Richmond Valley Council

AGENDA

Ordinary Council Meeting

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

Date: **Tuesday, 19 May 2026**

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 APOLOGIES

4 MAYORAL MINUTES

Nil

5 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

5.1 MINUTES OF ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON 21 APRIL 2026

Author: **Vaughan Macdonald**

RECOMMENDATION

That Council confirms the Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held on 21 April 2026.

REPORT

Refer to attached Minutes.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Unconfirmed Minutes 21 April 2026 (under separate cover)

6 MATTERS ARISING OUT OF THE MINUTES

7 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

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

8 NOTICE OF MOTION

Nil

9 MAYOR'S REPORT

9.1 MAYORAL ATTENDANCE REPORT 14 APRIL - 11 MAY 2026

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the Mayoral Attendance Report for the period 14 April – 11 May 2026.

APRIL

- 14th Richmond Valley Council General Manager's briefing
- 15th Rous County Council meeting
- 18th Cassino Gallery Event
- 18th Fun in the Sun - Youth Week - Evans Head
- 20th Meeting with Kevin Hogan MP - projects update
- 21st Richmond Valley Council Ordinary meeting
- 23rd Casino Public School Anzac Day Ceremony
- 23rd Casino High School Anzac Service
- 24th Casino Food Company Biohub project - construction commencement
- 25th Anzac Day 2026
    - Evans Head Dawn Service
    - Coraki Morning Service
    - Casino RSL Luncheon
    - Casino Retreat Ceremony
- 28th Citizenship Ceremony
- 30th Casino Food Company discussion

MAY

- 4th NSW Police Probationary Constables Welcome
- 5th Richmond Valley Council General Manager's briefing
- 6th Sod Turn Australia Post site - Casino
- 6th Richmond Valley Council - Reconnect with our 2026 Yes Program Trainees and Apprentices
- 7th LGNSW Rural & Regional Summit - Sydney
- 7th Legislative Council President - Welcome Function for Country Mayors Association - Sydney
- 8th Country Mayors Association meeting - Sydney
- 9th Casino Pony Club Gymkhana
- 9th Groovin the Moo festival - Lismore
- 9th Evans Head - Casino SLSC Inc annual presentation
- 10th Woodburn Orchid Society Show

10 DELEGATES' REPORTS

10.1 DELEGATES' REPORT MAY 2026 - ROUS COUNTY COUNCIL

RECOMMENDATION

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

REPORT

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

Cr Robert Mustow and Cr Sandra Humphrys have provided the following summary of the main items of business for the Rous County Council Ordinary Meeting held on 15 April 2026.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Rous Council Meeting Summary 15 April 2026

ROUS

Council Meeting, Wednesday 15 April 2026

Summary of main items of business

For a copy of the agenda for the meeting click here.

Reports to Council

1. Workplace Consolidation – Intersection of Gallans Road and Tamarind Drive update *(Late report)*

View Agenda Item 7.1

(a) Council accepted a late item for determination as a matter of urgency, in accordance with the Code of Meeting Practice.

(b) Rous and Ballina Shire Council have reached in-principle agreement for Rous to meet DA requirements via a financial contribution, with Ballina to deliver the future intersection upgrade. This approach enables Rous to obtain its Occupation Certificate and operate from the Gallans Road site without constructing the intersection upfront.

(c) Council received and noted the Workplace Consolidation – Intersection of Gallans Road update and approved the reallocation of funds identified for the intersection of Gallans Road and Tamarind Drive from financial year 2026/27 to financial year 2025/26, to allow execution of the agreement and meet the 28-day payment terms.

(d) The contribution is based on the estimated cost of the seagull intersection (plus contingency), with interim road safety measures to be implemented until a final treatment is delivered.

2. Quarterly Budget Review Statement

View Agenda Item 9.1 (pages 5 - 28)

(a) Council noted the Quarterly Budget Review Statement Quarter ending 31 March 2026 and authorised the variations to the amounts from those previously estimated.

(b) The Rous Responsible Accounting Officer has reported that the projected financial position at 30 June 2026 will be satisfactory.

3. Public Exhibition: Delivery program | Operational plan (with 2026 – 2027 budget and Statement of Revenue Policy)

View Agenda Item 10.1 (pages 29 - 137)

(a) Council endorsed the draft Delivery program | Operational plan (incorporating the 2026/27 Budget and Statement of Revenue policy) for public exhibition.

(b) The adjustments approved at the Council meeting as part of the March 2026 Quarterly Budget Review Statement reports have been included in the exhibited documents.

(c) Council's Draft Long-Term Financial Plan (LTFP) for 2026/27 – 2035/36 depicts finances improving over time, with operating results (including capital revenue) set to improve from $0.03M to $12.4M.

(d) This will enable Rous to fund capital works beyond 2027/28 from its cash reserves and meet key financial benchmark ratios.

(e) The 10-year capital works program totals $204M with significant investment in the Future Water Program (FWP) and water infrastructure assets.

(f) The FWP estimates within the LTFP include expenditure to construct and run new and expanded groundwater sites. To finance these the LTFP includes external borrowings and increased bulk water

charges to constituent councils (7.0% per annum for the next 6 years). Noting, the viability and estimated costs of the new water source solutions continue to be investigated.

(g) The price for retail water customers will also increase by 7%. Weeds & Biosecurity contributions and Flood Mitigation contributions will increase by 4% while other charges have generally increased by rate-peg or CPI.

4. Behaviour change program and rainwater tank rebate

View Agenda Item 11.1 (pages 138 - 139)

(a) Council endorsed to extend Rous' residential behaviour change program and rainwater tank rebate program to 30 June 2027.

(b) Due to delays in bringing a consultant onboard, internal staffing constraints and consideration of the impacts on the community following the 2022 floods, completion of the program has been impacted. To ensure the intended objectives are achieved, it is recommended that the program be extended to June 2027.

(c) The residential rainwater tank rebate program and the behaviour change program – known as the Ripple Effect: Waterwise Households – are key commitments of Rous' Regional Demand Management Plan (RDMP) 2023-2026.

(d) The Ripple Effect: Waterwise Households Program is intended to guide the design of a new, fit-for-purpose residential support program.

Information Reports

5. Council received and noted various information reports

View Agenda Items 12.1 – 12.5 (pages 140 - 168)

1. Investments – February 2026 (141 – 147)
2. Investments – March 2026 (pages 148 - 154)
3. Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee – meeting update (pages 155 - 160)
4. Gallans Road Project update (pages 161 - 167)
5. Actions pending (page 168)

11 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.

11.1 MATTERS TO BE DETERMINED WITHOUT DEBATE

RECOMMENDATION

That items identified be determined without debate.

12 GENERAL MANAGER

12.1 DRAFT OPERATIONAL PLAN 2026/2027 (INCLUDING DRAFT FINANCIAL ESTIMATES 2026/2030), DRAFT REVENUE POLICY 2026/2027 AND DRAFT LONG TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2026/2036.

Author: Vaughan Macdonald

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2026-2027 Operational Plan outlines the actions that Council will implement over the next 12 months to deliver the priorities of the Community Strategic Plan, provide essential services and design and build the infrastructure our community needs to support continued growth in housing and employment.

The Plan has been prepared in a challenging economic climate as conflict in the Middle East continues to take its toll on local businesses and households with increasing costs for fuel and services. Council has had to carefully balance the budget to ensure it has sufficient revenue to deliver priority projects and essential services, while being conscious of the community's cost of living challenges.

The past year has seen significant progress in delivering priority works, such as the $100m road repair program, following the 2022 flood and Cyclone Alfred, final planning for major upgrades to the Casino and Evans Head Sewage Treatment Plants, activation of the Regional Jobs Precinct and further improvements to community sporting facilities and recreation areas. The 2026-2027 Operational Plan will see these major projects move forward, as Council works with Government funding partners to secure further investment in housing activation and infrastructure.

This report includes the following key documents, prepared under the Local Government Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework, to guide progress over the next financial year and seeks Council's endorsement to place them on public exhibition for a period of at least 28 days:

1. Draft Operational Plan 2026/2027 (including Draft Financial Estimates for the period 2026/2030),
2. Draft Revenue Policy 2026/2027, and
3. Draft Long-Term Financial Plan 2026/2036.

Following exhibition, the draft plans will be returned to Council for final consideration at its June Ordinary Meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Endorses the Draft Operational Plan 2026/2027 (including Draft Financial Estimates 2026/2030), Draft Revenue Policy 2026/2027 and Draft Long Term Financial Plan 2026/2036 for placement on public exhibition for a period of at least 28 days, and

2. Notes that the draft documents will be brought back to Council, following exhibition, to consider any submissions received or amendments proposed, before final adoption at the 30 June 2026 Council meeting.

DELIVERY PROGRAM LINKS

Objective 11: Manage resources responsibly

11A Manage finances responsibly and provide value for money

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

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

As outlined in the report.

REPORT

Council adopted its revised Community Strategic Plan and 2025-2029 Delivery Program in June 2025 and has made strong progress in delivering the community priorities in these plans over the past 12 months. The 2026-2027 Operational Plan continues this commitment, with further works on major road repairs, following the 2022 floods and Cyclone Alfred, final planning and approvals for the replacement Casino STP, commencement of construction for Stage 2 of the Evans Head STP, completion of the new Woodburn clubhouse facility and Woodburn Oval upgrades, finalisation of the Casino CBD Masterplan, and completion of the $3.5m pedestrian suspension bridge in Casino, with further enhancements planned for the riverside precinct.

The draft Plan has been prepared in a challenging financial climate, as conflict in the Middle East continues to take its toll on local businesses and households with increasing costs for fuel and services. Fuel cost increases alone are expected to add more than $1 million to Council's annual operational expenses, with further increases in the price of construction materials and additional fuel levies from suppliers impacting on project costs. Council has had to carefully balance the budget to ensure it has sufficient revenue to deliver priority projects and essential services, while being conscious of the community's cost of living challenges. While the 2026-2027 price path for general rates will remain steady, increases in the waste management and water and sewerage charges are proposed to off-set increasing delivery costs.

Delivering priority projects and services

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

The Draft Operational Plan (including Draft Financial Estimates 2026/2030) has been updated, outlining the actions that Council will undertake in Year Two of its Delivery Program to achieve the CSP objectives, and the resources that will be allocated to support these actions.

The 253 actions within the 2026-2027 Operational Plan address the full range of Council's services, programs and priority projects. Highlights of the coming year include:

- Finalisation of the new Richmond Valley Flood Risk Management Plan, with new development guidelines for flood-affected communities
- Commencement of construction of the Casino Water Treatment Plant upgrade
- Commencement of construction on Stage 2 of the Evans Head Sewage Treatment Plant
- Completion of the Rappville Sewerage Scheme
- Finalisation of the Casino CBD Masterplan and commencement of the Evans Head CBD Masterplan
- Further work on Council's $100m road repair program, following the 2022 flood and Cyclone Alfred events
- More progress on bridge replacement, with Physics Creek Bridge and the Kirkland Court culvert project on the priority list
- Completion of the new Woodburn clubhouse and improvements to Woodburn Oval
- Further improvements to Stan Payne Oval
- Relocation of the Coraki Playground to Windsor Park, with plans for further upgrades
- Roll-out of the new mobile library vehicle to service rural communities
- Continued implementation of Council's Sustainable Communities Strategy, with more shade tree planting, habitat protection programs and solar installations

- Ongoing support for our Youth Employment Scheme, offering traineeships to local school leavers
- Continued delivery of our successful signature events, including the 2026 Casino Truck Show.

Draft Financial Estimates

The draft Operational Plan also includes Council's financial estimates for 2026-2030 and the draft Revenue Policy, outlining proposed rates, fees and charges.

This year's budget delivers an unrestricted cash surplus of $405,464, in 2026/2027, with projected surpluses across the remaining three year forward estimates as shown in the following table:

Budget Estimates	2025/2026	2026/2027	2027/2028	2028/2029
Total Operating Revenue	85,600	88,090	91,313	94,460
Total Operating Expenditure	93,446	94,953	98,501	100,910
Operating Result before Capital Grants and Contributions	**(7,846)**	**(6,863)**	**(7,188)**	**(6,451)**
Add: Capital Grants and Contributions	8,357	39,738	30,718	723
Operating Result including Capital Grants and Contributions	**511**	**32,874**	**23,530**	**(5,728)**
Add: Non-Cash Expenses	27,963	28,566	29,275	29,933
Add: Non-Operating Funds Employed	18,231	5,792	13,509	1,684
Less: Capital Expenditure	52,577	59,687	54,548	16,814
Less: Loan Repayments	2,987	2,163	2,088	2,185
Estimated Funding Result – Surplus/(Deficit)	**(8,858)**	**5,383**	**9,678**	**6,890**
Restricted Funds – Increase/(Decrease)	(9,264)	5,005	9,333	6,512
Unrestricted Funds – Increase/(Decrease)	**405**	**377**	**345**	**378**

While the unrestricted cash result is important - and should be a surplus – the large focus is on Council's operating result before capital grants and contributions. Council's projected operating result before capital grants and contributions for 2026/2027 is a deficit of $7,846,224, which improves to a projected deficit of $6,450,756 over the four-year forward estimates. Whilst Councils Operating Result is improving across the 10-year LTFP, it doesn't reach a break-even point which continues to be a key objective to ensure sustainability. With significant capital works planned across the LTFP, including proposed borrowings for Sewer Fund, preparing a budget with improving financial performance is critical in achieving loan funding and needs to continue to be a key focus for Council to demonstrate its ability to repay the debt. Challenges in achieving surplus operating results is sector wide and heighted by growth in expenditure outpacing growth in revenues for a consecutive number of years, particularly for Regional Councils, with only 19% of Country Councils achieving a general fund surplus last year as opposed to 58% of Sydney Councils.

There have been several challenges in forming the 2026/2027 budget and maintaining an unrestricted cash surplus and an improving operating result. Council's approved rate peg for 2026/2027 of 3.70% has been applied, which is a decrease from 3.9% in 2025/2026 and 4.60% in the 2024/2025 year, further widening the gap between income and the growth rate of expenditure.

Mounting depreciation expenses are further exacerbating the difficulties in achieving operating surpluses due to consistently high indexation rates being applied to asset values in line with accounting standards. Across the previous 5 years, the indexation applies to Council's assets has resulted in an additional $5 million in depreciation. Whilst Council continues to accelerate the depreciation of the Casino Sewage Treatment Plant, this has been extended by two years in line with the revised timeframe for replacement and decommissioning of the old plant, which has slightly improved the draft operating result.

The economic impact of the conflict in the Middle East is being felt nation-wide with longer term impacts on inflation from surged fuel costs, supply chain bottlenecks for critical imports and

pressure on economic growth continuing. Whilst still recovering from the effects of the pandemic and floods, this has added additional pressures, particularly to regional Councils like RVC, where own source revenue is limited. Council has managed to keep fee increases at or below 7% during the pandemic and natural disasters however in order to ensure Council's long-term sustainability and to ensure we are meeting industry standards for best practice pricing, increases in annual and user charges within the ranges of 8-10% are necessary to ensure our essential services, like waste, water and sewer can continue to be sustainable.

Suppliers are imposing fuel levies on Council in the order of 10% which are significantly impacting our operational and project budgets this year and are not sustainable into the future. A prolonged economic impact would result in an estimated cost to Council of $1.149mil over a twelve-month period. Council generates $18 million in rates revenue each year on a budget of $146 million, so would require an additional 6.5% in rates revenue or a significant cut to service levels in order to cover the increased costs. Just our waste collection and disposal services alone are estimated to cost an additional $330,000 next year due to these increases and are a critical service Council provides to the Community and they expect it to continue at existing levels of service.

Councils water and sewer teams are also experiencing supply constraints to critical materials such as PVC pipe, due to global supply chain issues and rising cost of PVC resin and related petrochemical products, typically used in the manufacturing of PVC pipe. Councils water and sewer teams are currently investigating ways of securing materials required to ensure business continuity in providing these critical services, which comes at a cost.

The Local Government State Award is currently under negotiation with a new award due to commence 1 July 2026. Council has allowed for a 4.1% increase in award wages pending the finalisation of the new award. Council continues to review its salary budgets to identify efficiencies and savings, especially when there is staff turnover, the need for roles is reviewed when they are vacant as this minimises the need to fund redundancies which put further strain on the budget, but produce savings in the medium term.

Council is proposing to invest an additional $500,000 into Stormwater drainage improvements in 2026/2027, being subsidised from general revenue. The current pricing for stormwater is estimated to generate a minimal $206,344 for 2026/2027, with the legislated charges not having increased in 20 years, resulting in the cross subsidisation and making it difficult for Council to maintain and improve its $78 million asset base. A Stormwater Service Review is currently underway which will inform the pathway forward for Council in levying Stormwater Charges to ensure Council can address the current backlog of infrastructure renewals required.

Major Capital Works

The draft budget for 2026/2027 includes a sizeable capital works program of $52.5 million, which is likely to further increase as adjustments from the March Quarterly Budget Review are processed.

Key projects for 2026/2027 include:

- Sewage Treatment Plant Augmentations (Casino & Evans Head) $20mil
- Casino Water Treatment Plant Upgrade $4.8mil
- Property & Economic Projects $3.3mil
- Disaster Recovery Works $7.1mil (likely to increase pending approvals from Cyclone Alfred)
- Stratheden Rd (Roads to Recovery) $1.5mil
- Broadwater Evans Head Road (RERRF) $691k
- Rural Reseal Program $900k
- Urban Reseal Program $567k
- Stormwater Drainage Improvements All Areas $660k
- Water Mains replacements $602k
- Sewer Pump Station Renewals $1.1mil
- Fleet Management plant purchases $2.5mil

Draft Revenue Policy – Fees & Charges 2026/2027

In developing the 2026/2027 budget, the following increases have been proposed to Rates and Annual Charges:

- General Rates – to increase by 3.70% in-line with Council's IPART determined rate peg
- Domestic Waste Annual Charge – to increase by 10%
- Non-Domestic Waste Annual Charge – to increase by 10%
- Water Annual Charges – to increase by 8%
- Sewerage Annual Charges – to increase by 8%

There have been several challenges in setting the fees and charges for 2026/2027, in particular for water, sewer and waste as mentioned earlier in the report.

The forward 10-year long term financial plan (LTFP) for water and sewer includes a significant investment in capital works with a complete replacement of the Casino Sewage Treatment Plant, an upgrade of the Evans Head Sewage Treatment Plant and upgrades at the Casino Water Treatment Plant requiring substantial borrowings. Across the forward 10-year LTFP Council proposes to invest $42mil in water and $132mil in sewer infrastructure works, the costs of which are subject to economic conditions which continue to be on the upward trend. Taking into consideration the level of future capital works required in these essential service areas, as well as the increase in the cost of operations an increase in charges has been proposed for water and sewer to enable Council to meet the requirement by the NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, Environment and Water to promote best practice pricing, the rationale for which includes full cost recovery. To achieve this, a minimum 8% increase is proposed for 2026/2027 across both annual and usage charges, followed by 5% across the remainder of the LTFP.

The increasing cost of funding infrastructure needs in the water and sewer sector is being felt industry wide with typical bills under NSWs' largest water utility, Sydney Water, increasing 13.8% from 1 October 2025, followed by 5.1% per year plus inflation, increases until 2030. Sydney Water cited the need to fund upgrades to its ageing infrastructure, support population growth and address the impacts of climate change as the reasoning behind the proposed increase. Similarly, Rous Water has factored in 7% increases to its bulk water charges across the forward 6 years of its LTFP, again to improve financial performance, repay debts and fund significant future infrastructure projects. A recent independent review of Council's water pricing confirmed Council's need to address water pricing to ensure it meets best practice pricing and provide more strategic long-term forecasting and as such, an assessment of fees and charges in line with best practice pricing framework will be undertaken to inform the pricing for 2027/2028 and across the remainder of the LTFP.

A review of the waste management budget has resulted in a proposed increase of 10% for domestic and non-domestic charges following a 5% increase in the 2025/2026 and a zero increase in 2024/2025. This increase is necessary to ensure Council continues to meet the reasonable cost of providing the domestic waste service in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993* and has been significantly heightened due to the current fuel crisis. The cost of undertaking kerbside waste collection is estimated to cost Council an additional $330k in 2026/2027, just in fuel costs alone.

As we transition to landfilling in the new Cell 6 at Nammoona, transporting residual waste to QLD also remains necessary with suppliers factoring in fuel levies on these contracted services, further adding to budget constraints. Whilst some Councils have had to suspend services due to diesel shortages, continuing with these services remains a priority for Council and has seen many Councils across NSW propose increased waste management fees like Richmond Valley Council. Some Sydney Councils are proposing up to 10% increases to their domestic waste charges, however regional areas often face higher charges due to transportation distances compared to condensed urban areas which adds to the financial burden on ratepayers.

On average, the increases in annual charges proposed within Council's 2026/2027 Financial Estimates would result in an estimated additional $7 per week to households from last year's fees, as opposed to $5 under the previous year's LTFP assumed charges increases.

Reporting on progress

The Draft Operational Plan includes 253 actions to support the 75 Principal Activities in the 2025-2029 Delivery Program and ultimately work towards achievement of the nine Community Strategic Plan Objectives. Each action has been assigned to the relevant Manager or Coordinator within Council's corporate structure. Draft measures have been prepared for each action to identify how Council will monitor progress in completing the actions and report to the community on achievements. Council reports every six months on progress in delivering the Principal Activities. The diagram below shows how the three plans fit together to deliver the CSP outcomes.

CONSULTATION

In accordance with the Integrated Planning and Reporting requirements the Draft Operational Plan 2026/2027 (including Draft Financial Estimates 2026/2030), Draft Revenue Policy 2026/2027 and Draft Long-Term Financial Plan 2026/2036 will be placed on public exhibition for a period of at least 28 days. During that time public submissions on the documents can be made. A further report on the documents and submissions received will be presented to the Council meeting scheduled for Tuesday 30 June 2026.

CONCLUSION

The Draft Operational Plan 2026/2027 (including Draft Financial Estimates 2026/2030), Draft Revenue Policy 2026/2027 and Draft Long-Term Financial Plan 2026/2036 have been prepared and are presented to Council for consideration. The report recommends that these documents be placed on public exhibition.

ATTACHMENT(S)

Nil

13 OFFICE OF THE GENERAL MANAGER

13.1 REVISED EVENT SUPPORT POLICY AND GUIDELINES

Author: **Vaughan Macdonald**

Responsible Officer: **Stacey Mills**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Events are a key driver of tourism and economic growth within the Richmond Valley and play an important role in fostering community connection and celebrating local identity. Council provides financial assistance to a range of community events, each year, through the Event Support Scheme and Signature Events funding programs.

Council has undertaken a comprehensive review of the event funding framework to ensure future funding opportunities are aligned with strategic priorities and deliver measurable community, tourism and economic outcomes.

A revised event funding process is presented for Council's consideration and endorsement. The proposed framework consolidates the former Event Support Scheme and Signature Events policies into a single set of Event Support Guidelines. This approach clearly outlines Council's funding priorities and establishes a consistent, transparent and accountable process for the application, assessment and allocation of event funding.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorses the Revised Event Support Policy and Event Support Guidelines.

DELIVERY PROGRAM LINKS

Objective 3: Grow and diversify our economy

3E4 Showcase our lifestyle and signature events

3E4.1 Support and deliver signature events that reflect our local lifestyle

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Implementation and delivery of event funding has been considered within the 2026/2027 budget and Long Term Financial Plan, and Council officers will manage applications to remain within approved budget allowances for both programs of $70,000 + GST

REPORT

Events are a key driver of visitation and economic growth within the Richmond Valley and are identified as a strategic priority in Council's Community Strategic Plan, Economic Development Strategy and Destination Management Plan (under review). The Richmond Valley also maintains a strong focus on events in recognition of the important role they play in fostering community connection, social interaction and local identity.

Council has a long-standing history of delivering and supporting both community and signature events across the Richmond Valley. This includes the provision of financial support to the Primex event over several decades, the continuation of annual sponsorship for Beef Week along with the delivery of the Casino Truck Show, with up to $60,000 per annum provided in combined financial and in-kind support for these events. Following the relocation of the Primex event, there is an opportunity to reallocate this funding under the new framework.

While events are recognised as an essential contributor to community wellbeing and regional vitality, Council also acknowledges the importance of building the long-term sustainability of events. This includes encouraging event organisers to strengthen financial self-sufficiency, improve operational efficiency and progressively grow event scale and impact. Such an approach supports

the ongoing delivery of diverse and high-quality events for residents and visitors, while contributing to a balanced and vibrant annual events calendar.

To support this objective, Council has redesigned its event funding framework by identifying three core desired outcomes for event support, being:

- **Community connection**
- **Tourism promotion**
- **Economic impact**

These outcomes provide a clear and consistent framework for event organisers to consider when seeking funding support and enable Council to assess funding applications against strategic priorities and measurable outcomes for the Richmond Valley.

Event Funding has been broken into two pools.

Community Event Support

Community Event Support funding is offered twice per year and provides financial assistance ranging from $500 to $5,000 (excluding GST). This funding stream is specifically designed to support smaller-scale, community-focused events that contribute to local connection and participation, such as Lions Christmas Carols, the Malibu Classic and the Peach Festival.

Community Event Support funding streams are outlined to run as follows.

- Stream One – events held between 1 July and 31 December annually
- Stream Two – events held between 1 January and 30 June annually

Note: due to the timing of finalising the review, it is proposed to adjust the application deadline for Stream One 2026, enabling applications to be submitted up until 30 June, in order to allow event organisers to apply for this stream. Council will also work with local applicants to help guide them through the new requirements in the transition phase.

Signature Event Investment

Signature Event Investment funding provides financial support of between $5,001 and $30,000 (excluding GST) per approved application. Applications may be submitted at any time throughout the financial year (July to June); however, applications will close once the annual funding allocation has been exhausted.

This funding stream is intended to support larger-scale events with a demonstrated capacity to drive increased visitation, generate overnight stays, and deliver measurable economic benefits to the Richmond Valley.

The 2026/2027 budget allocation for event funding is proposed as follows:

- Community Event Support – $30,000 per annum, delivered via two funding rounds of $15,000 (+ GST) each
- Signature Event Investment – $40,000 per annum, not including funding allocated to Beef Week

Council also continues to support Beef Week as a signature event for the Richmond Valley, entering into a new three-year agreement for 2026, 2027 and 2028 for $30,000 + GST per annum.

This revised framework also provides an opportunity to facilitate the development of a new signature event within the Mid Richmond area. Initial discussions have already been undertaken as part of the Destination Management Plan process with members of the business community in Evans Head to identify potential signature event opportunities.

Building on this early engagement, the revised framework is intended to create broader opportunities for other interested event organisers, businesses and stakeholders to put forward new event concepts that will contribute to the region’s growth and vibrancy.

The revised framework is supported by an updated policy, a new set of guidelines, and revised application and acquittal forms, providing applicants with a clear and transparent understanding of the funding process.

Following Council endorsement, these documents will be made available on Council's website within the Events section.

Applications will be individually assessed by a panel of 3 suitably experienced staff members, with the assessment framework scoring matrix, to determine a final score. Applications scoring above the required threshold will be tabled and presented to the General Manger with a recommendation for final determination under delegated authority.

A report will be prepared and presented to Council annually in April detailing beneficiaries of annual funding.

CONSULTATION

Council will continue to collaborate closely with event organisers by supporting applications for event funding and maintaining ongoing dialogue to ensure the framework remains effective and responsive. This approach is designed to meet the evolving needs of both Council and event planners, while encouraging and supporting a vibrant and diverse events calendar across the region.

CONCLUSION

Council has undertaken a comprehensive review of its event funding framework to ensure it remains contemporary, transparent and aligned with strategic priorities. The revised Event Support Policy and Guidelines provide a clear, equitable and outcomes-focused approach to funding, supporting both community and signature events while maximising social, tourism and economic benefits for the Richmond Valley.

It is therefore recommended that Council adopts the Revised Event Support Policy and Event Support Guidelines to enable the continued delivery of a sustainable, diverse and high-quality events calendar across the region.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. **Event Support Policy (revised May 2026) (under separate cover)**
2. **Event Support Guidelines (under separate cover)**

13.2 DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN 2026-2029

Author: **Vaughan Macdonald**

Responsible Officer: **Marie Cullen**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council has worked with key stakeholders over the past six months to remake the Disability Inclusion Action Plan in line with legislative requirements. The draft Plan was presented to Council's March Ordinary meeting and endorsed for public exhibition.

The Plan sets out 26 proposed actions across four key focus areas to improve awareness, provide more employment opportunities and support local people with disability to participate more fully in community life.

The draft plan was exhibited for 28 days, with only one community submission received.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Notes the review of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan, in consultation with the community and the subsequent public exhibition of the draft Plan and
2. Adopts the Richmond Valley Council Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026-2029.

DELIVERY PROGRAM LINKS

Objective 4: Celebrate our local identity and lifestyle

4A1 Celebrate our diverse community and increase understanding

4A1.3 Review and remake the Richmond Valley Disability Inclusion Action Plan

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Actions in the Plan will be funded through existing and future budget allocations and Council will pursue opportunities for additional funding through government grants.

REPORT

Council has prepared the Richmond Valley Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2026-2029 to outline practical actions Council will take to improve inclusion across its services, assets and workforce. The Plan is a legislative requirement under the NSW *Disability Inclusion Act 2014*, which requires all government agencies, including local councils, to maintain a stand-alone Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP). While the actions will be delivered through Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan, the DIAP provides a dedicated framework for planning, action and reporting on inclusion.

The NSW Disability Inclusion Action Planning Guidelines identify four focus areas for improving inclusion across NSW: Attitudes and behaviours; liveable communities; employment, and systems and processes. Council's DIAP aligns with these four focus areas and includes 26 measurable actions to strengthen inclusion and participation.

The Plan includes actions to build positive attitudes towards disability, promote community awareness and provide disability awareness training for Council staff. It also sets out priorities for improving accessibility in public spaces, continuing to deliver the Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan (PAMP), and ensuring new infrastructure is designed with inclusion in mind. The Plan also highlights the importance of consulting with people with disability and local services on the design and renewal of key assets and community spaces. Additionally, the Plan commits to improving systems and processes by enhancing accessible in-person engagement, making Council's website

easier to navigate and strengthening inclusive customer service through an updated Customer Service Charter.

Improving meaningful employment opportunities for people with disability is another key focus of the Plan. The DIAP includes actions to work with local Inclusive Employment Australia providers to make recruitment processes more accessible, promote job opportunities at Council, and provide workplace adjustments and career development support for employees with disability. The Plan also aims to create pathways for young people with disability to enter the workforce and build skills for future employment.

Together, these actions provide a clear, measurable pathway for Council to improve inclusion and ensure people with disability have more opportunities to participate in community life.

Click on the following link to view the plan 2026-29-Disability-Inclusion-Action-Plan-1.pdf

CONSULTATION

To prepare this Plan, Council engaged with a wide range of people across the community during December 2025 and January 2026. This included people living with disability, carers, support services and Council staff.

An online survey was used to gather feedback from residents, helping Council to understand the key issues and priorities across the four focus areas. Council also held four pop-up stalls at events across the LGA, giving community members the opportunity to speak with staff directly and share their ideas and experiences. In addition, Council staff met with the Richmond Valley Disability Network to ensure the perspectives of people with lived experience and local service providers were reflected in the Plan.

The online survey and consultation sessions provided some important insights into the barriers that people with disability face in navigating local streets and community assets and gaining access to employment opportunities. It also highlighted the need to establish ongoing consultation links with local groups and services to better understand the needs of those living with disability and identify emerging issues.

Public submissions

The draft Plan was placed on public exhibition for a period of 28 days, from 18 March to 19 April 2026, and distributed via email to members of the Richmond Valley Disability Network, Richmond Valley Youth Network and Richmond Valley Aboriginal Interagency Network. One public submission was received during the exhibition period.

The submission was provided by a member of the Casino Branch of Blind Citizens Australia, advising they had reviewed the draft Plan and were supportive of its overall direction. The submission also highlighted the importance of effective implementation, particularly the need to educate shop owners in the CBD about keeping footpaths clear of obstacles that may create trip hazards. Ongoing concerns about the condition and accessibility of some footpaths were also raised. These concerns are addressed within the Plan by *Action 1.5 Support local businesses by sharing information and resources that promote accessible and inclusive practices* and *Action 2.1 Continue to implement Council's Pedestrian and Access Mobility Plan*.

The Disability Inclusion Action Plan is designed to remain flexible and to support continued consultation as actions are delivered. As Council progresses accessibility improvements to public toilets, facilities and other infrastructure, targeted engagement with people with disability and representative organisations will be used to inform priorities and preferred designs. A key focus of the Plan is to strengthen opportunities to listen to guidance from the disability community and respond with practical and appropriate solutions over time.

CONCLUSION

Council has reviewed its Disability Inclusion Action Plan, in accordance with legislative requirements. The Plan includes 26 actions across four key focus area to help improve the accessibility of Council's services, infrastructure and processes and to support people living with disability to participate more fully in community life. The draft document was placed on public exhibition and received one community submission in full support of the plan.

ATTACHMENT(S)

Nil.

14 PLANNING AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Nil

15 INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES & PROJECTS

15.1 ASSET POLICY UPDATE

Director: **Ben Zeller**

Responsible Officer: **Kim Anderson**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council has reviewed and updated its asset planning policies to strengthen the management, protection, and long-term sustainability of community infrastructure. The revised policies provide clearer standards, reduce risk, and ensure assets are planned and maintained in a consistent, safe, and financially responsible manner. This framework supports better decision making, improved service delivery, and a more resilient asset base that meets current and future community needs.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council adopts the new and revised Asset Policies:
    (a) CPOL 11.17 Asset Capitalisation
    (b) CPOL 11.12 Lease of Road Reserve
    (c) CPOL 11.10 Public Gates and bypasses (cattle grids)
    (d) CPOL 11.15 Permanent Road Closures
    (e) CPOL 13.01 Naming of Public Parks, Sporting fields and Council facilities
    (f) CPOL 11.14 Naming of Roads and Bridges
    (g) CPOL 1.1.17 Signs as Remote Supervision
    (h) CPOL 11.06 Installation of Streetlights
    (i) CPOL 13.05 Roadside and Reserve Memorials
    (j) CPOL 11.22 Planting landscaping on footpaths, road reserves and drainage easements.

DELIVERY PROGRAM LINKS

Objective 5: Provide infrastructure that meets community needs

5A1 Maintain and improve asset management systems

5A1.1 Develop, implement & review the RV Asset Management Strategy, Asset Management Plans and Policies

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

Nil

REPORT

Council has undertaken a comprehensive review of its asset planning policies to ensure they remain consistent and aligned with best practice asset management principles. This review strengthens Council's ability to responsibly manage public infrastructure, support sustainable service delivery, and meet community expectations for safety, accessibility, and long-term financial responsibility. The new and revised policies provide clearer guidance on the planning, protection, and maintenance of Council assets while improving transparency around responsibilities for both Council and the community. By establishing consistent standards, addressing emerging risks, and

integrating legislative requirements, the revised policy framework enhances Council's capacity to make informed, evidence-based decisions that optimise asset performance, reduce lifecycle costs, and safeguard public amenity. The policies presented for consideration as part of this report include:

- CPOL 11.17 Asset Capitalisation (Last adopted 17 October 2023)

  This policy sets out how Council determines when expenditure should be treated as a capital asset rather than an operating expense. Its purpose is to ensure consistency, compliance with accounting standards, and accurate financial reporting. The Policy has been revised for expensing planning activities carried over beyond two consecutive financial years.

- CPOL 11.12 Lease of Road Reserve (Last adopted 28 June 2022)

  This policy outlines Council's approach to managing, assessing, and approving the occupation or leasing of public road reserves. Its primary purpose is to safeguard public access and safety while enabling appropriate structures or activities to occur on road reserves where suitable. The policy has been updated within minor changes to improve clarity and structure.

- CPOL 11.10 Public Gates and bypasses (cattle grids) (Last adopted 23 June 2015)

  This policy outlines how Council manages public gates, bypasses, and cattle grids on public roads to protect public safety, maintain road access, and ensure fair and transparent decision making regarding these structures on Council managed roads. The policy has been updated to enhance clarity and structure, including the addition of technical specifications.

- CPOL 11.15 Permanent Road Closures (Last adopted 28 June 2022)

  This policy sets out the process and requirements for permanently closing a public road under Councils control. Its purpose is to ensure that road closures are handled in a lawful, transparent, and consistent way. The policy has been updated within minor changes to improve clarity and structure.

- CPOL 13.01 Naming of Public Parks, Sporting fields and Council facilities (Last Adopted 21 September 2021)

  This policy guides how Council decides what public places and facilities should be called, ensuring the process is respectful, consistent, and aligned with community expectations. The policy has been updated to ensure alignment with NSW Geographical Names Board current naming practices and guidelines.

- CPOL 11.14 Naming of Roads and Bridges (Last Adopted 28 June 2022)

  This policy guides Council on a consistent process for naming and renaming roads and bridges in accordance with legislative requirements and state naming standards. The policy has been updated within minor changes to improve clarity and structure.

- CPOL 1.1.17 Signs as Remote Supervision (Last Adopted 15 August 2015)

  The purpose of a Signs as Remote Supervision policy is to ensure that appropriate signage is used to provide clear instructions, warnings, and safety guidance in situations at Council facilities, assets, or activities cannot be directly supervised by staff. The policy has been updated to improve clarity and structure.

- CPOL 11.06 Installation of streetlights (Last Adopted 23 June 2020)

  This policy establishes a consistent and transparent framework for assessing, approving, and installing street lighting to support community safety, asset management, and legislative compliance. The policy has been updated within minor changes to improve clarity and structure.

- CPOL 13.05 Roadside and Reserve Memorials (Last Adopted 21 September 2021)

  The purpose of this policy is to provide a compassionate yet safety focused framework for managing roadside and reserve memorials, ensuring they are placed and maintained in a way that minimises road safety hazards, reduces Council's public liability risks, protects community

amenity, and supports responsible management of Council controlled road and reserve assets. The policy has been updated within minor changes to improve clarity and structure.

- CPOL 11.22 Planting landscaping on footpaths, road reserves and drainage easements. (New Policy)

  The purpose of this policy is to ensure safe, accessible, and well managed footpath and nature strip areas by regulating landscaping activities and protecting essential infrastructure. This new policy provides guidance for both the community and Council on expectations for landscaping within road reserves and easements.

CONSULTATION

Council engaged with internal stakeholder groups across relevant departments to ensure the revised asset planning policies reflect operational needs, regulatory requirements, and practical implementation considerations.

CONCLUSION

The revised asset planning policies provide a stronger, more consistent framework for the management and protection of Council's infrastructure assets. Adoption of these policies will support clearer decision-making, reduce risk, and ensure Council continues to manage its assets responsibly and sustainably. It is therefore recommended that Council adopt the updated and new policies as presented.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. **CPOL 11.17 Policy - Asset capitalisation (under separate cover)**
2. **CPOL 11.12 Lease of Road Reserve (under separate cover)**
3. **CPOL 11.10 Public Gates and bypasses (Cattle grids) (under separate cover)**
4. **CPOL 11.15 Permanent Road Closures (under separate cover)**
5. **CPOL 13.01 Naming of Public Parks, Sporting fields and Council facilities (under separate cover)**
6. **CPOL 11.14 Naming of Roads and Bridges (under separate cover)**
7. **CPOL 1.1.17 Signs as remote supervision. (under separate cover)**
8. **CPOL 11.06 Installation of streetlights (under separate cover)**
9. **CPOL 13.5 Roadside and Reserve Memorials (under separate cover)**
10. **CPOL 11.22 Planting landscaping on footpaths road reserves and drainage easements (under separate cover)**

16 ORGANISATIONAL SERVICES

16.1 QUARTERLY BUDGET REVIEW STATEMENT FOR THE QUARTER ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

Director: **Ryan Gaiter**

Responsible Officer: **Zakari Witt**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The budget review report for the quarter ended 31 March 2026 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 improved by $1.48 million to a deficit of $10.37 million. This improvement is primarily due to a decrease in budgeted operating expenditure for the Casino Industries Activation project (Patricia Street roundabout), of which Council's contribution is expected to be utilised in 2027 following the completion of the grant funded roundabout.

Operating results from continuing operations, including capital grants and contributions but excluding depreciation, amortisation and impairment, have declined by $791,007, reducing the projected surplus to $64.84 million. The result is mainly driven by a $2.36 million reduction in income to a projection of $136 million. This improvement is largely due to capital income being rescheduled in line with project milestones and delivery programs. Additional information on significant budget adjustments is outlined on pages 4–8 of the Quarterly Budget Review Statement

As at 31 March 2026, Council's actual revenue has reached 71% of the projected year-end result, while expenditure from continuing operations is at 72%, indicating performance is broadly in line with the proposed revised budget.

Following a review of Council's capital works program, a proposed reduction of $8.06 million has been identified for 2025/2026, resulting in a revised program total of $71.13 million. Capital expenditure is currently tracking at 52% of the revised budget and is still anticipated to increase substantially during the remainder of the financial year as major grant-funded projects advance. Significant projects include Rappville sewage treatment plant, Woodburn-Evans Head shared pathway, NRLX effluent management system and Casino suspension bridge. The capital program will continue to be monitored closely with further budget adjustments reported to Council as required through future financial reports.

Council's unrestricted cash surplus has remained unchanged at $301,339 as of 31 March 2026, projecting a consistent cash position.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Receives the Quarterly Budget Review Statement as at 31 March 2026; and
2. Approves the recommended budget variations.

DELIVERY PROGRAM LINKS

Objective 9: Manage resources responsibly and provide great service

9A1 Undertake long-term financial planning and ensure compliance with financial regulations

9A1.4 Provide regular reports to Council on financial performance and ensure compliance with requirements for external audit

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

As detailed in the report.

REPORT

Council's third quarter budget review for the 2025/2026 financial year has resulted in the operating result from continuing operations, including capital grants and contributions but excluding depreciation, amortisation and impairment, decreasing by $791,007 to a projected surplus of $64.84 million. The net operating result before capital grants and contributions has improved by $1.48 million to a deficit of $10.37 million. This movement is primarily due to changes in income and expenditure from continuing operations, as detailed below.

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

Quarterly Budget Review Statement for the quarter ended 31 March 2026	Revised Budget 2025/2026	Recommended Changes for Council Resolution	Projected Year End Result 2025/2026
Operating Income	85,899,420	(82,215)	85,817,205
Operating Expenses	97,755,945	(1,566,257)	96,189,688
Net Operating Result before Capital Grants and Contributions	**(11,856,525)**	**1,484,042**	**(10,372,483)**
Add: Capital Grants & Contributions	52,817,308	(2,275,050)	50,542,258
Net Operating Result including Capital Grants and Contributions	**40,960,783**	**(791,008)**	**40,169,775**
Add: Depreciation, Amortisation and Impairment	24,672,900	0	24,672,900
Net Operating Result excluding depreciation, amortisation and impairment of non-financial assets	**65,633,683**	**(791,008)**	**64,842,675**
Add: Other Non-Cash Expenses	2,263,093	0	2,263,093
Add: Non-Operating Funds Employed	5,229,623	(3,200,836)	2,028,787
Less: Capital Expenditure	79,190,474	(8,058,554)	71,131,920
Less: Loan Repayments	3,385,226	0	3,385,226
Estimated Funding Result – Surplus/(Deficit)	**(9,449,302)**	**4,066,710**	**(5,382,592)**
Restricted Funds – Increase/(Decrease)	(9,750,641)	4,066,710	(5,683,931)
Unrestricted Funds – Increase/(Decrease)	**301,339**	**0**	**301,339**

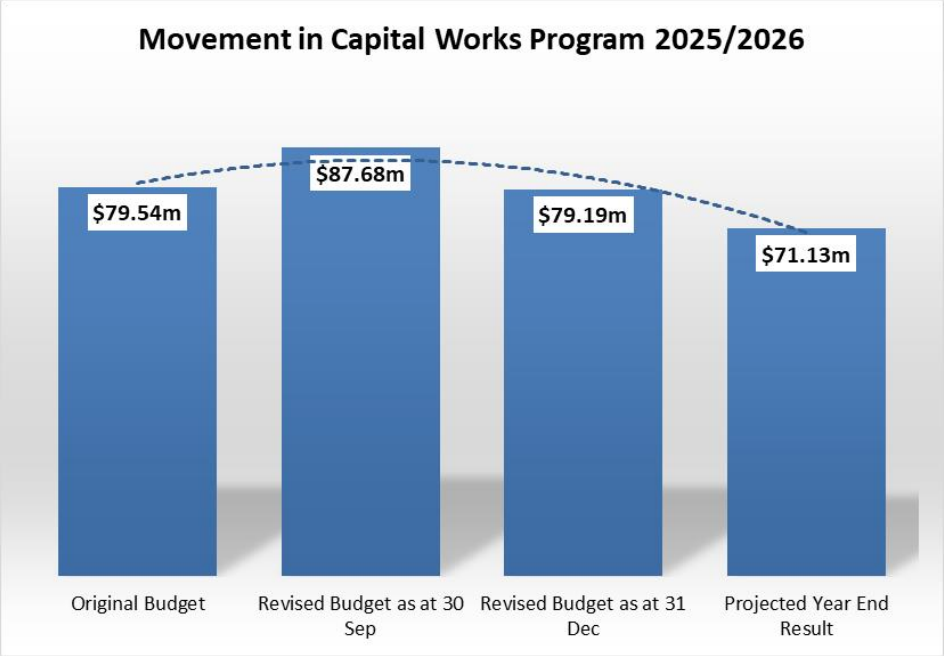
As illustrated in the table above, Council's estimated budget result (unrestricted cash result) has remained unchanged from the 2025/2026 revised budget at $301,339. In overall cash terms, there is a decrease in the estimated funding from reserves of $4.066 million with an estimated total transfer from reserves of $5.68 million for the 2025/2026 financial year. The movement from the revised budget predominately reflects the reallocation of significant funds back to reserves to be utilised in the 2026/2027 budget.

Income from continuing operations (operating income plus capital grants and contributions) is proposed to decrease by $2.36 million to $136.4 million, while expenses from continuing operations (including depreciation, amortisation and impairment) are proposed to decrease by $1.57 million to $96.19 million. Significant adjustments include the deferral of Council's contribution towards the Casino Industries Activation project (Patricia Street roundabout) to 2026/2027 and the reallocation of forecasted grant funding for construction of the Evans Head Sewer Treatment Plant to the 2027 financial year. Further details are provided on pages 4–8 of the Quarterly Budget Review Statement.

As at 31 March 2026, Council's actual revenue is tracking at 71% of the projected year-end result and expenditure from continuing operations at 72% of the projected year-end total, indicating consistent delivery against the operational budget.

Council's capital works program has been reviewed, resulting in revision of the current program for 2025/2026 to a projected total of $71.13 million, decreasing the programmed works by $8.06 million. Current expenditure for the capital program is at 52% of the revised year-end result. This is expected to rise substantially through the remainder of 2026 as several key grant-funded projects progress. Notable projects include the Rappville sewer treatment plant, Woodburn-Evans Head shared pathway, NRLX effluent management system and Casino suspension bridge. The capital program will be closely monitored, recognising the ongoing risks that large scale projects present, particularly in relation to contractor availability and weather delays. Given Council's continued focus on disaster recovery efforts, maintaining oversight of the capital budget continues to remain a priority.

The following graph highlights the movement in the 2025/2026 capital works program, illustrating the progression that previously approved changes and current recommended changes have on the projected year-end result.



The movement reflects a significant re-adjustment in the capital program to better align with the original program of works whilst considering any potential delays. As indicated, delivery of these works will depend heavily on contractor availability and favourable weather. The capital budget will continue to be closely monitored, and any required adjustments will be presented in future budget adjustment reports to Council

Council is continuing to monitor the ongoing impacts of the current fuel crisis and economic instability. With budgets already under pressure, we are taking steps to identify operational efficiencies for the remainder of this financial year, with some of the increased costs being absorbed into capital projects. Due to Council's fees and charges being adopted at the beginning of the year, the impact these economic conditions have is challenging, unlike contractors who have the ability to adjust pricing to reflect the current environment. Councils are challenged with finding ways to absorb the increased costs, without placing further financial burden on ratepayers. Unfortunately, this isn't sustainable long-term and may result in Council relying on its internal reserves or cash surplus this financial year, if operational savings and efficiencies are not sufficient. This is being reviewed further as Council works through the annual budget process for 2026/2027.

All recommended changes for continuing operations and capital are disclosed in Council's Quarterly Budget Review Statement. Changes in continuing operations are shown on page 3, with detailed explanations provided on pages 4–8. Capital changes are disclosed on pages 12, with further details on pages 13-17.

CONCLUSION

At the end of the third quarter, Council's operating result from continuing operations, including capital grants and contributions but excluding depreciation, amortisation and impairment, is a projected surplus of $64.84 million. Excluding capital grants and contributions, the result reflects a projected deficit of $10.37 million. Council's capital works budget is currently $71.13 million and will continue to be closely monitored with the continued aim to deliver all projects on time and within budget. Council's estimated budget result (unrestricted cash result) has remained unchanged at $301,339, demonstrating a consistent cash position. Overall, Council's projected financial position at year end remains satisfactory.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Quarterly Budget Review Statement for the quarter ended 31 March 2026 (under separate cover)

16.2 FINANCIAL ANALYSIS REPORT - APRIL 2026

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 as at 30 April 2026 is shown below:

Bank Accounts	Term Deposits	Floating Rate Notes	Fixed Rate Bonds	TCorp IM Funds	Total
$19,317,267	$35,000,000	$6,250,000	$3,000,000	$18,925,175	$82,492,442

The weighted average rate of return on Council's cash and investments at 30 April 2026 was 10.42% which was above the Bloomberg AusBond Bank Bill Index for April of 4.10% (annualised), which is Council's benchmark.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopts the Financial Analysis Report detailing the performance of its cash and investments for the month of April 2026.

DELIVERY PROGRAM LINKS

Objective 9: Manage resources responsibly and provide great service

9A1 Undertake long-term financial planning and ensure compliance with financial regulations

9A1.2 Maintain Council's investment portfolio in accordance with requirements and aim for the best long-term benefit for the community

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

As at 30 April 2026, Council has earned $2,343,769 in interest and $1,013,000 in fair value gains from funds held in TCorp, for a total investment income of $3,356,769. This equates to 107.39% of the annual budget for interest and investment income of $3,125,750, noting the annual budget was adjusted upwards by $682,000 following the December Quarterly Budget Review.

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 did not meet in April, so the cash rate remained at 4.10%.

Rate of Return

The weighted average rate of return on cash and investments in April was 10.42%, an increase in 1359 basis points from the previous month. The rate of return is 632 basis points above the Bloomberg AusBond Bank Bill Index of 4.10% (annualised) which is Council's benchmark.

Council's NSW Treasury Corporation IM Funds returned net gains of $462,690 during the month of April. The Medium-Term Growth Fund (MTGF) returned a gain of $300,425 and the Long-Term Growth Fund (LTGF) returned a gain of $162,265.

During April, financial markets were led by the ongoing developments in the Iran war. The first half of the month saw markets rise strongly following the announcement of a ceasefire, however

investor sentiment weakened towards the end of the month as hopes of an imminent end to the war declined. According to NSW Treasury Corp's monthly economic report, the risk of a sharp slowdown in consumer spending increases the longer the conflict continues as households globally are concerned about higher petrol prices, higher inflation and higher interest rates. The latest data from the ABS shows that annual CPI has risen 4.6% in the 12 months since March 2025.

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 Investment Portfolio

Council held cash and investments of $82,492,442 at 30 April 2026. This was made up of Council's Business Online Saver Account ($13,105,000), Macquarie Cash Management Account ($5,016,815), Term Deposits ($35,000,000), Floating Rate Notes ($6,250,000), Bonds ($3,000,000), NSW Treasury Corporation Investments ($18,925,175) and other bank accounts ($1,195,452).

Council's investment portfolio had maturity dates ranging from same day up to 1,813 days. Term deposits, floating rate notes and bonds of $44,250,000 represented 53.64% of the total portfolio as at 30 April 2026.

Council did not make any new investments during April 2026.

Council had the following investment maturities during the month of April 2026:

Banking Institution	Investment Type	ESI	Amount Invested	Interest Earned
Police Bank	Term Deposit	Y	$2,000,000	42,904.11
Australian Unity Bank	Term Deposit	Y	$2,000,000	43,181.37
Rabobank	Term Deposit	N	$3,000,000	65,220.82
Total			**$7,000,000**	**151,306.30**

Council had $18,925,175 in longer term investments being the MTGF and LTGF held with NSW Treasury Corporation as at 30 April 2026. The investment values and fair value returns are shown below:

Investment Holding	Fair Value at 30 April 2026	Fair Value Gain/(Loss) at 30 April 2026	Fair Value Gain/(Loss) YTD	Fair Value Gain/(Loss) Life of Investment
Medium Term Growth Fund	$ 14,774,947	$ 300,425	$ 689,627	$ 3,769,917
Long Term Growth Fund	$ 4,150,228	$ 162,265	$ 305,652	$ 1,150,228
Total	**$ 18,925,175**	**$ 462,690**	**$ 995,280**	**$ 4,920,145**

Environmentally Sustainable Investments (ESI's)

Council's cash and investments portfolio of $82,492,442 at 30 April 2026 includes $58,175,175 or 70.5% with no direct investment in the fossil fuel industry.

These percentages include Council's investments with NSW 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.

CONCLUSION

During the month of April 2026, Council's investments have been made in accordance with the Act, the Regulations and Council's Investment Policy.

As at 30 April 2026 Council's cash and investments totalled $82,925,175 with $19,317,267 of this being funds held in bank accounts. The weighted average rate of return was 10.42% and total investment revenue equals 107.39% of budgeted revenue for the year to 30 April 2026.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. RVC Investment Pack - April 2026 (under separate cover)

17 MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

RECOMMENDATION

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

17.1 COMMUNITY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM 2025/2026 ROUND TWO

Author: **Vaughan Macdonald**

Responsible Officer: **Marie Cullen**

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the allocation of funds through Community Financial Assistance Program 2025/2026 Round Two.

REPORT

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

Council allocated $78,614.00 in the 2025/2026 budget for the Community Financial Assistance Program. In accordance with the Policy, funding is delivered across two approximately equal funding rounds, with $41,307.00 available for allocation in Round Two.

Round Two of the Community Financial Assistance Program 2025/2026 was open from 2 March to 31 March 2026 inclusive. The program was promoted through Council's community email list, website, newsletters and Facebook, inviting eligible community groups to apply for funding under the Policy.

A total of 27 applications were received in this round, seeking funding of $115,617.94 against the available $41,307.00.

All applications were assessed in accordance with the Community Financial Assistance Program Policy. Of the applications received, 25 were deemed eligible. Each eligible application was individually assessed by a panel of three Council staff against the selection criteria outlined in the Policy, with scores combined to determine the final ranking.

Funding recommendations were developed based on the assessment scores, application information and panel comments, with the aim of supporting as many community groups as possible within the available funding.

Councillors were provided with a summary of the applications, including recommended funding allocations, and invited to provide feedback. The General Manager approved the final allocation of funds under delegated authority.

The following table summarises the 16 projects which were allocated partial or full funding.

Organisation	Purpose of funding	Amount allocated
Casino Community Men's Shed Inc	Purchase of a heavy duty Sherwood table saw with panel and dado cutting attachments to replace the existing outdated panel saw and improve safety and functionality.	$5,000.00
Casino Rugby Union Club Inc	Purchase and upgrade of essential playing and training equipment to replace outdated items and improve safety standards.	$2,500.00
Evans River Rugby Union Club	Purchase of new rugby training and playing equipment to improve skills, support fitness, teamwork, and more engaging training and game experiences.	$2,500.00
Rainbow Roos AU Inc	Subsidise weekly BabyRoos soccer sessions for ages 2–4 in Casino to support inclusive early development, confidence, and social connection in a safe environment.	$2,880.00
Rappville Sporting Facilities Committee	Install safety lighting and purchase one new fridge or freezer for the canteen to improve safety, increase capacity, and support community events.	$2,900.00
CASPA	Purchase outdoor safety, shade and play equipment to expand and improve the Casino Family Support Playgroup, increasing capacity, safety and developmental opportunities for children and	$3,000.00
Ellangowan Public hall	Purchase sustainable outdoor park seating for Ellangowan Hall to replace deteriorating units, improving safety and creating a welcoming space for community use.	$4,880.00
Casino Mixed Probus	Subsidised bus transport for day trips to reduce cost barriers, supporting senior participation, social connection, wellbeing and active ageing.	$1,500.00
Mid Richmond Historical Society Coraki	Purchase two new filing cabinets and associated folders to improve storage, organisation and accessibility of local historical records.	$1,428.00
Dirawong Reserve Land Manager	Support environmental education, conservation and community participation in healthy outdoor activities at Dirawong Reserve through printed maps, posters, PPE supplies and a pilot guided walk.	$1,000.00
Woodburn Wolves	Purchase of a surface water removal machine (Super Sopper) to reduce manual labour and ensure playing surfaces remain safe, suitable and available for fixtures.	$2,000.00
Broadwater Koala Park (Broadwater Koala Reserve Trust)	Support for contractor site preparation and native grass planting to improve pathways, reduce weeds and deliver a community planting day at Broadwater Koala Park.	$2,348.80
Casino Lions Australian Football Club	Purchase essential sporting equipment to support the re-establishment of the Casino AFL Club and enable safe, inclusive participation and community engagement.	$2,000.00
New Italy Museum INC	Purchase and installation of two weather proof park benches to improve accessibility, amenity and comfort in a well used public off leash dog park.	$4,035.60
Casino Pony Club	Purchase of two outdoor table and seating sets for the canteen area to improve functionality, safety and capacity at the Casino Showground.	$1,700.00
Casino Croquet Club Inc.	Installation of shade shelters over existing seating to improve comfort, safety and protection for players and spectators.	$1,634.60
	Total funding allocated	**$41,307.00**

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

- Casino & District Orchid Society Inc
- Casino Netball Club
- Casino Poultry Club
- Casino Senior Citizens Incorporated
- Coraki Golf Club
- Evans Area Resilience Network
- Evans Head Paddle Club
- Sporting Shooters Association of Australia (NSW) Northern Rivers Branch Inc
- St Marks Anglican Church Casino

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

- Casino Town Tennis Club
- Mid Richmond Neighbourhood Centre

ATTACHMENT(S)

Nil

17.2 KEY PROJECTS UPDATE

Director: **Ben Zeller**

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the Key Projects update.

REPORT

An update on Council's Key Projects is provided below. The table outlines each project's approved budget, funding source, estimated completion timeframe and status, together with an overview of key risks relevant to project delivery.

Risks have been identified across three broad categories:

- **Financial Risk** – factors that may affect expenditure against the approved project budget.
- **Program Risk** – factors that may influence the anticipated completion timeframe.
- **Scope Risk** – factors that may affect the delivery of the approved project scope or intended outcomes, including regulatory, design, stakeholder or external dependencies.

Each risk category has been recorded as **Low**, **Medium** or **High**, based on the information available at the time of reporting and defined as follows:

- **Low** – No material issues identified at this stage.
- **Medium** – Matters identified that require ongoing monitoring or management.
- **High** – Issues identified that have the potential to significantly affect project delivery if not adequately managed.

Risk ratings are intended to provide a high-level snapshot only and may change as projects progress and further information becomes available.

An update regarding Council's Key Projects is provided below:

Rappville Sewer Augmentation		
Budget	$6,149,613	
Funding Source	Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund $5,985,000 Council Contribution $164,613	
Estimated Completion	August 2026	
Financial Risk - Medium	**Program Risk** - Medium	**Scope Risk -** Low
Status Update	Works on the Rappville Sewer project continue to progress, with the village reticulation system completed east of the rail corridor and works currently underway along Nandabah Street. The installation of reticulation pipelines is targeted for completion by end May 2026. The rising main contract has been fully executed and required pipe materials have been delivered and are stored at Council's depot. Excavation works for the sewage treatment plant effluent and maturation ponds are underway, with Council and the contractor working closely with geotechnical specialists to ensure liner and material requirements are met. Negotiations continue for irrigation, inlet and pump station works. Electrical scope and solar requirements remain under review and procurement for the sewer pump station is underway. The Rappville Sewer Augmentation project holds some program risk	

	due to funding related deadlines, with regular liaison occurring with the department among several mitigation measures.

NRLX – Effluent Management System		
Budget	$5,750,000	
Funding Source	Infrastructure Betterment Fund (State Government)	
Estimated Completion	December 2026	
Financial Risk - Low	**Program Risk** - Medium	**Scope Risk -** Low
Status Update	A start up and concept design workshop with the contractor has been completed, providing early confirmation of scope, technical approach and delivery sequencing. The contractor has successfully mobilised to site and is undertaking preliminary works, including works to internal bank batters, clearing of existing drainage channels, targeted vegetation removal and establishment of a sediment drying area. Onsite sampling and assessments are underway to inform detailed design and operational requirements. Key administrative and regulatory preparatory activities are progressing concurrently. Development of the Review of Environmental Factors is underway, including supporting management plans and concept designs for the pretreatment system, new irrigation areas and the dredging sequence. EPA licensing and approval processes are also progressing. Detailed system design is underway for the pretreatment system, irrigation area and pond bank elevation.	

Casino Industries Activation		
Budget	$13,798,498	
Funding Source	Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund $9,969,000 Council Contribution $3,829,498	
Estimated Completion	August 2026	
Financial Risk - Medium	**Program Risk** - High	**Scope Risk -** High
Status Update	Roundabout: Construction of Stage 1 of the roundabout is progressing well. Electrical works have commenced, the concrete works contract has been executed, and construction of the southern culvert is complete. The base slab for the Patricia Street culvert has been poured, and road widening works on the northern side of the roundabout have been completed. Internal Works: The compulsory acquisition process regarding a portion of the adjacent landholding is in progress. The sewer construction has commenced and is complete up to the adjoining landowner's residence, with options to continue past the house currently under consideration. Roadworks have also progressed to the maximum extent possible to enable service installation and further progress	

	will take place following finalisation of the acquisition. Lot 1: Lot 1 development application and Subdivision Works Certificate have been approved, and the contract documentation and fill drawings have been issued to the purchaser for comment. Settlement is anticipated following completion of the construction works. This project presents high risk to Council from a delivery timeline and scope perspective due to weather impacts affecting the timing of construction along with some delays from third party agencies. Regular liaison occurs with the project steering committee and the funding body to manage these risks.

Queen Elizabeth Park Rugby League Clubhouse		
Budget	$1,607,825	
Funding Source	Community Assets Program (Federal Government) – administered by NSW Reconstruction Authority	
Estimated Completion	August 2026	
Financial Risk - High	**Program Risk** - High	**Scope Risk -** Medium
Status Update	Demolition works have been undertaken to remove the existing brick storage facility adjoining the northern side of the building, along with the removal and disposal of the shipping container located on site. The existing perimeter fencing has been removed to facilitate safe access and enable construction activities. Earthworks and site preparation have been completed, including clearing, excavation and ground preparation, bringing the site to the required condition for construction activities. A contractor has been procured for construction of the clubhouse and has commenced on site. Cost escalations evidenced by submitted pricing as part of the market tender process presents some cost risk. This has already impacted the project scope with a reduced delivery package agreed prior to the advertising of the tender.	

Woodburn Pony and Tennis Clubhouse		
Budget	$840,000	
Funding Source	Community Assets Program (Federal Government) – administered by NSW Reconstruction Authority	
Estimated Completion	December 2026	
Financial Risk - High	**Program Risk** - High	**Scope Risk** - High
Status Update	The clubhouse building element of the project is currently out to tender, with construction of the engineered earth mound underway to satisfy revised flood compliance requirements. The approved funding timeframe is no longer achievable, and a program extension will be required to enable completion of the full scope of works.	

	The revised compliant design has increased complexity and cost, and it is almost certain that additional funding will be required to complete the project as intended. Council continues to progress works where practical while engaging with the funding body (NSW Reconstruction Authority) regarding program deadlines and funding arrangements. This project carries high financial, program and scope risk, due to funding constraints, delivery timeframes and the complexity of the revised compliant design; however, Council remains committed to working through these challenges and identifying a viable pathway to deliver the project.

Airforce Beach Access and Carpark Upgrade		
Budget	$530,000	
Funding Source	Office of Local Government (OLG): $330,000 Council Contribution: $200,000	
Estimated Completion	TBD	
Financial Risk - Low	**Program Risk** - High	**Scope Risk -** Low
Status Update	This project had been initiated over two years ago but has been significantly impacted due to delays in securing the necessary Crown Land License Approvals. Crown have not yet issued a license, nor have they confirmed a timeframe when Council could expect the license returned. Recent correspondence has provided some potential avenues to resolve this, but nothing is certain at this stage. Council has previously secured a contractor via a market tender process who is ready to begin construction once the necessary approvals have been obtained.	

Stan Payne Oval Drainage and Lighting Upgrade		
Budget	Lighting Upgrade: $529,025 Drainage Upgrade: $140,000	
Funding Source	Lighting Upgrade: $200,000 from the NSW Government Office of Sport, $329,025 contributed by Council. Drainage Upgrade: Council $140,000	
Estimated Completion	October 2026	
Financial Risk - Medium	**Program Risk** - Low	**Scope Risk -** Low
Status Update	The Stan Payne Oval lighting upgrade has progressed to the delivery phase, with the tender finalised and contracts executed in April 2026. The detailed lighting design is currently under review, and early works including underground service location and geotechnical investigations are underway. The drainage upgrade is nearing completion with only tidy up works remaining. Further surface rectification works are still to be completed. The main risk with this project pertains to the drainage works with	

	some required scope changes necessary after excavation and proper inspection revealed the need for wider trenching.

Casino Suspension Bridge		
Budget	$3,505,767.00	
Funding Source	Community Assets Program (Federal Government) – administered by NSW Reconstruction Authority	
Estimated Completion	June 2026	
Financial Risk - Medium	**Program Risk** - Medium	**Scope Risk -** Low
Status Update	The contractor remobilised to site at the end of March following completion of structure fabrication, assembly and surface treatment of the bridge sections off site. Construction of the approach ramps on both the eastern and western sides has been completed, along with associated landscaping works, including batter shaping and slope stabilisation with rock reinforcement. The remaining bridge works, including installation of cables, wire, decking, handrails and artwork are on track for completion by the end of June.	

Woodburn Evans Head Shared Pathway		
Budget	$6,651,000	
Funding Source	Transport for NSW Road Safety Program	
Estimated Completion	December 2026	
Financial Risk - Medium	**Program Risk** - Medium	**Scope Risk -** Low
Status Update	Works are on track, with pavement, concrete path construction and drainage works continuing. Concrete works on multiple sections of the pathway are now complete. Culvert works are also progressing, supported by inspections and quality checks confirming compliance with design requirements. Design development for the pedestrian bridge is advancing, with a specialist engaged for detailed design and geotechnical investigations underway with a focus on safe carriage for pedestrians and cyclists.	

Coraki Pool Upgrade		
Budget	$118,189	
Funding Source	$58,189 Coraki Pool Committee, $60,000 contribution from Council	
Estimated Completion	July 2026	
Financial Risk -Low	**Program Risk** - Low	**Scope Risk -** Low
Status Update	A local building contractor has been procured, and construction has commenced on site. The scope for this project includes upgrading the amenities,	

	installation of a new larger shade structure with picnic tables, a drinking fountain, installation of new pool covers and reels. This project is on track to be complete by July 2026.

Casino Sewer Treatment Plant		
Budget	$2,950,000 (2025/26 only)	
Funding Source	Sewer Reserve	
Estimated Completion	December 2026	
Financial Risk - High	**Program Risk** - Low	**Scope Risk** - High
Status Update	The new Casino STP development is progressing with the detailed design reaching the 90% milestone, with final deliverables due in June 2026. Ganden (detailed design consultant) has submitted variation claims that are currently being assessed. Further geotechnical investigations are required to refine the detailed design and finalise the structural and earthworks components. This work will be undertaken following completion of the detailed design. Total expenditure to date (all years) on the project is $3.83 million. Council continues to engage with regulatory agencies (EPA and DCCEEW) concerning the project and has not yet received section 60 approval to construct the plant. This will occur once the EPA is satisfied with the discharge location and management of the environmental effects of the effluent. Council has recently engaged Manly Hydraulics Laboratory (MHL) to assist in navigating a pathway to compliance and finding a solution that will be acceptable to the EPA. The Review of Environmental Factors (REF) is undergoing an update and work continues developing the early works proposal in accordance with the budget request for 2026/27. A noise and odour assessment has been completed, and the findings indicate that the predicted emissions are below the relevant thresholds, and no design modifications are required. This is Council's priority project which is currently unfunded from a construction perspective. The immediate focus is the completion of the detailed design, followed by the required Section 60 approval. Financial risk mitigations are being considered including a reduction of external project management support.	

Evans Head Sewer Treatment Plant – Stage 2		
Budget	$18,553,000	
Funding Source	DCCEEW SSWP – 50% funded, Sewer Reserves 50%	
Estimated Completion	December 2027	
Financial Risk - High	**Program Risk** - Medium	**Scope Risk -** Low
Status Update	The detailed design for the second stage of the Evans Head Sewer Treatment Plant has been finalised, and a Review of Environmental Factors (REF) is currently being reviewed by Council's Development	

	Assessment Panel (DAP) with a response expected soon. The Section 60 application documentation is also being reviewed and finalised for submission by mid-June with a 60-day review and approval period by DCCEEW. Construction tender documentation will be finalised during the S60 review period and it is planned to call for Tenders in July. The target for construction commencement is January 2027 with project completion by December 2027. This project has been the subject of significant expected cost escalation since its inception, with the Public Works providing estimates at several stages of the design process.

Casino Water Treatment Plant		
Budget	$10,000,000	
Funding Source	50% Safe and Secure Funding Program, 50% Council Water Fund	
Estimated Completion	June 2028	
Financial Risk - High	**Program Risk** - Medium	**Scope Risk** - Medium
Status Update	The Casino WTP Augmentation Project is funded under the Safe and Secure Water Program (SSWP). The existing Water Treatment Plant, constructed in 1985, was assessed by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) as presenting a high water quality risk. This risk is primarily associated with insufficient treatment barriers for chlorine-resistant pathogens, including Cryptosporidium. The proposed upgrade is essential to meet the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines, improve performance, and ensure a reliable, high-quality drinking water supply for the Casino community through to 2050. The project is currently in the Concept Design phase, with MJM Environmental engaged as the design consultant. MJM is presently undertaking Stage 1 optioneering, as part of its program of works. Following completion of the Concept Design, the project is expected to proceed directly to detailed design and construction. Uminex has been engaged to provide Project Management and Technical Support Services to assist with the delivery of the project.	

ATTACHMENT(S)

Nil

17.3 FUEL SECURITY UPDATE

Director: **Ryan Gaiter**

RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes the Fuel Security Update.

REPORT

The purpose of this report is to brief Council on the current Australian fuel crisis and to assess the impacts on council operations and budget if the crisis continues for an extended period.

Australia is experiencing the most significant fuel supply disruption in decades, driven primarily by international conflict and weaknesses in national fuel security. The crisis has resulted in volatile fuel prices, periodic supply shortages, particularly with diesel and increased operating costs across all levels of Council's operations. The current fuel crisis began in late February 2026 following escalating conflict in the Middle East and the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz, a route responsible for approximately 20% of global oil shipments. While Australia imports limited crude oil directly from the Middle East, it relies heavily on refined fuels from Asia, which in turn depend on Middle Eastern supply. This indirect exposure has resulted in shipment delays, supply uncertainty and price volatility.

The Federal Government announced a fuel excise reduction of 26.3 cents per litre, effective from 1 April 2026, which will remain in place for three months. This measure has led to lower fuel prices at the pump; however, the federal budget does not provide for any extension of the discount beyond 30 June 2026.

Through these widespread challenges, Council is being directly impacted by higher fleet costs, increased contractor costs and escalating material costs in turn, putting pressure on essential services and capital works budgets.

Comparing Council's current fuel costs to the costs at the same time last year shows the significant increase our organisation is needing to fund. Council does have best value pricing from our distributors due to the tendering process but as can be seen, even with discounted pricing the cost increase is significant due to the volume of fuel we use in Council operations.

The following is a per litre comparison of costs of fuel for the month of April in 2025 and 2026.

	April 2025	April 2026	$ Increase	% Increase
Diesel	$1.74	$2.75	$1.02	58.59%
Unleaded	$1.70	$1.94	$0.24	14.26%
E10 Unleaded	$1.67	$1.94	$0.27	15.94%
Premium 95	$1.76	$1.89	$0.13	7.48%
Premium 98	$1.81	$2.07	$0.25	13.88%
Premium Diesel	$1.71	$2.68	$0.97	56.59%

As can be seen from the figures above there has been a significant increase in the per litre cost, especially in Diesel and Premium Diesel which has seen an exceptional increase between 56-59%, unfortunately these are the two products that Council consumes the most. Some of the factors that impact diesel pricing are:

- Global diesel shortage
- Diesel is heavily used in freight, agriculture, mining, construction, and power generation
- Global demand has remained high while supply has tightened
- Refinery capacity constraints
- Many refineries internationally have closed or shifted away from diesel production

- Australia imports most diesel, leaving prices exposed to global supply shocks
- Higher wholesale margins
- Diesel pricing is more volatile than petrol
- Wholesale suppliers increased margins as diesel demand stayed strong
- Transport and distribution costs
- Extra cost to move fuel to regional NSW disproportionately affects diesel
- Heavy vehicles rely on diesel → costs cascade into delivery pricing

The following table is a comparison of Council's fuel costs for the months of March and April for 2025 and 2026.

		2025			2026				
		NORMAL			FUEL CRISIS				
		Litres purchased	Average cost per day	Average Cost per year	Litres purchased	Average cost per day	Average Cost per year	Additional cost per day	Additional Cost per year
March	Bulk Fuel	47,294	3,081.03	1,124,577.33	71,259	5,833.56	2,129,250.31	2,752.53	1,004,672.98
	Fuel Cards	15,770	921.66	336,404.54	18,613	1,319.21	481,512.48	397.55	145,107.94
		63,064.11	**4,002.69**	**1,460,981.87**	**89,872.06**	**7,152.77**	**2,610,762.79**	**3,150.08**	**1,149,780.92**
April	Bulk Fuel	40,153	2,221.53	810,857.72	55,890	4,823.06	1,760,415.20	2,601.53	949,557.48
	Fuel Cards	15,463	887.145	323,807.93	16,533	1,451.54	529,811.86	564.39	206,003.93
		55,615.64	**3,108.67**	**1,134,665.65**	**72,422.61**	**6,274.59**	**2,290,227.05**	**3,165.92**	**1,155,561.41**

What the table above shows is Council's fuel usage has increased over the past year, some of this increase is due to the decision to keep our storage at higher levels due to the fuel crisis, we have seen between 30-42% growth in usage. Our cost has grown significantly more between 78-101%. The current fuel crisis is costing us approximately an additional $3,150 per day or $1.15m per year (working on March comparisons, if it continues at the same impact level). We normally spend $1.46mil per year on fuel ($4,000 per day) – with the current crisis fuel would cost us $2.6mil per year ($7,000 per day). Additionally, our project costs are increasing as contractors are able to make variation claims for the additional fuel supply costs they are incurring. We are monitoring these budgets closely with the aim to manage these increases within project budgets.

Council has developed our own Fuel Supply Plan, it provides a structured, staged framework to manage Council fuel resources during fuel supply disruptions. Its primary aim is to ensure continuity of critical services while enabling transparent, defensible decisions about service reduction as fuel availability declines.

The plan is designed to:

- Maintain critical public health, safety and legally required services for as long as possible.
- Provide clear governance and escalation pathways for fuel allocation decisions.
- Prioritise fuel use in line with business continuity, emergency management and WHS obligations.
- Align Council actions with State emergency powers where required.

The plan may be activated when advice is received from suppliers or government regarding disruption, Council fuel reserves fall below 7 days of normal consumption, deliveries are delayed or uncertain, or fuel conservation or rationing is required. Activation can occur progressively and may be influenced by State declarations under relevant NSW legislation.

The plan has a staged response, Council's response escalates through the following four operational stages:

Stage 1 – Normal Operations (>21 days supply):
Business as usual with fuel efficiency awareness and supply monitoring.

Stage 2 – Fuel Conservation (14–21 days):
Council-wide conservation measures, reduced discretionary travel, deferral of non-essential works.
All core services maintained.

Stage 3 – Service Prioritisation (7–14 days):
Executive approval required for non-priority fuel use.
Focus on Priority 1 services (waste, water/sewer, emergency response, critical road safety).
Priority 2 services reduced.

Stage 4 – Critical Operations Only (<7 days):
Full rationing, central fuel control, immobilisation of non-essential fleet.
Only essential waste, water/sewer and emergency response continue.

If the plan is activated staff will perform daily monitoring of Councils fuel stocks, usage rates and delivery schedules. Daily fuel status reporting will be given to the Executive Team. A designated Fuel Controller (Senior Leader Fleet Management and Procurement) manages monitoring, allocations, supplier liaison and reporting. Executive Team retains authority to reduce or suspend services based on risk and fuel forecasts. Discretionary vehicle use is progressively restricted, with Executive approval required from Stage 3.

Once the crisis is de-escalating, operations return progressively to normal once fuel supply stabilises and at least 14 days of bulk fuel is restored. A post-event review evaluates impacts, benchmarks fuel usage and identifies resilience improvements (particularly at Nammoona).

Councils' current diesel fuel storage is as follows:

Evans Head Depot

Storage capacity: 10,000 litres, Average usage: 3,000–3,500 litres per week Primary users: waste collection vehicles, rural grading crew, effective supply: approximately 3 weeks

Casino Depot

Storage capacity: 20,400 litres, Average usage: 8,000–10,000 litres per week Primary users: Roads and Drainage operations and major plant, effective supply: approximately 2.3 weeks

Nammoona Waste Facility

Storage capacity: 5,000 litres, Average usage: 2,500–3,500 litres per week Primary users: garbage trucks, hook truck, loader, compactor, excavator, effective supply: approximately 1.6 weeks

Noted as Council's highest fuel-supply risk location

Effectively Council has diesel supply of approximately 7 weeks.

Councils' current petrol fuel storage consists of approximately 1,000 litres stored at Evans Head and Casino. Used mainly for open spaces and small plant. No major critical service dependency identified.

Councils' bulk fuel tender was deferred from the March Ordinary Metting due to Council requiring more information to make an informed decision, this report will be bought back to June's Ordinary Meeting for consideration.

Future updates will be provided to Council as circumstances change.

ATTACHMENT(S)

Nil

17.4 DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS DETERMINED UNDER THE ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT ACT FOR THE PERIOD 1 APRIL 2026 TO 30 APRIL 2026

Director: **Tina Kao**

Responsible Officer: **Andy Edwards**

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the Development Applications report for the period 1 April 2026 to 30 April 2026.

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.

Councillors receive 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.

The total number of Development Applications and Complying Development Applications determined within the Local Government area for the period 1 April 2026 to 30 April 2026 was seventeen (17) with a total value of $7,702,616.76.

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

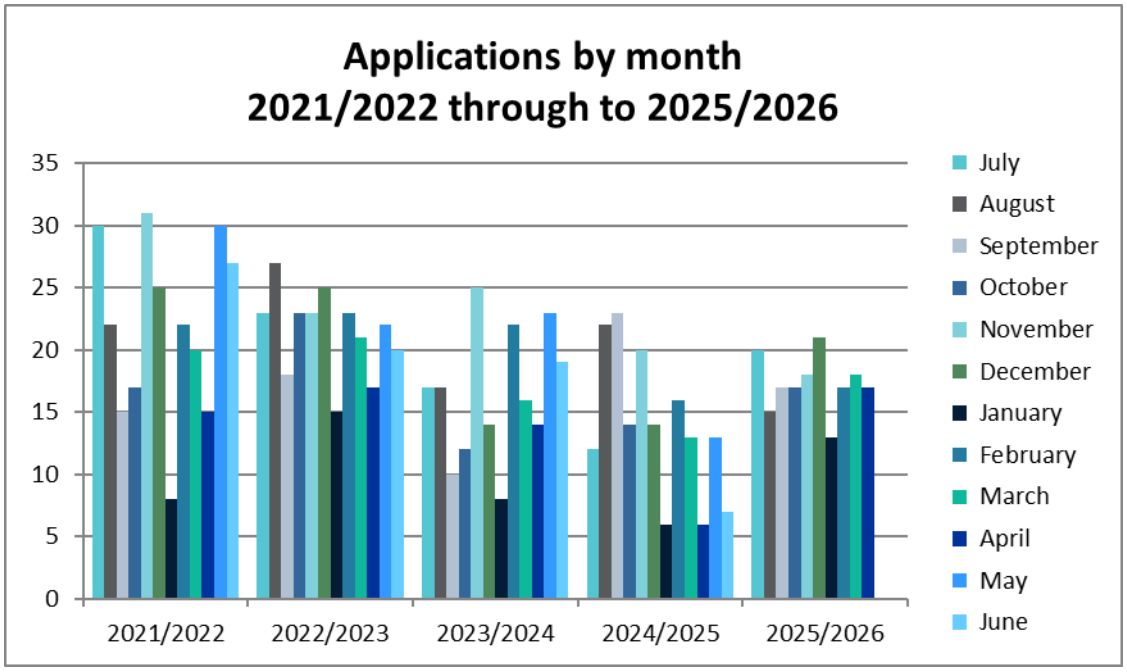


Figure 1: Monthly number of development applications and CDC's processed by Council over five financial years.

Figure 2 provides the annual value of Development Consents including CDCs issued by Council and private ceritifers over five financial years. Figure 3 provides a detailed review of the value for the reporting month of April 2026.

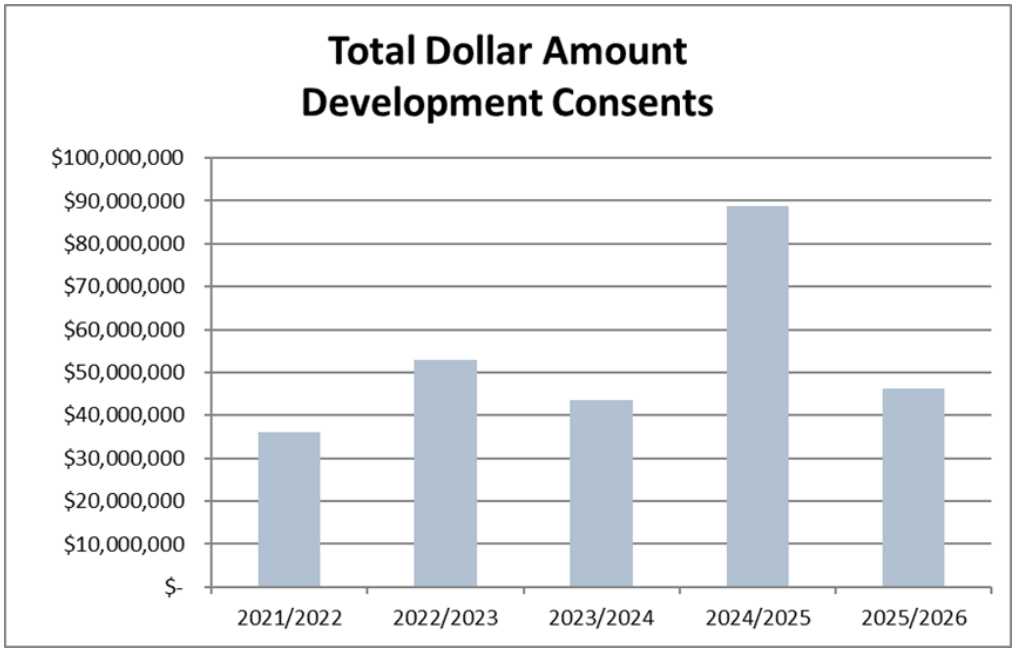


Figure 2: Annual value of development

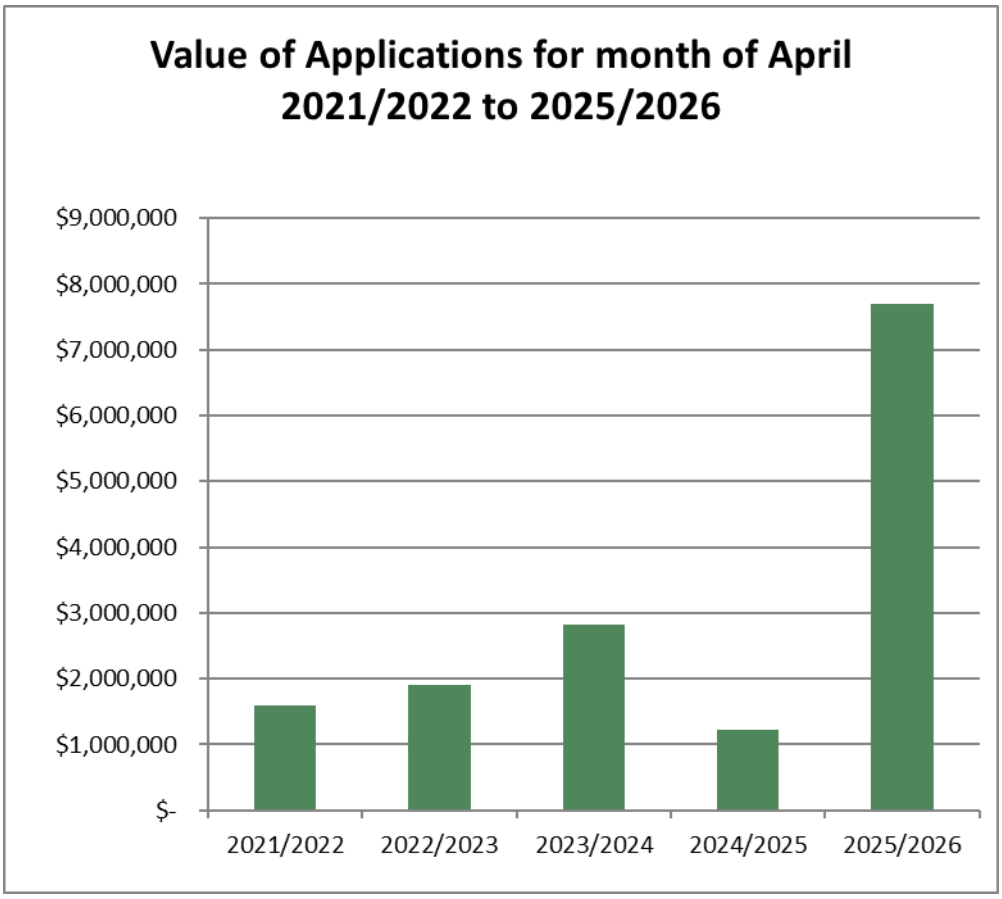


Figure 3: Value of development for the month of April from 2021/2022 to 2025/2026

2021/2022	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026
15	17	14	6	17

Table 1: Number of Applications for the month of April from 2021/2022 to 2025/2026

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 value and number of applications determined by Council over the past five years.

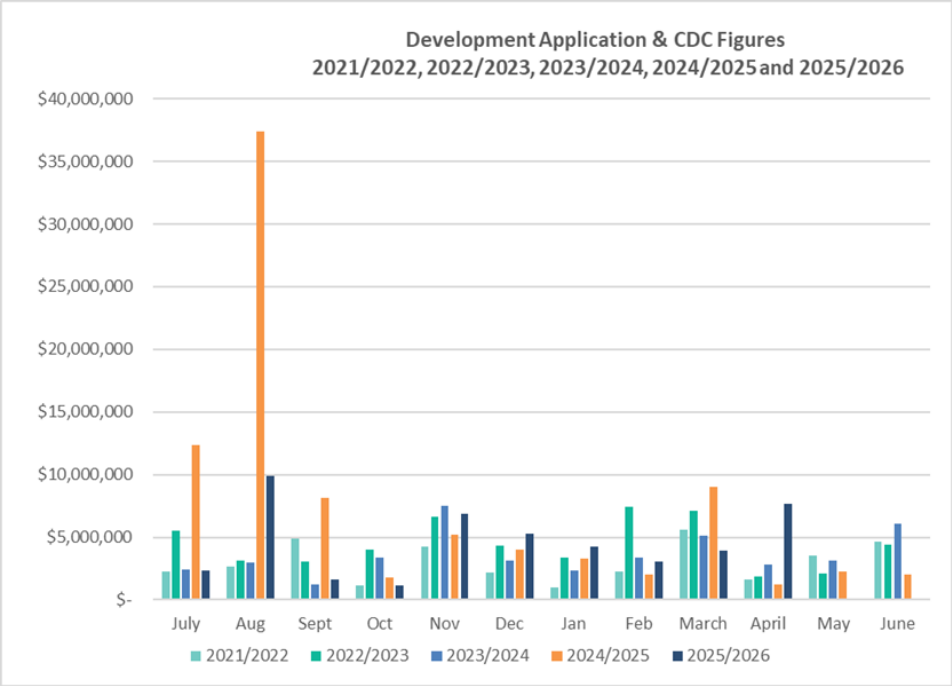


Figure 4: Value of development applications per month over five financial years.

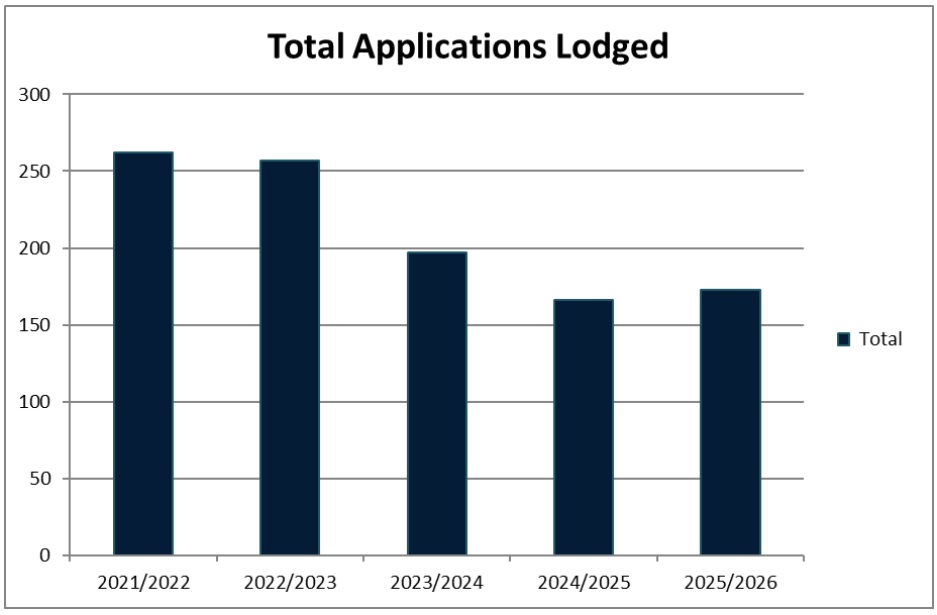


Figure 5: Number of Development Applications & CDCs per annum over five financial years

Activity for the month of April 2026

General Approvals (excluding Subdivisions, Section 4.55)	12
Section 4.55 amendments to original consent	2
Operational Consent	-
Deferred Consent	-
Subdivision	1
Refused	-
Complying Development (Council Approved)	-
Complying Development (Private Certifier Approved)	2
Amended Complying Development (Private Certifier Approved)	-
TOTAL NUMBER OF DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS DETERMINED	**17**
Rejected	-
Withdrawn	-
Average assessment days for applications determined in April 2026 (Planning & Building Combined)	33
No. of Integrated development applications determined in April 2026	-
No. of Designated development applications determined in April 2026	-

ATTACHMENT(S)

Nil

Summary of Development Applications determined under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act for the period 1 April 2026 to 30 April 2026								
Application ID	**Applicant**	**Owners**	**Location**	**Development**	**Date Received (In Portal)**	**Date Accepted (In Portal)**	**Determination Date**	**Estimated Cost $**
DA2026/0097	D L Johnston	A Rogelja & D L Johnston	650 Bungawalbin Whiporie Road, Bungawalbin	Proposed new dwelling house, swimming pool and shed, ancillary water tanks, septic system and conversion of existing dwelling into a farm building.	7/11/2025	28/11/2025	23/04/2026	550,999.90
DA2026/0118	AJM Architectural Designs	The Henwood Family Pty Ltd	1-3 Winjeel Road, Evans Head	Change of use to Artisan Food and Drink Premises (Distillery) with ancillary Cafe and retail areas, including new building works, carparking, landscape and associated works and retention of existing on-site managers residence.	10/12/2025	5/01/2026	30/04/2026	1,445,400.00
DA2026/0149	N L Lammers	R A & N L Lammers	41 Cypress Street, Evans Head	Residential alterations and additions including master bedroom, verandahs, deck, detached carport and associated works with request to vary DCP.	15/02/2026	11/03/2026	7/04/2026	100,000.00
DA2026/0155	GMB Builders Pty Ltd	P A, S G & L J Mason	12 Nortons Road, New Italy	Single storey three bedroom manufactured home and associated works.	23/02/2026	16/03/2026	17/04/2026	287,100.00
DA2026/0156	Council Approval Group	I G Berocay & S H Patten	4 Gray Street, Coraki	Amalgamate existing 5 lots and construct a new single dwelling.	23/02/2026	9/03/2026	23/04/2026	290,000.00

Summary of Development Applications determined under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act for the period 1 April 2026 to 30 April 2026 (Cont'd)								
Application ID	**Applicant**	**Owners**	**Location**	**Development**	**Date Received (In Portal)**	**Date Accepted (In Portal)**	**Determination Date**	**Estimated Cost $**
MA2026/0022	J A Nommensen	D A & J A Nommensen	32 Diary Street, Casino	S4.55(1A) Modification to re-site existing carport & build new shed including a variation to the DCP.	23/02/2026	3/03/2026	1/04/2026	0.00
DA2026/0160	C L Hoare	C L & R Hoare	14 Blackwood Road, Naughtons Gap	Construction of a new detached steel shed with associated driveway extension, retaining walls and request to vary DCP.	24/02/2026	5/03/2026	1/04/2026	39,600.00
MA2026/0024	Amy Campbell Architect	R G & S E Francis	26 River Street, Broadwater	S4.55(1A) Modification to approved detached secondary dwelling relating to floor plan, internal floor area and external finishes along with associated works.	27/02/2026	12/03/2026	14/04/2026	0.00
DA2026/0162	Newton Denny Chapelle	T W Gould	105 Tomki Bight Road, Greenridge	Formalise the use of as-built alterations and additions which have been undertaken within an existing farm shed.	27/02/2026	6/03/2026	14/04/2026	112,162.20
DA2026/0164	Ballina Pool Shop	P S Waters & C M Randall	203 Centre Street, Casino	Inground concrete swimming pool and safety fencing.	3/03/2026	10/03/2026	8/04/2026	59,820.00
DA2026/0166	Fernleigh Drafting & Council Services	P J Whitney	70 Hickey Street, Casino	Detached steel frame shed with request to vary DCP.	5/03/2026	10/03/2026	2/04/2026	27,000.00
DA2026/0171	Hibbards Pty Ltd	Hibbards Pty Ltd	18 Barling Street, Casino	Construction of a single storey dwelling and associated works	10/03/2026	17/03/2026	22/04/2026	579,000.00

Summary of Development Applications determined under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act for the period 1 April 2026 to 30 April 2026 (Cont'd)

Application ID	Applicant	Owners	Location	Development	Date Received (In Portal)	Date Accepted (In Portal)	Determination Date	Estimated Cost $
DA2026/0174	J L Koroheke	J L & K L Koroheke	21 Thomas Crescent, Coraki	Alfresco roof addition to existing dwelling.	14/03/2026	25/03/2026	22/04/2026	26,610.00
DA2026/0176	G P Meineke	D A & A J S Hirst	131 Richmond Terrace, Coraki	Strata Subdivision of an existing attached dual occupancy and ancillary works.	16/03/2026	30/03/2026	23/04/2026	13,750.00

Summary of Council Certified Complying Development Applications determined under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act for the period 1 April 2026 to 30 April 2026

Application ID	Applicant	Owners	Location	Development	Date Received (In Portal)	Date Accepted (In Portal)	Determination Date	Estimated Cost
Nil								

Summary of Flood Affected Development Applications determined under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act for the period 1 April 2026 to 30 April 2026

Application ID	Applicant	Owners	Location	Development	Date Received (In Portal)	Date Accepted (In Portal)	Determination Date	Estimated Cost
DA2026/0175	R J Hayes	S J Smith	77 Richmond Street, Woodburn	Raise existing dwelling including alterations & additions.	16/03/2026	23/03/2026	22/04/2026	172,370.00

Summary of Privately Certified Applications determined under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act for the period 1 April 2026 to 30 April 2026								
Application ID	**Applicant**	**Owners**	**Location**	**Development**	**Date Submitted to Council for Registration**	**Date Accepted**	**Determination Date**	**Estimated Cost**
CDC2026/0025	DP Property Consulting Pty Ltd	RSM Properties Pty Ltd	164 Canterbury Street, Casino	Internal alterations to existing retail supermarket & conversion of 4 existing car parking spaces to Coles click & collect parking bays.	20/04/2026	24/04/2026	17/04/2026	2,998,804.66
CDC2026/0028	G Richardson	C F & J D Larcombe	33 Manifold Road, North Casino	Construction of a new steel frame single storey dwelling with attached garages, related utilities and landscaping.	30/04/2026	04/05/2026	30/04/2026	1,000,000.00

Summary of Development Applications determined under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act with a Clause 4.6 Variation for the period 1 April 2026 to 30 April 2026								
Application ID	**Applicant**	**Owners**	**Location**	**Development**	**Date Received (in Portal)**	**Date Accepted (In Portal)**	**Determination Date**	**Estimated Cost**
Nil								

Summary of Development Applications Refused under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act for the period 1 April 2026 to 30 April 2026								
Application ID	**Applicant**	**Owners**	**Location**	**Development**	**Date Received (in Portal)**	**Date Accepted (In Portal)**	**Refusal Date**	**Estimated Cost**
Nil								

Summary of Development Applications Rejected under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act for the period 1 April 2026 to 30 April 2026								
Application ID	**Applicant**	**Owners**	**Location**	**Development**	**Date Received (in Portal)**	**Date Accepted (In Portal)**	**Rejected Date**	**Estimated Cost**
Nil								

Summary of Development Applications Withdrawn under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act for the period 1 April 2026 to 30 April 2026								
Application ID	**Applicant**	**Owners**	**Location**	**Development**	**Date Received (in Portal)**	**Date Accepted (In Portal)**	**Date Withdrawn**	**Estimated Cost**
Nil								

17.5 GRANT APPLICATION INFORMATION REPORT - APRIL 2026

Director: **Ryan Gaiter**

Responsible Officer: **Rylee Vidler**

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the Grant Application Information Report for the month of April 2026.

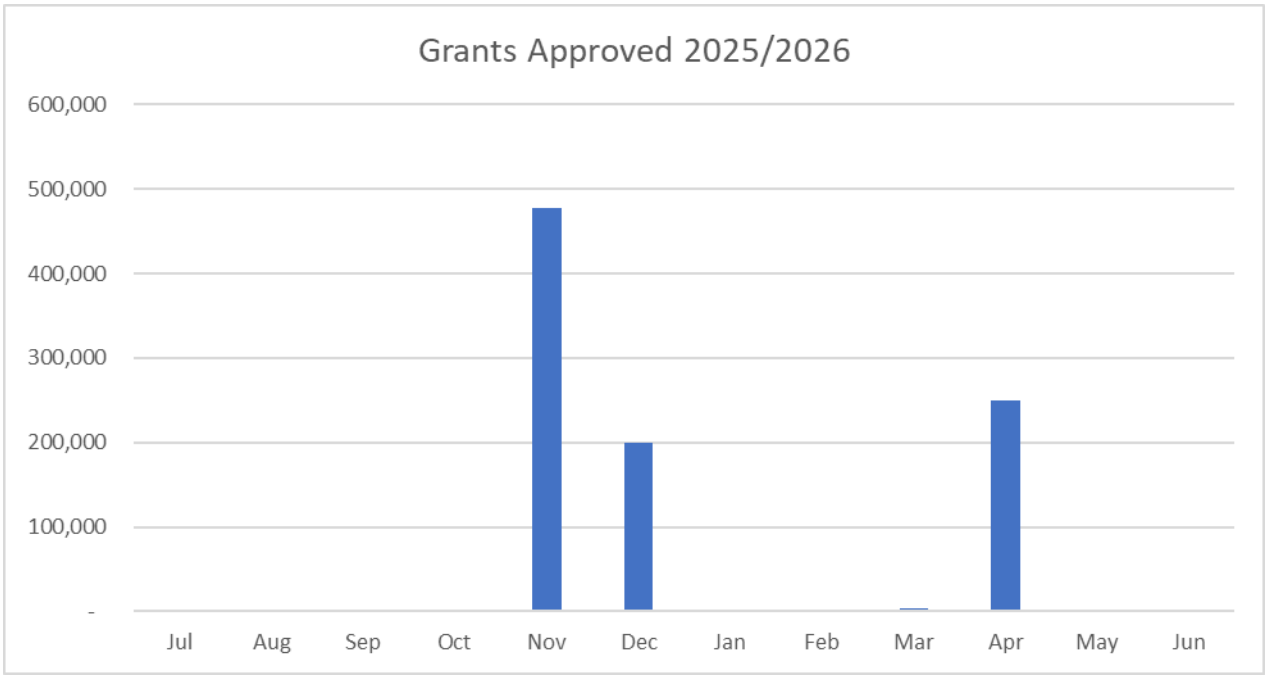
REPORT

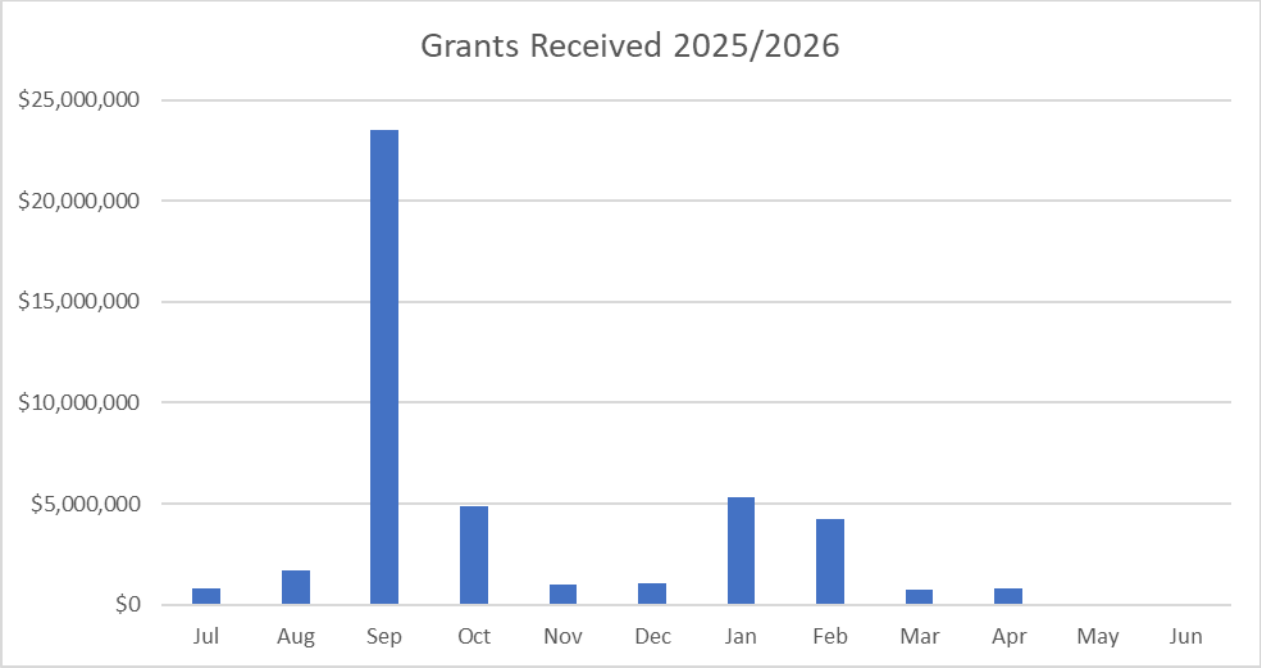
This report provides information on grant applications that have been approved, grants that have been received, grant applications that were unsuccessful and grant applications that were submitted for the month of April 2026.

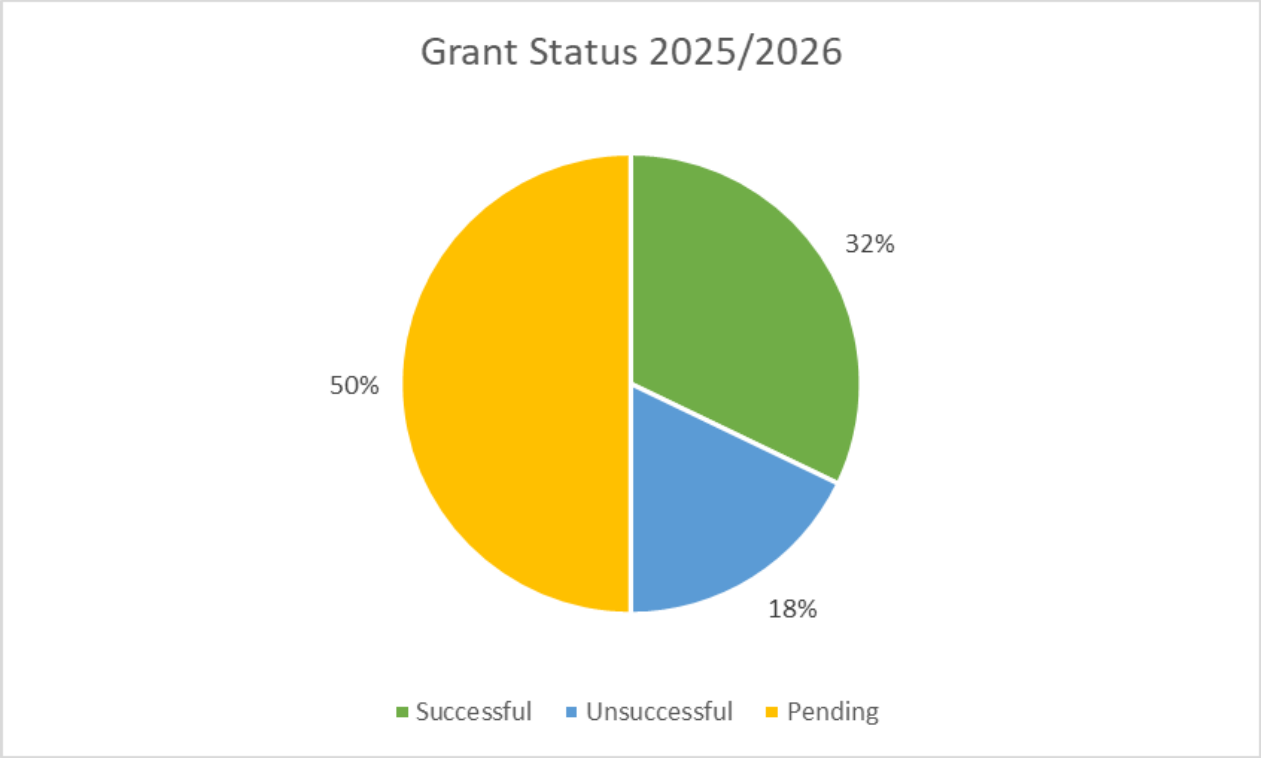
During the reporting period, Council submitted six new grant applications and was notified of one successful application. Council was not notified of any unsuccessful applications.

Council received $791,153 during April from two previously approved grants.

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




Grants Received 2025/2026
$25,000,000
$20,000,000
$15,000,000
$10,000,000
$5,000,000
$0
Jul
Aug
Sep
Oct
Nov
Dec
Jan
Feb
Mar
Apr
May
Jun


Grant Status 2025/2026
32%
50%
18%
Successful
Unsuccessful
Pending

Grant Applications Submitted

Project Name	Funding Body	Funding Name	Project Value	Grant Funding	Council Funding	Application Submitted
Regional Event Fund Program 26/27 Flagship Stream - Casino Truck Show 2026	Destination NSW (State)	Regional Event Fund 2026/2027 Flagship Stream	$ 20,000	$ 20,000	$ -	10 April 2026
Comment: If successful, this funding will be used in targeted marketing initiatives for the 2026 Casino Truck Show, including digital advertising, professional photography and videography.						
Design of Casino Stormwater Upgrades	Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (State)	Floodplain Management Program	$ 300,000	$ 200,000	$ 100,000	14 April 2026
Comment: If successful, this funding will be used to complete detailed designs of stormwater network upgrades in Casino.						
MR145 - Road realignment at Coopers Lagoon	Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (Federal)	Safer Local Roads and Infrastructure Program Tranche 5	$ 3,300,000	$2,640,000	$ 660,000	30 April 2026
Comment: If successful, this funding will be used to design and construct a road realignment at Coopers Lagoon.						
Physics Creek Bridge Replacement	Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (Federal)	Safer Local Roads and Infrastructure Program Tranche 5	$ 700,000	$ 560,000	$ 140,000	30 April 2026
Comment: If successful, this funding will be used to design and construct a new bridge over Physics Creek, replacing the original timber deck bridge.						
Evans Head Traffic Calming	Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (Federal)	Safer Local Roads and Infrastructure Program Tranche 5	$ 852,168	$ 681,735	$ 170,433	30 April 2026
Comment: If successful, this funding will be used to construct traffic calming interventions to reduce speed on Broadwater-Evans Head Road, Flame Street and Beech Street in Evans Head.						

Project Name	Funding Body	Funding Name	Project Value	Grant Funding	Council Funding	Application Submitted
Saville Road Culvert Replacement	Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (Federal)	Safer Local Roads and Infrastructure Program Tranche 5	$ 400,000	$ 320,000	$ 80,000	30 April 2026
Comment: If successful, this funding will be used to replace a collapsed stormwater drainage culvert on Savilles Road.						

Grants that have been received

Project Name	Funding Body	Funding Name	Project Value	Grant Funding	Council Funding	Application Submitted	Date Received	Total Received
Betterment of Casino Footbridge	Department of Regional NSW (State)	Community Assets Program	$ 3,505,767	$ 3,505,767	$ -	27 March 2023	$ 701,153 22 April 2026	$ 2,804,614
Comment: Instalment 3 received								
Richmond River riparian/ riverbank stabilisation and restoration projects - Coraki Windsor Park, Jabiru Wetlands and Raw Water Pump Station Showcase site	Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development - ADMINISTERED by Rous County Council	Northern Rivers Watershed Initiative	$ 300,000	$ 300,000	$ -	N/A	$ 90,000 30 April 2026	$ 210,000
Comment: Progress payment for 30% of grant funds for completion of Activity 3 (complete on-ground works to 30%).								

Grants that have been approved

Project Name	Funding Body	Funding Name	Project Value	Grant Funding	Council Funding	Application Submitted	Date Approved
Design of Enabling Infrastructure for Summerland Estate	Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (State)	Regional Housing Strategic Planning Fund Round 4	$ 267,678	$ 250,000	$ 17,678	15 December 2025	24 April 2026
Comment: This funding will allow Council to prepare construction-ready designs for the critical water and sewage enabling infrastructure to service over 1500 homes in the new							

ATTACHMENT(S)

Nil

17.6 RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Author: **Vaughan Macdonald**

Responsible Officer: **Jenna Hazelwood**

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the information in the Residential Development Update report.

REPORT

Council has been working to improve housing supply and diversity across the Richmond Valley to help address the long-term impacts of the regional housing crisis and respond to increasing demand through in-migration. Currently, housing development across the Valley is falling short of projected housing demand, particularly in inland communities, and this gap is expected to increase in the future without targeted intervention. Over the past five years, housing prices have escalated to reflect increasing demand, and rental vacancy rates have fallen below 1%, with the Richmond Valley recently reporting median rent increases of up to 14.5%.

Housing challenges are experienced differently across the Valley and each urban settlement requires a customised response. In inland areas such as Casino, there is ample flood-safe land for future housing. However, development servicing costs and lower rates of return have seen developers reluctant to invest in long-term housing projects, when short-term returns in coastal areas are more attractive. Housing growth has largely been limited to rural residential expansion and council-led housing developments.

In the Mid-Richmond villages, uncertainty over future flooding impacts, housing buy-back programs and challenges with obtaining insurance have limited growth, while coastal locations, such as Evans Head have seen strong investment interest, but expansion is limited by a lack of unconstrained land for housing.

To support housing growth across the Valley, Council has applied the following strategies:

- Clearly defining future growth opportunities through the Richmond Valley Growth Management Strategy and place-based planning for towns and villages.
- Actively supporting private housing development proposals, through council services such as the development concierge and pre-lodgement meetings and continuing to deliver some of the fastest development assessment turn-around times in the Northern Rivers.
- Working with the NSW Reconstruction Authority to activate major housing sites identified in the Northern Rivers Resilient Lands Strategy through targeted government investment in infrastructure.
- Highlighting opportunities for government investment in local housing and pursuing grants for infrastructure planning and delivery.
- Undertaking small scale housing development projects, where necessary, to provide community outcomes.

Current housing development

In Evans Head, the private market is leading housing development, with the Thyme Lifestyle Resort now complete, and continued interest from investors in other seniors living opportunities. Pre-construction work has also commenced on the Iron Gates development, which was approved by the NSW Land and Environment Court in 2024, for development of 121 community title residential lots. Council's professional officers continue to work through the conditions of consent with the proponents. Meanwhile, Planning NSW is leading the assessment of a further proposed development at Memorial Airport Drive, Evans Head, incorporating 157 lots for a variety of housing types, including multi-dwelling houses, dual occupancies and affordable housing. The proposal

was declared State Significant Development in August 2025, following a recommendation from the NSW Housing Delivery Authority.

In the Mid-Richmond villages finalisation of the new Richmond Valley Flood Risk Management Plan (currently on public exhibition) will provide more clarity on future housing opportunities and constraints, with the introduction of a new approach to development assessment, known as Flood Planning Constraints Categorisation (FPCC). This methodology offers a more refined and multi-factored approach to the previous flood hazard categories. It not only considers flood behaviour but also takes into account evacuation risks and emergency response considerations.

Council's Mid-Richmond Place Plans also consider adaptation opportunities for the future, such as house raising and modification and the NSW Reconstruction Authority is continuing to support these options through its Resilient Homes Program. The Place Plans anticipate a level of managed growth in Woodburn, Broadwater/Rileys Hill and Coraki over the next 20 years, despite the inherent flooding constraints. In this regard, Council is currently working with Homes NSW and the NSW Reconstruction Authority to consider future housing options on the former hospital site at Coraki, once the lease period for the pod village concludes during 2027.

In Casino, plans to activate up to 1500 new homes at South Fairy Hill took another step forward this month, with the NSW Government providing a $250,000 grant under the Regional Housing Strategic Planning Fund to prepare detailed designs for water and sewerage infrastructure to service the new estate. The land was identified for priority investigation in the NSW Reconstruction Authority's Resilient Lands Strategy and Council has been working with the Authority and the development proponents to complete feasibility studies for the project and move it towards planning proposal stage. The infrastructure funding will help to ensure the infrastructure works are shovel-ready for the future.

Council also continues to consider opportunities for smaller-scale housing projects, as appropriate, to stimulate investment in the local housing market, although the preferred position remains for the private development industry to drive housing delivery wherever possible.

ATTACHMENT(S)

Nil

17.7 CLOSURE OF EAGAR STREET CORAKI

Director: **Ben Zeller**

Responsible Officer: **Kim Anderson**

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Notes the information contained within the report on the proposed road closure of part of Eagar Street Coraki; and
2. Notes that a future report will be presented to Council for determination of the proposed road closure following the consultation required under the *Roads Act 1993*.

REPORT

Council resolved on 20 October 2020 for the closure and disposal of part of Eagar Street Coraki, (adjoining 21-23 Queen Elizabeth Drive, Coraki) to the adjoining landowners. The property owners at that time had been using part of this road reserve for over forty-five years including an 8m wide, 60m long area (480m2 total area) enclosed by a fence into their property. The resolution included the sale of the full length of the adjoining land (Lot 2 Section A in DP7104). Council entered into a deed of agreement for the closure and sale. The site has been surveyed, and compensation for this land has been paid to Council. The final plans have not yet been registered at the Land Registry Services (LRS) to finalise this matter.

The landowners have since sold the property, and a deed of assignment was signed from the new owners as part of the property sale.

The new property owners have asked Council to consider closing the entire length of part Eagar Street, which would require them to consolidate the affected lots to ensure no parcel is left without legal access to a public road.

In accordance with Section 38B of the *Roads Act 1993*, Council is required to undertake the relevant consultation prior to closing a public road for disposal. This process will include notifying relevant authorities, adjoining landholders and inviting feedback.

A further report will be presented to Council following the completion of the public consultation period for determination.

Map: Showing proposed road closure for disposal.

ATTACHMENT(S)

Nil

18 QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

18.1 QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Author: Vaughan Macdonald

The following questions on notice were received from Councillor Lyndall Murray.

Question 1 Development Application DA2026/0097

Council received Development Application DA2026/0097 on 28 November 2025. The applicant has raised concerns regarding delays in the assessment process, and the Richmond Valley 2040 Community Strategic Plan includes a commitment to work with the Government Property Assessment Program to fast-track inspections, orders and development applications for flood-affected properties.

Could the General Manager please provide an update on the status of DA2026/0097? On 17 February 2026, when asked which external referrals remained outstanding, Council advised that only the SES advisory referral was pending; this was subsequently received on 6 March.

Please also outline the reasons for the extended time delay in reaching an outcome on the assessment, and detail the steps being taken to progress the application in line with Council's Community Strategic Plan commitments to flood-affected property owners.

Response

DA2026/0097 was determined on 23 April 2026.

The proposal sought approval for residential development comprising a dwelling, swimming pool and shed on an existing earth mound connected to the Bungawalbin Flood levee. This mound was previously the subject of development consent that regularised its use for extensive agriculture. Clarification was sought during the assessment period on the submitted information, and consultation with several external agencies. Enquiries were also received from the applicant and their consultants during this period.

Council's current average assessment period of 46 days is the fastest in the Northern Rivers. The assessment period of this DA is a reflection of the range of issues required to be considered prior to determination. Many neighbouring Councils have DA assessment times that regularly exceed 145 days which is rare in Richmond Valley Council.

Council's target is to approve 90% of applications within 40 days, however depending on the complexity of a development, the site and its attributes, and the information provided in the development application, this can take longer.

Question 2 Tourism Evans Head

Tourism is the primary economic driver of Evans Head, with artisan hospitality and food businesses playing a pivotal role in attracting visitors, activating underutilised for business industrial precinct, and advancing the area's destination marketing objectives.

Could the General Manager please provide an update on the current status of Development Application DA2026/0118, including an indication of the expected assessment timeline, and confirm whether Council's planning processes are adequately supporting tourism-related start-up businesses as part of its broader economic development commitments for Evans Head?

Response

DA2026/0118 was approved on 30 April 2026

Council's planning services provide support for a wide range of development types, including but not limited to business, tourism, and start-up proposals. These processes are opportunities for early engagement with our community through Council's Development Concierge service, and for more complex applications a dedicated pre-lodgement service is provided, where applicants meet

officers in expertise areas to work through queries prior to lodgement of applications, along with informal consultations.

In relation to the subject Artisan Food and Drink Premises, Council officers engaged with the proponent through informal meetings both prior to the lodgement and during the assessment process. This included facilitating discussions directly with the applicant and their consultants to provide guidance and support throughout the application.

Public exhibition of this DA received a number of submissions, with concerns shared with the applicant to address them through adjustments to the DA. The outcome provided mitigation and design changes addressing the concerns raised. This resulted in improved outcomes for local amenity however added to the process and assessment time.

Question 3 Youth Program

At the March council meeting, it was resolved that Council consider a $20,000 investment in a youth program. Has this been reviewed and approved? If so, what is the proposed plan for allocating these funds?

Response

At the March Ordinary Meeting, Council resolved to consider the allocation of up to $20,000 through the 2026/27 budget process to support additional youth initiatives across the Richmond Valley. This allocation has not yet been formally approved, as it is subject to adoption of the 2026-2027 Operational Plan, following public exhibition.

It should be noted that this proposed allocation includes Council's existing annual youth engagement budget of $7,804, approximately half of which is currently allocated towards Youth Week Activities.

If approved, the additional funding would be directed towards local youth programs, in consultation with the Richmond Valley Youth Network. Council's key priority would be to strengthen engagement and support services delivered through trusted local youth organisations and involve local young people in the co-design of programs and activities.

Question 4 Draft Flood Risk Management Study and Plan

Could the General Manager please advise whether the Draft Flood Risk Management Study and Plan includes any measures directed at modifying flood behaviour — such as upstream retention, catchment-scale interventions, or infrastructure designed to alter flood frequency or depth outcomes — and if so, identify those measures and their current funding and implementation status?

If the plan does not include flood behaviour modification measures, could the General Manager further advise whether any such measures have been considered and rejected during the preparation of this plan, and on what basis, given that the Richmond Valley 2040 Community Strategic Plan commits to long-term adaptation and new solutions in response to the ongoing challenges of living on a floodplain?

Response

The Draft Flood Risk Management Study and Plan considered numerous flood mitigation infrastructure measures designed to alter flood depths; however, Council's flood model does not extend into the upper reaches of the catchment and therefore has no capacity to assess the effectiveness of regional scale infrastructure measures.

The National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) is currently working with CSIRO on a Northern Rivers region wide flood model which will be used to assess a range of significant mitigation options. This work provides greater catchment scale considerations. Whilst flood frequency cannot be altered, flood impact and downstream effects may be modified through

mitigation. NEMA's findings and initial plan are anticipated to be presented to the Government by the end of June 2026 and available to the public thereafter. Briefings with Councils are being scheduled during July 2026.

Pacific Motorway flood modelling undertaken by Transport for NSW was acquired by Council during the preparation of the Richmond Valley Flood Study 2023. Council has in turn shared its model with Transport for NSW which has been used to further test potential impacts from the Motorway. Subsequent expert advice procured by the NSW Government confirmed that the Pacific Motorway had little or minor impact to flood depths (at most being 25mm or 50mm) across the span of the Pacific Motorway in the LGA. These are well within acceptable thresholds for approved major government infrastructure projects.

ATTACHMENT(S)

Nil

19 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:

19.1 Tender VP480811 - Biosolids Removal and Disposal

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.

19.2 Tender VP467634 - Construction of the Woodburn Pony and Tennis Clubhouse

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.

19.3 Tender REGPROT402526RTC Co-Mingled Recycling Removal

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.

19.4 Tender VP505575 - Supply of Fire Compliance Services to Council Buildings and Facilities

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) - (a) 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 personnel matters concerning particular individuals (other than councillors).

20 RESOLUTIONS OF CLOSED COUNCIL