

ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20



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**

CONTENTS

Our Annual Report	02
Highlights And Challenges	04
Muswellbrook At A Glance	06
Council At A Glance	08

AN OVERVIEW

What We Want	10
Our Shire	13
<i>Muswellbrook Snapshot</i>	14
<i>Outputs by Industry/Jobs Comparison Unit</i>	16
<i>Building Economic Resilience</i>	18
<i>Tourism</i>	20
2018/2019 Awards and Recognition	22
The Year in Review- Transforming Our Shire	24
Mayor's Message	27
General Manager's Message	29

COMMUNITY

Engaging Our Community	30
Supporting Businesses and Other Stakeholders	31
Sustainability Engagement	35
Events	38

PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

How we plan	42
Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework	43
Muswellbrook Shire Council Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027	44
Meeting the Goals of Our 2017-2021 Delivery Program	46
Strategic Directions Reporting Tables	47
<i>01. Economic Prosperity</i>	<i>48</i>
<i>02. Social Equity & Inclusion</i>	<i>54</i>
<i>03. Environmental Sustainability</i>	<i>60</i>
<i>04. Cultural Vitality</i>	<i>64</i>
<i>05. Community Infrastructure</i>	<i>68</i>

OUR ORGANISATION

Organisational Chart	78
The Leadership Team	80
Organisation's Employment Status	82
SPIRIT Values	83
Work Health and Safety	84

GOVERNANCE

Councillors	86
Democratic Governance	89
Corporate Governance	91
Fraud Control	93

FINANCIALS

Fit for the Future Improvement Plan	94
Where does our money come from & how is it spent?	97
Council Expenses	98
Understanding Council Finance	99
Primary Financial Statements	107

STATUTORY INFORMATION

Statutory Report	118
Disability & Social Inclusion Strategy	119

Cover Image:

Front to back, Carmel
Fackender with Dot Jackson
and Rhonda Wright at
St.Vincent's de Paul's
Muswellbrook

Graphic design:

Nicola X Cuppaidge
Hunter Valley Printing



Envirocare
100%
Recycled Paper

Presenting Muswellbrook Shire Council's 2019/20 Annual Report

Our annual report provides a snapshot of the Muswellbrook 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 2019/20;*
- *information prescribed by the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005, including a detailed progress report on our Delivery Program and Operational Plan.*

Council's 2019/20 Annual Report demonstrates our commitment to the Muswellbrook Shire Council Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027 (CSP 2017-2027 page XX), 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 outlined 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:

- 1. Economic Prosperity**
- 2. Social Equity and Inclusion**
- 3. Environmental Sustainability**
- 4. Cultural Vitality**
- 5. Community Infrastructure**
- 6. 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. (page XX). 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 XX 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



University of Newcastle students organised the Blue Heeler Festival Event (background) and Una Rey from UoN and Mayor Rush (insert)

Highlights & Challenges 2019/20

Council has made significant progress towards the realisation of the Community's interests and aspirations in 2019/20. Some of the highlights included:

Economic Prosperity

- ✓ Council lead a Hunter Joint Organisation delegation to the Latrobe Valley, Victoria in February 2020 to review the progress the Latrobe Valley has made in their economic transition;
- ✓ Council was an active participant on the Hunter Region Economic Transition Steering Committee;

- ✓ Construction works for the Rail Noise Abatement Project were completed in October - the construction of four noise abatement walls along the rail corridor at Brook and William Streets and Simpson Park Muswellbrook was funded by Resources for Region Round 4 (\$1.950M). Council commissioned two Aboriginal artworks which were embossed into the noise wall panels at two locations in Simpson Park;

Social Equity and Inclusion

- ✓ HunterWise Outreach Program at Muswellbrook High School - a targeted school's program for girls focused on the development of technical skills applied to science, technology, engineering and mathematics, featuring mentoring support from the HunterWise network, the Outreach program was delivered to girls at Muswellbrook High School in partnership with Muswellbrook Shire Council, University of Newcastle, Glencore and Hunter Water;
- ✓ Council attended regular meetings regarding the planned closure of Liddell Power Station, which is scheduled for 2022 - Council joined the Just Transition committee and attended regular meetings to prepare for the practical decommissioning and transitioned closure of the power station;

Cultural Vitality

- ✓ Blue Heeler Film Festival delivered under a new partnership with the University of Newcastle, October 2019 - the 7th Blue Heeler Film Festival represented a significant change of direction in delivery following a partnership between Muswellbrook Shire Council and the University of Newcastle. The scholarship program engaged four students and a supervisor from the University to be responsible for the content and curation of the event. The outdoor event was held in the courtyard of the Tertiary Education Centre;
- ✓ Council hosted the Archibald Prize 2019 Regional Tour at the Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre from January until March 2020. Opening night guests included 2019 winner Tony Costa and People's Choice winner, Upper Hunter resident David Darcy;

Environmental Sustainability

- ✓ Council opened the Platypus Walking Trail in December - part of the Muswellbrook Urban Riparian Master Plan, which aims to improve the environmental and recreational value of Muscle Creek, the interactive trail starts at Olympic Park and runs for 190 metres behind the Muswellbrook Aquatic Centre;

Community Infrastructure

- ✓ Council's largest ever infrastructure project, the \$35 million Muswellbrook Recycle Water Treatment Works was commissioned in February 2020;

- ✓ *Grand opening of Denman Memorial Hall was held in August 2019 – a formal reception marked the official opening of the iconic hall rebuilt after being destroyed by fire;*
- ✓ *Stage 1 of Olympic Park Upgrade Commenced - the Olympic Park precinct hosts a variety of facilities including sports fields, tennis courts, bowling club and velodrome. The Master Plan includes field improvements, additional amenities, improved access, new car parking, cycle and pedestrian connections and a regional standard grandstand;*
- ✓ *Muswellbrook Aquatic and Fitness Centre upgrade underway – works include the refurbishment of the historic White Memorial Pool. The 92-year-old outdoor pool was relined, and new surrounds built. Other features of the upgrade include a heated Learn to Swim pool, wet play area, sauna and spa and 24-hour access to the fitness centre;*

Community Leadership

- ✓ *Mine Affected Roads Strategy completed – Council undertook an assessment of the impact of mine related traffic on the local road network and developed a local road network plan to determine an equitable approach to maintaining the road structure of the Shire;*
- ✓ *CBD Parking Strategy completed September 2019 - an important part of Council's preparations to relocate its Administration Centre to Campbell's Corner has been to provide up to eighty (80) additional car parking spaces for staff. Accordingly, Council prepared a CBD Car Parking Strategy which was endorsed by Council on 29 October 2019. This Strategy aims to reduce the impact on existing car parking spaces already available in the CBD.*

As the drought continued to challenge Council, the Shire, our region and NSW more broadly, COVID-19 emerged as the major national and international concern during the latter part of 2019/20.

In response to the ongoing drought across the Shire and the bushfire impacts on the Wollomai National Park and Martindale Council responded in the following way:

- ✓ *introduced level 2 water restrictions in response to a reduction in Glenbawn Dam's capacity to 38%;*
- ✓ *allocated town water to farmers in the upper hunter, which was delivered by truck, free of charge;*
- ✓ *maintained back-up water supply to support the fire-fighting efforts of the National Parks and Wildlife Service;*
- ✓ *attended regular meetings of the State Critical Water Advisory Hunter Drought Taskforce group;*
- ✓ *participated in the Our Shout This Christmas program in support of drought affected farmers and businesses.*

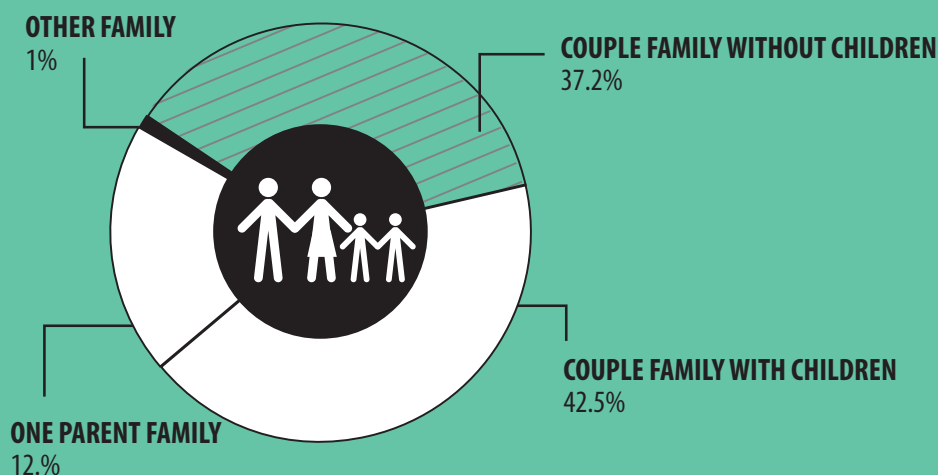
Council has responded to the risks presented by the COVID-19 pandemic by:

- ✓ *enacting Council's Business Continuity Plan (March 2020);*
- ✓ *maintaining essential services such as water, sewerage and garbage collection;*
- ✓ *managing parks, sporting fields, Council-run events and Council owned and operated facilities in compliance with NSW Public Health Orders;*
- ✓ *partnering with local licensed clubs and Hunter Volunteer Centre (HVC), to introduce a food delivery service in support of isolated and vulnerable community members;*
- ✓ *partnering with Muswellbrook Healthy and Well, and Warrior Disability Services to coordinate Muswellbrook Connect social media content and encourage the community to adopt healthy and sustainable habits;*
- ✓ *introducing online meetings of Council.*

Muswellbrook at a Glance

FAMILY COMPOSITION

Source: ABS 2016



Population
16,377

0-4 years	7.63%
5-9 years	7.69%
10-19 years	13.12%
20-29 years	13.24%
30-39 years	13.79%
40-49 years	13.40%
50-59 years	13.31%
60-69 years	9.46%
70-79 years	5.51%
80-89 years	2.39%
90-99 years	0.47%
100 and over	0.00%
Total	100.00%

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

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



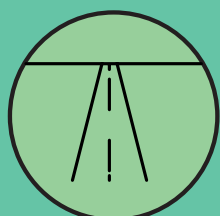
31.1%
UNPAID CHILDCARE



18.1%
VOLUNTEERED



Council at a Glance



**SQUARE METRES
OF ROADS**

**SEALED/
REHABILITATED**

New and Replaced

99,775m²



**MUSWELLBROOK
SHIRE COUNCIL
WEBSITE**

276,940

unique page views

FACEBOOK:

Page likes: 3,316

Followers: 3,798



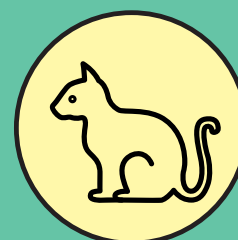
LIBRARY VISITS

Muswellbrook

57,676

Denman

3,505

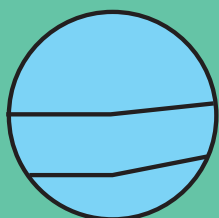


**DOGS & CATS
RESCUED**

161

**DOGS & CATS
returned home**

81



**SQUARE
METRES OF
FOOTPATHS**

**New and
Replaced**

4,053m²

**AQUATIC CENTRE
FACEBOOK**

Followers: 139

Likes: 106

WEBSITE: 3,100

unique page views

LIBRARY LOANS

51,783

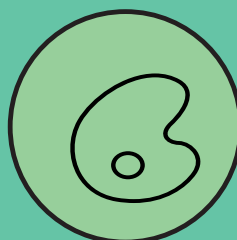
**DOGS & CATS
REGISTERED**

248

**ANIMAL SHELTER
FACEBOOK**

Followers: 7,427

Page likes: 6,883

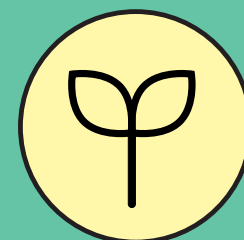


ARTS CENTRE VISITS

4,190

**Muswellbrook Art
Prize Entrants**

553



**NATIONAL TREE
DAY**

**1,500 TREES
PLANTED**

**CLEAN UP
AUSTRALIA DAY**

28.22

**TONNES
WASTE
COLLECTED**

LIBRARY Facebook

Followers: 908

Likes: 901

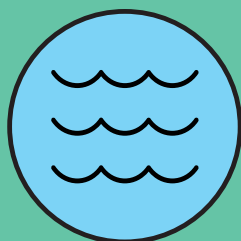
**SUSTAINABLE
FUTURES Facebook**

Followers: 1,200

Likes: 1,155

**Local Art Awards
Entrants**

140

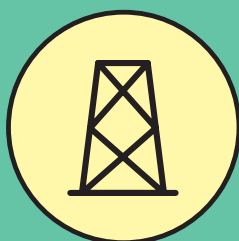


MUSWELLBROOK AQUATIC CENTRE VISITS

52,814

DENMAN AQUATIC CENTRE VISITS

5,886



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%

Water and Waste – 7.3%

Rest of Council – 22.5%

Whole Council – 11.1%

Electricity used by Council	6,188 MWh
Water consumed in Muswellbrook Shire	1,732,966 KL
Water used by Council	216,883 KL
Fuel used by Council Vehicles	299,096.96 L
OCCUPATION CERTIFICATES ISSUED:	
Issued by Council	61
Issued by Private Certifiers	23
Occupatio Certificates issued	TOTAL 84
Issued by Private Certifiers	30
TOTAL	73
Development Applications Lodged	126

Muswellbrook Shire Council Service Requests Lodged	3,363
----------------------------------------------------	-------

Muswellbrook Shire Council Community Events	2 events
---------------------------------------------	----------

Citizenship Ceremonies	3
------------------------	---

New Australian Citizens	56
-------------------------	----



Chemical Collection Day	3,743kg (110 visitors)
-------------------------	------------------------

Waste Disposed of into Landfill	17,694 Tonnes
---------------------------------	---------------

Household Bin Waste Disposed of	3,307 Tonnes
---------------------------------	--------------

Recycling collected	984 Tonnes
---------------------	------------

Organics Processed	1,333 Tonnes
--------------------	--------------

Tonnes of e-Waste Collected	14.6 Tonnes
-----------------------------	-------------

COMMUNITY COMPLAINTS

Odour	5	Erosion Sediment	0
Noise	13	Illegal Dumping	100
Dust	3	Wood Smoke	4

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.





Children learning how to render a straw bale wall at Denman Memorial Hall



Sunrise Denman

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 2019 was 16,377 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 been 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.

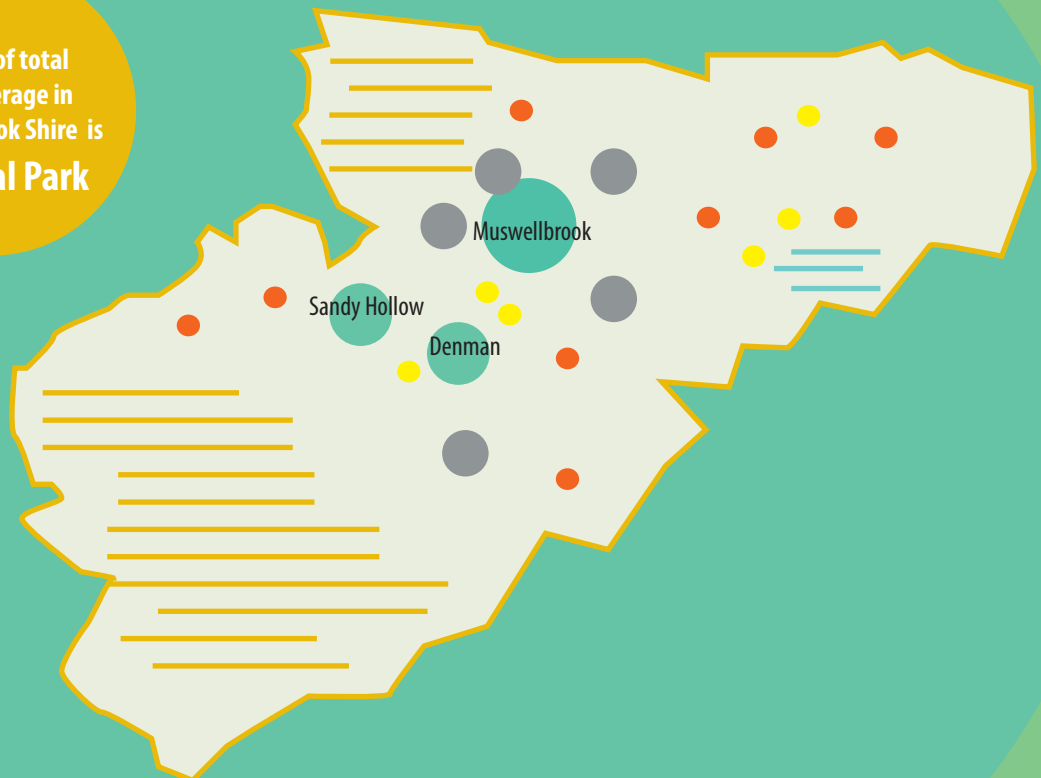
The ratio of men to women hardly changed at all; in 2016 it was 51.3% male and 48.7% female.

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 | Yarrawa |

National Parks

Mines

Equine, Viticulture and Cropping

General Rural

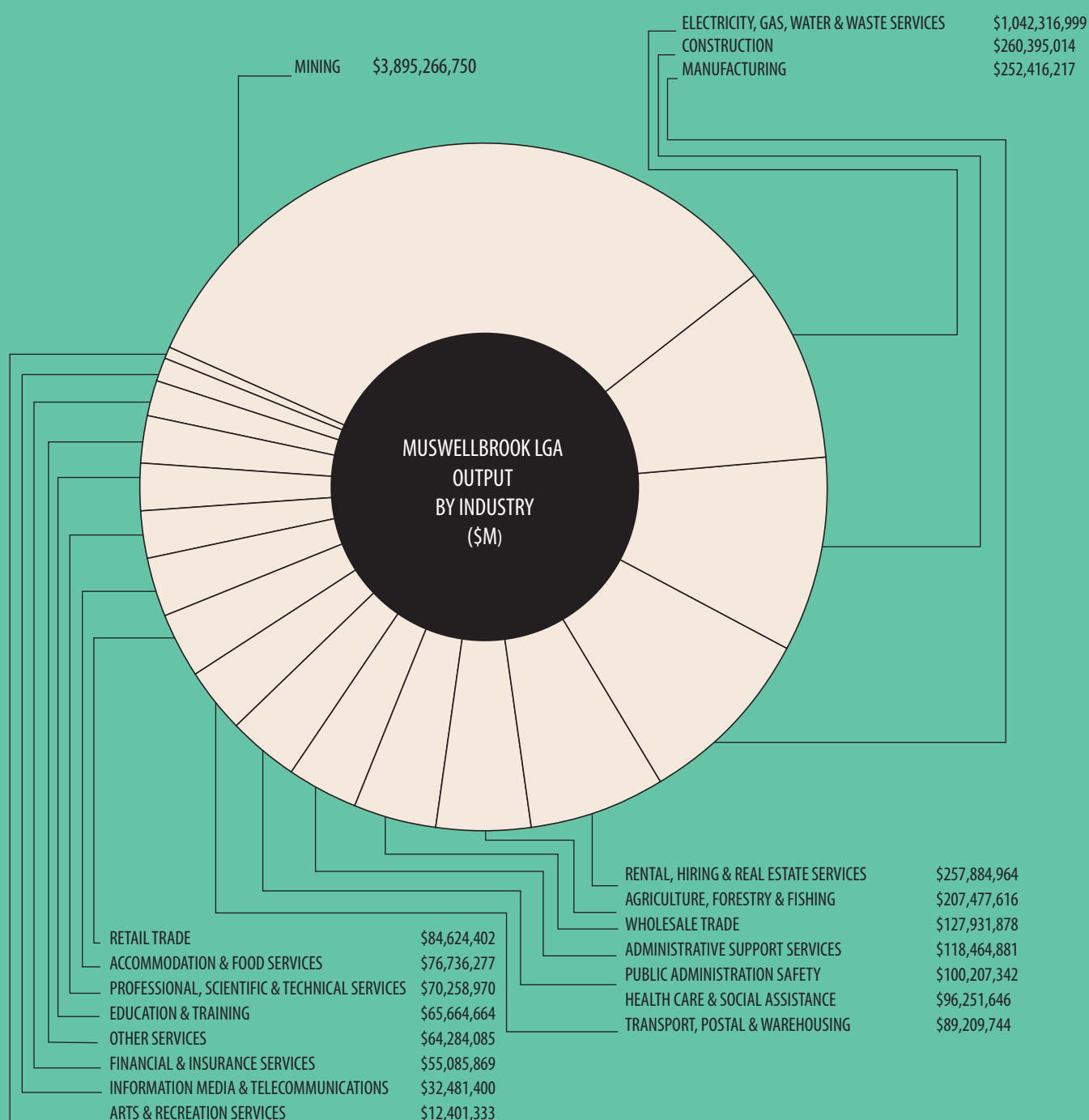
Environment Management

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	\$3,895,266,750	56.38%	3,120	31.15%
Electricity, Gas, Water & Waste Services	\$1,042,316,999	15.09%	887	8.85%
Construction	\$260,395,014	3.77%	515	5.14%
Rental, Hiring & Real Estate Services	\$257,884,964	3.73%	95	0.95%
Manufacturing	\$252,416,217	3.65%	321	3.20%
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	\$207,477,616	3.00%	541	5.40%
Wholesale Trade	\$127,931,878	1.85%	297	2.96%
Administrative & Support Services	\$118,464,881	1.71%	363	3.62%
Public Administration & Safety	\$100,207,342	1.45%	479	4.78%
Health Care & Social Assistance	\$96,251,646	1.39%	694	6.93%
Transport, Postal & Warehousing	\$89,209,744	1.29%	275	2.75%
Retail Trade	\$84,624,402	1.22%	679	6.78%
Accommodation & Food Services	\$76,736,277	1.11%	505	5.04%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	\$70,258,970	1.02%	244	2.44%
Education & Training	\$65,664,664	0.95%	441	4.40%
Other Services	\$64,284,085	0.93%	366	3.65%
Financial & Insurance Services	\$55,085,869	0.80%	70	0.70%
Information Media & Telecommunications	\$32,481,400	0.47%	58	0.58%
Arts & Recreation Services	\$12,401,333	0.18%	67	0.67%
Total	\$6,909,360,049	100.00%	10,017	100%

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 of 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 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.

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 percent 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 \$3,673 million or 74.28% 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.



Thoroughbred Industry

The origins of the Upper Hunter's thoroughbred breeding industry dates back over 150 years and has 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 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.

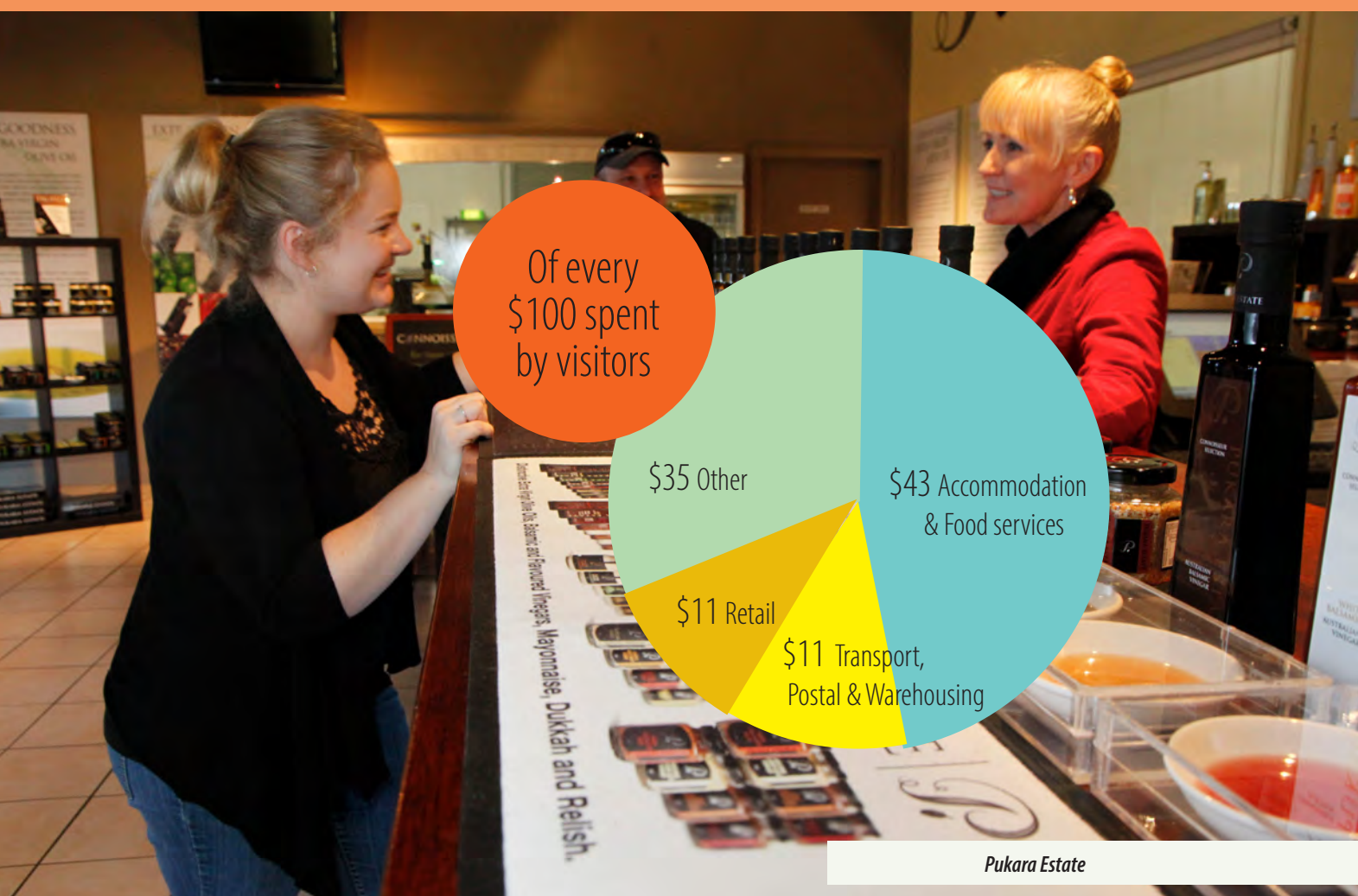
Muswellbrook Tourism

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.

The total value of Tourism related output for Muswellbrook is estimated at \$73.768million, which is 1.1% of total output. The total tourism related employment estimate for the Shire is 364 jobs which represents 3.6% of the total workforce.

Most visitors to the region are from NSW. Similarly, in the previous two years Sydney was the largest source of visitors to the region, followed by regional NSW and Queensland.

For each dollar spent by a tourist in Muswellbrook LGA, it is estimated that typically \$0.43 is spent on Accommodation & Food Services, and \$0.11 on Transport, Postal & Warehousing as well as on Retail Trade.





Art Gallery Exhibition, Aleisha and John at Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre (background) and Art Gallery Director Elissa Emerson (insert)

Muswellbrook Shire Council 2019/20 Staff Excellence Awards



CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Ragu San,

The Networks Team - Sewer –
William Randall, Brad Ellis and Geoff Nebauer

Planning & Building Services Team –
Hamish McTaggart, Alisa Evans, Tanya Jolly, Taraqual Bhuiya,
James Boyce, John Rix, Claire Rozema, Jarryd Beveridge,
Michelle Reichert, Samantha Jones, Chloe Wuiske

CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

Library Team –
Janet Jones, Angelynn Gill, Julie Edwards, Donna Ryan,
Melanie Tytherleigh, Caroline Worth, Lauren Allan

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Kylie Bates

QUALITY

Irene Chetty

TEAMWORK AND COLLABORATION:

Memorial Park Team –
Kathy Palmer, Shane Power, Kylie Gardiner, Steve McGhie,
Roy Newman, Jason Allan, John Camps, Bevan Brown, Alex Loreda,
Luke Franks, Michael Whipps, Peter Ball, Kellie Scholes,
Russell Fitzgerald, Paul Chandler, Matt Lysaught, Graham Chevis



SAFETY

Lyndall Gunning

Mellanie Meadows

GM'S EXCELLENCE AWARD FOR PERFORMANCE

The Finance Team – Lynn Payne, Mandy Fitzgerald, Dale Gilmore, Jenny Hughes, Kylie Bates, Annette Bridge, Rima Eli, Kate Collins, Elita Moss, Ashlee Grainger

Laura Wicks

Michelle Sandell-Hay

COVID-19 AWARD

Alex Loreda

The Year in Review – Transforming Our Shire

Council's grants team were successful in winning additional capital grants funding in 2019/20, which will contribute to the replacement of Williams Bridge, intelligent lighting at Olympic Park, embellishments to Denman Memorial Park Playground, the rehabilitation of Muscle Creek, defibrillators for 15 sports sites, the refurbishment of the White Memorial Pool, the completion of the new Community Conservation, Land Management and Energy Centre, the Sandy Hollow Pocket Park Upgrade and Stage 1 of the Muswellbrook Urban Riparian Landcare Master Plan.

2019/20 has been an action-packed year for Council with some considerable progress in the advancement of many locally significant projects.

Regional Entertainment and Conference Centre (RECC):

- *The detailed design has been finalised and the RECC is progressing towards the development approval process. The design has been informed by broad stakeholder consultation with organisations including the Muswellbrook Amateur Theatre Society (MATS), the Upper Hunter Eisteddfod and local schools.*

Denman Memorial Hall:

- *The newly refurbished Denman Memorial Hall was officially opened on 3 August 2019. Completed on time and on budget, as well as being the first commercial straw bale constructed building in Australia, the Hall has the versatility of being transformed into a dance floor, a theatre, a cinema, an events space, and a reception centre.*

Denman Recreational Vehicle Destination:

- *Denman Tourist Park Master Plan has been adopted by Council.*

Olympic Park Precinct upgrade:

- *Design consultant engaged for detailed design of the grandstand and amenities;*
- *Velodrome fencing contract has been awarded.*

Muswellbrook Aquatic Centre upgrade:

- *Works have commenced on the major upgrade of the Muswellbrook Aquatic Centre.*

Upper Hunter Innovation Precinct Stage 2 (TEC II):

- *A Development Application was awarded at the June Ordinary Meeting of Council. An architect has been engaged to develop the detailed design, and draft construction documentation is being prepared.*

Muswellbrook Urban Riparian Master Plan:

- *Platypus Walking Trail was officially opened in late 2019.*
- *Concept designs for the Hunter Beach Project were finalised in early 2020.*

Rail Noise Abatement Project:

- *Construction of the Muswellbrook Rail Noise Abatement Project, including final landscaping works, was completed in April in partnership with the ARTC.*





Cr Martin Rush

Mayor of Muswellbrook

The 2019/20 financial year has proven to be a most challenging twelve months with the combination of drought, bush fires and the outbreak of COVID-19. And yet, notwithstanding the difficulties experienced globally and across the nation, our community has responded so positively and with such humanity that it is a great source of comfort and inspiration. The Area Health Service should be particularly congratulated for the comprehensive and professional way it has responded to the pandemic in our Region.

Whilst the year has seen the Council's resources and finances experience unanticipated pressures in order to coordinate the Shire's response to the pandemic, the operation of the Council in these trying circumstances over the course of the year has nevertheless continued in a strong and positive direction with a further consolidation of the work of Council and the ongoing delivery of key strategic priorities identified by the community for our Shire.

Despite the very significant downturn in global, national and state economies, the Shire's economy has performed encouragingly well. Our local workforce is disproportionately employed in essential services, particularly the power industry, and the industries most impacted by COVID-19 nationally are not proportionally well represented locally, which means that our local economy is fairing relatively much better than most.

Economic transition remains a key strategic focus of Council with additional investment in job creation initiatives continuing to deliver sustainable employment for the future in ever changing global economic circumstances.

Despite the difficulties of this year Council's financial performance remains an encouraging highpoint, 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 community has demonstrated extraordinary resilience over the past twelve months in response to the continuing drought, bushfire threat and the COVID-19 pandemic. Council staff are committed to working with the Community to overcome these challenges as we continue to progress the Shire as a Regional Centre, secure the development of employment opportunities and build a sustainable economy.

Although COVID-19 restricted movements and gatherings during the final quarter of 2019/20 resulting in the need to cancel our very popular Easter Family Fun Day, Council's events and creative arts program continued to thrive in the 2019/2020 financial year. Council delivered the Blue Heeler Film Festival in late 2019 under a new partnership with the University of Newcastle, and the Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre hosted the 2019 Archibald Prize tour from January to March 2020.

In response to COVID-19 health and safety concerns, the NSW Government announced a decision in June to postpone the NSW local government elections until September 2021. As a result, Council will continue to operate under the current 2017-27 Community Strategic Plan and 2017-2021 Delivery Program for a further year.

I would like to thank Council staff for their hard work in trying times and Councillors for their support and leadership throughout 2019/20. The 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 2019/20 financial year.

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.



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. As an independent civil watchdog, it gives its audience a voice, helps set the agenda in regional communities, provides the most extensive coverage of local, including Council, affairs and supports the community in emergency situations.

Muswellbrook Shire Council enjoys a healthy relationship with local media outlets enabling widespread community consultation on important issues. Whilst many planned events and projects were cancelled following the outbreak of COVID-19 in early 2020, Council collaborated with local media to keep the community informed and updated on changes to council services and facilities that occurred on an almost daily basis during the early stages of the pandemic.

During any prolonged interruption to services or in an emergency situation Muswellbrook Shire Council is dependent on local media, in conjunction with Council's social media outlets and web site, to keep the community informed and updated of the status of a situation. For example, when the onset on COVID-19 necessitated the immediate closure of some Council facilities including the swimming pool and libraries, Council were able to inform the community immediately with the assistance of local media.

Muswellbrook Shire Council features regularly in local newspapers and, in addition, Council's Mayor or General Manager submit a fortnightly column to the Hunter River Times newspaper and are interviewed weekly on local radio stations ABC Radio Upper Hunter and Radio 2NM, ensuring the community is well informed regarding Council's activities.

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, information and efficient and effective services and facilities.
Ratepayers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Web: www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au • Rates notices • Ratepayers Rewards Program • 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 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"> • Web: www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au • 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, and its group entities, are the hub for local government collaboration, strengthening 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 that operate 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. The Hunter Joint Organisation’s statutory mandate includes identifying key regional strategic priorities, advocating for these priorities, and building collaborations around these priorities with other levels of government, industry and community.*
- *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 Regional Policy & Programs Division (which delivers on the strategic priorities of the Hunter Joint Organisation, including the Hunter and Central Coast Regional Environment Program (HCCREMS), on behalf of both Hunter JO member councils 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 governance of the entities 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 Joint Organisation of Councils, including associated entity Strategic Services Australia
- 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 Unit largely focus on community education and engagement along with programs to reduce Council's and the Community's energy and water consumption and waste production and natural area rehabilitation works focused on Muscle Creek.

Under COVID 19 restrictions the Sustainability Unit continued to engage with the community online. Staff developed and posted on Facebook under the banner Muswellbrook Connect; showing local community members what they can do at home to live healthy and sustainable lives. The popularity of the Sustainable Futures Muswellbrook Facebook page continues to grow. The page has 1,109 likes and 1,150 followers.

Landcare and Sustainability grants were awarded to six community organisations by the Sustainability Unit. Council received external funding for the Denman Don't be a Tossers Project and the Healthy Towns Challenge to coordinate community engagement programs focussed on reducing litter and living a healthy, active and engaged life.

Restoration works were completed on Muscle Creek through Council's Major Landcare Projects with support from the NSW Environmental Trust. The Platypus Track was completed to allow the community better access to Muscle Creek and to learn about some of its environmental values. Works were also completed on the Martindale Crown Lands Reserve Project.

Energy and water audits were undertaken on Council's buildings and sporting facilities. These audits informed energy and water saving projects undertaken by sustainability officers.

Sustainable educational activities were delivered to over 600 students through tours of the waste facility, waster wise puppet shows and school holiday activities. Community groups and schools engaged included Muswellbrook Girl Guides, Denman Children Centre, Muswellbrook High School, Tilly's Play and Development Centre, Muswellbrook Children Centre, MOOSH, 2nd Muswellbrook Scout Group, 1st Denman Scout Group, St James, Muswellbrook Preschool and Goodstart Early Learning

Centre, Denman Community Garden, Muswellbrook Multicultural Group, Sandy Hollow Progress Association, Denman Men's Shed, Muswellbrook Men's Shed, Upper Hunter Community Services Inc, Act Belong Commit Steering Committee, Hunter Park Family Centre, Upper Hunter Landcare, Martindale Landcare, Pacific Brook Christian School, The Penguin Garden Club, Muscle Creek Landcare, Hunter Sustainability Landcare TEAM, Warrior Disability Services, Early Links, Muswellbrook PCYC, Denman Public School and St Joseph's Denman.

Council supported Clean Up Australia Day activities with over 750 community members and National Tree Day with over 80 volunteers planting 1500 plants. Museums with different environmental themes have been loaned to many educational groups.

The Sustainability Hub continues to be a hive of activity providing community members the opportunity to participate in positive and sustainable practices. Picnic at the Hub activities were held with 50 community members. Educational activities were held at the Hub with over 50 students. Plants grown by the Hunter Sustainability Land Team at the Hub have been donated to six other community gardens. The Penguin Garden Club and Muscle Creek Landcare met at the Hub with 20 community members attending events on average each month. Warrior Disability Services continue to run the composting system at the Sustainability Hub, diverting over 2700 litres of waste from landfill.

The Sustainability Unit developed and distributed information to encourage community members to be water smart, reduce food waste, use compost bins and worm farms, report abandoned trolleys and properly dispose of problem wastes. Community Recycling Stations were set up in the Muswellbrook and Denman libraries to help residents recycle some problem household waste items and keep them out of landfill.

Sustainability engagement continued

Council's Sustainability Unit supports the following community groups through a range of sustainability projects and activities:

- Upper Hunter Community Services Inc MOOSH
- Muswellbrook Healthy and Well
- Martindale Landcare
- Denman Community Garden
- Denman Children Centre
- 1st Denman Scout Group
- 2nd Muswellbrook Scout Group
- Muswellbrook Pre School
- Tilly's Play and Development Centre
- Sandy Hollow Progress Association
- Muswellbrook Men's Shed
- Muswellbrook Child Care Centre
- Wanaruah Local Aboriginal Land Council
- Ability Links

MUSCLE CREEK NATURE TRAIL

A new nature trail, called the Platypus Track, was officially opened in December 2019. The new trail runs behind the Muswellbrook Aquatic Centre, along Muscle Creek. The area allows users to visit a quiet spot with nice views of the Creek. The trail features a number of recycled rubber animal statues, signs and a sandstone picnic table.

MUSCLE CREEK FISH HABITAT

Work has now been completed on the Fish Habitat Action Grant project. This project was funded by a Recreational Fishing Trust's Habitat Action Grant Program from the Department of Industry. Council provided in-kind support. Work involved weed control and revegetation on a 1.8 hectare site along Muscle Creek next to the Muswellbrook Golf Course. Weed and erosion control and revegetation also took place behind the Muswellbrook Aquatic Centre and above Sydney Street. Over 3000 native tube stock were planted on all sites. This work has seen a significant transformation of the Golf Club site with large amount of Privet and Green Cestrum controlled and replaced with natives.

MUSWELLBROOK CONNECT

In response to COVID-19 the Sustainability Unit redirected community engagement to focus online. Staff worked with Muswellbrook Healthy and Well in coordinating social media posts under the heading Muswellbrook Connect. This involved coordinating the development of locally produced materials aimed at making recommendations to local community members on what they can do at home to lead healthy and sustainable lives.

HEALTHY TOWNS CHALLENGE

Council is supporting Muswellbrook Healthy and Well in running the Healthy Towns Challenge. This is a grant funded program aimed at encouraging the community to adopt healthy habits. As part of this grant Council will receive funding for a portable water refill station to be used at events, pathway signage that combines getting healthy and learning about the local environment and sustainable garden workshops.

DENMAN – DON'T BE A TOSSER

Council received another Don't be a Tosser grant for an anti-litter project focused in Denman. This project involves installing signs and bin enclosures, working with school and community groups and promoting the consequences of littering.

LANDCARE GRANTS 2ND ROUND AND SUSTAINABILITY GRANTS

Another round of Landcare and Sustainability Grants were awarded. The successful applicants were Martindale Catchment Landcare, Upper Hunter Community Services (MOOSH), Hunter Sustainability Landcare TEAM and Muswellbrook PCYC. These grants help these groups take action in order to be more sustainable.

ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST GRANT PROJECTS

Council has started preparation works for the Muswellbrook Urban Riparian Restoration Project (2019) in an area between Muswellbrook Golf Course and Muscle Creek. This project involves workshops and signage. 1,000 plants will be planted and 1.5 hectares of weed control will take place early in 2021.

Recently Council was notified that it was successful in gaining funding for another project along Muscle Creek. This project called Rehabilitation of Muscle Creek for Community and Environmental Benefit (2020) will occur between the railway line and Muscle Creek.

EVENTS

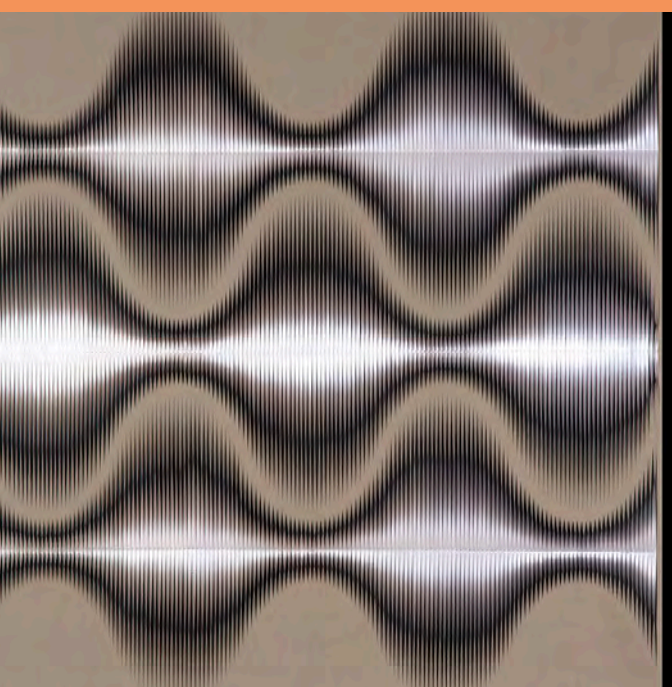
Council holds a number of events throughout the year and supports and contributes to other community run events.



BLUE HEELER FILM FESTIVAL

The Blue Heeler Film Festival was held for the seventh year in partnership with the University of Newcastle (UoN) in an outdoor setting between the Muswellbrook Campus of the UoN and Loxton House, Muswellbrook. Films were submitted in two categories: Senior and Open with a special prize awarded to the film that is voted by the audience as the “People’s Choice”. The event was again sponsored by Bengalla Mining Company and Muswellbrook Shire Council with prizes provided by Harvey Norman Muswellbrook. This year the films were collated and judged by students of UoN.

47TH 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 close of the exhibition. The Muswellbrook Art Prize is generously sponsored by Bengalla Mining Company Pty. Limited in partnership with Muswellbrook Shire Council.

This year’s exhibition was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic but the opening was shared through social media.



MUSWELLBROOK LOCAL ART AWARDS

The Muswellbrook Local Art Awards, now entitled The Viola Bromley Awards, are an annual competition which offers local artists from Muswellbrook, Singleton, and Upper Hunter shires the opportunity to showcase their best works from the previous twelve months.

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

The Local Art Awards is strongly supported by residents of the Upper Hunter, visitors and local businesses with seven prize categories.



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.



NATIONAL TREE DAY

Successful National Tree Day events were held in Muswellbrook and Denman in July 2019 with over 80 people attending and planting 1500 plants at two sites. 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 Scout Group, Muscle Creek Landcare and Mangoola Coal employees for coming along to assist with the planting. Council used these events to encourage the community to be as water efficient as possible to ensure the highest survival rate.



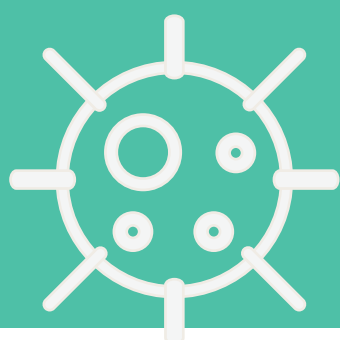
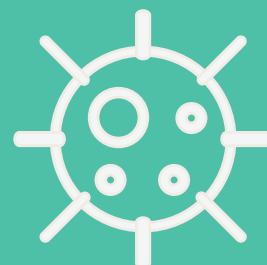
CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY

More than 750 community members participated in Clean Up Australia Day activities in 2020.

Council hosted events in Muswellbrook and Denman and supported businesses and schools to hold their own Clean Up activities.

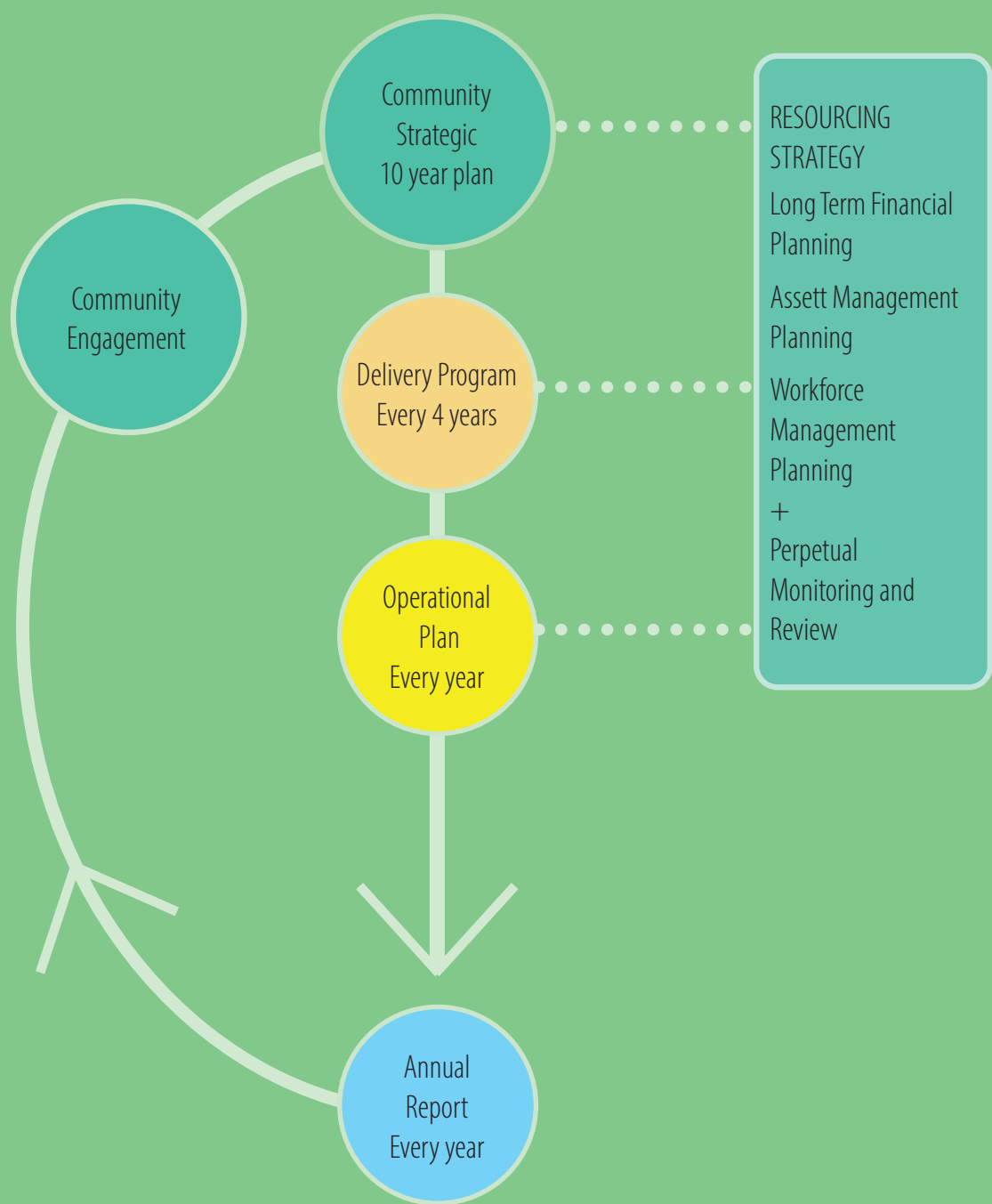
School Clean Up Day involved over 600 students from Muswellbrook High School, Muswellbrook Girl Guides, St James' Muswellbrook, St Joseph's Denman, Denman Public School and Brookside Christian School.

Business Clean Up Day saw 32 people from AGL Macquarie, Warrior Disability Services and Denman Children's Centre clean up around Denman and Community Clean Up Day involved 30 people in Muswellbrook and 27 in Denman, including scout groups from both towns. Two large skip bins of waste were removed from the local environment.



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.

For more information on the Council Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework visit muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au/index.php/ipr

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 2019/20 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.

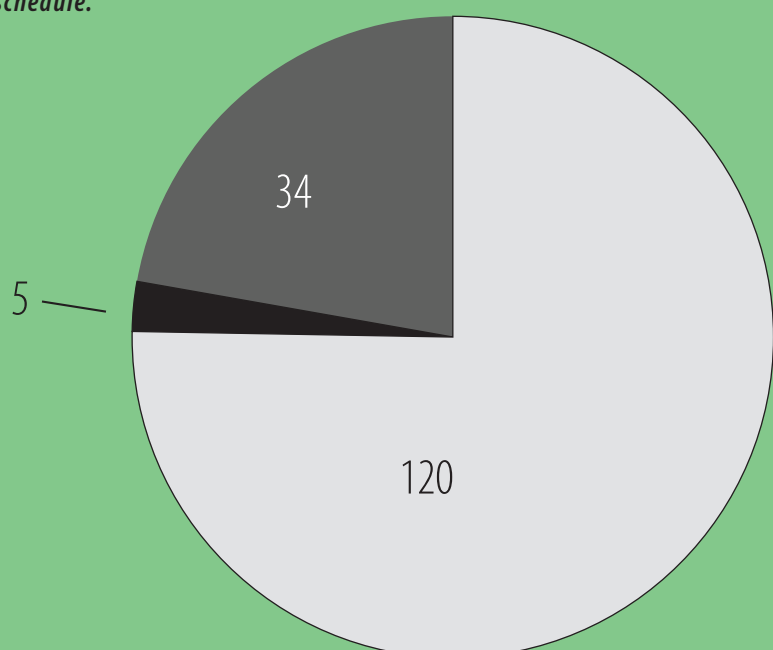
2019/20 end of year position

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 2019/20

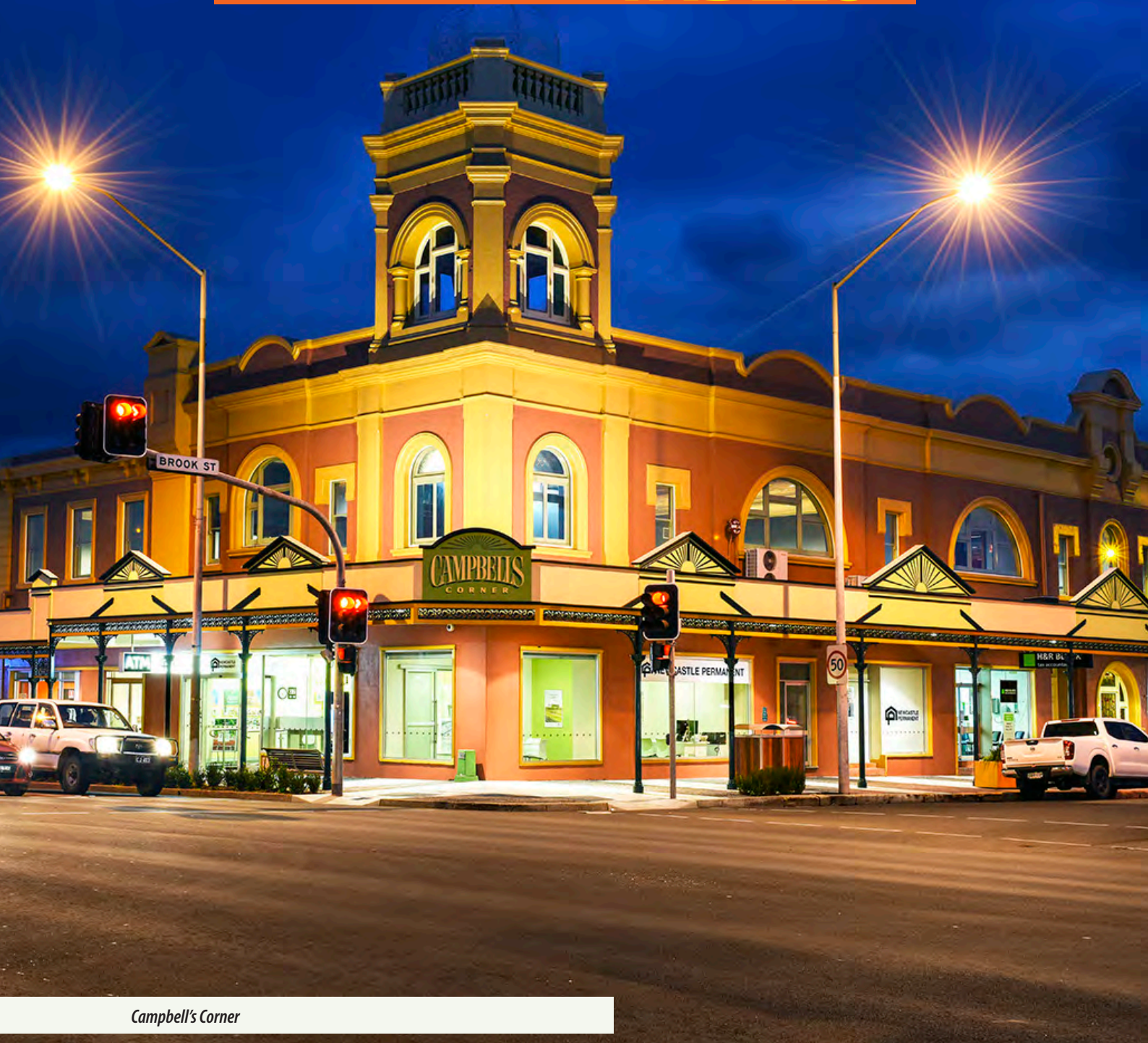
Of the 159 activities committed to by Council:

- *3% are not progressing;*
- *21% are progressing;*
- *76% have been completed on or ahead of schedule.*



STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

REPORTING TABLES



Campbell's Corner

01: Economic Prosperity



Muswellbrook MarketPlace

GOAL 1 | Support job growth.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
1.1 Facilitate the expansion and establishment of new industries and business.	Progressing	1.1.1 Development Approval for refurbishment work for the Innovation Hub was awarded at the June Ordinary Council Meeting, following Heritage Council approval. Construction documentation is being prepared for tender.
	Delivered	1.1.2 Council's Local Strategic Planning Statement has been completed and placed on public exhibition; a key focus of Council's Strategic Planning Statement is land use planning that supports transition and a diversified economy including alternative energy and agribusiness.
	Delivered	1.1.3 Council commissioned a report into the feasibility of establishing biological fuel industries in the upper hunter region. The Bio-Valley Study was delivered and presented to Council and other contributors, the Department of Premier and Cabinet and Singleton Shire Council during early 2020. The findings of the study support the development of bio-fuels in the Hunter Valley.

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.	Completed	2.1.1 Council's Local Strategic Planning Statement has been completed and placed on public exhibition; a key focus of Council's Strategic Planning Statement is land use planning that facilitates the diversification of the Shire's economy and supports growth of existing industry and business enterprise.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
2.2 Work with University of Newcastle on research and innovation in areas where the Upper Hunter has a competitive or comparative advantage.	Completed	2.2.1 An application has been forwarded to the Minister to seek approval for the establishment of the Hunter 2050 Foundation as a subsidiary of the Hunter Joint Organisation of Councils. The Hunter 2050 Foundation will be charged with leading economic transition and diversification across the Hunter Valley with a focus on facilitating new industry to the Hunter and the Upper Hunter.
	Completed	2.2.2 Council has been working with the Department of Premier and Cabinet on a substantial grant from Growing Local Economies to secure a water supply that will enable the development of an intensive agricultural industry in the Muswellbrook Shire, for example a new abattoir. The application process is complete, and Council hopes to attract the funds required to provide a new water pipeline to the west of the Shire.
	Completed	2.2.3 Council is working with the University of Newcastle on the establishment of a new research centre, to be based in Muswellbrook, which will undertake economic modelling to attract new industry to the Shire. A development application for Tertiary Education Stage 2 (TEC II) has been lodged; this facility will be built in 2020/21 and include a state of the art Makerspace
	Completed	2.2.4 Council has completed a feasibility study into the development of a Snow Dome to be developed on the Muswellbrook Coal site, which is due to close in 2022. Council has co-funded a STEM coordinator to work across the Shire with primary and high schools to improve the development of science, technology, engineering and maths skills. A development application for Tertiary Education Stage 2 (TEC II) has been lodged.
	Progressing	2.2.5 A comprehensive investment prospectus has not been finalised for the Muswellbrook Shire area. An initial draft is complete, however a final hard copy has not been completed. Once launched, the regional Upper Hunter Web Site will provide a virtual prospectus of the Shire.
	Progressing	2.2.6 Council has continued towards the completion of the revitalisation of the Denman Village including the completion of stage 3 of the Denman Village Upgrade. The Denman Lookout nature trail has been completed. Progress on access to the Wollemi National Park remains a goal for council in consultation with NSW National Parks and Wildlife Services.



Tertiary Education Centre (TECH 11)

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
2.2 Work with University of Newcastle on research and innovation in areas where the Upper Hunter has a competitive or comparative advantage.	Completed	2.2.7 Council tendered for a study into the opportunities available to the Hunter Valley and specifically benefits of the establishment of a biofuels industry in the upper hunter. The study was commissioned and completed. Council partnered with the Department of Premier and Cabinet, Singleton Shire and Upper Hunter Shire in the delivery of this study. The study informs a way forward in the establishment of biofuels as a future industry.
2.3 Review the Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plan to improve investment certainty for industry.	Progressing	2.3.1 Council resolved to exhibit the Draft Local Strategic Planning Statement at the 30 June 2020 meeting
2.4 Implement the Muswellbrook, Denman Town Centre Masterplans and the Sandy Hollow Village Masterplan.	Completed	2.4.1 Concept plans have been developed for new commercial buildings as part of the Muswellbrook Town Centre Strategy for the consideration of Council.
	Progressing	2.4.2 Preliminary parking survey work for the Muswellbrook Town Centre is being undertaken by Council's Community Infrastructure section.
	Completed	2.4.3 Noise Walls 1, 3, & 4 have been completed in consultation with Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC). Discussions will continue with key stakeholders on future opportunities.
	Progressing	2.4.4 The construction of additional gateway access to Olympic Park is continuing. A Review of Environmental Factors (REF) is being prepared together with Wilder Street Bridge concept options for stakeholder consultation and Council's consideration. Minor landscaping and refurbishment works have been undertaken at the Wilkinson Bridge entry.
	Completed	2.4.5 Designs for a number of capital projects in the Olympic Park Precinct are being developed consistent with the adopted Olympic Park Master Plan.
	Completed	2.4.6 Detailed design for a number of stages of the Muswellbrook Aquatic & Fitness Centre Upgrade have been completed and construction has commenced.
	Completed	2.4.7 The Denman Lookout Walking Trail is complete with interpretive signage installed. Denman Village visitors can now walk or drive to the top of the trail and enjoy a spectacular view across the upper hunter.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
2.5 Develop agricultural industry opportunities in the Shire.	Progressing	2.5.1 Council has applied to the Growing Local Economies Fund to construct a new water pipeline between Denman and Sandy Hollow, to improve water security and support the development of intensive agribusiness in the west of the Shire, including a new Abattoir which will provide approximately 300 jobs.
	Progressing	2.5.2 The Food Upper Hunter project has been impacted by the drought, bushfires and COVID-19. Resources have been allocated to working on projects to support existing small businesses. The new Upper Hunter Website, promotes existing industry and businesses. Muswellbrook Shire Council is working with Upper Hunter Shire Council on extending and expanding the Buy Local campaign.

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	3.1.1 Development Approval for refurbishment work for the Upper Hunter Innovation Precinct - Stage 2 awarded at the June Ordinary Council Meeting, following Heritage Council approval. Construction documentation is being prepared for tender.

02: Social Equity and Inclusion



Top: Citizenship Ceremony - Denman. Bottom: Clean up Australia Day

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.	Completed	5.1.1 A list of prioritised capital sport and recreation projects is maintained to inform the annual program. Works for the 2019-2020 General Recreation Program were approved and completed.
5.2 Continue town centre revitalisation projects.	Completed	5.2.1 As part of the CBD Activation Grant Program a mural was commissioned and installed in the Muswellbrook Marketplace laneway.
5.3 Facilitate investment in entertainment opportunities, particularly for young people.	Completed	5.3.1 There was a 5.1% increase in youth memberships of the Upper Hunter Regional Library during 2019/20. The increase of 33 current members reflects the work that library staff have undertaken to raise the awareness of library programs relevant to young people.
	Progressing	5.3.2 COVID-19 impacted Learn to Swim enrolments, Gym memberships and participation in general activities during the latter half of 2019/20 resulting in a reduced number of youth memberships at the Muswellbrook Aquatic & Fitness Centre for the year.
	Completed	5.3.3 The relocation of the Upper Hunter Youth Services deliveries has been strongly supported by Council during 2019/20. The project site was confirmed, and work was completed on final design and costs associated with relocating the service to the Muswellbrook Indoor Sports Centre, in a purpose-built addition to the facility. Project progress was reported monthly to Council.
	Completed	5.3.4 Grant applications were submitted in support of infrastructure to deliver affordable entertainment for young people in isolated communities. An application to support Upper Hunter Youth Services was successful.
	Not Progressing	5.3.5 Youth Week activities did not progress during March 2020, due to the limitations of the Public Health Order current at that time. Planning continues for events which will possibly be held in October/ November, 2020 as restrictions are wound back.
	Completed	5.3.6 In response to COVID-19 new service delivery methods were introduced at the libraries including online borrowing and Home Library. There was a 100% increase in the delivery of Home Library to a wide range of member demographics and abilities.
	Completed	5.3.7 Council attracted grant funding from multiple sources for work along Muscle Creek, adjacent to the Muswellbrook Aquatic and Fitness Centre and Golf Course.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
5.5 Promote and facilitate increased participation in active and passive recreational activities.	Completed	5.5.1 Sporting and recreational facilities are maintained to standards, which are benchmarked against comparable local government areas.
	Completed	5.5.2 Council continued the matched funded Small Sport and Recreation Grants Program for 2019/20, with successful applications awarded at the November 2019 Ordinary Council meeting.
	Completed	5.5.3 Council continued the matched funded Large Sport and Recreation Grants Program for 2019/20, with successful applications awarded at the November 2019 Ordinary Council meeting.
	Completed	5.5.4 Facility user groups meetings were held monthly and the biannual Muswellbrook Shire Sport and Recreation User Group meetings were held. Monthly user group meetings were interrupted by COVID-19 Public Health Orders.
	Progressing	5.5.5 Design work for the construction of Hunter Beach is progressing to be tendered early in 2020/21.
	Progressing	5.5.6 Staff have been collaborating with Upper Hunter Community Services to investigate the possibility of delivering Hunter Park Family Centre from other suitable locations in the Wollombi Road area, which might accommodate an expanded service. COVID-19 impacted upon program delivery and both organisations concentrated on alternate operating protocols and foci in response to Public Health Orders.
5.6 Consider and deliver social inclusion principles across Council functions.	Completed	5.6.1 Council prepared and submitted in excess of 23 grant applications in support of projects and programs aligned to the Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program in 2019/20.
	Completed	5.6.2 Council's approved General Building Renewal Program 2019/20 includes works identified in accessibility building and property audits. Works programmed for 2019/20 have been completed.
	Progressing	5.6.3 Council's Information Services strategy is progressing with the implementation of several key systems to ensure continued security and system improvements, including: Office 365; Phone System upgrades; ITIL management system; C4 security management platform Next Generation Anti-Virus Crowd Strike; and Next Generation Email Filter Mimecast.
	Progressing	5.6.4 Information Services has completed a tapes backup with system testing of disaster recovery rollover scenarios now easier to conduct. A Disaster Recovery Plan is in development with implementation to be supported by a linked project action plan.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
5.6 Consider and deliver social inclusion principles across Council functions.	Progressing	5.6.5 The major asset classes have been successfully uploaded in the Asset Management System. Further implementation of Asset Management System phase 2 - financial components has been impacted by the departure of a key resource. Progress will resume in 2020/21.
	Completed	5.6.6 Customer requests and online payments can be lodged via Council's Online Community Portal. The Portal has been active since February 2020 and transactions are increasing.
	Progressing	5.6.7 Council's style guide is nearing completion and will be launched in the latter half of 2020.
5.7 Facilitate the provision of affordable housing opportunities through development application process as encouraged through the Affordable Rental Housing SEPP 2009.	Completed	5.7.1 There were no changes to the Affordable Housing SEPP during 2019/20.

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.	Not Progressing	6.1.1 The CREATE change Coalition has finalised their program of work and the role of the Collaborative Impact Facilitator has ceased. This operational plan action will not progress further.

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.	Completed	7.2.1 The internal oversight of accessibility has not required a meeting of the Internal Accessibility Audit Committee. Alternatively, these matters are raised during Pre-Development Application meetings with the Planning Business Unit and through Construction Certificates.
	Completed	7.2.2 Accessibility reports are a requirement for all significant development proposals as part of "Business as Usual" for Council's planning and building section.

GOAL 9 | Facilitate opportunities to expand seniors' living.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
9.2 Facilitate discussions with other levels of Government to enhance the delivery of services to support older people to live in the Muswellbrook Shire.	Completed	9.2.1 The Muswellbrook Shire Ageing Strategy was adopted by Council and distributed throughout the community during preparations for the Seniors Festival 2020. An action list identifying future work will be considered as part of the 2021/22 Operational Plan
	Completed	9.2.2 A Seniors Festival Program was developed and promoted in 2019/20, however some activities did not progress due to COVID-19.
	Not Progressing	9.2.3 Attendance at Denman and Muswellbrook Aquatic Centres increased by 2.5% during the 2019/20 reporting period. COVID-19 health restrictions halted the Centres' promotion program to further increase membership.

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

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
10.1 Collaborate with the local Aboriginal people on projects which enhance an appreciation for, and which develop the vitality of, Aboriginal culture.	Completed	10.1.1 The Aboriginal Culture and Heritage Working Group was not required to convene during 2019/20.
	Completed	10.1.2 During 2019/20 the Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre collaborated with local Aboriginal Artist Travis De Vries to host The Hidden Garden exhibition.
	Completed	10.1.3 A review of the workingwithindigenoussaustralians.info/ was carried out during 2019/20, including the addition of updated legislation and relevant resources.
	Completed	10.1.4 The quote provided by International Conservation Services will ensure that the conservation of the Reconciliation Mural is scheduled to occur in 2021/22.
10.2 Raise awareness of the local Aboriginal community and an appreciation of their long traditions and culture.	Progressing	10.2.1 Council has consulted extensively with the Aboriginal Community this year around the development of local cultural and educational activities. These discussions have progressed to the development of an Aboriginal Treaty Project.
	Progressing	10.2.2 A meeting was held with the Aboriginal Community to discuss possible native tree plantings at the "Common". A funding source has yet to be identified.



03: Environmental Sustainability



Top left: Goodstart worms. Top right: Sustainable Futures - Native seed planting. Bottom: Sustainable Futures- Education through characters

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	11.1.1 Muswellbrook Shire Council's Local Strategic Planning Statement focuses on the future of land use in the Shire and transition from thermal coal mining to sustainable energy, fuels and agribusiness.
	Completed	11.1.2 Staff have reviewed several Mine Operation Plans and Mine Rehabilitation Plans this year.
	Completed	11.1.3 Council staff attend the Muswellbrook Coal, Bengalla, Mt Pleasant and Dartbrook Community Consultation Committee meetings. This year, Councillors were representatives for the other mine Community Consultation Committees.

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.	Completed	12.1.1 Upper Hunter Region Landcare Network provides Council with monthly reports regarding Landcare activities in the Shire. Efforts to expand existing local Landcare Groups were hampered by an intense bushfire season and restrictions to public gatherings due to COVID-19.
	Completed	12.1.2 Rehabilitated riparian and natural areas including Muscle Creek, Karoola Wetlands and Denman Wetlands are maintained by a dedicated Works Parks team.
	Completed	12.1.3 The maintenance of rehabilitated riparian and natural areas is preformed by a dedicated Works Parks team, to avoid degradation.
	Completed	12.1.4 National Tree day was held at three locations across the Shire in 2019/20, with details provided to Councillors via monthly Director's report.

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 actions.	Completed	13.1.1 Council has been successful with a number of grant applications with funds directed to works along Muscle Creek.

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	Completed	14.1.1 External funding opportunities to support the development of a Shire wide catchment management plan is yet to be identified.
	Completed	14.1.2 Air quality monitoring funded by Council (ANSTO) continues to occur and Councillors receive a copy of the quarterly Air Quality Monitoring Network seasonal newsletter which includes statistics.
	Progressing	14.1.3 Projects including the Animal Shelter and Sustainability Hub are currently on hold awaiting development of new sites.
	Completed	14.1.4 Muswellbrook Shire Council entered into an agreement with AGL Energy to develop a pumped hydro storage facility on Bells Mountain, which is planned to commence operations in 2026.
	Progressing	14.1.5 Sustainability education programs which facilitate community understanding of food and green waste and divert waste from landfill continued in an online format to achieve compliance with Public Health (COVID-19 Restrictions on Gathering and Movement) Order.
	Progressing	14.1.6 Collecting data for all Council activities in an effort to improve sustainability has proved difficult. Council is considering starting with discrete sites where water use is monitored in 2020/21.
	Completed	14.1.7 Council's Sustainability and Landcare Grants were open to local Landcare Groups, with progress updates provided to Council via monthly Director Reports.
	Completed	14.1.8 Community activities conducted at the Sustainability Hub were reported in the monthly Director's report to Council.
	Completed	14.1.9 Staff monitored upcoming grant funding sources for energy, waste, and water sustainability projects. Project outcomes were reported via monthly Director's Reports to Council.
	Completed	14.1.10 Regulatory staff investigate reports of illegal dumping and arrange for material to be removed to the waste facility. Staff are collating information but have not identified any regular illegal dumping locations.
	Progressing	14.1.11 Grant funding for car covers, clothesline covers, gurneys and weed tree removal was expended. A source of funds for habitat rehabilitation works has not yet been identified.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
14.2 Require all development proposals to avoid and mitigate against potential environmental impacts and facilitate improved environmental outcomes where possible.	Completed	14.2.1 Report outlining Biodiversity Offset Options was considered by Council at the May Ordinary meeting.

04: Cultural Vitality



Suzie Worth, Wanaruah Local Aboriginal Land Council Culture & Heritage Officer

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	16.1.1 Development Approval for refurbishment work for Loxton House was awarded by Council at the June Ordinary Meeting following Heritage Council approval. Construction documentation is being prepared for tender.
	Not Progressing	16.1.2 Council continues to seek NSW State funding to progress a review of the Heritage Inventory.
16.3 New investment in heritage conservation and restoration made.	Progressing	16.3.1 Two local Heritage Grant applications were received and approved during 2019/20, with works now completed.

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 a Special Variation).	Completed	17.1.1 The design of the Regional Entertainment and Conference Centre (RECC) has been prepared for Council consideration and lodgment of Development of Application.

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 Noisy Heeler Festival with a view to engaging more locals and visitors.	Completed	18.1.1 The 2020 Blue Heeler Festival was held on 19 October, in partnership with the School of Creative Industries at the University of Newcastle, at the Upper Hunter Innovation Precinct with just under 150 entries received in total over two categories (open and senior).
	Completed	18.1.2 Some events scheduled for 2020 have been postponed until 2021 due to the impact of COVID-19. All events going forward will be reviewed in December 2020.
18.2 Continue the provision of arts appreciated through the Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre	Completed	18.2.1 Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre delivered four exhibitions during 2019/20. The delivery of the scheduled exhibitions was altered to comply with COVID-19 Public Health Orders. Promotion and advertising of exhibitions has moved to the digital platform to continue engagement with the art and wider community.
	Completed	18.2.2 Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre has commenced consultation to secure sponsorship for the delivery of the 2022 Muswellbrook Art Prize.
	Completed	18.2.3 During 2019/20, Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre partnered with the Goodstart Early Learning Centre to deliver 'The Saplings' exhibition and 'The Young Archies' attracted entries from many of the local schools.
	Completed	18.2.4 The 2020 Artist in Residence Program has been delivered, with accomplished artist Todd Fuller scheduled to exhibit his works, completed during the Project, in 2021.
18.4 Support Arts Upper Hunter as the peak organisation of Artist endeavour.	Completed	18.4.1 Management support has been provided to Arts Upper Hunter during 2019/20.
	Completed	18.4.2 Local artist groups receiving Country Arts Support Program (CASP) funding in 2019/20 included: Upper Hunter Youth Council, Scone Arts and Crafts, Cassilis District Development Group Incorporated (Cassilis DDG), Dungog Primary School P&C and Singleton Council.



Pre Covid 19 - A category winner of the Young Archibald, Hannah Tranate with Mayor Rush

05: Community Infrastructure



Denman Memorial Park

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.	Completed	19.1.1 Council has delivered the 2019-20 Capital program substantially on time, on budget and in accordance with the relevant design and construction standards. Significant projects have included the streetscape upgrade of Ogilvie St Denman, safety improvements on Bylong Valley Way and rehabilitation of sections of Thomas Mitchell Drive and Wybong Road.
	Completed	19.1.2 The street and footpath sweeping schedule was implemented under contract, as programmed.
	Completed	19.1.3 Management and removal of graffiti was carried out in compliance with Council's Graffiti Management policies and procedures.
	Completed	19.1.4 The annual Best Practice Management (BPM) audit of water supply and sewerage services was carried out in 2019/20. The audit results indicated that Council demonstrated 'substantial compliance' with BPM of water supply and sewerage services in line with the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment - Water BPM guideline and the BPM Framework. The result of the audit was reported to Council.
19.2 Maintain and continually improve asset management.	Completed	19.2.1 Continual improvement in asset management systems and practice has been a core focus during 2019/20, with a revaluation of Council's road, storm water and footpath assets undertaken.
	Completed	19.2.2 Service levels were monitored throughout 2019/20 to ensure Level of Service targets in asset management plans and in funded levels of the Precinct Specification Manual were achieved.
	Completed	19.2.3 Reported pilot projects to achieve a reduction in passive mowing areas are being progressed by a dedicated Works Parks team.
	Completed	19.2.4 Meetings have been held with the Office of Environment & Heritage during 2019/20, and an in-principle agreement has been reached for both the Muswellbrook and Denman levees to be included as assets in the Hunter Valley Flood Mitigation Scheme.
	Completed	19.2.5 A prioritised bus stop shelter upgrade and renewal program has been prepared.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
19.3 Facilitate investment in high quality community infrastructure necessary to a regional centre.	Progressing	19.3.1 A design has been prepared for the New Animal Care Facility and a Development Application has been lodged.
	Completed	19.3.2 To ensure that the community's infrastructure is planned well and is safe, reliable and provides the required level of service, a Capital Works Program was developed, and endorsed by Council at the July 2019 Ordinary Council Meeting.
	Completed	19.3.3 To ensure that the Community's infrastructure is planned well, safe, reliable and provides the required level of service, designs are prepared for future projects and reported to Council for endorsement. Major designs endorsed by Council during 2019/20 included those for Williams Bridge, Thompson Street signalised intersection and Edderton Road upgrade works.
	Completed	19.3.4 Council has undertaken to investigate and adopt appropriate management treatments for road safety and traffic management in Muswellbrook Shire. Relevant matters are discussed at the Local Traffic Committee at monthly meetings and reported to Council on a quarterly basis. A Road Safety Action Plan with nominated projects has been developed for 2020/21.
	Completed	19.3.5 Capital works projects status are updated regularly and reported quarterly to Council.
	Completed	19.3.6 Throughout 2019/20 regular development assessment meetings and project-specific meetings have been held between Council's Planning and Engineering teams to ensure the provision of consistent, high-quality advice in relation to the infrastructure aspects of development. Core considerations of this advice have been to ensure development engineering and assessments meet the reporting timeframes of the Planning team, and to ensure that new infrastructure provided by development meets the required specifications.
	Not Progressing	19.3.7 A full review of Councils Development Contributions Plans is scheduled for 2020/21
	Progressing	19.3.8 The Muswellbrook Bypass Committee meets regularly with Transport for NSW to progress planning for the Bypass and for the Bridge Street upgrade post the Bypass. Council receives regular project progress briefings from Transport for NSW and is confident the Bypass will be delivered in 2026.
	Completed	19.3.9 Council is finalising funding applications to Growing Local Economies and Resources for Regions - both are significant applications to fund large community infrastructure programs.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
19.4 Maintain and continually improve community infrastructure across the Shire.	Completed	19.4.1 During 2019-20, Council obtained grant funding for an investigation into the establishment of an early flood warning system for Muswellbrook. This project has been identified as a high priority in the Floodplain Risk Management Plan.
	Completed	19.4.2 Service requests have been generated and works carried out on the Muswellbrook and Denman levees during 2019-20. An inspection of the levees was carried out during the fourth quarter of the year.
	Completed	19.4.3 An internal working group was convened to progress plans of management and identified actions for Council and Crown Land.
	Completed	19.4.4 Council has sought funding for the replacement of Williams Bridge, Martindale Road. Funding applications to the Bridges Renewal Program, NSW Bushfire Community Resilience Economic Recovery Fund Phase 1, and Restart NSW were successful. Replacement of Williams Bridge is programmed to be carried out in the first half of 2020/21.
	Completed	19.4.5 A prioritised and responsive rolling works program of maintenance is prepared monthly against yearly goals and adjusted weekly.
	Completed	19.4.6 Programmed asset inspections have been carried out throughout 2019/20 and works orders have been raised and prioritised within budget. Matters that are extensive or that require capital funding have been listed for consideration in future works programs.
	Completed	19.4.7 Customer service requests are captured and provided within agreed levels of service and budget allocations.
	Completed	19.4.8 Waste avoidance and resource recovery strategies are included as an important consideration of project and works management. Funded aspects of the action plan have been 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.	Completed	20.1.1 Throughout 2019/20, Muswellbrook and Denman Sewage Treatment Works have complied with NSW Environment Protection Authority guidelines.
	Completed	20.1.2 In 2019/20, Best Practice Water Supply and Sewerage Services reports were reported to Council on a quarterly basis. A formal audit report was submitted to the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment - Water and to NSW Health.
	Completed	20.1.3 In 2019/20, quarterly reports on Water & Wastewater Services were submitted to Council, and an Annual Drinking Water Quality Report was submitted to the NSW Department of Health. During 2019/20, Council recorded no breaches to health requirements in the supply of safe drinking water to communities in the Shire.
	Completed	20.1.4 During 2019/20, Council carried out appropriate and timely corrective actions to protect high risk zones and treatment works within the sewer system exposed by business with liquid trade waste discharges. A report providing detailed information in relation to liquid trade waste premises inspections, monitoring and control measures was reported to Council.
	Completed	20.1.5 Weekly inspections in relation to liquid trade waste monitoring and control have been carried out by dedicated Council staff and an external service provider. Detailed reports have been provided to Council.
	Completed	20.1.6 Council has entered into contracts with external customers for the purchase of recycled water produced from the Muswellbrook Recycled Water Treatment Works. Throughout 2019/20, regular testing and monitoring of recycled water was conducted to ensure recycled water quality meets contracted standards and requirements.
	Completed	20.1.7 Design work is progressing for the second water main servicing south Muswellbrook.
	Completed	20.1.8 The Landfill Environmental Management Plan was reviewed and updated in the first quarter of 2019/20, and subsequently reported to the 27 August 2019 Ordinary Council Meeting.
	Progressing	20.1.9 Delays to the construction of a new water treatment plant for Sandy Hollow have been caused by the lack of an affordable storage and distribution solution for the secondary water product produced by the envisaged new treatment plant.

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
20.1 Provide safe, secure, efficient and effective water, sewerage and waste services in compliance with regulatory requirements.	Completed	20.1.10 Significant studies and approvals relating to the development of a Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) processing facility has been carried out during 2019/20. A tender for the provision of preliminary engineering designs and Review of Environmental Factors in relation to the provision of Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) was reported to the 17 December 2019 Ordinary Council Meeting. A detailed, draft Environmental Impact Statement and preliminary engineering designs were reported to the 30 June 2020 Ordinary Council Meeting. This report included information in relation to the trial of a Mobile Aerated Floor System to process kerbside organic material.
	Completed	20.1.11 Inspections of onsite wastewater sewage systems to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements were conducted during 2019/20, however COVID-19 restrictions impacted the volume of inspections completed in the final quarter.
	Completed	20.1.12 The business case for the upgrading of the Denman sewer treatment plant has been completed and is currently undergoing peer review.

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.	Completed	21.1.1 Council was presented with a report on options to be funded and the amounts necessary to achieve the Delivery Program priorities at the July 2019 Ordinary Meeting of Council, where Council endorsed the Capital Works program for Roads and Drainage. Discrete reports related to capital projects are submitted for Council's consideration on a project-by-project basis throughout the year.
	Completed	21.1.2 Council has delivered the 2019/20 Capital Program to maintain and improve the Shire's footpath and cycleway network to improve connectivity, on time, within budget and in accordance with the relevant design and construction standards. Footpaths constructed during the year include Wilkinson Avenue, Brook Street and King Street Muswellbrook, and Palace Street in Denman.

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 placed to make decisions in the best interest of the community.	Completed	22.1.1 A desk-based exercise to test preparedness for a severe weather or earthquake event was carried out during the first quarter of 2019/20, and a report in relation to the exercise was submitted to the Local Emergency Management Committee.
	Completed	22.1.2 During 2019/20, the Bush Fire Risk Management Plan was reviewed by the regional Bush Fire Risk Management Committee.
	Completed	22.1.3 Quarterly meetings of the joint Muswellbrook-Singleton Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC) were held in Muswellbrook in September 2019 and March 2020. In the fourth quarter of 2019/20, a decision was taken to disband the joint LEMC, and for separate Muswellbrook and Singleton LEMCs to be reinstated.
	Completed	22.1.4 Council has advocated throughout 2019/20 for a regional transition from a thermal coal dominated economy to a more diverse and sustainable economy into the future through the establishment of a Hunter Transitions Foundation (Hunter 2050). Council has successfully lobbied for funding for the Muswellbrook Bypass (due to be delivered in 2026) and continuation of the Resources for Regions fund.
	Completed	22.1.5 During 2019/20, a review of Council's Emergency Management Plan (EMPLAN) was conducted, which included the updating of the status of evacuation centres for Muswellbrook Shire.
	Completed	22.1.6 Council's attendance at Regional Emergency Management Committee meetings occurred as scheduled during 2019/20.
	Completed	22.1.7 Council's attendance at meetings of the Combined Muswellbrook-Singleton Bush Fire Risk Management Committee occurred as scheduled during 2019/20.
	Progressing	22.1.8 A Climate Change Resilience Policy is currently in development and is anticipated for completion during the first half of 2020/21.
	Completed	22.1.9 Planning and design for capital projects includes consideration of emergency risk management.

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.	Progressing	23.1.1 Council undertook community consultation in relation to all community infrastructure projects and a community survey and forum in relation to the new Aquatic Centre.
23.2 Enhance Council's consultation and communication with the community to build awareness and understanding of Council's activities and community needs.	Completed	23.2.1 Council continues to promote its work to the community and other key stakeholders. Over the last twelve months Council's communications team published 180 stories in social and traditional media. Council's social media engagement over the period has seen a cumulative reach of 108,376 and resulted in direct engagement on 97,234 occasions.

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.	Completed	24.1.1 The Future Fund has been actively managed and reported on to Council and the Future Fund Committee in 2019/20.
24.2 Implement a comprehensive and targeted business improvement program.	Completed	24.2.1 Council appointed an Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee, which met three times in 2019/20. The Committee provided advice on a range of business improvement initiatives. Two Service Delivery Reviews were completed and two were commenced throughout the year, however, Council suspended the program in the final quarter of 2019/20 in response to COVID-19. Council also appointed internal auditors to draft a Strategic Internal Audit Plan for the forward three years. The Plan was completed in consultation with staff and will be presented to the ARIC and Council in the first quarter of 2020/21.
	Completed	24.2.2 Council received two formal Government Information (Public Access) Act ("GIPA") applications in the year, which were responded to within statutory time frames. Reviews of Council's Public Interest Disclosure and GIPA processes continue and are expected to be finalised in the first quarter of 2020/21.
	Completed	24.2.3 New notification processes, updated staff delegations and a new full-time Building Surveyor are assisting to improve Development Application, Complying Development Certificate, Construction Certificate and Occupational Certificate assessment services, however there has also been an increase in Development Application lodgments in the last quarter of 2019/20.
	Completed	24.2.4 Statistics of Principal Certifying Authority certification services retained by Council and private certifiers has been reported to Council in the monthly Director's Report.
	Completed	24.2.5 Statistics reported to Council on Development Application and Construction Certificate compliance as part of monthly Director's Report.
	Completed	24.2.6 Statistics on the number of regulated premises (caravan parks, food outlets, skin penetration, hairdressers, mortuaries, air handling systems) registered and inspected reported to Council in the monthly Director's report.

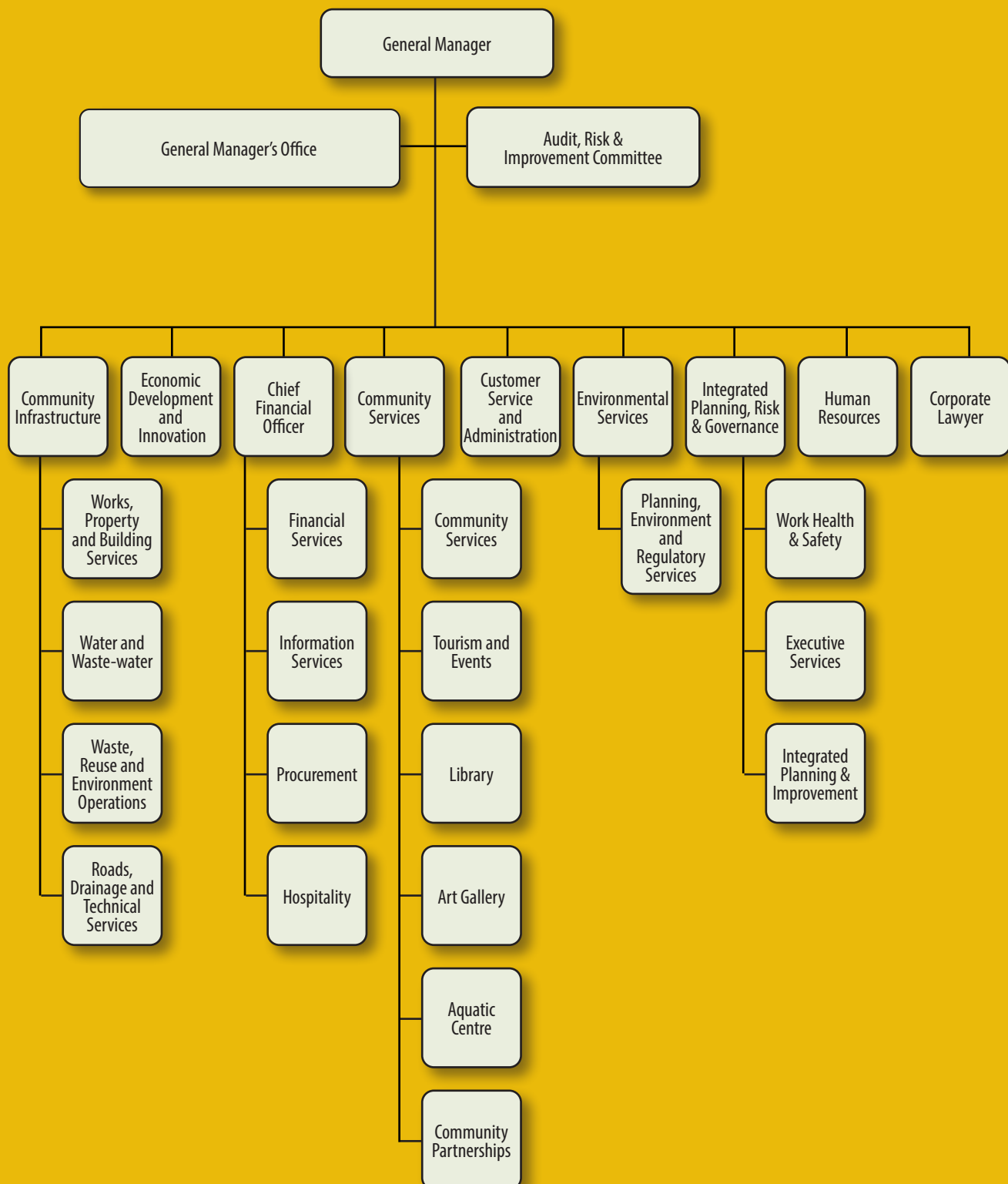
Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
24.2 Implement a comprehensive and targeted business improvement program.	Completed	24.2.7 Monthly statistics have been recorded on incoming and outgoing animals, rescues, adoptions, return to owners and euthanasia's in accordance with regulations.
	Completed	24.2.8 Reminder letters were issued to owners of Buildings on Council's register of fire safety measures as premises fell due. Some premises were closed in 2020 and were not able to be inspected.
	Completed	24.2.9 Registered public pools have been inspected and pool safety fencing is inspected as part of new builds and as properties sell. Statistics are reported to Council in the monthly Director's Report.
	Progressing	24.2.10 Council's policy reviews are continuing in line with the policy framework management strategy and available resources.
	Completed	24.2.11 Council Business Papers are provided in accordance with the Code of Meeting Practice. In response to COVID-19, meetings of the Council and its committees are able to be attended by audio/visual means. Facilities have been made available to all Councillors to participate in meetings in this format. Each Councillor has access to business papers electronically.
	Progressing	24.2.12 Human Resources are implementing the Muswellbrook Shire Council Workforce Plan 2017-2021 and reviewing actions in line with the requirements to deliver the Delivery Program.
	Completed	24.2.13 Human Resources ensures compliance with all Recover at Work processes and procedures in accordance with requirements of the regulators, Council's insurer and NSW Public Health Orders issued in response to COVID-19.

GOAL 25 | A sustainable Council that is best practice employer providing 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	25.1.1 A preliminary concept design for a new Community Infrastructure Works Depot is progressing for planning approval.
	Completed	25.1.2 Council continues to meet Workplace Health and Safety obligations and responsibilities. Council's WHS team provides continuous monitoring and oversight of Council's health and safety performance.

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 and has postgraduate qualifications in Organisational Development and Sustainability.



Derek Finnigan

Deputy General Manager

Director Community Infrastructure

Derek has gained experience in a variety of roles during his more than thirty years working with Muswellbrook Shire Council, and considers the 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 variety of roles across Muswellbrook Shire Council in the Corporate and Community Services directorates in her twelve 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 for Council for nine years and is committed to providing responsive and agile local government services to the community.

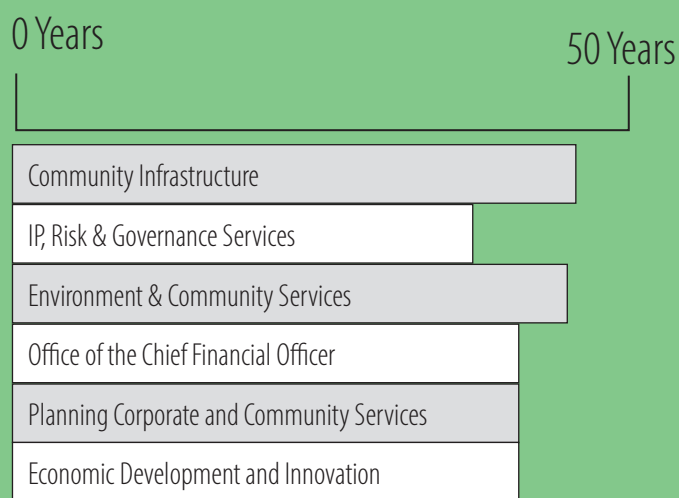


Peter Chambers

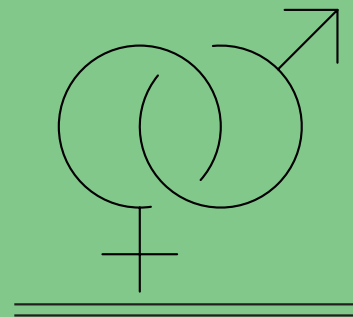
Chief Engineer

Peter brings a wealth of experience to Council including a specialist background in civil engineering, storm water treatment, storm water 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

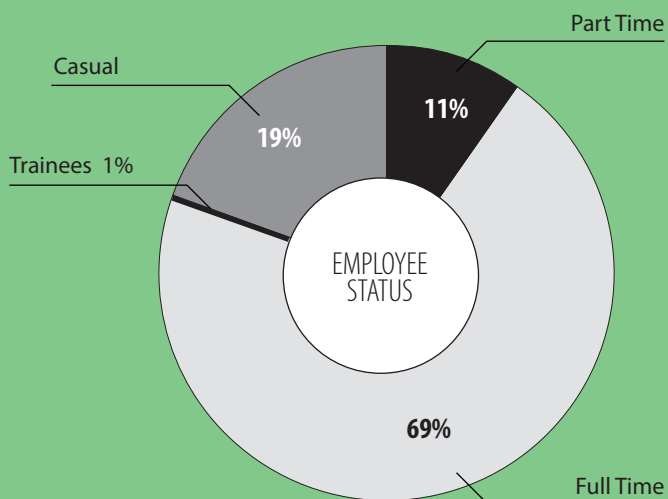


49/51



157 FULL TIME
EQUIVALENT

MEDIAN AGE
= 45



TOTAL = 201 Employees

Spirit Values

Council staff members work by 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	2019	Result (below/ met/ exceeded target)	Improvement/ Comments	WHO
Number of incidents reported including near misses	92	186	339	N/A	Increase in incident reports is due to encouragement of reporting, implementation of SafeHold WHSMS and staff training	WHS
Near misses	23	24	39			
Lost time	0	3	1			
Public Liability	15	60	114			
Medical Treatment	6	18	29			
Injury/Illness Related	36	78	166			
Property Related	14	43	72			
Security Related	7	8	14			
Environmental	1	2	1			
Abuse	1	5	12			
Number of incidents investigated	13	59	95	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	90	Meets	100% of corrective actions raised have been completed.	WHS
Number of risks eliminated	2	26	29	N/A	Number of risks eliminated using the hierarchy of controls.	WHS
Number of Hazard reports logged	1	3	17	N/A		WHS



WHS Committee Meetings (Target: 100% of 12 meetings held/ year)	9	11	11	Below		WHS
Number of Hazard Safety Inspections completed per Month (Target: 100% of 59 inspections per year)	0	36	45	Below	Hazard/Safety Inspection timetable and Monthly report to the WHS Committee. (Impacted by COVID – 19)	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	1,327	Exceeds	Daily toolbox talks included with Site Specific risk assessments. StateCover toolbox talk shared at Monthly teams meeting. Toolbox 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

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, Heritage and Events.



**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, Council's 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 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 Finance, Aboriginal Reconciliation and Corporate Services and Integrated Planning and is 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 and Wellbeing.

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



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 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 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 2019/20 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	EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS
30 July 2019	13 August 2019
27 August 2019	10 September 2019
24 September 2019	8 October 2019
29 October 2019	12 November 2019
26 November 2019	23 January 2020
17 December 2019	11 February 2020
25 February 2020	14 April 2020
31 March 2020	
28 April 2020	
26 May 2020	
30 June 2020	

Council Attendance

COUNCILLOR	MEETINGS ATTENDED	MEETINGS ABSENT
Martin Rush	17	1
Scott Bailey	3	15
Mark Bowditch	14	4
Janelle Eades	16	2
Jason Foy	15	3
Michelle Green	9	9
Jacinta Ledlin	14	4
Graeme McNeill	16	2
Steven Reynolds	13	5
Rod Scholes	17	1
Stephen Ward	15	3
Brett Woodruff	15	3

Ratepayers and other members of the public are entitled to speak to matters before the Council in Public Participation. During 2019/20 nine 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.

Council is required to consider certain matters in Closed Council, pursuant to section 10A(2) of the Local Government Act. Such matters include those subject to commercial-in-confidence, the award of tenders, personnel matters, the identification of the location of Aboriginal heritage sites and the personal hardship of any resident or ratepayer. In 2019/20, some 84 matters were considered in Closed Council.



Library staff - Top: Dion, Janet and Angelynn. Bottom: Janet, Rosemary, Caroline and Angelynn.

Corporate Governance

Council's independent internal audit program commenced in 2015 with the primary objective of ensuring good governance and continuous business improvement.

Following the conclusion of Council's three year Strategic Internal Audit Plan 2015-2018 and the dissolution of Council's Internal Audit Committee in December 2018, Council adopted a revised Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee Charter in March 2019 and undertook an extensive recruitment process to appoint Council's reconstituted and renamed Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC).

The inaugural meeting of the Muswellbrook Shire Council ARIC was held on 20 November 2019. The new Committee includes two independent members and one Councillor Member:



Independent Member 1: Chair
Mitchell Morley, Director - InConsult Pty Ltd

Mitchell is a Director of InConsult and has almost 30 years' experience in the NSW public sector covering internal audit, corporate governance, probity, risk management and privacy management.

Mitchell leads InConsult's service delivery on all major audit, assurance and probity projects and has successfully delivered outcomes for clients in local, state and federal government as well as the insurance and not for profit sectors.

Mitchell was chair of the NSW Local Government Governance Network, a Board member of Westpool and has held senior management positions in a number of NSW councils including Liverpool, Marrickville, Hornsby and Fairfield Councils. He is currently the independent chair of the Muswellbrook Shire Council Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee and an independent member of the Upper Hunter Shire Council Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee.

Mitchell is an active professional member of the Institute of Internal Auditors and has written articles for various publications on current and emerging risk, governance and audit issues. He has also presented at conferences and seminars in Australia and overseas.



***Independent Member 2:
Paul Quealey, Partner – Lambourne Partners***

Paul has been in the Audit and Assurance industry for over 17 years and is the Audit and Assurance Partner at Lambourne Partners in Newcastle. Paul is highly experienced in conducting external and internal audits, as well as reviewing internal controls and operating systems.

Paul graduated from the University of Newcastle with a Bachelor of Commerce, is a Registered Company Auditor and Registered Self Managed Superannuation Fund Auditor with ASIC and a member of Chartered Accountants Australia & New Zealand.

Having worked in an international mid-tier accounting firm for over 10 years, along with being the Internal Auditor for the largest building society in Australia, Paul has worked across a range of industry sectors including Local and State Government, manufacturing, retail, engineering, mining and exploration, registered clubs and cooperatives and not-for-profits.

In addition to all of this, Paul is also involved in discussions with industry groups and associations about changes to key legislation, auditing standards and financial reporting. Paul currently resides on three Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee's in the Hunter region, holding the position as Chairperson for one of those ARIC Committee's.



***Councillor Member:
Cr Rod Scholes, Deputy Mayor – Muswellbrook Shire Council***

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

Cr Scholes has served in his role at Muswellbrook Shire Council as a Councillor for 8 years and as Deputy Mayor for 4 years.

Cr Scholes is a retired Senior Project Manager, having worked for major mining companies in the Hunter region and northwest since 1997. Prior to this he worked as a Production Mining Superintendent.

During 2019/20 the ARIC was convened on 20 November 2019, 3 March 2020 and 20 May 2020.

Key achievements of the ARIC this year included:

- ***Endorsement of Council's new Enterprise Risk Management Framework;***
- ***Endorsement of Council's new Internal Audit Charter;***
- ***Review of outstanding internal audit recommended actions;***
- ***Review of the financial statements and management letter,***
- ***Oversight of Council's Service Delivery Review program; and***
- ***Oversight of Council's proposed forward strategy for internal audit.***

Centium were appointed in May 2020 to develop the Muswellbrook Shire Council Strategic Internal Audit Plan 2020-2023 in consultation with senior management and the ARIC.

Fraud Control

In 2019/2020 Council's CFO won a scholarship to attend a one-week ICAC intensive training session on Fraud and Corruption Control. Following this training the CFO reviewed key business processes and conducted inhouse training and key staff undertook on-line training. The focus in 2019/2020 has been on improving compliance with Council's new Procurement Policy, conducting in-house training into Procurement Policy Compliance and Procurement Procedures.

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 2019/2020 Council delivered the following business improvements:

- *Established a new Audit Risk and Improvement Charter and Committee*
- *Completed the second stage of the Information Communication Strategy (ICT) which delivered improved connectivity via a fibre optic roll out between council sites*
- *Delivered a new Customer Service Requests system, and a new Asset Management System*
- *Successfully activated the Business Continuity Plan in response to COVID-19*
- *Introduced a new service review program launched in 2019*
- *Revised the Procurement Policy and function to improve compliance.*

Fit for the Future Ratios

RATIO	BENCHMARK	2019/20	ACHIEVES BENCHMARK	2018/19	ACHIEVES BENCHMARK	2017/18	ACHIEVES BENCHMARK
Operating Performance	>0	12.38%	Yes	6.98%	Yes	13.03%	Yes
Own Source Revenue	>60%	74.30%	Yes	68.12%	Yes	65.83%	Yes
Building & Asset Renewal	>100%	102.90%	Yes	78.27%	No	97.11%	Yes
Infrastructure Backlog	<2%	2.93%	No	6.28%	No	5.49%	No
Asset Maintenance	>100%	106.41%	Yes	98.28%	No	75.13%	Yes
Debt Service Cover Ratio	>2%	2.56%	Yes	2.80 x%	Yes	2.3%	Yes
Real Operating Expenditure*	Decreasing	3.00	No	2.72	No	2.72	Yes

Children rendering the Straw bale wall in the Denman Memorial Hall

Special Variation to Rates

In February 2019 Council applied for and was granted a permanent continuation of a one-year temporary special variation to rates approved in 2018/19 to maintain the increased general income above the rate peg of 2.7% for 2019/20. The approval granted the following:

- *Increase general income by 15.13% in 2019-20;*
- *Retain this increase in the rate base permanently.*

This replaced the 1-year temporary special variation of 14.73% which expired on 30 June 2019.

The special variation funds:

- *an upgrade to the Olympic Park Sports Precinct;*
- *development of the Regional Entertainment and Conference Centre;*
- *maintenance of existing services;*
- *improvements to stormwater infrastructure; and*
- *support of the Job Creation program.*

During 2019/20 the following works were undertaken with income generated from the special variation.

<i>Wilkinson Bridge</i>	<i>\$75,667</i>
<i>Olympic Park Precinct Cycleway</i>	<i>\$134,640</i>
<i>Performance Centre</i>	<i>\$418,589</i>
<i>116 Bridge Street</i>	<i>\$1,375,661</i>
<i>Olympic Park</i>	<i>\$15,669</i>
<i>Contribution to Economic Development</i>	<i>\$249,996</i>
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>\$2,270,222</i>

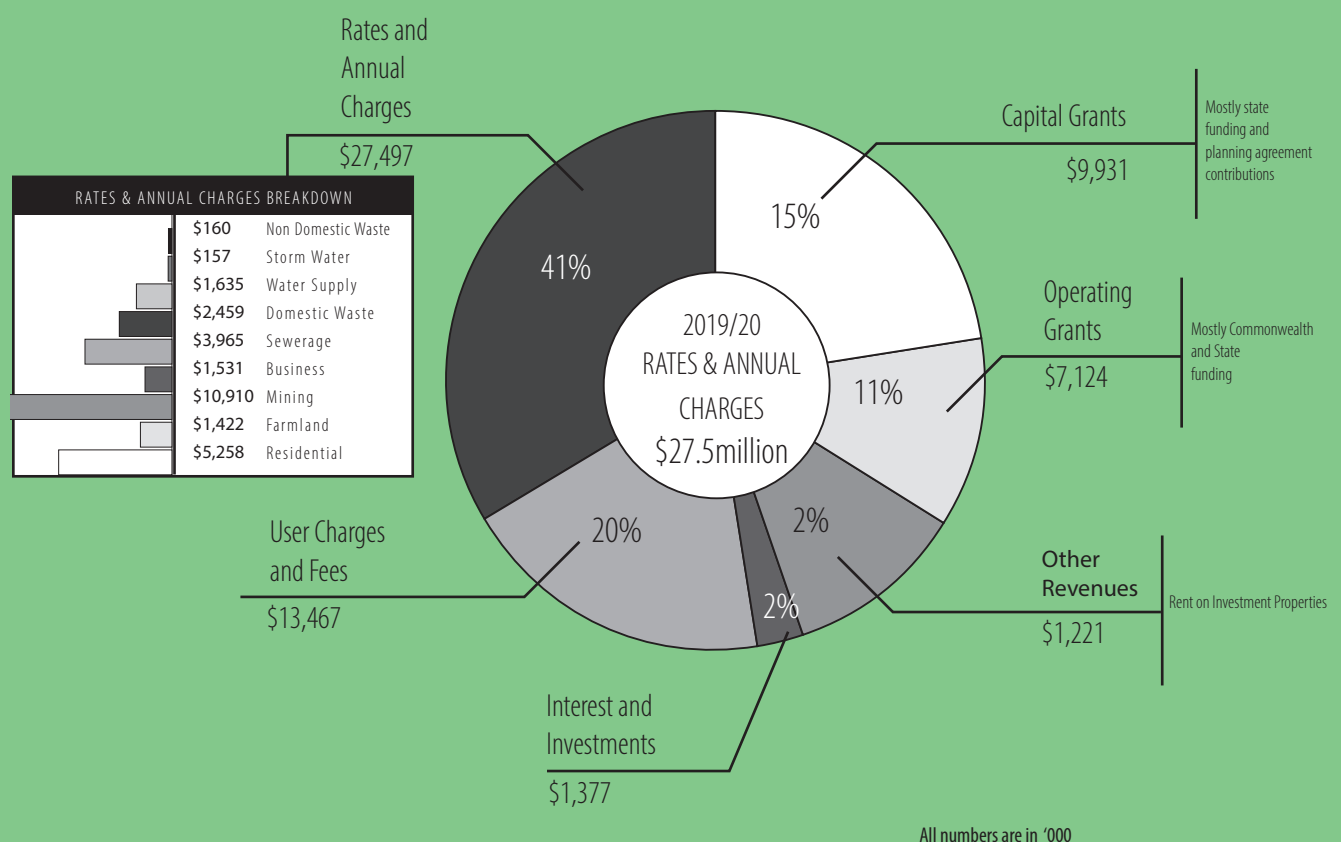
It is requirement for Council to report on the expenditure of the special variation until 2021/22.

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

Overall, the total comprehensive income for 2020 for the consolidated statements shows a surplus of \$55.4m (\$19.3m in 2019).

The \$36.0m increase in comprehensive income since last year is due to a \$37.8m improvement in the revaluation outcome for infrastructure, property, plant and equipment from a gain of \$2.1m in 2019 to \$39.9m in 2020, plus a \$4.7m increase in Rates & Annual Charges, offset primarily by:

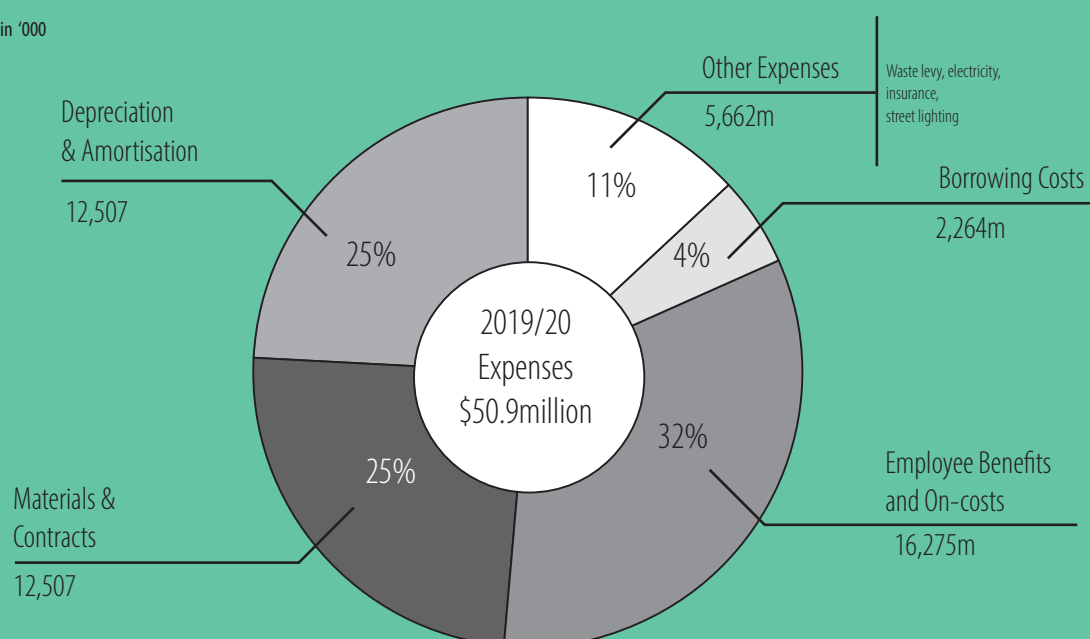
- *\$3.5m decrease in capital and operating grants,*
- *\$1.9m increase in Employee benefits and on-costs, largely due to reduced capitalisation, and*
- *\$1.3m increase in net loss from the disposal of assets.*



Council's expenses

Council's expenses, amounting to \$50.9m, are broken down as follows:

All numbers are in '000

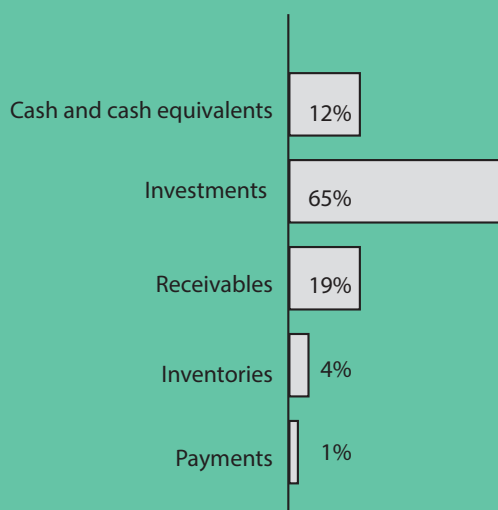


Council's total comprehensive income of \$55.4m for the year is \$39.9m great than the net operating result of \$15.4m, due to \$39.9m gain on the revaluation of infrastructure including roads, bridges and stormwater drainage.

Statement of Financial Position

Council's total assets increased by \$54m to \$782m compared to the prior year, primarily due to gains on the revaluation of roads, bridges and stormwater drainage.

Council's current assets, amounting to \$41.8m are comprised as follows:



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 2020.

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 2019-20. Refer to the Financial Statements 2019-20 for a complete financial analysis and accompanying notes.



Drought Buster Charity Rodeo, sponsored by Mach Energy, Malabar Coal, Mangoola Mine, Bengalla, Muswellbrook RSL and Theiss

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

Financial Statements 2020

Muswellbrook Shire Council

General Purpose Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2020

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:

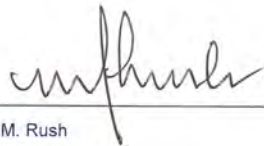
- the *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW) (as amended) and the regulations made thereunder,
- the Australian Accounting Standards and other pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board
- the *Local Government Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting*.

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 28 July 2020.



Cr. M. Rush
Mayor
26 November 2020



Ms. F. Plesman
General Manager
26 November 2020



Cr. R. Scholes
Councillor
26 November 2020



Mr. D. Hagger
Acting Responsible Accounting Officer
26 November 2020

Income Statement

Muswellbrook Shire Council

Financial Statements 2020

Income Statement

for the year ended 30 June 2020

Original unaudited budget 2020	\$ '000	Notes	Actual 2020	Actual 2019
Income from continuing operations				
26,232	Rates and annual charges	3a	27,497	22,816
11,299	User charges and fees	3b	13,467	13,259
813	Other revenues	3c	1,221	6,527
5,699	Grants and contributions provided for operating purposes	3d,3e	7,124	6,747
15,666	Grants and contributions provided for capital purposes	3d,3e	9,931	13,818
1,226	Interest and investment income	4	1,377	1,922
5,919	Rental income	13	5,755	—
66,854	Total income from continuing operations		66,372	65,089
Expenses from continuing operations				
14,630	Employee benefits and on-costs	5a	16,275	14,419
2,798	Borrowing costs	5b	2,264	2,907
12,511	Materials and contracts	5c	12,507	12,546
13,328	Depreciation and amortisation	5d	12,761	12,382
4,265	Other expenses	5e	5,646	5,436
—	Net losses from the disposal of assets	6	1,470	209
—	Net share of interests in joint ventures and associates using the equity method	18	16	20
47,532	Total expenses from continuing operations		50,939	47,919
19,322	Operating result from continuing operations		15,433	17,170
19,322	Net operating result for the year		15,433	17,170
19,322	Net operating result attributable to council		15,433	17,170
3,656	Net operating result for the year before grants and contributions provided for capital purposes		5,502	3,352

The Council has not restated comparatives when initially applying AASB 1058 *Income of Not-for-Profit Entities*, AASB 15 *Revenue from Contracts with Customers* and AASB 16 *Leases*. The comparative information has been prepared under AASB 111 *Construction Contracts*, AASB 118 *Revenue*, AASB 1004 *Contributions*, AASB 117 *Leases* and related Accounting Interpretations.

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

Statement of Comprehensive Income

Muswellbrook Shire Council

Financial Statements 2020

Statement of Comprehensive Income for the year ended 30 June 2020

\$ '000	Notes	2020	2019
Net operating result for the year (as per Income Statement)		15,433	17,170
Other comprehensive income:			
Amounts which will not be reclassified subsequently to the operating result			
Gain (loss) on revaluation of IPP&E	10(a)	39,938	2,160
Total items which will not be reclassified subsequently to the operating result		39,938	2,160
Total other comprehensive income for the year		39,938	2,160
Total comprehensive income for the year		55,371	19,330
 Total comprehensive income attributable to Council		 55,371	 19,330

The Council has not restated comparatives when initially applying AASB 1058 *Income of Not-for-Profit Entities*, AASB 15 *Revenue from Contracts with Customers* and AASB 16 *Leases*. The comparative information has been prepared under AASB 111 *Construction Contracts*, AASB 118 *Revenue*, AASB 1004 *Contributions*, AASB 117 *Leases* and related Accounting Interpretations.

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

Statement of Financial Position

Muswellbrook Shire Council

Financial Statements 2020

Statement of Financial Position

as at 30 June 2020

\$ '000	Notes	2020	2019
ASSETS			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	7(a)	5,066	6,164
Investments	7(b)	27,000	30,000
Receivables	8	7,765	6,074
Inventories	9a	1,700	1,700
Other	9b	220	116
Total current assets		41,751	44,054
Non-current assets			
Investments	7(b)	27,797	22,834
Receivables	8	846	—
Infrastructure, property, plant and equipment	10(a)	655,676	605,244
Investment property	11	55,323	55,988
Investments accounted for using the equity method	18	197	213
Total non-current assets		739,839	684,279
Total assets		781,590	728,333
LIABILITIES			
Current liabilities			
Payables	14	8,030	6,512
Contract liabilities	12	1,265	—
Borrowings	14	19,231	21,494
Provisions	15	3,734	3,259
Total current liabilities		32,260	31,265
Non-current liabilities			
Borrowings	14	45,975	47,935
Provisions	15	9,410	9,153
Total non-current liabilities		55,385	57,088
Total liabilities		87,645	88,353
Net assets		693,945	639,980
EQUITY			
Accumulated surplus	16	369,526	355,499
Revaluation reserves	16	324,419	284,481
Council equity interest		693,945	639,980
Total equity		693,945	639,980

The Council has not restated comparatives when initially applying AASB 1058 *Income of Not-for-Profit Entities*, AASB 15 *Revenue from Contracts with Customers* and AASB 16 *Leases*. The comparative information has been prepared under AASB 111 *Construction Contracts*, AASB 118 *Revenue*, AASB 1004 *Contributions*, AASB 117 *Leases* and related Accounting Interpretations.

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

Statement of Changes in Equity

Financial Statements 2020

Muswellbrook Shire Council

Statement of Changes in Equity for the year ended 30 June 2020

\$ '000	Notes	as at 30/06/20			as at 30/06/19		
		Accumulated surplus	revaluation reserve	IPP&E	Accumulated surplus	revaluation reserve	IPP&E
				Total equity			Total equity
Opening balance		355,499	284,481	639,980	338,329	282,321	620,650
Changes due to AASB 1058 and AASB 15 adoption	16	(1,406)	—	(1,406)	—	—	—
Restated opening balance		354,093	284,481	638,574	338,329	282,321	620,650
Net operating result for the year		15,433	—	15,433	17,170	—	17,170
Other comprehensive income							
– Gain (loss) on revaluation of IPP&E	10(a)	—	39,938	39,938	—	2,160	2,160
Other comprehensive income		—	39,938	39,938	—	2,160	2,160
Total comprehensive income		15,433	39,938	55,371	17,170	2,160	19,330
Equity – balance at end of the reporting period		369,526	324,419	693,945	355,499	284,481	639,980

The Council has not restated comparatives when initially applying AASB 1058 *Income of Not-for-Profit Entities*, AASB 15 *Revenue from Contracts with Customers* and AASB 16 *Leases*. The comparative information has been prepared under AASB 111 *Construction Contracts*, AASB 118 *Revenue*, AASB 1004 *Contributions*, AASB 117 *Leases* and related Accounting Interpretations.

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 2020

Statement of Cash Flows for the year ended 30 June 2020

Original unaudited budget 2020	\$ '000	Notes	Actual 2020	Actual 2019
Cash flows from operating activities				
Receipts:				
26,232	Rates and annual charges		26,419	23,315
11,299	User charges and fees		13,756	13,601
1,226	Investment and interest revenue received		1,438	2,098
21,365	Grants and contributions		16,683	20,484
–	Bonds, deposits and retention amounts received		–	250
6,732	Other		5,743	5,020
Payments:				
(13,784)	Employee benefits and on-costs		(15,807)	(14,133)
(15,777)	Materials and contracts		(11,550)	(12,110)
(2,798)	Borrowing costs		(2,242)	(2,620)
–	Bonds, deposits and retention amounts refunded		(45)	(260)
(4,265)	Other		(6,222)	(4,457)
30,230	Net cash provided (or used in) operating activities	17b	28,173	31,188
Cash flows from investing activities				
Receipts:				
70	Sale of investment securities		37,250	31,750
–	Sale of infrastructure, property, plant and equipment		510	304
Payments:				
–	Purchase of investment securities		(39,213)	(36,260)
(326)	Purchase of investment property		665	(636)
(29,765)	Purchase of infrastructure, property, plant and equipment		(24,238)	(28,572)
–	Purchase of real estate assets		–	(7)
(30,021)	Net cash provided (or used in) investing activities		(25,026)	(33,421)
Cash flows from financing activities				
Receipts:				
–	Proceeds from borrowings and advances		2,000	7,000
Payments:				
(6,174)	Repayment of borrowings and advances		(6,329)	(3,828)
(6,174)	Net cash flow provided (used in) financing activities		(4,329)	3,172
(5,965)	Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		(1,182)	939
–	Plus: cash and cash equivalents – beginning of year	17a	6,164	5,225
(5,965)	Cash and cash equivalents – end of the year	17a	4,982	6,164
–	plus: Investments on hand – end of year	7(b)	54,797	52,834
(5,965)	Total cash, cash equivalents and investments		59,779	58,998

The Council has not restated comparatives when initially applying AASB 1058 *Income of Not-for-Profit Entities*, AASB 15 *Revenue from Contracts with Customers* and AASB 16 *Leases*. The comparative information has been prepared under AASB 111 *Construction Contracts*, AASB 118 *Revenue*, AASB 1004 *Contributions*, AASB 117 *Leases* and related Accounting Interpretations.

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 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 Statement by Councillors and Management, the Income Statement of each Declared Business Activity for the year ended 30 June 2020, the Statement of Financial Position of each Declared Business Activity as at 30 June 2020 and Note 1 Significant accounting policies for the Business Activities declared by Council.

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 2020, and their 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 28 (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 (including Independence Standards)' (APES 110).

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

Independent Auditor's Reports (Auditor General)

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 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.

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 2020 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.

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.

Independent Auditor's Reports (Auditor General)

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.

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.

The scope of my audit does not include, nor 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

27 November 2020
SYDNEY



Cr Martin Rush
Mayor
Muswellbrook Shire Council
PO Box 122
MUSWELLBROOK NSW 2333

Contact: Furqan Yousuf
Phone no: 02 9275 7470
Our ref: D2027807/1765

27 November 2020

Dear Cr Rush

**Report on the Conduct of the Audit
for the year ended 30 June 2020
Muswellbrook Shire Council**

I have audited the general purpose financial statements (GPFS) of Muswellbrook Shire Council (the Council) for the year ended 30 June 2020 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 2020 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

	2020 \$m	2019 \$m	Variance %
Rates and annual charges revenue	27.5	22.8	20.6
Grants and contributions revenue	17.1	20.6	17.0
Operating result from continuing operations	15.4	17.2	10.5
Net operating result before capital grants and contributions	5.5	3.4	61.8

Rates and annual charges revenue increased by \$4.7million (20.6 per cent) to \$27.5 million in 2019–20. This increase is largely attributable to:

- a special rate variation of 15.13 per cent for the 2019-20 rate year, and
- an increase in mining rates revenue by \$4.05 million due to increase in land valuation by the NSW Valuer General.

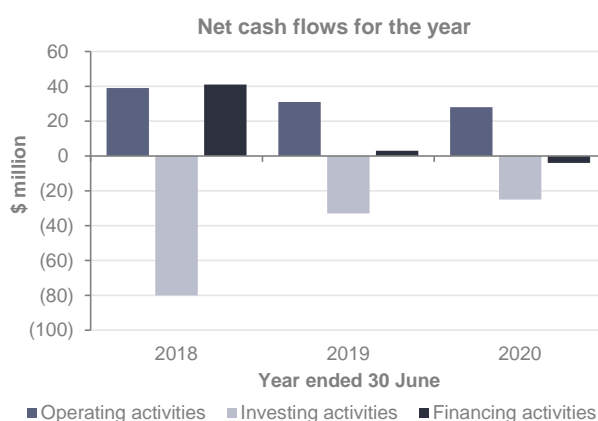
Grants and contributions revenue decreased by \$3.5 million (17.0 per cent) to \$17.1 million in 2019–20. The decrease was largely attributable to decreases in cash developer contributions by \$2.6 million and other cash contributions for roads and bridges by \$3.6 million. The overall decrease was offset by an increase in capital grant funding for Transport by \$2.2 million.

Council's operating result for the year is a surplus of \$15.4 million, which is \$1.8 million lower than the 2018-19 operating result. The reduction is mainly attributable to the increase in operating expenses by \$3.0 million (employee benefits and on-costs increased by \$1.9 million and loss from the disposal of assets increased by \$1.3 million), partially offset by the increase in total revenue by \$1.3 million (as explained above).

Council's net operating result before capital grants and contributions is a surplus of \$5.5 million, which is \$2.1 million greater than the 2018–19 net operating result before capital grants and contributions. This is mainly attributable to the decrease in capital grants and contributions by \$3.9 million, partially offset by the decrease in net operating result for the year.

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

- The Council's cash and cash equivalents was \$5.0 million at 30 June 2020 (2018-19: \$6.2 million).
- Net cash inflows from operating activities decreased by \$3.0 million mainly due to the decrease in grants and contributions received during the year.
- Net cashflows used in investing activities decreased by \$8.4 million mainly due to the decrease in purchase of investment securities and infrastructure property plant and equipment.
- Net cash inflows from financing activities decreased by \$7.5 million mainly due to net repayment of borrowings of \$4.3 million during the year, compared with the net proceeds from borrowings of \$3.2 in the prior year.



FINANCIAL POSITION

Cash and investments

Cash and investments	2020	2019	Commentary
	\$m	\$m	
External restrictions	34.2	36.9	<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 decreased by \$2.7 million primarily due to a decrease in cash relating to sewer fund developer contributions. 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 internal restrictions of \$2.2 million is mainly due to increases in restricted cash for waste management centre and carry over capital works 19/20. Unrestricted cash balance of \$2.1 million at 30 June 2020 is available to provide liquidity for day-to-day operations of the Council.
Internal restrictions	23.6	21.4	
Unrestricted	2.1	0.7	
Cash and investments	59.9	59.0	

Debt

The Council has \$65.2 million of borrowings as at 30 June 2020 (2019: \$69.4 million).

The Council had an accumulated financing facility limit of \$0.8 million as at 30 June 2020 (2019: \$0.8 million) which remained unutilised at year-end.

PERFORMANCE

Performance measures

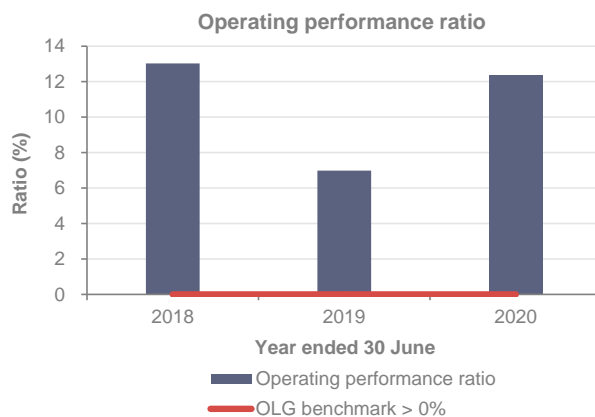
The following section provides an overview of the Council's performance against the performance measures and performance benchmarks set by the Office of Local Government (OLG) within the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment.

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 OLG is greater than zero per cent.

The Council's operating performance ratio of 12.38 per cent is above the industry benchmark of zero per cent.

The 2019-20 ratio improved as a result of Council's improved operating result for the year.



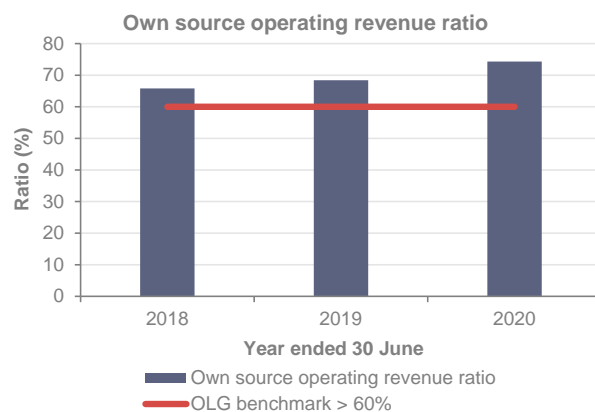
Own source operating revenue ratio

The 'own source operating revenue ratio' measures council's fiscal flexibility and the degree to which it relies on external funding sources such as grants and contributions. The benchmark set by OLG is greater than 60 per cent.

The Council's own source operating revenue ratio of 74.3 per cent is above the industry benchmark of 60 per cent. 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 Council's 2019-20 own source operating revenue ratio improved mainly due to the increase in revenue from rates and annual charges.

The 2018-19 ratio was restated from 68.12 per cent to 68.4 per cent, based on the revised OGL guidelines.

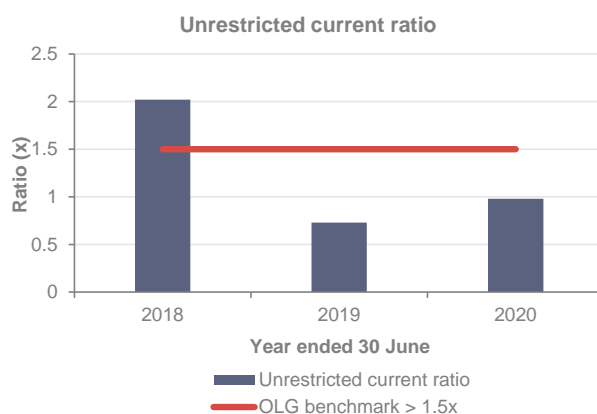


Unrestricted current ratio

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 OLG is greater than 1.5 times.

The Council's liquidity ratio of 0.98 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 they fall due.

The Council's unrestricted current ratio has improved from prior year mainly due to a reduction in current portion of the externally restricted assets.

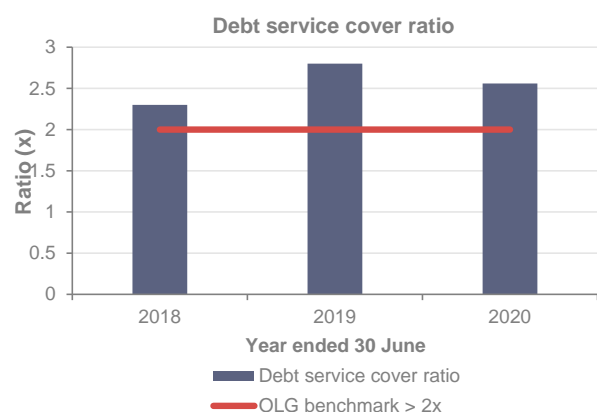


Debt service cover ratio

The 'debt service cover ratio' measures the operating cash to service debt including interest, principal and lease payments. The benchmark set by OLG is greater than two times.

The Council's debt service cover ratio of 2.56 times is above the industry benchmark of greater than 2 times.

The Council's debt service cover ratio has decreased from prior mainly due to increased repayment of borrowings in 2019-20.



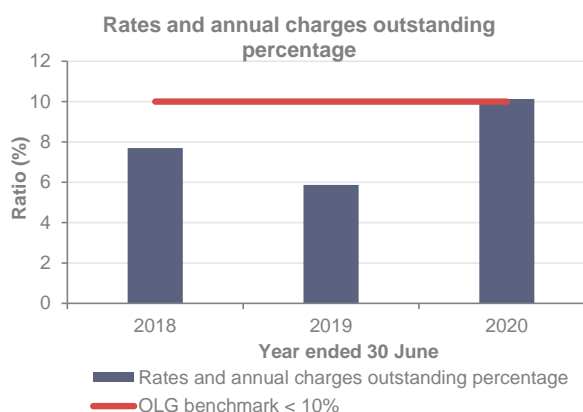
Rates and annual charges outstanding percentage

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 OLG is less than 10 per cent for regional and rural councils.

The Council's rates and annual charges outstanding percentage of 10.13 per cent exceeded the threshold benchmark of less than 10 per cent for regional and rural councils.

The increase in 2019-20 ratio compared with the prior year was mainly due to the increase in rates and annual charges debt at 30 June 2020. The debt increase is primarily related to a mining ratepayer with the remaining balance of above \$1.2 million repayable in instalments over the next two financial years.

The 2018-19 ratio was restated from 5.91 per cent to 5.87 per cent, based on the revised OLG guidelines.

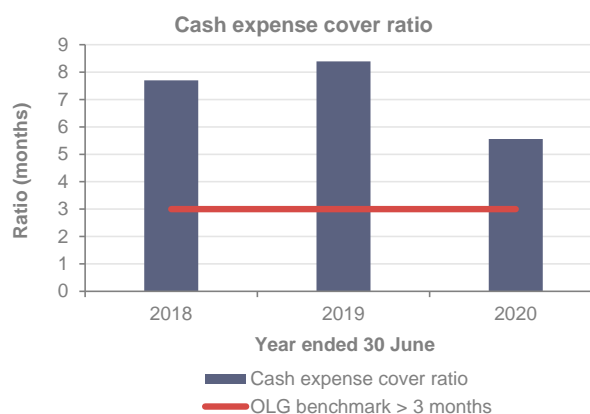


Cash expense cover ratio

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 OLG is greater than three months.

The Council's cash expense cover ratio was 5.56 months, which is above the industry benchmark of greater than 3 months. This indicates that the Council had the capacity to cover 5.56 months of operating cash expenditure without additional cash inflows at 30 June 2020.

The cash expense cover ratio has decreased due to increase in repayment of borrowings during the year.



Infrastructure, property, plant and equipment renewals

The Council has renewed \$12.3 million of assets in 2019-20 financial year, compared to \$10.0 million in the prior year.

OTHER MATTERS

Impact of new accounting standards

AASB 15 'Revenue from Contracts with Customers' and AASB 1058 'Income for Not-for-Profit Entities'

The Council adopted the new accounting standards AASB 15 'Contracts with Customers' and AASB 1058 'Income of Not-for-Profit Entities' (collectively referred to as the Revenue Standards) for the first time in their 2019–20 financial statements.

AASB 15 introduces a new approach to recognising revenue based on the principle that revenue is recognised when control of a good or service transfers to a customer. AASB 15 impacts the timing and amount of revenue recorded in a councils' financial statements, particularly for grant revenue. AASB 15 also increases the amount of disclosures required.

AASB 1058 prescribes how not-for-profit entities account for transactions conducted on non-commercial terms and the receipt of volunteer services. AASB 1058 significantly impacts the timing and amount of income recorded in a councils' financial statements, particularly for grant income and rates which are paid before the commencement of the rating period.

The Council recognised a \$1.4 million adjustment to opening accumulated surplus at 1 July 2019 on adoption of the new Revenue Standards.

The Council disclosed the impact of adopting the new Revenue Standards in Note 15.

AASB 16 'Leases'

The Council adopted the new accounting standard AASB 16 'Leases' for the first time in their 2019–20 financial statements.

AASB 16 changes the way lessees treat operating leases for financial reporting. With a few exceptions, operating leases will now be recorded in the Statement of Financial Position as a right-of-use asset, with a corresponding lease liability.

AASB 16 results in lessees recording more assets and liabilities in the Statement of Financial Position and changes the timing and pattern of expenses recorded in the Income Statement.

The Council determined that no material right-of-use assets and lease liabilities existed at 1 July 2019 on adoption of AASB 16 and none were entered into during the 2019-20 financial year.

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 to the audit.



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

cc: Ms Fiona Plesman, General Manager
Mr Mitchell Morley, Chair of Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee
Mr Jim Betts, Secretary of the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment

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	\$27,000
Councillors Fees	\$133,000
Councillors Expenses	
Office Equipment	\$0
Telephone Calls	\$1,548
Conference & Seminars	\$3,316
Training & skills development	\$0
Interstate Visits	\$1,288
Overseas Visits	\$0
Spouse/Partner Expenses	\$0
Transport	\$12,312
Catering	\$1,300
Child Care	\$316
Other	\$361
Officer Insurance	\$54,332
Councillor Expenses sub-total	\$74,773
Total	\$234,773

Interstate and overseas travel

No overseas travel was undertaken by councillors in 2019/20.

The Mayor and two Council Officers travelled to Melbourne twice in 2019/20 for meetings to discuss the advancement of economic development opportunities for the Muswellbrook Shire.

The total cost of the program of travel (including economy class airfares, accommodation, meals, insurance and land transport) for the Mayor was \$1,288

Legal expenses

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

Item	Expense
Planning and Development	\$455
Debt Recovery	\$83,768
Other	\$1,499,620
Total	\$1,583,843

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 2019/20, Council made contributions, under section 356 of the Act in the total amount of \$35,00. Council introduced a new program of Community Grants in 2019/20, which encourages community organisations to make applications for funds to support a range of initiatives and events with small matched contributions, together with its regular allocation of funds to schools and program of events. The program will continue in future years.

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

Baerami Memorial School Of Art	\$4,094
Early Links Inclusion Support	\$1,364
Merton Living Limited	\$1,000
Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce	\$2,500
Hunter Councils	\$10,877
Hunter Valley Research Foundation	\$5,000
St Martins Women's Guild	\$1,485
Sunnyfield Disability Services	\$1,000

Exercise of Council functions by external bodies

The following organisations exercised functions delegated by Council during the 2019/20year:

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 2019/20 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 sought expressions of interest from all staff members to fill voluntary Council EEO Officer roles. Responses were received from across Council and all candidates have been enrolled in a role-specific online E-learning course. EEO training is now also available to all staff via E-learning in an endeavour to provide whole-of-organisation awareness regarding the EEO Officer role at Council.

Human Resources (HR) has updated all grievance and dispute resolution policies, procedures and forms. Further training will be provided to the EEO Officers following the consultation, approval and adoption of the revised policies and procedures. The HR portal will be updated, at the conclusion of the policy and procedure review process, to ensure that the EEO Officer contact list is made available to all Council staff.

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 2019/20, Council has two (2) senior staff with a total remuneration package of \$463,356.68

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 2019/20 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
TCM CIVIL PTY LTD	Design and Construction of SPS5 Rising Main	\$574,385.00
Cleveland Property Services P/L	Provision of Cleaning Services for Muswellbrook Shire Council Buildings and Public Toilets	\$163,359.43
Hitachi Construction Machinery (Aust.) Pty Ltd	Supply and Delivery of a Close Radius Tracked Excavator and optional extras	\$212,237.50
Bitzios Consulting	Review of Mine Affected Roads Network Plan	\$298,750.00
Stefanutti Construction Pty Ltd	Upgrade of Wybong Road, from CH20.6 – CH21.5 and CH22.0 – CH23.7	\$1,277,907.40
TCM Pty Ltd	Water Dispensing Points for Muswellbrook and Denman	\$282,303.00
AACPK Investments Pty Ltd t/as Wideland Trucks & Machinery	Supply and Delivery of Water and Wastewater Networks – First Response Vehicle	\$206,415.26
Sewerquip Group	Supply and Delivery of Sewer Jetter Truck	\$329,045.50
Pitt & Sherry Pty Ltd	Preliminary Engineering Design and Environmental Impact Statement for Food Organics & Garden Organics (FOGO) Processing Facility	\$245,292.00

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 2019/20 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 incident were recorded in the NSW Government's Companion Animals Registry database.
Cost of Council's companion animal management and activities	\$155,392.00
Companion animal community education programs carried out and strategies Council has in place to promote and assist the desexing of dogs and cats	Council offers discounted micro-chipping service from the shelter. Facebook posts have been made to encourage people to desex and vaccinate their pets. A new register of undesexed cats has been established. Due to COVID-19, Council did not implement face-to-face community education programs to promote the desexing of dogs and cats during 2019/20.
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	361	204
Released to owner	73	8
Sold/Adopted	27	17
Rescue	76	85
Euthanised	56	63

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

Council wrote off or abandoned the following amounts during 2019/20 in rates and annual charges. All abandonments were made either under the General Manager's delegated authority or Council resolutions.

Undetected water leaks (in accordance with Council Policy W5/4 – Water Management Policy Undetected Water Leak)	\$14,789.50
Double charged water consumption through two meters	\$294.32
Council used water on private property during works	\$3.80

Code of Conduct

Three complaints were made under the Muswellbrook Shire Council Code of Conduct for the year 2019/2020.

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 2020, Muswellbrook Shire Council received one disclosure made under the PID Act. The matter was investigated and resolved within the reporting period.

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	No
Information made publicly available by the agency	No

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	2
---------------------------------------	---

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	0	0	0%
Members of Parliament	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Private sector business	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	50%
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	0	0%
Members of the public (other)	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	50%
Total	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	
% of Total	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%		

*** 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)	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	100%
Access applications that are partly personal information applications and partly other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Total	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	
% of Total	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%		

* 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	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	100%
Decided after 35 days (by agreement with applicant)	0	0%
Not decided within time (deemed refusal)	0	0%
Total	2	

**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*	0	0	0	0%
Internal review following recommendation under section 93 of Act	0	0	0	0%
Review by NCAT	0	0	0	0%
Total	0	0	0	
% of Total	0%	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	0	0%
Applications by persons to whom information the subject of access application relates (see section 54 of the Act)	0	0%
Total	0	

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	



The new aquatic centre features a wet playground for children, sauna rooms, wading pool and a heated indoor pool.

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

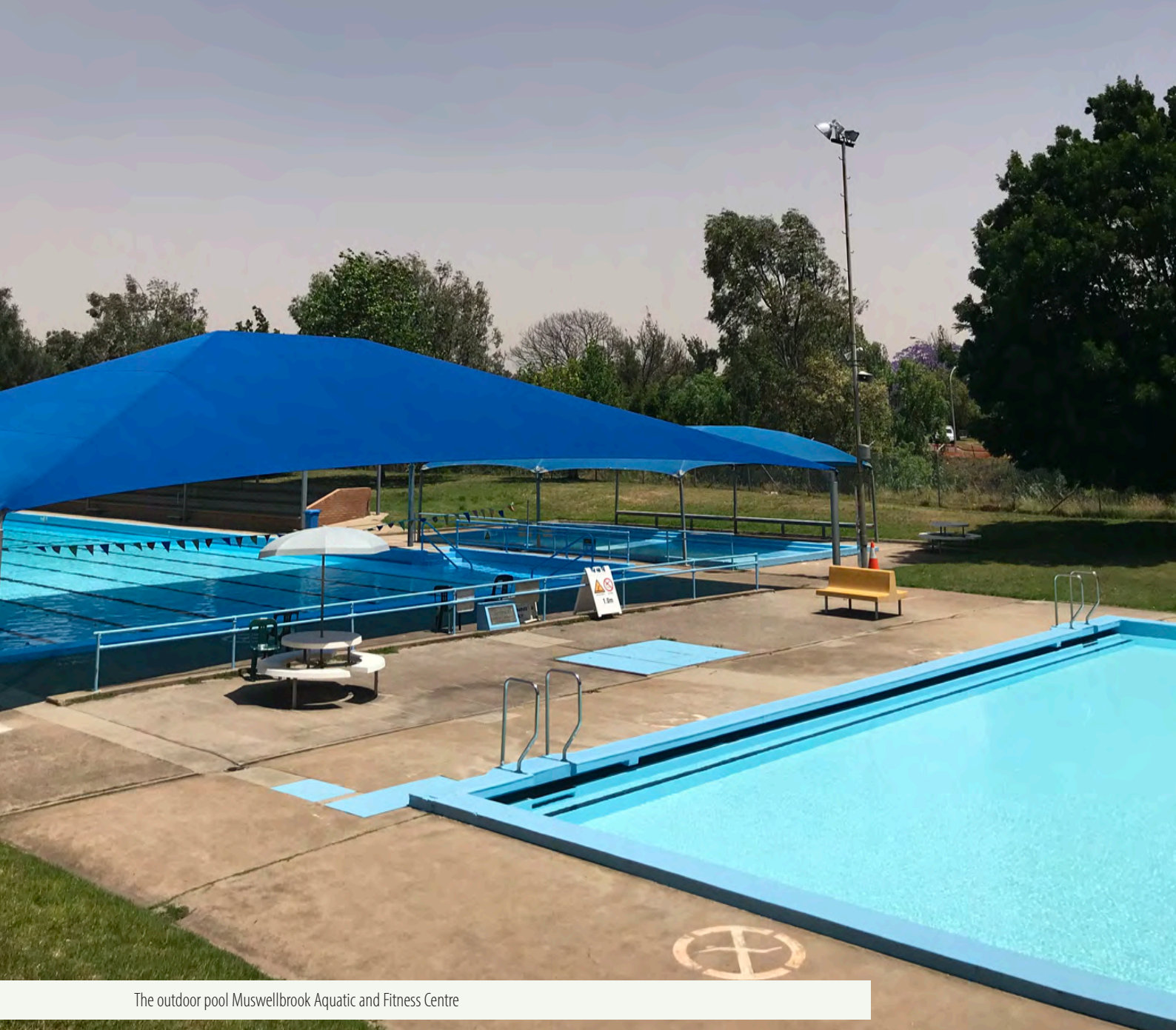
Pursuant to section 7.5(5) of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979, the following table details compliance with planning agreements to which Council is a party. It is noted that each of the agreements were complied with in full.

Planning Agreement	Project	Expenditure 2019/20
Hunter Valley Energy Coal Pty Ltd	Resources for Regions VI	\$598,000.000
Bengalla Mining Company Ltd	Bylong Valley Way	\$200,000.00
	Hunter Beach	\$298,000.00
Mangoola Coal Operations Pty Ltd	Denman Business Precinct	\$300,000.00
	Wybong Road R4R Co-contribution	\$110,000.00
MACH Energy Australia Pty Ltd	Denman Business Precinct	\$605,000.00

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	3
Inspections of premises on which there are more than two dwellings	1
Compliance Certificates issued	59
Non-Compliance Certificates issued	2



The outdoor pool Muswellbrook Aquatic and Fitness Centre

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 agencies and Council services appropriate to their age and needs.

Council also works with health, welfare and educational organisations 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 include;

- *Adapting existing services to ensure that they meet the needs of people with disabilities, is an ongoing action across all parts of Muswellbrook Council*
- *Ensuring that physical access to public buildings and facilities is improved to meet current building codes and standards*
- *Providing information to our community that is in formats which meet the communication requirements of people with disabilities in an ongoing goal of Council*
- *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 including the Disability Inclusion Tent at events which includes adaptive assistance aid to people with varying needs.*

