Richmond Valley Council

# MINUTES

## Ordinary Council Meeting
## 17 February 2026

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**MINUTES OF RICHMOND VALLEY COUNCIL**
**ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING**
**HELD AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 10 GRAHAM PLACE, CASINO**
**ON TUESDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 2026 AT 6PM**

*Please note: these minutes are subject to confirmation at the next Council Meeting. Decisions recorded in the draft minutes are subject to the Council's Code of Meeting Practice in relation to rescinding decisions.*

**PRESENT:** Cr Robert Mustow (Mayor), Cr Stephen Morrissey (Deputy Mayor), Cr Sam Cornish, Cr Robert Hayes, Cr Sandra Humphrys, Cr John Walker

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Vaughan Macdonald (General Manager), Ryan Gaiter (Director Organisational Services), Jenna Hazelwood (Chief of Staff), Tina Kao (Director Planning and Sustainable Communities), Ben Zeller (Director Infrastructure Services & Projects), Julie Clark (Personal Assistant to the General Manager and Mayor), Simon Breeze (IT Support Coordinator)

## 1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Mayor provided 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

The meeting opened with a prayer by the General Manager.

## 3 APOLOGIES

**RESOLUTION 170226/1**

Moved: Cr Robert Hayes
Seconded: Cr Sam Cornish

That the apology received from Cr Lyndall Murray (absent due to work commitments) be accepted and leave of absence granted.

**CARRIED**

## 4 MAYORAL MINUTES

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the first ordinary meeting for 2026 and noted that the new Code of Meeting Practice was now in place.

# 5 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

## 5.1 MINUTES OF ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 16 DECEMBER 2025

**RESOLUTION 170226/2**

Moved: Cr Sandra Humphrys
Seconded: Cr Stephen Morrissey

That Council confirms the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 16 December 2025.

**CARRIED**

## 5.2 MINUTES OF EXTRAORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 22 JANUARY 2026

**RESOLUTION 170226/3**

Moved: Cr Sandra Humphrys
Seconded: Cr Robert Hayes

That Council confirms the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held on 22 January 2026.

**CARRIED**

# 6 MATTERS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

Cr Hayes referred to Item 16.2 Future Management of Airforce Beach - Notice of Motion Response

*"5. Investigates the option of relocating the 4wd access point to cleared land on the Northern side of Evans Head and provides all correspondence and replies with all government agencies to Councillors as soon as possible*" and enquired if any agency advice had been received."

The General Manager advised that two (2) letters were sent to the agencies involved; one response has been received, and Council is still awaiting the second response. A report will be provided to the March Ordinary meeting including the responses.

# 7 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Cr Robert Hayes declared a non-pecuniary insignificant interest in relation to Item 14.1 DA2026/0091 - Clause 4.6 Richmond Valley Local Environmental Plan Variation at 395 Reardons Lane Swan Bay, due to a being an applicant for other development applications on this land, not related to the matter before Council.

Director Ryan Gaiter declared a non-pecuniary insignificant interest in relation to Item 17.2 Development Applications Determined Under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act for the Period 1 December 2025 - 31 January 2026, due to both himself and his brother having development applications determined in December and January which are listed in the report.

# 8 NOTICE OF MOTION

Nil

# 9 MAYOR'S REPORT

## 9.1 MAYORAL ATTENDANCE REPORT 9 DECEMBER 2025 - 9 FEBRUARY 2026

**RESOLUTION 170226/4**

Moved: Cr Robert Mustow
Seconded: Cr Stephen Morrissey

That Council receives and notes the Mayoral Attendance Report for the period 9 December 2025 – 9 February 2026.

**CARRIED**

# 10 DELEGATES' REPORTS

## 10.1 DELEGATES' REPORT FEBRUARY 2026 - ROUS COUNTY COUNCIL

**RESOLUTION 170226/5**

Moved: Cr Sandra Humphrys
Seconded: Cr Robert Mustow

That Council receives and notes the Delegates' Report – Rous County Council for February 2026.

**CARRIED**

# 11 MATTERS DETERMINED WITHOUT DEBATE

## 11.1 MATTERS TO BE DETERMINED WITHOUT DEBATE

**RESOLUTION 170226/6**

Moved: Cr Stephen Morrissey
Seconded: Cr Sam Cornish

That items 16.1,16.2,16.3, identified be determined without debate.

**CARRIED**

# 12 GENERAL MANAGER

## 12.1 DELIVERY PROGRAM PROGRESS REPORT, JULY - DECEMBER 2025

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Richmond Valley Council has completed the first six months of its 2025-2029 Delivery Program, with strong progress in achieving the community's priorities over the July-December 2025 reporting period. A number of key milestones have been achieved, including commencement of the $3.5m Casino Suspension Bridge, official opening of the $1.6m Broadwater Bridge upgrade and commencement of another stage of the Three Villages Cycleway. Work on Council's $100m road flood repair program also progressed well, along with plans for major water and sewerage upgrades. The past six months have also seen a major boost to the local economy, with $15.6m in new commercial, industrial and tourism investment approved by Council, and a further $1.5b in major solar farm projects approved by the NSW Government.

Of the 75 Principal Activities in the Delivery Program, 73 are currently on schedule, with plans in place to bring the remaining two projects – review of the Destination Management Plan and finalisation of the Floodplain Risk Management Plan – back on track in early 2026. A full report on progress is attached.

**RESOLUTION 170226/7**

Moved: Cr Robert Hayes
Seconded: Cr Robert Mustow

That Council:

1. Receives the July-December 2025 Progress Report on the 2025-2029 Delivery Program and notes the significant progress across the four Key Directions of the plan.
2. Continues to advocate strongly for Government funding to deliver the community's priority projects.

**CARRIED**

# 13 OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER

Nil

# 14 PLANNING AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

## 14.1 DA2026/0091 - CLAUSE 4.6 RICHMOND VALLEY LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN VARIATION AT 395 REARDONS LANE SWAN BAY

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council has received Development Application no. DA2026/0091 seeking consent for a proposed Torrens Title Subdivision from three (3) Lots into four (4) Lots at Lots 831, 832, 833 DP 847683, commonly known as 395 Reardons Lane, Swan Bay.

As a result of the proposed subdivision, two existing dwellings will be located on proposed Lot 2, thus creating a detached Dual Occupancy Development where the dwellings would be located 150 metres apart, exceeding a development standard by 50 metres, or 50%.

This has necessitated the submission of a Clause 4.6 variation of Clause *4.2B Erection of dual occupancies and dwelling houses on land in Zone RU1, R5 and C3*, under the *Richmond Valley Local Environmental Plan 2012* (LEP), to permit the detached Dual Occupancy to have a dwelling separation distance exceeding 100 metres.

In accordance with the *Department of Planning and Environment Guide to Varying Development Standards November 2023*, where the extent of variation is greater than 10% the elected council has the function in determining the variation.

**RESOLUTION 170226/8**

Moved: Cr Stephen Morrissey
Seconded: Cr Sandra Humphrys

That Council, pursuant to clause 4.6 of the *Richmond Valley LEP 2012*, approves a development standard variation within DA2026/0091 to permit two dwellings located on a single allotment in exceedance of the maximum 100 metres separation provided for in clause 4.2B(4)(c).

**CARRIED**

# 15 INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES & PROJECTS

## 15.1 RELOCATION OF CORAKI PLAYGROUND

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the Ordinary Council Meeting of July 2024, Council adopted the Coraki Place Plan as part of its broader strategic planning framework. The Place Plan sets out a clear vision and land use direction for Coraki, identifying twelve key directions, including “Revitalise Coraki Memorial Park and riverfront open space.”

This direction highlights the need to enhance both passive and active recreational opportunities, building on existing assets such as the beach, boat ramp, jetty, and Coraki Memorial Park itself. A specific action from the plan includes securing funding to manage erosion and stabilisation of the riverbanks, particularly in response to flood events and elevated tides.

The Coraki Playground, located within Memorial Park at the junction of the Richmond and Wilson Rivers, is a valued asset for both residents and visitors. However, its location has presented ongoing challenges due to flood impacts and the Richmond Terrace landslip, which continues to compromise the site’s safety and long-term viability. Despite recent repair and enhancement works completed in June 2024 including installation of shade sails, surface upgrades, and equipment repairs, the continued effects of erosion and Cyclone Alfred impacts have again raised concerns about the playground’s sustainability in its current location.

Previous assessments indicate limited options to prevent the progressive landslip from undermining the site, prompting the need to explore relocation options. Relocation is currently unfunded and would require a major budget adjustment however it does align with the Coraki Place Plan’s goals to enhance local amenity and recreational opportunities.

Council staff have commenced preliminary design and cost planning, with cost estimates of $215,000 for a larger, relocated playground with full amenities including fencing, shade sails, surfacing, and demolition of the existing site.

In September 2025, Council conducted community consultation on potential relocation sites, receiving 18 submissions. Based on community feedback and technical assessments, strong feedback proposed relocation of the playground to Windsor Park, with some support to maintain the playground within Memorial Park adjacent to the CBD.

In December 2025, Council carried out further targeted consultation by sending letters to residents adjoining Windsor Park. This process resulted in 1 submission, which suggested having two playgrounds—one in Windsor Park and one retained in Memorial Park (adjoining caravan park).

### RESOLUTION 170226/9

Moved: Cr Robert Mustow
Seconded: Cr Robert Hayes

That Council:

1. Notes the options for the relocation of Coraki Playground and the feedback received from the community;
2. Endorses Windsor Park as the preferred location for the project and actively seeks funding opportunities to support its delivery, and/or identifies Council funding sources in the preparation of the 2026/27 budget.
3. Notes that the existing Coraki Playground in Memorial Park, will remain in service until such time as the facility can no longer be maintained or repaired, or the new facility at Windsor Park is constructed.

**CARRIED**

# 16 ORGANISATIONAL SERVICES

## 16.1 CODE OF MEETING PRACTICE

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council adopted its revised Code of Meeting Practice in December 2025. The revised Code incorporates the mandatory provisions of the new Model Code of Meeting Practice for NSW Local Government, which applies to all local councils from January 2026.. The new code aims to create more transparent, accountable and publicly accessible meetings.

### RESOLUTION 170226/10

Moved: Cr Stephen Morrissey
Seconded: Cr Sam Cornish

That Council:

1. Notes the commencement of the Model Code of Meeting Practice for NSW Local Government mandatory provisions and the additional guidance received from the Office of Local Government regarding implementation.;
2. Endorses the proposed arrangements for Public Forums as outlined in this report;
3. Adopts the proposed general order of business for ordinary meetings
4. Adopts the ordinary meeting dates for 2026 as outlined in this report.

**CARRIED**

## 16.2 SOCIAL MEDIA AND MEDIA POLICY UPDATE

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The use of social media continues to grow in both professional and personal contexts. Considering evolving digital practices, reputational risks and legal obligations, the Office of Local Government (OLG) issued model media and social media policies to provide a framework when dealing with the media. The model policies aim to ensure that media engagement by councillors and staff is consistent, accurate, professional, and enhances the council's reputation. Additionally, the model policies endeavour to clarify the responsibilities and expectations of council representatives depending on their role.

Council has revised its Media and Social Media Policies to incorporate key elements of the OLG model policies, to better reflect current expectations, technologies and risks.

### RESOLUTION 170226/11

Moved: Cr Stephen Morrissey
Seconded: Cr Sam Cornish

That Council adopts the updated Media and Social Media Policies.

**CARRIED**

## 16.3 FINANCIAL ANALYSIS REPORT - DECEMBER 2025 AND JANUARY 2026

### 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 as at 31 December 2025 and 31 January 2026 is shown below:

| Month | Bank Accounts | Term Deposits | Floating Rate Notes | Fixed Rate Bonds | TCorp IM Funds | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **December 2025** | $15,882,943 | $42,000,000 | $6,250,000 | $3,000,000 | $18,688,846 | $85,821,789 |
| **January 2026** | $20,319,454 | $39,000,000 | $6,250,000 | $3,000,000 | $18,815,891 | $87,385,345 |

The weighted average rate of return on Council's cash and investments at 31 December 2025 was 3.59% which was below the Bloomberg AusBond Bank Bill Index for December of 3.72% (annualised), which is Council's benchmark.

The weighted average rate of return on Council's cash and investments at 31 January 2026 was 5.00% which was above the Bloomberg AusBond Bank Bill Index for January of 3.65% (annualised).

### RESOLUTION 170226/12

Moved: Cr Stephen Morrissey
Seconded: Cr Sam Cornish

That Council adopts the Financial Analysis Report detailing the performance of its cash and investments for the months of December 2025 and January 2026.

**CARRIED**

## 16.4 QUARTERLY BUDGET REVIEW STATEMENT FOR THE QUARTER ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2025

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The budget review report for the quarter ended 31 December 2025 has been prepared to provide Council and the community with information regarding Council's financial performance and proposed amendments to the 2025/2026 budget.

This Quarterly Budget Review Statement is presented in the Office of Local Government's (OLG) newly introduced (mandatory) reporting format.

Council's projected net operating result before capital grants and contributions for 2025/2026 has decreased slightly by $36,038, to a deficit of $11.85 million. This decrease is primarily due to a transfer from unexpended grants in internal reserves towards operating expenditure for the funded project.

Operating results from continuing operations including capital grants and contributions but excluding depreciation, amortisation and impairment increased by $6.65 million, bringing the surplus to $65.634 million. This outcome stems from income increasing by $8.04 million to $138 million, primarily due to an increase in capital grants and contributions. Detailed notes on significant adjustments are available on pages 4-6 of the Quarterly Budget Review Statement.

As at 31 December 2025, Council's actual revenue is tracking at 58% of the projected year-end result and expenditure from continuing operations at 48%, indicating consistent delivery against the operational budget.

Council's capital works program has been reviewed, resulting in proposed decrease in the current program for 2025/2026 of $8.487 million, to $79.190 million. Current expenditure for the capital program is at 31% of the revised budget. This is expected to rise substantially through the remainder of 2025/2026 as several key grant funded projects progress. Notable projects include the Casino Industries Activation (Patrica St roundabout), betterment of the NRLX effluent management system, Casino suspension bridge, and Woodburn-Evans Head shared pathway. The capital budget will continue to be closely monitored, and any required adjustments will be presented in future financial reports to Council.

Council's unrestricted cash surplus has remained unchanged at $301,339 as of 31 December 2025, projecting a consistent cash position.

### RESOLUTION 170226/13

Moved: Cr John Walker
Seconded: Cr Sam Cornish

That Council:

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

**CARRIED**

Note: The General Manager agreed to provide a report to Council in March 2026 in regard to IT services and increased costs for software licensing following questions from Cr Walker.

## 17 MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

**RESOLUTION 170226/14**

Moved: Cr Stephen Morrissey
Seconded: Cr Robert Hayes

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

**CARRIED**

### 17.1 RICHMOND VALLEY - RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

**RESOLUTION 170226/15**

Moved: Cr Stephen Morrissey
Seconded: Cr Robert Hayes

That Council receives and notes the report Richmond Valley – Residential Development Update.

**CARRIED**

### 17.2 DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS DETERMINED UNDER THE ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT ACT FOR THE PERIOD 1 DECEMBER 2025 - 31 JANUARY 2026

**RESOLUTION 170226/16**

Moved: Cr Stephen Morrissey
Seconded: Cr Robert Hayes

That Council receives and notes the Development Applications report for the period 1 December 2025 to 31 January 2026.

**CARRIED**

### 17.3 PACIFIC HIGHWAY - ROAD HANDOVER UPDATE

**RESOLUTION 170226/17**

Moved: Cr Stephen Morrissey
Seconded: Cr Robert Hayes

That Council notes the Pacific Highway – Road handover update report.

**CARRIED**

### 17.4 CIVIC HALL MASTERPLAN

**RESOLUTION 170226/18**

Moved: Cr Stephen Morrissey
Seconded: Cr Robert Hayes

That Council notes the Civic Hall Masterplan report and proposed community consultation, and that following consultation, a further report will be presented to Council seeking adoption of the

final Master Plan.

**CARRIED**

### 17.5 QUARTERLY CAPITAL WORKS UPDATE

**RESOLUTION 170226/19**

Moved: Cr Stephen Morrissey
Seconded: Cr Robert Hayes

That Council receives and notes the Quarterly Capital Works Update.

**CARRIED**

### 17.6 CUSTOMER SERVICE REPORT OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2025

**RESOLUTION 170226/20**

Moved: Cr Stephen Morrissey
Seconded: Cr Robert Hayes

That Council receives and notes the Customer Service Report for the period 1 October – 31 December 2025.

**CARRIED**

### 17.7 GRANT APPLICATION INFORMATION REPORT - DECEMBER 2025 & JANUARY 2026

**RESOLUTION 170226/21**

Moved: Cr Stephen Morrissey
Seconded: Cr Robert Hayes

That Council receives and notes the Grant Application Information Report for the months of December 2025 and January 2026.

**CARRIED**

### 17.8 WRITE OFF OF MONIES UNDER DELEGATION

**RESOLUTION 170226/22**

Moved: Cr Stephen Morrissey
Seconded: Cr Robert Hayes

That Council receives and notes the write-off of monies totalling $2,165.27 under the General Manager’s delegation.

**CARRIED**

# 18 QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

## 18.1 QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

**RESOLUTION 170226/23**

Moved: Cr Robert Hayes
Seconded: Cr Stephen Morrissey

That the response to the Questions on Notice by Councillor Hayes, regarding the health of the Richmond River and the Flood Risk Management Study and Plan be received and noted.

**CARRIED**

# 19 QUESTIONS FOR NEXT MEETING (IN WRITING)

Cr Robert Hayes submitted the following question in writing to the meeting;

*Why is the upcoming environmental work on Terrace Street Evans Head funded by Richmond Valley Council, when the land is owned and managed by Crown Land?*

# 20 MATTERS REFERRED TO CLOSED COUNCIL

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:

**20.1 Tender - VP478065 - Casino Water Treatment Plant Augmentation - Project Management & Technical Support Services**

This matter relates to a (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.

The General Manager reported that no written representations had been received in respect of the items listed for consideration in Closed Council.

The Chair called for representations from the gallery.

There were no verbal representations from the gallery in respect of this item.

The Chair advised that under section 10A Local Government Act 1993, the media and public are to be excluded from the meeting on the basis that the business to be discussed is classified confidential under the provisions of section 10(2) as outlined above.

**RESOLUTION 170226/24**

Moved: Cr Stephen Morrissey
Seconded: Cr Sam Cornish

That:

1. Council enters Closed Council to consider the business identified in Item 22.1, together with any late reports tabled at the meeting.
2. Pursuant to section 10A(2) of the Local Government Act 1993, the media and public be excluded from the meeting on the basis the business to be discussed is classified confidential under the provisions of section 10(2) as outlined above. The correspondence and reports relevant to the subject business be withheld from access to the media and public as required by section 11(2) Local Government Act 1993

**CARRIED**

Council closed its meeting at 6.53 pm.

The open Council meeting resumed at 6.57pm

## 21 RESOLUTIONS OF CLOSED COUNCIL

The resolution of the Closed Council meeting were read by the Director Infrastructure Services and Projects (Item 20.1)

### 20.1 Tender - VP478065 - Casino Water Treatment Plant Augmentation - Project Management & Technical Support Services

That Council:

1. Appoints Uminex Pty Ltd as the Lead Project Management Consultant to assist Council in the delivery of the Casino WTP Augmentation project.
2. Authorises the General Manager to negotiate and finalise the terms and conditions of any contract or agreement, in line with the content of this report and the available budget and affixing the seal of Council where necessary.

The Meeting closed at 7pm.

The minutes of this meeting were confirmed at the Ordinary Council Meeting held on 17 March 2026.

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**CHAIRPERSON**