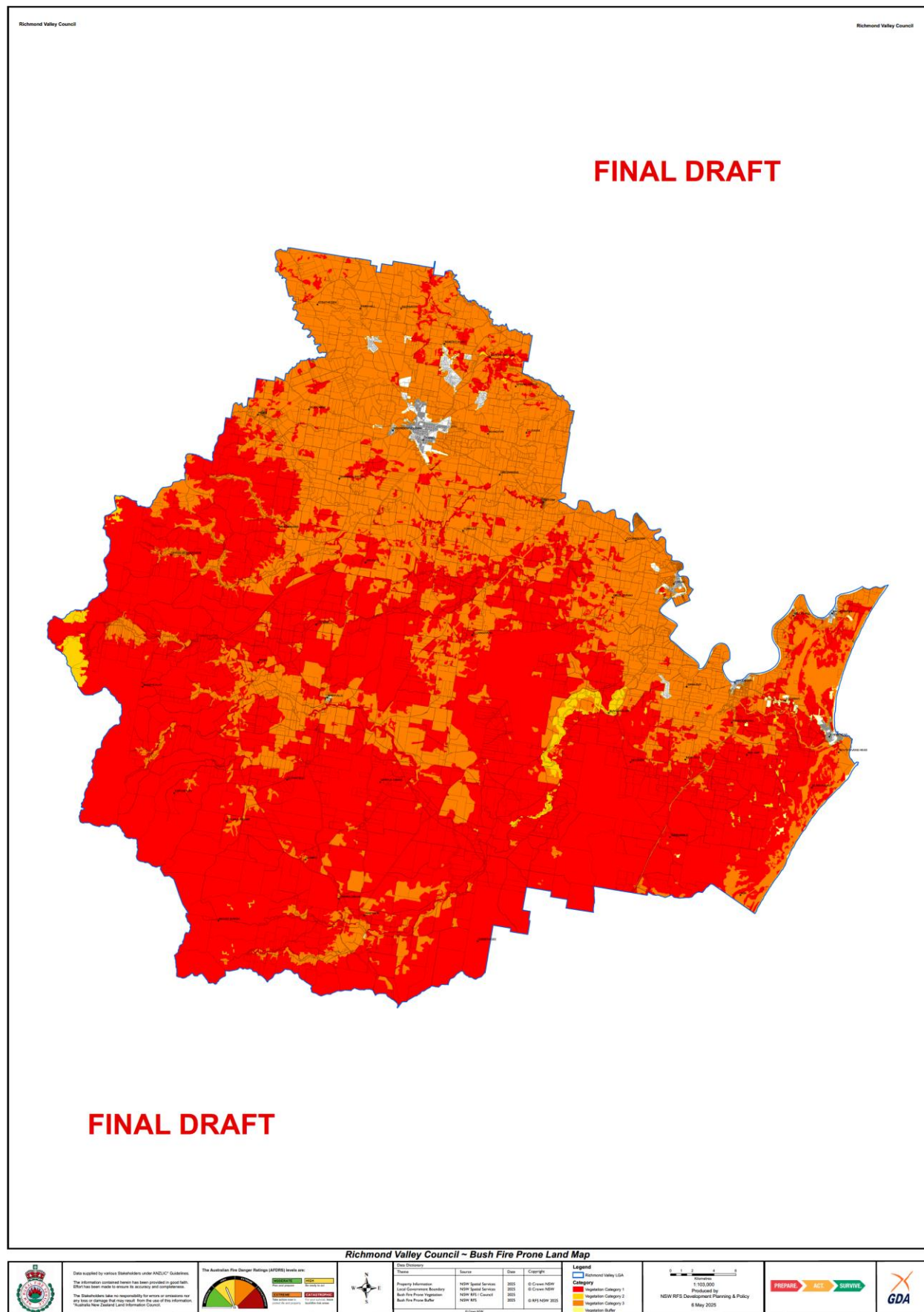
Comment

The Iron Gates development has development consent which it is required to comply with.

CONCLUSION

The Draft Richmond Valley Council Bush Fire Prone Land Map (02 December 2024) was publicly exhibited for a minimum of 30 days from 28 February 2025 to 31 March 2025. Four (4) written submissions were received. Recommended changes to the Draft Map have been accepted by the NSW Rural Fire Service and resulted in the production of the Final Draft Richmond Valley Council Bush Fire Prone Land Map (6 May 2025). The changes made to the map include removal of mapped hazard over part of the Rileys Hill Dry Dock reserve, and corrections to location labels involving the removal of the 'Iron Gates' and 'Ruthven' labels.

The final draft map is presented for the endorsement of Council prior to referring it to the Commissioner of the NSW RFS for certification. Once certified the map will become effective immediately.



ATTACHMENT(S)

Nil

15.2 SECTION 46 RICHMOND VALLEY LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN - PROPOSED OVERHEIGHT DWELLING - 4 CEDAR STREET, WOODBURN..**Director:** Vaughan Macdonald**Responsible Officer:** Francis Eyndhoven**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Council has received a development application for alterations and additions to a flood-affected home at Woodburn to raise the existing flood affected dwelling above the minimum habitable floor level including alterations and additions. This includes a Section 4.6 variation to the RVLEP 2012 for building height exceeding 8.5m as it raises the dwelling by 2.79m to help avoid future inundation.

The proposal would result in the building being more than 10% above the permissible height limit and, therefore, it must be referred to Council for determination. As the home is located on a large residential lot and there will be no impacts on neighbouring properties, the variation is recommended for approval.

RECOMMENDATION

That pursuant to Clause 4.6 of *Richmond Valley Local Environmental Plan 2012* a variation in respect of Clause 4.3 Height of Buildings be granted for DA2025/0152, as outlined in this report.

DELIVERY PROGRAM LINKS

Objective 5: Live sustainably in a changing climate

5A Improve community preparedness and response to natural disasters

5A1 Support regional disaster planning, response and recovery

REPORT

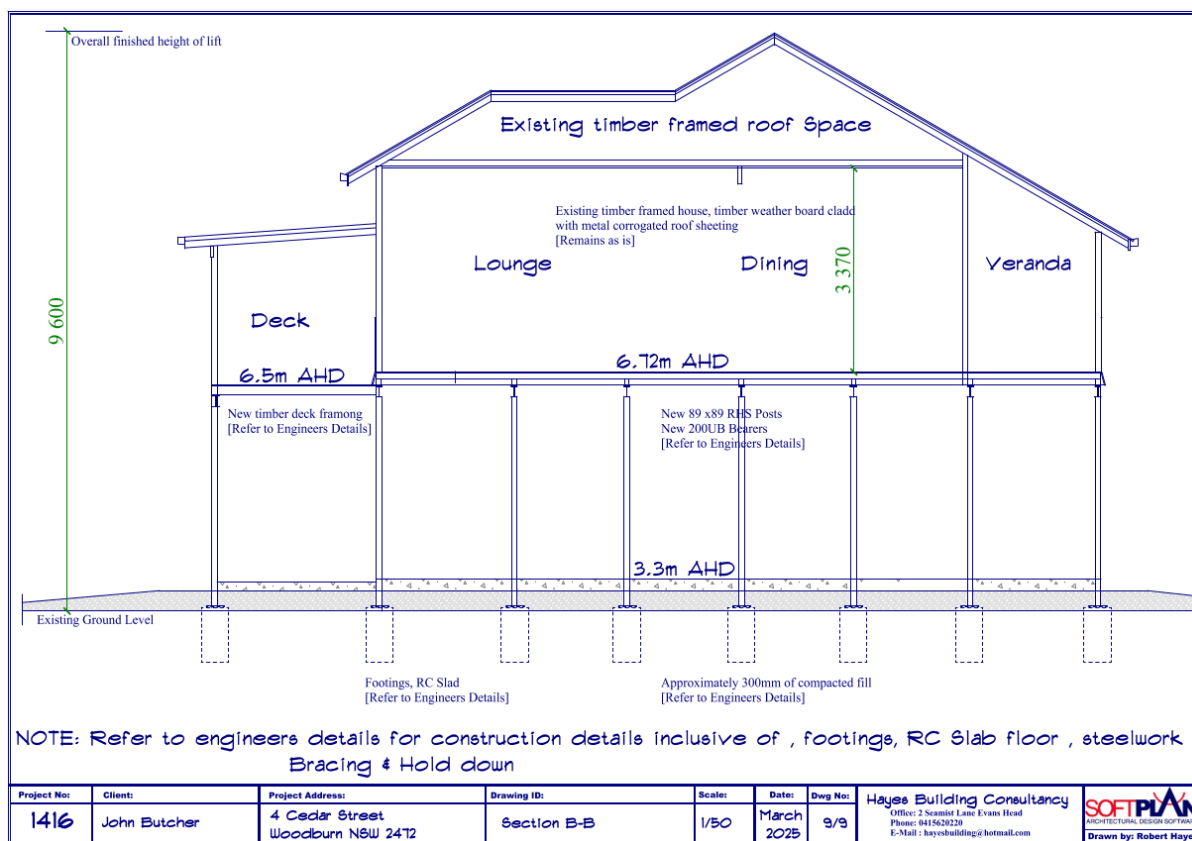
The application (DA2025/0152) relates to a dwelling at 4 Cedar Street, Woodburn (Lot 1 DP793825). The application proposes a variation to the residential building height limit of 8.5 metres as set out in the RVC DCP 2021. The proposal is to raise the dwelling by 2.79m, which will mean that the peak of the dwelling's roof will be 1.150m above the maximum building height of 8.5m in this zone (9.65m above existing ground level). The lot requires a minimum habitable floor level (HFL) of 5.9m AHD and the dwelling will have a proposed HFL of 6.72m AHD upon completion of works. The dwelling can meet the required setbacks for the proposed height in this zone.

The diagram is a floor plan of a property located at 4 CEDAR STREET. The property boundary is a rectangle measuring 50.000m in width and 22.065m in depth. The existing house is a rectangular structure measuring 27.644.5m in width and 30.395m in depth. The house is oriented with its long side parallel to the street. The plan shows the following features:

- Existing House:** A rectangular structure with a central area labeled "Existing House floor plan to remain as is with a new raised finished floor level of 6.72m AHD".
- New Deck:** A rectangular area at the rear of the house, labeled "New Deck", with a width of 1.600m and a depth of 4.600m.
- New Laundry:** A rectangular area at the rear of the house, labeled "Replacement Laundry", with a width of 1.500m and a depth of 4.600m.
- New Replacement Stairs:** Two sets of stairs are shown, one on the left side of the house and one on the right side, both labeled "New Replacement Stairs".
- Property Boundary:** The boundary is marked with a blue line, and the dimensions are given in green text.
- North Arrow:** A north arrow is located in the upper left corner of the plan, pointing towards the top of the page.
- Address:** The address "4 CEDAR STREET" is written vertically on the right side of the plan.
- DP793825 m2:** The text "DP793825 m2" is written in the bottom left corner of the plan.

Architectural drawing of the South Elevation of a building. The drawing shows a two-story structure with a gabled roof, multiple windows, and a balcony. Dimensions are indicated: a total height of 8,500 and a section height of 3,200. The drawing is labeled "South Elevation" at the bottom.

Figure 3. Proposed increased elevation of dwelling showing degree of Non-compliance with RVLEP 2012



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

The variation request submitted by the applicant demonstrates that the additional height is required so that the habitable floor of the dwelling exceeds the nominated AHD for flooding. As the existing dwelling is located to the middle of the lot and surrounded by existing mature vegetation, there is no overshadowing, loss of privacy or loss of views for neighbouring lots.

The proposed house raising will vary the maximum height as set out in the DCP by approximately 13.5%. Under NSW planning requirements, all variations greater than 10% must be referred to Council for determination.

CONSULTATION

No consultation has been undertaken as this variation to the RVLEP 2012 requires approval before assessment of the development application can commence. In accordance with NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment Planning Circular PS 20-002, all Development Applications where there has been a variation less than 10% in numerical standards under Clause 4.6 of the RVLEP 2012, can be determined by delegation (General Manager or nominated staff member). All variations greater than 10% must be referred to Council for determination.

CONCLUSION

As the proposal is considered to meet the intent and objectives of the development standard and relevant objectives of the RU5 Village zone the variation to building height is recommended for approval.

ATTACHMENT(S)

Nil

16 PROJECTS & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**16.1 PROPOSED ROAD CLOSURE PETERSONS QUARRY ROAD CORAKI**

Director: Ben Zeller

Responsible Officer: Kim Anderson

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Development Application DA2022/0250 has been approved for the Extractive Industry expansion of Petersons Quarry to the maximum of 4,900,000 tonnes over the life of the quarry, including the quarry footprint over the existing road reserve known as Peterson Quarry Road. Part of the approval requires the formal road closure of the road reserve within the operating quarry and consolidation of individual land parcels.

Petersons Quarry is owned by Richmond Valley Council and operated by KIS Plant Pty Ltd (t/a KIS Quarries) under a lease agreement. Upon road closure the land will form part of the quarry property owned by Council as operational land.

Council is required to undertake relevant consultation in accordance with Section 38B of the *Roads Act 1993* to close the public road. A further report will be submitted to Council at the end of the consultation period for consideration and determination.

RECOMMENDATION

That

1. Council undertakes the relevant consultation in accordance with Section 38B of the *Roads Act 1993* to close the public road.
2. A further report be submitted to Council at the completion of the consultation.

DELIVERY PROGRAM LINKS

Objective 11: Manage resources responsibly

11E Manage Council's commercial activities for community benefit

11E1 Identify opportunities for strategic investment and business development

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

All costs associated with the road closure including survey and plan registrations will be the responsibility of KIS Plant Pty Ltd as the lease holder of Petersons Quarry.

REPORT

Petersons Quarry is owned by Richmond Valley Council and operated by KIS Plant Pty Ltd (t/a KIS Quarries) under a lease agreement. This quarry has been operating since 1916 and is located approximately 2.5 kilometers northwest of the Coraki village.

A Development Application DA2022/0250 was approved in July 2023 for the Extractive Industry expansion of Petersons Quarry to the maximum of 350,000 tonnes per annum and maximum 4,900,000 tonnes over the life of the quarry. The expansion includes the footprint to incorporate the disturbance area of the Coraki Quarry and existing road reserve known as Peterson Quarry Road within the operating quarry property.

A condition of the development expansion approval is the requirement to undertake the formal road closure of the road reserve within the operating quarry and consolidation of individual land parcels.



Map 1 – Showing location of proposed road closure as operational land.

The section of road proposed for closure is not currently utilised by the public as public road and is fenced within the Petersons Quarry utilised for access and internal roads.

Upon road closure it is proposed that the land will form part of the quarry owned by Council as operational land.

CONSULTATION

Council will be required to undertake the relevant public consultation in accordance with Section 38B of the *Roads Act 1993* to close the public road. This includes notification to relevant authorities, advertising in a local newspaper, and writing to affected residents and adjoining landholders with a minimum 28-day period for submissions.

CONCLUSION

Council undertakes the formal road closure process for part of Petersons Quarry Road supporting the expansion and conditions of the development approval for Petersons Quarry.

A further report will be submitted to Council at the completion of the public consultation for final determination.

ATTACHMENT(S)

Nil

17 ORGANISATIONAL SERVICES**17.1 QUARTERLY BUDGET REVIEW STATEMENT FOR THE QUARTER ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

Director: Ryan Gaiter

Responsible Officer: Zakari Witt

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The budget review report for the quarter ended 31 March 2025 has been prepared to provide Council and the community with information regarding Council's financial performance and proposed amendments to the 2024/2025 budget.

Council's projected operating result including capital grants and contributions for 2024/2025 has decreased by \$11.23 million, excluding previously approved adjustments, to a surplus of \$31.14 million. The net operating result before capital grants and contributions has improved \$1.97 million to a deficit of \$7.26 million. The improvement is due to receiving grant funding in 2025 for operational work that is scheduled in 2026.

Income from continuing operations has decreased \$2.38 million, to \$80.67 million and expenses from continuing operations have decreased \$4.35 million to \$87.93 million. Significant adjustments include transferring \$3.68 million in operational income and \$6.11 million in operational expenditure to the 2026 budget due to an updated work schedule for the Casino Industries Activation project funded through the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund. Council's actual revenue is tracking at 73.6% of the projected year-end result which is 10.7% better than this time last year and expenditure from continuing operations is on track with 69.5% of the projected year end result expended as at 31 March 2025.

Council's capital works program has been reviewed, resulting in a projected program for 2024/2025 of \$60.66 million, reducing the programmed works by \$24.44 million after previously approved adjustments, largely due to the impacts of Cyclone Alfred and the ongoing wet weather. Current actual expenditure for the capital program is at 61.1% of the projected year-end result and is forecasted to increase notably over the final quarter of 2025, weather permitting, with several significant projects underway including Tatham and Broadwater bridge replacements. The capital budget will continue to be closely monitored, with any adjustments required to be included in future monthly budget adjustment reports to Council.

Council's unrestricted cash surplus has remained unchanged at \$272,799 as of 31 March 2025.

A detailed Quarterly Budget Review Statement for the third quarter of 2024/2025 has been circulated separately to each Councillor. These changes are disclosed by priority areas on pages 4-8 of the Quarterly Budget Review Statement and detailed explanations are provided on pages 9-13.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Receives the Quarterly Budget Review Statement as at 31 March 2025; and
2. Approves the recommended budget variations.

DELIVERY PROGRAM LINKS

Objective 11: Manage resources responsibly

11A Manage finances responsibly and provide value for money

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

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

As detailed in the report.

REPORT

The budget review for the third quarter of the 2024/2025 financial year has resulted in Council's operating result including capital gains and contributions decreasing by \$11.23 million to a projected surplus of \$31.14 million. The net operating result before capital grants and contributions has improved \$1.97 million to a deficit of \$7.26 million. The improvement in the net operating result before capital grants and contributions is attributed to the movement in income and expenses from continuing operations detailed below.

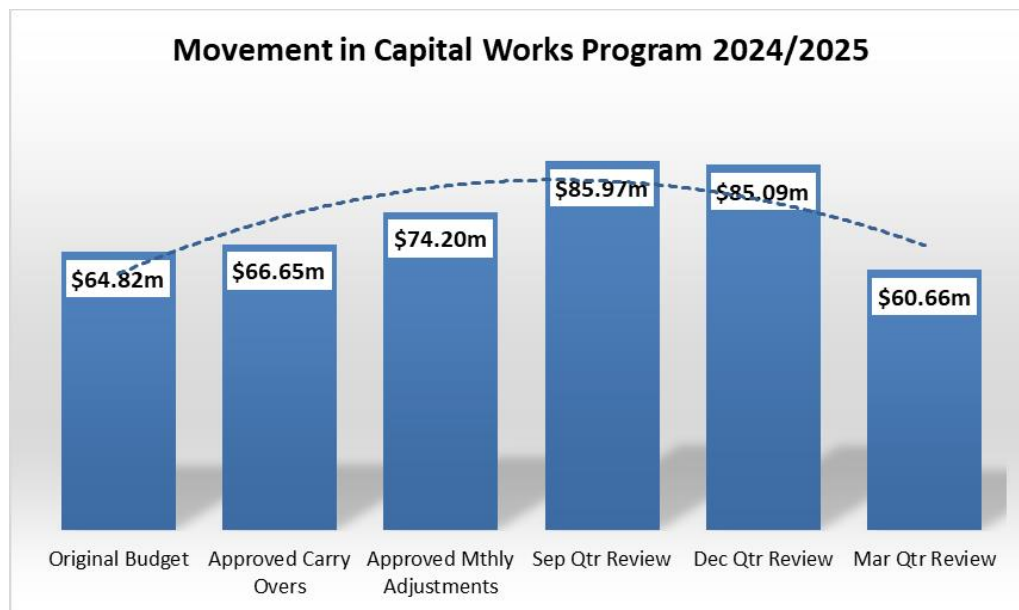
Council's estimated budget result (unrestricted cash result) has remained unchanged from the 2024/2025 original budget at \$272,799. In overall cash terms, there is a significant reduction in the estimated funding from reserves of \$13.21 million with an estimated total transfer from reserves of \$5.83 million for the 2024/2025 financial year. This is predominately due to the reduction of the capital works program with significant adjustments detailed below.

Income from continuing operations is proposed to decrease by \$2.38 million to \$80.67 million and expenses from continuing operations are proposed to decrease by \$4.35 million to \$87.93 million. The movement in operational budgets is largely attributed to the transfer of \$3.68 million in operational income and \$6.11 million in operational expenditure to the 2026 budget due to an updated work schedule for the Casino Industries Activation project funded through the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund and the addition of \$1.2 million in line with actual interest revenues received. Actual income is currently at 73.6% of the projected year-end result for income from continuing operations which is a positive result and 10.7% better than this time last year, with expenditure from continuing operations on track at 69.5% of the projected year end result expended as at 31 March 2025.

Council's capital works program has been reviewed, resulting in a projected program for 2024/2025 of \$60.66 million, decreasing the programmed works by \$24.44 million from previously adopted adjustments. Current expenditure for the capital program is at 61.1% of the projected year-end result. The proposed adjustments are forecasted to align the budget with the projected year-end result indicating an expectation of increased expenditure in the June quarter due to several significant projects being underway including Tatham and Broadwater bridge replacement. This will be monitored closely as there is always a risk with large capital programs, with uncertainties around contractor availability and weather. March has been a challenging quarter for Councils capital program due to significant rainfall delaying progress and changing priorities in response to the Cyclone Alfred weather event. Councils focus continues to be on disaster recovery thus the capital budget will continue to be closely monitored, with any adjustments required to be included in future monthly budget adjustment reports to Council.

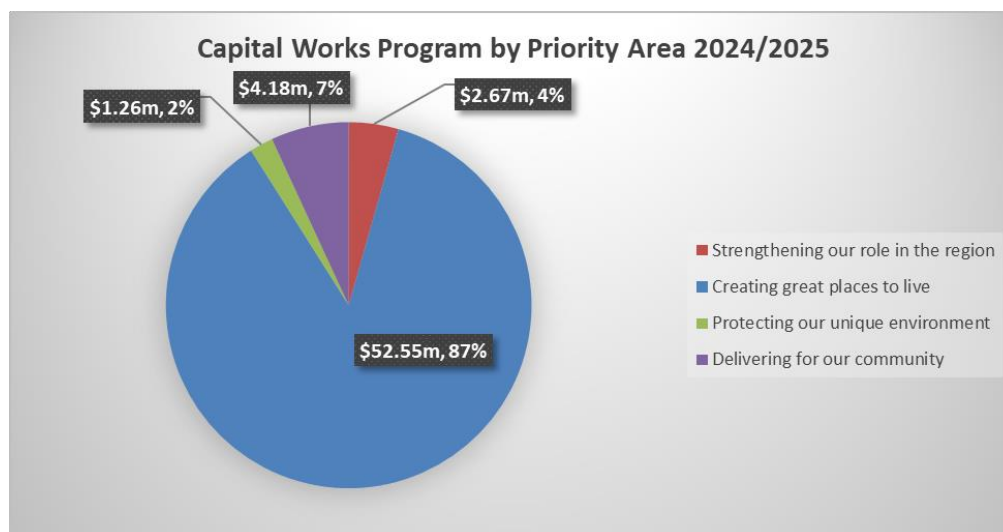
All recommended changes for continuing operations and capital are disclosed by priority area on page 4 to 8 of Council's Quarterly Budget Review Statement and detailed explanations are provided on pages 9-13.

The following graph tracks the movement in the capital works program for 2024/2025 from the original budget, after the adoption of approved carry over works and other approved monthly adjustments up to the March Quarterly Budget Review.



This graph illustrates the reduction in the capital program as indicated in the significant adjustments detailed below.

The following graph provides a summary of the capital works program by priority area:



Council's projected budget position and recommended changes for Council resolution are summarised in the table below:

Quarterly Budget Review Statement for the quarter ended 31 March 2025	Revised Budget 2024/2025	Recommended Changes for Council Resolution	Projected Year End Result 2024/2025
Income from Continuing Operations	83,044,636	(2,378,330)	80,666,306
Expenses from Continuing Operations	92,279,192	(4,349,299)	87,929,893
Net Operating Result before Capital Grants and Contributions	(9,234,556)	1,970,969	(7,263,587)
Add: Capital Grants & Contributions	51,598,855	(13,197,211)	38,401,644
Net Operating Result including Capital Grants and Contributions	42,364,299	(11,226,242)	31,138,057
Add: Non-Cash Expenses	26,595,834	0	26,595,834
Add: Non-Operating Funds Employed	1,254,132	0	1,254,132
Less: Capital Expenditure	85,094,917	(24,438,679)	60,656,238
Less: Loan Repayments	3,891,584	0	3,891,584
Estimated Funding Result – Surplus/(Deficit)	(18,772,235)	13,212,437	(5,559,798)
Restricted Funds – Increase/(Decrease)	(19,045,034)	13,212,437	(5,832,597)
Unrestricted Funds – Increase/(Decrease)	272,799	0	272,799

Pages 9 to 13 of the attached Quarterly Budget Review Statement contain the budget variation explanations. A summary of the main contributing factors within each Priority Area is as follows:

Strengthening our role in the region

- Proposed reduction of \$3.68 million in operational income and \$6.11 million in operational expenditure in line with an updated work schedule for the Casino Industries Activation Project which encompasses the construction of a roundabout on the Bruxner Highway funded through the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund.
- Proposed transfer of \$320,000 in capital expenditure to the 2025/2026 budget for Stage 3 Reynolds Road development works due to a revision of the design.

Creating great places to live

- Proposed transfer of \$964,695 in capital income and \$1.5 million in capital expenditure to the 2025/2026 budget for the grant funded Casino Rugby League clubhouse betterment under the Australian and NSW government co-funded Community Asset Program as designs are finalised.
- Proposed transfer to the 2025/2026 budget, \$4.45 million for Essential Public Asset Restoration works for the February 2022 flood event funded by Transport for NSW in line with a revision of the work schedule due to unforeseen delays after the Cyclone Alfred weather event.
- Proposed transfer of \$2.45 million in capital income and \$3 million in capital expenditure to the 2025/2026 budget due to a revision of project milestones under the Australian and NSW Government co-funded Community Asset Program for the Casino Footbridge.
- Proposed transfer of \$3.75 million in capital income and \$5.69 million in capital expenditure to the 2025/2026 budget in line with timeframe variations being sought under the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund following the handover of the Rappville Sewer Treatment Plant project from Public Works.

Protecting our unique environment

- Proposed transfer of \$103,334 to the 2025/2026 budget for pound upgrades under NSW Local Government Recovery Grant funding received for highly impacted council to provide companion animal support in response to the February 2022 flood event.
- Total reduction of \$202,939 in capital expenditure due to a comprehensive review of waste management capital program, including transferring \$80,000 to the 2026/2027 budget for a new shed at the Evans Head transfer station.

Delivering for our community

- Proposed increase to operational income of \$1.2 million in line with actual interest revenues generated on Councils investments due to favourable economic conditions.

CONCLUSION

At the end of the third quarter, Council's operating result including capital grants and contributions is a projected surplus of \$31.14 million, with a projected deficit before capital grants and contributions of \$7.26 million. Council's capital works budget is currently \$60.66 million, and this will be closely monitored to ensure all projects can be delivered. Council's estimated budget result (unrestricted cash result) has remained unchanged at \$272,799 and overall, Council's projected financial position at year end remains satisfactory.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. **Quarterly Budget Review Statement for the quarter ended 31 March 2025 (under separate cover)**

17.2 FINANCIAL ANALYSIS REPORT - APRIL 2025**Director:** Ryan Gaiter**Responsible Officer:** Rylee Vidler**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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

The value of Council's cash and investments at 30 April 2025 is shown below:

Bank Accounts	Term Deposits	Floating Rate Notes	Fixed Rate Bonds	TCorp IM Funds	Total
\$14,584,436	\$31,000,000	\$6,750,390	\$4,500,000	\$17,363,473	\$74,198,299

The weighted average rate of return on Council's cash and investments at 30 April 2025 was 4.87% which was above the Bloomberg AusBond Bank Bill Index for April of 4.23% (annualised), which is Council's benchmark.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopts the Financial Analysis Report detailing the performance of its cash and investments for the month of April 2025.

DELIVERY PROGRAM LINKS

Objective 11: Manage resources responsibly

11A Manage finances responsibly and provide value for money

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

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

As at 30 March 2025, Council has earned \$2,384,700 in interest and \$917,206 in fair value gains from funds held in TCorp, for a total investment income of \$3,301,905. This equates to 140.66% of the annual budget for interest and investment income of \$2,347,506.

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

REPORT**Reserve Bank of Australia (RBA) Cash Rate Update**

The RBA held the cash rate at 4.10% per annum at the April meeting.

Rate of Return

The weighted average rate of return on cash and investments in April was 4.87%, an increase in 415 basis points from the previous month. The rate of return is 63 basis points above the Bloomberg AusBond Bank Bill Index of 4.23% (annualised) which is Council's benchmark.

Council's NSW Treasury Corporation IM Funds returned net gains of \$78,771 during the month of April. The Medium-Term Growth Fund (MTGF) returned a gain of \$61,407 and the Long-Term Growth Fund (LTGF) returned a gain of \$17,364.

Ongoing geopolitical tensions and uncertainty surrounding US tariffs continues to impact on investors' opinions in financial markets. Equity markets fell sharply following the "Liberation Day" announcements but recovered by the end of the month as some of the tariffs were temporarily reduced. CPI data released in April was consistent with a 2.5% annual rate over the past 6 months, which is within the RBA's target band. This further increased confidence that the RBA will cut interest rates at the May meeting by at least 25bps.

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

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

Council's Cash and Investments Portfolio

Council held cash and investments of \$74,198,299 at 30 April 2025. This was made up of Council's Business Online Saver Account (\$4,645,000), Macquarie Cash Management Account (\$8,031,366), Term Deposits (\$31,000,000), Floating Rate Notes (\$6,750,390), Bonds (\$4,500,000), NSW Treasury Corporation Investments (\$17,363,473) and other bank accounts (\$1,908,069).

Council's investment portfolio had maturity dates ranging from same day up to 1,742 days. Term deposits, floating rate notes and bonds of \$42,250,390 represented 56.94% of the total portfolio as at 30 April 2025.

Council made the following new investments during April 2025.

Banking Institution	Investment Type	Environmentally Sustainable Investment	Amount Invested	Investment Term	Interest Rate
Defence Bank	Term Deposit	Y	\$2,000,000	6 months	4.80%
National Australia Bank	Term Deposit	N	\$2,000,000	3 months	4.65%
AMP Bank	Term Deposit	N	\$1,000,000	5 months	4.45%
Total			\$5,000,000		

Council had the following investment maturities during the month of April 2025:

Banking Institution	Investment Type	Environmentally Sustainable Investment	Amount Invested	Interest Earned
Judo Bank	Term Deposit	Y	\$2,000,000	\$50,362
AMP Bank	Term Deposit	N	\$1,000,000	\$12,603
National Australia Bank	Term Deposit	N	\$1,000,000	\$12,205
Total			\$4,000,000	\$75,170

Council had \$17,363,473 in longer term investments being the MTGF and LTGF held with NSW Treasury Corporation as at 30 April 2025. The investment values and fair value returns are shown below:

Investment Holding	Fair Value 30 April 25	Fair Value Gain/(Loss) at 30 April 25	Fair Value Gain/(Loss) YTD	Fair Value Gain/(Loss) Life of Investment
Medium Term Growth Fund	\$13,704,365	\$61,407	\$676,912	\$2,699,336
Long Term Growth Fund	\$3,659,108	\$17,364	\$240,294	\$659,108
Total	\$17,363,473	\$78,771	\$917,206	\$3,358,444

Environmentally Sustainable Investments (ESI's)

Council's cash and investments portfolio of \$74,198,299 at 30 April 2025 includes \$42,613,473 or 57.4% with no direct investment in the fossil fuel industry.

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

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

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

CONCLUSION

During the month of April 2025, Council's investments have been made in accordance with the Act, the Regulations and Council's Investment Policy.

As at 30 April 2025 Council's cash and investments totalled \$74,198,299 with \$14,584,436 of this being funds held in bank accounts. The weighted average rate of return was 4.87% and total investment revenue equals 140.66% of budgeted revenue for the year to 30 April 2025.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. RVC Investment Pack - April 2025 (under separate cover)

17.3 DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TO THE GENERAL MANAGER

Director: Ryan Gaiter

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Section 380 of the *Local Government Act 1993* (LG Act) requires Council to review its delegations during the first 12 months of each term of office. This report is presented to confirm delegations for Richmond Valley Council's General Manager, Vaughan Macdonald.

RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. All previous delegations to the General Manager be revoked.
2. Council delegates to the General Manager all of the functions of the Council pursuant to section 377 of the *Local Government Act 1993*, as outlined in this report, excluding:
 - a) Those functions specified in clauses (a) to (u) of section 377(1) of the *Local Government Act 1993*,
 - b) Any function that would be inconsistent with the aims, objectives or provisions of any existing Council policy,
 - c) Any function where Council, by resolution, has lawfully directed that a particular matter be referred to Council for decision, in which event this delegation shall not apply to such particular matter unless and until such direction or resolution is revoked by further lawful direction or resolution, and
 - d) The write-off of any debts owed to Council with a value of more than \$5,000.
3. The General Manager takes steps to ensure the conditions and limitations outlined above (point two of the recommendation) apply to functions sub-delegated to Council staff by the General Manager, where appropriate.
4. Council delegates the responsibility for determining the allocation of section 356 Community Financial Assistance Programs to the General Manager, with determinations to be made following a workshop with Councillors and in accordance with Council's Community Financial Assistance Program Policy.
5. Council delegates the responsibility for determining the allocation of funding under the Events Support Program to the General Manager, with determinations to be made following a workshop with Councillors and in accordance with the Event Support Policy.

DELIVERY PROGRAM LINKS

Objective 10: Lead and advocate for our community

10C Lead with integrity

10C1 Provide representative and accountable community governance

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Nil

REPORT

Section 380 of the *Local Government Act 1993* (LG Act) requires Council to review its delegations during the first 12 months of each term of office. Delegations help to ensure that the day-to-day management of Council can be carried out efficiently. The following information outlines the power of Council with respect to delegations to the General Manager, according to the LG Act.

General power of the council to delegate

Section 377 *Local Government Act 1993*:

(1) A council may, by resolution, delegate to the general manager or any other person or body (not including another employee of the council) any of the functions of the council under this or any other Act, other than the following—

- (a) the appointment of a general manager,
- (b) the making of a rate,
- (c) a determination under section 549 as to the levying of a rate,
- (d) the making of a charge,
- (e) the fixing of a fee,
- (f) the borrowing of money,
- (g) the voting of money for expenditure on its works, services or operations,
- (h) the compulsory acquisition, purchase, sale, exchange or surrender of any land or other property (but not including the sale of items of plant or equipment),
- (i) the acceptance of tenders to provide services currently provided by members of staff of the council,
- (j) the adoption of an operational plan under section 405,
- (k) the adoption of a financial statement included in an annual financial report,
- (l) a decision to classify or reclassify public land under Division 1 of Part 2 of Chapter 6,
- (m) the fixing of an amount or rate for the carrying out by the council of work on private land,
- (n) the decision to carry out work on private land for an amount that is less than the amount or rate fixed by the council for the carrying out of any such work,
- (o) the review of a determination made by the council, and not by a delegate of the council, of an application for approval or an application that may be reviewed under section 82A of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*,
- (p) the power of the council to authorise the use of reasonable force for the purpose of gaining entry to premises under section 194,
- (q) a decision under section 356 to contribute money or otherwise grant financial assistance to persons,
- (r) a decision under section 234 to grant leave of absence to the holder of a civic office,
- (s) the making of an application, or the giving of a notice, to the Governor or Minister,
- (t) this power of delegation,
- (u) any function under this or any other Act that is expressly required to be exercised by resolution of the council.

(1A) Despite subsection (1), a council may delegate its functions relating to the granting of financial assistance if—

- (a) the financial assistance is part of a specified program, and
- (b) the program is included in the council's draft operational plan for the year in which the financial assistance is proposed to be given, and
- (c) the program's proposed budget for that year does not exceed 5 per cent of the council's proposed income from the ordinary rates levied for that year, and
- (d) the program applies uniformly to all persons within the council's area or to a significant proportion of all the persons within the council's area.

(2) A council may, by resolution, sub-delegate to the general manager or any other person or body (not including another employee of the council) any function delegated to the council by the Departmental Chief Executive except as provided by the instrument of delegation to the council.

These exceptions generally relate to matters which could be broadly described as policy issues, rather than management issues.

Functions of the General Manager

Section 335 *Local Government Act 1993*:

The general manager of a council has the following functions—

- (a) to conduct the day-to-day management of the council in accordance with the strategic plans, programs, strategies and policies of the council,
- (b) to implement, without undue delay, lawful decisions of the council,
- (c) to advise the mayor and the governing body on the development and implementation of the strategic plans, programs, strategies and policies of the council,
- (d) to advise the mayor and the governing body on the appropriate form of community consultation on the strategic plans, programs, strategies and policies of the council and other matters related to the council,
- (e) to prepare, in consultation with the mayor and the governing body, the council's community strategic plan, community engagement strategy, resourcing strategy, delivery program, operational plan and annual report,
- (f) to ensure that the mayor and other councillors are given timely information and advice and the administrative and professional support necessary to effectively discharge their functions,
- (g) to exercise any of the functions of the council that are delegated by the council to the general manager,
- (h) to appoint staff in accordance with the organisation structure determined under this Chapter and the resources approved by the council,
- (i) to direct and dismiss staff,
- (j) to implement the council's workforce management strategy,
- (k) any other functions that are conferred or imposed on the general manager by or under this or any other Act.

Functions that are assigned to the General Manager under the LG Act cannot be exercised by Council.

Council is required to ensure that appropriate delegations are provided to the General Manager to ensure that all duties and responsibilities can be carried out in accordance with legislative requirements.

Section 356 Community Financial Assistance Program

Council allocates an amount of financial assistance each year to requests from individuals, groups or organisations seeking funding. Council's Community Financial Assistance Program Policy (adopted in July 2018) provides for two rounds of funding allocations each year. The policy sets out the method of determining allocations in accordance with the outlined strategies, eligibility and selection criteria.

Council is permitted under section 377 (1A) *Local Government Act 1993* to delegate the determination of section 356 funding on the following provisos:

- a) the financial assistance is part of a specified program, and
- b) the program is included in the council's draft operational plan for the year in which the financial assistance is proposed to be given, and
- c) the program's proposed budget for that year does not exceed 5 per cent of the council's proposed income from the ordinary rates levied for that year, and
- d) the program applies uniformly to all persons within the council's area or to a significant proportion of all the persons within the council's area.

Council's Community Financial Assistance Program Policy meets these criteria. To ensure that Councillors are fully informed about the program and its determinations, the General Manager will hold a workshop prior to the six-monthly determination and advise Council of the outcomes as soon as practicable.

Event Support Funding

Council's Event Support Policy (adopted in February 2022) provides two avenues of funding for events:

1. Grant funding – funding may be by way of financial contribution or in-kind support.
2. Sponsorship – assistance may as a cash or in-kind fee paid to an organisation in return for the commercial benefit(s) associated with an event.

The requirements are outlined in the Event Support Guidelines. This ensures that proposals will be objectively evaluated against each other and that those with the most merit will be funded. Criteria includes, but is not limited to, economic advantages, tourism benefit, marketing exposure, community benefit, financial viability and sustainability. A copy of the Guidelines is available to the community on Council's website on the Events page:

<https://richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au/community-services/events-in-the-valley/seeking-support-for-your-event/>

Council's Event Support Policy complies with section 356 of the LG Act, making the Event Support Policy consistent with other financial assistance programs, such as the Community Financial Assistance Program. Under section 377 (1A) LG Act the General Manager can be delegated this responsibility.

General Manager's current delegations

Following is the schedule of responsibilities and delegations that were assigned to the General Manager by the previous Council in February 2022. It is proposed to maintain these responsibilities and delegations for the 2024-2028 Council term.

Schedule 1 (Authority)

- 1.1 The functions of the Council as specified in:
 - *Local Government Act 1993*, Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 and related legislation,
 - Other legislation under which Council has powers, authorities, duties and functions,
 - Council's adopted Codes, Policies and Procedures, and
 - The Responsibilities, Accountabilities and Performance Measures listed in the General Manager's Contract of Employment and Position Description.
- 1.2 The authorisation of expenditure and payments in accordance with Council resolutions and/or budget provisions.
- 1.3 Council specifically delegates the responsibility for determining the allocation of the Section 356 Community Financial Assistance Program to the General Manager.
- 1.4 Council specifically delegates the responsibility for determining the allocation of funding under the Events Support Program to the General Manager.

Schedule 2 (Limitations and Exclusions)**Limitations**

- 2.1 Subject to the provisions of the *Local Government Act 1993* and any other legislation relevant to the delegations.
- 2.2 Council may by resolution direct that a particular matter be referred to Council for decision.
- 2.3 The General Manager shall exercise the functions herein delegated in accordance with and subject to:
 - The provisions of the *Local Government Act 1993*, as amended; and
 - All and every policy of the Council adopted by resolution and current at the time of the exercise of the functions herein delegated.

Exclusions

- 2.4 Power to make or amend Council policy.
- 2.5 Carrying out new or non-core services not already being undertaken by Council.
- 2.6 Significant variation to any existing Council service that would have ongoing implications for Council in terms of cost or service delivery.
- 2.7 Any functions which are required by or under the *Local Government Act 1993* or by or under any other Act or Instrument to be performed by the Council.
- 2.8 Functions delegated to the Mayor.
- 2.9 Determination of applications for development consent under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act*, or for approval under the *Local Government Act*, that are required to be referred to Council for approval.
- 2.10 Adoption of a Plan of Management for Community Land.
- 2.11 Approval to write off debts in excess of \$5,000.
- 2.12 Approval to write off rates and charges in excess of \$5,000.

CONSULTATION

Nil

CONCLUSION

Section 380 of the *Local Government Act 1993* requires councils to review all of their delegations during the first 12 months of each term of office. However, the Council may also at any point in time, by resolution, amend the delegations of the General Manager.

ATTACHMENT(S)

Nil

18 GENERAL BUSINESS

Nil

19 MATTERS FOR INFORMATION**RECOMMENDATION**

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

19.1 OUTCOME OF COMMUNITY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM 2024/2025 ROUND TWO FUNDING

Director: Vaughan Macdonald

Responsible Officer: Marie Cullen

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the allocations under the Community Financial Assistance Program 2024/2025 Round Two.

REPORT

Council allocates an amount of funds each year to support local community organisations and groups that provide services, programs, or activities in the Richmond Valley. The funding is managed in accordance with the financial assistance provisions of Section 356 of the *Local Government Act 1993* and Policy 1.02 Community Financial Assistance Program.

Council has allocated \$76,575.00 in the 2024/2025 budget for the Community Financial Assistance Program. The policy provides for two approximately equal funding rounds, allowing for \$38,809.00 to be allocated in this second round. This round of funding was advertised in March 2025 and Council received 20 applications.

All applications received have been reviewed in accordance with the policy and 16 applications were deemed eligible. 13 projects will be partially or fully funded in this round.

In determining the allocation of funds, consideration was given to Council's Community Strategic Plan and the deliverables in the Delivery Program and Operational Plan, as well as Program eligibility requirements, prior funding, past acquittal performance and selection criteria.

Councillors had an opportunity to review the proposals and provide feedback at a workshop on 6 May 2025, with the General Manager approving the allocation of funds under delegation.

The following table summarises eligible projects that will be partially or fully funded.

Organisation	Purpose of funding	Amount allocated
Casino RSM Cobras Football Club	Purchase and install a publicly accessible automated external defibrillator onto the outside of the soccer clubhouse.	\$2,188.00
Casino Family Support CASPA	Purchase resources and equipment to provide the community with a supportive playgroup.	\$2,344.99
St Mary's Primary School Casino	To support the development of St Mary's Mobile Laundry project, to benefit homeless and disadvantaged community members.	\$5,000.00
Casino Community Men's Shed Inc	Purchase a V312 Machine Vice for the overhead milling machine to improve safety and ease of use.	\$2,090.00
Broadwater Community Social	Purchase a pop-up gazebo, urn and coffee machine to support community events.	\$527.00
Casino & District Historical Society Inc	Replace two computer work stations and one printer used to maintain collection records.	\$4,323.00
Clovass McKees Hill Soldiers Memorial and Community Hall Incorporated	Install modern and efficient light fittings and fans to improve the hirer experience and reduce operating expenses.	\$2,500.00
Mid Richmond Historical Society Inc.	Purchase and install new shelving to provide a unified and more pleasing display for museum visitors.	\$3,450.00
The Scout Association of Australia NSW Branch 2nd Casino Scout Group	Purchase two new pop-up gazebos and gutters, a cart for carrying camp gear and snorkel sets to support youth activities.	\$1,907.75
Cassino Gallery Inc.	Purchase a modern gallery hanging system which will be installed by volunteers.	\$4,671.92
Casino Lady Golfers	Encourage more women to try golf by providing free introductory lessons in a social environment.	\$1,000.00
Momentum Collective - Casino Neighbourhood Centre	Purchase a lawn mower to maintain the Casino Community Garden area.	\$5,000.00
Coraki Golf Club	Plant 40 native trees across the course, providing shade and wind protection.	\$3,800.00
		\$38,802.66

Round Two was over-subscribed, and as such, the following applications have not been allocated funding in this round. Unsuccessful applicants will be advised of the outcome and offered feedback on their application and encouraged to apply again in the next round or provided with alternative solutions to address their needs.

- Casino Dog Trial Inc
- Pacific Coast Railway Society Inc
- Woodburn Wolves Football Club

The following applications were deemed ineligible under the Policy to receive funding, and will be provided with feedback on why they were deemed ineligible:

- Bentley Community Preschool Inc
- Border Ranges Richmond Valley Landcare Network
- Evans Head Living Museum
- Rainbow Roos Au Inc

ATTACHMENT(S)

Nil

19.2 RESPONSE TO NOTICE OF MOTION - FLYING FOXES ANNUAL VISIT TO CASINO

Director: Vaughan Macdonald

Responsible Officer: Carla Dzendolet

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the Response to Notice of Motion – Flying Foxes Annual Visit to Casino.

REPORT

At Council's 15 April, 2025 Ordinary Meeting, Councillor Robert Mustow submitted a notice of motion;

"That Council review the Flying Fox colony visit during the recent summer 2024/25 season to identify the impact, how it was managed, lessons learned, forward program and funding availability to reduce the impact of the 'Little Red' Flying Foxes annual migratory visit to Casino in future years."

The following information is provided;

Throughout the summer of 2024-2025, a large colony of Little Red flying-foxes migrated into Casino along the Richmond Riverbank between Webb and Memorial Park. There was, at the time, a Pink Bloodwood blossoming event in our region which was likely what attracted the Little Reds. These flying-foxes are nomadic and opportunistic. Usually the flying-foxes will stay within the area for a period of 2-4 months until the surrounding pollen and nectar source is depleted. Some years we don't see the Little Reds at all and other years they may turn up a number of times in varying numbers. They are drawn here purely due to food availability in our region. The fact these flying-foxes want to return to our Local Government area for food is an indication our environment is still somewhat healthy and this is due to significant areas of natural bushlands and national parks surrounding our urban areas.

During this most recent flying-fox event some of our parks needed to be closed due to the large numbers of flying-foxes occupying the park trees and the weight of the flying-foxes causing tree branches to fall and become a hazard. The Little Reds habit is to roost in large family clusters. These clusters get quite heavy causing the branches to break. In addition to the influx of flying-foxes Cyclone Alfred hit our region and this caused further damage to the trees in our parks.

Maintenance of the parks while they are roosting is problematic due to the risk of falling branches. However, disturbing the flying-foxes is not an option as this may cause the flying-foxes to roost in residents and businesses property. It is best for the parks to be closed for a short time of the year rather than causing them to roost further into our urban areas. The Little Red flying-foxes have now moved on, maintenance is back on schedule and the parks are now reopened and are looking great. Our small permanent colony of Grey-Headed flying-foxes remain.

There were 12 recorded matters relating to the recent Flying-fox event:

- 5 – Injured or dead animals after the cyclone.
- 6 – Branches and tree impacts in and around the colony.
- 1 – Informed council they have moved on and if we could reopen the parks.

Flying foxes play a vital role in our environment as a pollinator, they are part of a healthy environment, and they will continue to come to our region. We don't have control of this, but we have got plans in place to find more appropriate roosting locations away from residents and businesses.

Richmond Valley Council has been working with Local Government New South Wales since 2022 in partnership on the Flying-fox Habitat Rehabilitation Project grant. This is an 8-year grant project which includes 5 years of grant funding and 3 years council funded maintenance. So far council has established over 12,000 trees and shrubs along the Richmond River next to Queen Elizabeth Park away for our urban area. Over the coming years the trees will mature supporting alternative flying-fox roosting areas. These trees are growing well due to favourable growing conditions and will be an asset for Casino and the Richmond Valley in the future.

The grant included community engagement, aimed at providing our community with a better understanding of these native animals and the important role they play in our native forests and ecosystems. The sustainable communities team ran some very successful community engagement events including Science in the Pub – Beers, Bats and Biodiversity in November 2024, Trivia Night – Science Edition February 2025, Clay, and Tea at the Casino Library May 2025. There are further events proposed including Trivia Night Science Edition programmed for June 2025 to be held at Evans Head and a Science in the Club event to be held in July at Evans Head.

Flying foxes are of national importance and are protected in NSW by the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*.

Our Flying-fox Habitat rehabilitation project aims to safely shift the preferred roosting location in the coming year with little disturbance away for our urban areas and to bring about a better awareness of the role they play in nature.

The below map in Blue shows the recently occupied roosting area, and in the Green the proposed new roosting area.



Key

-  Current roosting areas
-  Planted areas for future roosts

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Richmond Valley Flying-Fox Brochure
2. Queen Elizabeth Park Flying-Fox Planting

Flying-Foxes are crucial pollinators for our local native flora. Without their evening foraging, many of our native tree species numbers would drastically decrease.

Populations of flying-foxes are declining at an alarming rate. A widespread lack of food and habitat trees following bushfires and flooding has led to extreme stress throughout the colonies.

By regenerating and revegetating areas along the Richmond River in Casino, we are restoring significant habitat for our flying-foxes and other native wildlife.

Richmond Valley Council has planted over 12,000 food and habitat source trees for our local flying-fox camps.

Council's aim is to provide a safe habitat for roosts that are away from resident populated areas.

Community Event Registration

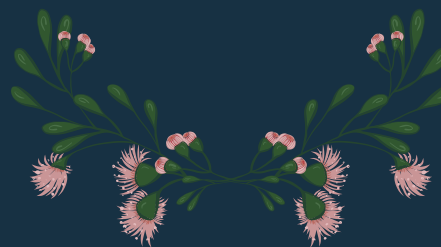



Look out for RVC's upcoming citizen science and community events by following the QR code above



This project is part of the Flying-fox Habitat Restoration Program assisted by the NSW government through its Environmental Trust in association with Local Government

Flying-foxes of the Richmond Valley





Preferencing endemic and native plant species is one of the best ways we can support local biodiversity and ecology.

Native plants have evolved to withstand the occasional harsh conditions such as flooding and drought in the region.

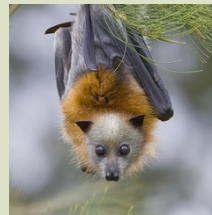
Our native wildlife have also evolved to forage and process native fruit and pollen.

By understanding our flying-fox colonies' needs and preferences when interacting with our local ecosystem, we can further regenerate areas to benefit their populations.

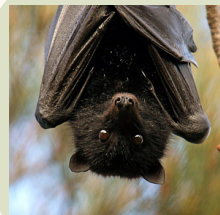
The Richmond Valley is home to three different types of flying-foxes.



Little Red Flying-Fox





Grey-Headed Flying-Fox



Black Flying-Fox

Colonies of the flying-foxes will move in and out of roosting areas as the amount of local food varies between Kyogle and Casino



As climate change continues to lead to extreme weather events such as heat waves, we are seeing an increased number of mass mortality events.

The risk of diseases spreading to human is extremely low. In fact, unless you are scratched or bitten by a flying-fox, they pose no major health risks.

Residents are reminded to never handle flying-foxes, injured or deceased. If you find an injured flying-fox, call a wildlife organisation who will send a vaccinated bat rescuer.



www.wires.org.au

Rescue hotline:
1300 094 737



Northern Rivers
Wildlife Carers
6628 1866

Species planted include

Ficus coronata - Sandpaper Fig

Callistemon viminalis - Weeping Bottlebrush

Callistemon salignus - Willow Bottlebrush

Assorted Lilly Pilly / *Syzygium* species

Melaleuca quinquenervia - Broad-leaved Paperbark &

Melaleuca bracteata - Black Tea-tree

Acacia melanoxylon - Australian blackwood

Casuarina cunninghamiana - River Oak

Assorted *Eucalyptus* species;

Forest Red Gum

Northern Grey Ironbark

Grey Box

Grey Gum

Spotted Gum

Community Event Registration

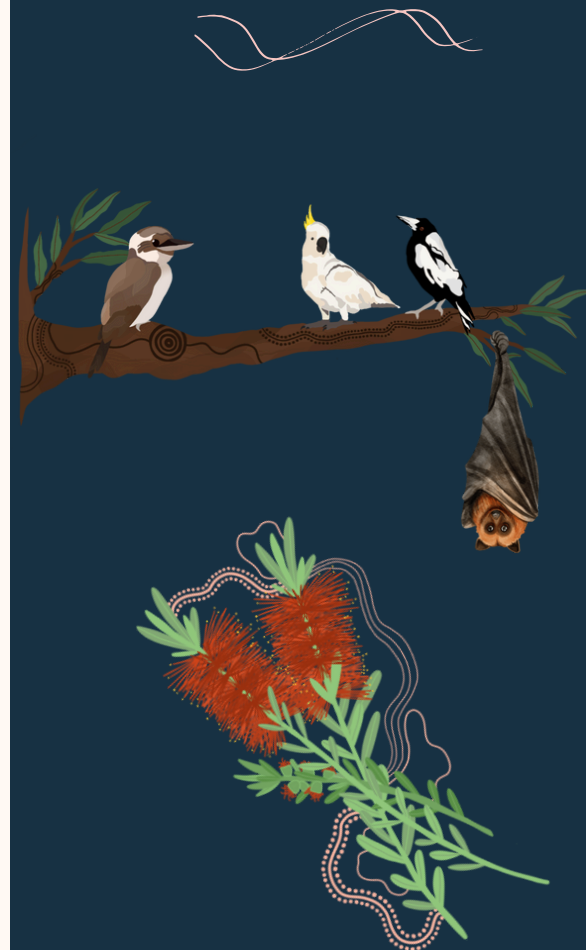


Look out for RVC's upcoming citizen science and community events by following the QR code above



This project is part of the Flying-fox Habitat Restoration Program assisted by the NSW government through its Environmental Trust in association with Local Government NSW.

Queen Elizabeth Park Flying-Fox Planting



Following the 2019 fires and 2022 floods, flying-fox food and habitat sources are at an all-time low.

This has led to the camps venturing closer to residential areas and populations, causing increased conflict.

To reduce the interaction between the flying-fox population and residents, Richmond Valley Council have committed to an ongoing habitat rehabilitation project away from highly residential areas.

Richmond Valley Council in partnership with LGNSW have planted over 12,000 plants since 2020 for our Flying-Fox Habitat Rehabilitation Project.

Stage 1 planting - 2022



Throughout this project we are aiming to support both our flying-fox colonies and our community/residents.

By providing safe habitat and a plentiful variety of appropriate native food sources, the flying-foxes will no longer need to roost close to residential areas of town.

Excellent climatic conditions during the establishment stage of the planting has led to incredible growth throughout the various trees and grasses.

Over the next 5 years, we hope to see our flying-fox population gradually show interest and shift to the planted area

Stage 1 planting - 2023



Ongoing maintenance and support of growth for the plants is a high priority for Richmond Valley Council.

Our flying-fox camps are crucial for local ecology as main pollinators for native plant species. Each roost plays an important part in supporting biodiversity.

Without direct contact with flying-foxes or their droppings, there are no negative health effects on humans.

Always call wildlife support and avoid touching wildlife.

The scent of flying-fox roosts is not from their droppings, instead from the scent gland on males - their main form of communication.

Stage 1 planting - 2024



19.3 DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS DETERMINED UNDER THE ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT ACT FOR THE PERIOD 1 APRIL 2025 - 30 APRIL 2025

Director: Vaughan Macdonald

Responsible Officer: Andy Edwards

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the Development Application report for the period 1 April 2025 to 30 April 2025

REPORT

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

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

The total number of Development Applications and Complying Development Applications determined within the Local Government area for the period 1 April 2025 to 30 April 2025 was six (6) with a total value of \$1,223,550.00.

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

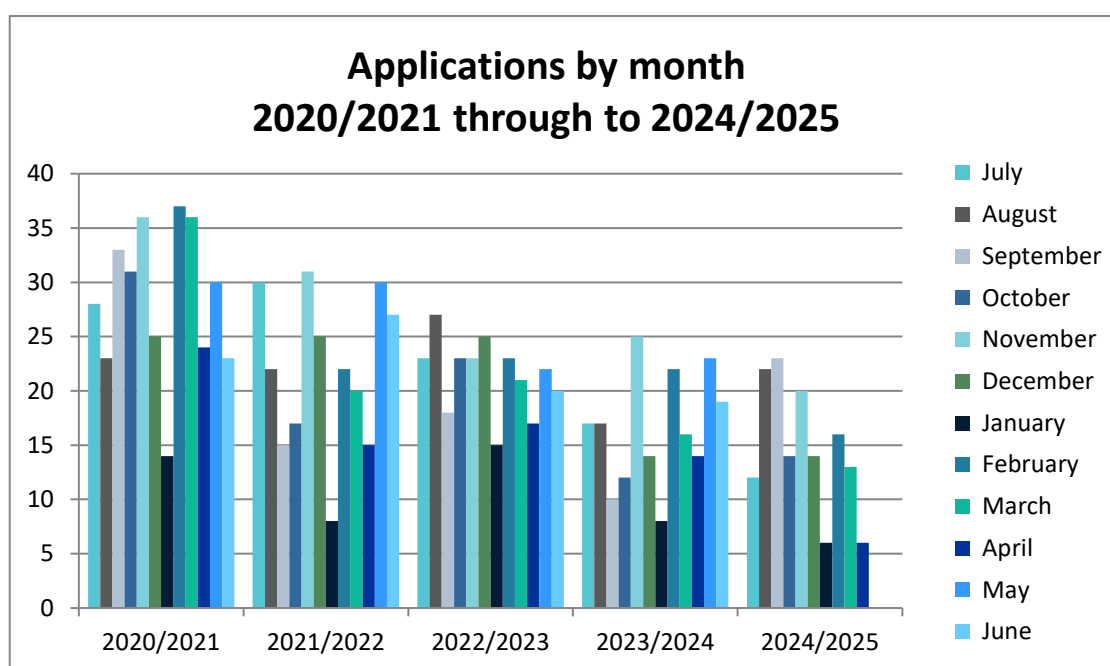


Figure 1: Monthly number of development applications and CDCs processed by Council over five financial years.

Figure 2 provides the annual value of Development Consents including CDCs issued by Council and private certifiers over five financial years. Figure 3 provides a detailed review of the value for the reporting month of April 2025.

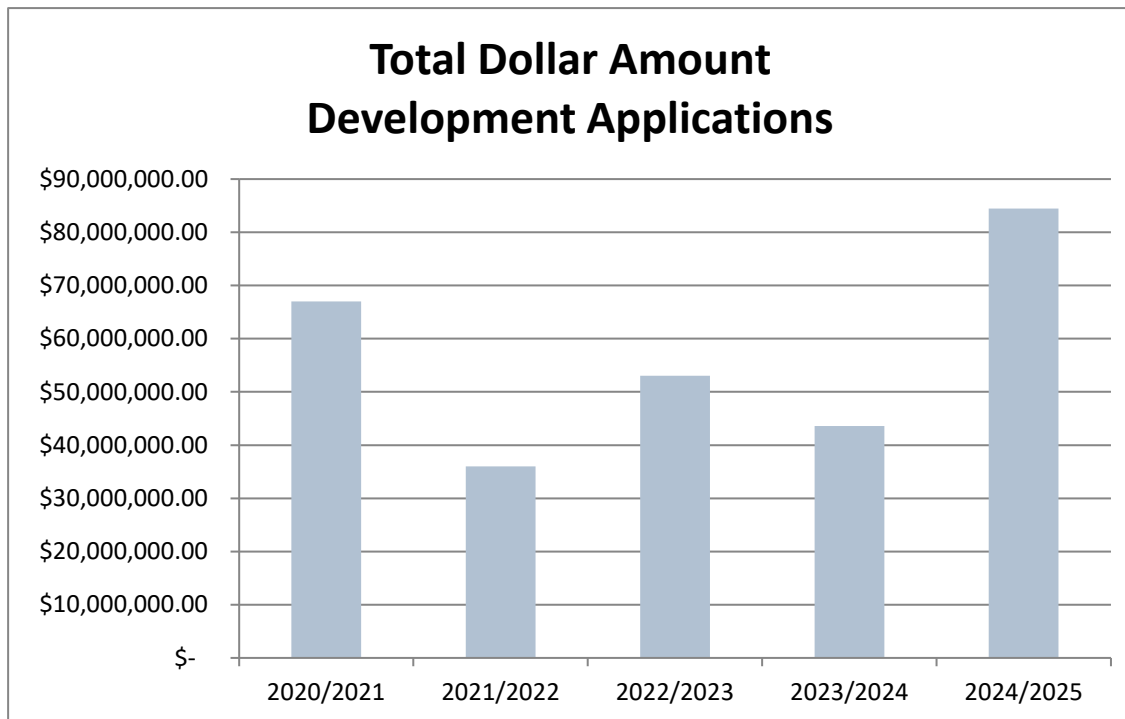


Figure 2: Annual value of development

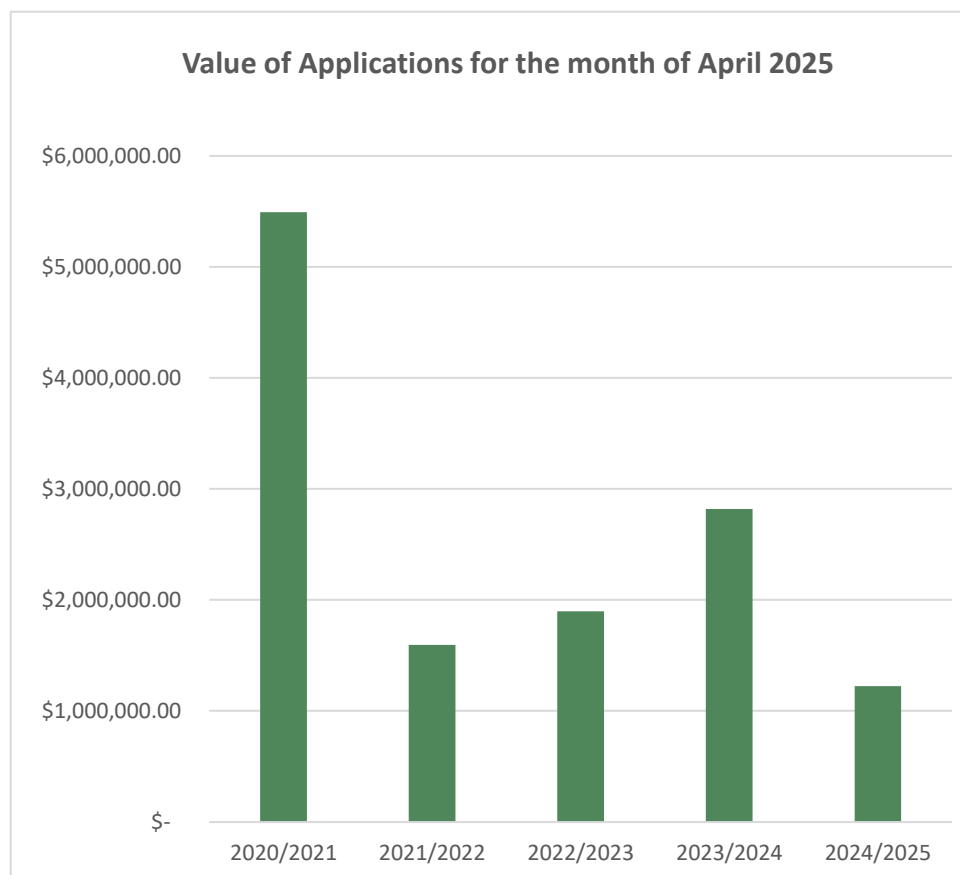


Figure 3: Value of development for the month of April 2025

Number of Development Applications

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

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

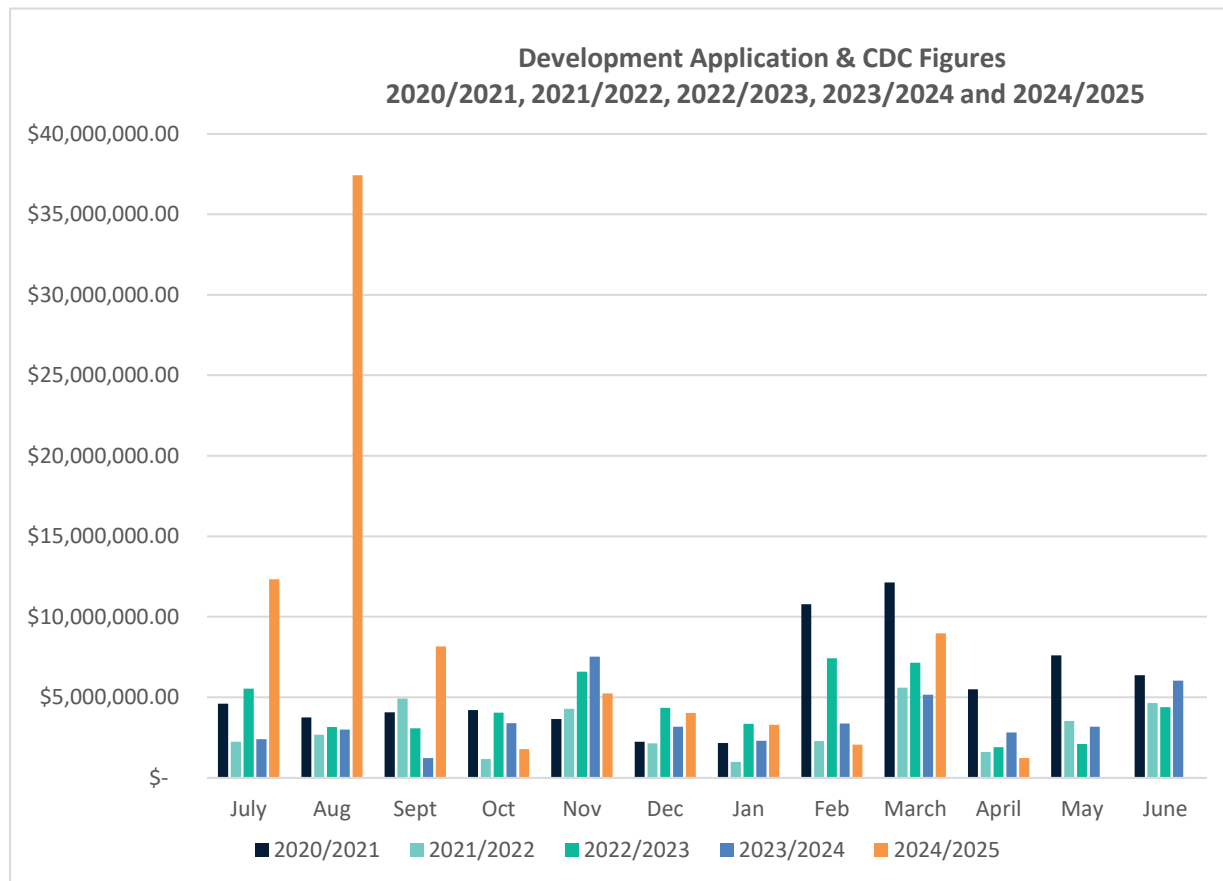


Figure 4: Value of development applications per month over five financial years.

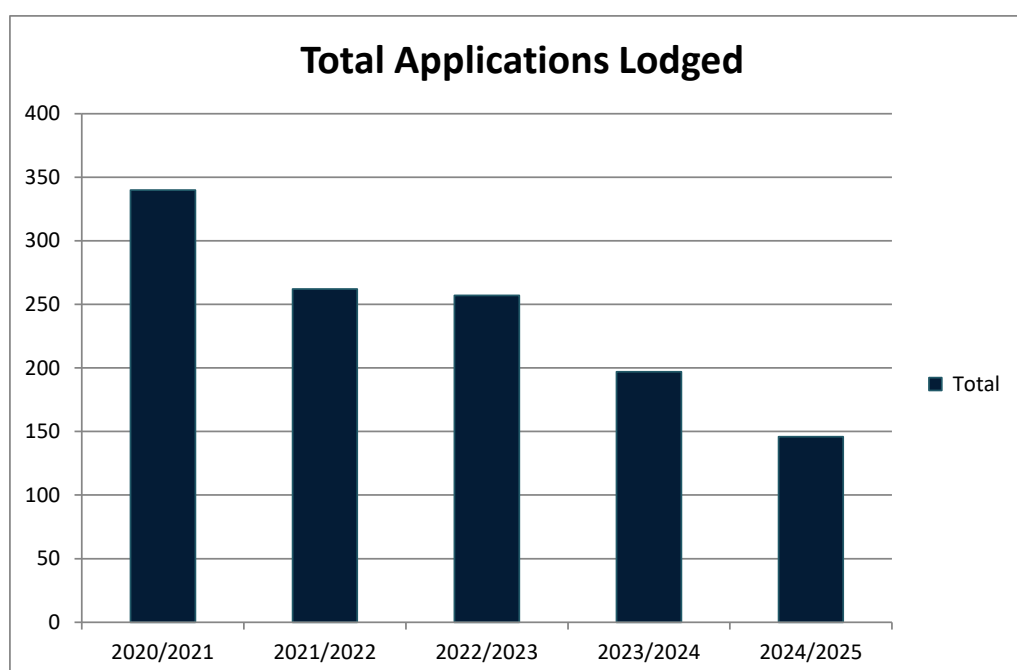


Figure 5: Number of Development Applications & CDCs per annum over five financial years

Activity for the month of April 2025

General Approvals (excluding Subdivisions, Section 4.55)	4
Section 4.55 amendments to original consent	2
Operational Consent	-
Subdivision	-
Refused	-
Complying Development (Council Approved)	-
Complying Development (Private Certifier Approved)	-
Amended Complying Development (Private Certifier Approved)	-
TOTAL NUMBER OF DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS DETERMINED	6
Rejected	-
Withdrawn	-
Average assessment days for applications determined in April 2025 (Planning & Building Combined)	26
No. of Integrated development applications determined in April 2025	1
No. of Designated development applications determined in April 2025	-

ATTACHMENT(S)

Nil

Summary of Development Applications determined under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act for the period 1 April 2025 to 30 April 2025								
Application ID	Applicant	Owners	Location	Development	Date Received (In Portal)	Date Accepted (In Portal)	Determination Date	Estimated Cost
DA2025/0139	G J Hansen	J R Slade & G J Hansen	130 Whites Road, New Italy	Construction of a single storey dwelling, related landscaping and ancillary structures on a rural allotment.	22/02/2025	6/03/2025	3/04/2025	\$374,550.00
DA2025/0140	R J Hayes	J S & A E Delaney	4 Ash Street, Evans Head	Demolition of existing ancillary building, construction of a new secondary dwelling and associated works	26/02/2025	4/03/2025	3/04/2025	\$163,000.00
DA2025/0142	J D Larcombe	C F & J D Larcombe	33 Manifold Road, North Casino	Cut and fill earthworks and retaining walls exceeding 900mm in height for a proposed new dwelling. Application includes the construction of a shed with attached carport	26/02/2025	4/03/2025	3/04/2025	\$18,300.00
DA2025/0145	AJ Bulk Haulage Pty Ltd	AJ Bulk Haulage Pty Ltd	Ginibi Drive, Swan Bay	Construction of a new double storey dwelling with associated earthworks and retaining walls	3/03/2025	6/03/2025	4/04/2025	\$667,700.00
MA2025/0019	J L McCaughey	J L McCaughey Pty Ltd	7 Dyraaba Street, Casino 9 Dyraaba Street, Casino & 90-94 Colches Street, Casino	S4.55 (1A) Modification - Inclusion of additional loading dock and related increase in width of loading area, removal of 4 parking spaces, changes to elevations (colour scheme and signage detail)	27/02/2025	18/03/2025	16/04/2025	\$0.00
MA2025/0021	Ballina Pool Shop	D R & L T Hamill	46 Currajong Street, Evans Head	S4.55(1A) Modification - Change from an inground fibreglass swimming pool to an inground concrete swimming pool with associated equipment & fencing	10/03/2025	20/03/2025	24/04/2025	\$0.00

Summary of Council Certified Complying Development Applications determined under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act for the period 1 April 2025 to 30 April 2025								
Application ID	Applicant	Owners	Location	Development	Date Received (In Portal)	Date Accepted (In Portal)	Determination Date	Estimated Cost
Nil								

Summary of Flood Affected Development Applications determined under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act for the period 1 April 2025 to 30 April 2025								
Application ID	Applicant	Owners	Location	Development	Date Received (In Portal)	Date Accepted (In Portal)	Determination Date	Estimated Cost
Nil								

Summary of Privately Certified Applications determined under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act for the period 1 April 2025 to 30 April 2025								
Application ID	Applicant	Owners	Location	Development	Date Submitted to Council for Registration	Date Accepted	Determination Date	Estimated Cost
Nil								

Summary of Development Applications determined under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act with a Clause 4.6 Variation for the period 1 April 2025 to 30 April 2025								
Application ID	Applicant	Owners	Location	Development	Date Received (in Portal)	Date Accepted (In Portal)	Determination Date	Estimated Cost
Nil								

Summary of Development Applications Refused under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act for the period 1 April 2025 to 30 April 2025								
Application ID	Applicant	Owners	Location	Development	Date Received (in Portal)	Date Accepted (In Portal)	Refusal Date	Estimated Cost
Nil								

Summary of Development Applications Rejected under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act for the period 1 April 2025 to 30 April 2025								
Application ID	Applicant	Owners	Location	Development	Date Received (in Portal)	Date Accepted (In Portal)	Rejected Date	Estimated Cost
Nil								

Summary of Development Applications Withdrawn under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act for the period 1 April 2025 to 30 April 2025								
Application ID	Applicant	Owners	Location	Development	Date Received (in Portal)	Date Accepted (In Portal)	Date Withdrawn	Estimated Cost
Nil								

19.4 GRANT APPLICATION INFORMATION REPORT - APRIL 2025**Director:** Ryan Gaiter**Responsible Officer:** Rylee Vidler**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council receives and notes the Grant Application Information Report for the month of April 2025.

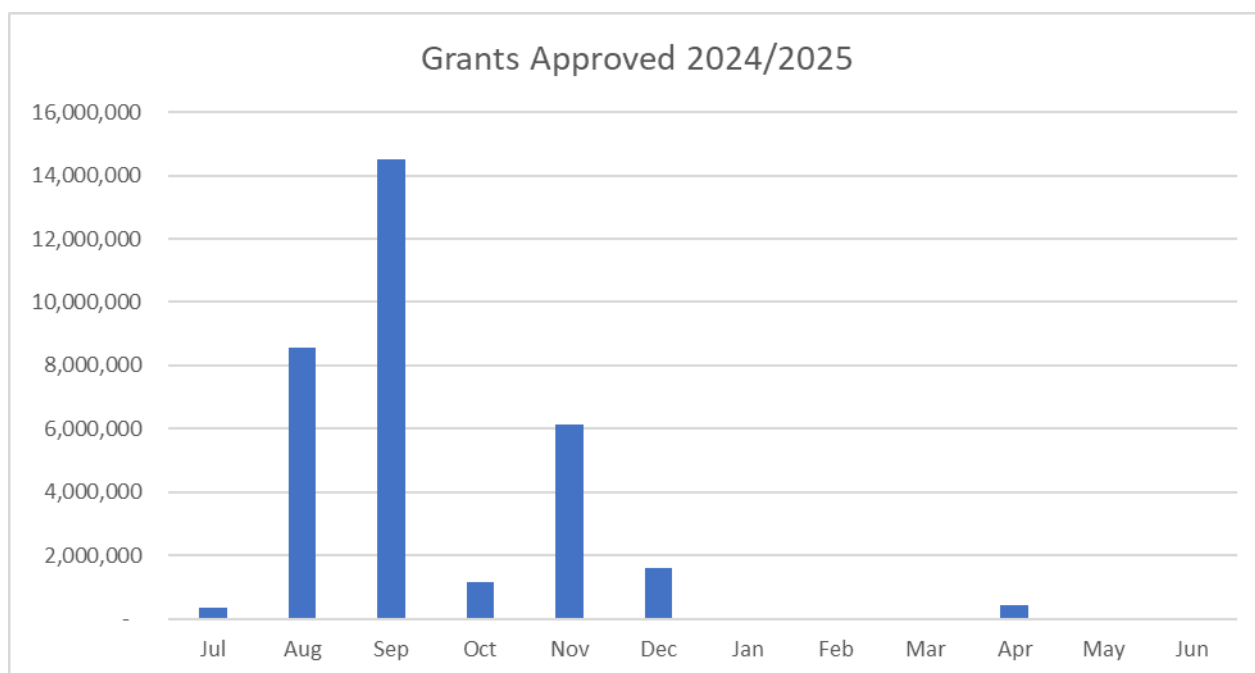
REPORT

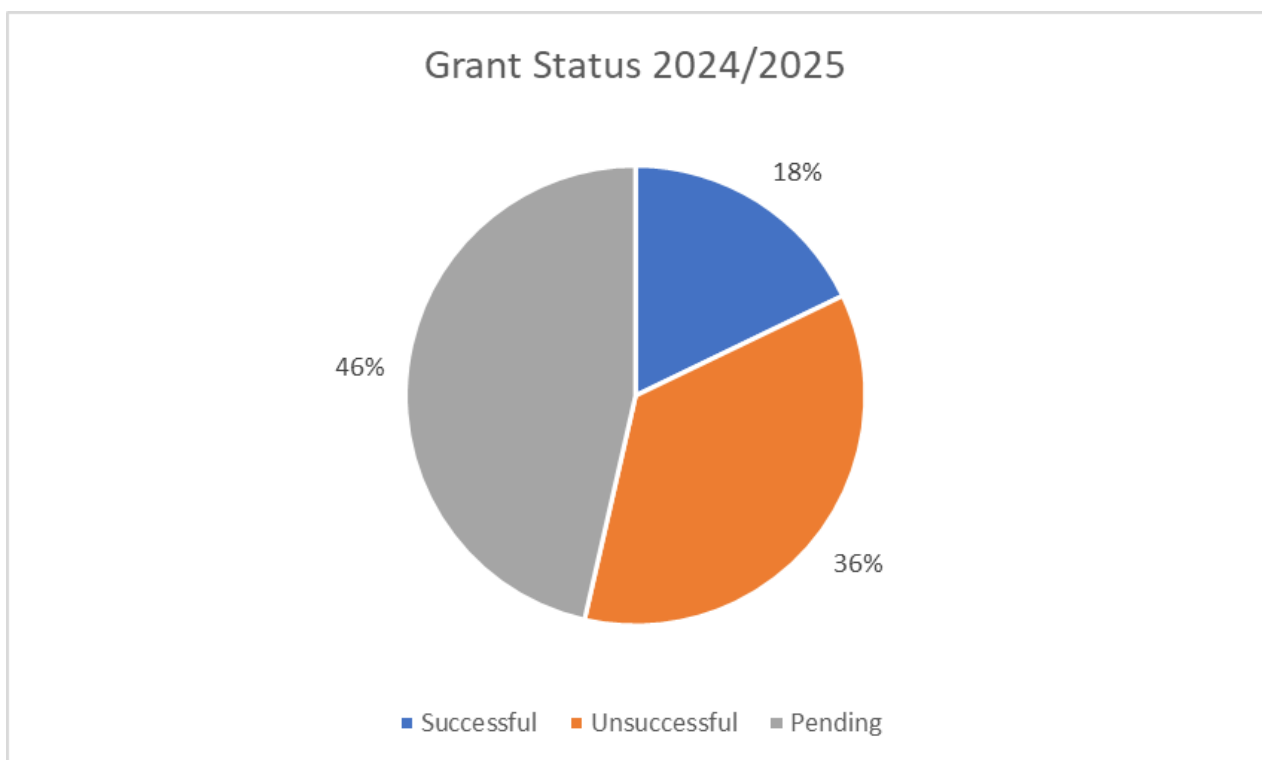
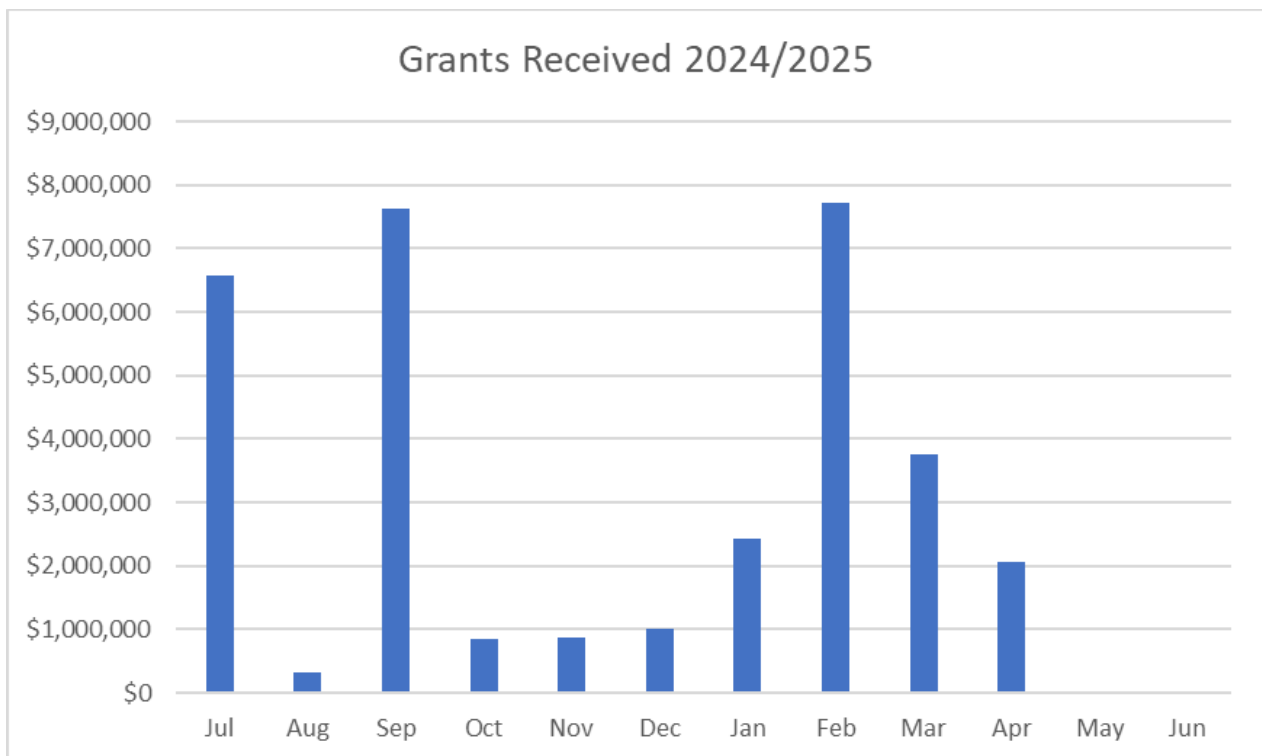
This report provides information on grant applications that have been approved, grants that have been received, grant applications that were unsuccessful and grant applications that were submitted for the month of April 2025.

During the reporting period, there were two new grants approved and one application submitted. Council was not notified of any unsuccessful applications during the period.

Council received funding for two grants totalling \$2,064,194.

A summary of grants approved and received, as well as the status of applications for the current financial year to 30 April is shown below:





Grant Applications Submitted

Project Name	Funding Body	Funding Name	Project Value	Grant Funding	Council Funding	Application Submitted
Regional Event Fund Program 2025/26 Flagship Stream - Casino Truck Show	Destination NSW	Regional Event Fund 2025/26	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ -	6 April 2025
Comment: If successful, this funding will be used for marketing expenses for the 2025 Casino Truck Show.						

Grants that have been approved

Project Name	Funding Body	Funding Name	Project Value	Grant Funding	Council Funding	Application Submitted	Date Approved
Casino Unit - Painting and Flooring Project	NSW State Emergency Services (Other)	Unit Building Grant	\$ 49,877	\$ 49,877	\$ -	N/A	11 April 2025
Comment: This funding will be used to complete internal painting and remove and replace the flooring in the Casino SES building							
Youth Employment Strategy (YES Program) Funding	Office of Local Government (State)	Local Government Apprentice, Trainee and Cadet Program - Round 1	\$ 511,281	\$ 360,739	\$ 150,542	8 November 2024	28 April 2025
Comment: This funding will be used to fund two new positions - Apprentice Heavy Vehicle Mechanic and Apprentice Mechanical Fitter.							

Grants that have been received

Project Name	Funding Body	Funding Name	Project Value	Grant Funding	Council Funding	Application Submitted	Date Received	Total Received
Betterment of Woodburn Memorial Hall Carpark	Regional NSW (State)	Community Assets Program	\$ 234,647	\$ 234,647	\$ -	27 March 2023	\$ 70,394 3 April 2025	\$ 234,647
Comment: Final payment								
Casino Industrial Precincts	Public Works Advisory (Joint Federal and State)	Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund	\$ 13,333,000	\$ 9,969,000	\$ 3,364,000	N/A	\$ 1,993,800 17 April 2025	\$ 5,820,234
Comment: Progress payment for works completed on Casino Industrial Precinct.								

ATTACHMENT(S)

Nil

19.5 CORRESPONDENCE - ENERGY FROM WASTE FRAMEWORK REVIEW; OPTIONS PAPER SUBMISSION

Director: Vaughan Macdonald

Responsible Officer: Julie Clark

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the Energy from Waste Framework Review – Options Paper submission from Richmond Valley Council.

REPORT

Council at its 18 March 2025 Ordinary meeting resolved the following:

That Council:

- 1. Notes the proposed changes to the NSW Government's Energy from Waste Framework, outlined in the energy from waste options paper;*
- 2. Strongly supports the proposed removal of the Richmond Valley Regional Jobs Precinct as a priority infrastructure area for energy from waste facilities;*
- 3. Confirms its commitment to alternate waste treatment solutions as part of the circular economy and supports proposed changes to the definition of thermal treatment, as well as the proposed exception relating to powering industrial or manufacturing processes on site;*
- 4. Updates its Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy to reflect any amendments to the NSW Framework that may be made following the consultation;*
- 5. Records its total opposition to an Energy from Waste project involving incineration ever being built in the Richmond Valley Local Government Area.*

Following a question at the April Council meeting about the references to EfW/AWTS on page 30 of the approved Richmond Valley Regional Job Precinct (RV RJP) Master Plan, it is advised that the wording is the same as it was in the Draft Master Plan that was endorsed by Council in June 2024. This reflects the current legislative requirements and will continue until such time as the Regulation is changed. Any potential changes are expected to occur once the EPA finalises the current consultation which has been extended to 16 May 2025.

Council's submission supporting the changes is attached for information. Once the EPA makes its decision on the change to the legal framework, any required adjustments will be made to the RV RJP Master Plan.

ATTACHMENT(S)

- 1. Energy from Waste Framework Review – Options Paper submission**



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

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

ABN 54 145 907 009

8 April 2025

NSW Environment Protection Authority
Via email: energyfromwaste@epa.nsw.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

Energy from Waste Framework Review – Options Paper submission

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the EPA's Energy from Waste – Options Paper.

I write to advise that on 18 March 2025, Richmond Valley Council resolved the following:

That Council:

1. *Notes the proposed changes to the NSW Government's Energy from Waste Framework, outlined in the energy from waste options paper;*
2. *Strongly supports the proposed removal of the Richmond Valley Regional Jobs Precinct as a priority infrastructure area for energy from waste facilities;*
3. *Confirms its commitment to alternate waste treatment solutions as part of the circular economy and supports proposed changes to the definition of thermal treatment, as well as the proposed exception relating to powering industrial or manufacturing processes on site;*
4. *Updates its Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy to reflect any amendments to the NSW Framework that may be made following the consultation;*
5. *Records its total opposition to an Energy from Waste project involving incineration ever being built in the Richmond Valley Local Government Area.*

Council has consulted with the community on multiple occasions since 2017 and reported publicly on the issues throughout this time. This included our Council leading the work that led to the North Coast Waste Investment Report [North-Coast-Region-Waste-Investment-Report.pdf](#) and the development of the Richmond Valley Regional Jobs Precinct Masterplan, which has now been gazetted. While there are a wide range of opinions on the subject of EfW facilities within the community, community sentiment in the Northern Rivers is sufficient that social licence for these facilities has not been achieved.

Given the background and decisions that have been made by Governments, and the outcomes of Council's own investigations into financial viability, it is time to move on from the pursuit of EfW facilities as an alternate waste treatment technology for the Richmond Valley community.

Should you wish to discuss this matter in further detail, please contact me.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vaughan Macdonald".

Vaughan Macdonald
General Manager

Love where we live and work



20 QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Nil

21 QUESTIONS FOR NEXT MEETING (IN WRITING)

22 MATTERS REFERRED TO CLOSED COUNCIL**RECOMMENDATION**

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

22.1 Tender VP444226 - Construction of Patricia Street and Irving Drive

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

22.2 Tender VP452353 - Supply and Delivery of Bitumen Surfacing, Stabilisation and Asphalt Services 25-26

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

22.3 Tender VP443460 – Casino Sewage Treatment Plant Detailed Design

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

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

23 RESOLUTIONS OF CLOSED COUNCIL