

ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19



Striving for
Community
Wellbeing



muswellbrook
shire council

Muswellbrook Shire Council respectfully acknowledges the
Local Aboriginal People who are the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land.

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Cover Image:

Gabriella Phillips and her
horse Sweetie, Piercefield.
Muswellbrook

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Nicola X Cuppaidge



Envirocare
100%
Recycled Paper

Hello! 2018/19 Annual Report

Our annual report provides a snapshot of our Shire and an update on how Council is progressing plans and projects for the future of our community.

The following chapters include:

- *an overview of Council's highlights and challenges for the past year;*
- *a summary of our operational performance;*
- *a detailed breakdown of our financial performance and expenditure for 2018/19;*
- *information prescribed by the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005, including a detailed progress report on our Delivery Program and Operational Plan.*

Council's 2018/19 Annual Report demonstrates our commitment to the Muswellbrook Shire Council Community Strategic Plan 2017- 2027 (CSP 2017-2027 page 50), adopted by Council in February 2017, which articulates our Community's priorities and aspirations for the Shire.

The Community's goals outlined in the CSP 2017-2027 were also informed by, and aligned with the priorities and actions endorsed in the Premier's Priorities, as well as NSW State Priorities and other NSW Government plans to grow the economy, deliver infrastructure, protect the vulnerable, reduce human impacts on the environment and improve health, education and public services across NSW. Specific elements of those goals are also aligned with the goals and directions identified in the vision articulated in the Hunter Regional Plan 2036 which will guide the delivery of greater prosperity for communities across the Hunter region, including those in the Muswellbrook Shire.

To achieve the CSP 2017-2027, Council has developed clear strategies to meet the key issues and challenges specific to our community under the following six themes:

- 01. Economic Prosperity**
- 02. Social Equity and Inclusion**
- 03. Environmental Sustainability**
- 04. Cultural Vitality**
- 05. Community Infrastructure**
- 06. Community Leadership**

Aligned with these themes and strategic directions, Council has identified key major infrastructure projects which support the achievement of the Community's vision for the future of the Shire. (Major Projects 26). Working in partnership with our stakeholders, these projects will ensure we achieve the Community's vision and meet the challenges of the future.

Read more about the Muswellbrook Shire Council Community Strategic Plan 2017– 2027 on page 50 or at <https://muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au/ipr>

Further information about the reporting framework for councils is available at www.olg.nsw.gov.au/councils/integrated-planning-and-reporting/framework.



Winners of the 2018 Blue Heeler Film Festival Junior Category, Braeden Wallace (left) and Lachlan Peasley, were thrilled to receive their prizes from festival patron Sigrid Thornton

Highlights & Challenges 2018/19

01 Economic Prosperity

Highlights:

- › Council signed a deed with energy company AGL making them the preferred company to develop a pumped hydro energy storage facility for the Hunter region. The proposed \$300 million, 250 megawatt facility will have the potential to power every home in the Hunter for up to eight hours and is part of AGL's renewable energy and storage mix as it prepares to close Liddell coal-fired power station in 2022.
- › Muswellbrook Shire Council worked with Upper Hunter Shire Council and Upper Hunter Country Tourism Association to develop an integrated region wide Tourism strategy which provides the direction and actions required to grow the local visitor economy. The strategy enables new programs to be created and encourages entrepreneurs and investment in local tourism ventures. A region wide updated Website was launched and hard copy Visitors Guide was published and distributed.
- › Council committed \$200,000 from its Future Fund to the Tailings to Topsoil project. This project is led by the University of Newcastle and will provide an alternative solution to the disposal of mine tailings by transforming tailings into a soil additive for developing high-performance biomass production. Council's involvement in the Tailings to Topsoil project is aligned to the strategic objectives of the Shire to improve economic diversification and support new technologies and processes for environmental rehabilitation and remediation.

02 Social Equity and Inclusion

Highlights:

- › Inclusion and accessibility were brought to the forefront of playtime in Muswellbrook with the launch of Flower Power at Muswellbrook's Simpson Park. A collaboration between Ability Links NSW, four Muswellbrook primary schools, singer-songwriter Baihe Butcher and Council, the project links the existing Liberty Swing through creative play to the main playground area.
- › In partnership with Ability Links NSW, local schools, Girl Guides and the Wanaruah Aboriginal Land Council, Sound Smart Natives interactive audio signage was launched near the Semillon Street dog park in Muswellbrook's Karoola Park where

residents and visitors can push buttons to listen to a description of each plant at the garden, which have been chosen for their sensory value, enabling those with vision impairment the opportunity to hear the information.

- › Upper Hunter Library Network introduced free access to Borrowbox, an eBook and eAudio Book library, which was specifically curated with local communities in mind and is also great for people with vision impairment or low vision as eAudio titles can be downloaded and played using audio readers.

03 Environmental Sustainability

Highlights:

- › Several local small business and community groups were awarded grants from Council to help complete a wide range of sustainability projects including the purchasing of compostable and recyclable packaging; installing solar panels; to change from diesel-powered tools to solar-powered tools; to run a large composting system and tint large windows.
- › Council, local clubs, community members and local contractors joined forces in a series of working bees over the past three years in an effort to regenerate Muscle Creek by replacing noxious and invasive weeds with local native vegetation. The project was a partnership funded jointly by Council and the NSW Environmental Trust and supported by the Remington Motor Inn, Muswellbrook and District Workers Club and Muswellbrook Golf Club.
- › Council's Sustainable Futures Program received two state awards this year from Keep Australia Beautiful NSW 2018 Sustainable Communities Awards and Local Government NSW 2018 Excellence in the Environment Awards (see page 22).

04 Cultural Vitality Highlights:

- › Council announced the establishment of the Richard Gill National Music Academy - an independent primary school based on the vision of acclaimed music educator and conductor, the late Richard Gill.
- › National interest in the 46th Muswellbrook Art Prize increased in 2018/19 with 4.7% more entries from outside NSW, from an overall 2% increase in entries across the board (when compared to the previous year).

- Council awarded almost \$75,000 in matched funding to local community sports groups to improve or replace sport and recreational equipment and facilities through the Large and Small Capital Grants Programs.

05 Community Infrastructure Highlights:

- The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) granted Council's application for a continuation of the Special Variation applied in 2018 resulting in increased funds for roads and drainage maintenance, continued upgrades for Olympic Park and allows for the construction of a Regional Entertainment Centre for the Shire (see page 26).
- Led by Muswellbrook Shire Council Mayor Martin Rush the community participated in a rendering event at Denman Memorial Hall. The hall rebuild creates a multi-purpose space, catering to sit-down functions, performances with tiered seating, dance, community meetings, and the future potential to include a community cinema. The auditorium space is constructed of rendered straw bales and the air pockets throughout the straw bales provide extremely high insulation to noise and heat, as well as fire resistance.
- Council unveiled the Animal Care Facility masterplan for a multi-purpose facility including deposit pens, adoption and private boarding kennels, seized and stray animal kennels, a dog park, stock pound, nursery, cafe and a new sustainability hub.

06 Community Leadership Highlights:

- As a joint drought relief initiative with Upper Hunter Shire, Council invited local businesses – big and small - to participate in a free economic development initiative - We LIVE Here gift cards. The LIVE (Local investment) cards operate like an EFTPOS gift card once loaded, and are only able to be used in the two shires, ensuring local expenditure and economic development for our region.
- Council attracted over \$20.4 million in government grants and funding for community projects and programs in 2018/19.
- The Muswellbrook Shire Community Panel was reconvened in October 2018 where panel members were provided an update on Council's Special Variation Projects, presentations on Council's finances and services and the opportunity to ask questions of the General Manager and the senior management team.

Challenges

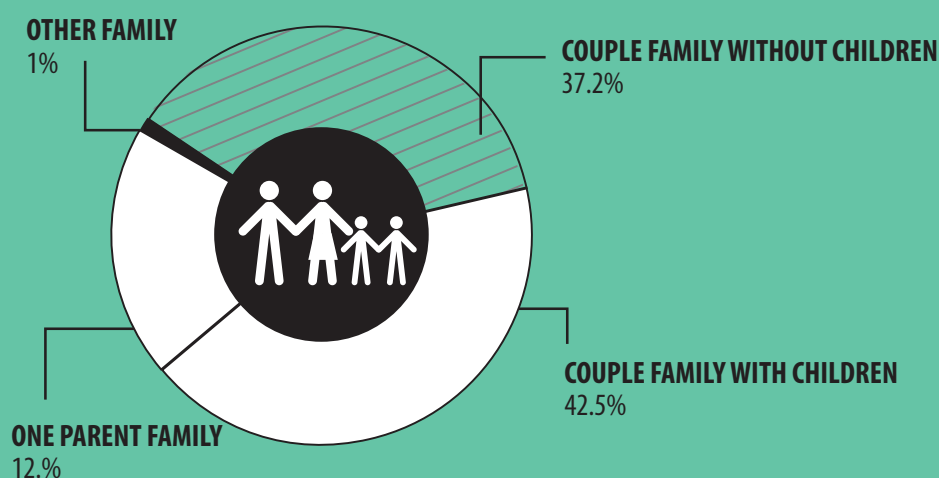
The relentless drought has been the dominant challenge for Council, the Shire, our region and more broadly across NSW for 2018/19. Council has responded in various ways, for example:

- Council provided over 850KL of free water to farmers in 2018, working closely with Rotary to provide free delivery of water to farmers across the region.
- Council has worked closely with the Hunter Regional Water Alliance and the NSW Department of Planning, Water to monitor water levels and water usage with the aim of assessing the requirement to introduce Water Restrictions.
- Council made a decision in late June to implement mandatory Level 1 water restrictions in the Shire from 1 July 2019, in response to forecast below average winter rainfall across much of eastern Australia and diminishing levels in Glenbawn Dam.
- Council has maintained all storage reservoirs to the highest level in readiness for fire fighting, should this be necessary.

Muswellbrook at a Glance

FAMILY COMPOSITION

Source: ABS 2016



Source: ABS 2016 totals differ due to ABS confidentiality adjustments)
REMPAN Est. 16,468

Population

16,383

Age Range	Male	Female
0-4	648	588
5-9	635	600
10-14	595	553
15-19	504	481
20-24	481	486
25-29	565	537
30-34	620	544
35-39	542	512
40-44	529	490
45-49	591	534
50-54	583	565
55-59	512	459
60-64	433	392
65-69	365	352
70-74	279	268
75-79	164	185
80-84	124	144
85-89	49	82
90-94	14	43
95-99	3	9
100+	0	0
	8236	7824

ORIGIN OF STUDENTS LIVING IN MUSWELLBROOK

LGA OF RESIDENCE 5 YEARS AGO	STUDENTS MOVING IN
Upper Hunter Shire	114
Overseas	93
Central Coast	51
Singleton	51
Lake Macquarie	40
Newcastle	32
Maitland	30
Tamworth Regional	25
Port Stephens	25
Cessnock	25

Source: ABS 2016 Census TableBuilder Pro – customised table

*Estimated Regional Population (ABS)2018

22.4% of
Muswellbrook Shire
Population is aged
0–14 yrs

MEDIAN AGE IS
35 Yrs

88.4%
ENGLISH SPOKEN
AT HOME

62 ROAD CRASH
CASUALTIES 2016

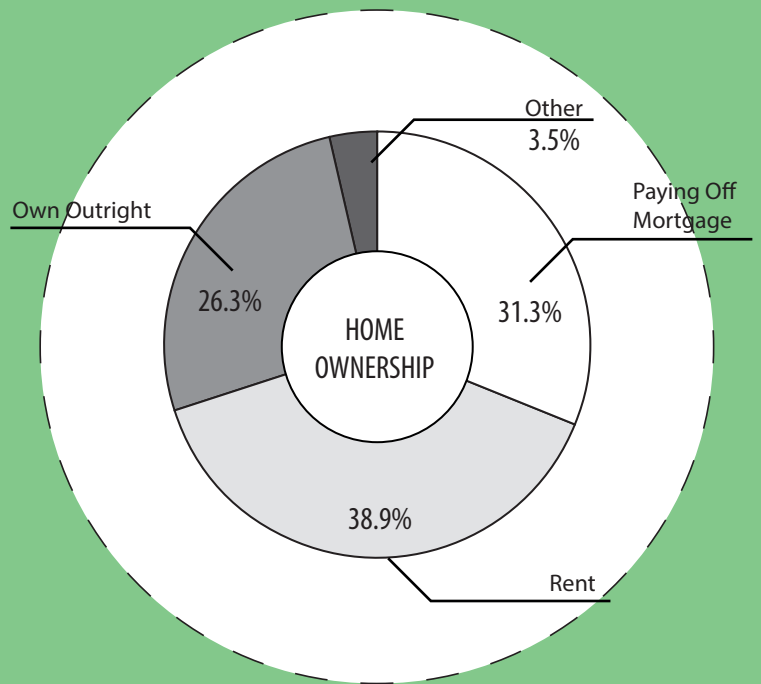
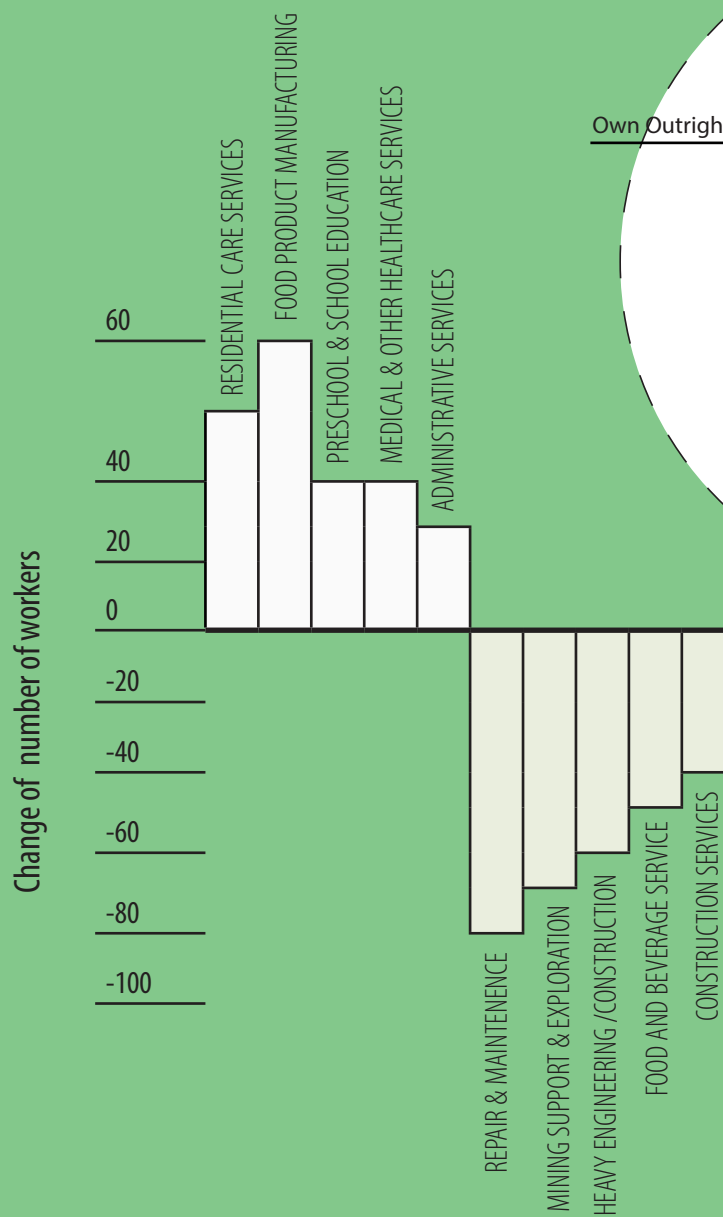
7%
COMMUNITY
AFFECTED BY CRIME

31.1%
UNPAID CHILDCARE

18.1%
VOLUNTEERED

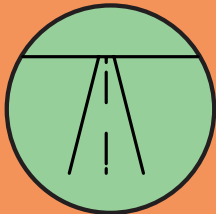
Employment

Top Growth and Decline Industries of Employment in Muswellbrook



Source: ABS 2016 Census TableBuilder
Pro – customised table

Council at a Glance

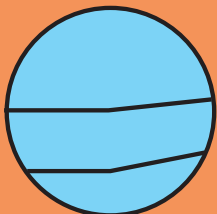


**SQUARE METRES
OF ROADS**

**SEALED/
REHABILITATED**

New and Replaced

136,545m²



**SQUARE
METRES OF
FOOTPATHS**

**New and
Replaced**

3688m²



**MUSWELLBROOK
SHIRE COUNCIL
FACEBOOK Followers:**

3,200

Likes 3,020

website visits

21,552 18-19

**Instagram
195**

**ANIMAL SHELTER
FACEBOOK Followers:**

6,000

**ARTS CENTRE
FACEBOOK**

Followers: 1,239

**Instagram
1,396**

**LIBRARY Facebook
Followers: 889**

LIKES 1882

Website visits:

48,014

**SUSTAINABLE
FUTURES Facebook**

Followers: 901

LIKES: 888

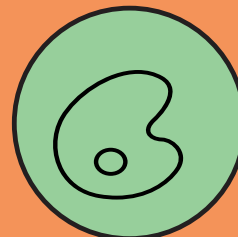


LIBRARY VISITS

81,680

LIBRARY LOANS

50,296



ARTS CENTRE VISITS

1,894

**Muswellbrook Art
Prize Entrants**

589

**Muswellbrook Art
Prize Entrants**

122



**DOGS &
CATS
RESCUED**

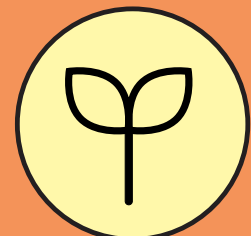
320

**DOGS &
CATS
returned
home**

194

**DOGS &
CATS
REGISTERED**

308



**COUNCIL
PLANTED
TREES**

2000

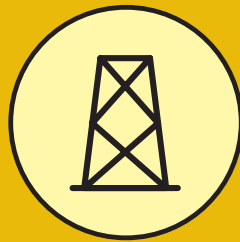


MUSWELLBROOK AQUATIC CENTRE VISITS

71,715

DENMAN AQUATIC CENTRE VISITS

8,437



APPROVED MINING DEVELOPMENTS

There are seven approved mines in the LGA, one of these straddles the LGA boundary with Singleton Council and another straddles the boundary with Upper Hunter Shire.

Renewable Energy Target for 2025 40%

Electricity used by Council	5.72 MWh
Water consumed in Muswellbrook Shire	1,901,196 KL
Water used by Council	173,081 KL
Fuel used by Council Vehicles	301,944.77
OCCUPATION CERTIFICATES ISSUED:	
Issued by Council	61
Issued by Private Certifiers	23
TOTAL	84
Development Applications Lodged	126

Muswellbrook Shire
Council Service
Requests Lodged

3,363

Muswellbrook Shire
Council Community
Events

1,780 People

Citizenship
Ceremonies

4

New Australian
Citizens

20



Chemical
Collection Day

2.156 Tonnes

Waste Disposed of
into Landfill

19,377.76 Tonnes

Household Bin Waste
Disposed of

3,270.36 Tonnes

Recycling collected

999.14 Tonnes

Organics
Processed

1,515.12 Tonnes

Tonnes of e-Waste
Collected

23.96 Tonnes

COMMUNITY COMPLAINTS

Odour	9	Erosion Sediment	2
Noise	91	Illegal Dumping	105
Dust	3	Wood Smoke	3

An Overview of Muswellbrook Shire

What we want

We want wellbeing to be at the heart of everything we do and every decision we make.

We want to be inclusive.

We want everyone to enjoy full participation in our community.

We want to be culturally rich and diverse with our Shire's communities having strong identities and shared 'sense of place'.

We want a local economy with full employment in a full diverse range of high value industries.

We want to be leaders in environmental sustainability.



**COMMUNITY
WELLBEING**

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

LEADERS IN SUSTAINABILITY

SOCIAL EQUITY & INCLUSION

INCLUSIVE | INTERCONNECTED | PARTICIPATION

CULTURAL VITALITY

CULTURALLY RICH & DIVERSE

STRONG IDENTITY & SENSE OF PLACE

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

DIVERSE RANGE OF HIGH VALUE INDUSTRIES

FULL EMPLOYMENT | DYNAMIC LOCAL ECONOMY



Citizenship Ceremony 2018



Our Shire

Muswellbrook Shire is located within the Gamilaraay Indigenous Nation, one of the four largest Indigenous nations in Australia.

Muswellbrook Shire acknowledges that the local Aboriginal People are the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land.

The first white settlement occurred in the 1820s and the township of Muswellbrook was gazetted in 1833.

Muswellbrook Shire is centrally located in the Upper Hunter Valley, approximately 130km north-west of Newcastle. By road, Muswellbrook is approximately three hours from Sydney, two hours from Tamworth and around 90 minutes from Newcastle.

The Shire consists of two larger towns, Muswellbrook and Denman, as well as a number of outlying rural communities including Sandy Hollow, Wybong, Baerami, Martindale, McCully's Gap, Widden and Muscle Creek.

The boundaries of the Local Government Area (LGA) are marked by Lake Liddell to the east, Goulburn River National Park to the west, Wollemi National Park to the south and bordering Aberdeen in the north.

A surprising fact to many is that 1,455km – or 43% - of Muswellbrook Shire's 3,402km² land coverage is national park. This includes the World Heritage Wollemi National Park.

We are a young community with a rising population.

Muswellbrook Shire is a welcoming community offering all the cultural, recreational, educational and community facilities that you would expect to find in a city. It is the main regional centre for the Upper Hunter. The population of Muswellbrook Local Government Area (LGA) is concentrated in the towns of Sandy Hollow, Denman and Muswellbrook.

The estimated residential population for Muswellbrook (LGA) in 2018 was 16,383 people (ABS). This is up from 15,793 in 2011. Council anticipates modest population growth in the short to medium term. This is largely associated with more affordable housing, a diversifying economy and expanding educational opportunities.

The average population of the Muswellbrook LGA has reflected the ebbs and flows of the mining industry. Annual population growth over the last decade, 2006 to 2016, was 5.3% - a steady rise for a regional area. The majority of this growth has concentrated in Muswellbrook, which accounted for around half the growth. However, the 2016 census showed that growth overall since 2011 has only been 1.9%.

The 2016 census indicated that Muswellbrook Shire has a relatively high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples residing in the community at 8.1%. This compares with the 2.7% NSW State average.

Muswellbrook Shire tends to be a younger community with the median age of people being 35 years.

In 2016 our population consisted of 7.7% aged 0-4 years (preschool age), compared with NSW at 6.2%; while 21.0% were aged 5-19 years (school age/dependants) compared with NSW at 18.2%. At the other end of the age spectrum, the population has 18.2% of 60 years and over; this compares to 22.1% across the state.

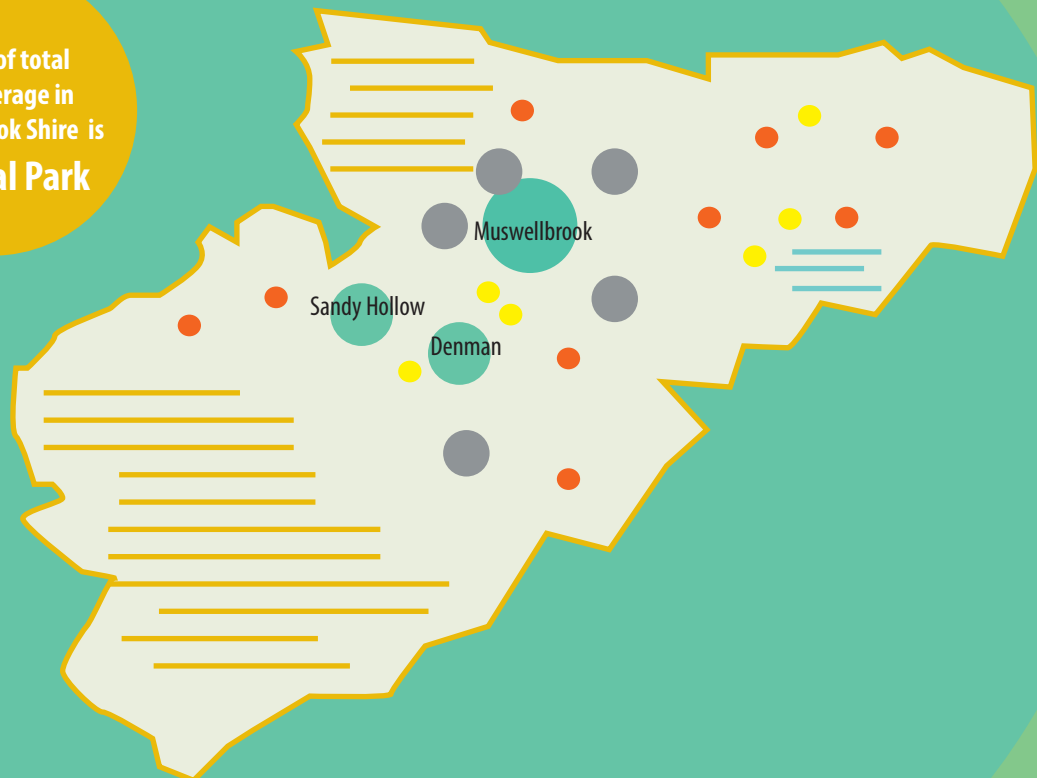
The ratio of men to women has remained consistent from 2011, in 2016 it was 51.3% male and 48.7% female.

To find out more about Muswellbrook Shire's Community Profile visit: www.communityprofile.com.au/muswellbrook

We are here



43% of total
land coverage in
Muswellbrook Shire is
National Park



MUSWELLBROOK SHIRE TOWNS | Antiene | Baerami | Bureen | Castle Rock | Dalswinton | Denman | Dunbars Creek | Giants Creek | Kayuga | Kerrabee | Manobalai | Martindale | McCullys Gap | Muscle Creek | Muswellbrook | Muswellbrook North | Muswellbrook South | Sandy Hollow | Widden | Widden Valley | Wybong | Yarrowa |

National Parks

Mines

Equine, Viticulture and Cropping

General Rural

Environment Management

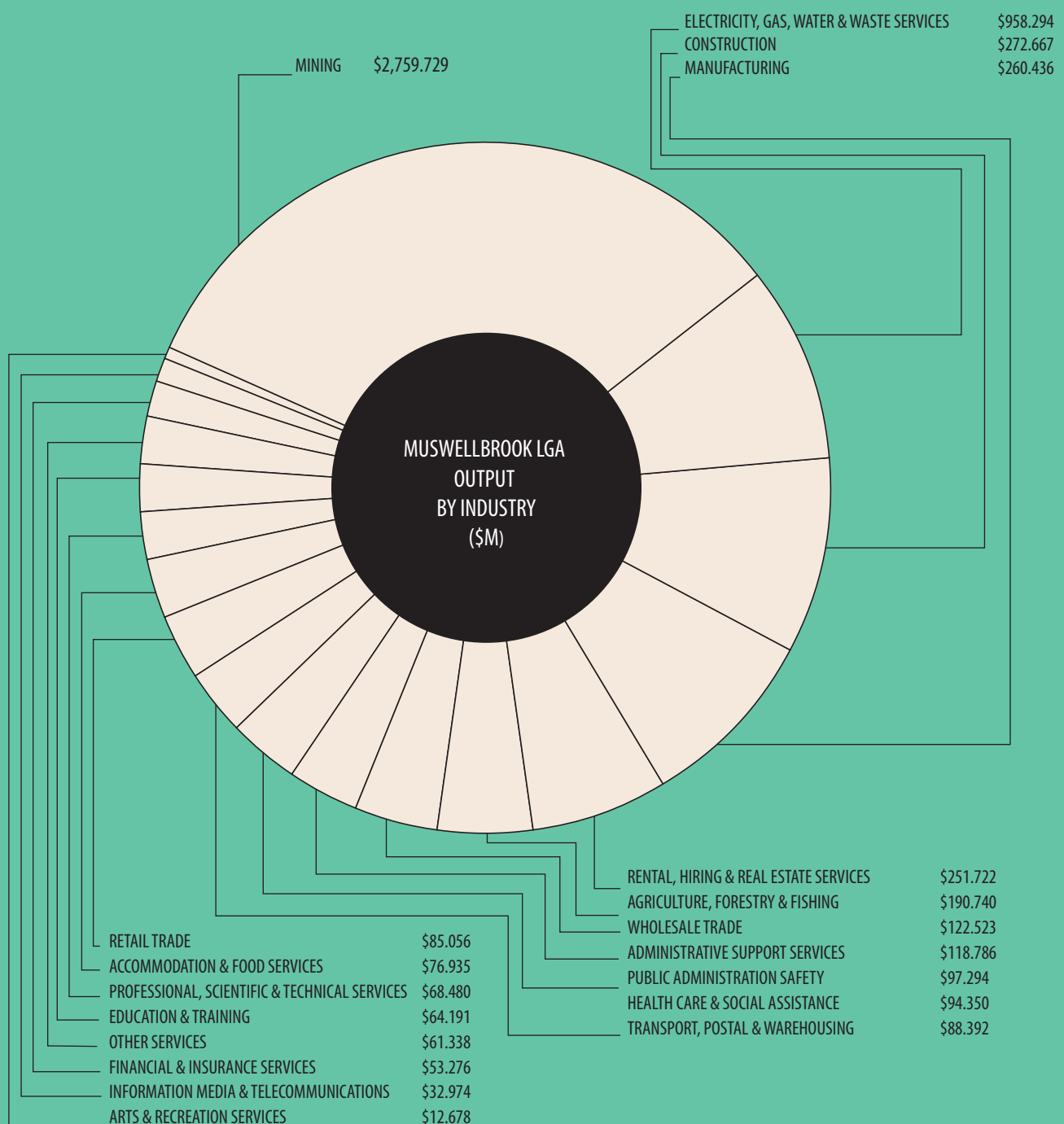
Lake Liddell

Output

The total annual output in the Muswellbrook Shire LGA is estimated at \$6.9 billion. Output data represents the gross revenue generated by businesses/

organisations in each of the industry sectors. Gross revenue is also referred to as total sales or total income.

The figures below and table represent industry sectors share and output (\$M) for the LGA respectively.



Muswellbrook LGA output —jobs comparison

Industry Sector	Output (\$M)	Output %	Jobs	Jobs %
Mining	\$2,759.729	48.7%	3,120	31.1%
Electricity, Gas, Water & Waste Services	\$958.294	16.9%	887	8.9%
Construction	\$272.667	4.8%	515	5.1%
Manufacturing	\$260.436	4.6%	321	3.2%
Rental, Hiring & Real Estate Services	\$251.722	4.4%	95	0.9%
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	\$190.740	3.4%	541	4.4%
Wholesale Trade	\$122.523	2.2%	297	3.0%
Administrative & Support Services	\$118.786	2.1%	363	3.6%
Public Administration & Safety	\$97.294	1.7%	479	4.8%
Transport, Postal & Warehousing	\$88.392	1.6%	275	2.7%
Health Care & Social Assistance	\$94.350	1.7%	694	6.9%
Retail Trade	\$85.056	1.5%	679	6.8%
Accommodation & Food Services	\$76.935	1.4%	505	5.0%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	\$68.480	1.2%	244	2.4%
Other Services	\$61.338	1.1%	366	3.7%
Education & Training	\$64.191	1.1%	441	4.4%
Financial & Insurance Services	\$53.276	0.9%	70	0.7%
Information Media & Telecommunications	\$32.974	0.6%	58	0.6%
Arts & Recreation Services	\$12.678	0.2%	67	0.7%
Total	\$5,669.861	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Building Economic Resilience

Muswellbrook Shire Council acknowledges both the long-term transition of the thermal coal industry and the closure and transition of power generation and is committed to broadening the focus on the sustainability of the Shire's economic and employment base.

Muswellbrook presents an opportunity for investors to capture new markets and build business in a period of sustained growth. Our region is rich in natural resources with significant mining, viticulture and

Mining

Muswellbrook Shire's long association with mining began in the late 1800s with the commencement of the first underground coal mine. Open cut coal mining has had a presence since 1944 and is the largest employer in the Shire today, with over 20% of the workforce engaged in the resources sector. The Shire is home to Muswellbrook Coal, which commenced operations in 1906 and is Australia's longest continuously operating coal mine, and together with approved operations at Mt Arthur, Bengalla, Mangoola, Mt Pleasant and Dartbrook, contributes \$2,570 million or 68.2% of the Shire's total regional exports.

Power Generation

AGL Macquarie is one of the country's biggest energy producers. The company's Liddell and Bayswater power stations are based in the Muswellbrook Shire and employ over 600 workers. Between them, the power stations generate enough electricity to power over three million homes each year and produce around 30 percent of the State's electricity.

AGL has announced its intention to close both the Liddell and Bayswater power stations and continues to actively explore renewable energy opportunities as part of the end-of-cycle options for the Liddell site. AGL and Council are working closely together to maximise the myriad opportunities that will arise from a transition to renewable energy generation in the Shire in order to contribute to the further diversification of our regional and national economy.

Education


Muswellbrook has established itself as a centre of educational excellence in the Upper Hunter. It is strategically positioned for the efficient and effective provision of education and vocational training for both existing and emerging industries.

Council, as part of its support for local education opportunities, has worked closely with Hunter TAFE, the University of Newcastle and industry to promote and provide higher learning pathways.

Hunter TAFE and Muswellbrook Shire Council collaborated to construct the CBD Tertiary Education Centre to facilitate higher education delivery. It has expanded to house the University of Newcastle and works will commence on the construction of the next stage of the Centre in the coming year.

These partnerships provide education pathways for local and visiting students, offer collaborative research opportunities with established and emerging industry and facilitate the diversification of the Shire's economy.

Driven by the community's expectations, Council is working with industry and the research sector to maximise emerging opportunities and reduce volatility of the resources dominated local economy. Council is fostering the transition towards new industries such as renewable energy, bioresources and intensive smart agriculture, while continuing to support the growth of our existing viticulture and equine industries. The diversification of our economy can be achieved by promoting and building on the strengths of the region with our skilled workforce and existing infrastructure assets.



equine sectors and the opportunity to attract new enterprise. We understand the importance of discovery, innovation and collaborative strategies to meet the economic and social objectives of our region.

Thoroughbred Industry

The origins of the Upper Hunter's thoroughbred breeding industry date back over 150 years and have earned a global reputation for excellence and success. It is one of only three International Centres of Thoroughbred Breeding Excellence. The others are Kentucky, USA and Newmarket, UK.

It is the unique convergence of the Hunter Valley's topography, soil, air, water availability and specialised workforce that makes it an ideal location for the horse breeding industry. This combination ensures that nearly half of all the thoroughbred bloodstock born in Australia come from this area.

Muswellbrook Shire is home to the largest critical mass of thoroughbred rearing in Australia, located in an arc from Widden Valley through Sandy Hollow to Jerry's Plains. Two of the largest thoroughbred horse studs in the southern hemisphere are located in the Muswellbrook Shire.

Viticulture Industry

Local wine is high quality and integral to the Upper Hunter food and wine offering and while the Upper Hunter viticulture industry is small, it is an internationally acclaimed wine tourism destination renowned for its quality and the volume of wine production and processing.

The earliest evidence of grape growing in the Upper Hunter dates back to 1860 when vines were planted at the confluence of Wybong Creek and the Goulburn River. The wine from these grapes gained international recognition and established a proud tradition for the Upper Hunter as a centre for wine production that continues today.

Government Services

As the principal regional centre of the Upper Hunter, Muswellbrook is the location of several regional agency offices of the State and Federal Government including the Hunter New England Local Health District, Corrective Services, Juvenile Justice, Department of Family and Community Services, NSW Police Local Area Command and the Department of Human Services.

Centrally located between New England and the Lower Hunter, Muswellbrook Shire provides an excellent geographical advantage. This has established it as the regional centre of the Upper Hunter, allowing government agencies to efficiently service the surrounding areas.

Muswellbrook Tourism

As at 30th of June 2018 the total value of Tourism related output for Muswellbrook was estimated at \$75,202 million. The total tourism related employment estimate for the Shire were 378 jobs which represents 3.8% of the total workforce.

Muswellbrook Shire is home to a significant proportion of the equine and wine industries in the Upper Hunter Region and a key location advantage for the Shire as a tourist destination is its proximity to the already popular tourist destinations such as the Lower Hunter Valley and the Blue Mountains.

In 2018 most visitors to the region were from NSW. Similarly, in 2017 Sydney (45.6%) was the largest source of visitors to the region, followed by regional NSW (38.3%) and Queensland (7.6%). Compared to year ending 2016, the Sydney source market grew by 12.4% and regional NSW increased by 4.2%. Over the same period, Queensland grew by 21.9% and Victoria increased by 3.3% while the ACT grew by 34.0%.

For each dollar spent by a tourist in Muswellbrook LGA, it is estimated that typically \$0.47 is spent on Accommodation & Food Services, \$0.12 on Transport, Postal & Warehousing and \$0.10 on Retail Trade.





Piercefield Camel Farm visit www.upperhuntercountry.com/stories/

2018/19 Awards & Recognition



Council's Sustainable Futures Program received two state awards this year:

- Winner, Environmental Communication Category - Keep Australia Beautiful NSW 2018 Sustainable Communities Awards - November 2018;
- Winner, Division A and Overall Communication, Education and Empowerment Category Winner - Local Government NSW 2018 Excellence in the Environment Awards - December 2018.

The Sustainable Futures Program includes a range of activities which help to empower the community to make sustainable choices and improve outcomes by reducing food waste, improving water efficiency, growing local food and increasing rates of up-cycling and renewable energy uptake.

Congratulations Ciennah!

The 2019 Hunter Regional Apprenticeship and Traineeship Advisory Committee (HRATA) Awards were held Friday 21 June 2019 at West City in Newcastle. Ciennah Welsh was awarded Trainee of the Year in Certificate IV Property Services.

The HRATA Awards are held each year to reward and promote excellence in vocational education and training (VET) in our region.

Nominated by her TAFE teacher, Ciennah is doing an outstanding job as a Trainee Property Officer for Council based at Muswellbrook Marketplace.

This HRATA Award reflects Ciennah's effort and professionalism on a daily basis.





Council's Water & Waste Water Team were finalists in two categories at the Local Government Professionals 2018 Local Government Excellence Awards:

- Category Finalist, Asset Management and Infrastructure – water main spray lining technique;
- Category Finalist, Special Project Initiative – Recycle Water Treatment Works upgrade

Muswellbrook Shire Council 2018/19 Staff Excellence Awards



CUSTOMER SERVICE AWARD

Awarded for excellence in service delivery or excellence in delivery of an event or a specific recognition for excellence acknowledged by customers.

Michelle Crook & Anthony Mettam
Ranger Services

Mardi Eriksson
Technical Officer Property and Building Services

QUALITY AWARD

Awarded for a high level of workmanship or overall excellence achieved in relation to staff responsibilities, outcomes or standards maintained or exceeded in relation to a project.

Dennis Fernandes
Project Manager Property and Building Services

Joseph Thurairatnam
Works Engineer

Anthony Willis
Corporate Lawyer

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AWARD

Awarded for either an incremental improvement with significant benefits for the whole of Council or a major improvement leading to savings in a specified area of Council – or a significant system that benefits the Shire as a whole.

Dale Gilmore, Kylie Bates and Hayley Parkinson
Rates & Collection Services

Jacob Godwell, Stefan Ambler, Arlen Nott, Ian Kowalke and Monica Ly
Information Technology Services

Dylan Harrington and Rebecca Smith
Waste Management

Jade Richardson
Coordinator Customer Service and Administration



CREATIVITY & INNOVATION AWARD

Awarded for an initiative taken, development of a new technique or system that benefits the whole or part of Council – or a creative solution to a significant issue or problem.

Paul Chandler
Technical Officer – Recreation & Property

Ruaan Van Der Wath
Tourism & Events Officer

SAFETY & RISK MANAGEMENT AWARD

Awarded for demonstrated excellence in identifying hazards, controlling risks, reviewing control measures and contributing to help Council exceed the benchmark in safety and risk management.

Alex Loredo
Works Supervisor

Irene Chetty
Operations & Process Engineer
John Towns
Tree Maintenance Officer

TEAMWORK AND COLLABORATION AWARD

This award recognises collaboration, open communication and the fostering of co-operation with the Council or as a part of the Shire.

Kathy Palmer, Steve McGhie, Shane Power, Sam Boag, Matt Grady, Jeff Cox, Roy Newman, Russell Fitzgerald, Craig Power, Michael Whipps, Jason Allan, Bevan Brown, Kathy Richardson, Graham Wicks, Jackson Ball, Alex Loredo, Luke Franks

Combined Roads
Drainage & Works Team

Mandy Fitzgerald
Administration Officer – Works

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENDATION FOR EXCELLENCE AWARD

Julia Belford
Records Office

The Year in Review – Transforming Our Shire

Council's grants team were successful in winning in excess of \$13.8 million in additional capital grants funding in 2018/19, which will contribute to the upgrade of the Muswellbrook Aquatic Centre (including the installation of Learn To Swim and Hydrotherapy pools), completion of stage 2 of the Denman Town Revitalisation project, further improvements to the Shire's mine affected road network and the enhancement to a number of sporting and recreation facilities across the Shire.

2018/19 has been an action-packed year for Council with some considerable progress in the advancement of many locally significant major projects, as outlined below.

Regional Entertainment and Conference Centre:

- *Council has awarded the winning design and contract for development approval and detailed design of the Regional Entertainment and Conference Centre.*

Denman Memorial Hall:

- *The refurbishment of Denman Memorial Hall was completed in 2018/19 with Council inviting the community to participate in a straw bale rendering event as part of the build. The newly refurbished Hall is a multi-purpose, energy efficient and environmentally responsible asset that will serve the community well into the future.*

Olympic Park Precinct upgrade:

- *Olympic Park Stage 1 car parking complete and traffic infrastructure plans are being developed for detailed design.*

Muswellbrook Aquatic Centre upgrade:

- *Following development approval Council will call tenders for construction of the Muswellbrook Aquatic Centre Stage 1.*

Upper Hunter Tourism Strategy:

- *In collaboration with Upper Hunter Shire, Council delivered a new Upper Hunter Visitors Guide with revised destination maps and branded promotional videos which were broadcast on Council and National Parks and Wildlife websites.*

Muswellbrook Urban Riparian Master Plan:

- *Construction of the Muswellbrook Nature Trail has been completed with the inclusion of interpretive signs, publically accessible footpaths and public furniture. Early planning has commenced on the Hunter Beach project which will be delivered during 2019/20.*

Economic Diversification:

- *A prospectus has been completed and is now available to assist prospective investors to identify the comparative and competitive advantages of the Upper Hunter region;*
- *Council is working with the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet, the Hunter Joint Organisation of Councils and Singleton Council to deliver a Bio Valley Study to provide guidance regarding the potential for the development of Bio Fuel industries in the Upper Hunter;*

Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS):

- *Council's Local Strategic Planning Statement was publicly exhibited and adopted in 2018/19. The LSPS sets out the 20-year vision for land use in the local area, the special character and values that are to be preserved and how change will be managed into the future. This document now sits with Department of Planning and Environment for final ratification following its inclusion in the Department of Planning template.*

Rail Noise Abatement Wall:

- *Construction of the Muswellbrook Rail Noise Abatement Wall is progressing with completion expected by the end of October 2019.*

Information Services Strategy:

- *Roll-out of Council's online Customer Request Management System means that residents and ratepayers are now able to submit a request, report a problem, or obtain information from Muswellbrook Shire Council via Council's website.*



Cr Martin Rush

Mayor of Muswellbrook

The previous twelve months have seen a consolidation of the work of Council and the delivery on a range of key strategic priorities identified by the community for our Shire.

Economic transition has been a strategic focus of Council with investment in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and creativity to harness the skills and jobs of the future. Council is dedicated to vocational education and TAFE and integrating STEM programs into schools. Creativity through the Richard Gill National Music Academy and visual arts will ensure a creative and talented local workforce base.

Council is taking an active role in managing transition, in an economically diligent, responsible and conscientious way that respects the diverse and multifaceted nature of the Shire.

Economic diversification of the Shire through tourism, education, health and aged care reflects the Shire's broad potential to continue to grow into the future, in a secure, orderly and innovative way.

Muswellbrook Shire's strength in mining and energy infrastructure, water resources and land use diversification, make it well positioned to be a hub of economic transition and innovation.

Council announced the second stage of the Tertiary Education Centre, which will commence construction in the next year, providing additional space to expand the research capability of the University of Newcastle and provide additional opportunities for the Shire's communities.

Council's financial performance has been a particular highpoint of the previous twelve months, with the operating results showing a higher than projected budgeted surplus, strengthening the foundations Council has laid over the past decade to ensure the financial future of the community is secure for the long term.

Each of the Councillors commends the General Manager and her staff for their exceptional efforts throughout the year and we all look forward to continuing to work together to deliver for the Muswellbrook Shire.



Martin Rush
Mayor,
Muswellbrook Shire Council



Fiona Plesman

General Manager of Muswellbrook Shire Council

The 2018/19 Annual Report provides an overview of Council's achievements, major projects, service delivery and performance against the 2017-2021 Delivery Program and long term financial plan.

Council remains in a strong financial position at the end of the 2018/19 financial year. Throughout the year Council continued to focus on improvement in the delivery of Council services and advancement of Council's vision for economic diversification and innovation in the Shire.

Council's creative arts and events program continued to grow in 2018/19, with the Muswellbrook Art Prize and Blue Heeler Film Festival gaining national and international attention.

Pleasingly the Community's average level of satisfaction across Council's 22 key services and facilities has slightly improved on 2017 levels. All council staff work very hard to provide the best service to the community they possibly can; over 85% of council staff live in the Muswellbrook and Upper Hunter region, with the towns and villages of the Shire demonstrating the strong commitment Councillors and staff have for the region.

Council will continue to show leadership on the issues that the Community has nominated as the major challenges for the future: economic diversification and attracting new industry; job creation; the future of the coal industry; making the Shire an attractive and healthy place to live; addressing air quality/pollution issues.

Despite the challenges presented by the continuation of the drought, Council staff look forward to working with the Community as we progress the Shire as a Regional Centre, secure the development of employment opportunities and build a sustainable economy.



**Fiona Plesman,
General Manager,
Muswellbrook Shire Council**

Community Engagement

Council in the Media

The Muswellbrook community values local news. Local news is relevant, connects and binds communities and provides social context. Local media is an independent civil watchdog that gives its audience a voice, helps to set the agenda in regional communities, provides the most extensive coverage of local, including Council, affairs and supports Council in emergency situations.

Muswellbrook Shire Council enjoys significant support from local media enabling widespread community consultation on important issues. In 2018/19 the proposed continuation of the Special Variation, major pumped hydro energy project, participation and promotion of state wide sustainability projects, such as the “Don’t be a Tosser” and schemes like “Free Cuppa for Drivers” attracted extensive coverage and received substantial feedback from residents.

Major projects, such as the Revitalisation of Denman Town Centre, upgrade of Muswellbrook Aquatic Centre, construction of a new Animal Care Facility and a proposed Regional Entertainment and Conference Centre also attracted substantial media coverage with feedback from the community following.

During a prolonged interruption to services or in an emergency Muswellbrook Shire Council depends on local media, alongside Council’s social media and website, to keep the community informed of the status of a situation. For example, a break in the Muswellbrook South Water Main resulted in a large number of residents being without water for more than 48 hours. With the support of local media Council kept affected residents informed throughout the interruption to services.

Muswellbrook Shire Council features regularly in local media and, in addition, Council’s Mayor or General Manager submit a fortnightly column to the newspaper and hold weekly interviews on the local radio stations ensuring the community is well abreast of Council activities.

2018 Community Panel

Council's Community Engagement Strategy was endorsed in 2016 and includes a commitment to employ a variety of community engagement methodologies including a deliberative democracy approach.

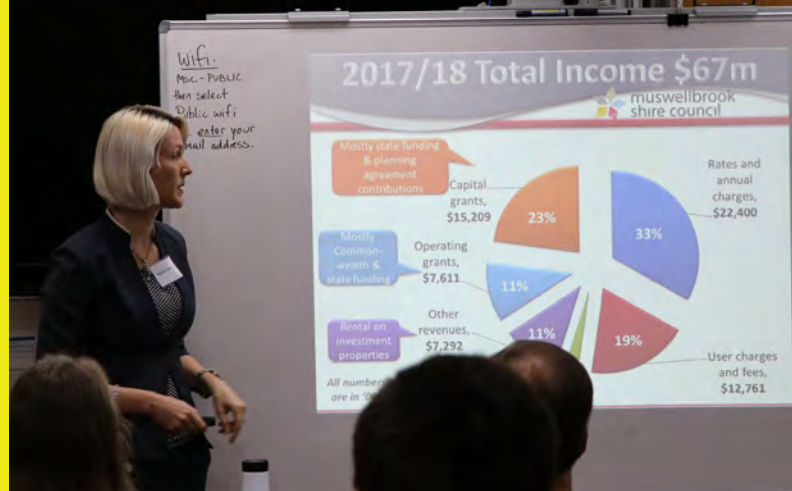
Council's August 2017 Community Satisfaction survey asked respondents to indicate if they would be willing to participate in a Community Panel. 150 of the 450 people surveyed indicated their interest. This list was used to randomly select a demographically representative group of 27 community members to form a community panel that met over three weekends in late 2017.

The Muswellbrook Shire Community Panel was reconvened in 2018 initially by way of a direct invitation to past participants, followed by an EOI process. A demographically representative group of 35 community members was selected to form the 2018 Community Panel, which met on 6 and 20 October 2018.

The Panel received an update on Council's Special Variation Projects, viewed presentations on Council's finances and services and was provided the opportunity to ask questions of the General Manager and the senior management team.

The 22 Community Panel members present on the final day of the Panel were asked to indicate their support or opposition to the continuation of the 2018/2019 Special Rate Variation (SV) with the following outcome:

- 16 Panel members voted in support of the continuation of the existing SV;
- 4 Panel members voted in support of a revised SV; and
- 2 voted in opposition to the continuation of the SV.



2019 Community Satisfaction Survey

In May 2019, Muswellbrook Shire Council commissioned Jetty Research to conduct a random and statistically valid telephone survey of 500+ adult residents living within the local government area to assess satisfaction with, and priorities towards Council-managed facilities and services and Council customer service. The survey was also designed to identify residents' perceptions of the major challenges and opportunities affecting the region's future.

Among the survey's major findings:

- 1. Overall satisfaction with Council was strong, though with a slight decline on 2017 results, where 11% more residents felt satisfied than dissatisfied;*
- 2. The average level of satisfaction across the 22 key services and facilities was slightly higher than in 2017 with an average rating of 3.23 out of a possible 5 (vs. 3.22 in 2017);*
- 3. When asked what they see as the challenges for the future of the region, residents most frequently mentioned economic diversification (22%), followed by job security/unemployment (11%), future of the coal industry (9%), impact of mining (9%) and air quality/pollution (9%).*
- 4. Services and facilities considered of highest importance to residents included sealed roads, water supply, waste and recycling and sewage collection and treatment;*
- 5. When services were placed into a matrix of importance vs. satisfaction, as indicated by survey respondents, the following picture emerged:*

Higher Importance Lower Satisfaction	Higher Importance Higher Satisfaction	Lower Importance Lower Satisfaction	Lower Importance Higher Satisfaction
Footpaths and cycleways Sealed roads Dog control Services for the elderly Economic development and attracting new investment	Stormwater drainage Bridges Waste and recycling Water supply Cleanliness of streets Sewage collection and treatment Parks, reserves and playgrounds	Development applications (DA's) Unsealed roads Public toilets Weed control Youth facilities and activities Council website	Council pools Libraries Sporting facilities Community halls

To view the full 2019 Community Satisfaction Survey Report please visit Council's website at <https://muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au/ipr>

Our Stakeholder Engagement

Following is a list of Council's stakeholder groups, including how we engage them and why our relationships are important.

WHO WE ENGAGE	HOW WE ENGAGE	WHY WE ENGAGE
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web: www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au • Social media • Publications • Community Panel • Events & ceremonies • Council offices 	The community contributes knowledge, cultural experience, resources, ideas and feedback.
		Council provides leadership, partnership, representation and efficient and effective services and facilities.
Ratepayers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web: www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au • Rates notices • Social media • Publications • Community forums 	Ratepayers contribute knowledge, cultural experience, resources, ideas and feedback.
		Council generates sustainable growth and return to the community.
Council Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Magpie Newsletters • General Manager's Newsletter • General Manager's Forums • Manex • Managers' Meetings • Tool box talks • Posters • Intranet • Email • Staff events and training • Staff Awards 	Staff members contribute valuable knowledge, skills and labour for our operations.
		Council provides employment, training opportunities and flexible and supportive work arrangements.
Community & Sporting Organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web: www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au • Social media • Publications • Community Panel • Events & ceremonies • Council offices • Grants programs • Sustainability Hub 	The community contributes knowledge, cultural experience, resources, ideas and feedback.
		Council provides civic leadership, partnership, representation and efficient and effective services and facilities.

Our Stakeholder Engagement *cont*

WHO WE ENGAGE	HOW WE ENGAGE	WHY WE ENGAGE
Muswellbrook business and industry community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web: www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au • Participation in Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI)breakfasts • Annual Report • Other publications • Meetings 	The local business and industry community provides employment and economic growth.
		Council provides guidance, support and opportunity.
Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web: www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au • Muswellbrook Visitor Information Centre • Upper Hunter Country Visitor Guide • Events 	Visitors bring economic benefits to the Shire including more local employment opportunities.
		Council provides high standard facilities and services.
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal meetings • Correspondence • Forums and Conferences 	The Federal and NSW State Governments provide partnerships, funding and network opportunities.
		Council provides resources, partnerships and networks.
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media releases • Media alerts and briefings • Social media • Interviews • Paid advertising 	The media raises the community's awareness of services, facilities, events and issues of importance.
		Council contributes content and comment for publication and broadcast.

Council participated in a partnership with the Hunter Joint Organisation Group Entities

The Hunter Joint Organisation group is the hub for local government collaboration, which strengthens our communities by being the local voice on regional strategic issues in the Hunter and delivering tailored local government solutions. For over sixty years, local government in the Hunter has found significant benefit in working together through positive cooperation and resource sharing.

There are four key entities creating and operating as part of the current enterprise offering:

- *Hunter Joint Organisation – a statutory body under the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW), established in 2018 to identify, advocate for and collaborate on regional strategic priorities for the Hunter.*
- *Strategic Services Australia Limited (and its wholly owned subsidiary Hunter Councils Legal Services Limited) – are companies limited by guarantee under the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth) and established to improve the quality and efficiency of local government services throughout the Hunter Region. These organisations offer tailored local government services through its five divisions; Local Government Training Institute, Local Government Legal, Regional Procurement, Screen Hunter (which, under delegation from member councils, licences film production on council owned and control land), and the Environment Division (which delivers a regional environmental management program on behalf of both member councils from the Hunter region and Central Coast Council).*
- *Hunter Councils Incorporated - an incorporated association under the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 (NSW) that holds property assets for the Hunter Joint Organisation group.*

Muswellbrook Shire Council has representation on each entity's Board, and shares ownership and/or control with the other nine councils of the Hunter Region.



Council worked with the following corporations, partnerships, trusts, joint ventures, syndicates (or other bodies):

- Arts Upper Hunter
- Australian Local Government Association
- Community Consultation Groups for the mines in our Shire: Mangoola, Bengalla, Mt Pleasant, Mt Arthur, Muswellbrook Coal, Malabar Coal and Dartbrook Coal
- Create NSW
- Denman and District Development Association
- Denman Chamber of Commerce
- Destination NSW
- Healthy and Well Upper Hunter
- Hunter Joint Organisation Group Entities
- Hunter Research Foundation
- Integrated Living Australia
- Liddell Transition and Community Dialogue Group
- Local Buying Foundation Advisory Committee (run by BHP)
- Local Government Professionals
- Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- National General Assembly of Local Government
- NSW Health and Local Area Health
- NSW Local Government Association
- NSW Rural Fire and Emergency Services
- NSW Sport and Recreation
- NSW Water Directorate
- Planning Institute of Australia (NSW division)
- Regional Arts NSW
- Richard Gill National Music Academy
- Royal Lifesaving NSW
- Sandy Hollow Progress Association
- Standards Australia
- State Library NSW
- Statecover
- Statewide Mutual
- TAFE NSW
- Transcare Services
- University of Newcastle
- Upper Hunter Community Services
- Upper Hunter Conservatorium of Music
- Upper Hunter Domestic Violence Service
- Upper Hunter Drug and Alcohol Service
- Upper Hunter Economic Diversification Working Party
- Upper Hunter Homeless Services
- Upper Hunter Landcare
- Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue, (coordinated by NSW Minerals Council)
- Upper Hunter Tourism
- Upper Hunter Water Alliance
- Upper Hunter Youth Services
- Wanaruah Local Aboriginal Lands Council

Sustainability engagement

The Sustainability Hub allows Council to demonstrate practical ways that the community can be water and energy efficient and reduce waste going to landfill. A range of community events have been held at the Sustainability Hub, including school holiday activities for Muswellbrook High School, Girl Guides Muswellbrook, Pacific Brook Christian School, Hunter Park Family Centre and Goodstart Early Learning Muswellbrook. Warrior Disability Services also runs a weekly composting system from the Hub, showcasing how to reduce food waste going to landfill.

The Penguin Garden Club and Muscle Creek Landcare group continue to meet at the Sustainability Hub, hosting an average of 10 people twice per month and 4 people each month respectively. With Council's support, a new group, the Hunter Sustainability Landcare TEAM has recently been incorporated.

Council's Sustainability Unit supports community groups through a range of initiatives:

- 2nd Muswellbrook Scout Group
- Ability Links.
- Denman Children Centre
- Denman Community Garden
- Denman Scouts
- Martindale Landcare
- Muswellbrook Child Care Centre
- Muswellbrook Healthy and Well
- Muswellbrook Men's Shed
- Muswellbrook Pre School
- Sandy Hollow Progress Association
- Tillies
- University of Newcastle
- Upper Hunter Community Services
- Upper Hunter Community Services Inc MOOSH
- Upper Hunter Conservatorium of Music
- Upper Hunter Domestic Violence Service
- Upper Hunter Drug and Alcohol Service
- Upper Hunter Economic Diversification Working Party
- Upper Hunter Homeless Services
- Upper Hunter Landcare
- Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue, (coordinated by NSW Minerals Council)
- Upper Hunter Tourism
- Upper Hunter Water Alliance
- Upper Hunter Youth Services
- Wanaruah Local Aboriginal Lands Council

Celebrating Our Volunteers



Volunteers for Sustainability Hub's working bees



EVENTS

Council holds a number of events throughout the year and supports and contributes to other community run events.



Yield @ Dusk

This festival aims to build on the cultural events programmed as part of the Muswellbrook Art Prize and was held in March 2019 following a successful grant application from Create NSW. Yield is a collaborative live music, dance and painting performance which was held in 'The Void' at the Upper Hunter Conservatorium of Music.



Blue Heeler Film Festival

Sigrid Thornton was the Patron of the sixth Blue Heeler short film festival, which captured the imagination of film enthusiasts throughout the region. Films are submitted in three categories: Junior, Senior and Open with a special prize awarded to the film that is voted by the audience as the "People's Choice". The 2018/19 festival was held at Two Rivers Winery in Denman and was well attended. Competition prizes were provided by major festival sponsor, Bengalla Mining Company and supported by Two Rivers Wines, Harvey Norman Muswellbrook, Regional Australia Bank and Screen Hunter.



46th Muswellbrook Art Prize

The annual Muswellbrook Art Prize is among the richest art prizes in regional Australia with a total of \$71,000 offered across four competition categories:

- *Painting \$50,000 (acquisitive prize)*
- *Works on Paper \$10,000 (acquisitive prize)*
- *Ceramics \$10,000 (acquisitive prize)*
- *People's Choice \$1,000 (non-acquisitive prize)*

The acquisitive prizes are chosen by an adjudicator and announced at the opening of the exhibition. Voting for the People's Choice Prize takes place during the exhibition, with the winner announced online at the close of the exhibition. The Muswellbrook Art Prize is generously sponsored by Bengalla Mining Company Limited in partnership with Muswellbrook Shire Council.



Muswellbrook Local Art Awards

The Muswellbrook Local Art Awards is an annual competition which offers local artists from Muswellbrook, Singleton, and Upper Hunter Shires the opportunity to show off the cream of their work from the past twelve months.

A total prize value of \$7,000 shared over five disciplines, painting, works on paper, 3D, photography and Aboriginal art.

This local art prize is strongly supported by the local residents, visitors and local businesses with seven prize categories.



Hunter Soap Box Derby

The Hunter Soap Box Derby is a fundraiser organised by and for the benefit of Hunter Life Education, working to ensure young people of the Hunter have access to free or subsidised Life Education lessons.

The second event was held on 6 April 2019 with a list of local sponsors, including Muswellbrook Shire Council. The Hunter Soap Box Derby aims to foster connections between families and community members, drive business to the area, as well as bring a fun yearly major event to a country



Easter Family Fun Day

The Easter Family Fun Day was hosted by Muswellbrook Shire Council and Bengalla Mining Company as a free community event in 2019 which attracted over 2000 people. The event's vision and mission is to provide a free community event that local families can enjoy while promoting local community organisations and Muswellbrook Shire Council. The day included a variety of kid's entertainment; jumping castles, face painting, live music, food, information stalls, lucky door prizes and the BIG Easter Egg Hunt accompanied by a special visit from the Easter Bunny.



National Tree Day

SuNational Tree Day events were held in the Muswellbrook Shire. With more than eighty people attending and planting 1,500 plants at sites in Muswellbrook and Denman. Council also supported Muswellbrook Girl Guides with their planting the following Sunday.

These plantings will continue re-establishing local native species to help create habitat and corridors for wildlife. These plants also provide shade and capture carbon.

Council appreciates the support of the Muswellbrook and Denman communities, Muswellbrook Girl Guides, 2nd Muswellbrook Scout Group, Denman Scouts, Muscle Creek Landcare and Mangoola Coal employees for coming along to assist with the planting

Council always works on being as water efficient as possible to ensure the highest survival rate. We achieve this through:

- *utilising reuse water were possible*
- *the use of pasteurised mulch from our waste facility*
- *including water crystals in the bottom of the hole to encourage the roots downwards*
- *deep watering for a short time period until they are established*
- *choosing local native species.*
- *including woodchip mulch which will be reapplied when needed*

Clean Up Australia Day

Over 300 school students participated in School's Clean Up Australia Day this year with Goodstart Early Learning Centre, St James Muswellbrook, Denman Public School and St Joseph's Denman children all pitching in to make a difference to their local community by cleaning up around their schools. Warrior disability Services held a Business Clean Up Australia Day that saw 45 participants from local businesses clean up around the Muswellbrook CBD. 49 Muswellbrook and Denman Residents gave up their Sunday morning sleep in to clean up their towns. Two large skip bins of rubbish were removed from the local environment. The day was supported Denman and Muswellbrook Scout Group, JR Richards, MACH Energy and Mangoola Coal.



Graffiti Removal Day

Graffiti Removal Day is when Council joins with Hunter Valley Police, Muswellbrook Rotary Club and members of the community to tackle graffiti and make a real difference to the look of the town.

Volunteers are supplied with cleaning materials, safety equipment and training on how to remove graffiti safely. After the hard work is completed volunteers are rewarded with lunch and a swim at the local pool. Council has appointed a graffiti management officer and is committed to the removal and prevention of graffiti. This has been a highly successful program that has resulted in a significant reduction in Graffiti across Muswellbrook Shire.



Muscle Creek Nature Trail

The new Muscle Creek Nature Trail runs along the banks of Muscle Creek behind the Muswellbrook Aquatic Centre. Now completed, the trail boasts areas for children to learn about the local environment, animal play equipment and sandstone pavings, signage and tables creating a tastefully functional environment connected to the natural landscape.



Muscle Creek Fish Habitat

Now at the halfway point, the Fish Habitat Action Project has resulted in a dramatic decrease in the numbers of weed species, especially privet, along the section of creek near the golf course.

The next stage of the project will involve replacing the exotic weeds with native species. This work will help improve local habitat for native animals in and around the waterway. It will also result in more recreational opportunities for the community.

The work is carried out by local contractors and maintained by Council and the local Muscle Creek Landcare Group.

The Fish Habitat Project is funded by a Recreational Fishing Trust's Habitat Action Grant Program from the Department of Industry.



Muswellbrook Cup Day

For the first time the Muswellbrook Cup day was moved to autumn and held on 29 March 2019. It is one of the Upper Hunter's 'must attend' calendar events, and provides the Shire of Muswellbrook with an exciting and unforgettable racing experience.

Held at Skellatar Park, Cup Day is a gazetted half-day public holiday for residents of the Shire, combining the best of country racing with a relaxed autumn style. Part of the challenge of Cup Day is to integrate with other activities and develop the race day as part of a "destination weekend" for visitors to the Upper Hunter Valley. Cup Day is a great local success and is now worth over \$150,000 with support races including the \$75,000 Skellatar Sprint and the \$50,000 Wayne Harris Handicap.



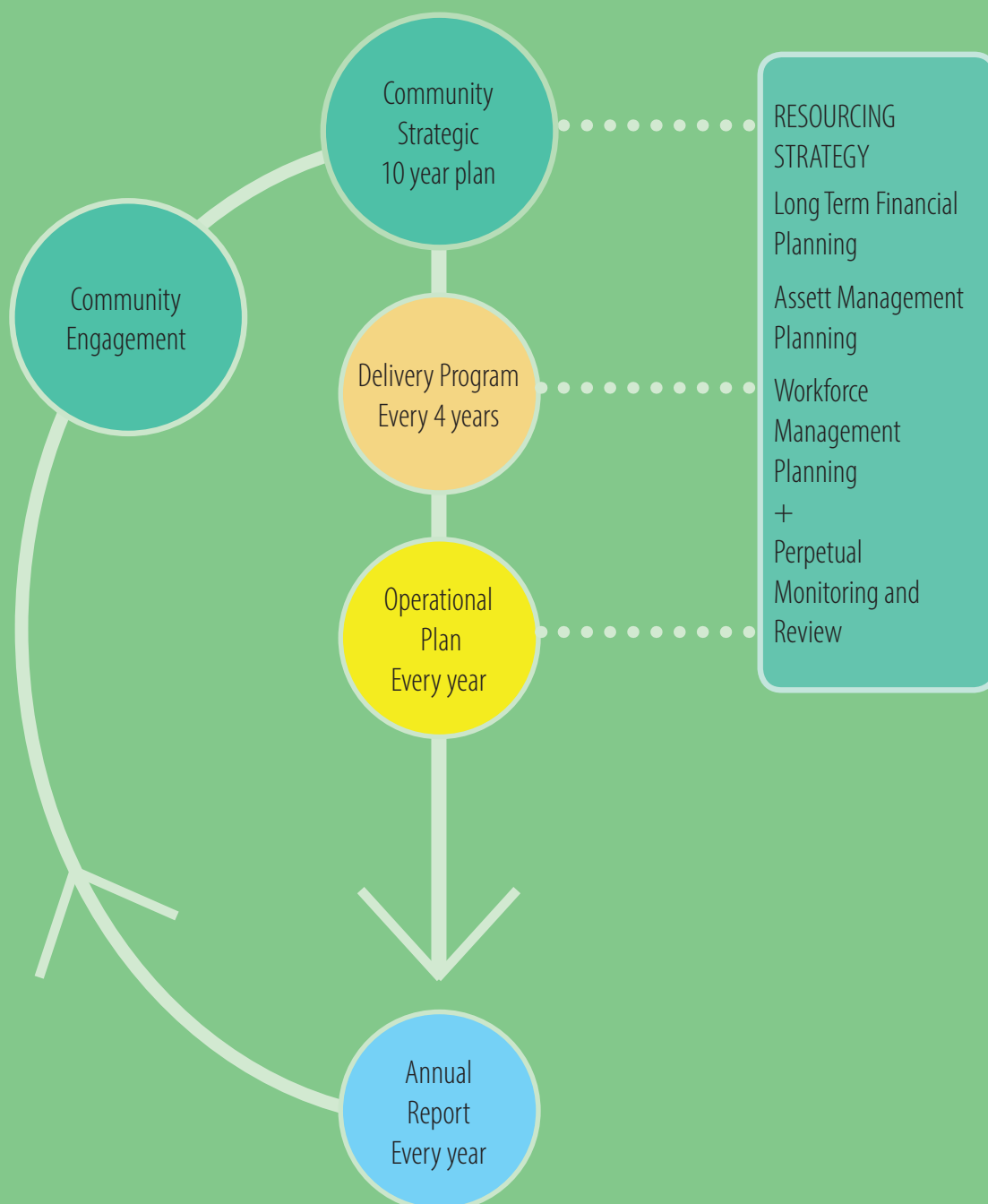
Club to Club

The third stage of the Club to Club Muscle Creek Rehabilitation project was a notable success with volunteer working bees and contractor works all exceeding expectations. Volunteers focused on litter removal along the length of the creek, resulting in five tonnes of rubbish collected by 28 community volunteers. 2,500 sq metres of weeds were removed, and 280 local native trees and shrubs planted. Muswellbrook Golf Club supported this event by cleaning up its own section of creek. Contractors removed some 13,000 sq metres of weeds over time approximately 10,000 local species planted. Council also funded the removal of a number of large exotic trees in this area including Willows, Himalayan Ash, Date Palms and Chinese Tallow.

Council has invested in the ongoing maintenance of all Club to Club sites to address weed regrowth and infestations and Council staff will continue to maintain these areas.

How We Plan

Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework
Accountability and Transparency for Stakeholders



Integrated Planning & Reporting Framework

The Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework was established in 2009 by the New South Wales state government. This legislation requires all Councils to have the following plans developed in consultation with the community:

Community Strategic Plan (10 years)

The Community Strategic Plan (CSP) is an overview document that identifies the community's main priorities and goals for the future. It aims to describe what the community wants to see and feel in and around their area. It is reviewed at the beginning of each new Council term (every four years) and informed by community consultation undertaken by Council. It is an aspirational plan with a 10 year horizon. Council started the community consultation process for the next Community Strategic Plan in June 2019 as part of the 2019 Community Satisfaction Survey (see page 34 for more).

Delivery Program (4 years)

The Delivery Program is the point of reference for all activities undertaken by the Council during its term of office. The Program details the goals Council has committed to for the next four year period, working towards achievement of the strategies articulated in the CSP.

Operational Plan (Annual)

The Operational Plan directly addresses the goals outlined in the Delivery Program. It identifies the actions, programs and activities Council will undertake within the current financial year. The Operational Plan also allocates responsibility for each action, or set of actions, identifies performance measures for determining the effectiveness of the activities and includes the annual budget.

Resourcing Strategy

The Resourcing Strategy demonstrates how Council will resource achievement of the CSP and Delivery Program. Council does not have full responsibility for implementing or resourcing all of the community's aspirations. State agencies, non-government organisations, community groups and individuals also have a role to play in delivering these outcomes. Council's Long Term Financial Plan, Asset Management Plan and Workforce Management Plan have been developed to outline how Council intends to resource the actions identified in the Delivery Program and objectives of the CSP.

2017–2027 Community Strategic Plan

Local issues & Global Mega-trends in Context

The Shire's economy is closely linked to the fortunes of the energy industry and, in particular, the international thermal coal industry and the domestic power industry. Between the extraction of thermal coal, power generation and transmission, the energy industry employs more than 35% of the Shire's workforce and imports labour from neighbouring local government areas – the totality of which means that the Shire is a net importer of labour.

When the previous community strategic plan was adopted, the prevailing focus had been on managing the rapid tripling in size of the thermal coal industry over the forward decade.

In addition to the rapid expansion of thermal coal extraction, a concept approval for a third thermal coal baseload power station – to be known as 'Bayswater B' had been granted which would have been a significant driver of employment growth in the Shire had it moved into construction and operation.

The Community's focus had been on air quality and dust management, visual impacts and on other community impacts – such as housing supply, childcare and health services. Council's 2013 Baseline Data Survey indicated that 50% of people requested a reduction in excessive mining noise and dust and 52% wanted improved medical services. Similar data was reflected in other community surveys which also noted a need to focus on housing supply and childcare services.

Much of Council's corporate focus had been on ensuring sufficient revenues were in place to support the growth of the State's energy industry in the Shire culminating in a Mining Affected Road Network Study and a Thomas Mitchell Drive Contributions Plan and, ultimately, a special rate variation in the mining category to bridge the projected shortfall in necessary local road funding. Council was also focused on hospital expansions, childcare capacity building, and the facilitation of housing development.

Since that time there has been a strong and sustained reversal in the long term projections for traded thermal coal and substantial local job losses. The closure of Drayton Coal in November 2016 and the planned closures of Muswellbrook Coal and Liddell Coal and Mangoola Coal will have a substantial impact on local employment – although partially offset by the anticipated commencement of mining at Mt Pleasant Coal. Moreover, AGL Macquarie, the owner of the Shire's two existing base load thermal coal stations, has announced closure dates for both its local stations. The loss of the associated 600 jobs is expected to have a further substantial impact on the local economy.

Indeed, the community's focus has changed markedly to jobs, economic diversification and resilience, transition to a low carbon future, education and skills, and for Muswellbrook to develop and emerge as a Regional Centre.

This has been borne out in a process of extensive and diverse consultations undertaken by Council of its community over the last four years. Residents have been invited to participate on Community Panels, attend community forums, participate in both telephone and face-to-face surveys, and to make submissions in response to strategic documents such as the Denman Town Centre Strategy, the Muswellbrook Town Centre Strategy and the Local Environmental Plan.

To inform the ongoing development and review of the 2017–2027 Community Strategic Plan, Council completed a series of community engagement Listening Posts at key locations around the Shire at which the community identified their priorities for the future of economic prosperity, social equity, environmental sustainability, cultural vitality, community infrastructure and community leadership over the next ten years and beyond.

The community has made it clear they are proud to live in Muswellbrook but are concerned about future job opportunities. They believe that Muswellbrook should be the Regional Centre for the Upper Hunter with infrastructure that is matching – such as a Regional Entertainment and

Convention Centre, a children's water park and improved sport and recreation facilities. The community is rightly concerned that Council respond rapidly and effectively in its strategic response to these as well as other local issues and/or mega-trends that have been identified via Council's community engagement program or councillor feedback.



Winning Design for the Muswellbrook Regional Entertainment Centre

Meeting the Goals of Our 2017 – 2021 Delivery Program

Council has made significant progress in 2018/19 towards achievement of the goals outlined in the 2017 – 2021 Delivery Program. As required under the Local Government Act 1993 and the Integrated Planning and Reporting Guidelines, the following section of this annual report describes these achievements.

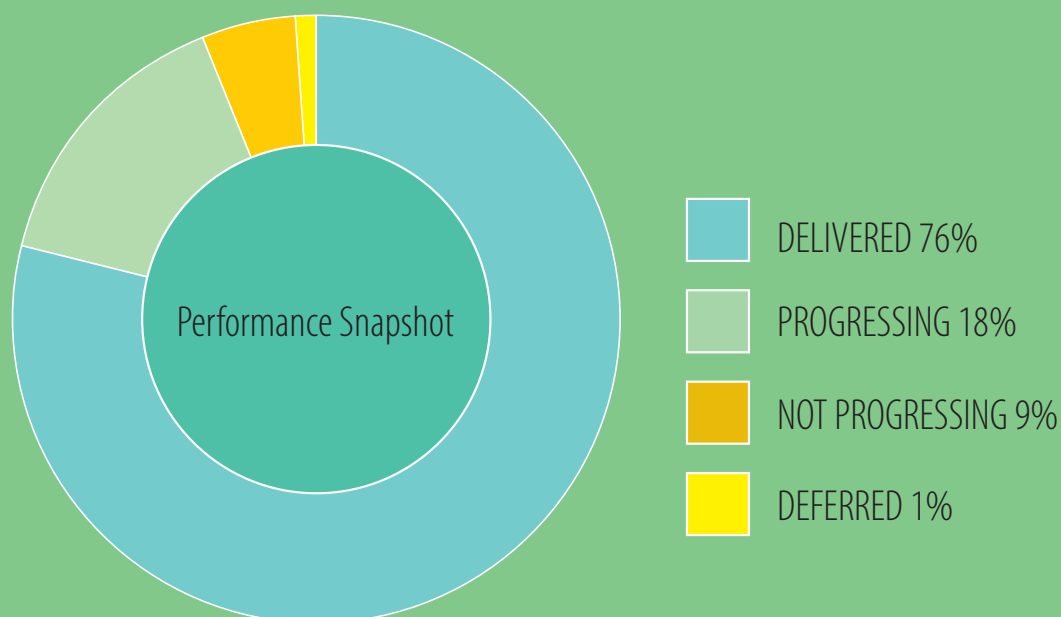
2018/19 end of year position

A snapshot of Council's performance across the strategic directions and focus areas of the Delivery Program is provided below. More details of key achievements, challenges and highlights in each area of the program is provided throughout the remainder of this section.

Operational Plan performance Snapshot 2018/19

Of the 170 activities committed to by Council:

- 129 have been completed on or ahead of schedule this year;
- 31 are progressing;
- 1 has been deferred until 2019/20; and

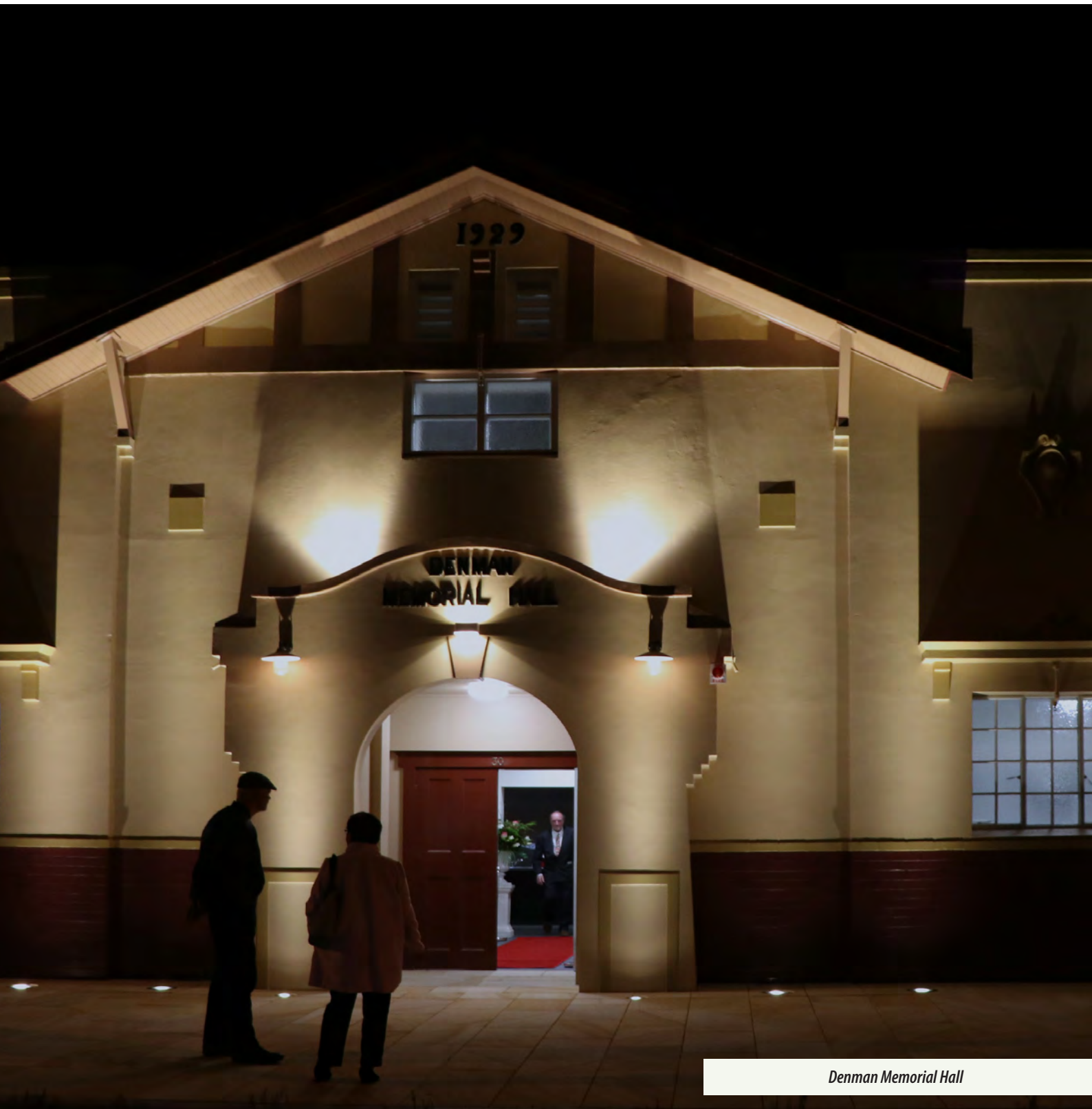


STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

REPORTING TABLES



01: Economic Prosperity



Denman Memorial Hall

GOAL 1 | Support job growth.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
1.1 Facilitate the expansion and establishment of new industries and business.	Progressing	Designs are being prepared in relation to the Innovation Hub.
	Delivered	Strategic Land Use planning and development controls were managed through pre-lodgement DA meetings to ensure that economic development and innovation initiatives were meeting the framework of the Local Strategic Planning Statement during 2019/20.

GOAL 2 | Diversify the economy, facilitate the development of intensive agriculture and other growth industries, make the Shire a more attractive place to invest and do business.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
2.1 Facilitate the diversification of the Shire's economy and support growth of existing industry and business enterprise.	Delivered	Advice was regularly provided to developers and Council Staff. A pre-lodgement service is now available for proponents.
	Progressing	The NSW Government did not support the establishment of an Upper Hunter Economic Development Corporation. Council is negotiating with the Hunter Joint Organisation of Councils to establish a regional Transitions Alliance.
	Progressing	Council is working with the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet, the Hunter Joint Organisation of Councils and Singleton Council to deliver a Bio Valley Study to provide guidance regarding the potential for the development of Bio Fuel industries in the Upper Hunter.
2.2 Work with University of Newcastle on research and innovation in areas where the Upper Hunter has a competitive or comparative advantage.	Delivered	The Hunter Research Foundation completed a Skills Gap analysis with assistance from the Upper Hunter Regional Economist.
	Delivered	The Upper Hunter Tourism Strategy was delivered in collaboration with Upper Hunter Council; a new Upper Hunter Visitors Guide was produced and distributed and promotional videos were produced and broadcasted on Council and National Parks and Wildlife websites.
	Delivered	An investment prospectus has been completed and is available to identify the comparative and competitive advantages of the region.
	Progressing	A new look visitors guide has been published with revised destination maps linking Muswellbrook Shire and Upper Hunter Shire sites, including accommodation.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
2.3 Review the Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plan to improve investment certainty for industry.	Delivered	The Local Strategic Planning Statement was exhibited and adopted by Council. This document now sits with Department of Planning and Environment for final ratification following it's inclusion in the Department of Planning template.
2.4 Implement the Muswellbrook, Denman Town Centre Masterplans and the Sandy Hollow Village Masterplan.	Delivered	Designs have been prepared consistent with the Muswellbrook Town Centre Strategy.
2.5 Develop agricultural industry opportunities in the Shire.	Deferred	The development of an Agribusiness Development Strategy has been deferred to the 2019/2020 Operational Plan.
2.6 Develop a Local Strategic Plan in response to changes to the NSW Planning Act	Delivered	The Local Strategic Planning Document was adopted by Council during 2018/19.

GOAL 3 | Facilitate greater access to higher education and participation in the knowledge and creativity economy.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
3.1 Through the Future Fund invest in additional education infrastructure, in partnership with Hunter TAFE the University of Newcastle and other providers.	Progressing	Designs are being developed for Tertiary Education Centre Stage 2.

GOAL 4 | Develop Muswellbrook as a Regional Centre.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
4.1 Council will apply to IPART for a permanent continuation of IPART's approved one-off Special Rate Variation for 2018/19 of 12.43% (plus 2.3% rate peg) and increasing the 2018/19 ratebase for 2019/20 by IPART's 2.7% rate peg.	Progressing	The review of Council's Parking Study 2010 and the development of a comprehensive parking strategy for Muswellbrook and Denman did not progress during 2018/19. However, a smaller study of the Muswellbrook CBD was conducted. The broader Mine Affected Roads Strategy is being reviewed during 2019/20 pending available funding.
	Progressing	The Muswellbrook Rail Noise Abatement project is scheduled to be completed by October 2019.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
4.1 Council will apply to IPART for a permanent continuation of IPART's approved one-off Special Rate Variation for 2018/19 of 12.43% (plus 2.3% rate peg) and increasing the 2018/19 ratebase for 2019/20 by IPART's 2.7% rate peg.	Progressing	Concept designs have been completed for the Olympic Park Precinct.
	Delivered	Following development approval Council will call tenders for construction of the Muswellbrook Aquatic Centre Stage 1.



Steve and Racquel Goodchild, Pukara Estate For more local stories visit <https://upperhuntercountry.com/stories/>

02: Social Equity and Inclusion



Beastman Culturefest skateboard painting workshop

GOAL 5 | Continue to improve the affordability, liveability and amenity of the Shire's communities.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
5.1 Implement the outcomes of the Recreation Needs Study.	Delivered	The Recreation Needs and Management Study together with user group consultation informs the annual capital program of sport and recreation works, and has been reported to Council.
5.2 Continue town centre revitalisation projects.	Progressing	The Muswellbrook Laneway public art project is scheduled to be completed by December 2019.
5.3 Facilitate investment in entertainment opportunities, particularly for young people.	Delivered	The Muswellbrook and Denman libraries both saw a significant combined increase of more than 35% in youth memberships during 2018/19.
	Delivered	The Muswellbrook Aquatic Centre and Gym delivered existing and new programs that encouraged youth membership of the Gym and Fitness activities at the Muswellbrook Aquatic Centre. This resulted in close to a 5% increase in youth memberships during 2018/19.
	Delivered	Staff met regularly with the Upper Hunter Youth Services Committee during 2018/19 to discuss possible options regarding the relocation of this service to a more suitable location once the Muswellbrook Showground has been sold. A preferred site has been discussed and agreed upon. External grant funding will be sought to support this action during 2019/20.
	Delivered	A strong partnership with Arts Upper Hunter saw the delivery of a number of affordable entertainment options for young people in isolated communities across the Upper Hunter. In addition Council directly supported a number of free events that encouraged youth participation in Council libraries, the Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre and Aquatic Centres.
	Delivered	Youth Week activities were delivered in partnership with a broad range of providers in March 2019.
	Delivered	Work is progressing in the delivery of home library services to all residents through the development in partnerships with other service providers. The Borrow Box lending option has increased digital access to both libraries during 2018/19. The digital increase in home borrowing is a shared statistic with the Upper Hunter. This statistic represented more than a 30% increase in home borrowing.
	Delivered	A construction phase of the Muswellbrook Nature Trail was commenced and completed during the final quarter of 2018/19. This included the introduction of interpretive signs, publically accessible footpaths and public furniture.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
5.5 Promote and facilitate increased participation in active and passive recreational activities.	Delivered	Muswellbrook Shire Sport and Recreation biannual meetings, monthly user group consultation, and booking and licencing data inform the Shire's recreation facilities capital and maintenance program standards.
	Delivered	Another successful round of the Small Sport and Recreation Grants Programme was delivered in 2018/19 with five projects funded.
	Delivered	Another successful round of the Large Sport and Recreation Grants Programme was delivered for 2018/19 with six projects funded.
	Delivered	Biannual Muswellbrook Shire Sport and Recreation group and monthly facility user group meetings were held during 2018/19.
5.6 Consider and deliver social inclusion principles across Council functions	Delivered	Council has throughout the year prepared and submitted strong applications for funding to external agencies all of which were submitted by the due date. In excess of \$13.8 million in additional capital funding was won through external grants in 2018/19.
	Delivered	Works to improve accessibility were delivered under both the General Building and Recreation Capital Programmes.
	Delivered	Council's Information Technology infrastructure and Disaster Recovery projects have been completed. Customer Request Management system and Asset Management system implementation projects have been completed.
	Delivered	In the event of a system failure Disaster Recover infrastructure will restore functionality of all critical servers in less than 1 day.
	Progressing	The Asset Management System implementation is a multi-year project, which has progressed effectively during 2018/19.
	Progressing	The first stages of the development of Council's re-branding strategy has commenced which includes a new style guide to assist Council in meeting the needs of people with varying abilities. This project is scheduled for completion in 2019/20.
	Progressing	The implementation of the Customer Request Management system has been completed, however the online transactions portal has been delayed due to vendor availability.
	Delivered	The new Customer Request Management system is capturing data in relation to Council's disability inclusion strategies, plan and actions. A desk-top review of Council's Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027 and Delivery Program 2017 - 2021 has been undertaken with opportunities for improvement identified.
	Delivered	The implementation of the Fibre Optic network has been completed between all Council offices. Substantial improvement in performance has been achieved, with no interruptions of service.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
5.7 Facilitate the provision of affordable housing opportunities through development application process as encouraged through the Affordable Rental Housing SEPP 2009.	Delivered	The Muswellbrook Shire Local Environmental Plan currently restricts medium density housing opportunities in some parts of the Shire. The drafting of the new Local Environment Plan is nearing completion, which considers the provision of affordable housing options throughout the Shire.

GOAL 6 | Stabilise the tenancy turnover in the Shire's social housing.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
6.1 Continue partnership with Government and community housing services to reduce the turnover of tenants in the Shire's social housing.	Delivered	A report was delivered to the Council regarding the Collaborative Impact Facilitator Project with respect to the wellbeing of Muswellbrook residents.

GOAL 7 | Build social inclusion and improve the delivery of social services.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
7.2 Facilitate and implement improved disability access and inclusion across the Shire	Delivered	Work was completed towards accessible infrastructure; a new chair lift was installed at Denman Aquatic Centre. Investigations continue to improve access to the Denman Library. Policy and Procedures are reviewed regularly to ensure social equity and accessibility continues to improve in Shire infrastructure.
	Delivered	Construction Certificates considered Building Codes of Australia requirements regarding accessibility across Muswellbrook Shire during 2018/19.

GOAL 8 | Retention and expansion of quality and affordable Child Care Services.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
8.1 Facilitate investment in child care services across the Shire	Delivered	A design of the Upper Hunter Early Learning Centre has been developed to support grant funding applications.
	Not Progressing	The Children's Services Strategic Plan is currently being reviewed, and funding will be sought in 2019/20 to complete the review.
	Delivered	The CREATE change coalition in partnership with other Community Service providers, including Muswellbrook Shire Council, considered and supported investment in the Healthy and Well Program. The lead agency in this program is the University of Newcastle's, Family Action Centre. The program supported healthy lifestyles across a broad range of demographics including children.
	Delivered	Following development approval of the staged works at Muswellbrook Aquatic Centre, Council will tender for construction. Stage 1 of the works includes a crèche and indoor children's play area.

GOAL 9 | Facilitate opportunities to expand seniors' living.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
9.1 Facilitate investment in new seniors living facilities	Delivered	The Muswellbrook Shire Ageing Strategy review has been completed and a report was prepared for the July 2019 Council meeting to communicate the outcomes of community consultation with this age group.
	Delivered	Seniors Festival Events (2019) in Muswellbrook and the Upper Hunter were promoted on Council's websites and through a Seniors Directory that was developed in-house.
	Delivered	At least 5% of older residents are members of and/or participating at libraries and aquatic centres across Muswellbrook Shire.

GOAL 10 | Further the process of reconciliation in the Shire.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
10.1 Collaborate with local Aboriginal people on projects which enhance an appreciation for, and which develop the vitality of, Aboriginal culture.	Not Progressing	The Aboriginal Culture and Heritage working group have not yet met in the 2018/19 financial year.
	Delivered	More than five events were held in 2018/19 to celebrate and promote Aboriginal Art and Culture.
	Progressing	The Aboriginal Oral History Project is in its final stages of development this has been carried out in consultation with the Muswellbrook Shire Council Aboriginal Reconciliation Committee.
	Delivered	An inspection of the Mural by the Artist conservators took place in October 2018 and no work was required at this time. Quarterly inspections occurred, a full conservation report by the restoration artists of the Reconciliation Mural will be included to accommodate renewal of the work in the 2020/21 budget.
10.2 Raise awareness of the local Aboriginal Community and an appreciation of their long traditions and culture.	Progressing	The Reconciliation Committee met in November 2018 and March and May 2019 to consider community ideas for the construction of a suitable cultural space.
	Progressing	The Wanaruah Local Aboriginal Land Council met with Council staff on a number of occasions to progress Muswellbrook Shire Council's Native Tree Planting Program on Aboriginal land. This program was not funded in the 2018/19 financial year and relied on external grants to progress the project. A number of unsuccessful grant applications were made to various funding bodies.

03: Environmental Sustainability



Muswellbrook CBD is in close proximity to mines

GOAL 11 | Higher quality final landforms with shallower voids and more emphasis on progressive rehabilitation with local workforce participation.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
11.1 Work in partnership with industry and other levels of government to achieve improved rehabilitation outcomes for disused mining lands and ongoing employment for the local workforce.	Progressing	Council has submitted a Strategic Planning Statement to the NSW Department of Planning and has progressed completion of a new Local Environment Plan. Development of a Mining and Extraction Policy is now included in the 2019/2020 Operational Plan.
	Progressing	New and modified consent applications approved by Department of Planning & Environment have been reviewed to ensure they are consistent with Council's Mining Policy.
	Delivered	Staff and Councillors attended Community Consultative Committees as required during 2018/19.
	Delivered	During 2018/19 staff attended Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue meetings as arranged.
	Delivered	Improved mining rehabilitation outcomes are sought during mine modification and mine rehabilitation reviews. Work continues to improve air quality across the Upper Hunter by improving rehabilitation of exposed areas.

GOAL 12 | Enhance native vegetation connectivity across the Upper Hunter.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
12.1 Support Landcare initiatives and programs to enhance native vegetation connectivity across the Upper Hunter.	Delivered	An annual report is being prepared to describe the work of Landcare in the Upper Hunter.
	Progressing	A draft vegetation map was developed by a third party during 2018/19. This map is not currently publically available.
	Progressing	The Club to Club project held community days in conjunction with Clean Up Australia Day. The Club to Club project was completed this financial year. Weed control and mulching continues at the wetland in Hyde Park.
	Progressing	Weed management and infill planting activities to existing natural project areas included weed treatments, increased species diversity and improved survival rate of plantings during 2018/19.
	Delivered	National Tree Day is conducted in partnership with other local service groups and organisations each year. 75 volunteers and over 2000 trees were planted across two sites, one in Denman and the other in Muswellbrook.

GOAL 13 | Our local rivers and creeks are enhanced, utilised and valued.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
13.1 Adopt an Urban Riparian Masterplan and implement	Delivered	Funding has been received to progress part of the four stages of the Muswellbrook Urban Riparian Masterplan. Early planning has commenced on the Hunter Beach project which will be delivered during 2019/20 and parts of the Muscle Creek Nature trail have been completed.

GOAL 14 | Support initiatives which reduce the community's impact on the environment.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
14.1 Carry out actions under the Sustainability Action Plan.	Progressing	The Hunter Local Land Services have completed the Draft Hunter River Management Plan which considers the Health of the Hunter River and it's tributaries. A final report will be prepared for Council once the document has been published that identifies key sites that require work.
	Delivered	Air Quality monitoring is ongoing. Filters are changed weekly at the air quality monitoring device at Water and Waste. Results from this air Quality monitoring are returned to Council for reporting annually. Reports on the Upper Hunter Air Quality Monitoring Network are provided quarterly.
	Progressing	A level two audit has been conducted at the Stan Theiss Centre and relevant actions identified to improve energy efficiency. An audit has also been conducted at Muswellbrook Aquatic Centre. The Administration Building audit did not progress in light of the imminent relocation of Council's administration functions to other locations.
	Progressing	Planet Footprint quarterly reviews are continuing. It is intended that accurate energy use will be published on Council's new website.
	Delivered	Council successfully initiated a Pumped Hydro Storage project adopted for action by AGL in partnership with Idemitsu
	Delivered	A comprehensive education program to facilitate increased community understanding of reducing food and green waste diversion to landfill was conducted during 2018/19.



Landcare information session at the Muswellbrook Sustainability Hub

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
14.1 Carry out actions under the Sustainability Action Plan.	Delivered	The new procurement policy has been adopted that establishes sustainable procedures and audits their implementation by Council staff.
	Delivered	A complete report on education activities was provided to Council as part of the annual sustainability report in September 2018.
	Delivered	Council activities for community groups at the Sustainability Hub were reported publically in the Director of Environment and Community Services report each month during 2018/19. The new Sustainability Hub will be co-located with the new Animal Shelter.
	Delivered	The "Hey Tosser do you know where your litter ends up?" grant funded project was completed in April 2019.
	Delivered	An annual report is being prepared for Council that describes the number of illegal dumping sites reported, inspected and appropriate enforcement action taken.
	Delivered	Funding that supports the planned management actions of the Flying Fox Management plan was not required during Q3. Additionally funding that was available through the flying fox grants program 2019 was not suitable for actions promised in council's Flying Fox Camp Management Plan.
	Delivered	Council was not successful in achieving grant funding to support the creation of Flying Fox habitat in appropriate areas of the Shire during 2018/19. Advocacy for the creation of suitable Flying Fox habitats across the shire continues.
14.2 Require all development proposals to avoid and mitigate against potential environmental impacts and facilitate improved environmental outcomes where possible.	Not Progressing	Funding for the Terrestrial Biodiversity maps was not achieved during the 2018/19 financial year.
	Delivered	All development proposals that include potential environmental impacts were reviewed as part of the Development Application process. This was reported to Council as required.

GOAL 15 | Support Federal and State initiatives to reduce the human impact on climate change.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
15.1 Increase the proportion of the energy used by Council from renewable sources.	Progressing	Planning and design is proceeding for the proposed 800kW solar array system at the new Recycle Water Treatment Works and a budget has been allocated in 2019/20 for construction.
	Delivered	Audits of Council buildings to identify efficiency savings were completed.
15.2 Increase the take up of energy used by the wider community from renewable sources.	Delivered	Council worked with the Sustainable Advantage group to deliver training, workshops and educational material to the community during 2018/19.
	Delivered	An Open Day was held at the Indoor Sports Centre to showcase the work conducted to achieve off grid outcomes at this facility during 2018/19. A calendar of events for 2019 was established that promoted the Renewable Energy Target and energy reduction initiatives in Muswellbrook Shire.

04: Cultural Vitality



Hockey Dad, the Noisy Heeler Music Festival

GOAL 16 | Conserve the heritage and history of the Shire.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
16.1 Support the conservation and restoration of the Shire's heritage items.	Progressing	The Office of Environment and Heritage - Heritage Council did not issue General Terms of Approval for the Tertiary Education Centre Stage 2 as currently designed, delaying the adaptive reuse works of Loxton House. A new design is being prepared for resubmission.
	Delivered	The restoration of Denman Memorial Hall has been completed.
	Not Progressing	Council was successful in receiving grant funding from the Heritage Near Me program. Staffing changes during the 2018/19 financial year meant that this project did not progress.
16.2 Ensure sites or artifacts of aboriginal significance are protected where new development proposals are considered.	Not Progressing	Changes in Legislation that may affect the deliveries of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Working Group were not available to action during the 2018/19 financial year.
16.3 New investment in heritage conservation and restoration made.	Delivered	Council approved grant funding for two Local Heritage Grant projects at the December 2018 Council meeting. A report on the outcomes of this round of grant funding will be submitted to Council as this information is made available by the applicants.

GOAL 17 | Facilitate options to improve cultural activities in the Shire.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
17.1 Construct a Regional Entertainment and Conference Centre (subject to Special Variation).	Delivered	Council has awarded the winning design and contract for development approval and detailed design of the Regional Entertainment and Conference Centre.

GOAL 18 | Facilitate cultural activities and events which engage the community and visitors, and which create a 'sense of place' and identity.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
18.1 Increase funding to the Blue Heeler Film Festival and the Bottoms Up beer and music festival with a view to engaging more locals and visitors.	Delivered	The Noisy Heeler Festival will not continue due to changes to compliance requirements for festivals. Council will provide an expanded program of family fun days as part of the 2019/2020 Operational Plan and continue to work in support of Arts Upper Hunter.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
18.1 Increase funding to the Blue Heeler Film Festival and the Bottoms Up beer and music festival with a view to engaging more locals and visitors.	Delivered	The 2018 Blue Heeler Film festival attracted record attendances with over 500 people attending, amounting to a 127% increase on attendances for 2017/18.
	Delivered	The 2019 Easter Family Fun Day held at Highbrook Park Muswellbrook attracted 2,000 attendances, amounting to a 150% increase on attendances for 2017/18.
18.2 Continue the provision of arts appreciated through the Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre	Delivered	A minimum of five exhibitions were delivered at the Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre during the 2018/19 financial year.
	Delivered	Funding for the 2019 Muswellbrook Art Prize has been secured through the generous continuing donation of Bengalla Mining Company and Muswellbrook Shire Council. A report was included in the July Council agenda that described the outcomes of the annual prize.
	Not Progressing	The Muswellbrook Photography prize will be incorporated into future prize exhibitions when funding can be identified.
	Delivered	More than two exhibitions involving young local artists and education providers were delivered at the Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre during 2018/19.
	Delivered	The Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre hosted an Artist in Residence Program during 2018/19.
18.4 Support Arts Upper Hunter as the peak organisation of artist endeavour	Progressing	Activities of the Arts Upper Hunter organisation are reported to Council through the Director of Environment and Community Services report. The constitution has been amended to allow attendance by phone or digital media to enable 100% attendance of all board meetings.
	Delivered	The Local Artist uptake of grants is encouraged through the Arts Upper Hunter social media.
	Delivered	The Noisy Heeler Festival will not continue due to changes to compliance requirements for festivals. Council will provide an expanded program of family fun days as part of the 2019/2020 Operational Plan and continue to work in support of Arts Upper Hunter.



Catapult Dance Company perform at this year's Culture Harvest

05: Community Infrastructure



Hydropanels Installed on the Indoor Sports Centre Muswellbrook

GOAL 19 | Our community's infrastructure is planned well, is safe and reliable and provides required levels of service.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
19.1 Improve and maintain civic precincts.	Delivered	The 2018/19 capital works programme was delivered substantially on time, on budget, and in accordance with relevant design and construction standards.
	Delivered	A program of street and footpath sweeping under contract has been delivered.
	Delivered	Management and removal of graffiti is being undertaken in compliance with Council's policy.
19.2 Maintain and continually improve asset management.	Delivered	Coordination and facilitation of the implementation of the Asset Management Strategy was carried out during 2018/19.
	Delivered	The Asset Management Plan and Improvement Strategy, as it applies to Roads and Drainage Assets, has been implemented and updated during 2018/19.
	Delivered	Throughout 2018/19, the achievement of service levels has been monitored and compared to service level targets articulated in asset management plans and the Precinct Specification Manual.
	Delivered	Passive mowing and horticultural services are being managed to achieve desired native vegetation outcomes with use on internal and external resources. This includes the planning and establishment of pockets of native vegetation.
	Delivered	The legal status of the Denman levee has been clarified. Council is continuing to liaise with the State Government in order for both the Muswellbrook and Denman levees to be included in the Hunter Valley Flood Mitigation Scheme.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
19.3 Facilitate investment in high quality community infrastructure necessary to a Regional Centre.	Progressing	A master plan and concept plan has been developed for the New Animal Care Facility to progress to development approval and construction.
	Delivered	A list of proposed works for design was submitted to the July 2018 meeting of the Infrastructure Committee, and endorsed by Council at the August 2018 Ordinary Meeting of Council.
	Delivered	Designs and estimates for the forward financial year have been progressively provided to Council during 2018/19. A full programme of works based on these designs and estimates will be submitted to the July 2019 Ordinary Meeting of Council.
	Delivered	Road safety audits have been undertaken on Ridglands and Yarraman Roads. The associated reports recommend appropriate management treatments to enable improvements in road safety and traffic management. Other matters have been reported to the Local Traffic Committee as they arise. Additionally, scheduled inspections carried out by Council's Asset Inspector recommends appropriate treatments to enhance traffic management and road safety.
	Delivered	A large annual and multi-year capital program is being delivered with quarterly updates provided to Council.
	Delivered	During 2018/19, quality professional development engineering and assessment was delivered in a timely manner.
	Not Progressing	Council's Development Contribution Plans were not reviewed during 2018/19. This work will commence once the Strategic Planner has been appointed in 2019/20.
	Delivered	As part of the 2019 NSW State Election, Council progressed advocacy for the Muswellbrook bypass and welcomes the NSW Government commitment to fully fund the Muswellbrook bypass with completion targeted for 2026.
	Not Progressing	Regular consultation with the RMS confirms that forward upgrades for the Golden Highway do not contemplate a bypass for the township of Denman.
	Delivered	Council has successfully applied to the NSW and Federal governments for funding to support infrastructure priorities, including from Resources for Region, Growing Local Economies and Growing Regional Economies attracting over \$4 million in grant funding.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
19.4 Maintain and continually improve community infrastructure across the Shire	Delivered	The provision of a nursery is included in the site master plan for the New Animal Care Facility.
	Delivered	The Flood Plain Risk Management Study and Plan was endorsed by Council at the April 2019 Ordinary Meeting of Council. A grant funding application has been submitted in relation to a flood warning system for Muscle Creek.
	Delivered	Inspections of the Muswellbrook and Denman levees were carried out. A report detailing the result of the inspection will be submitted to Council in the first quarter of 2019/20.
	Delivered	A review of Crown Land tenure and required plans of management has been undertaken with a review of classification of public land to be completed.
	Delivered	Council has been successful in securing \$650,000 in grant funding for the replacement of Williams Bridge, Martindale Road.
	Delivered	A rolling and responsive works program of maintenance was scheduled monthly and adjusted weekly.
	Delivered	During 2018/19, asset inspections have been carried out regularly in accordance with the relevant asset inspection programme.
	Delivered	Customer service requests were effectively managed through capture and correspondence, and prioritised in monthly, weekly and daily works programs.
	Delivered	Waste avoidance and resource recovery strategies are included in all works. Individual measures and programs are reported to Council.

GOAL 20 | A safe, secure and reliable water supply and sewerage services are provided to all residents that will ensure public health.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
20.1 Provide safe, secure, efficient and effective water, sewerage and waste services in compliance with regulatory requirements.	Delivered	During 2018/19, Council at all times operated in accordance with the requirements of its New South Environment Protection Authority (EPA) Licences. The required Annual Return was submitted to the Environmental Protection Agency.
	Delivered	Substantial achievement of Best Practice Water Supply and Sewerage Guidelines was achieved through effective monitoring and operating of required critical control points throughout the year. Council's annual drinking water report was submitted to the NSW Department of Health on time. Council also carried out an external audit of its water and sewerage operations during 2018/19, and was found to be substantially achieving compliance with Best Practice Water Supply and Sewerage Guidelines.
	Delivered	Throughout 2018/19, testing and monitoring of water supply and sewerage systems, including re-use systems, was carried out to ensure legislative compliance with health guidelines and licence parameters.
	Delivered	Appropriate and timely corrective actions are taken as required. No actions were taken during 2018-2019.
	Delivered	Throughout 2018/19, inspections and approvals of liquid trade waste premises and agreements were undertaken.
	Delivered	Quarterly quality effluent reuse and disposal compliance reports were submitted to Council's Infrastructure Committee during 2018/19.
	Delivered	During 2018/19, a Review of Environmental Factors was carried out for all projects and work activities as required.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
20.1 Provide safe, secure, efficient and effective water, sewerage and waste services in compliance with regulatory requirements.	Delivered	Throughout 2018/19, Council's kerbside waste collection contractor submitted monthly contract compliance reports. Reports providing information in relation to the contractor's key performance indicators and contract performance were submitted to Council on a quarterly basis during 2018/19.
	Delivered	Landfill Environmental Management Plans have been updated, and will be reported to Council in the first quarter of 2019/20.
	Delivered	Electrical and water supply services have been installed for proposed MAF (Mobile Aerated Floor) system. Specifications have been prepared for a public tender as per Council procurement policy.
	Delivered	Electrical and water supply services have been installed for a proposed MAF (Mobile Aerated Floor) system. Specifications have been prepared for a public tender as per Council procurement policy. This project is aimed at providing an economical means of managing Food Organics and Garden Organics. A report on the implementation of the project will be submitted to Council during 2019/20.
	Delivered	A monthly report is provided to Council advising of the number of inspections of new and existing on-site sewage management systems carried out to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements.

GOAL 21 | The road, footpath and cycleway networks are integrated and allow for the safe movement of residents around the Shire.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
21.1 Maintain and continually improve the Shire's footpath and cycleway networks to improve connectivity.	Delivered	The 2018/19 Capital Works Programme was reported to the August 2018 Ordinary Meeting of Council. The report provided prioritised options to be funded and the amounts necessary to achieve the Delivery Programme priorities. The programme of capital works aims to maintain and continually improve the Shire's footpath and cycleway networks.
	Delivered	During 2018/19, the capital works programme was delivered substantially on time, on budget, and in accordance with the relevant design and construction standards. Project Status Reports were submitted to Council on a quarterly basis. Asset registers were updated as projects were completed.

06: Community Leadership



Kellie Scholes, presenting ideas at a community panel

GOAL 22 | Collaborative and responsive community leadership that meets the expectations and anticipates the needs of the community.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
22.1 Enhanced collaboration with Council's community and stakeholders to ensure Council and its elected arm is best place to make decisions in the best interests of the community.	Delivered	<p>In November 2018, a desk based exercise was carried out with Muswellbrook Police, testing preparedness for a major bush fire and extreme weather event. In addition, a multi-agency exercise will be facilitated by Muswellbrook Police in September 2019, further testing preparedness for a severe weather or bush fire event.</p> <p>Council is also a signatory to a Memorandum of Understanding with the Office of Emergency Management for the development of a Disaster Preparedness Program. The development of this program will provide tools, resources and training to local government when preparing for emergencies, with the aim of minimising the impact of emergency events on local communities.</p>
	Delivered	The Bush Fire Risk Management Plan has been reviewed. The Plan is currently being further updated by Officers of the Rural Fire Service in consultation with Council staff and the Bush Fire Management Committee. A trial is being conducted of innovative mapping technology that will assist in more accurate forecasting of bush fire behaviour. The Hunter Valley region has been selected as the initial trial and test region for this technology.
	Delivered	During 2018/2019, four quarterly meetings of the Local Emergency Management Committee were held. Meetings were conducted in Muswellbrook on 6 September 2018 and 7 March 2019. Meetings were conducted in Singleton on 6 December 2018 and 6 June 2019. The next scheduled meeting of the Local Emergency Management Committee will be held in Muswellbrook in September 2019.
	Delivered	Council has undertaken community engagement that includes detailed workshops with a Community Panel; regular meetings with sporting and other interest groups and completed a Community Satisfaction Survey for feedback on Community Services.
	Delivered	Comprehensive Community Consultation Plans have been developed to seek community feedback on 2018/2019 projects with details of outcomes reported to Council. Community consultation rates have increased by 27% against 2017/2018 benchmarks.

GOAL 23 | Genuine and well informed community participation in decision making.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
23.1 Utilise best practice models of community engagement to ensure decision making is meeting the expectations of the community.	Delivered	Community consultation has occurred via Listening Posts held at various locations across the Shire in order to inform the review of Council's Ageing Strategy and to promote Council's ongoing sustainability programs.
23.2 Enhance Council's consultation and communication with the community to build awareness and understanding of Council's activities and Community needs.	Delivered	A demographically representative group of 35 community members was recruited to Council's 2018 Muswellbrook Shire Community Panel. Two Community Panel meetings were convened on 6 and 20 October 2018, with meeting outcomes and panel recommendations reported to Council.
	Progressing	The review of Council's Media and Communications Policy is continuing and is expected to be finalised in 2019/20. All but one formal application made under the Government Information (Public Access) Act was responded to by the due date and in accordance with the Act.

GOAL 24 | A Council that is well managed, efficient and properly resourced and that is responsive to its communities and stakeholders.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
24.1 Maintain a strong focus on financial discipline to enable Council to properly respond to the needs of the communities it serves.	Delivered	Council's Future Fund is being effectively managed with integrated processes to monitor and report the Future Fund performance. This work informed a recent review of Council's Future Fund Policy.
	Progressing	Processing times have remained the same as the past year. A higher number of complex applications have been assessed compared to the previous year.
	Delivered	Quarterly statistics are reported to Council of Principal Certifying Authority certification services retained by Council.
	Progressing	Site inspections occurred for all Development Application and Construction Certificate prior to determination in accordance with statutory requirements.
	Delivered	Council inspects food premises, skin penetration, caravan parks and monitors air handling systems to ensure compliance with relevant legislative requirements.
	Delivered	A new electronic system register was internally created during 2018/19 to maintain current statistics on animals, rescues, adoption and returns to owners as part of the construction of the new animal shelter.
	Delivered	Council issued 143 reminder letters requesting Fire Safety Statements this financial year and received 93 Fire Safety Statements.
	Delivered	A monthly report is provided to Council advising of the number of swimming pool compliance inspections completed as well as re-inspections to ensure swimming pools comply with the provisions of the Swimming Pool Act 1992.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
24.2 Implement a comprehensive and targeted business improvement program	Delivered	Each of Council's statutory reporting obligations for the 2018/19 year have been met.
	Delivered	Policy framework management strategy has been endorsed by Council as part of the review of the Governance Policy. A review of all policies has commenced in accordance with the framework, with recommended new and amended policies and those for revocation reported to Council and Manex as appropriate for adoption.
	Delivered	Council continues to promote its work to the community and other key stakeholders. Over the year Council's Communications Team published 269 stories in social and traditional media. Council's social media engagement over the period has seen a cumulative reach of 512,465 and resulted in direct engagement on 88,925 occasions.
	Delivered	Council business papers and agenda materials have been prepared and generally circulated by the due dates. Efforts continue to reduce the need for late reports to Council unless for the sake of urgency.
	Delivered	Council's Information Technology infrastructure and Disaster Recovery projects have been completed. Customer Request Management system and Asset Management system implementation projects have been completed.
	Progressing	Service Delivery Reviews are currently ongoing across two Council service areas.

GOAL 25 | A sustainable council that is a best practice employer providing a safe, happy and productive workplace.

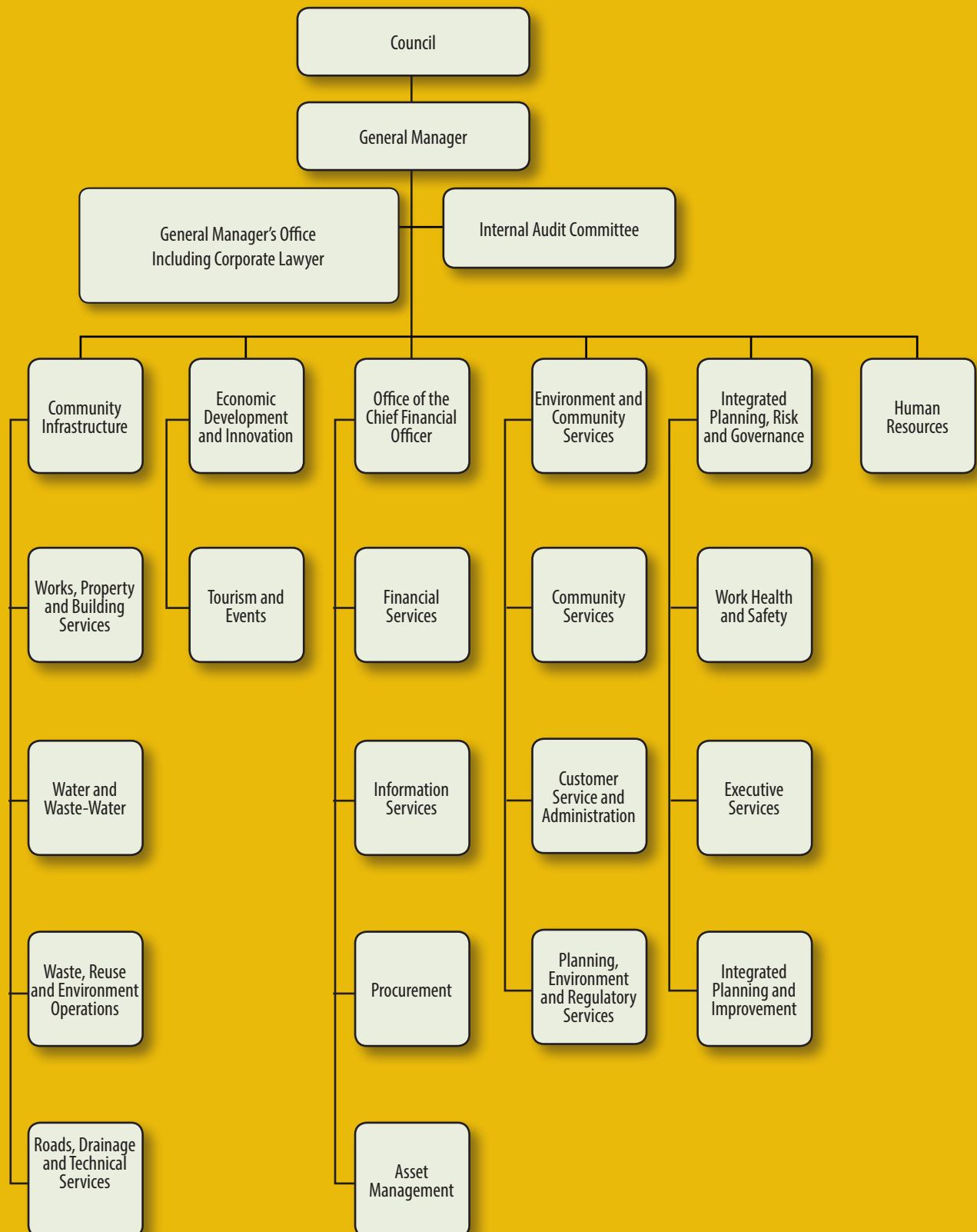
Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
25.1 Continue to prioritise safety and risk management initiatives, employee welfare initiatives and upgrades to Council's works depot and waste management facility.	Progressing	A concept plan for a new consolidated Works Depot has been prepared to progress to development approval and detailed design.
	Delivered	Monthly incident reports are made to Manex and the WHS Committee using the Work, Health & Safety Management System Safehold. Safehold is monitored and updated weekly by the WHS Advisor. A program to review all WHS policies and procedures is continuing, with the bulk of all core procedures having been reviewed and adopted by the end of 2018/19.
	Delivered	New strategies delivered in the HR environment have proven to be successful for Council with employment Attraction, Retention, Engagement and development. Acon LGBTI training was attended and options to promote MSC as a supportive employer of LGBTI communities can now be considered.



Mayor Martin Rush engaging with the community through the local radio station every Monday

Our Organisation

Organisational Chart Departmental Structure





Council Administration Building

The Leadership Team



Fiona Plesman

General Manager

With more than 30 years' experience as a leader in higher education and local government Fiona's focus has been business development and management, organisational development and managing disruption and change. Fiona is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, the Human Resources Institute and Local Government Professionals. She has postgraduate qualifications in Organisational Development and Sustainability.



Derek Finnigan

Director Community Infrastructure

Derek Finnigan has gained experience in a variety of roles during his more than thirty years working with Muswellbrook Shire Council, and considers Muswellbrook Shire to be a wonderful place, to work, live, and to raise a family. Derek's tertiary qualifications include an MBA majoring in sustainable business, Bachelor Business Administration, Diploma Occupational Health & Safety, and Bachelor English Literature. Derek is Council's Local Emergency Management Officer.



Natalia Cowley

Chief Financial Officer

Natalia is Council's Chief Financial Officer and Executive Manager responsible for Finance, Information Technology, Procurement and Asset Management. Natalia is a chartered accountant, holds a degree in Accounting and Information Technology and brings financial services experience gained in senior roles at two global accounting firms and international banks to her role at Muswellbrook Shire Council.



Sharon Pope

Executive Manager Planning, Environment and Regulatory Services

Sharon's broad range of experience in strategic land use planning, the development assessment process and community collaboration saw her recognised as a Fellow of the Planning Institute of Australia in 2018. Sharon has a degree in Urban and Regional Planning and has vast experience in local government, starting as a Trainee Town Planner at Greater Taree City Council followed by stints at Newcastle, Maitland, Great Lakes and Lake Macquarie councils, before joining Muswellbrook Shire Council.



Carolyn O'Brien

Manager, Community Services

Carolyn has held a number of roles across Muswellbrook Shire Council in the Corporate and Community Services Directorate in her eleven years with Council. Carolyn is a strong advocate of community consultation and customer service, and is passionate about the Shire and Council's plan to grow Muswellbrook as the Regional Centre of the Upper Hunter through education and economic diversification.



Joshua Brown

Manager, Integrated Planning, Risk and Governance

As Council's Manager Integrated Planning, Risk and Governance, Joshua leads a team with a wide variety of responsibilities, including communications, business improvement, workplace health and safety, grants coordination and advocacy. Joshua has worked with Council for more than eight years and is committed to providing responsive and agile local government services to the community.

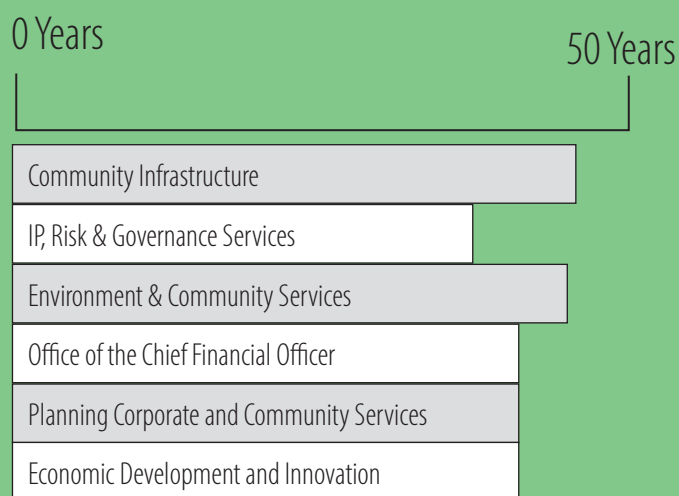


Peter Chambers

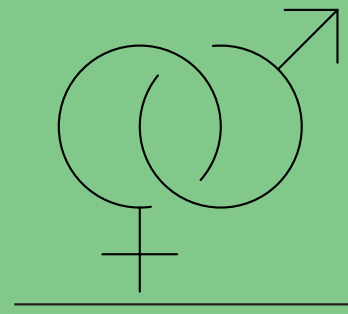
Chief Engineer

Peter brings a wealth of experience to Council including a specialist background in civil engineering, stormwater treatment, stormwater management and precast engineering systems. With a strong background in residential development, civil design, drafting, estimation, channel and basin design , major projects, feasibilities and innovative designs , Peter is in demand for presentations to councils, consultants and as a guest lecturer at universities.

Organisation's Employment Status

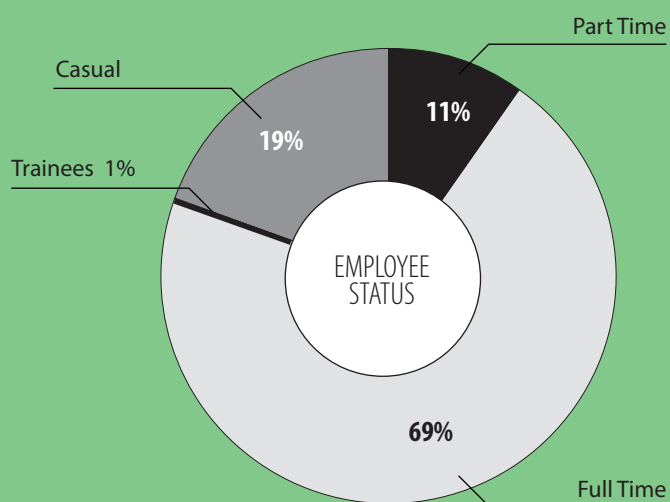


49/51



157 FULL TIME
EQUIVALENT

MEDIAN AGE
= 45



TOTAL = 201 Employees

Spirit Values

Council staff comply with Council's Code of Conduct and Organisational Values, which provide a framework for how staff should treat each other, our customers and other stakeholders at work.

We use the word SPIRIT to identify the six values that we consider to be meaningful and important. The six values are Safety, Pride, Integrity, Respect, Innovation and Teamwork.

SAFETY

We look after each other

We advocate and apply safe work practices

We are positive with one another

We ask for help when we need it

PRIDE

We lead the way

We communicate our goals

We encourage the heart

We stay the course

INTEGRITY

We are accountable and take responsibility

We do what we say

We are transparent in our decision making processes

We are honest with each other

RESPECT

We embrace diversity

We listen to the opinions of others

We listen and communicate with each other honestly

We show our appreciation

INNOVATION

We value new ideas and ways of working

We work smarter

We learn from our mistakes

We seek improvement

TEAMWORK

We work together to achieve outcomes

We celebrate our achievements

We embrace diversity

We collaborate

Work Health & Safety

Muswellbrook Shire Council values the health and wellbeing of staff and prioritises WH&S.

Key performance indicator (KPI)	2017	2018	Result (below/ met/ exceeded target)	Improvement/ Comments	WHO
Number of incidents reported including near misses	92	186	N/A	Increase in incident reports is due to encouragement of reporting, implementation of SafeHold WHSMS and staff training	WHS
Near misses	23	24			
Lost time	0	3			
Public Liability	15	60			
Medical Treatment	6	18			
Injury/Illness Related	36	78			
Property Related	14	43			
Security Related	7	8			
Environmental	1	2			
Abuse	1	5			
Number of incidents investigated	13	59	N/A	Incident investigation requirements are determined during incident evaluations based on the severity of the incident.	WHS
Number of corrective actions completed (Target: 100% completion of corrective actions raised)	9	64	Meets	100% of corrective actions raised have been completed.	WHS
Number of risks eliminated	2	26	N/A	Number of risks eliminated using the hierarchy of controls.	WHS
Number of Hazard reports logged	1	3	N/A		WHS

Number of Hazard Safety Inspections completed per Month (Target: 100% of 59 inspections per year)	0	36	Below	Hazard/Safety Inspection timetable and Monthly report to the WHS Committee commencing November 2017.	WHS
Communication – number of toolbox talks completed (Target: 780 per year – which is equal to 3x work crews x 5 days/ week x 52 weeks)	1,510	1,356	Exceeds	Daily tool box talks included with Site Specific risk assessments. StateCover toolbox talk shared at Monthly teams meeting. Tool box meetings agendas include incident outcomes and corrective actions, RMS wake up calls, messages from HSRs and WHS Committee meetings.	WHS
HSR = Health & Safety Representative WHSMS = Work, Health & Safety Management System RMS = Roads & Maritime Services					



Staff planting flowers on the main the street for Spring

Governance – Councillors



Cr Martin Rush – *Mayor*

Martin Rush has been the Council's Mayor since 2008. A barrister by profession, Councillor Rush holds degrees in economics and law and owns a farming property at McCully's Gap, north east of Muswellbrook. He is Council's spokesperson for Innovation, Land Use Planning and Heritage.



Cr Rod Scholes
– *Deputy Mayor*

Second term Councillor and Deputy Mayor Councillor Rod Scholes has been a resident of Muswellbrook for 36 years and is spokesperson for Utilities and Sustainability. Cr Scholes has a wealth of experience and an interest in addressing water supply, sewerage and drainage issues.



Cr Scott Bailey

Finance and entertainment are top of the agenda for first term Councillor Scott Bailey, Council's spokesperson for Finance, Corporate Services, Integrated Planning and Events. As General Manager of the Muswellbrook and District Workers Club, Cr Bailey is a driving force in the centre of town



Cr Mark Bowditch

The environment, transparency between Council and the community, education and the development of employment opportunities are all important to first term Councillor, Mark Bowditch, spokesperson for Emergency Services.



Cr Janelle Eades

Returning for a third term Councillor Janelle Eades is Council's spokesperson for Social Inclusion and lists volunteering as one of her major activities outside Council and work commitments. Born and raised in Muswellbrook Cr Eades has had a long term involvement in community services in the Shire.



Cr Jason Foy

Arts and music play a large part in the day to day activities of Councillor Jason Foy, spokesperson for the Arts. The first term Councillor is Head Teacher of Creative and Performing Arts at Muswellbrook High School and enjoys providing connections between the school and community.



Cr Michelle Green

First term Councillor Michelle Green is Council's spokesperson for Recreation and Wellbeing and is a member of the Mangoola Community Consultative Committee, Bengalla Community Consultative Committee and the Sport and Recreation User Group committee.



Cr Jacinta Ledlin

Cr Ledlin is Council's spokesperson for Aboriginal Reconciliation, a member of the Aboriginal Reconciliation and Liddell Community Consultation committees and the Aboriginal Culture and Heritage Working Group.

Governance – Councillors



Cr Graeme McNeill

Returning for his second term Cr McNeill is Council's spokesperson for Sport.

A resident of 35 years, he has a long association with the resource sector in the Shire and would like to see more facilities for the young and elderly.



Cr Stephen Ward

Cr Ward is serving his third term on Muswellbrook Shire Council and is Council's representative on both Mangoola and Spur Hill Community Consultative Committees. The Denman community plays a large part in Cr Ward's life and he enjoys meeting locals and supporting local projects.



Cr Steve Reynolds

Councillor Reynolds, in his first term in Council, is committed to having a strong local voice and to supporting the view of the whole community and promotes engagement and consultation with Shire residents as Council's spokesperson for Community Engagement.



Cr Brett Woodruff

Council's longest serving councillor, Cr Woodruff is proud to be serving his fifth term, and 19th year, as a Muswellbrook Shire Councillor, Cr Woodruff is the current spokesperson for Infrastructure and Development, Assessment and Regulation.

Democratic Governance

Local Government is the most responsive, agile and community driven level of government in Australia. Council, as the local government authority, is responsible for day-to-day community services and infrastructure, ranging from kerbside bin collection, local roads and the public swimming pools in Denman and Muswellbrook to the provision of water and sewer across the Shire. Council also operates the Regional Art Centre, the Denman Memorial Hall, libraries and other cultural activities for residents and visitors alike.

It is important to distinguish between local government and the State and Federal governments that have responsibility for other services. The State Government looks after schools, hospitals, public transport and national parks, whereas the Federal Government is responsible for defence, trade, foreign affairs and the collection and distribution of tax. Councils are not responsible for the decisions of private enterprise, although Muswellbrook Shire Council is committed through its Jobs Fund to support and encourage local businesses to establish, grow and flourish in the Shire.

Muswellbrook Shire Council is a body politic with authority mandated by the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW). The elected council of twelve councillors, are elected by all eligible ratepayers and residents of the Shire every four years for a term of four years. Councillors represent the entirety of the Shire and are not singular to any particular area.

During the course of 2018/19 a total of eleven ordinary meetings of the Council took place together with seven extraordinary meetings, which were convened by necessity to consider specific matters.

Meeting Dates

ORDINARY MEETINGS

10 July 2018
14 August 2018
11 September 2018
9 October 2018
13 November 2018
11 December 2018
12 February 2019
12 March 2019
9 April 2019
14 May 2019
11 June 2019

EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS

16 July 2018
23 July 2018
1 August 2018
20 November 2018
30 January 2019
21 May 2019
26 June 2019

Council Attendance

COUNCILLOR

MEETINGS ATTENDED

Martin Rush	16
Scott Bailey	9
Mark Bowditch	16
Janelle Eades	17
Jason Foy	14
Michelle Green	12
Jacinta Ledlin	16
Graeme McNeill	11
Steven Reynolds	10
Rod Scholes	15
Stephen Ward	11
Brett Woodruff	13

Ratepayers and other members of the public are entitled to speak to matters before the Council in Public Participation. During 2018/19 fifteen residents took part in Public Participation. Meetings are held in public and all residents are invited to join the meeting in the gallery. Media representatives are generally present at meetings.

Corporate Governance

In 2015 Council embarked on a three year Strategic Internal Audit Plan. The main objective for Council's independent internal audit program is to ensure good governance and continuous business improvement.

Council's Internal Audit Committee meets quarterly and provides independent review of and advice to Council on matters identified by the independent internal auditor. Audit reports, presented to the committee at each meeting, include action updates provided by responsible Council Officers via an Independent Internal Audit Findings Register.

In 2018/19, Council's independent internal auditor, Forsyths Chartered Accountants conducted reviews of:

1. Review of Grant Management (September 2018)

2. Review of the Art Gallery (September 2018)

As of December 2018 there were a total of 125 Outstanding Actions and 70 Completed Actions listed on Council's Independent Internal Audit Findings Register.

In December 2018, in conjunction with the conclusion of Council's three year Strategic Internal Audit Plan 2015-2018, a self-review of Council's internal audit function was conducted and Council's Internal Audit Committee was dissolved. The findings of the self-review were reported to MANEX on 17 December 2018 and a recruitment process seeking expressions of interest for independent external members for Council's reconstituted Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC) commenced.

At the 12 March 2019 Ordinary Meeting, Council adopted a revised Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee Charter, which aligns with:

- a. the Office of Local Government's Internal Audit Guidelines – September 2010;*
- b. statutory changes proposed by the Office of Local Government (OLG); and*
- c. Council's budget.*



Council Staff outside the Administration building

Financials

Fit for the Future Improvement Plan

In June 2015 Council submitted a Fit for the Future Improvement Plan to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal and the office of Local Government. Council was declared fit for the future and not subject to merger. As part of the fit for the future process council made a commitment to deliver its Fit for the Future Plan and meet targets in the following categories:

- *Cost reduction measures*
- *Organisation and business improvements*
- *Building strategic capacity*
- *Service efficiencies*
- *Renewable energy savings*
- *Revenue streams.*

In 2018/2019 Council delivered the following improvements:

- *Initiated a new Information Communication Strategy (ICT) with a focus on improving all business systems and process starting with Customer Service Requests, stage 2 of a new Asset Management System*
- *Regular Internal Audits with all identified improvements rated and registered in a new Risk Management Register*
- *A centralised Store and new stock take system and procedure*
- *A review of Fees and Charges with charges revised in line with recent assessment of actual costs*
- *Continuation of temporary part time Debt-Collection function to a permanent function*
- *Reviewed continuous improvement functions and service delivery review methodology with the introduction of a new service review program launched in 2019.*

Fit for the Future Ratios

RATIO	BENCHMARK	2018/19	ACHIEVES BENCHMARK	2017/18	ACHIEVES BENCHMARK
Operating Performance	>0	6.98%	Yes	13.03%	Yes
Own Source Revenue	>60%	68.12%	Yes	65.83%	Yes
Building & Asset Renewal	>100%	78.27%	No	97.11%	Yes
Infrastructure Backlog	<2%	6.28%	No	5.49%	No
Asset Maintenance	>100%	98.28%	No	75.13%	Yes
Debt Service Cover Ratio	>2%	2.80 x%	Yes	2.3%	Yes
Real Operating Expenditure*	Decreasing	2.72	No	2.72	Yes

*2015/16 population estimate of 17,209 is adjusted to 16,383 for 2018/19

Children rendering the Straw bale wall in the Denman Memorial Hall

Special Variation to Rates

In 2018/2019 Muswellbrook Shire Council applied for a permanent increase of in 2018/19 of rates by 12.43% (including 2.3% rate peg) to fund the following projects and programs:

- *An additional allocation of \$300,000 per year for stormwater drainage and \$100,000 per year for roads and parks asset maintenance programs.*
- *Development of the Olympic Park Sports Precinct and the Regional Entertainment and Conference Centre with a combined value of \$26,010,000*
- *An additional \$250,000 towards the Job Creation program and \$62,000 to offset a shortfall in rating revenues arising from a change in NSW Government policy with respect to biodiversity offsets.*

The NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) approved Council's application for the continuation of the Special Variation (SV) and to include it permanently in the rate base.

Council is progressing with the program of works approved for funding by IPART.

Where does our money come from and how is it spent?

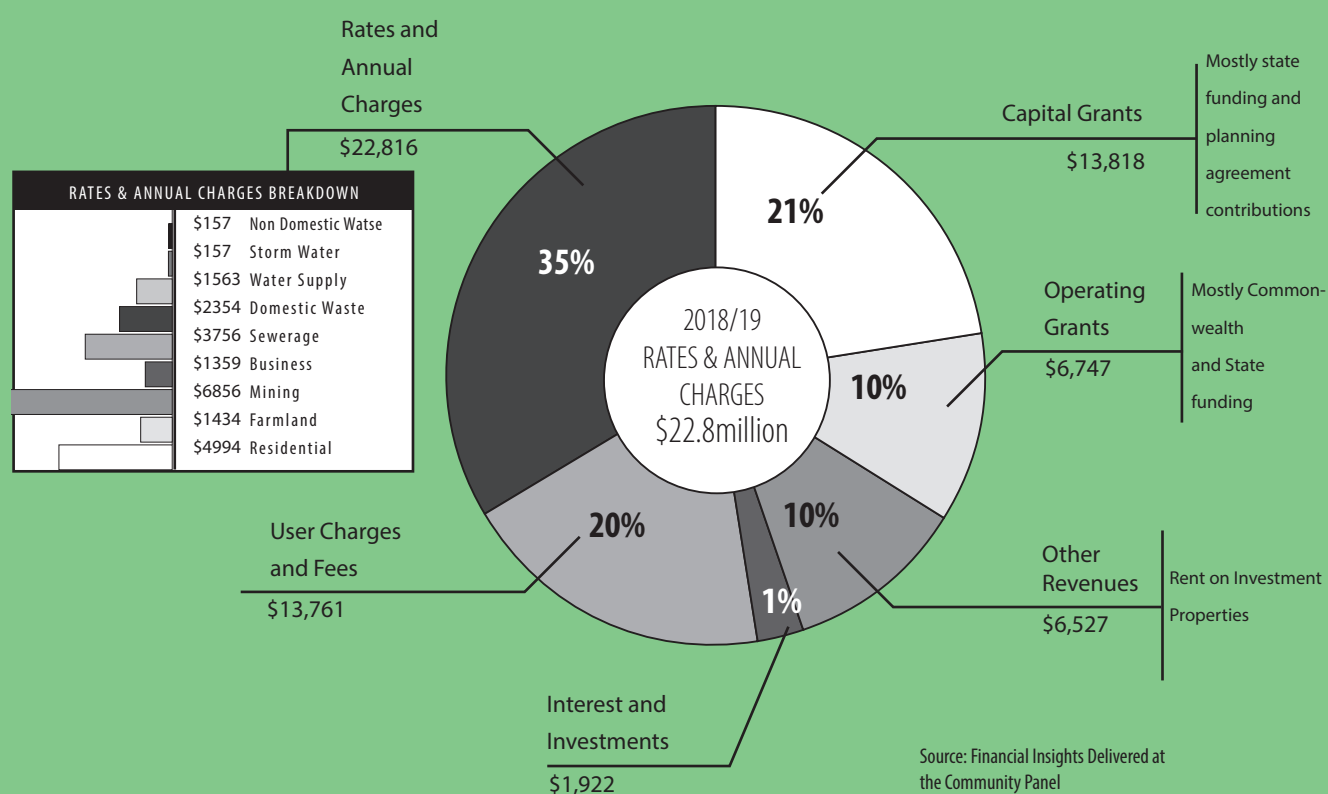
Overall, the total comprehensive income for 2019 for the consolidated statements shows a surplus of \$19.3m (\$10.1m in 2018).

The \$9.2m increase in comprehensive income since last year is due to a \$14.1m improvement in the revaluation outcome for infrastructure, property, plant and equipment from a \$12m loss in 2018 to a gain of \$2.1m in 2019, which is offset by:

\$2.1m decrease in capital and operating grants,

\$1.5m increase in depreciation and amortisation, and

\$1.6m increase in materials and contracts, mostly driven by legal expenses and higher raw materials spend.



Source: Financial Insights Delivered at the Community Panel

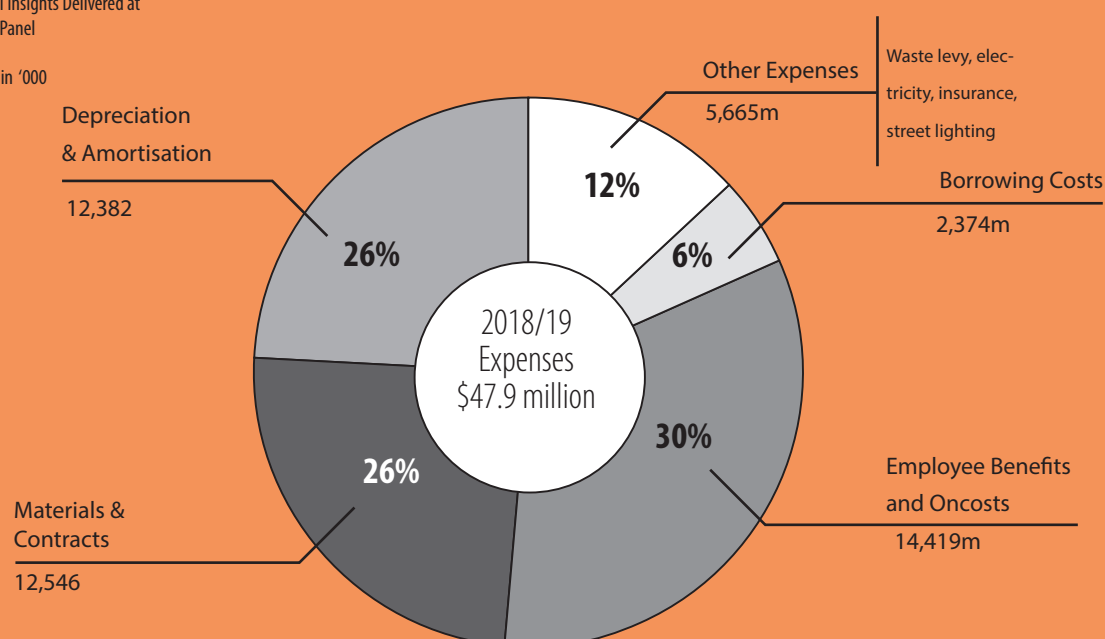
All numbers are in '000

Council's expenses

Council's expenses, amounting to \$47.9m, are broken down as follows:

Source: Financial Insights Delivered at the Community Panel

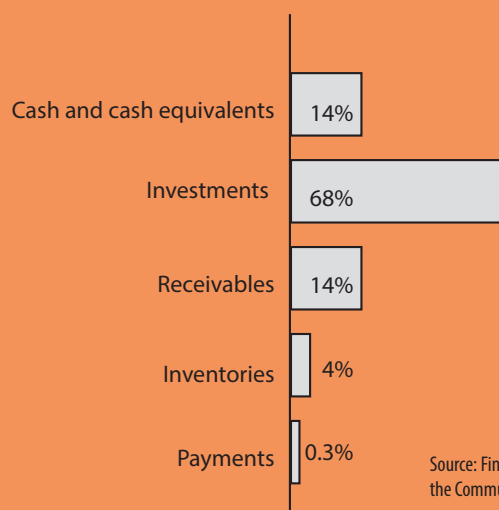
All numbers are in '000



Council's total comprehensive income for the year is \$2.1m greater than the net operating result of \$17.2m, due to \$2.1m gain on the revaluation of sewer and water networks.

Statement of Financial Position

Council's total assets have increased by \$23m to \$728m since prior year, due to the work in progress construction of the Reuse Water Treatment Works and the investment in roads and buildings. Council's current assets, amounting to \$44.1m, are broken down as follows:



Source: Financial Insights Delivered at the Community Panel

Understanding Council's Financial Statements

Each year, individual local governments across New South Wales are required to present a set of audited financial statements to their council and community.

What you will find in the statements

The financial statements set out the financial performance, financial position and cash flows of Council for the financial year ended 30 June 2018.

The format of the financial statements is standard across all NSW Councils and complies with both the accounting and reporting requirements of Australian Accounting Standards and requirements as set down by the Office of Local Government.

About the Councillor/Management Statement

The financial statements must be certified by senior staff as 'presenting fairly' the Council's financial results for the year and are required to be adopted by Council

– ensuring both responsibility for and ownership of the financial statements.

About the primary financial statements

The financial statements incorporate five 'primary' financial statements:

1. The Income Statement

Summarises Council's financial performance for the year, listing all income and expenses.

This statement also displays Council's original adopted budget to provide a comparison between what was projected and what actually occurred.

2. The Statement of Comprehensive Income

Primarily records changes in the fair value of Council's Infrastructure, Property, Plant and Equipment.

3. The Statement of Financial Position

A 30 June snapshot of Council's financial position indicating its assets, liabilities and "net wealth".

4. The Statement of Changes in Equity

The overall change for the year (in dollars) of Council's "net wealth".

5. The Statement of Cash Flows

Indicates where Council's cash came from and where it was spent. This statement also displays Council's original adopted budget to provide a comparison between what was projected and what actually occurred

The following primary financial statements have been extracted from Council's Financial Statements 2018-19. Refer to the Financial Statements 2018-19 for a complete financial analysis and accompanying notes.



The Muswellbrook Rams vs Murrurundi at the Highbrook Park

Statement by Councillors and Management (signed by GM/ Mayor/ Deputy GM/ CFO)

Financial Statements 2019

Muswellbrook Shire Council

General Purpose Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2019

Statement by Councillors and Management made pursuant to Section 413(2)(c) of the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW) (as amended)

The attached General Purpose Financial Statements have been prepared in accordance with:

- the *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW) (as amended) and the regulations made thereunder,
- the Australian Accounting Standards and other pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board
- the *Local Government Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting*.

To the best of our knowledge and belief, these statements:

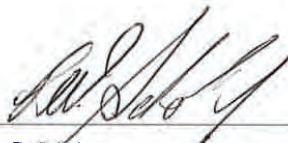
- present fairly the Council's operating result and financial position for the year
- accord with Council's accounting and other records.

We are not aware of any matter that would render these statements false or misleading in any way.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of Council made on 27 August 2019.



Cr. M. Rush
Mayor
24 October 2019



Cr. R. Scholes
Councillor
24 October 2019



Ms. E. Plesman
General Manager
24 October 2019



Mrs. N. Cowley
Responsible Accounting Officer
24 October 2019

Income Statement

Muswellbrook Shire Council

Financial Statements 2019

Income Statement

for the year ended 30 June 2019

Original unaudited budget 2019	\$ '000	Notes	Actual 2019	Actual 2018 ¹
Income from continuing operations				
<u>Revenue:</u>				
24,708	Rates and annual charges	3a	22,816	22,581
11,032	User charges and fees	3b	13,259	12,761
974	Interest and investment revenue	3c	1,922	1,747
6,639	Other revenues	3d	6,527	7,048
5,816	Grants and contributions provided for operating purposes	3e,3f	6,747	7,430
9,394	Grants and contributions provided for capital purposes	3e,3f	13,818	15,209
<u>Other income:</u>				
70	Net gains from the disposal of assets	5	—	—
—	Fair value increment on investment properties	10	—	116
—	Net share of interests in joint ventures and associates using the equity method	15	—	128
58,633	Total income from continuing operations		65,089	67,020
Expenses from continuing operations				
14,978	Employee benefits and on-costs	4a	14,419	14,946
3,014	Borrowing costs	4b	2,907	2,374
12,340	Materials and contracts	4c	12,546	10,944
11,427	Depreciation and amortisation	4d	12,382	10,838
3,454	Other expenses	4e	5,436	5,748
—	Net losses from the disposal of assets	5	209	127
—	Net share of interests in joint ventures and associates using the equity method	15	20	—
45,213	Total expenses from continuing operations		47,919	44,977
13,420	Operating result from continuing operations		17,170	22,043
13,420	Net operating result for the year		17,170	22,043
13,420	Net operating result attributable to council		17,170	22,043
4,026	Net operating result for the year before grants and contributions provided for capital purposes		3,352	6,834

⁽¹⁾ The Council has not restated comparatives when initially applying AASB 9. The comparative information has been prepared under AASB 139 *Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement*

The above Income Statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Statement of Comprehensive Income

Muswellbrook Shire Council

Financial Statements 2019

Statement of Comprehensive Income for the year ended 30 June 2019

\$ '000	Notes	2019	2018 ¹
Net operating result for the year (as per Income Statement)		17,170	22,043
Other comprehensive income:			
Amounts which will not be reclassified subsequently to the operating result			
Gain (loss) on revaluation of IPP&E	9(a)	2,160	(11,961)
Total items which will not be reclassified subsequently to the operating result		2,160	(11,961)
Total other comprehensive income for the year		2,160	(11,961)
Total comprehensive income for the year		19,330	10,082
Total comprehensive income attributable to Council		19,330	10,082

(1) The Council has not restated comparatives when initially applying AASB 9. The comparative information has been prepared under AASB 139 *Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement*

The above Statement of Comprehensive Income should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Statement of Financial Position

Muswellbrook Shire Council

Financial Statements 2019

Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2019

\$ '000	Notes	2019	2018 ¹
ASSETS			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalent assets	6(a)	6,164	5,225
Investments	6(b)	30,000	14,324
Receivables	7	6,074	5,915
Inventories	8a	1,700	1,718
Other	8b	116	123
Total current assets		44,054	27,305
Non-current assets			
Investments	6(b)	22,834	34,000
Infrastructure, property, plant and equipment	9(a)	605,244	588,088
Investment property	10a	55,988	55,352
Investments accounted for using the equity method	15	213	233
Total non-current assets		684,279	677,673
TOTAL ASSETS		728,333	704,978
LIABILITIES			
Current liabilities			
Payables	11	6,512	6,232
Borrowings	11	21,494	4,159
Provisions	12	3,259	2,837
Total current liabilities		31,265	13,228
Non-current liabilities			
Borrowings	11	47,935	62,067
Provisions	12	9,153	9,033
Total non-current liabilities		57,088	71,100
TOTAL LIABILITIES		88,353	84,328
Net assets		639,980	620,650
EQUITY			
Accumulated surplus	13a	355,499	338,329
Revaluation reserves	13a	284,481	282,321
Council equity interest		639,980	620,650
Total equity		639,980	620,650

(1) The Council has not restated comparatives when initially applying AASB 9. The comparative information has been prepared under AASB 139 Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement

The above Statement of Financial Position should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Muswellbrook Shire Council

Financial Statements 2019

Statement of Changes in Equity for the year ended 30 June 2019

\$ '000	Notes	2019			2018 ¹		
		Accumulated surplus	IPP&E revaluation reserve	Total equity	Accumulated surplus	IPP&E revaluation reserve	Total equity
Opening balance		338,329	282,321	620,650	316,286	294,282	610,568
Net operating result for the year		17,170	-	17,170	22,043	-	22,043
Other comprehensive income							
- Gain (loss) on revaluation of IPP&E	9(a)	-	2,160	2,160	-	(11,961)	(11,961)
Other comprehensive income		-	2,160	2,160	-	(11,961)	(11,961)
Total comprehensive income		17,170	2,160	19,330	22,043	(11,961)	10,082
Equity – balance at end of the reporting period		355,499	284,481	639,980	338,329	282,321	620,650

(1) The Council has not restated comparatives when initially applying AASB 9. The comparative information has been prepared under AASB 139 Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement

The above Statement of Changes in Equity should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Statement of Cash Flows

Muswellbrook Shire Council

Financial Statements 2019

Statement of Cash Flows

for the year ended 30 June 2019

Original unaudited budget 2019	\$ '000	Notes	Actual 2019	Actual 2018
Cash flows from operating activities				
<u>Receipts</u>				
24,708	Rates and annual charges		23,315	23,506
17,433	User charges and fees		13,601	13,234
974	Investment and interest revenue received		2,098	2,137
15,210	Grants and contributions		20,484	22,288
–	Bonds, deposits and retention amounts received		250	2,087
2,683	Other		5,020	7,033
<u>Payments</u>				
(14,001)	Employee benefits and on-costs		(14,133)	(15,225)
(15,716)	Materials and contracts		(12,110)	(11,021)
(3,014)	Borrowing costs		(2,620)	(2,016)
–	Bonds, deposits and retention amounts refunded		(260)	(96)
(3,454)	Other		(4,457)	(2,839)
24,823	Net cash provided (or used in) operating activities	14b	31,188	39,088
Cash flows from investing activities				
<u>Receipts</u>				
–	Sale of investment securities		31,750	28,500
70	Sale of infrastructure, property, plant and equipment		304	246
<u>Payments</u>				
–	Purchase of investment securities		(36,260)	(34,821)
(1,925)	Purchase of investment property		(636)	(33,321)
(31,651)	Purchase of infrastructure, property, plant and equipment		(28,572)	(41,144)
–	Purchase of real estate assets		(7)	(2)
(33,506)	Net cash provided (or used in) investing activities		(33,421)	(80,542)
Cash flows from financing activities				
<u>Receipts</u>				
5,000	Proceeds from borrowings and advances		7,000	46,800
<u>Payments</u>				
(4,376)	Repayment of borrowings and advances		(3,828)	(6,275)
624	Net cash flow provided (used in) financing activities		3,172	40,525
(8,059)	Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		939	(929)
–	Plus: cash and cash equivalents – beginning of year	14a	5,225	6,154
(8,059)	Cash and cash equivalents – end of the year	14a	6,164	5,225
Additional Information:				
–	plus: Investments on hand – end of year	6(b)	52,834	48,324
(8,059)	Total cash, cash equivalents and investments		58,998	53,549

The above Statement of Cash Flows should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Independent Auditor's Reports (Auditor General)



INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

Report on the special purpose financial statements

Muswellbrook Shire Council

To the Councillors of the Muswellbrook Shire Council

Opinion

I have audited the accompanying special purpose financial statements (the financial statements) of Muswellbrook Shire Council's (the Council) declared business activities, which comprise the Income Statement of each declared business activity for the year ended 30 June 2019, the Statement of Financial Position of each declared business activity as at 30 June 2019, Note 1 Significant accounting policies for the business activities declared by Council, and the Statement by Councillors and Management.

The declared business activities of the Council are:

- Water supply
- Sewerage
- Commercial buildings.

In my opinion, the financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Council's declared business activities as at 30 June 2019, and its financial performance for the year then ended, in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards described in Note 1 and the Local Government Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting – update number 27 (LG Code).

My opinion should be read in conjunction with the rest of this report.

Basis for Opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under the standards are described in the 'Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements' section of my report.

I am independent of the Council in accordance with the requirements of the:

- Australian Auditing Standards
- Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 'Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants' (APES 110).

I have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with APES 110.

Parliament promotes independence by ensuring the Auditor-General and the Audit Office of New South Wales are not compromised in their roles by:

- providing that only Parliament, and not the executive government, can remove an Auditor-General
- mandating the Auditor-General as the auditor of councils
- precluding the Auditor-General from providing non-audit services.

I believe the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my audit opinion.

Independent Auditor's Reports (Auditor General)

Emphasis of Matter - Basis of Accounting

Without modifying my opinion, I draw attention to Note 1 to the financial statements which describes the basis of accounting. The financial statements have been prepared for the purpose of fulfilling the Council's financial reporting responsibilities under the LG Code. As a result, the financial statements may not be suitable for another purpose.

Other Information

The Council's annual report for the year ended 30 June 2019 includes other information in addition to the financial statements and my Independent Auditor's Report thereon. The Councillors are responsible for the other information. At the date of this Independent Auditor's Report, the other information I have received comprise the general purpose financial statements and Special Schedules (the Schedules).

My opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information. Accordingly, I do not express any form of assurance conclusion on the other information. However, as required by the *Local Government Act 1993*, I have separately expressed an opinion on the general purpose financial statements and Special Schedule 'Permissible income for general rates'.

In connection with my audit of the financial statements, my responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or my knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude there is a material misstatement of the other information, I must report that fact.

I have nothing to report in this regard.

The Councillors' Responsibilities for the Financial Statements

The Councillors are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements and for determining that the accounting policies, described in Note 1 to the financial statements, are appropriate to meet the requirements in the LG Code. The Councillors' responsibility also includes such internal control as the Councillors determine is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Councillors are responsible for assessing the Council's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting, unless it is not appropriate to do so.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

My objectives are to:

- obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error
- issue an Independent Auditor's Report including my opinion.

Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but does not guarantee an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect material misstatements. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error. Misstatements are considered material if, individually or in aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions users take based on the financial statements.

A description of my responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located at the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board website at: www.auasb.gov.au/auditors_responsibilities/ar4.pdf. The description forms part of my auditor's report.

Independent Auditor's Reports (Auditor General)

My opinion does not provide assurance:

- that the Council carried out its activities effectively, efficiently and economically
- about the security and controls over the electronic publication of the audited financial statements on any website where they may be presented
- about any other information which may have been hyperlinked to/from the financial statements.



Furqan Yousuf

Delegate of the Auditor-General for New South Wales

29 October 2019
SYDNEY



Cr Martin Rush
Mayor
Muswellbrook Shire Council
PO Box 152
MUSWELLBROOK NSW 2333

Contact: Furqan Yousuf
Phone no: 02 9275 7470
Our ref: D1925286/1756

29 October 2019

Dear Mayor

**Report on the Conduct of the Audit
for the year ended 30 June 2019
Muswellbrook Shire Council**

I have audited the general purpose financial statements (GPFS) of the Muswellbrook Shire Council (the Council) for the year ended 30 June 2019 as required by section 415 of the *Local Government Act 1993* (the Act).

I expressed an unmodified opinion on the Council's GPFS.

This Report on the Conduct of the Audit (the Report) for the Council for the year ended 30 June 2019 is issued in accordance with section 417 of the Act. This Report should be read in conjunction with my audit opinion on the GPFS issued under section 417(2) of the Act.

INCOME STATEMENT

Operating result

	2019 \$m	2018 \$m	Variance %
Rates and annual charges revenue	22.8	22.6	0.9
Grants and contributions revenue	20.6	22.6	8.8
Operating result for the year	17.2	22.0	21.8
Net operating result before capital grants and contributions	3.4	6.8	50.0

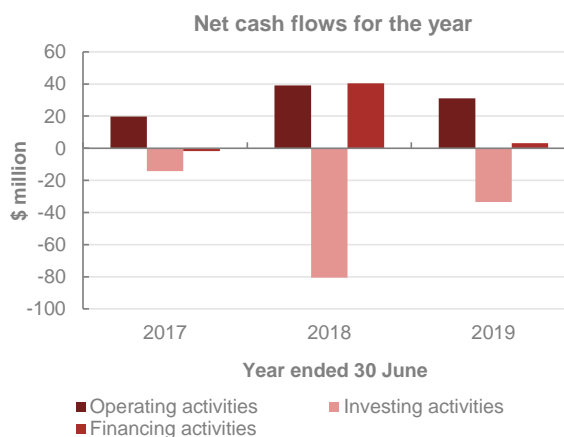
The Council's net operating result before capital grants and contributions was a surplus of \$3.4 million, which was \$3.4 million lower than the 2017–18 net operating result. This was mainly due to a decrease in total income and increase in total expenses from continuing operations for 2018–19.

The operating result for the year was a surplus of \$17.2 million, which was \$4.8 million lower than the 2017–18 operating result. The decrease is mainly attributable to:

- decrease in grants and contributions revenue by \$2.1 million relating to specific purpose grants
- increase in depreciation expense by \$1.6 million mainly relating to specialised buildings
- increase in materials and contracts expense by \$1.6 million relating to increased spending on raw materials, consumables and other legal costs.

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

- The Council's cash and cash equivalents was \$6.2 million (\$5.2 million for the year ended 30 June 2018). There was net increase in cash and cash equivalents of \$1.0 million at 30 June 2019.
- The Council has reported net cash inflows from its operating activities over the past three years. The decrease in operating cash inflows in 2018–19 is mainly due to a decrease in grants and contributions revenue and an increase in total operating expenses.
- Net cash outflows from the investing activities decreased by \$47.1 million compared to prior year. This was mainly due to purchase of investment property in 2017–18.
- Net cash outflows from the financing activities represent the proceeds from borrowings of \$7.0 million and repayments of borrowings of \$3.8 million.



FINANCIAL POSITION

Cash and investments

Cash and investments	2019	2018	Commentary
	\$m	\$m	
External restrictions	36.9	33.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Externally restricted cash and investments are restricted in their use by externally imposed requirements. Council's externally restricted cash and investments have increased by \$3.7 million primarily due to an increase in available cash balance relating to Road Network Efficiency projects. Internally restricted cash and investments have been restricted in their use by resolution or policy of Council to reflect identified programs of works and any forward plans identified by Council. The increase in the internal restrictions of \$1.7 million is mainly due to newly restricted funds for Carryover Works, SRV Reserve and Road Reserve. The Council's unrestricted cash balance of \$0.7 million at 30 June 2019 is available to provide liquidity for day-to-day operations of the Council.
Internal restrictions	21.3	19.6	
Unrestricted	0.7	0.8	
Cash and investments	58.9	53.6	

Debt

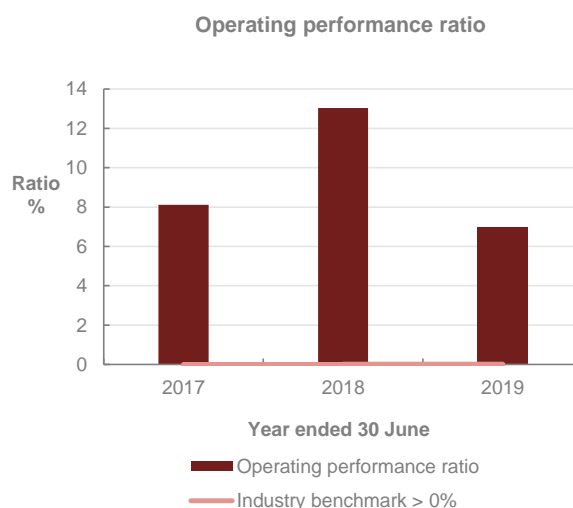
The Council has \$69.4 million of borrowings as at 30 June 2019 (2018: \$66.3 million)

The Council has an accumulated drawdown facility limit of \$750,000 as at 30 June 2019 (2018: \$750,000) of which remained unutilised at the year-end.

PERFORMANCE

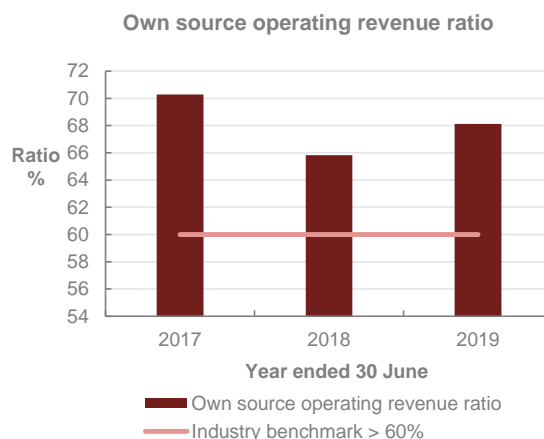
Operating performance ratio

- The 'operating performance ratio' measures how well council contained operating expenditure within operating revenue (excluding capital grants and contributions, fair value adjustments, and reversal of revaluation decrements). The benchmark set by the former Office of Local Government (OLG) is greater than zero per cent.
- The Council achieved the OLG benchmark for operating performance ratio for the past three years.
- The deterioration in operating performance ratio compared to the prior year is mainly due to an increase in Councils operating expenses.



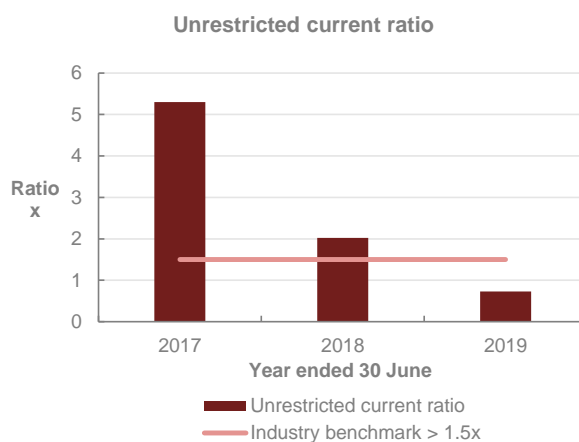
Own source operating revenue ratio

- The 'own source operating revenue ratio' measures council's fiscal flexibility and the degree to which it relies on external funding sources such as operating grants and contributions. The benchmark set by the former OLG is greater than 60 per cent.
- The Council's own source operating revenue ratio of 68.1% is above the industry benchmark of 60%. This indicates that the Council has a diversified source of income and does not have an overly strong reliance on operating grants and contributions.
- The improvement in own source revenue ratio was mainly due to a reduction in revenue from grants and contributions.



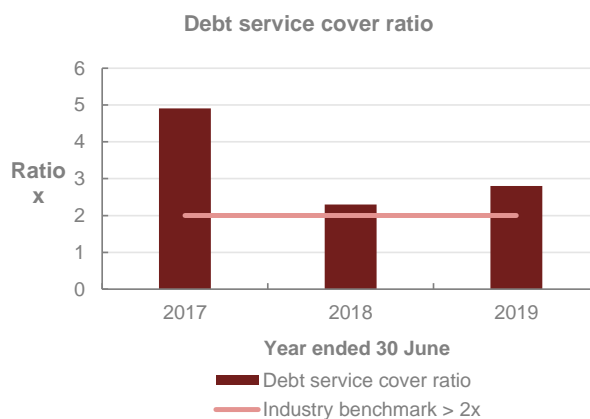
Unrestricted current ratio

- The 'unrestricted current ratio' is specific to local government and represents council's ability to meet its short-term obligations as they fall due. The benchmark set by the former OLG is greater than 1.5 times.
- The Council's liquidity ratio of 0.7 is below the industry benchmark minimum of greater than 1.5 times. This indicates that the Council may not have sufficient liquidity to meet its current liabilities as and when they fall due.
- The Council's unrestricted current ratio has deteriorated from prior year mainly due to the maturity of bank loans.



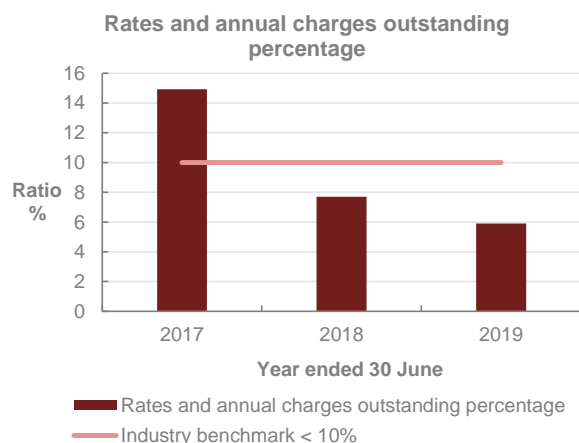
Debt service cover ratio

- The 'debt service cover ratio' measures the operating cash to service debt including interest, principal and lease payments. The benchmark set by the former OLG is greater than two times.
- The Council's debt service cover ratio of 2.8 times is above the industry benchmark of greater than 2 times.
- The increase in the ratio in the current year was due to the reduction in principal repayments on bank loans.



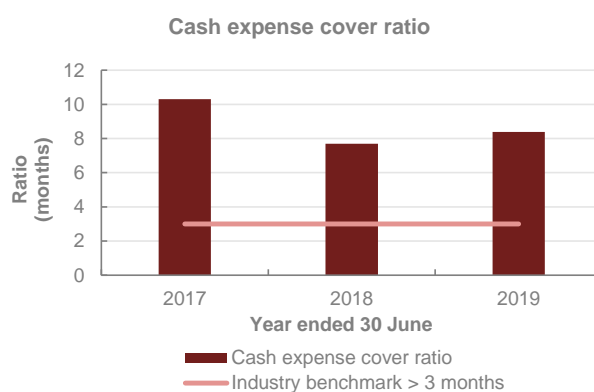
Rates and annual charges outstanding percentage

- The 'rates and annual charges outstanding percentage' assesses the impact of uncollected rates and annual charges on council's liquidity and the adequacy of debt recovery efforts. The benchmark set by the former OLG is less than 10 per cent for regional councils.
- The Council's rates and annual charges outstanding percentage of 5.9% is within the benchmark of less than 10% for regional councils.
- Over the past two years, the Council's collection procedures have operated effectively to collect more than 90 per cent of the rates and annual charges revenue within the receivable due dates.



Cash expense cover ratio

- This liquidity ratio indicates the number of months the council can continue paying for its immediate expenses without additional cash inflow. The benchmark set by the former OLG is greater than three months.
- The Council's cash expense cover ratio was 8.4 months, which is above the industry benchmark of greater than 3 months. This indicates that the Council had the capacity to cover 8.4 months of operating cash expenditure without additional cash inflows at 30 June 2019.
- The cash expense cover ratio increased compared with prior year due to maturing term deposits.



Infrastructure, property, plant and equipment renewals

The Council has renewed (excluding capital works in progress) \$10.0 million of assets in 2018–19 financial year, compared to \$10.8 million (excluding capital works in progress and tip assets) of assets in the prior year.

OTHER MATTERS

New accounting standards implemented

Application period	Overview
AASB 9 'Financial Instruments' and revised AASB 7 'Financial Instruments: Disclosures'	
For the year ended 30 June 2019	<p>AASB 9 replaces AASB 139 'Financial Instruments: Recognition and Measurement' and changes the way financial instruments are treated for financial reporting.</p> <p>Key changes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a simplified model for classifying and measuring financial assets • a new method for calculating impairment • a new type of hedge accounting that more closely aligns with risk management. <p>The revised AASB 7 includes new disclosures as a result of AASB 9.</p> <p>Council's disclosure of the impact of adopting AASB 9 is disclosed in Note 13.</p>

Legislative compliance

My audit procedures did not identify any instances of non-compliance with legislative requirements or a material deficiency in the Council's accounting records or financial statements. The Council's:

- accounting records were maintained in a manner and form to allow the GPFS to be prepared and effectively audited
- staff provided all accounting records and information relevant to the audit.

The Council's:

- accounting records were maintained in a manner and form that facilitated the preparation and the effective audit of the general purpose financial statements.
- staff provided all accounting records and information relevant for the audit.



Furqan Yousuf
Delegate of the Auditor-General for New South Wales

cc: Ms Fiona Plesman, General Manager
Mr Jim Betts, Secretary of the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment



Two Rivers Winery, Denman

Statutory Report

Under the Local Government Act 1993 ("the Act") and other legislation, Council is required to provide a range of information to the community. The information contained in this section of Council's Annual Report supplements information provided elsewhere in the report to provide additional transparency in our reporting and our operations more broadly.

Council's general reporting requirements are set out in section 428 of the Act and Clause 217(1) of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 ("the Regulation").

To access copies of the Act and Regulation visit: www.legislation.nsw.gov.au.

Councillors' expenses

The following allowances, fees and expenses have been provided to Councillors during the 2018/19 period and are detailed hereunder in accordance with the Regulation:

Mayoral Allowance	\$25,880
Councillors Fees	\$142,319
Councillors Expenses	
Office Equipment	\$0
Telephone Calls	\$6,029
Conference & Seminars	\$5,357
Training & skills development	\$0
Interstate Visits	\$0
Overseas Visits	\$5,334
Spouse/Partner Expenses	\$0
Transport	\$13,776
Catering	\$3,512
Child Care	\$2,137
Councillor Expenses sub-total	\$36,145
TOTAL	\$204,344

Interstate and overseas travel

A total of \$5,334 was expended for interstate and overseas travel in 2018/19 for the purposes of assessing the viability of extending the life of coal fired power stations through the use of biofuels and carbon capture and storage technologies, innovation and economic development.

Legal expenses

Legal expenses for the 2018/19 comprised of the following.

Item	Expense
Planning and Development	\$4,949
Debt Recovery	\$223,400
Other	\$1,171,604
Total	\$1,399,953

Works carried out on private land

Private work rates are detailed in Council's Fees and Charges, which is available on Council's website. Members of the public requesting private works to be undertaken by Council are charged at those advertised rates.

Council did not resolve to carry out work on private land that was fully or partly subsidised by the Council.

Contributions granted under section 356 of the Local Government Act 1993

During the year 2018/19, Council made contributions, under section 356 of the Act in the total amount of \$79,000

Organisations receiving contributions of \$1,000 or more were:

Cancer Council NSW	\$2,000
United Hospital Auxiliaries of NSW (Muswellbrook Branch)	\$4,000
Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce	\$1,000
Muswellbrook Christmas Spectacular	\$6,000
Muswellbrook & District Camera Club	\$1,023
Muswellbrook Race Club	\$55,000
Rotary Club of Muswellbrook	\$1,200
Upper Hunter Conservatorium of Music	\$5,454
Muswellbrook and Upper Hunter Eisteddfod	\$2,000

Exercise of Council functions by external bodies

The following organisations exercised functions delegated by Council during the 2018/19 year:

Organisation	Function
Upper Hunter Weeds Authority	Control of noxious weeds
Upper Hunter Regional Library Network	Library service
Denman Sports Council Management Committee	Control and operate the Denman Indoor Sports Centre
Senior Citizens and Community Centre Management Committee	Control and operate the Muswellbrook Senior Citizens Centre

Corporations, partnerships, trusts, joint ventures, syndicates and other bodies

Council is a partner with other Hunter Region councils in the Strategic Services Australia Ltd joint venture, which has been established to improve the quality and efficiency of local government services throughout the Hunter Region. The activities of the joint venture are not controlled by any one council. Strategic Services Australia Ltd provides a purpose built training facility, negotiates bulk purchasing arrangements and provides legal services for member councils.

Council is a member of the Upper Hunter Weeds Authority Council ("the County Council"), a body corporate established under the Local Government Act 1993 for the control of noxious weeds. Council is one of three constituent council members and does not control the County Council.

The level of Council's financial interest and benefit in relation to Strategic Services Australia Ltd and the Upper Hunter Weed Authority Council is outlined in Note 15 of Council's 2018/19 Financial Statements.

Council has no interest in any other corporation, partnership, trust, joint venture or syndicate

Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan

Section 345 of the Local Government Act details the requirements for Councils Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Management Plan. Council is currently reviewing our EEO Management Plan for the next period. As indicated in the key facts on the profile of our community, Muswellbrook is becoming an increasingly younger community, with children aged 0–14 now making up 22.4% of the population. To increase our commitment to the community and youth, Council will continue to provide opportunities to youth through work experience, tertiary and vocational education programs.

The appointment of Fiona Plesman as General Manager, the first woman to occupy the role and the appointment of key woman to positions of leadership within council reflects a commitment to gender diversity and female empowerment and participation in the decision making process. Council will continue to foster and encourage the participation of women in Local Government by reducing any identified barriers and encouraging female employees to develop their careers and move into senior positions.

Senior staff and remuneration package for senior staff

In accordance with the definitions outlined in Section 332 and 334 of the Local Government Act 1993, during the year 2018/19, Council has two (2) senior staff with a total remuneration package of \$399,637.

This includes the salary component, performance payments in addition to superannuation, including employer's contribution and salary sacrifice contributions, non- cash benefits including motor vehicles, and the fringe benefits tax associated with the non-cash benefits.

Awarded contracts

Following are details of each contract awarded by Council during the year 2018/2019 excluding:

- *Employment contracts (that is, contracts of service but not contracts for services); and*
- *Contracts for less than \$150,000 or such other amount as may be prescribed by the regulations.*

Contractor	Purpose	Value
KCE PTY LTD	Thomas Mitchell Drive Muswellbrook Upgrade – Stage 4	\$919,973.08
TCM CIVIL PTY LTD	Design and Construction of SPS5 Rising Main	\$574,385.00
Panel of Eight (8) Contractors	Provision of Water and Sewer Construction Service	Schedule of rates
GCM Enviro P/L/Liebher	Supply and Delivery of a 32T Landfill Compactor	\$804,465.00
Panel of Twelve (12) Contractors	Panel Contract for Electrical, Mechanical and other relevant services	Schedule of rates
Panel of contractors, Regional Procurement contractors and Council's Works Staff	Bylong Valley Way – Widden Rd Intersection Improvements	\$718,482.00
	Renewal of Reservoir No. 5 – Muswellbrook	\$1,100,000.00
Panel of Six (6) Contractors	Provision of Legal Services	Schedule of rates
Strike Force Services Pty Ltd	Provision of Cleaning Services for Council Buildings and Public Toilets	\$231,287.16
Bitzios Consulting	Mine Affected Roads Network Plan Improvement Strategy and Developer Contributions Plan – Review	\$298,750.00
Panel of contractors, Regional Procurement contractors and Councils Works Staff	Rehabilitation of Hebden Road	\$358,444.00
Stefanutti Construction P/L	Upgrade of Wybong Road	\$1,277,907.40

Companion Animals Act and Regulation

Council is required to provide a detailed statement in accordance with the Guideline on the Exercise of Functions under the Companion Animals Act and the regulations under that Act.

Lodgement of animal impoundment data collection returns with the Office of Local Government	Council lodged all animal impoundment data with the Office of Local Government at the end of 2018/19 through the NSW Government's Companion Animals Registry database.
Lodgement of data about dog attacks with the Office of Local Government	Details of each dog attack incidents were recorded in the NSW Government's Companion Animals Registry database.
Cost of Council's companion animal management and activities	\$107,605.00
Companion animal community education programs carried out and strategies Council has in place to promote and assist the desexing of dogs and cats	Council promoted and offered assistance to de-sex cats and dogs as part of a community campaign during National De-sexing Month in July, with particular focus on parts of the Shire where pet ownership is highest.
Council's strategies for complying with the requirement under section 64 of the Act to seek alternatives to euthanasia for unclaimed animals	Council partners extensively with over thirty rescue agencies and has developed a highly successful adoption program. Council also participates in the Pet Rescue website, both of which have resulted in a highly successful adoption program
Off leash areas provided in the council area	Council maintains two off leash areas within the Shire: one in Karoola Park, Muswellbrook and the other in Arbour Park, Denman.

	Dogs	Cats
Incoming	311	285
Released to owner	76	10
Sold/Adopted	71	29
Rescue	123	159
Euthanised	48	87

Stormwater Management Services

In 2018/2019, Council in accordance with section 496A of the Act, levies an annual charge for the provision of stormwater management services for each parcel of rateable land for which the service is available. Stormwater Management Services were charged at the following rates;

Residential property		\$25.00
Residential strata unit		\$12.50
Non-residential impervious land	0 – 1199sqm	\$25.00
	1200 – 4999sqm	\$100.00
	5000 – 9999sqm	\$375.00
	> 10,000sqm	\$725.00

The funds raised from the levy were spent exclusively on stormwater and related infrastructure. In 2018/19 the transactions that occurred in relation to the funding are outlined below;

Opening balance (funds unspent from previous allocation)	\$594,000
Funds raised	\$156,000
Allocation spend	\$0
Available to spend	\$750,000

The remaining balance has been carried over to 2018/2019 and will be used to fund future projects.

Rates & Charges Written Off

In 2018/19, Council resolved to abandon 237 small debts totalling \$26,765.90. The bulk of these write offs were approved as the cost of pursuing the unpaid charges exceeded the maximum amount recoverable. Nine debts were written off in recognition of situations of financial hardship, bankruptcy or personal circumstances where it would be inappropriate to pursue.

Code of Conduct

Council adopted the new Model Code of Conduct in February 2019. No Code of Conduct complaints concerning councillors were made for the year 2018/2019.

Public Interest Disclosures

Council is committed to the objectives of the Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994 (the PID Act) and encourages the reporting of any allegations of suspected wrongdoing, including instances of corrupt conduct, maladministration, serious and substantial waste and government information contravention. Council has in place a framework to support staff who report suspected wrongdoing.

For the reporting period ending 30 June 2019, Muswellbrook Shire Council received no disclosures made under the PID Act.

Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009

In accordance with the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 the following Annual Report of statistics relating to applications for information is provided:

Clause 7A: Details of the review carried out by the agency under section 7 (3) of the Act during the reporting year and the details of any information made publicly available by the agency as a result of the review

Reviews carried out by the agency	Nil
Information made publicly available by the agency	Nil

Clause 7B: The total number of access applications received by the agency during the reporting year (including withdrawn applications but not including invalid applications)

Total number of applications received	4
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Clause 7C: The total number of access applications received by the agency during the reporting year that the agency refused either wholly or partly, because the application was for the disclosure of information referred to in Schedule 1 to the Act (information for which there is conclusive presumption of overriding public interest against disclosure).

The following tables (A-I) relate to formal applications for information made under the *Government Information Act (Public Access) Act 2009*.

Table A: Number of applications by type of applicant and outcome*

	Access Granted in Full	Access Granted in Part	Access Refused in Full	Information not Held	Information Already Available	Refuse to Deal with Application	Refuse to Confirm/Deny whether information is held	Application Withdrawn	Total	% of Total
Media	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	25%
Members of Parliament	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Private sector business	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	25%
Not for profit organisations or community groups	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Members of the public (by legal representative)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	25%
Members of the public (other)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	25%
Total	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	
% of Total	25%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	25%		

* More than one decision can be made in respect of a particular access application. If so, a recording must be made in relation to each such decision. This also applies to Table B.

Table B: Number of applications by type of application and outcome*

	Access Granted in Full	Access Granted in Part	Access Refused in Full	Information not Held	Information Already Available	Refuse to Deal with Application	Refuse to Confirm/Deny whether information is held	Application Withdrawn	Total	% of Total
Personal information applications*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Access applications (other than personal information applications)	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	100%
Access applications that are partly personal information applications and partly other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Total	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	
% of Total	25%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	25%		

* A personal information application is an access application for personal information (as defined in clause 4 of Schedule 4 to the Act) about the applicant (the applicant being an individual).

Table C: Invalid applications

Reason for invalidity	No of applications	% of Total
Application does not comply with formal requirements (section 41 of the Act)	0	0%
Application is for excluded information of the agency (section 43 of the Act)	0	0%
Total number of invalid applications received	0	0%
Invalid applications that subsequently became valid applications	0	
Total	0	

Table D: Conclusive presumption of overriding public interest against disclosure: matters listed in Schedule 1 of Act

	Number of times consideration used*	% of Total
Overriding secrecy laws	0	0%
Executive Council information	0	0%
Contempt	0	0%
Legal professional privilege	0	0%
Excluded information	0	0%
Documents affecting law enforcement and public safety	0	0%
Transport safety	0	0%
Adoption	0	0%
Care and protection of children	0	0%
Ministerial code of conduct	0	0%
Aboriginal and environmental heritage	0	0%
Total	0	

*More than one public interest consideration may apply in relation to a particular access application and if so, each such consideration is to be recorded (but only once per application). This also applies in relation to Table E

Table E: Other public interest considerations against disclosure: matters listed in table to section 14 of Act

	Number of times consideration used*	% of Total
Responsible and effective government	0	0%
Law enforcement and security	0	0%
Individual rights, judicial processes and natural justice	0	0%
Business interests of agencies and other persons	0	0%
Environment, culture, economy and general matters	0	0%
Secrecy provisions	0	0%
Exempt documents under interstate Freedom of Information legislation	0	0%
Total	0	

Table F: Timeliness

	Number of applications*	% of Total
Decided within the statutory timeframe (20 days plus any extensions)	2	66%
Decided after 35 days (by agreement with applicant)	0	0%
Not decided within time (deemed refusal)	1	33%
Total	3	

**Table G: Number of applications reviewed under Part 5 of the Act
(by type of review and outcome)**

	Decision varied	Decision upheld	Total	% of Total
Internal review	0	0	0	0%
Review by Information Commissioner*	1	0	1	50%
Internal review following recommendation under section 93 of Act	1	0	1	50%
Review by NCAT	0	0	0	0%
Total	1	0	1	
% of Total	100%	0%		

*The Information Commissioner does not have the authority to vary decisions, but can make recommendations to the original decision-maker. The data in this case indicates that a recommendation to vary or uphold the original decision has been made by the Information Commissioner.

**Table H: Applications for review under Part 5 of the Act
(by type of applicant)**

	Number of applications for review	% of Total
Applications by access applicants	1	100%
Applications by persons to whom information the subject of access application relates (see section 54 of the Act)	0	0%
Total	1	

Table I: Applications transferred to other agencies.

	Number of applications transferred	% of Total
Agency-Initiated Transfers	0	0%
Applicant - Initiated Transfers	0	0%
Total	0	



Netball at Karoola Park

Capital Works projects

Work continued on the development of the following projects, for which Council has prepared Capital Expenditure Reviews. These have each been reviewed by the Office of Local Government.

Project	Status
Muswellbrook Regional Entertainment and Convention Centre	Endorsement of capital expenditure review Concept designs progressed
Muswellbrook Aquatic Centre Upgrade	Endorsement of capital expenditure review Concept designs progressed
Olympic Park Master Plan Implementation	Endorsement of capital expenditure review Concept designs progressed

Planning Agreements

Pursuant to section 7.5(5) of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, the following table details compliance with planning agreements to which Council is a party. It is noted that each of the agreements were complied with in full.

Planning Agreement	Project	Expenditure 2017/18
Hunter Valley Energy Coal Pty Ltd	Muswellbrook Race Club Expansion	\$400,000.00
	Performance Centre	\$434,000.00
	Town Education Campus Stage 2	\$153,000.00
	Aquatic Centre	\$480,000.00
	Resources for Regions VI	\$598,000.000
Begalla Mining Company Ltd	Tertiary Education Centre Stage 2	\$1,100,000.00
Liddell Coal Operations Pty Ltd	Tailings to topsoil research project	\$300,000.00
Mangoola Coal Operations Pty Ltd	Denman Hall	\$500,000.00
	Denman Business Precinct	\$300,000.00
Muswellbrook Coal Company Limited	Animal Shelter land acquisition	\$410,000.00
	Aquatic Centre	\$1,000,000.00
MACH Energy Australia Pty Ltd		\$0.00

Private swimming pool inspections

Pursuant to section 22F(2) of the *Swimming Pools Act 1992* and Regulation, the following table provides details of inspections of private swimming pools undertaken by Council:

Inspections of tourist and visitor accommodation	7
Inspections of premises on which there are more than two dwellings	5
Compliance Certificates issued	131
Non-Compliance Certificates issued	2



Disability & Social Inclusion Strategy

In May 2017 Muswellbrook Shire Council adopted a Disability and Social Inclusion Strategy. This strategy requires a continued focus on policies and actions that promote social inclusion and participation in Muswellbrook Shire. This includes the delivery of existing employment, community events and activities that provide improved liveability, services and facilities that support people of all abilities, families and older residents as they move towards retirement.

Most residents in our Shire are engaged, feel a sense of pride in their communities and feel safe and secure in their homes. However, there are still a number of people who have indicated that they are seeking more. Youth services and facilities and services for older people along with a desire for support for local communities are areas of priority.


Residents from across the Shire and our visitors already have access to a wide range of community, government agency and Council services appropriate to their age and needs.


Council also works with health, welfare and educational organisation from the government and non-government sector to improve outcomes for individuals and our community. This occurs through liaison, advisory support, assistance with the use of Council premises and provision for opportunities for networking.

The Disability Inclusion Strategies, plans and actions in Muswellbrook Shire are monitored by an internal access audit committee, which meets as required. This committee focuses on ensuring that all community service requests that involve issues of physical and digital access for people with disabilities are prioritised. The committee's terms of reference focus on;

- *Adapting existing services to ensure that they meet the needs of people with disabilities*
- *Ensuring that physical access to public buildings and facilities is improved*
- *Providing information to our community that is in formats which meet the communication requirements of people with disabilities*
- *Delivering training to staff as required to ensure that advice and services are relevant to the needs of people with disabilities*
- *Partnering with other service providers to support the participation of people with disabilities in civic activities and public spaces that are appropriate.*



 (02) 6549 3700

 (02) 6549 3701

 council@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au

 muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au

 157 Maitland Street Muswellbrook 2333

 PO Box 122 Muswellbrook 2333



[muswellbrook shire council](#)

ABN 86 864 180 944



muswellbrook
shire council