

Richmond  
Valley  
Council



# **AGENDA**

## **Ordinary Council Meeting**

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

**Date: Tuesday, 24 June 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 20 MAY 2025**

**General Manager:** Vaughan Macdonald

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council confirms the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 20 May 2025.

**REPORT**

Refer attached Minutes.

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

- 1. Unconfirmed Ordinary Meeting Minutes 20 May 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**

Nil

**11 MAYOR'S REPORT****11.1 MAYORAL ATTENDANCE REPORT 13 MAY - 16 JUNE 2025****RECOMMENDATION**

That Council receives and notes the Mayoral Attendance Report for the period 13 May – 16 June 2025.

**May**

- 12-16 May - Rous County Council Conference
- 17<sup>th</sup> - Primex Casino
- 19<sup>th</sup> - Northern Rivers Community Leaders Forum
- 20<sup>th</sup> - Richmond Valley Council Ordinary meeting
- 21<sup>st</sup> - Rous County Council Workshop
- 22<sup>nd</sup> - Casino Library Volunteers "Thank You" Morning Tea
- 22<sup>nd</sup> - Richie Williamson MP - Broadwater Sunrise Caravan Park, Broadwater Pedestrian Connection project, CCTV Coraki, Stan Payne Oval upgrade
- 23<sup>rd</sup> - NRJO Board meeting
- 23<sup>rd</sup> - NRJO Strategic Planning Workshop
- 24<sup>th</sup> - Beef Week Dinner
- 26<sup>th</sup> - Driving Brenda Beef Week Promotion
- 26<sup>th</sup> - Beef Week - Steaks and Mates dinner
- 28<sup>th</sup> - Cattle Spectacular Casino CBD
- 29<sup>th</sup> - 2025 Casino Beef Week Industry Dinner
- 30<sup>th</sup> - Breakfast with the Butchers
- 30<sup>th</sup> - The Casino Beef Week Cup Races
- 31<sup>st</sup> - Beef Week Saturday

**June**

- 1<sup>st</sup> - Show 'n Shine Car Show
- 2<sup>nd</sup> - Blind Citizens Australia – Casino Branch Meeting
- 3<sup>rd</sup> - Richmond Valley Council - Councillor Information Session
- 12<sup>th</sup> - Rail Trail Riders Group Visit
- 13<sup>th</sup> - Rous Meeting with Janelle Saffin
- 14<sup>th</sup> - Kyogle Happy Dance Event
- 16<sup>th</sup> - Northern Rivers Community Leaders Forum
- 16<sup>th</sup> - Evans Head K-12 School 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

Nil



**12 DELEGATES' REPORTS**

Nil

**13 MATTERS DETERMINED WITHOUT DEBATE**

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

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

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

That items identified be determined without debate.

## **14 GENERAL MANAGER**

### **14.1 DRAFT COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN AND 2025-2029 DELIVERY PROGRAM**

**Author:** Vaughan Macdonald

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Richmond Valley Council has completed the review of the Community Strategic Plan – Richmond Valley 2040, and prepared a draft Delivery Program 2025-2029, following community consultation, in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1993*. The draft documents were placed on public exhibition for a 28-day period for further community feedback and, at the time of writing this report, one submission had been received. The review process, undertaken over the past six months, 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. The draft documents are now presented for Council's final consideration.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

That Council:

1. Notes the review of the Community Strategic Plan, as required under the *Local Government Act 1993*, the community engagement program undertaken to inform the revised Plan and draft Delivery Program 2025-2029 and the subsequent public exhibition of the draft documents;
2. Acknowledges the many community members who contributed to the development of the plans;
3. Endorses the revised Richmond Valley 2040 Community Strategic Plan and adopts the 2025-2029 Delivery Program.

#### **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**

Priority projects and programs identified within the 2025-2029 Delivery Program will be funded through a combination of Council resources, borrowings and government grants. The draft 2025-2026 Operational Plan, which is the subject of a separate report to Council, outlines budget allocations for Year One of the Delivery Program.

#### **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 for its term of office. 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. The draft documents were presented to Council's May Ordinary Meeting and endorsed for public exhibition for a period of 28 days.

The review process has confirmed that the Community Strategic 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 plan was first developed in 2023, following delays due to the Northern Rivers floods. Two years into the implementation of the plan, the revised version includes a number of amendments and refinements to reflect emerging community priorities and streamline the planning and reporting process, however the key directions of the plan remain the same. 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 document 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, along with increased advocacy for improved health services. The Objective also focuses on ensuring essential infrastructure to support growth is delivered in the required timeframes. 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, in response to community feedback, with a stronger focus on reducing our environmental impacts. 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, 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.

### 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 was prepared. The draft program aligns with the nine objectives of the Community Strategic Plan and its long-term vision. It identifies 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 continued flood recovery, build resilience and provide essential infrastructure for future growth.



The Program's 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 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, as well as 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.

## CONSULTATION

The revised Community Strategic Plan and draft 2025-2029 Delivery Program were placed on public exhibition for 28 days, from 21 May 2025 to 19 June 2025 (allowing for the public holiday). The draft documents were featured in the On Exhibition section of Council's website and promoted through posts on Council's Facebook page, including a video clip explaining how to provide feedback. Council also wrote to some 500 members of local community groups, encouraging them to make a submission, notified key State Agency delivery partners, such as Transport for NSW, NSW Health and the NSW Reconstruction Authority, and personally invited those who participated in the Casino and Evans Head Community Forums during the consultation program to review the draft plans and make a submission. At the time of writing this report (19 June) one community submission had been received on the IP&R documents. A copy of this submission has been circulated to Councillors for information. The submission, from two Riley's Hill residents, highlighted three issues:

- The importance of improving the health of the Richmond River and investing in restoration projects
- The need to invest more in Mid-Richmond communities to support continued flood recovery
- Concerns with a perceived lack of sporting facilities in the Mid-Richmond, including the lack of an indoor sports stadium.

Both the draft Community Strategic Plan and the Delivery Program highlight the environmental and economic importance of the Richmond River to the community. Objective 6 of the CSP focusses on preserving native bushland, biodiversity and waterways and Principal Activity 6C of the Delivery Program specifically commits to improving catchment health and water quality. The plans recognise that improving catchment health is a shared responsibility between many delivery partners, including federal and state governments, Council, local farmers, businesses and residents. While Council has limited funding to direct to river improvement programs, it is a strong

advocate for government investment and has been successful in securing funding for habitat restoration and riverbank enhancement. The plans commit to continuing this focus

The CSP and Delivery Program also both acknowledge the importance of supporting continued flood recovery for the Mid-Richmond communities, including implementation of the adaptation strategies and civic improvements identified in the Mid-Richmond Place Plans. The Delivery Program identifies \$51m in direct investment to support these communities, including completing a \$13m expansion of the Evans Head STP, staged delivery of the \$20 Three Villages Cycleway, which will be a major economic boost for the community, and the \$18m replacement of the twin Tatham Bridges, which will help to build flood resilience for the the Mid-Richmond Villages. Council has also invested to bring other key projects - such as the \$9.5m Richmond Terrace restoration for Coraki and the \$4m Woodburn CBD revitalisation – to the shovel-ready stage and these works are identified in the Delivery Program as top priorities for funding.

The CSP and the Delivery Program also identify the need to continue to invest in community sporting facilities. The past two years have seen more than \$5.9m secured for upgrades to Stan Payne and Woodburn Ovals and new clubhouses for Woodburn Pony and Tennis Clubs, as well as three Casino sporting clubs. The Operational Plan identifies planned upgrade works for Evans Head Aquatic Centre and Coraki Pool and the CSP reiterate's Council's ongoing commitment to advocate strongly for more government funding for local sports facilities and to work with the community to assess future sporting needs.

Having regard to these actions, it is considered that the issues raised in the submission have been addressed within the IP&R documents and no further amendment is proposed.

## **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 draft documents were endorsed for public exhibition at Council's May Ordinary Meeting and exhibited for a period of 28 days, with no submissions received. The final documents are now presented for Council's 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

**General Manager :** Vaughan Macdonald

**Responsible Officer:** Hayley Martin

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At its Ordinary Meeting on 20 May 2025, Council resolved to place the Draft Operational Plan (including Financial Estimates), Draft Revenue Policy and Draft Long-Term Financial Plan on public exhibition.

This report provides information regarding public submissions received by Council during the exhibition period and details minor amendments that have been made to the Draft Financial Estimates.

### RECOMMENDATION

That:

1. Council adopts the Draft Operational Plan 2025/2026 (including Financial Estimates 2025/2029), Revenue Policy 2025/2026 and Long-Term Financial Plan 2025/2035, the subject of this report;
2. In respect to the general land rates contained in the 2025/2026 Draft Revenue Policy, Council in accordance with Sections 535 and 537 of the *Local Government Act 1993* makes the following General Rates for the 2025/2026 financial year:

Rating Category	Base Amount	% Yield from Base Amount	Rate in Dollar (Ad Valorem)
Residential	\$310.00	22.91%	\$0.00380
Rural Residential (sub-category)	\$310.00	26.16%	\$0.00239
Business	\$360.00	8.91%	\$0.01140
Farmland	\$360.00	16.74%	\$0.00265

3. In relation to interest on overdue rates and charges, Council makes and imposes the maximum charge for interest, as determined by the Minister for Local Government and in accordance with Section 566 (3) of the *Local Government Act 1993*, as follows:
  - (i) for the 2025/2026 financial year, 10.5% per annum;
4. In respect of annual charges and user charges for Waste Management, Water, Sewerage and Stormwater Management Service Charges, in accordance with Section 535 of the *Local Government Act 1993*, Council makes these charges as detailed in the 2025/2026 Draft Revenue Policy to apply to the 2025/2026 financial year.

### 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**

The Draft Operational Plan (including Financial Estimates), Draft Revenue Policy and Draft Long-Term Financial Plan were placed on public exhibition following the Ordinary Meeting of Council on 20 May 2025. The exhibition period closed 4:30pm Thursday 19 June 2025.

Council's Long-Term Financial Plan 2025/2035 has been reviewed as part of the development of the Operational Plan 2025/2026 (including Financial Estimates 2025/2029).

During the public exhibition period, further information has been received, requiring changes to be made to the 2025/2026 budget. These changes are detailed below:

***Operating Income – increase of \$4,006,397***

- Updated supplementary land values and the number of assessments and services has resulted in a net increase in rates and annual charges of \$67,697.
- Adjustments as approved in the March Quarterly Budget Review with the most notable changes being the Casino Industries Activation project of \$3.68mil along with some minor operational grant funded projects under the Northern Rivers Watershed program.

***Operating Expenditure – increase of \$6,344,178***

- Revised budgets for Councillor and Mayoral fees, resulting in an increase in operating expenditure of \$1,188 based on fees determined by the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal.
- Adjustments as approved in the March Quarterly Budget Review with the most notable changes being the Casino Industries Activation project of \$6,107,539, the Casino CBD Masterplan for \$120,000 along with some minor operational grant funded projects under the Northern Rivers Watershed program.

***Capital Grants and Contributions – increase of \$4,468,760***

- Increase in capital grants as approved in the March Quarterly Budget review, with the most notable changes being:
  - Casino Suspension Footbridge \$2.45mil
  - Footpath Connection QE Park to Suspension Bridge \$160,000
  - Casino Rugby League Clubhouse \$964,695
  - Woodburn Pony and Tennis Clubhouse \$504,000
  - Colley Park Upgrades \$142,695

***Capital Expenditure – increase of \$11,960,442***

The main changes are as approved in the March Quarterly Budget review, with the most notable changes being:

- NRLX Effluent Management System \$5.55mil
- Casino Rugby League Clubhouse \$1.5mil
- Casino Suspension Footbridge \$2.99mil
- McDonalds Bridge Road \$384,057
- Halsteads Drive Stage 3 \$954,140

The changes resulted in a slight increase to the unrestricted cash surplus of \$832, to \$301,339. The revised budget projections are summarised below:

Budget Estimates	2025/2026	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029
Total Operating Revenue	84,036	82,303	85,035	88,035
Total Operating Expenditure	94,842	89,097	91,689	91,855
<b>Operating Result before Capital Grants and Contributions</b>	<b>(10,807)</b>	<b>(6,794)</b>	<b>(6,654)</b>	<b>(3,820)</b>
Add: Capital Grants and Contributions	45,697	38,715	19,888	939
<b>Operating Result including Capital Grants and Contributions</b>	<b>34,890</b>	<b>31,921</b>	<b>13,234</b>	<b>(2,881)</b>
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	79,543	59,762	58,053	15,792
Less: Loan Repayments	3,385	2,876	2,081	2,085
<b>Estimated Funding Result – Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>(15,927)</b>	<b>(765)</b>	<b>3,265</b>	<b>7,969</b>
Restricted Funds – Increase/(Decrease)	(16,228)	(1,112)	2,940	7,659
<b>Unrestricted Funds – Increase/(Decrease)</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>347</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>310</b>

### ***Draft Revenue Policy***

The Statement of Rates and Charges has been updated with the latest supplementary land values along with movements in the number of assessments and services. Annual charges for waste, water, sewerage and stormwater increased by \$67,697.

### **CONSULTATION**

Council advertised the Draft Operational Plan (including Financial Estimates 2025/2029), Draft Revenue Policy 2025/2026 and Draft Long-Term Financial Plan 2025/2035 from 21 May 2025, with public submissions closing at 4:30pm Thursday 19 June 2025.

Advertising included coverage on Council's Facebook page, website and community radio interviews. Copies of the draft documents were also made available at Council's administration offices in Casino and Evans Head.

At the time of writing this report, no submissions had been received.

### **Rates and charges**

Council resolved at its 20 May Ordinary Meeting, that the draft revenue policy on public exhibition included the following increases 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 Access Charges – to increase by 7%
- Water Consumption Charges – to increase by 7%
- Sewerage Annual Charges – to increase by 7%

### **CONCLUSION**

Following the public exhibition period 21 May to 19 June 2025, some amendments have been made to the Operational Plan Financial Estimates 2025/2029 and Revenue Policy 2025/2026, as detailed in the report.

It is recommended that Council adopts the draft plans as presented with this report.

### **ATTACHMENT(S)**

Nil.

**14.3 DRAFT RICHMOND VALLEY COUNCIL WORKFORCE STRATEGY****General Manager:** Vaughan Macdonald**Responsible Officer:** Luke Fleming**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Richmond Valley Council's draft Workforce Strategy 2025–2029 has been developed under the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) requirements, to support the Community Strategic Plan and the 2025–2029 Delivery Program. The Strategy provides a comprehensive framework to attract, retain, and develop a capable, inclusive, and future-ready workforce that reflects the values and aspirations of the Richmond Valley community.

Over the past five years, Richmond Valley Council has faced significant challenges from natural disasters and a changing economic climate yet has continued to deliver strong outcomes through a locally-based and community-focussed workforce. The next four years will see increasing demands on resources as Council undertakes one of its most ambitious capital works programs to support new growth and continued flood recovery. The draft strategy sets a pathway to address these challenges and increase local employment opportunities.

The draft Workforce Strategy has been prepared in consultation with staff and is structured around four key focus areas and eleven strategic objectives, each supported by measurable actions. The document is now presented for Council's consideration.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council adopts the draft Richmond Valley Council Workforce Strategy 2025-2029 and publishes a copy of the strategy on its website.

**DELIVERY PROGRAM LINKS**

Objective 12: Provide great service

12C Provide great corporate and operational support

12C3 Provide efficient operational support services

**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

Actions in the draft Strategy will be funded through existing budget allocations over the next four years.

**REPORT**

The Workforce Strategy sets key directions for workforce development over the next four years and ensures that Council has the skills and resources required to deliver the 2025–2029 Delivery Program. The Delivery Program outlines one of Council's most ambitious capital works programs, including completion of major projects such as the disaster recovery road repair program, major upgrades to water and sewage treatment facilities, and improvements to drainage systems. This will require significant resourcing, while still meeting Council's commitment to deliver essential services such as waste management, compliance and community facility maintenance, to a high standard.

To meet these expectations Council will need a local workforce that is skilled, resilient, and future-ready. The Workforce Strategy 2025–2029 is designed to ensure that Council has the right people, in the right roles, with the right support to succeed.

Council relies heavily on a skilled and capable workforce to deliver a wide range of services to the community. With 293 employees, 77% of whom live within the Richmond Valley, Council staff are not only service providers but also neighbours, volunteers, and leaders within the local community, who bring local knowledge, pride, and purpose to their work. The draft Workforce Strategy aims to increase the level of local employment opportunities for the community, including continuation of Council's successful Youth Employment Scheme. So far, this scheme has provided opportunities for 120 local young people through traineeships and apprenticeships.

The draft Strategy is structured around four key focus areas:

### **Focus Area 1: A Place to Belong and Thrive**

Ensuring that every employee feels that they belong at Council and has the opportunity to thrive. This includes how Council designs roles, recruits talent, and welcomes new staff. Council will continue to refine its recruitment processes over the next four years to be more inclusive and efficient, and further enhance its induction and mentoring programs to support early success.

This focus area also aims to embed equity and inclusion across the organisation through cultural awareness, inclusive language, and accessibility. Council's Employee Value Proposition (EVP) will be strengthened to reflect key attributes, such as meaningful work, flexibility, fairness, and a strong sense of community.

### **Focus Area 2: Healthier and Safer Together**

This area focusses on maintaining a physically and psychologically safe workplace through proactive risk management, structured safety systems, and health monitoring programs. Council recognises that wellbeing is essential to performance and the strategy includes initiatives to address psychosocial risks, promote mental health, and support staff through life's challenges.

### **Focus Area 3: Recognising, Listening and Learning**

This area focusses on building a culture where performance is recognised, feedback is valued, and learning is continuous. It includes reviewing Council's performance management framework to better align individual goals with strategic direction and developing structured recognition programs to celebrate achievements and positive behaviours.

It also focusses on strengthening internal communication, ensuring that staff voices are heard and that feedback informs decision-making. Through regular surveys, staff events, and committee engagement, Council will aim to foster a workplace where people feel connected and empowered.

### **Focus Area 4: Developing a Capable and Adaptable Workforce**

This area focusses on investing in training, career pathways, and leadership development. Council's "Grow Our Own" approach will continue to support youth employment, traineeships, and internal promotions. Building capability from within.

It also includes preparing for change through service reviews, succession planning, and digital transformation. By equipping its workforce with the skills and confidence to adapt, Council aims to ensure that it remains responsive, innovative, and resilient.

Each objective in the Strategy is supported by clear actions and performance measures which will guide progress across the focus areas. These measures are designed to be practical, meaningful, and adaptable, allowing Council to monitor outcomes over time and respond to emerging needs.

**CONSULTATION**

Internal consultation was undertaken with Council staff, leadership, and relevant committees to prepare the draft Strategy. The document also reflects feedback from the broader community engagement process conducted during the CSP review and Delivery Program development.

**CONCLUSION**

Richmond Valley Council's draft Workforce Strategy 2025–2029 has been developed under the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) requirements, to support the Community Strategic Plan and the 2025–2029 Delivery Program. The strategy will support continued development of a capable, inclusive, and future-ready workforce and ensure there are sufficient resources to deliver Council's ambitious capital works program over the next four years. The strategy has been prepared in consultation with key stakeholders and is now presented for Council's consideration. Following adoption, the strategy will be published on Council's website, in accordance with legislative requirements and implemented under the leadership of the General Manager who is responsible for the operations of the organisation in line with Council's strategic direction.

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

**Nil**

## 15 COMMUNITY SERVICE DELIVERY

### 15.1 PLANNING PROPOSAL 70 MANIFOLD ROAD NORTH CASINO - POST EXHIBITION

**General Manager:** Vaughan Macdonald

**Responsible Officer:** Tony McAteer

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Planning Proposal PP2025/0001 (NSW Planning Portal Case PP-2024-2355) proposes to rezone 70 Manifold Road North Casino to enable it to be developed as a rural residential estate potentially containing 9 lots. A Gateway Determination was issued by the Department of Planning, Housing & Infrastructure on 24 March 2025 conditional upon agency consultation, public exhibition for a minimum 20 working days, and completion within nine months of the determination.

Agency engagement has been completed with no objections. The Planning Proposal was also publicly exhibited from 1 May 2025 to 30 May 2025 with one submission by way of objection received.

This report contains a summary of the consultation process undertaken and submissions received, and seeks Council's continued support to progress this Planning Proposal to completion.

#### RECOMMENDATION

That

1. Council receives and notes the post exhibition report on Planning Proposal PP2025/0001 (NSW Planning Portal Case PP-2024-2355);
2. Council proceeds, pursuant to authorisations under Section 3.36(2) of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act*, to make a local environmental plan to give effect to Planning Proposal PP2025/0001; and
3. Local Plan-making authorisation from the Planning Secretary (dated 24 March 2025) be delegated to the General Manager to make an amendment to *Richmond Valley Local Environmental Plan 2012* which is consistent with item 2 of this resolution.

#### DELIVERY PROGRAM LINKS

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

2D Provide more homes for our growing community

2D1 Activate residential development on flood-safe land

#### BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Nil. All infrastructure upgrades resulting from this development will be funded by the developer.

#### REPORT

Planning Proposal application (PP2025/0001) (NSW Planning Portal Case No PP-2024-2355) seeks to rezone Lot 21 DP601461, 70 Manifold Road North Casino (see Figure 1) so it can be developed as a Large Lot Residential (rural residential) estate with a concept subdivision layout proposing 9 lots.

The Planning Proposal effectively seeks to amend the *Richmond Valley Local Environmental Plan 2012* by amending the:

- Land Zone Map—by changing the zoning from Zone RU1 Primary Production to Zone R5 Large Lot Residential,
- Lot Size Map—by changing the minimum lot size (MLS) from 40ha to 7,500m<sup>2</sup>, and
- Dwelling Opportunity Map—by removing the mapped dwelling opportunity over this land (noting this amendment is to remove land zoned RU1 from the map. However, because the land will be zoned R5 it will retain a dwelling opportunity from provisions outside clause 4.2B and the map).

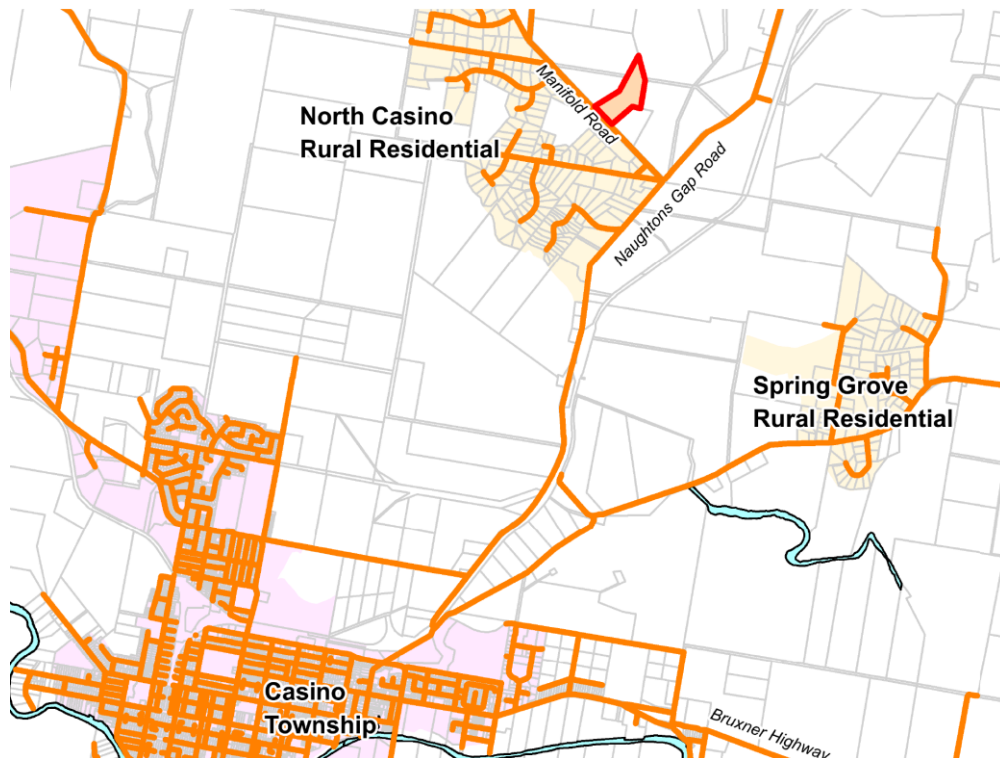


Figure 1 – Locality Plan identifying the subject land (outlined by heavy red line) at 70 Manifold Road, North Casino

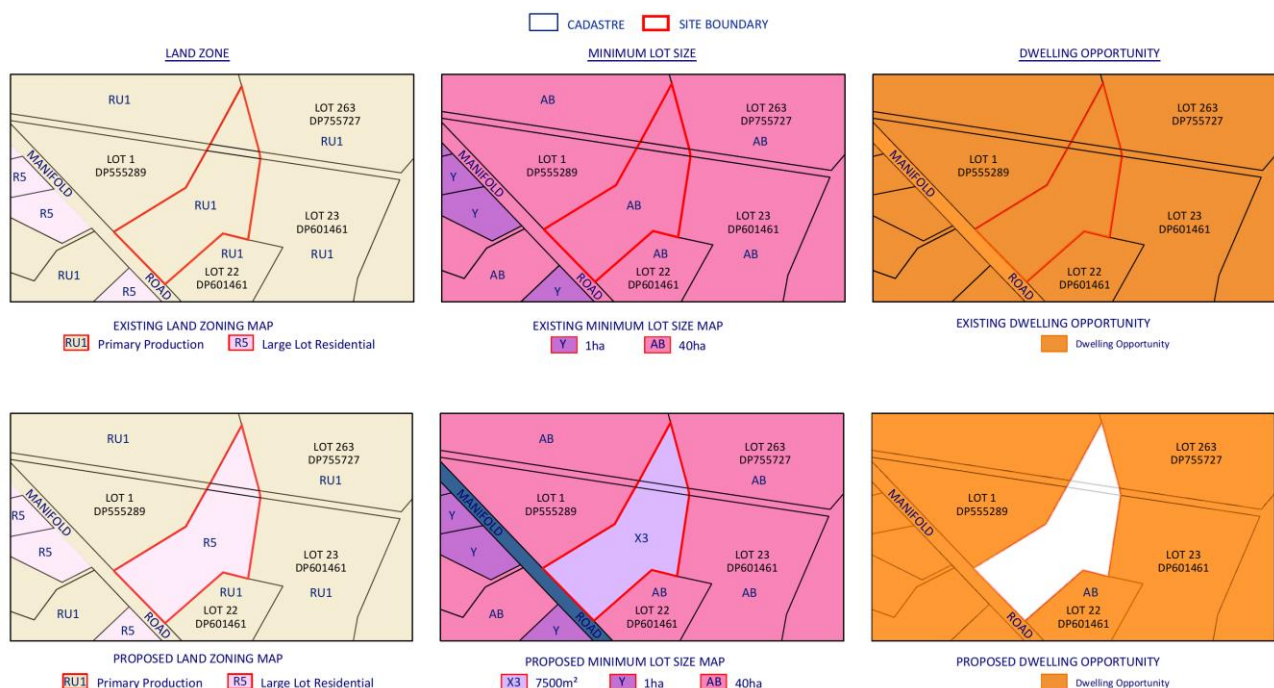


Figure 2 – Existing and proposed Land Zone, Lot Size, and Dwelling Opportunity map amendments

Figure 2 shows the existing and proposed Land Zone, Minimum Lot Size, and Dwelling Opportunity Map configurations.

A report was presented to the 18 February 2025 Ordinary Meeting of Council (Minute No. 180225/9) where it was resolved to:

1. support the planning proposal
2. seek a Gateway determination from the Department of Planning, Housing & Infrastructure, and
3. seek Local Plan-making authority and delegate this function to the General Manager.

### **Gateway Determination**

The Department of Planning, Housing and Industry (DPHI) granted a conditional Gateway Determination on 24 March 2025. The Determination included delegated (authorised) Local Plan-making functions to Council (and the General Manager) pursuant to Section 3.36(2) of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

Conditions on the Gateway Determination require:

1. Updating the Planning Proposal to include a timeline for the completion of the LEP amendment
2. Agency consultation with:
  - Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water - Conservation Programs, Heritage and Regulation
  - Department of Primary Industries-Agriculture
  - NSW Rural Fire Service
  - Department of Primary Industries - NSW Resources, and
  - Casino Boolangle Local Aboriginal Land Council, and
3. Public exhibition of the Planning Proposal for a minimum of 20 working days.
4. Completion within nine months of the Gateway being issued (thus being prior to 24 December 2025).

The updated timeline was inserted into the Planning Proposal prior to agency and community consultations.

## **CONSULTATION**

### **Agency Consultation**

**NSW Resources** – (5 May 2025) – to resolve any inconsistencies with Section 9.1 Direction 8.1 Mining, Petroleum Production and Extractive Industries

NSW Resources notes the proposal area is the subject of Exploration Licence (EL) 9545 held by Geogen Pty Ltd for Group 8 minerals. NSW Resources recommends consultation with the licence holder to determine its interest in the area and any planned exploration activities.

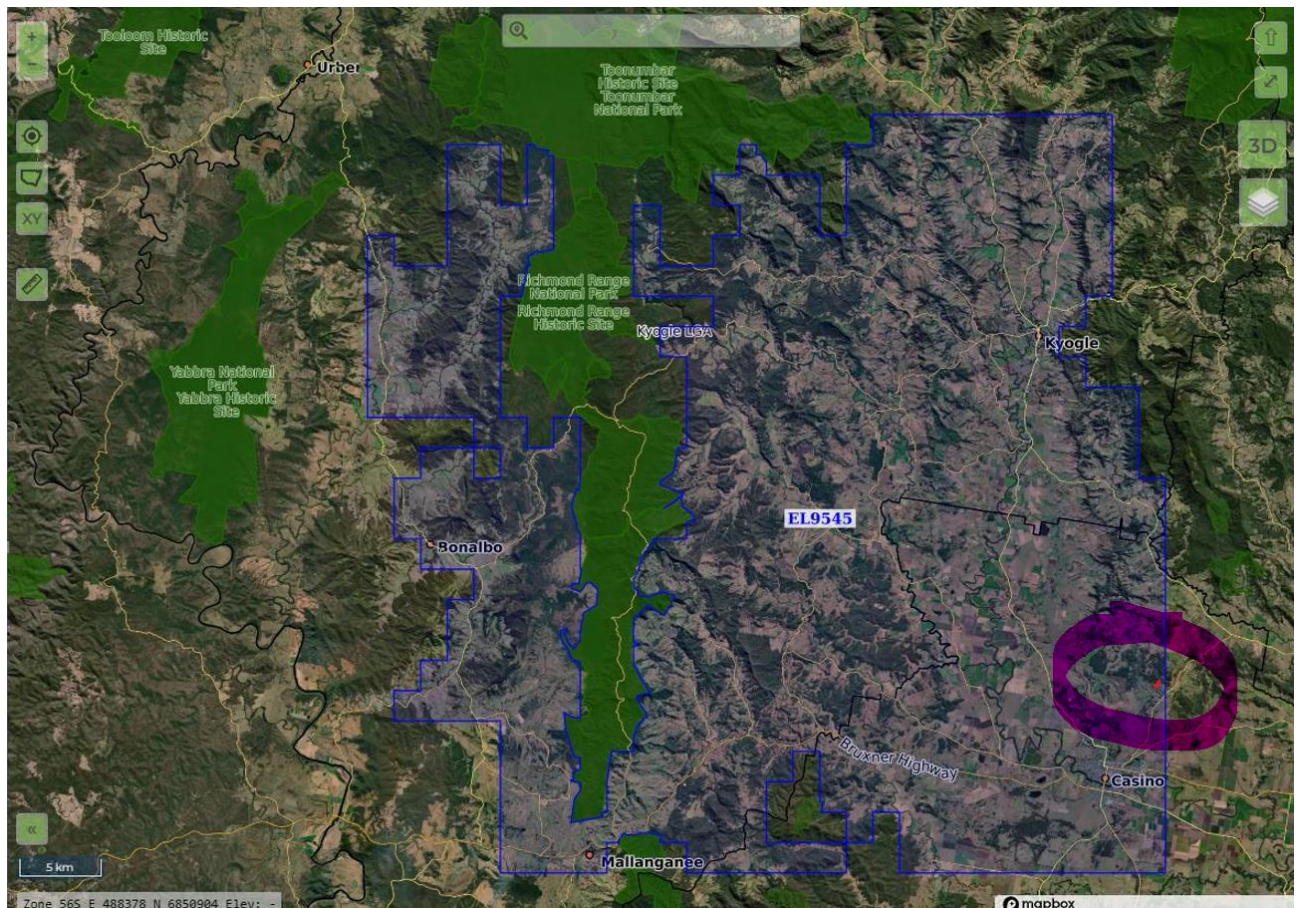
#### *Comments-*

*An online search identified the Richmond Valley Geothermal Project (EL9545) owned by Australian company Geogen Pty Ltd. The EL is to explore low emission, renewable, dispatchable geothermal energy.*

*Correspondence was sent to Geogen Pty Ltd on 5 May 2025 but no response has been received.*

*Figure 3 shows the extent of EL9545.*





*Figure 3 – Exploration Licence 9545 – Red dot (circled with purple highlighter) identifies the location of the Planning Proposal towards the eastern extent of the EL area*

**NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS)** – (9 May 2025) – to resolve any inconsistencies with Section 9.1 Direction 4.3 Planning for Bushfire Protection

The bushfire report documents a suitable asset protection zone, access and water services that will provide suitable mitigation from any built form to the identified bushfire threat.

The rezoning proposal is supported. Future development proposal(s) shall demonstrate compliance with Planning for Bush Fire Protection guidelines. For large lot residential subdivisions, asset protection zones shall link to the public road servicing each lot.

**Department of Primary Industries – Agriculture (DPI-Ag)** – (9 May 2025) – to resolve any inconsistencies with Section 9.1 Directions 9.1 Rural Zones; 9.2 Rural Lands; and 9.4 Farmland of State and Regional Significance on the NSW Far North Coast

The Department has reviewed the Planning Proposal and associated documentation and does not provide an objection to the proposal.

### **Strategic Planning**

We note the subject land is located in the North Casino Rural Residential Lands precinct identified for future rural residential investigation in the Richmond Valley Growth Management Strategy, endorsed by the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (August 2023).

We also note that the land has not been identified as important farmland of regional or state significance in the North Coast Regional Plan 2041.

### **Land Use Conflict Risk**

The Land Use Conflict Risk Assessment is considered reasonable. It is noted that a Planning Proposal is currently being prepared for Lot 1 DP555289. Noting the separation distance from the nearest proposed dwelling to the current grazing activities undertaken on this adjacent lot is 20m and below the recommended separation distance of 50m, Council may wish to consider whether an interim control measure is required during any transition period (relevant to the staging of the two proposals).

If this Planning Proposal for Lot 21 DP601461 is approved and the adjacent land remains as RU1 Primary Production land, Council should reassess the land use conflict risk measures applicable to the interface between the future R5 land and Lot 1 DP555289.

We also note Direction 9 of the Richmond Valley Growth Management Strategy seeks to: Investigate DCP (including site-specific) amendments to ensure controls are in place to manage the nature of development in rural residential zones. DPIRD Agriculture and Biosecurity would welcome the opportunity to support the development of appropriate controls to manage the nature of development in rural residential zones to minimise impacts from this type of development on surrounding agricultural lands.

**Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water - Conservation Programs, Heritage and Regulation Group (CPHR)** – (14 May 2025) – to resolve any inconsistencies with Section 9.1 Directions 3.1 Conservation Zones; and 4.1 Flooding

CPHR has no issues to raise regarding biodiversity with respect to the planning proposal. However for any future development application, we expect Richmond Valley Council will ensure the Biodiversity Offset Scheme thresholds are correctly applied. Also, given the proposed minimum lot size, CPHR anticipates the existing biodiversity values identified across the planning area, including hollow bearing trees and established native vegetation, will be avoided and protected using an appropriate in-perpetuity mechanism as part of the future subdivision of the land.

In relation to impacts of flooding, the planning proposal states the Richmond Valley Flood Study does not identify the planning area as being subject to riverine flooding, but the planning proposal has not provided the information to confirm this.

The 2023 Richmond Valley Flood Study has produced a series of flood maps to describe flood risk in the Richmond Valley local government area. Information that demonstrates the location of the planning area in relation to the 0.2% AEP flood map and the Probable Maximum Flood map will indicate whether the planning area is affected by riverine flooding.

CPHR recommends:

1. The 0.2% AEP and Probable Maximum Flood maps be included in and considered by the planning proposal package to enable assessment and confirmation the planning area is not subjected to riverine flooding and the planning proposal updated accordingly.
2. If the flood mapping indicates the planning area is impacted by riverine flooding then the mapping and the updated planning proposal be provided to CPHR for further review and comment.

*Comments-*

*Confirmation was made with DCCEEW to demonstrate the land is outside of PMF flooding as identified within the Richmond Valley Flood Study 2023 (see Figure 4). CPHR acknowledged (on 22 May 2025) resolution of the flooding issues raised.*

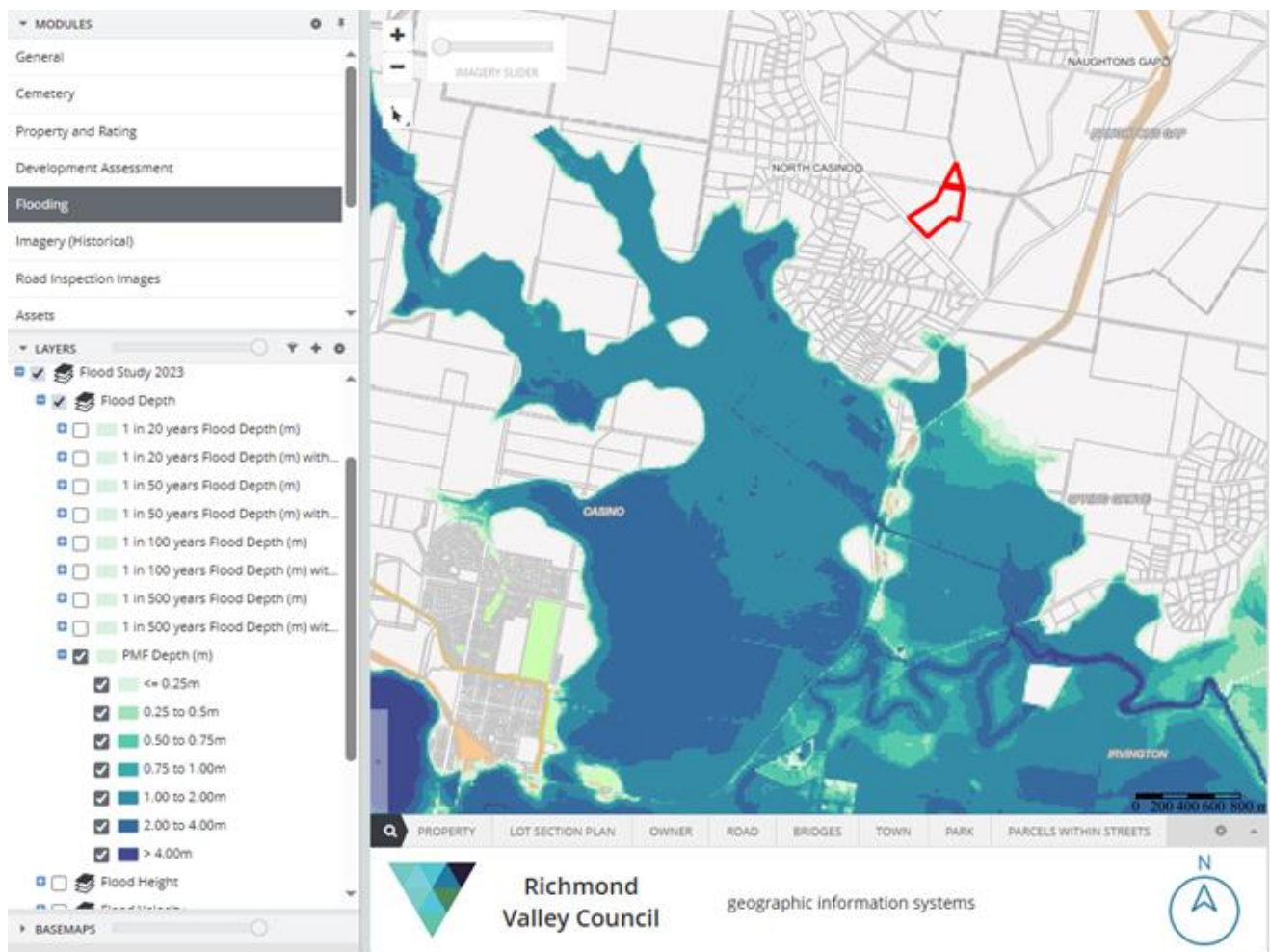


Figure 4 – Flood depth map showing the subject land to be outside the PMF (Source RVC Intramaps)

#### Casino Boolangle LALC – to resolve any inconsistencies with Section 9.1 Direction 3.2 Heritage Conservation

No response received.

##### Comments.

*It is noted from the ACH Assessment Report, prepared by Tim Hill @ Heritage Management & Planning, that a site inspection was undertaken on 27 October 2023 in to company of Casino Boolangle LALC Senior Aboriginal Sites Officer Mr Bruce Caldwell.*

*Having considered a desktop assessment and the outcomes of the site inspection, which demonstrated the study area has been subject to significant soil disturbance, it is not considered likely that the project will impact on Aboriginal archaeological sites.*

#### Community Consultation

The Planning Proposal was publicly exhibited from 01 May 2025 to 30 May 2025 as per the Richmond Valley Council Community Participation Plan 2020 and the requirements of the Gateway Determination. This involved-

- a written notice posted to adjoining property owners within 500m of the proposal (a total of 49 property owners were notified).



- a notice was published on the Richmond Valley Council “On Exhibition” webpage with links to the NSW Planning Portal where the Planning Proposal was officially notified. This included downloadable copies of the Gateway Determination, the Planning Proposal and support documents.
- a public notice and printed copy of the Planning Proposal, Gateway, and support documents were displayed at each of Council’s Customer Experience Centres at Casino and Evans Head.
- A post was made on Council’s Facebook page with links to the webpage.
- a notices was also published in Council’s eNewsletter, May edition.

One submission objecting to the Planning Proposal was received from a landowner near the proposal.

### **Farmland**

In the first instance the submission objects to the Planning Proposal on the basis that maintaining current farmland is important from an agricultural perspective and to preserve the existing rural community in North Casino.

#### *Comments-*

*The agricultural value of the subject property is marginal at best. The DPI-Ag submission (see above) acknowledges the land is not important farmland of regional or state significance.*

### **Noise**

The submission goes further to suggest that if approved, careful consideration is needed for noise impacts. To support this request, the submitter has indicated that noise in this valley reverberates and echoes in an unusual way which carries some distance from the source. Heavy machinery required during construction could have significant impact on surrounding residents and the school. A noise impact assessment should be conducted that assesses the geology to determine why/how the sound echoes as it does.

#### *Comments-*

*The concern is specific to noise emissions from heavy machinery used during construction of the estate and erection of future dwellings. Council generally restricts construction to be between 7am to 6pm weekdays, 8am to 1pm Saturdays, and not at all on Sundays and public holidays.*

*These restrictions would be conditioned on all future development consents.*

### **Stormwater Management**

If approved, the submission also requests careful consideration for water run-off as Manifold Road is at risk of being isolated during heavy rain events due to flooding at the Manifold & Savilles Road intersection and from overtopping of the roadside table drains just outside the Casino Christian School. During heavy rain, run-off from the surrounding hills is very significant. Any development of this land will increase stormwater run-off, by reducing vegetation & soil infiltration, and increased impervious surfaces. This development should include provisions to ensure that flash flooding of Manifold Road is not increased.

#### *Comments-*

*Stormwater management has been identified as an issue to be dealt with at the development application stage for this subdivision. Roadside table drains along the frontage of this development are inadequate to manage current stormwater flows, which can only increase as a result of this development.*

*There will need to be a stormwater management study completed prior to granting development consent to subdivide. This study may identify the need to improve roadside drainage, upgrade culverts beneath Manifold Road, and may propose stormwater detention*

*onsite. Any such works will be required to be completed by the developer at their expense with the aim to improve stormwater management with regard to infrastructure and residents downstream of the site.*

## CONCLUSION

Planning Proposal PP2025/0001 (NSW Planning Portal Case PP-2024-2355) proposes to rezone 70 Manifold Road North Casino, to Zone R5 Large Lot Residential with a minimum lot size of 7,500m<sup>2</sup>.

The proposal was reported to Council on 18 February 2025 where in principle support was given (Resolution No. 180225/9) to progress the Planning Proposal to Gateway.

A conditional Gateway Determination was issued by the DPHI on 24 March 2025.

The Planning Proposal was publicly exhibited from 1 May 2025 to 30 May 2025, and referred to Government agencies for comment.

- One community submission objecting to the proposal was received.
- Four (4) agency submissions were received. The RFS, NSW Resources, DPI-Ag, and DCCEEW raised no objections.

The Secretary's Local Plan-making functions (under s.3.36(2)) were delegated to Council, however, prior to assuming these functions Council must confirm the Planning Secretary's formal agreement to inconsistencies with Section 9.1 Ministerial Directions:

- 4.3 Planning for Bushfire Protection; &
- 8.1 Mining, Petroleum Production and Extractive Industries.

These inconsistencies have been addressed via agency consultation and there should be no reason for the Secretary's approval to be withheld.

Should Council support the recommendation, the next steps would be:

- to seek approval from the Planning Secretary for inconsistencies with Section 9.1 Directions 4.3 & 8.1,
- to arrange for DPHI to draft a map only amendment to *Richmond Valley Local Environmental Plan 2012*,
- to arrange for DPHI to check the proposed Local Environmental Plan map amendments,
- for the General Manager to endorse the map only *Richmond Valley Local Environmental Plan 2012* amendment under delegated Local Plan-making functions, and
- to arrange for the *Richmond Valley Local Environmental Plan 2012* map only amendment to be notified on the NSW Legislation Website.

## ATTACHMENT(S)

Nil

## **16 PROJECTS & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT**

### **16.1 TRAFFIC CALMING EVANS HEAD (BEECH STREET & FLAME STREET)**

**Director:** Ben Zeller

**Responsible Officer:** Graeme Robertson

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In response to community concerns regarding traffic speeds, Council initiated traffic calming investigations for Beech Street and Flame Street, Evans Head.

Council engaged an appropriately qualified contractor to carry out the traffic studies and develop a preliminary concept and detailed design. The resulting concept plan aimed to address the key concerns raised by the community, such as pedestrian safety, vehicle speed management, and overall street amenity.

Council conducted consultation, seeking feedback from the community and affected residents on the proposed concept designs, and incorporated suggested improvements into the detailed design. The revised, final design is included in the attachments.

Council received endorsement from the Local Traffic Committee for the traffic calming options and detailed design and will now seek grant funding opportunities for the future construction of the project.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

That Council:

1. Notes the extensive community consultation and resultant design updates included in the Evans Head (Beech Street & Flame Street) Traffic Calming Reports
2. Notes the endorsement of the final designs for the Evans Head (Beech Street & Flame Street) Traffic Calming by the Richmond Valley Council Local Traffic Committee
3. Endorses the final designs for the Evans Head (Beech Street & Flame Street) Traffic Calming and actively seeks funding to undertake the project.

#### **DELIVERY PROGRAM LINKS**

Objective 6: Provide infrastructure that meets community needs

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

6C1 Deliver local infrastructure maintenance and renewal programs

#### **BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

This project is currently unfunded with an estimated cost of \$650,000 for construction of the final traffic calming design solutions. Council will continue to explore grant opportunities to fund the works.

#### **REPORT**

Beech Street, Evans Head, is commonly used as a thoroughfare for commuter and tourist traffic travelling to and from Broadwater and Evans Head. This street consistently experiences motorists

travelling above the 50km/h sign posted speed limit, particularly during the morning and afternoon peak periods. It is a recurring issue for the residents and raises ongoing safety risks.

Council staff consulted with Transport for NSW (TfNSW) road safety officers with funding made available by TfNSW to carry out a traffic calming study to include concepts, design, and cost estimates.

Subsequently, Council engaged GeoLink Consulting Pty Ltd (GeoLink) to investigate the design of appropriate traffic calming infrastructure for this street with the main objectives to include:

- Physically altering the carriageway within the study area to slow traffic.
- Maintaining or improving safety for all road users, including cyclists and pedestrians.
- Maintaining an acceptable level of efficiency for motorised traffic given the estimated daily traffic volumes of around 2,500 vehicles per day.
- Maintaining a comfortable bus route.
- Improving the overall amenity of the street.
- Minimising capital and maintenance costs.

GeoLink provided the attached Concept Design Options Report which details the investigations, assessment, and proposed treatment options. Using these recommendations, a detailed design has been provided that would mitigate the highlighted risks when constructed. This construction phase of the project is currently unfunded.

The detailed design includes improvements from Booyong to Currajong Streets incorporating blister islands, and traffic calming modifications at the intersections of Cudgerie, Carrabeen and Ash Streets. Additionally, residents contacted Council for expanded investigations into reducing the speed of vehicles entering Evans Head from Broadwater Evans Head Road. Consultation for options was undertaken at the same time as the Beech Street traffic calming project.

Council conducted community consultation seeking feedback from the community and affected residents and received 19 written submissions on the options presented. Each submission was reviewed in detail, and a peer review process was undertaken to identify common themes, constructive suggestions, and any concerns raised.

Council had instructed the design consultants to amend the concept to incorporate these community-driven suggestions where feasible. The revised, final design is included in the attachments. Staff will continue to explore grant opportunities to construct the final design solutions.

## **CONSULTATION**

Council presented the concept design report and options for public consultation allowing feedback from any affected residents and the community. A total of 19 submissions were received, including feedback for amendments to the design. The submissions have been peer reviewed, and improvements incorporated within the design.

Council received endorsement from the Local Traffic Committee for the traffic calming options and detailed design.

## **CONCLUSION**

Investigation and design work has been completed for proposed traffic calming options in Beech Street and Flame Street, Evans Head. Following community consultation, the final designs are now presented for Council's consideration. The work is currently unfunded and Council will actively pursue external funding opportunities for the construction phase of the project.

## **ATTACHMENT(S)**

1. **Final Design Beech Street (under separate cover)**
2. **Final Design Flame Street (under separate cover)**

## 17 ORGANISATIONAL SERVICES

### 17.1 CODE OF MEETING PRACTICE REVIEW

**Director:** Ryan Gaiter

**Responsible Officer:** Catherine Davis

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Section 360(3) of the *Local Government Act 1993* (the Act) requires a Council to adopt a code of meeting practice no later than 12 months after a local government election, in this instance held in September 2024.

The Code must include the mandatory provisions of the Model Code of Meeting Practice, prescribed under the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021* (the Regulation). The Office of Local Government (OLG) is currently reviewing the Model Code, with a view to introducing substantial changes to the provisions. However, these proposed amendments are not expected to be finalised in time to meet the current deadline for exhibition and adoption of Council's Code.

It is therefore recommended that Council adopts its existing Code as an interim measure, to ensure compliance with the legislative requirements. Should Council endorse this option, the document will be placed on public exhibition period for 28 days, with a community feedback period of not less than 42 days.

#### RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Notes the NSW Government's current review of the Model Code of Meeting Practice and the expectation that any proposed amendments will not be finalised within the required timeframe.
2. Notes that, pending the outcome of the review, no further changes are proposed to Council's Draft Code of Meeting Practice, at this time, as outlined in this report;
3. Publicly exhibits the Draft Code of Meeting Practice for a minimum of 28 days following the June 2025 Ordinary Meeting; and
4. Notes that following a 42-day period to allow for community feedback, the Draft Code of Meeting Practice will be brought before Council at a future meeting for adoption.

#### DELIVERY PROGRAM LINKS

10 - Lead and advocate for our community

10C - Lead with integrity

10C1 - Provide representative and accountable community governance

#### BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Nil

#### REPORT

Part 2, Division 1 of the *Local Government Act 1993* (the Act) together with the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021* (the Regulation) sets out the obligations and procedures for all Councils with respect to preparation and adoption of a Code of Meeting Practice.



The Model Code of Meeting Practice for Local Councils in NSW 2021 (the Code) is made under section 360 of the Act and the Regulation.

The Code applies to all meetings of councils and committees of which all the members are councillors. Councils must adopt a code of meeting practice that incorporates the mandatory provisions of the Model Meeting Code within 12 months of the local government elections, held in September 2024. The Code to be adopted can also incorporate the non-mandatory provisions, together with additional provisions, provided they are not inconsistent with the mandatory provisions.

Councils must exhibit a draft of the Code for a period of at least 28 days and provide the community at least 42 days in which to comment on the draft Code.

Since the last Code of Meeting Practice was adopted in 2022, no further amendments to the Model Code have been made. However, the Office of Local Government is currently reviewing the Model Code and it is anticipated that an amended version, incorporating substantial changes, will be released during 2025. It is unlikely the updated Model Code will be available in time for Council to comply with its obligation to adopt a code of meeting practice within 12 months of the local government election.

A review of Council's current Code of Meeting Practice has not raised any significant concerns which require immediate amendment to the document and, as an interim measure, it is recommended that Council adopts the current Code, to ensure compliance with its legislative obligations.

Once the new Model Code is available, Council will complete a detailed review of any new requirements and amend and re-exhibit its Code, as required.

## **CONSULTATION**

Following presentation to the June 2025 Ordinary Meeting, community consultation will be undertaken via a public exhibition period of not less than 28 days, with community feedback to be received for a period of 42 days.

## **CONCLUSION**

This report summarises the obligation for Council to adopt a code of meeting practice within 12 months of a local government election after a period of public exhibition and commits to a detailed review of its Code as soon as the anticipated changes to the Model Code are communicated by the Minister.

## **ATTACHMENT(S)**

- 1. Draft Richmond Valley Council Code of Meeting Practice 2025 (under separate cover)**

## 17.2 CODE OF CONDUCT REVIEW

**Director:** Ryan Gaiter

**Responsible Officer:** Catherine Davis

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Section 440(7) of the *Local Government Act 1993* (the Act) requires a Council to review and adopt its Code of Conduct within 12 months of a local government election, in this instance being September 2024.

The Office of Local Government (OLG) most recently amended the Model Code of Conduct for NSW Councils (the Model Code) in late 2020, along with the Procedures for the Administration of the Model Code of Conduct for NSW Councils (the Procedures). However, OLG is currently conducting a further review of the Code with a view to making significant changes in the future. To date, no timeframe has been confirmed for these proposed amendments. In the interim it is recommended that Council adopts the current Code, to ensure compliance with the Act requirements.

### RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Notes the Draft Richmond Valley Council Code of Conduct incorporates the Model Code of Conduct for NSW Councils and the Procedures for the Administration of the Model Code of Conduct for NSW Councils, and that no changes are recommended as outlined in this report
2. Places the Draft Code of Conduct on public exhibition for a minimum of 28 days following the June 2025 Ordinary Meeting; and
3. Notes that following a 42-day period to allow for community feedback, the Draft Code of Conduct will be brought before Council at a future meeting for adoption.

### 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

The Model Code and Procedures prescribed under section 440 of the Act and the Regulation remain unchanged since release of the versions in late 2020. Recent communications with the Office of Local Government indicate that the Model Code and Procedures are currently under review, however no specific date has been confirmed for any proposed amendments. It is recommended that Council adopts the current Model Code and Procedures in the interim, to adhere to legislative timeframes. Should the OLG review result in future amendments, the Code could be revised and re-exhibited as required.

It is open for a Council to adopt a Code of Conduct that is different from the Model Code, however the provisions of the Model Code and Procedures must be incorporated into the document. Any additional clauses must not be inconsistent with the Model Code.

Upon review of the Model Code and Procedures, it would be difficult to recommend any amendments that would provide a meaningful addition to the comprehensive Model Code and

Procedures. Accordingly, it is recommended that the Model Code and Procedures be once again adopted as the Council's Code of Conduct.

Following the local government election in September 2024, Councillors received induction training which included a briefing on the Code of Conduct. It is intended that ongoing training will be provided to Councillors on the Code of Conduct and other relevant matters as part of the Councillor professional development program.

The Code of Conduct does not legislatively require public exhibition; however it is recommended that Council proceeds with a public exhibition and feedback period to support and encourage both transparency and community engagement.

### **CONSULTATION**

Following presentation to the June 2025 Ordinary Meeting, community consultation will be undertaken via a public exhibition period of not less than 28 days, with community feedback to be received for a period of 42 days.

### **CONCLUSION**

This report summarises the obligation for Council to adopt a Code of Conduct incorporating the Model Code and Procedures within 12 months of a local government election and recommends adopting the existing Code, with a public exhibition and feedback period to encourage community engagement and transparency.

### **ATTACHMENT(S)**

1. **Code of Conduct and Procedures - Policy Review 2025 (under separate cover)**

**17.3 COUNCILLOR REMUNERATION 2025/2026**

**Director:** Ryan Gaiter

**Responsible Officer:** Hayley Martin

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Each financial year, the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal determines the minimum and maximum remuneration payable to Mayors and Councillors for carrying out their duties. The determination by the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal is pursuant to Sections 239 and 241 of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

Council has received notification that the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal has determined that the Mayoral and Councillor Fees are to increase 3% for the 2025/2026 financial year.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council:

1. Sets the Mayoral Allowance for the 2025/2026 financial year effective from 1 July 2025 at \$50,676 per annum or \$4,223 per month.
2. Sets the Councillor Fee for the 2025/2026 financial year effective from 1 July 2025 at \$23,220 per annum or \$1,935 per month.

**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**

The draft budget already includes an amount for this expense, the budgeted figure was calculated estimating an increase of two and half percent in Mayoral and Councillor remuneration. The increase determined by the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal for 2025/2026 was 3%, therefore a minor adjustment of \$1,188 to the draft budget currently on exhibition will be required.

**REPORT**

In April each year the New South Wales Local Government Remuneration Tribunal releases its annual report and determination on the remuneration of Mayors and Councillors for the following financial year. The report sets out the factors considered by the Tribunal when making its determination. These include:

- Submissions and comments made by associations and individual councils
- Key economic indicators
- Council categorisation
- IPART Rate Peg Base Cost Change
- Other public sector and state remuneration determinations

The Tribunal has determined an increase of 3% for next financial year, a comparison of the current fees and the determined fees is shown in the table below. There has been no change to the categorisation of Richmond Valley Council which remains in the Regional Rural grouping. Council

resolved to adopt the maximum fees category throughout the duration of the last term of Council. The majority of NSW Councils do the same.

Fee Type / Year	Minimum Fee	Maximum Fee
<b>Councillor Fee 2024/2025</b>	\$10,220	\$22,540
<b>Councillor Fee 2025/2026</b>	\$10,530	\$23,220
<b>Mayoral Allowance 2024/2025</b>	\$21,770	\$49,200
<b>Mayoral Allowance 2025/2026</b>	\$22,420	\$50,680

A copy of the full report published by the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal can be viewed at:

[LGRT-2025-Annual-Determination.pdf](#)

It should be noted that the fees above do not include the superannuation component of Councillors' remuneration, which will be paid at the required rate. Following the *Local Government Amendment Act 2021*, Council resolved to make payment of superannuation to Councillors equivalent to the superannuation guarantee which will be 12% from 1 July 2025.

## CONCLUSION

It is recommended that Council continues to adopt the maximum fee and increases the Mayoral and Councillor fees in accordance with the Tribunal recommendation for the 2025/2026 financial year as outlined in this report.

## ATTACHMENT(S)

Nil

**17.4 REVIEW OF COUNCILLOR EXPENSES AND FACILITIES POLICY**

**Director:** Ryan Gaiter

**Responsible Officer:** Catherine Davis

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Section 252 of the *Local Government Act 1993* (the Act) requires adoption of a Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy within twelve months of the commencement of a new council term. The existing policy has been reviewed and some minor changes are proposed. The changes aim to improve alignment with the Office of Local Government's suggested template and the *Guidelines for the payment of expenses and the provision of facilities for Mayors and Councillors in NSW*.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council endorses the draft updated Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy for public exhibition

**DELIVERY PROGRAM LINKS**

Objective 10: Lead and advocate for our community

10C Lead with integrity

10C1 Provide representative and accountable community governance

**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

The policy includes an annual allocation towards Councillors' professional development activities, including completion of courses and attendance at conferences. The current allocation of \$6000 per Councillor per annum has been included in the draft policy. Additionally, the annual allocation for carer support is proposed to increase to \$3,500 per annum to reflect increasing costs for these services

**REPORT**

The existing policy was adopted in September 2022 and had regard to the Office of Local Government (OLG) suggested template. The OLG has not released an amended draft policy template since this time, yet minor amendments have been made to better align Council's policy with the template.

Section 252(5) of the Act requires the policy to comply with the provisions of the Act, the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021* and any relevant guidelines issued under section 23A of the Act. Some further amendments to the current policy have been made to ensure it aligns with the *Guidelines for the payment of expenses and the provision of facilities for Mayors and Councillors in NSW*, issued under section 23A of the Act.

The following changes are proposed:

- The addition of a table setting out the maximum resources Council will provide for specific expenses and facilities
- The addition of maximum amounts for specific expenses and facilities throughout the policy
- The addition of a reporting requirement; and
- Minor amendments to allow inclusion of maximum resources within the policy and readability.

A copy of the amended draft policy is attached for Councillors' consideration and endorsement for public exhibition.

## CONSULTATION

Section 253 of the Act outlines the actions to be undertaken prior to adoption of an expenses and facilities policy:

### **253 Requirements before policy concerning expenses and facilities can be adopted or amended**

- 1. A council must give public notice of its intention to adopt or amend a policy for the payment of expenses or provision of facilities allowing at least 28 days for the making of public submissions.*
- 2. Before adopting or amending the policy, the council must consider any submissions made within the time allowed for submissions and make any appropriate changes to the draft policy or amendment.*

## CONCLUSION

Council's Expenses and Facilities Policy has been reviewed and minor amendments are proposed to better align with government guidelines and improve transparency. The revised policy is now presented for Council's consideration, with the recommendation to proceed to public exhibition for 28 days.

## ATTACHMENT(S)

- 1. Councillor Expenses and Facilities - Policy Review 2025 (under separate cover)**

**17.5 FINANCIAL ANALYSIS REPORT - MAY 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 31 May 2025 is shown below:

Bank Accounts	Term Deposits	Floating Rate Notes	Fixed Rate Bonds	TCorp IM Funds	Total
\$15,961,588	\$33,000,000	\$6,750,390	\$4,500,000	\$17,683,931	\$77,895,908

The weighted average rate of return on Council's cash and investments at 31 May 2025 was 8.47% which was above the Bloomberg AusBond Bank Bill Index for May of 4.12% (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 May 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 31 May 2025, Council has earned \$2,585,614 in interest and \$1,237,663 in fair value gains from funds held in TCorp, for a total investment income of \$3,823,277. This equates to 162.87% 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 reduced the cash rate by 25 basis points to 3.85% per annum at the May meeting.

**Rate of Return**

The weighted average rate of return on cash and investments in May was 8.47%, an increase in 360 basis points from the previous month. The rate of return is 435 basis points above the Bloomberg AusBond Bank Bill Index of 4.12% (annualised) which is Council's benchmark.

Council's NSW Treasury Corporation IM Funds returned net gains of \$320,457 during the month of May. The Medium-Term Growth Fund (MTGF) returned a gain of \$210,334 and the Long-Term Growth Fund (LTGF) returned a gain of \$110,123.



Ongoing geopolitical tensions and uncertainty surrounding US tariffs continues to impact on investors' opinions in financial markets. However, market conditions did stabilise throughout May. The RBA lowered interest rates as predicted by many economists, with headline inflation remaining steady and the unemployment rate remaining at 4.1%.

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 \$77,895,908 at 31 May 2025. This was made up of Council's Business Online Saver Account (\$6,700,000), Macquarie Cash Management Account (\$8,026,027), Term Deposits (\$33,000,000), Floating Rate Notes (\$6,750,390), Bonds (\$4,500,000), NSW Treasury Corporation Investments (\$17,683,931) and other bank accounts (\$1,235,560).

Council's investment portfolio had maturity dates ranging from same day up to 1,742 days. Term deposits, floating rate notes and bonds of \$44,250,390 represented 56.81% of the total portfolio as at 31 May 2025.

Council made the following new investments during May 2025.

Banking Institution	Investment Type	Environmentally Sustainable Investment	Amount Invested	Investment Term	Interest Rate
Rabobank	Term Deposit	Y	\$1,000,000	6 months	4.50%
MyState Bank	Term Deposit	Y	\$1,000,000	3 months	4.55%
National Australia Bank	Term Deposit	N	\$2,000,000	3 months	4.50%
Bank of Queensland	Term Deposit	Y	\$2,000,000	6 months	4.45%
AMP Bank	Term Deposit	Y	\$2,000,000	6 months	4.45%
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$8,000,000</b>		

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

Banking Institution	Investment Type	Environmentally Sustainable Investment	Amount Invested	Interest Earned
National Australia Bank	Term Deposit	N	\$2,000,000	\$50,085
Bank of Queensland	Term Deposit	Y	\$2,000,000	\$49,589
Bank of Queensland	Term Deposit	Y	\$2,000,000	\$51,077
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$6,000,000</b>	<b>\$150,751</b>

Council had \$17,683,931 in longer term investments being the MTGF and LTGF held with NSW Treasury Corporation as at 31 May 2025. The investment values and fair value returns are shown below:

Investment Holding	Fair Value 31 May 25	Fair Value Gain/(Loss) at 31 May 25	Fair Value Gain/(Loss) YTD	Fair Value Gain/(Loss) Life of Investment
Medium Term Growth Fund	\$13,914,700	\$210,334	\$887,246	\$2,909,670
Long Term Growth Fund	\$3,769,231	\$110,123	\$350,417	\$769,231
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$17,683,931</b>	<b>\$320,457</b>	<b>\$1,237,663</b>	<b>\$3,678,901</b>

### Environmentally Sustainable Investments (ESI's)

Council's cash and investments portfolio of \$77,895,908 at 31 May 2025 includes \$52,933,931 or 68.0% 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 May 2025, Council's investments have been made in accordance with the Act, the Regulations and Council's Investment Policy.

As at 31 May 2025 Council's cash and investments totalled \$77,895,908 with \$15,961,588 of this being funds held in bank accounts. The weighted average rate of return was 8.47% and total investment revenue equals 162.87% of budgeted revenue for the year to 31 May 2025.

### ATTACHMENT(S)

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

**17.6 CIVIC RISK MUTUAL INSURANCE PERFORMANCE REPORT**

**Director:** Ryan Gaiter

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Civic Risk Mutual (the Mutual) is Council's provider for insurance and related risk management services. The Mutual consists of 27 member councils from NSW and Victoria who work together to achieve more affordable and comprehensive insurance coverage and improve risk management practices.

Since joining the Mutual in July 2020, Council has achieved substantial premium savings and received strong support through challenging times and a hardening insurance market. This included a \$5m payout following the 2022 floods and Council continues to have flood insurance cover for up to \$4m per event. Other benefits from being a member of the Mutual are included in this report.

The Mutual's insurance broker is Willis Towers Watson (WTW), who support the Mutual to negotiate suitable insurance coverage each year, in consultation with its Board of Directors. This involves direct meetings annually with major insurance providers in London, with presentations by the Mutual's broker, Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Board and the CEO. The Mutual has extended the opportunity to participate in these discussions to other Board Members, with Council's General Manager being invited to represent the Board at the meetings/presentations to be held in London this September 2025, which is being funded by the Mutual.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council:

1. Notes the positive performance report on Council's membership with CivicRisk Mutual; and
2. Approves the international travel for the General Manager to attend the CivicRisk Mutual meetings/presentations in London in September 2025, which is being funded by the Mutual.

**DELIVERY PROGRAM LINKS**

Objective 11: Manage resources responsibly

11C Manage organisational risks responsibly

11C1 Implement Richmond Valley Council's Enterprise Risk Management Framework

**BUDGET IMPLICATIONS**

Council's insurance premiums paid to Civic Risk Mutual are included in the Draft Operational Plan for 2025/26 which is subject of a separate report at this meeting.

**REPORT**

Civic Risk Mutual (the Mutual) is Council's provider for insurance and related services. The Mutual consists of 27 member councils who work together to achieve more affordable and comprehensive insurance coverage and improve risk management practices.

Since joining the Mutual in July 2020, Council has achieved substantial savings and received strong support through challenging times and a hardening insurance market. This included a \$5m payout following the 2022 floods and we continue to have flood insurance up to \$4m, where other flood impacted Northern Rivers Councils who are with a different insurer, are unable to secure flood insurance.

Council is represented within the Mutual in several positions:

- On the Mutual's Board of Directors by the General Manager
- On the Member's Assembly by the General Manager and the Director of Organisational Services
- On the Risk Management Committee by the Chief of Staff
- On the Finance Committee by the Director of Organisational Services.

As part of the Mutual's services, Council is provided with a yearly report outlining the Mutual's performance across a range of variables. Highlights from the report outlining the benefits provided by Civic Risk Mutual to its members Councils includes:



The Mutual achieves its success through adopting a structure of insurance layers to address claims and off-set risk. This includes a level of self-insurance, where each member council agrees to address minor claims through its own resources. The second layer of coverage utilises pooled resources from the 27 members to help manage more significant claims, under the guidance of the Mutual's claims management provider and legal panel. Funds that aren't utilised within the pool

each year are retained as accumulated surplus and ultimately returned to members as cash payments.

The third and fourth layers of insurance involve third-party coverage from Australian and international insurance providers, to ensure the Mutual can address major claims. The Mutual utilises the services of its broker, Willis Towers Watson (WTW), to negotiate this coverage each year, in consultation with its Board of Directors. This involves direct meetings with major providers in London, with presentations by the Mutual's broker, Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Board and the CEO. These presentations have been a critical component in securing ongoing disaster coverage for members, as they provide detailed insights into member councils' risk profiles and disaster risk management strategies and allow a more nuanced approach to the negotiations. As part of its succession planning and professional development program for Board Members, the Mutual has decided to extend the opportunity to participate in these discussions to other Board Members, with Council's General Manager being invited to represent the Board at the meetings/presentations to be held in London this September 2025, which is being funded by the Mutual.

### **CONSULTATION**

Councillors were briefed in more detail at a recent workshop, which provided more specific details on the Council's performance with the Mutual, with some information being commercial in confidence.

### **CONCLUSION**

Council's decision to join Civic Risk Mutual in 2020 continues to provide benefits, improved coverage and savings in a challenging market, where insurance cover can be difficult to source. The Mutual's recent performance report highlights the Mutual is in good financial health and continues an upward trajectory in performance results. Council seeks to continue advancing its knowledge and development of risk management strategies with an example being the General Managers invitation to attend the Civic Risk Mutual meetings/presentations in London during September 2025, which requires Council's approval for international travel.

### **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 GRANT APPLICATION INFORMATION REPORT - MAY 2025

**Director:** Ryan Gaiter

**Responsible Officer:** Rylee Vidler

### RECOMMENDATION

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

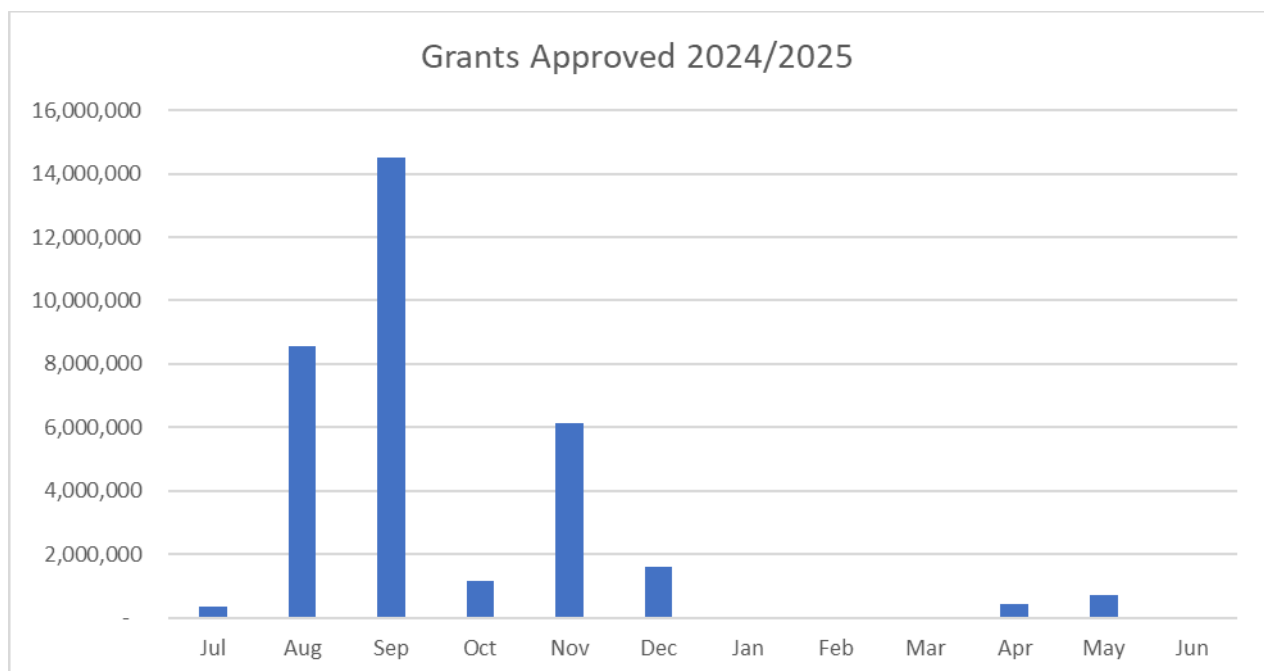
### REPORT

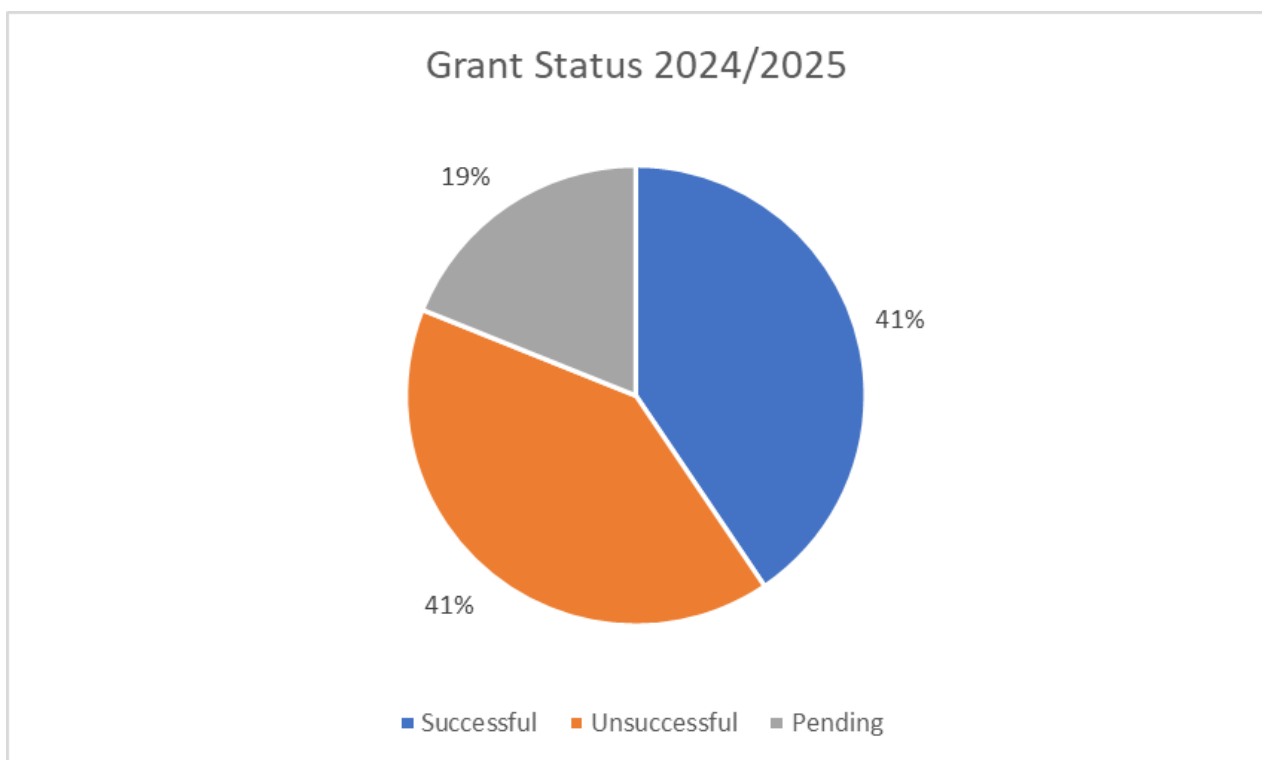
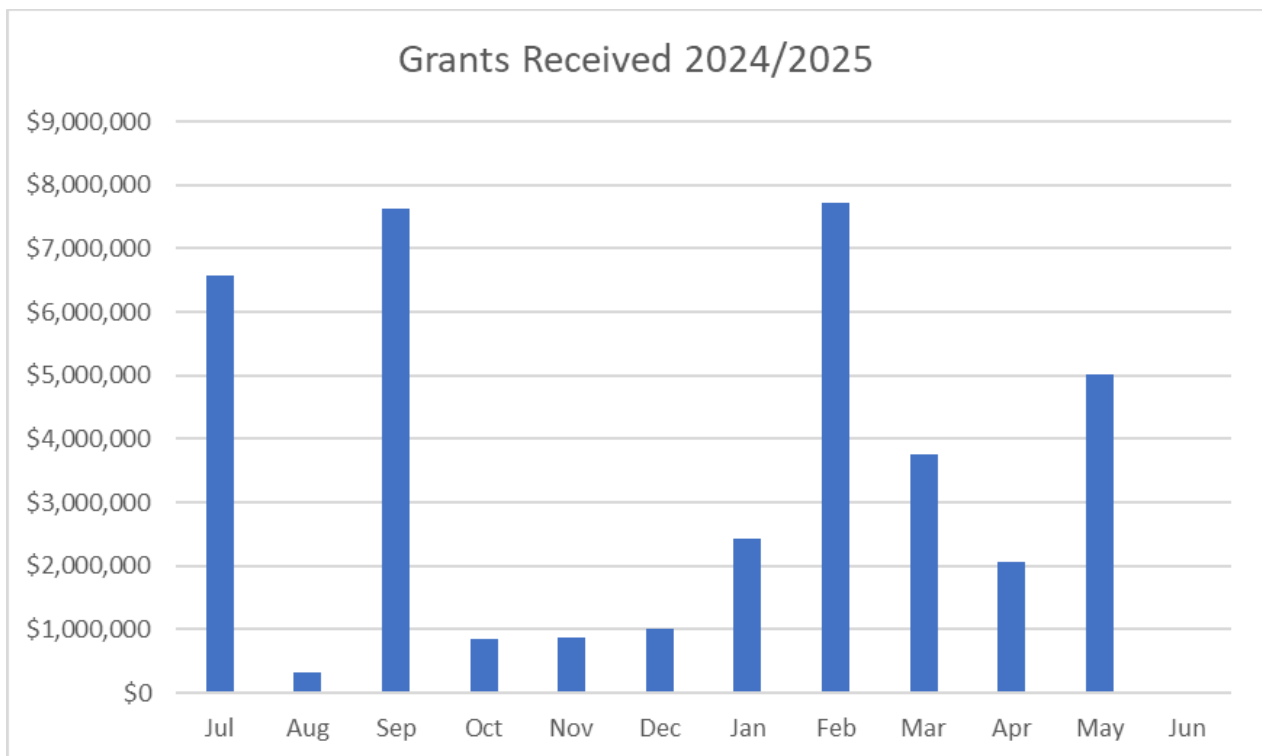
This report provides information on grant applications that have been approved, grants that have been received, grant applications that were unsuccessful and grant applications that were submitted for the month of May 2025.

During the reporting period, there were three new grants approved and two applications submitted. Council was notified of five unsuccessful applications during the period.

Council received funding for seven grants totalling \$5,017,853.

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







**Grant Applications Submitted**

Project Name	Funding Body	Funding Name	Project Value	Grant Funding	Council Funding	Application Submitted
Hotham Street Casino Level Crossing Improvement	Transport for NSW (State)	Level Crossing Improvement Program	\$ 200,000	\$ 200,000	\$ -	2 May 2025
Comment: If successful, this funding will be used to upgrade the existing pedestrian level crossing at Hotham Street Casino, by removing it from the immediate roadside.						
Critical Ecological Restoration and Biodiversity Corridor Creation along the NRRT	NSW Environmental Trust (State)	Environmental Restoration and Rehabilitation Grants Program	\$ 230,000	\$ 200,000	\$ 30,000	16 May 2025
Comment: If successful, this funding will be used to lead an ecological restoration initiative in partnership with local landholders, Indigenous groups, Landcare, and other key stakeholders along the Northern Rivers Rail Trail.						

**Grants that have been approved**

Project Name	Funding Body	Funding Name	Project Value	Grant Funding	Council Funding	Application Submitted	Date Approved
Coraki Safety Initiative	Regional NSW (State)	Resilient Business Activation Program	\$ 135,000	\$ 135,000	\$ -	18 December 2024	7 May 2025
Comment: This funding will be used to install 8 security cameras and one automated number plate recognition camera to deter anti-social behaviour and crime.							
Broadwater Pedestrian Connection Project	Regional NSW (State)	Resilient Business Activation Program	\$ 100,000	\$ 70,000	\$ 30,000	18 December 2024	7 May 2025
Comment: This funding will be used to install approximately 120m of footpath to connect the existing footpath network to the service station, post office and convenience store.							
Mobile Library Replacement	State Library of NSW (State)	Public Library Infrastructure Grant	\$ 1,032,000	\$ 500,000	\$ 532,000	28 October 2024	26 May 2025
Comment: This funding will be used to part fund the replacement of the mobile library truck.							

**Unsuccessful Grant Applications**

Project Name	Funding Body	Funding Name	Project Value	Grant Funding	Council Funding	Application Submitted	Advised Unsuccessful
Casino Living CBD Masterplan	NSW Department of Planning and Environment (State)	Regional Housing Strategic Planning Fund 2024	\$ 200,000	\$ 150,000	\$ 50,000	22 November 2024	8 May 2025
Comment: Council will seek feedback for this funding.							
Evans Head Street Fest	Transport for NSW (State)	Open Streets Program 2025-2028	\$ 100,000	\$ 90,000	\$ 10,000	14 March 2025	16 May 2025
Comment: Funding was oversubscribed and successful applicants had strong evidence how their events would drive vibrancy and street activation during and beyond the grant period.							
Rail Trail to QE Park Connection	Transport for NSW (State)	Get Active NSW	\$ 2,012,850	\$ 2,012,850	\$ -	25 November 2024	18 May 2025
Comment: Funding was oversubscribed, Council is awaiting specific feedback for the application.							
Design of Woodburn to Broadwater Shared Pathway	Transport for NSW (State)	Get Active NSW	\$ 198,000	\$ 198,000	\$ -	25 November 2024	18 May 2025
Comment: Funding was oversubscribed, Council is awaiting specific feedback for the application.							
Broadwater to Evans Head Shared Pathway	Transport for NSW (State)	Get Active NSW	\$ 6,768,297	\$ 5,000,000	\$ 1,768,297	25 November 2024	18 May 2025
Comment: Funding was oversubscribed, Council is awaiting specific feedback for the application.							

**Grants that have been received**

Project Name	Funding Body	Funding Name	Project Value	Grant Funding	Council Funding	Application Submitted	Date Received	Total Received
Rail Trail Habitat Restoration	Department of Climate Change, Energy, The Environment and Water (DCCEEW) (State)	Biodiversity Conservation Project Fund	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ -	21 February 2025	\$ 10,000 1 May 2025	\$ 10,000
Comment: Milestone 1 payment received.								
Rappville Sewer Augmentation	Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (State)	Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund	\$ 5,985,000	\$ 5,985,000	\$ -	N/A	\$ 1,815,000 1 May 2025	\$ 2,233,268
Comment: Claim for activities 5 and 6 per funding agreement.								

Project Name	Funding Body	Funding Name	Project Value	Grant Funding	Council Funding	Application Submitted	Date Received	Total Received
Betterment of Casino Swimming Clubhouse	Regional NSW (State)	Community Assets Program	\$ 546,875	\$ 546,875	\$ -	27 March 2023	\$ 164,063 5 May 2025	\$ 546,875
Comment: Final payment for works completed.								
Tatham Bridge Raising	NSW Reconstruction Authority (State)	Emergency Response Fund - Northern Rivers Recovery and Resilience Program 2022-23	\$ 18,000,000	\$18,000,000	\$ -	N/A	\$ 2,250,000 5 May 2025	\$ 4,750,000
Comment: Progress payment for works completed.								
Financial Assistance Grant 2024/25	NSW Local Government Grants Commission (Federal)	Financial Assistance Grant	\$ 6,842,387	\$ 6,842,387	\$ -	N/A - Annual Allocation	\$ 268,790 16 May 2025	\$ 6,842,387
Comment: Quarter 4 instalment of the 2024/2025 FAG Grant.								
Mobile Library Replacement	State Library of NSW (State)	Public Library Infrastructure Grant	\$ 1,032,000	\$ 500,000	\$ 532,000	28 October 2024	\$ 500,000 21 May 2025	\$ 500,000
Comment: Full funding received for approved grant.								
Rail Trail Habitat Restoration	Department of Climate Change, Energy, The Environment and Water (DCCEEW) (State)	Biodiversity Conservation Project Fund	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,000	\$ -	21 February 2025	\$ 10,000 26 May 2025	\$ 20,000
Comment: Milestone 2 payment received.								

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

**Nil**

## 19.2 DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS DETERMINED UNDER THE ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT ACT FOR THE PERIOD 1 MAY 2025 - 31 MAY 2025

**General Manager:** Vaughan Macdonald

**Responsible Officer:** Andy Edwards

### RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the Development Application report for the period 1 May 2025 to 31 May 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 May 2025 to 31 May 2025 was thirteen (13) with a total value of \$2,290,163.

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

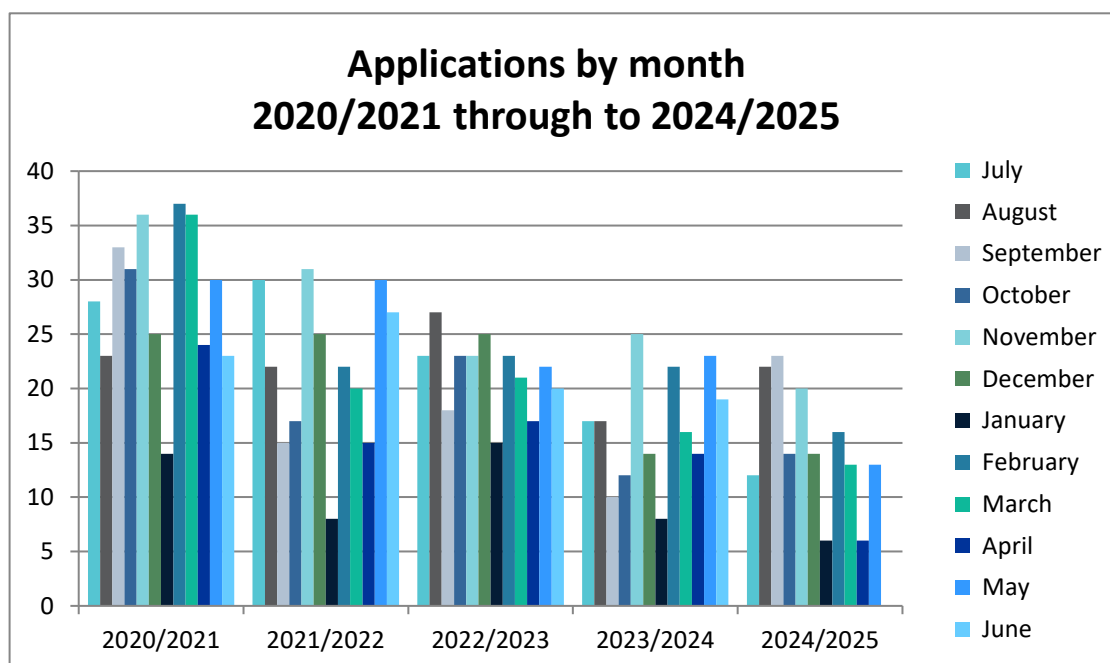
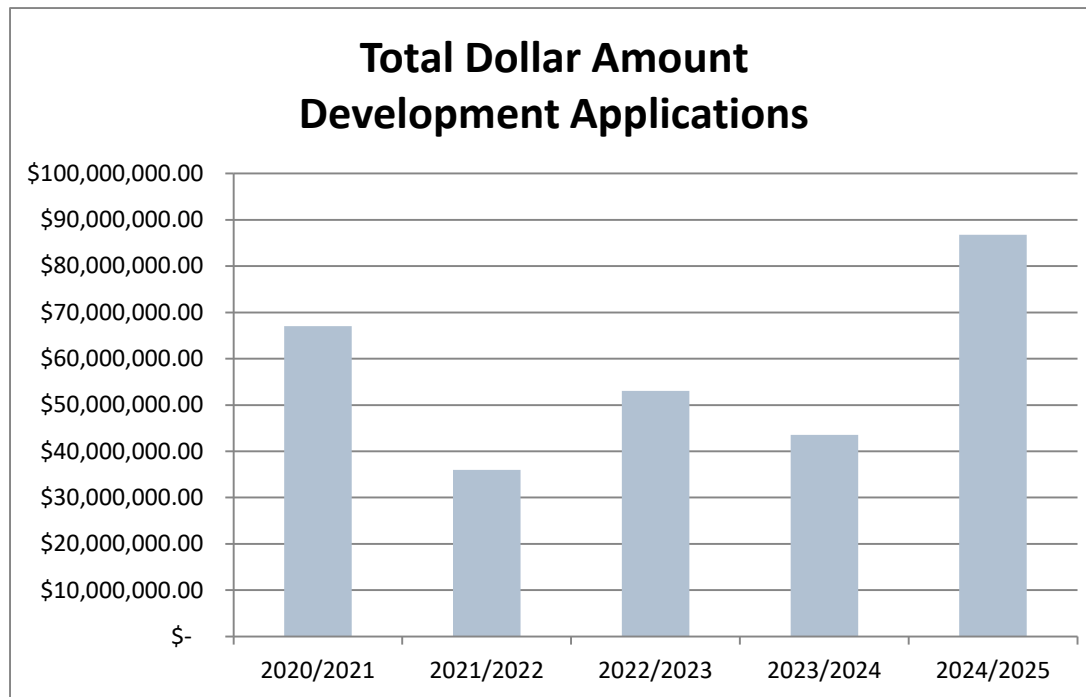
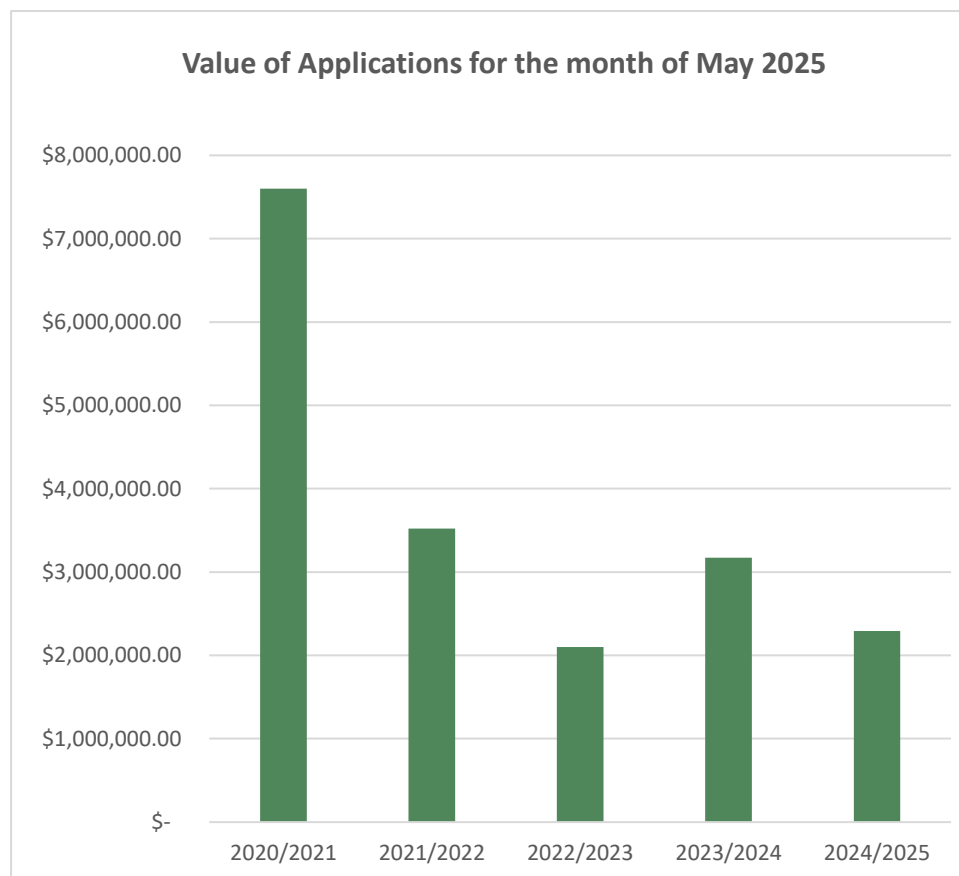


Figure 1: Monthly number of development applications and CDCs processed by Council over five financial years.

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 May 2025.



*Figure 2: Annual value of development*



*Figure 3: Value of development for the month of May 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.

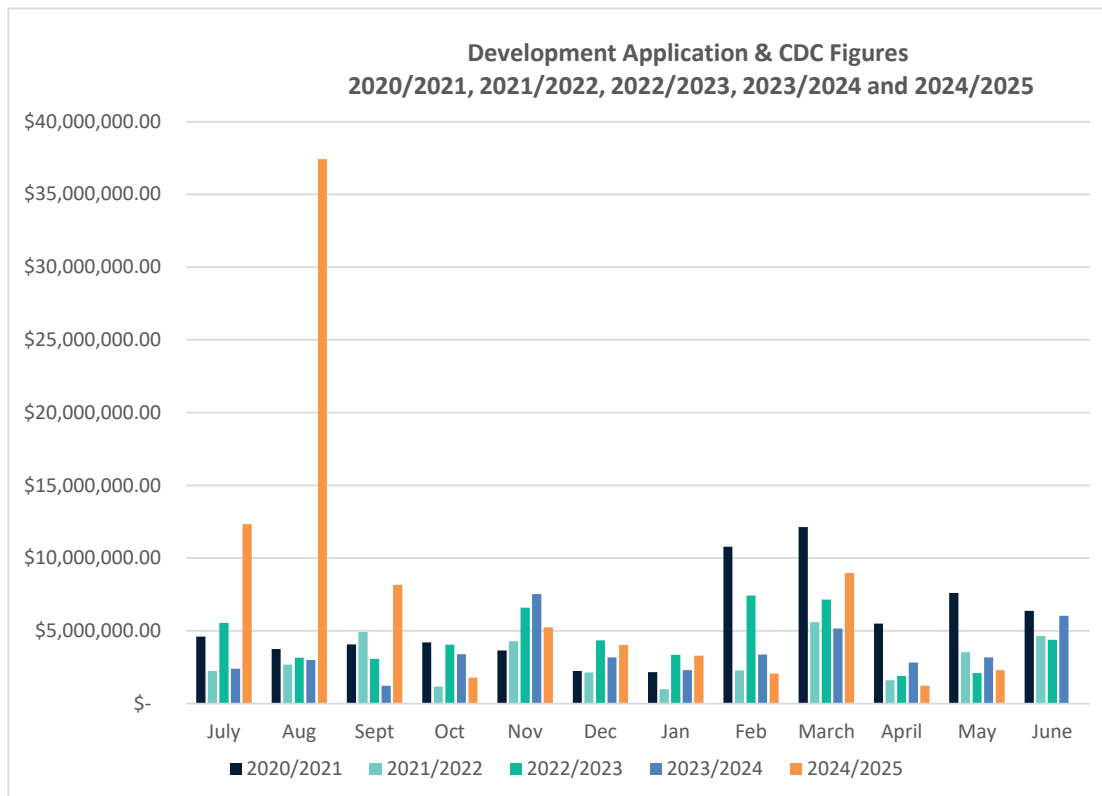


Figure 4: Value of development applications per month over five financial years.

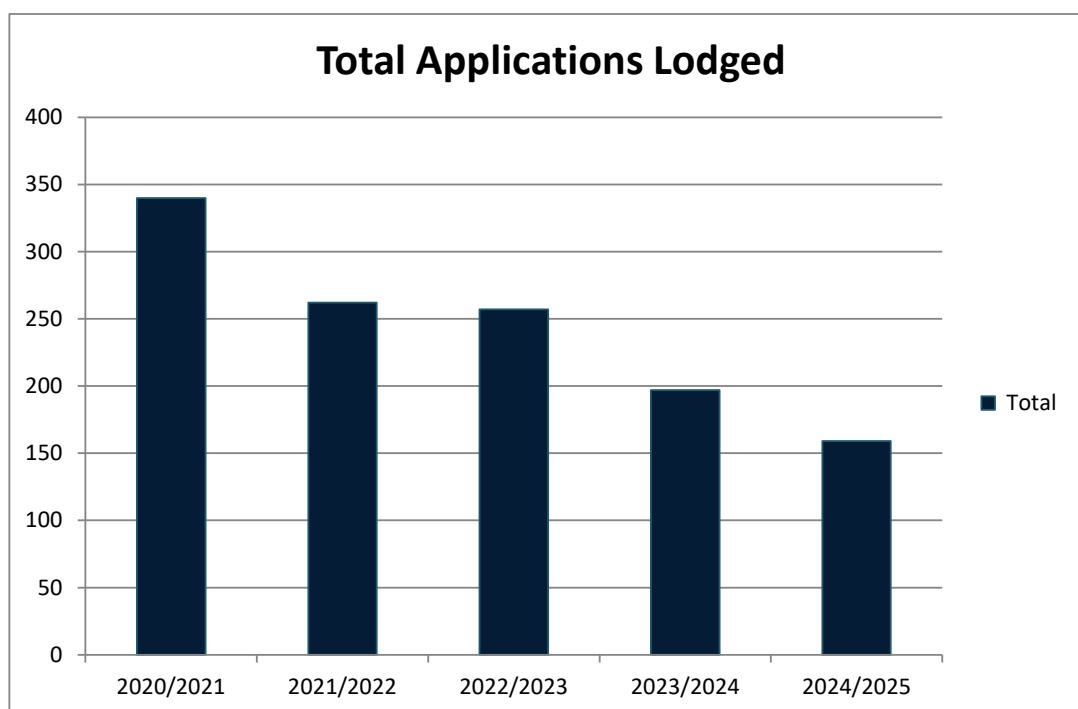


Figure 5: Number of Development Applications & CDCs per annum over five financial years.

**Activity for the month of May 2025**

General Approvals (excluding Subdivisions, Section 4.55)	<b>9</b>
Section 4.55 amendments to original consent	<b>2</b>
Operational Consent	-
Subdivision	-
Refused	-
Complying Development (Council Approved)	<b>1</b>
Complying Development (Private Certifier Approved)	<b>1</b>
Amended Complying Development (Private Certifier Approved)	-
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS DETERMINED</b>	<b>13</b>
Rejected	-
Withdrawn	<b>1</b>
<b>Average assessment days for applications determined in May 2025 (Planning &amp; Building Combined)</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>No. of Integrated development applications determined in May 2025</b>	<b>Nil</b>
<b>No. of Designated development applications determined in May 2025</b>	<b>Nil</b>

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



Summary of Development Applications determined under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act for the period 1 May 2025 to 31 May 2025								
Application ID	Applicant	Owners	Location	Development	Date Received (In Portal)	Date Accepted (In Portal)	Determination Date	Estimated Cost
MA2025/0020	Newton Denny Chapelle	One Funds Management Limited	31A Richmond Street, Casino	S4.55(1A) Modification of approved development for subdivision and construction of two group homes involving minor changes to building footprint, internal layout changes, and changes to windows	28/02/2025	27/03/2025	8/05/2025	\$0.00
DA2025/0144	SeaO2 Algae Pty Ltd	Eranda Pty Ltd	166 Langs Way, Woodburn	Construction of a second greenhouse, installation and use of 2 x shipping containers for onsite storage and relocation of the subsurface irrigation field for the existing on-site sewage management system	3/03/2025	11/03/2025	1/05/2025	\$218,881.00
DA2025/0153	I Gluyas	M T Bracks & C R Wilson	3925 Bruxner Highway, Woodview	Inground reinforced concrete swimming pool and associated fencing	25/03/2025	28/03/2025	2/05/2025	\$60,500.00
DA2025/0155	Evolve Planning Services Pty Ltd	L R & M K Fowkes	550 Woodburn Coraki Road, Swan Bay	Shed including variation to front setback	25/03/2025	28/03/2025	1/05/2025	\$48,840.00
DA2025/0156	Inghams Enterprises Pty Limited	Inghams Enterprises Pty Limited	9085 Summerland Way, Leeville	As-built shed that will be used for cleaning & storage of farm equipment	27/03/2025	3/04/2025	21/05/2025	\$163,187.00

Summary of Development Applications determined under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act for the period 1 May 2025 to 31 May 2025								
Application ID	Applicant	Owners	Location	Development	Date Received (In Portal)	Date Accepted (In Portal)	Determination Date	Estimated Cost
DA2025/0157	Fernleigh Drafting & Council Services	T N & B C Parkes	27 Carrabeen Street, Evans Head	Steel frame carport including a variation request to the RVCDP	1/04/2025	17/04/2025	14/05/2025	\$14,690.00
DA2025/0160	Fence & Deck Australia Pty Ltd	L A Matthews	19 Holloway Road, Casino	Flyover insulated panel roof to cover existing deck area	7/04/2025	17/04/2025	14/05/2025	\$18,535.00
DA2025/0163	Tranquil Pools Pty Ltd	B W A Troy	3 Farley Street, Casino	In-ground fibreglass swimming pool (7.5m x 3.8m) and associated fencing	15/04/2025	29/04/2025	27/05/2025	\$69,780.00
DA2025/0164	J F McLennan	J F & G J McLennan	345 Brookers Road, Shannon Brook	Single storey dwelling	16/04/2025	17/04/2025	15/05/2025	\$789,800.00
MA2025/0024	M J Patch	K E & Mr M J Patch	7 Lancaster Street, Casino	S4.55(1A) Modification - Covered outdoor area, sunroom and carport	17/04/2025	22/04/2025	26/05/2025	\$0.00

Summary of Council Certified Complying Development Applications determined under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act for the period 1 May 2025 to 31 May 2025								
Application ID	Applicant	Owners	Location	Development	Date Received (In Portal)	Date Accepted (In Portal)	Determination Date	Estimated Cost
CDC2025/0020	B A Harley	N J W & M G King	Ginibi Drive, Swan Bay	Construction of Single Dwelling	9/05/2025	21/05/2025	30/05/2025	\$661,500.00

Summary of Flood Affected Development Applications determined under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act for the period 1 May 2025 to 31 May 2025								
Application ID	Applicant	Owners	Location	Development	Date Received (In Portal)	Date Accepted (In Portal)	Determination Date	Estimated Cost
DA2025/0152	R J Hayes	Mr J R Butcher	4 Cedar Street, Woodburn	Raise existing flood affected dwelling above the minimum habitable floor level including alterations and additions. This includes a Section 4.6 variation to the RVLEP for building height exceeding 8.5m	24/03/2025	27/03/2025	29/05/2025	\$160,050.00

Summary of Privately Certified Applications determined under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act for the period 1 May 2025 to 31 May 2025								
Application ID	Applicant	Owners	Location	Development	Date Submitted to Council for Registration	Date Accepted	Determination Date	Estimated Cost
CDC2025/0020	Buildcert Certification Pty Ltd	R A & A T Hampstead	2 Verulam View, Spring Grove	Swimming pool	6/05/2025	13/05/2025	6/05/2025	\$84,400.00

Summary of Development Applications determined under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act with a Clause 4.6 Variation for the period 1 May 2025 to 31 May 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 May 2025 to 31 May 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 May 2025 to 31 May 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 May 2025 to 31 May 2025								
Application ID	Applicant	Owners	Location	Development	Date Received (in Portal)	Date Accepted (In Portal)	Date Withdrawn	Estimated Cost
DA2025/0169	Mr R J Hayes`	K T MacDonald, S E Brady & W M Brady	37 Pacific Crescent, Evans Head	Demolition and part demolition of ancillary structures and the alterations and additions to the existing dwelling including new roof and front deck	30/04/2025	8/05/2025	26/05/2025	\$165,000.00

**19.3 EVENT SUPPORT SCHEME ALLOCATION 2025/2026****General Manager:** Vaughan Macdonald**Responsible Officer:** Tiarn Stenner**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council receives and notes the allocations under the Event Support Scheme for 2025-2026.

**REPORT**

Under Section 356 of the *Local Government Act 1993* (LG Act) Council may, by resolution, contribute financial assistance to individuals, groups and organisations seeking support to host an event. At the February 2022 Council meeting, Council resolved to delegate authority to the General Manager to approve allocation of funds in accordance with Council's Policy 9.04 Event Support.

Council has allocated \$33,924 in the 2025-2026 budget for the Event Support Scheme. This funding was advertised in February and Council received seven applications.

The remaining funds are allocated throughout the year, as Council receives a significant number of requests for support from local event organisers.

All applications received have been reviewed in accordance with the policy. Six applications were deemed appropriate for support. Evaluations included a recommendation from the Manager Community Connection, Events Officer and General Manager as to the appropriate cash and in-kind contribution to be provided.

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 eligibility requirements, prior funding, past acquittal performance and selection criteria.

The following table summarises the outcomes of the evaluation.

Event	Requested allocation	Event description	Amount allocated
Peach Festival: Sunday 19 October	\$3850 cash \$1075 in-kind	The Peach Festival celebrates an annual harvest where the community can enjoy a day at an orchard and pick their own fruit. The event focuses on activities suitable for families, showcasing to children the origins of their food and providing an opportunity to taste fruits which have just ripened on the trees. This event builds a sense of unity within the community, inviting both local farmers and businesses to participate.	\$0 cash \$1075 in-kind
Woodburn Riverside Festival: Saturday 27 September	\$3000 cash \$4571 in-kind	A full day of mainly free activities and entertainment for all ages in Riverside Park and on River Street from 10am to 8pm.	\$3000 \$4571 in-kind

Event	Requested allocation	Event description	Amount allocated
Evans Head Malibu Classic: Friday 3 to Monday 6 October	\$1500 cash \$1453.18 in-kind	This is an annual surfing event which attracts participants from other clubs across the region, as well as intrastate. It has been running for more than 30 years.	\$1500 cash \$1453.18 in-kind
Casino Show: Friday 10 to Saturday 11 October	\$2000 cash \$3731.23 in-kind	Each year, the Casino Show Society showcases the best of local and interstate producers and exhibitors, offering a dynamic range of events including: cattle judging; equestrian competitions; poultry exhibitions; and an impressive display of arts and crafts. The Show also brings a carnival atmosphere, featuring a lively sideshow alley, market stalls, and a variety of entertainment which ensures there's something for everyone.	\$2000 cash \$3731.23 in-kind
Casino Lions Club Christmas Wonderland: Saturday 6 December	\$3000 cash \$543.50 in-kind	Christmas Wonderland in Casino is an event which combines the Lions Club of Casino's yearly Christmas carols and the Lions Club of Casino's Farmers' Market Christmas Market.	\$2000 cash \$543.50 in-kind
Evans Head RSL - Hot Summer Nights Riverside Sessions: Sunday 28 December 2025 to Saturday 3 January 2026	\$5000 cash \$1020.97 in-kind	Hot Summer Nights Riverside Sessions is a vibrant multi-day outdoor live music event, designed to bring the Evans Head community together for a number of unforgettable summer evenings by the river. The event will feature live entertainment, food and beverage stalls, and a lively atmosphere, making the most of the RSL's scenic waterfront location. The event will feature one ticketed show, with the remaining shows being free of charge.	\$0 cash \$0 in-kind
2025 Australian Cattle Dog Championships Wednesday 16 to Sunday 20 July	\$5000 cash \$4415 in-kind	With more than 200 entries already received, the 2025 Australian Cattle Dog Championships and State of Origin is shaping up to be one of the biggest trials to date. Held in the undercover arena at the Casino Showground, this four-day event runs from Wednesday 16 July through to Sunday 20 July and offers \$26,000 in winnings, buckles and prizes. Categories include: the Casino John Gould Memorial Open; Novice; and Maiden; and Sire Shootout.	\$5000 cash \$4415 in-kind
		Cash	\$13,500.00
		In-kind	\$15,788.91
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$29,289.00</b>

Note: Feedback will be provided directly to all applicants where the amount requested differs from what has been allocated.

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

**19.4 CASINO SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT PROJECT UPDATE**

**Director:** Ben Zeller

**Responsible Officer:** David Timms

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council receives and notes the Casino Sewage Treatment Plant Project Update.

**REPORT**

The development phase for the delivery of a new sewage treatment plant (STP) in Casino is well underway and continues to progress on an aggressive schedule.

The existing Casino STP was constructed in 1932 and has received numerous augmentations and upgrades over the past 90 years to address various performance, environmental and WHS issues. The STP is now approaching the end of its useful life and is at its operational capacity with inherent structural risks that cannot be effectively mitigated by further temporary repairs and upgrades. Without replacement of the STP, there is a risk of widespread service disruptions, environmental damage and regulatory non-compliance.

Council's adopted plans and strategies highlight a growth trajectory for the Richmond Valley, particularly in Casino, that is beyond the current capacity of the STP. To complement the expected growth, the STP needs to be replaced with a modern, environmentally compliant plant that can service the community into the next century. Council expects the new STP to cost at least \$65m, however this depends on its capacity to secure funding within the next 1-2 years. Recent analysis has shown that with continued cost escalation and contingencies, the ultimate cost could be as high as \$80m. The preferred solution is to replace the existing plant with an Intermittently Decanted Extended Aeration (IDEA) treatment plant. The solution allows for an equivalent population of 20,000 to connect to the centralised sewage network.

Council has a current project budget of \$4,960,490 to fund the planning, design and development work for the plant upgrade project. The completion of this work will provide Council with a shovel ready project. This is funded via the Sewer reserves and current expenditure against budget for this phase totals \$1,619,091. Grant funding and council borrowing will need to be secured to undertake the full construction phase of the project, noting that Council's long term financial plan includes a commitment to borrow \$20 million as a contribution.

With such a significant infrastructure project, the development phase has necessitated a detailed planning schedule with some of the highlighted elements as follows:

- Completion of preliminary environmental and habitat assessments
- Climate change modelling and risk assessments
- Facilitation of a competitive market tender procurement process for the STP Concept Design, subsequently awarded to industry specialist to Beca Hunter H2O.
- Geotechnical investigation and reporting
- Regular project collaboration with partners such as (NSW State Government agencies) – Department of Climate Change, Energy the Environment and Water (DCCEEW), NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) and NSW Department of Health (DoH)
- Aboriginal due diligence assessment
- Threatened species target surveys
- Submission of Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program (RPPP) and Housing Support Program grant applications (unsuccessful)
- Completion of flood studies
- Completion of topographical survey of the proposed site.



Post the initial development phase, several important milestones have been met and are outlined following.

- Completion of the Ecological Assessment for the new Casino Sewage Treatment Plant which concluded that, 'there will be no known direct impacts on threatened flora or fauna species',
- Completion of Aboriginal Due Diligence Assessment Report which concluded that 'no newly identified archaeological material was identified and that the potential for any intact archaeological sub-surface deposits to be present within the study area is nil.'
- Completion of The Review of Environmental Factors (REF) has been lodged with Council on 14 May 2025. The feedback process is underway.
- Completion of Casino STP Concept Design
- Completion of Receiving Waterways Study Report. It concluded that the proposed STP is expected to comply with the expected EPA Environmental Protection Licence (EPL) limits.
- Engagement has continued with the Department of Climate Change Energy the Environment and Water (DCCEEW), NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) and NSW Department of Health (DoH), in relation to the finalisation of the concept design and the Section 60 approval application.
- The Section 60 Application was submitted to DCCEEW on 10 April 2025. In the absence of any 'stop the clocks' on the application a decision would take no longer than 12 weeks, however DCCEEW issued Council with a RFI on 29 May 2025 which has 'stopped the clock' on the assessment process. The RFI listed eight items that require further clarification which the project team is preparing a response to.
- Council received advice that grant applications for the Federal governments Housing Support Program were unsuccessful. Applications for \$36M which included \$29M of enabling infrastructure works for the Summerland Estate and \$7M for early works at the Casino STP site and a second application just for the \$29M of enabling infrastructure works were made. Feedback on the applications has been received and will be considered for any future grant applications.
- Council received advice that a grant application for the Federal governments Regional Precincts and Partnerships Program (Stream 1) for \$5M was unsuccessful. Feedback on the application was requested and subsequently received and will be addressed in future applications.
- An independent cost estimate has been undertaken by consultants WT Partnerships which concluded that, based on the finalised concept design, the STP would cost \$84.5M.
- A suitably qualified contractor has been engaged to provide advice on the rehabilitation and demolition of the existing STP.
- The Business Case has been updated and refreshed by Balmoral Group (original authors of the Business Case). The study has shown that, even with the 'worst case' capital cost of \$84.5M the project still has a Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) of 1.33 at a discount rate of 5% and provides a net benefit of \$25M over 50 years to NSW, making it a positive and economically viable investment.
- A Request for Tender for the Detailed Design of the STP was issued with three tenders submitted and considered at the May 2025 Council Meeting. All tenders were rejected with authorisation given to the General Manager to negotiate a commercial outcome for the detailed design engagement. Provided a consultant is engaged in June and commences work in July 2025, the detailed design should be completed by the end of February 2026.

The next steps in the project development are:

- Engage a consultant for the detailed design and commence the work package
- Respond to the DCCEEW s60 Application request for information
- Finalise the STP decommissioning and rehabilitation optioneering and budget plan for the existing STP
- Issue a Request for Quote for an update to the Recycled Water Management Plan
- Ongoing STP influent sampling and testing
- Ongoing receiving waterways sampling/monitoring (at least until July 2025)

- Updates to the project website
- Explore, advocate and apply for funding opportunities for the full construction of the project.

Council has committed the current budget allocation to ensure the project reaches a shovel ready stage, expected mid-2026.

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

**Nil**

## 19.5 PLANNING INSTITUTE OF AUSTRALIA NATIONAL CONGRESS AND NATIONAL PLANNING EXCELLENCE AWARDS

**General Manager:** Vaughan Macdonald

**Responsible Officer:** Tony McAteer

### RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the report on the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) National Congress and the 2025 National Awards for Planning Excellence.

### REPORT

This year's Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) National Congress was held at the Darwin Convention Centre over the 29<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> May 2025. The event was attended by the General Manager and Strategic Land Use Planner which provided opportunities to network with planners from across Australia, listen to thought provoking panel discussions and keynote presentations, and attend the PIA National Planning Excellence Awards.

This year's Congress was themed around:

- Delivery of great communities, housing, resilience, connectivity and infrastructure,
- New ways of planning from AI to zoning,
- Future of place in changing cities, towns and regional settlements, and
- First Nations knowledge and planning.

The Congress was opened by the PIA National President Emma Riley who spoke of currently living in a time of uncertainty and rapid change, particularly in terms of technological advancement, with planners, planning systems and delivery of planning outcomes under pressure right across Australia.

### Key Takeaways from presentations

#### National shortage of town planners

- Investment is needed to encourage and train new planners to take up this career path.

#### Housing Crisis

- Professor Anthony Burke, host of Grand Designs Australia, questioned whether we have a supply and demand issue, as on any given night in Australia there are-
  - 122,000 homeless
  - 10.9 million homes with 1 million empty
  - 28 million spare bedrooms (more than 1 in each home)
  - social housing shortfall of 433,000 properties, and
  - rental increases in 2024 between 13%-25%.
- Australia needs to deliver housing to meet its projected demography which means changing housing typologies, including smaller homes.
- NSW is on track to deliver 230,000 new homes under the Housing Accord but is a long way behind in delivering on its target of 377,000.
  - The NSW Housing Program is very much focused on infill development in areas where there is existing infrastructure capacity. This is seen as the fastest way to deliver new homes.

- The NSW Government's TOD (Transport Oriented Development) and the Low and Mid-Rise (LMR) Infill Housing Programs made bold planning changes—Sydney went from having a single council, of thirty-three, permitting terraces and small residential flats in residential zones around transport hubs, to mandating it in over 170 locations across Sydney.
- South Australia has focused heavily on contemporary housing policy – inclusive of rezoning, smaller houses and more diverse housing.
  - It's Future Living Code amendments looked carefully at infill and character areas with a focus on reigning in social licence for infill development where years spent trying to achieve an 85% infill target have caused a lot of concern.
  - SA sees the challenge nationally will be to get more affordable housing, more smaller housing, and more missing middle product.
  - SA also sees the National Construction Code as another area of policy holding back the delivery of housing.

### Planning Reforms

- South Australia adopted a new Planning Act in 2017 and spent the last eight-years building new Planning and Design Codes. This offers a single set of planning rules, replacing 72 planning schemes (equivalent to NSW LEPs).
  - This is a fully digital platform and, unlike other regional plans that are in booklet format and out-of-date the day they are printed, they can maintain it on a day to day basis with immediate statutory effect.
  - By the end of the year, SA's electronic system will be making planning decisions, which will involve changes to the Planning Act as it currently requires a human to make decisions. This would be used to approve things such as houses in housing zones that meet all the rules.
  - Sally Smith, Chief Planner for SA, challenged the other States to look at their Acts and remove unnecessary processes and administrative procedures.
- The NSW Planning System is perceived as broken. Gary White, former Chief Planner for NSW, advocates for a reversal of the current planning framework where 90% of planning resources go to assessment and regulatory enforcement and only 10% goes into strategic planning. He sees our current planning systems are designed to control, regulate, and stop. However, the essence of successful planning is to "Dream It – Design It – Deliver It".

### AI Technology

- The next 20 years could see technological change exceeding that of the last 200 years.
- Planning AI software is in its infancy, but in the medium-term new software needs to be embraced.
- There are a lot of AI solutions on the market, so you really need to have a clear understanding of your requirements before diving into a solution that may be expensive, complex, and not solve the problem.
- There is a need to understand ethical and governance frameworks because there is a lot of other legislation to consider including privacy & information sharing, and digital government policies such as the use of AI and advanced technologies.
- Many fear AI will replace jobs but the Harvard Business Review says "AI won't replace humans - but humans with AI will replace humans without AI".
- Most AI vendors at the Congress were addressing different aspects of the development assessment process from online concierge services to development

application dashboard management systems. There doesn't appear to be a single planning solution yet and certainly nothing that could unwind the technically complex planning system.

Overall, the congress presented new ideas and challenged current understanding of what good planning looks like and should look like into the future.

### PIA National Awards for Planning Excellence

Council was also nominated for a National PIA Award, following its success in the State awards with the Mid Richmond Place Plans. The Mid Richmond Place Plans were recognised as a major body of strategic planning work that integrates strategic planning with urban design and adaptation planning. The Place Plans won the Climate Change and Resilience category at the NSW PIA Planning Excellence Awards in November 2024, and progressed as a finalist to the National PIA Awards for Planning Excellence which were announced at the Congress. The Mid Richmond Place Plans was commended in the category of Climate Change and Resilience because they *"demonstrated strong originality, with urban adaption as an embedded outcome of the strategic planning, urban design and placemaking for each of the five Place Plans"*.

The Plan was prepared by consultancy firm Place Design Group and Meridian Urban, in close collaboration with Council, with the inclusion of data provided by Broad Property Research and Advisory. Part funding was provided by the NSW Reconstruction Authority (RA) as a pilot to inform local and regional disaster adaption planning. Special thanks are extended to the NSW Reconstruction Authority, Place Design Group, Meridian Urban and Council staff involved in the project.



*National PIA Planning Excellence Commendation Awarded to Mid Richmond Place Plans in the category of Climate Change and Resilience*



*Receiving the Commendation Award were (left to right) General Manager Vaughan Macdonald, Strategic Planner Tony McAteer, Camille Kirwan (Place Design Group) and Ryan McNeilly Smith (Meridian Urban)*

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

**Nil**

**19.6 MINUTES OF THE AUDIT, RISK AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING - 28 MAY 2025****Director: Ryan Gaiter****Responsible Officer: Latoya Cooper****RECOMMENDATION**

That Council receives and notes the Minutes of the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee meeting held on 28 May 2025.

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

- 1. Minutes of the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee Meeting - 28 May 2025 (under separate cover)**

**19.7 MINUTES OF THE LOCAL TRAFFIC COMMITTEE MEETING - 3 JUNE 2025****Director: Ben Zeller****Responsible Officer: Kim Anderson****RECOMMENDATION**

That Council receives and notes the Minutes of the Local Traffic Committee Meeting held on 3 June 2025.

**REPORT**

A copy of the Minutes is included in the attachments.

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

1. **Minutes of the Local Traffic Committee Meeting held on 3 June 2025 (under separate cover)**



**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 REGPRO041526 Supply and Delivery of Traffic and Safety Signage**

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 VP457163 - Supply and Delivery: One (1) x Quad-Axle Deck Widening Low Loader**

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 - Casino Raw Water Pump Station Solar System**

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**