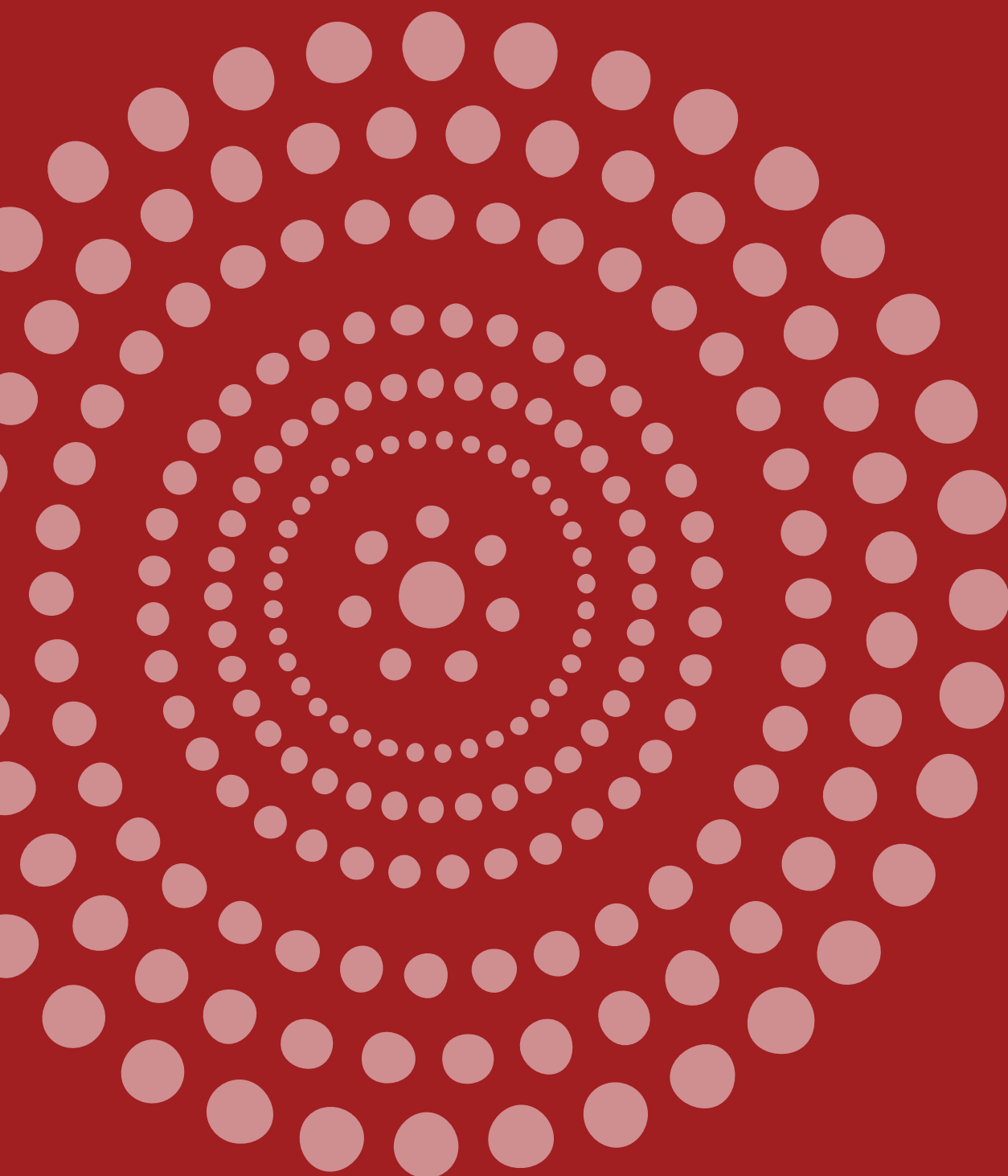


ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22



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



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Presenting Muswellbrook Shire Council's 2021/2022 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 2021/22;
- › information prescribed by the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021, including a detailed progress report on our Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

Council's 2021/22 Annual Report demonstrates our commitment to the Muswellbrook Shire Council *Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027* (CSP 2017-2027 page 44), 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. 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 44 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

Presenting Muswellbrook Shire Council's 2021/2022 Annual Report



Highlights 2021/2022

Council has made significant progress towards the realisation of the Community's interests and aspirations in 2021/22. Some of the highlights included:

Economic Prosperity

- › Council continued to work with the Hunter Joint Organisation of Councils - Hunter Futures Foundation to develop a Hunter Region Economic Diversification Strategy
- › Council's Economic Development team are working collaboratively with Federal and State governments and mining companies to prepare for transition from coal and ways to use current mining land to create future employment.

Cultural Vitality

- › A number of live cultural events returned in 2021/22 following the lifting of pandemic restrictions. The Easter Family Fun Day was held at Highbrook Park and the bronze statue, a tribute to local artist Max Watters, was unveiled.
- › The Muswellbrook Art Prize attracted record entries and the Muswellbrook Library extended its children's area and developed a sensory garden.

Social Equity and Inclusion

- › Council developed a STEM program for local schools - a targeted program focused on the development of technical skills applied to science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Community Infrastructure

- › Council commenced works on two major projects - the new Muswellbrook Animal Shelter and the Donald Horne Building, which will host the Muswellbrook Innovation Centre.
- › A major upgrade of the Muswellbrook Aquatic Centre to include two heated pools and children's water splash play area progressed.

Environmental Sustainability

- › Council continued the reclamation of weed-affected riparian areas along Muscle Creek and commenced the design of the Hunter Beach Project, which will open-up the area known as Karoola Wetlands (adjacent to the Hunter River) as a community recreation area.

Community Leadership

- › Council continued to advocate on behalf of the community for the full-funding and approval of the Muswellbrook By-Pass and Stage III of the Muswellbrook Hospital re-development.
- › In May, Council commissioned a random telephone survey of 400 adult Shire residents to measure their satisfaction with Council facilities and services, as well as explore residents' perceptions of key challenges and opportunities for the region.

All images ongoing and throughout report are credit and copyright of Muswellbrook Shire Council and staff, unless stated otherwise.

Highlights 2021/2022



Muswellbrook at a Glance



Population
16,357

Male 51.3%
Female 48.7%



Median weekly household income
\$1,628



Families
4,222

Average number of children per family for families with children
1.9



Median monthly mortgage repayments
\$1,517

Median weekly rent
\$300



Average number of motor vehicles per dwelling
1.9



All private dwellings
7,298

Average number of people per household
2.5



Provided unpaid care for child/children (during two weeks before Census Night)
27.7% (3,567)

PEOPLE AND POPULATION

All people	Muswellbrook (LGA 15650)	%	New South Wales	%
Male	8,397	51.3	3,984,166	49.4
Female	7,957	48.7	4,087,995	50.6

INDIGENOUS STATUS

All people	Muswellbrook (LGA 15650)	%	New South Wales	%
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	1,908	11.7	278,043	3.4
Non- Indigenous	13,474	82.4	7,404,499	91.7
Indigenous status not stated	978	6.0	389,616	4.8

Australian Bureau of Statistics - 2021 Census All persons QuickStats <https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/LGA15650>

Muswellbrook at a Glance

AGE

All people	Muswellbrook (LGA 15650)	%	NSW	%
Median Age	37	N/A	39	N/A
0-4	1,028	6.3	468,056	5.8
5-9	1,229	7.5	500,810	6.2
10-14	1,200	7.3	501,135	6.2
15-19	1,053	6.4	457,896	5.7
20-24	870	5.3	496,185	6.1
25-29	1,130	6.9	555,967	6.9
30-34	1,174	7.2	586,057	7.3
35-39	1,080	6.6	580,185	7.2
40-44	1,029	6.3	522,984	6.5
45-49	1,030	6.3	516,915	6.4
50-54	1,086	6.6	500,027	6.2
55-59	1,125	6.9	490,155	6.1
60-64	857	5.2	471,628	5.8
65-69	778	4.8	416,493	5.2
70-74	670	4.1	372,234	4.6
75-79	464	2.8	268,110	3.3
80 years and over	536	3.3	367,304	4.6

REGISTERED MARITAL STATUS

People aged 15 years and over	Muswellbrook (LGA 15650)	%	New South Wales	%
Married	5,377	41.7	3,124,151	47.3
Separated	566	4.4	209,657	3.2
Divorced	1,211	9.4	569,516	8.6
Widowed	671	5.2	339,990	5.1
Never Married	5,070	39.3	2,358,844	35.7

Council at a Glance



Square metres of roads sealed/ rehabilitated
128,402 m²



Square metres of footpaths works (new & replaced)
2220m²



Dogs and Cats returned home
64

Dogs and Cats registered
205 (43 Cats, 162 Dogs)

Dogs and Cats rescued
156



Library visits Muswellbrook & Denman
40,190

Library loans Muswellbrook & Denman
40,245

Library Events
93 In person Events & 7 Virtual Events



Social Media

Council
Page new likes 3,708
Followers 10,177

Aquatic Centre
Page new likes 124

Libraries
Facebook followers 1,164

Sustainability
Sustainable Futures 1,494 likes
Facebook 1,606 followers



Council-run community events
4



Website page visits
344,515

Aquatic & Fitness Centre Website hits
21,853



Council committees
11



Citizenship Ceremonies
4

New Australian Citizens
30



Art Centre visits
4,630

Muswellbrook Art Prize entrants
764



Council Service Requests lodged
4,616



Aquatic & Fitness Centre visits
Muswellbrook 11,566

Aquatic Centre visits
Denman 3,524



Occupation Certificates issued
68

Issued by Council: 23
Issued by Private Certifiers: 45

Council at a Glance



Development Applications
Lodged
192



Fuel used by Council Vehicles
268,487.07 Litres



Chemical Collection Day
Collected 2.1 Tonne
(60 visitors)



Waste Disposed of into Landfill
15,300 Tonnes

Household Bin Waste Disposed of
Household-Red Bin collected
3,578 Tonnes



Recycling collected
Kerbside 1.005 Tonnes
Dropped at Facility 32 Tonnes

Organics Processed
2,584 Tonnes

Tonnes of e-Waste Collected
19 Tonnes



RET
Water and Waste – 26.27%
Rest of Council – 36.01%
Whole Council – 30.22%



Community Complaints
Odour 9
Noise 18
Dust 4
Erosion Sediment 8
Illegal Dumping 78
Wood smoke 4



Electricity used by Council
5,390 MWH



Water consumed in
Muswellbrook Shire
1,368 Megalitres

Water used by Council
84 Megalitres



Approved mining
developments
8

Sustainability Events



National tree Day
Over 80 people planted
1,700 trees/shrubs/grasses

Clean Up Australia Day
33 participants
Waste Collected 1.4 Tonne

Renewable Energy Target for 2025
40%

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 belonging'.
- › We want a local economy with full employment in a diverse range of high value industries.
- › We want to be leaders in environmental sustainability.



An Overview of Muswellbrook Shire



Our Shire

Prior to European settlement, the Muswellbrook Shire was occupied by people of the Wonnarua/ Wanaruah language group. The Wonnarua/ Wanaruah people traded and had ceremonial links to their neighbouring tribes such as Awabakal, Darkinung, Geawegal, Kamilaroi, Wiradjuri and Worimi. The Muswellbrook Shire Local Government area is located within the Wanaruah Local Aboriginal Land Council boundary.

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

The first European 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 residential population for Muswellbrook (LGA) in 2021 was 16,357 people (ABS). This is up from 15,793 in 2016. Council anticipates low to modest population growth, in the short to medium term, associated with the planned closures of Liddell and Bayswater power stations offset by some diversification in the local economy. The average population of the Muswellbrook LGA has reflected the ebbs and flows of the mining industry.

The 2021 census indicated that Muswellbrook Shire has a relatively high proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples residing in the community at 11.7%. This compares with the 3.4% for NSW.

Muswellbrook Shire tends to be a younger community with the median age of people being 37 years, compared to 39 for NSW. In 2021 our population consisted of 21.1% aged 0-14 years compared with NSW at 18.2%; while 63.7% were aged 15-64 years compared with NSW at 64.2% and 15% aged 65 years and over compared to 17.7% across the State.

Our Shire

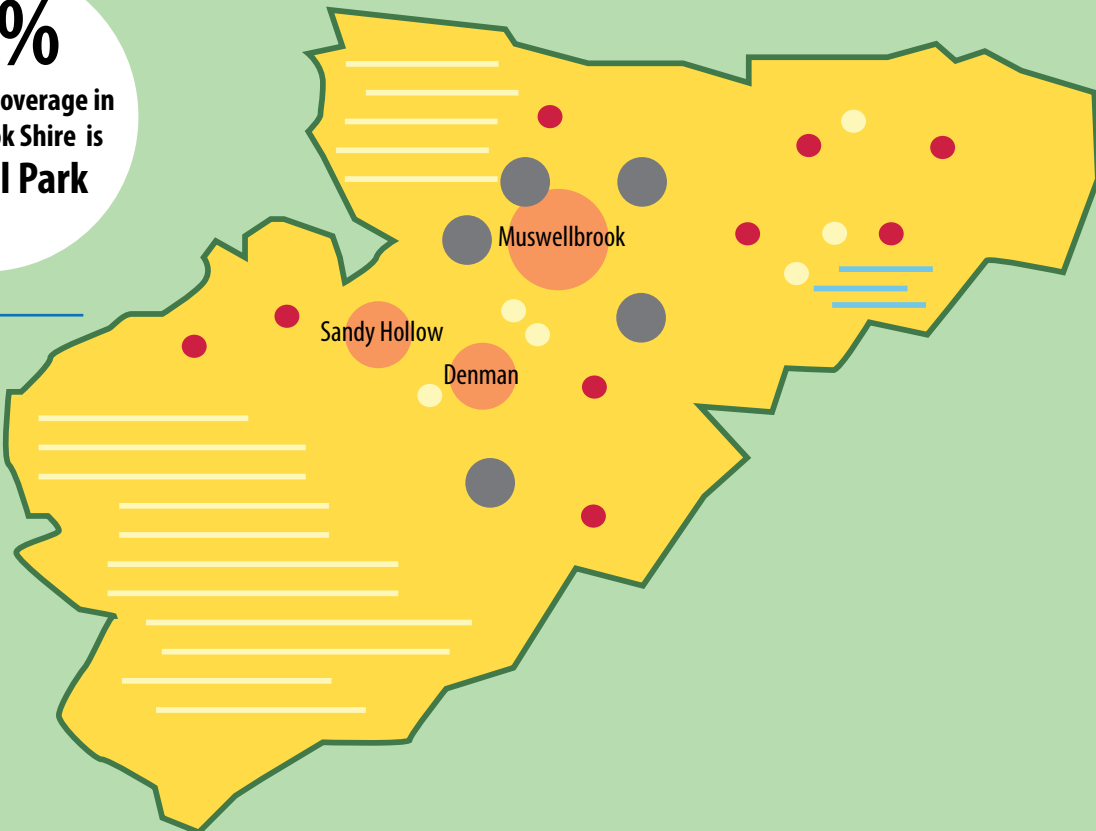


We Are Here



We Are Here

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



Muswellbrook Shire Towns

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



National Parks



Mines



Equine, Viticulture and Cropping



General Rural



Environment Management



Lake Liddell

Muswellbrook LGA Output – Jobs Comparison

Muswellbrook (A) (2021 Release 2)

Industry Sector	\$M	%	Jobs	%
Mining	\$5,543.54	61.2%	3,120	31.1%
Electricity, Gas, Water & Waste Services	\$1,498.23	16.5%	887	8.9%
Manufacturing	\$288.96	3.2%	321	3.2%
Rental, Hiring & Real Estate Services	\$273.89	3.0%	95	0.9%
Construction	\$267.48	3.0%	515	5.1%
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	\$193.92	2.1%	541	5.4%
Public Administration & Safety	\$132.74	1.5%	479	4.8%
Wholesale Trade	\$115.27	1.3%	297	3.0%
Health Care & Social Assistance	\$101.56	1.1%	694	6.9%
Transport, Postal & Warehousing	\$101.26	1.1%	275	2.7%
Retail Trade	\$89.58	1.0%	679	6.8%
Administrative & Support Services	\$80.10	0.9%	363	3.6%
Other Services	\$73.65	0.8%	366	3.7%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	\$72.98	0.8%	244	2.4%
Education & Training	\$65.25	0.7%	441	4.4%
Accommodation & Food Services	\$62.48	0.7%	505	5.0%
Financial & Insurance Services	\$51.98	0.6%	70	0.7%
Information Media & Telecommunications	\$35.51	0.4%	58	0.6%
Arts & Recreation Services	\$11.80	0.1%	67	0.7%
Total	\$9,060.16	100.0%	10,017	100.0%

* Source REMPLAN - All figures, data and commentary presented in this software are based on data sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), most of which relates to the 2016, 2011, 2006 and 2001 Censuses

Muswellbrook LGA Output – Jobs Comparison



Economic Resilience

The global economy is changing - as is the economy of the Hunter and Muswellbrook Shire.

With a long history in energy generation and coal mining, Muswellbrook Shire Council is committed to broadening the focus of the Shire's economic and employment base as these traditional industries evolve to meet global economic needs and policy changes.

As a Council, we are actively identifying and progressing opportunities to build economic resilience and create jobs. We are making a significant investment in projects and initiatives which will inspire future generations, prepare business for new opportunities and leverage our lifestyle advantages.

Muswellbrook Shire is well placed to build on our central location, existing infrastructure, workforce capability and entrepreneurial spirit as a key regional centre focused on renewable energy generation, advanced manufacturing, defence, agriculture and tourism as we move towards a net zero economy.

Council continues to work in partnership with NSW Government who have committed at least \$25 million through the Royalties for Rejuvenation Fund each year to support coal mining communities in NSW. The funding will ensure that coal mining communities, including Muswellbrook, have the support they need to plan for the future and diversify their economies.

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 in the Shire since 1944 and remains the largest employer, with over 20 percent of people working and living in the Shire engaged directly in the mining sector.

Muswellbrook Coal, commenced operations in 1906 and is Australia's longest continuously operated coal mine. Muswellbrook Coal is planned to extract its last coal from the site in late 2022. Council is assisting to attract new industries and infrastructure as a model mine reuse strategy to create jobs and leverage the sites location on the Muswellbrook Bypass. Together with approved operations at Mt Arthur, Bengalla, Mangoola, Mt Pleasant and Dartbrook, the mining sector contributes \$5,212 million or 75.8% of the Shire's total regional exports and provides 3,120 jobs.

POWER GENERATION

AGL is one of the country's biggest energy producers. The company's Liddell and Bayswater power stations based in the Muswellbrook Shire employ 522 workers plus approximately 500 contractors. 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 that it will close Liddell power station in 2023 and Bayswater power station in 2032. ALG continues to actively explore renewable energy, industry and agricultural opportunities as future options for the Liddell site. AGL and Council are working together to maximise opportunities from a transition to renewable energy generation to contribute to the diversification of our regional and national economy.

VITICULTURE

Our local wine is high quality and integral to the Upper Hunter's food and wine offering. 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 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.

Economic Resilience

EDUCATION

Muswellbrook, as a regional centre for the Hunter and New England catchments, has established itself as a provider of education and vocational training for both existing and emerging industries.

Council has invested in the Hunter Innovation Precinct as part of the town centre redevelopment as a catalyst for education excellence, innovation and industry linkages. The Hunter Innovation Precinct includes the Hunter TAFE, the University of Newcastle, Muswellbrook Library, and the Donald Horne building, incorporating the STEM Innovation Lab and Melt Advanced Manufacturing Centre, which is currently under construction.

Successful economic transitions have been led by investment in STEM education to inspire future generations and equip them with the skills for jobs which do not exist today. The STEM Innovation Lab will provide a state-of-the-art space with the latest technology for primary and secondary students in our Shire to access.

Driven by the community's expectations, Council is working with industry and the research sector to maximise emerging opportunities. These partnerships provide education pathways for students, offer collaborative research opportunities with established and emerging industry and facilitate the diversification of the Shire's economy.

EQUINE

The origins of the Upper Hunter's thoroughbred breeding industry dates back over 150 years and has earned a global reputation for breeding excellence and performance success. It is one of only three International Centres of Thoroughbred Breeding Excellence in the world. 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. With nearly half of all the thoroughbred bloodstock born in Australia coming from the Upper Hunter.

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 being Godolphin and Coolmore.

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 has a burgeoning tourism offer building on our unique wine, equine and food industries as well as our pristine national parks, mining and industrial history and our proximity to the already popular tourist destinations such as the Lower Hunter Valley and the Blue Mountains.

The tourism sector was severely effected by the COVID-19 pandemic which has impacted on the value of Tourism to the Shire. The total value of Tourism related

output for Muswellbrook is estimated at \$45.5million, which is 0.5% of total output. This is down from an estimated \$73.7million in 2016. The total tourism related employment estimate for the Shire is 250 jobs which represents 2.5% of the total workforce.

For each dollar spent by a tourist in Muswellbrook LGA, it is estimated that typically \$0.46 is spent on Accommodation & Food Services, and \$0.12 on Retail Trade.



Muswellbrook Tourism



Cr Steve Reynolds



A MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

As I reflect on the 2021-2022 financial year, I note that the latter half of 2021 was impacted by Local Government elections on December 4, 2021, which placed Council in a caretaker period until the first official meeting of the new Council, held on 11 January 2022.

Therefore, after being elected Mayor at that meeting, my reflections are of the period 11 January 2021 to 30 June 2022.

Firstly, I would like to recognise and thank our current Council, including several first term Councillors, who have helped to continue the drive for positive change in the Muswellbrook Shire.

We are incredibly fortunate in this Shire to have a passionate and engaged Council and community who provide invaluable encouragement, thoughts and ideas as we all work together to contribute to a more connected and sustainable life.

This reporting year Council launched a number of key strategies to focus us for the future. At the heart of these is the 10-year Community Strategic Plan which pulls together a wealth of feedback, ideas and priorities gathered from our community during community consultation.

Our Community Strategic Plan is underpinned by another critical strategy to help inform our decisions – the 2021/2022 Operational Plan. This essential document provides Council with a clear direction and strong evidence-base to ensure our key capital projects improve liveability and support economic development

Key projects underway or nearing completion include an extensive upgrade to Muswellbrook Aquatic Centre, a new animal shelter, an advanced manufacturing facility, housed in Stage II of the Education Hub, the Hunter River Beach project, continuing upgrades at Olympic Park, the Shire's Sports Hub, Denman Tourist Park, Denman Heritage Village and the design and planning process for Muswellbrook's town centre.

We continued to green the Shire with trees and native plantings in our streets, neighbourhoods and waterways to enhance our environment and help our public places thrive.

This period saw the end of an extensive drought period but also the continuing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and Council worked collaboratively to achieve shared goal of achieving the best possible outcomes for the Shire's residents.

I thank our collegiate and committed Councillors, Council's Leadership Team and staff who all strive to make this possible. Together, alongside our community, we will continue to make the Muswellbrook Shire the best it can be.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Steve Reynolds'.

Steve Reynolds

Mayor Muswellbrook Shire Council

Mr Derek Finnigan



A MESSAGE FROM THE ACTING GENERAL MANAGER

I am proud to present Muswellbrook Shire Council's 2021/22 Annual Report, the final annual report for the extended 2017-2022 term of Council. Muswellbrook Shire continues to develop as an important regional centre providing services and support to a community that has demonstrated great resilience in the face of drought, bushfire, the ongoing effects of the pandemic and, more recently, unprecedented rain and flooding events.

Council's resources and finances continue to experience pressure following the impacts of COVID-19 when the whole of the Upper Hunter was forced into weeks of lockdown with dire effects on both residents and businesses. Operating in these trying circumstances has, nevertheless, only strengthened Council's resolve to continue in a strong, positive direction towards fulfilling the ongoing delivery of key strategic priorities identified in the 10-year Community Strategic Plan.

Despite these difficulties, Council's financial performance remains an encouraging highpoint, with Council's operating results strengthening the foundations Council has laid over the past decade to ensure the financial future of the community is secure for the long term.

Economic transition remains a key strategic focus of Council, with additional investment in job creation initiatives continuing to contribute towards sustainable employment for the future in a dynamic global economic environment.

Progress on major projects has continued to be a key initiative of Council, with a number of important projects underway or nearing completion, including the extensive upgrade at the Muswellbrook Aquatic Centre, a new animal shelter, an advanced manufacturing facility housed in the new Donald

Horne Building, continuing upgrades at Olympic Park, the construction of the Denman Heritage Village, and design and planning for the ongoing development of Muswellbrook's town centre.

Council's achievements in 2021/22 are detailed in this Annual Report. I hope you enjoy reading about the ways Council has worked with our community and partners in government and business to achieve the objectives of the 2021/22 Operational Plan as we continue towards the fulfilment of our shared vision for the region.

Council will continue to demonstrate strong, positive leadership on the issues the community has nominated as the major challenges for the future, including economic diversification and attracting new industry, job creation, and making our Shire an attractive and healthy place to live focusing on the key initiatives of prosperity, sustainability, liveability and accessibility.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Derek Finnigan', written over a light blue grid background.

Derek Finnigan
Acting General Manager

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. During the ongoing challenges posed by COVID-19 during 2021/22 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 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. It is due to this collaboration that Council is able to inform the community immediately.

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.

2021 COMMUNITY SATISFACTION SURVEY AND COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW

Over the past 5-year term (2017– 2022), Council has consulted and engaged with Shire communities and stakeholders to inform the review of the 2017-2027 Community Strategic Plan and the development of the 2022-2032 Community Strategic Plan.

Community members have been invited to share their attitudes and ideas about a wide-range of local issues, including their level of satisfaction with Council's services and facilities and their perceptions of the major challenges and opportunities affecting the region's future via:

- › 6 random and statistically representative telephone surveys;
- › 2 Community Panels;
- › 1 online survey;
- › Listening Posts at Denman Memorial Hall and Muswellbrook Marketplace

Our Stakeholder Engagement

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 	<p>The community contributes knowledge, cultural experience, resources, ideas and feedback.</p> <p>Council provides leadership, partnership, representation, information and efficient and effective services and facilities.</p>
Ratepayers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Web: www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au › Rates notices › Ratepayers Rewards Program › Social media › Publications › Community forums 	<p>Ratepayers contribute knowledge, cultural experience, resources, ideas and feedback.</p> <p>Council generates sustainable growth and return to the community.</p>
Council Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › General Manager's Newsletter › General Manager's Forums › Manex › Managers' Meetings › Tool box talks › Posters › Intranet › Email › Staff events and training › Staff Awards 	<p>Staff members contribute valuable knowledge, skills and labour for our operations.</p> <p>Council provides employment, training opportunities and flexible and supportive work arrangements.</p>
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 	<p>The media raises the community's awareness of services, facilities, events and issues of importance.</p> <p>Council contributes content and comment for publication and broadcast.</p>
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 	<p>The local business and industry community provides employment and economic growth.</p> <p>Council provides guidance, support and opportunity.</p>
Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Web: www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au › Visitor Information Centre - Denman › Upper Hunter Country Visitor Guide › Events 	<p>Visitors bring economic benefits to the Shire including more local employment opportunities.</p> <p>Council provides high standard facilities and services.</p>
Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Web: www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au › Formal meetings › Correspondence › Forums and Conferences 	<p>The Federal and NSW State Governments provide partnerships, funding and network opportunities</p> <p>Council provides resources, partnerships and networks.</p>
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Media releases › Media alerts and briefings › Social media › Interviews › Paid advertising 	<p>The media raises the community's awareness of services, facilities, events and issues of importance.</p> <p>Council contributes content and comment for publication and broadcast.</p>

Our Stakeholders

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

- › 1st Denman Scout Group
- › 2nd Muswellbrook Scouts
- › Arts Upper Hunter
- › Australian Local Government Association
- › Australian Photographic Society
- › Belltrees Public School
- › Community Consultation Groups for the mines in our Shire: Bengalla, Dartbrook Coal Underground, Liddell, Mangoola, Maxwell Underground, Mount Arthur, Mount Pleasant and Muswellbrook Coal.
- › Create NSW
- › Denman & District Senior Cricket Club
- › Denman Amateur Swimming Club
- › Denman Basketball
- › Denman Chamber of Commerce
- › Denman Children's Centre
- › Denman Community Garden
- › Denman Golf Club
- › Denman Junior Cricket Association
- › Denman Junior Rugby League
- › Denman Little Athletics
- › Denman Men's Shed
- › Denman Pony Club
- › Denman Public School
- › Denman Rugby League Club
- › Denman Sandy Hollow JRLC
- › Denman Squash Club
- › Denman St Joseph's Primary School
- › Denman Visitor Information Centre
- › Department of Communities & Justice
- › Destination Sydney Surrounds North
- › Drug & Alcohol Health Services
- › Glen Gallic Shooting Club
- › Hunter Joint Organisation Group Entities (including associated entity Strategic Services Australia)
- › Hunter Region Landcare Network
- › Hunter Research Foundation
- › Hunter Sustainability Landcare TEAM (HSLT)
- › Liddell Transition and Community Dialogue Group
- › Local Buying Foundation Advisory Committee
- › Local Government NSW
- › Local Government Professionals
- › Martindale Creek Catchment Landcare
- › Martindale Public School
- › McCully's Gap Rehabilitation Sustainability Community Group Inc.
- › MOOSH
- › Muscle Creek Landcare
- › Muswellbrook 2nd Scout Group
- › Muswellbrook AFL Club
- › Muswellbrook Amateur Athletics
- › Muswellbrook Amateur Cycle Club
- › Muswellbrook Amateur RSL Youth Swimming
- › Muswellbrook Amateur Theatrical Society
- › Muswellbrook Basketball
- › Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- › Muswellbrook Childcare Centre
- › Muswellbrook Croquet Club
- › Muswellbrook District Junior Rugby League Club
- › Muswellbrook Girl Guides
- › Muswellbrook Golf Club
- › Muswellbrook High School
- › Muswellbrook Junior Cricket Club
- › Muswellbrook Junior Rugby League
- › Muswellbrook Little Athletics Club
- › Muswellbrook Men's Shed

Our Stakeholders

- › Muswellbrook Netball Association
- › Muswellbrook Park Tennis Club
- › Muswellbrook Physical Culture
- › Muswellbrook Preschool
- › Muswellbrook Public School
- › Muswellbrook Senior Rugby League Club
- › Muswellbrook South School
- › Muswellbrook Squash Club
- › Muswellbrook Theatrical Society
- › Muswellbrook Touch Football
- › 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 State Emergency Services
- › NSW Water Directorate
- › Olympic Park Tennis Club Inc
- › Pacific Brook Christian School
- › Penguin Community Garden
- › Pine Ridge Landcare
- › Planning Institute of Australia (NSW division)
- › Polly Farmer Foundation - Muswellbrook
- › Regional Arts NSW
- › Resilience NSW
- › Richard Gill School
- › Royal Lifesaving NSW
- › Sandy Hollow Progress Association
- › St Joseph's High School - Aberdeen
- › St Nicholas Early Education
- › Standards Australia
- › State Library NSW
- › StateCover
- › Statewide Mutual
- › TAFE NSW
- › The Brook Cricket Club
- › Tilly's Childcare Centre
- › Transcare Services
- › University of Newcastle
- › University of Newcastle – School of Creative Industries
- › Upper Hunter Community Drug Action Team
- › Upper Hunter Community Services
- › Upper Hunter Conservatorium of Music
- › Upper Hunter Country Tourism
- › Upper Hunter Domestic Violence Service
- › Upper Hunter Economic Development Corporation
- › Upper Hunter Homeless Support
- › Upper Hunter Landcare
- › Upper Hunter Local Drug Action Team
- › Upper Hunter Mining Dialogue (coordinated by NSW Minerals Council)
- › Upper Hunter Show
- › Upper Hunter Water Alliance
- › Upper Hunter Youth Services
- › Valley Mountain Bikers
- › Wanaruah Local Aboriginal Lands Council
- › Warrior Disability Services
- › Westpac Rescue Helicopter
- › Youth CLAN

Sustainability Engagement

Council's Sustainability Unit won an Excellence in Environment Award for Communication, Education and Empowerment for its Sustainable Future – Muswellbrook Connect program from Local Government NSW.

The Sustainability Unit was responsible for revegetation work on Muscle Creek as well as maintaining Hyde Park wetland in Denman. This work and two grant funded projects on Muscle Creek have involved planting over 2000 native species, three hectares of weed control, educational signage and workshops. These projects are supported by the NSW Government through the Environmental Trust.

The Business and Community War on Waste Grant Programs saw three business and five community groups receive grants to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill. Forty worm farms and thirty compost bins have been sold at a discount to residents. Council supported Denman Public, Denman St Joseph's, Muswellbrook Public and Muswellbrook South School through helping fund waste infrastructure.

Sustainability staff continue to assist with the roll out of a new Food Organics Garden Organics (FOGO) service. The grant funded "Denman – Don't be a Tosser" anti-litter project was successfully completed with new signs and bin enclosures installed and engagement activities held.

The popularity of the Sustainable Futures – Muswellbrook Facebook page continues to grow. It has now received 1,530 page likes and 1,634 page followers. This page and other Sustainability initiatives assist Council to engage with the community to promote the Community Recycling Centres, correct waste, water, sewerage and energy management, the Reuse Shop, Sustainability Hub activities, worm farms, composting, grant projects and more.

The Sustainability Hub and Muswellbrook Connect program continue to be a focus for practical and positive sustainable living. Council supports community groups such as Warrior Disability Services, the Penguin Community Garden, Muscle Creek Landcare, Muswellbrook Men's Shed, Hunter Sustainability Landcare TEAM (HSLT) and the Denman

Community Garden.

Over 100 participants from the University of Newcastle, Richard Gill and Belltrees Schools visited the Sustainability Hub during the year. The Sustainability team had a display at the Energy Hub at The Upper Hunter Show. Clean Up Australia Day was held with over 30 community volunteers in Muswellbrook and Denman. We also supported over 500 school students to participate.

The Healthy Town Challenge involved Test Yourself and 10,000 Steps signage and walking routes, a GrandMaster Chef Challenge, online workshops, pedometers hire program, cooking programs, portable water refill stations, lifestyle challenges, a photo competition and a seed library with over 1000 seed packets given away.

Each school term the Sustainability Unit hired a box from the Australian Museum and loaned them to ten educational groups. Native bee hotels have been donated to fourteen community and school groups. Workshops about native bees were held with ten educational groups and 30 residents. The Hunter Bird Observers Club (HBOC) and Council held presentations at Martindale Public School, Tilly's, Richard Gill School, Muswellbrook Childcare Centre, Goodstart and MOOSH. Council supported four bird walking tours with residents and the annual Aussie Backyard Bird Count.

Sustainability staff continue compiling electricity data and renewable energy target data. PM 2.5 air quality monitoring continued with staff changing air quality filters on a weekly basis. Staff attended quarterly Upper Hunter Air Quality Committee meetings. Flying Fox monitoring continued, while residents in affected zones are offered subsidised products to help mitigate their impact. Magpies are monitored and warning signs erected in areas known to be hotspots for Magpies swooping.

Sustainability Engagement



Events

Council holds a number of events throughout the year and supports and contributes to other community run events. Many events in 2021-2022 were impacted due to COVID-19 restrictions including the Mullins Conceptual Photography Prize and the Blue Heeler Film Festival.

2022 MUSWELLBROOK ART PRIZE



Since 1958, the Muswellbrook Art Prize has grown and evolved and is today one of the richest prizes for painting in regional Australia. Finalists for the Muswellbrook Art Prize vie for a total of \$70,000 in prize money across three categories: Painting (\$50,000 acquisitive), Works on Paper (\$10,000 acquisitive), and Ceramics (\$10,000 acquisitive). Astute adjudication of the Prize over the years has yielded an excellent collection of modern and contemporary Australian paintings, works on paper and ceramics from the Post War period of the 20th Century and into the 21st Century, with the winning acquisitive works forming the nucleus of what is now known as the Muswellbrook Shire Art Collection. Previous winners of the Muswellbrook Art Prize include such key figures as David Aspden, Sydney Ball, Richard Larter and Fred Williams. The Upper Hunter Region is also well represented with a number of local artists being successful in winning the Prize including Peter Atkins, Dale Frank, Lyn Nash and Hanna Kay.

Along with Muswellbrook Shire Council, who since 1958 has acted as sponsor and administrator of the Muswellbrook Art Prize, Bengalla Mining Company has generously sponsored the Prize for close to three decades, their commitment ensuring the development of the Muswellbrook Shire Art Collection.

2022 Muswellbrook Art Prize winners; Painting Prize – Rachel Milne, 'Nest' 2021. Works on Paper Prize - David Fairbairn 'Double Lives' _D.F&S.A No 3' 2021. Ceramics Prize – Fiona Hiscock 'Royal Park Refuge' 2021.

MULLINS CONCEPTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY PRIZE



The Australian Photographic Society's Mullins Photography Prize is a national \$15 000 acquisitive prize that seeks to find Australia's best conceptual photographic works. Finalists are exhibited annually at the Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre.

The 2021 Mullins Conceptual Photography Prize was livestreamed on Facebook due to the COVID 19 Public Health Order Restrictions.

NAIDOC WEEK - 'GUNDI: THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME – HEALING COUNTRY, FINDING ME'



This unique exhibition showcased recent works produced by the Gundi Program at St Heliers Correctional Centre. The Gundi Program focuses on cultural strengthening, vocational skills and experience of Indigenous Artist at the St Heliers Correctional Centre. The exhibition featured works

Events

titled 'Naggangbu Marngrookdha' painted by a proud Arakwal man from Bundjalung Nation.

MUSWELLBROOK ART HUNT



With the support of the NSW Government and the Festival of Place – Summer Fund, The Muswellbrook Art Hunt is a free and interactive, self-guided walking tour and treasure hunt of ten public art and culture sites around Bridge Street. Participants of the Muswellbrook Art Hunt use their smartphones to follow clues and answer questions relating to ten public artworks within the Muswellbrook CBD.

EASTER FAMILY FUN DAY



The Easter Family Fun Day is an annual event hosted by Council and local sponsors Bengalla Mining, with a mission to provide a free community event for local families while promoting local community organisations. The inaugural Easter Family Fun Day was hosted by Council in 2017. The Easter Family Fun Day features jumping castles, face painting, live music, food, information stalls, lucky door prizes and the BIG

Easter Egg Hunt accompanied by a special visit from the Easter Bunny. The 2022 Easter Family Fun Day was well supported by the local community with over 2000 people in attendance.

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE PROGRAM



Delivered by Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre, the annual Artist in Residence Program provides opportunities for the development of artists and the creation of new work for exhibition within the context of Muswellbrook Shire.

The 2022 Wollemi Artist in Residence Project was delivered in partnership with Singleton Council and NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and with support from NSW Government Resources for Regions Program. Council engaged five diverse artists for an Artist in Residence project focused on the largest declared wilderness area in NSW, and over 40% of Muswellbrook Shire, the World Heritage-listed Wollemi National Park.

Promoting conservation and celebrating the local natural environment in unity with the arts, works resulting from the project will be held in concurrent exhibitions at Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre and Singleton Culture and Arts Space in 2022.

Events

ARTIST WORKSHOPS & FAMILY PROGRAMS



The Peoples Studio is held the first Friday of the month, artists bring along their artwork and enjoy each other's company, a bite to eat and listen to some tunes courtesy of Upper Hunter Conservatorium of Music.

Workshops are held for interested community members and practicing artists, they are inspired by exhibitions including weaving techniques, charcoal drawing and tours of the Arts Centre.

The third Saturday of each month see families participate in exploratory art activities inspired by the exhibitions for 'The Art Station', whilst children aged 4-10 can participate any time during gallery opening hours in the Art Detectives program; a treasure hunt style activity designed to tune skills of art observation.

BLUE HEELER FILM FESTIVAL



The Blue Heeler Film Festival has been delivered by Muswellbrook Shire Council for numerous years, Bengalla Mining Company has generously donated \$10 000 to the Festival since its inception, their commitment ensures that the Film Festival can be delivered.

The 2022 Blue Heeler Film Festival was heavily impacted by the effects of COVID 19, which required workshops and the festival to shift to an online delivery. A partnership between Council and the University of Newcastle has been in place since 2019, the festival was cancelled in 2020, the online delivery in 2021 was a major success with 164 entries and the screening of 30 films, where a total of 117 people attended the live film screening event.

CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY



Clean Up Australia Day was held with over 30 community volunteers in Muswellbrook and Denman.

1390 kg of waste was removed from the local environment. Council also supported over 500 school students to participate.

NATIONAL RECONCILIATION WEEK – ABORIGINAL FLAG RAISING



The Muswellbrook Shire Council Aboriginal Reconciliation Committee hosts the annual Aboriginal Flag Raising Ceremony at Simpson Park Muswellbrook during National Reconciliation Week between 27 May – 3 June. The theme for 2022 was Be Brave. Make Change. This years

Events

The highlight of this year's Aboriginal Flag Raising was guest speaker Nicholas Bailey. It was well attended by a crowd of 100 people including community members, Councillors and local organisations.

NATIONAL TREE DAY



Denman National Tree Day

A National Tree Day event was held at Highbrook Park in Muswellbrook with 80 people attending where there were 1700 species of trees planted. There were two National Tree Day events held in Hyde Park in Denman in the 2021/2022 year. 47 students and teachers from St Joseph's Denman joined Sustainability staff and planted trees for the day of celebration.

COMMUNITY NATIONAL TREE DAY



Muswellbrook Girl Guides, Landcare and local residents at National Tree Day in Muswellbrook

In Muswellbrook 40 volunteers planted over 700 native species along Muscle Creek next to the Golf Course. This event was supported by Muswellbrook Girl Guides, Muswellbrook Golf Club, Muscle Creek Landcare and local residents. This project was assisted by the NSW Government through its Environmental Trust.

In Denman over 30 volunteers planted over 700 native species next to the wetland at Hyde Park. This event was supported by Denman Scouts and Lions. Glencore Mangoola contributed volunteers and funds through the Smarty Grants program. Work on the site was done by local contractor Final Form Regeneration and wooden stakes supplied by Koora Industries.

SCHOOLS NATIONAL TREE DAY

Council sponsored Denman Public School, Denman St Joseph's, Richard Gill School, Muswellbrook Preschool and St James Catholic School to plant over 300 trees. In Denman this included planting some of the critically endangered Denman Pomaderris.



Second year returning students from the University of Newcastle on a visit to the Sustainability Hub earlier this year. This was part of their subject Surviving the Anthropocene. Students now whom have returned do their placements here with our Sustainability team



Hunter Sustainability Landcare Team at Sustainability Hub

Events



Janet Jones, Mick Brady and Bailey Meissner with Sustainability books at the Muswellbrook Library



Plant ID and propagation workshop for local volunteers with Martindale Creek Catchment Landcare

More events and successful projects completed by The Sustainability Team included;

- › The Sustainability Unit was recognised as part of the 2021 Local Government NSW (LGNSW) Excellence in the Environment Awards. The council was awarded top prize in Division A (for council areas with a population below 30,000) in the Communication, Education and Empowerment category for our Sustainable Futures - Muswellbrook Connect project.
- › 20, 000 m2 of Weed control on Muscle Creek and Hyde Park Denman.
- › 2,500 native seedlings on top of the celebrated Tree Planting days.
- › Sustainable Futures – Muswellbrook Facebook page continues to grow. It has now received 1,500 page likes and 1,600 page followers.

- › More than 1,000 packets of seed and 1500 plants for free to residents, installing 40 x 10, 000 Steps signs along twenty-one walking routes. Developing and installing 7 Test Yourself stations along the Muscle Creek Loop and delivering online workshops.
- › 35 residents attended 3 bird watching trips along Muscle Creek.
- › 2 tours of Muscle Creek were conducted with Polly Farmer Foundation.
- › 2 plant ID and propagation workshops were held.
- › Engaged with over 600 people at the Muswellbrook Show and Picnic at the Park community events.
- › Sold 40 worm farms and 30 compost bins to residents.

Community War on Waste Grants were given to the following groups;

- › Muswellbrook South Public School Official P&C for a waste education program with worm farms, composting and garden resources.
- › St Joseph's Primary School Denman for a food waste education program involving enhancing their worm farms and setting up a chicken coop.
- › MOOSH - Upper Hunter Community Services Inc for waste education resources.
- › St Nicholas Early Education for a food waste education program involving enhancing their worm farms and gardening system.
- › Richard Gill School for waste education resources.
- › Martindale Public School for container deposit scheme resources.

Events



Muswellbrook Golf Club Staff, Martindale Creek Catchment Landcare and local residents at plant ID and propagation workshop.

Muswellbrook Shire Council 2021/2022 Staff Excellence Awards

Continuous Improvement

- › Mick Brady
- › Maddie Tredinnick

Creativity and Innovation

- › Art Gallery Staff (Elissa Emerson, Aleisha Knight, John Galloway, Rebecca Delaney)
- › Parks and Networks Tree Planting Team (Geoff Nebauer, Jarrod Shackleton, Will St John, Christie Allen, Aiden Worth, John Towns, Jamie Appelkamp)

Customer Service

- › Michelle Reichert
- › Caroline Worth
- › Mardi Eriksson
- › Kate Collins
- › Arlen Nott

Quality

- › Christie Allen
- › Mandy Fitzgerald

Teamwork and Collaboration

- › Operations Sewer Team (Merv Kilby, Dave Carroll, Reece Williams, Alex Worth, Kugan Thiru, Anthony Worth, Tyren Langdon, Ryan Bates)
- › Operations Water Team (Adam Ingram, Edward Clarke, Jesse McLean, Phillip Thring, Jasmine Randall, Matt Grady)
- › Nikita Butt

Safety

- › Janet Jones

GM's Excellence Award for Performance

- › Gamini Hemachandra
- › Andy Close

Leadership of Teams

- › Hamish McTaggart



Muswellbrook Shire Council 2021/2022 Staff Excellence Awards

Public Service Medal

Muswellbrook Shire Council Manager of Water and Waste, Irene Chetty received a Public Service Medal for Service as part of the Queens Birthday Honours list on Monday 13th June 2022.

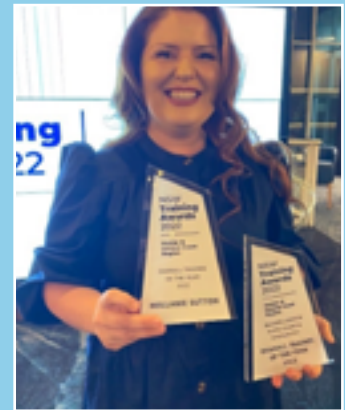


Irene Chetty and Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC Governor of New South Wales © Rob Tuckwell Photography - Government House NSW Investiture photography

NSW Training Awards

On Friday 10th June 2022 Mellanie Sutton, Muswellbrook Shire Council's Environmental Health Trainee Officer, received TWO awards at an awards ceremony in Newcastle. Mellanie was named Hunter and Central Coast Region Trainee of the Year AND NSW Overall Trainee of the year.

On behalf of all Staff and Councillors we would like to congratulate Irene and Mellanie on their well-deserved recognitions.



*Mrs Mellanie Sutton
NSW Training Awards*



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. Participating councils include; Cessnock City Council, Dungog Shire Council, Lake Macquarie City Council, Maitland City Council, MidCoast Council, Muswellbrook Shire Council, City of Newcastle, Port Stephens Council, Singleton Council, Upper Hunter Shire Council.

There are five 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.

- › **Arrow Collaborative Services Limited** (and its wholly owned subsidiaries **Hunter Councils Legal Services Limited** and **Arrow Collaborative Communications**) – 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, GoodChat TV, Regional Procurement, Screen Hunter (which, under delegation from member councils, licences film production on council owned and control land), and the Hunter JO Policy & Programs Division (which delivers on the strategic priorities of the Hunter Joint Organisation, including the Hunter and Central Coast Regional Environment Program, 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.

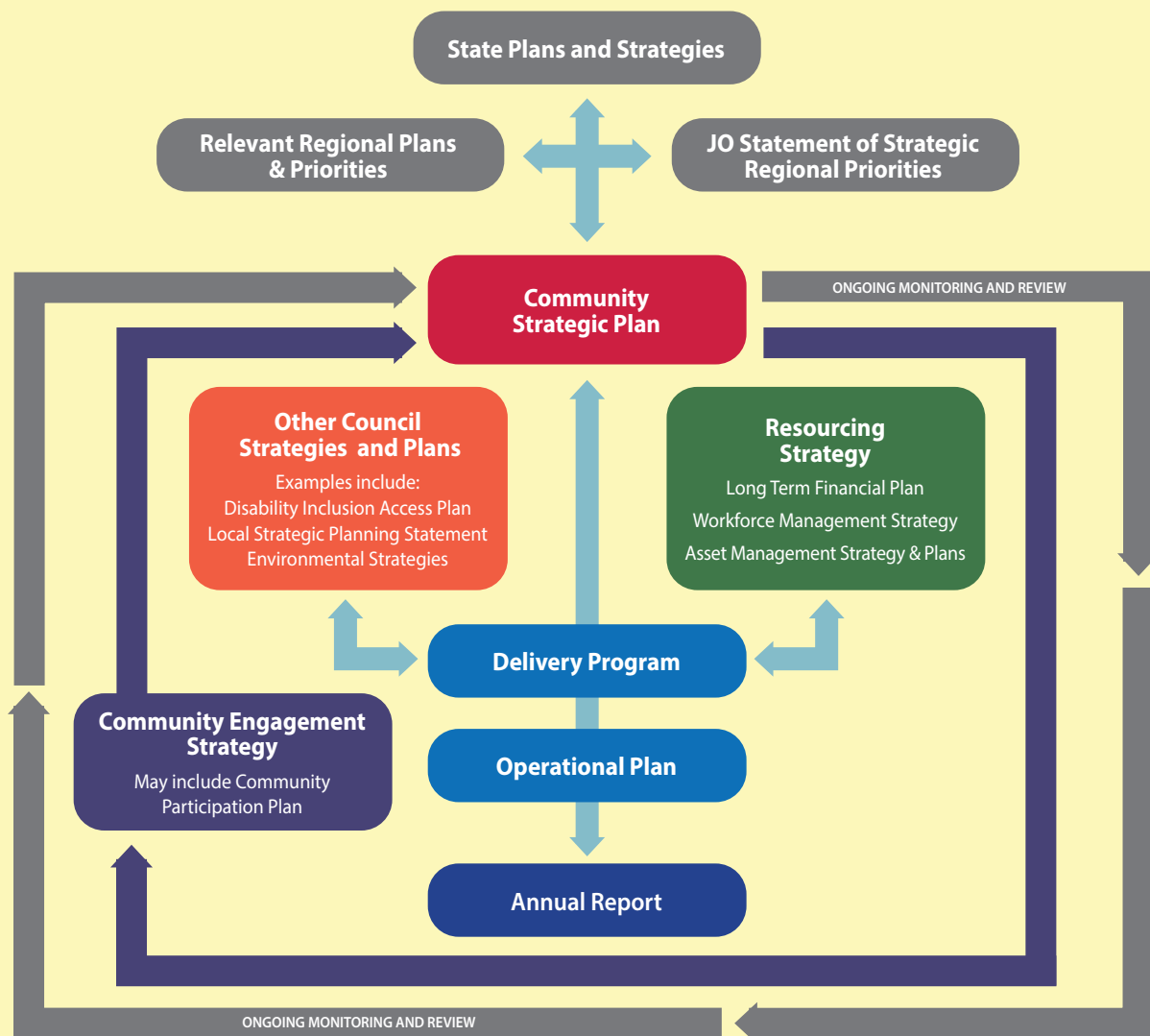
Muswellbrook Shire Council has representation on each entity's Board, and shares ownership and governance of the entities with the other nine councils of the Hunter Region.

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



Integrated Planning & Reporting Cycle

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



Integrated Planning & Reporting Cycle

THE COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN (10 YEAR)

The Community Strategic Plan is an overview document that identifies the community's vision and goals for the future. It covers a minimum time frame of 10 years. Council's role is initiating, preparing and maintaining the Community Strategic Plan on behalf of the community, however Council is not wholly responsible for its implementation. Other partners, including state agencies, non-government organisations, business and industry, joint organisations and community groups may also have a part to play in enacting the strategies identified within the Plan.

THE DELIVERY PROGRAM (4 YEAR)

The Delivery Program is a four-year plan. It is the point of reference for all activities undertaken by the Council during the Councillors' term of office. The Delivery Program details the activities Council will undertake over a four-year period, which align with and support the goals and strategies identified by the community and outlined in the Community Strategic Plan. The Delivery Program also allocates responsibilities for each activity and it identifies suitable performance measures for determining the effectiveness of the activities undertaken.

RESOURCING STRATEGY

The Resourcing Strategy demonstrates how Council will resource achievement of the Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program. Council's Long Term Financial Plan, Asset Management Plan and Workforce Management Plan have been developed to explain how Council intends to resource the activities identified in the Delivery Program and the Community Strategic Plan goals.

THE OPERATIONAL PLAN (ANNUAL)

The Operational Plan is a sub-plan of the Delivery Program. It directly addresses the activities outlined in the Delivery Program and identifies specific actions, projects and programs Council will be undertaking within the current financial year and allocates a corresponding budget commitment.

ANNUAL REPORT

The Annual Report is one of the key means by which Council reports on its progress to the community. It focuses on Council's implementation of the Delivery Program and Operational Plan because these are the plans that are wholly Council's responsibility.



Muswellbrook Hospital



Loxton House and TEC1

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 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.

2017-2027 Community Strategic Plan

MEETING THE GOALS OF OUR 2017 – 2021 DELIVERY PROGRAM

Council has made significant progress in 2021/22 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.

2021/22 end of year position

A snapshot of Council's performance across the strategic directions and focus areas of the Delivery Program is provided below.

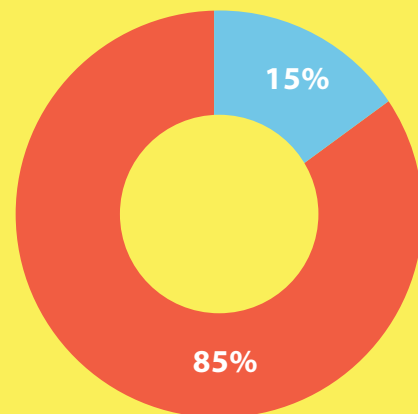
More details of key achievements, challenges and highlights in each area of the program is provided throughout the remainder of this section.

Operational Plan performance snapshot 2021/22

Of the 152 activities committed to by Council:

- › 129 have been completed on or ahead of schedule.
- › 23 are progressing;

2021/22 OPERATIONAL PLAN PERFORMANCE SNAPSHOT



● Progressing ● Completed

Strategic Directions

01. ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Goal 1 – Support job Growth

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
1.1 Facilitate the expansion of and establishment of new industries and business	Completed	1.1.1 The Upper Hunter Economic Development Corporation was dissolved following a resolution of Council at the 1 March 2022 Ordinary Council Meeting. A Community and Economy Directorate was subsequently formed in order to advance economic development as a function of Council for the benefit of Muswellbrook Shire.

Goal 2 – Diversify the economy, facilitate the development of intensive agriculture and other growth industries, make the Shire more attractive 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 Concept designs for the Denman Thermal Baths and Tourist Park have been completed. Suitable grant funding opportunities have actively been sought, and will continue to be sought, in order to progress the project.
2.2 Work with the University of Newcastle on research and innovation in areas where the Upper Hunter has a competitive or comparative advantage	Completed	2.2.1 During 2021-22, Council initiated an Employment Lands Audit and is undertaking this as an Upper Hunter region economic diversification project, working with Upper Hunter and Dungog Shire Councils, and Singleton Council.
	Completed	2.2.2 The Upper Hunter Country Tourism Committee has reviewed its 2021-23 Strategy. Council continues to deliver a diverse range of events and activities, focusing on building community identity, and has worked in partnership with Destination Sydney & Surrounds North, identifying further opportunities to enhance and develop tourism locally.
2.3 Review the Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plan to improve investment certainty for industry	Completed	2.3.1 A new section of the Development Control Plan, Section 13 - Floodplain Management, was adopted by Council on 1 March 2022 and is now effective.
	Progressing	2.3.2 Staff have been working with the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) on proposed changes to employment definitions and zones for Local Environmental Plans. This is a state-wide initiative. These changes are on exhibition. Staff are also involved in a visual amenity assessment with DPE which will aid in the review of the RU1 zone.

Strategic Directions



Strategic Directions

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
2.4 Implement the Muswellbrook, Denman Town Centre Masterplans and the Sandy Hollow Village Masterplan	Completed	2.4.1 Commercial opportunities and concepts are being sought and developed in Muswellbrook and Denman consistent with the Muswellbrook and Denman town centre strategies. The current focus is plans and opportunities to succeed the supermarket at Campbells Corner and improved connections from the main street to Marketplace in Muswellbrook.
	Completed	2.4.2 Funded stages of the Muswellbrook Parking Strategy were completed during 2021-22, with improvements in layout, signage and delineation made to the car park located at the rear of Bridge Street, between Brook Street and William Street.
	Completed	2.4.3 The Muswellbrook and Denman CBD parking and traffic strategies continued to be implemented during 2021-22, with traffic facilities installed within the Bridge Street car park, traffic signals currently under construction at Thompson Street, Muswellbrook, and directional parking signage installed at Denman. Additionally, a consultant has been engaged to review and update the Active Transport Plan for Muswellbrook, Denman and Sandy Hollow.
	Completed	2.4.4 Construction of the Wilder Street Bridge is complete, and works on the project has progressed to the road approaches and roundabout in Wilkinson Avenue and Wilder Street. The Olympic Park Masterplan project is programmed to be completed in the second quarter of 2022-23.
	Progressing	2.4.5 A Development Application for the Olympic Park grandstand and amenities design has been submitted for development approval.
	Completed	2.4.6 A Cooling the Streets concept plan for Muswellbrook Shire has been included in Council's review of its Active Transport Strategy.
	Completed	2.4.7 The development of a Denman CBD Walking Trail Plan has been included in Council's review of its Active Transport Strategy.
	Completed	2.4.8 Council implemented the funded component of the Walk and Cycle Plan through the construction of a shared pathway in Ironbark Road, Muswellbrook, from Rutherford Road to Calgaroo Avenue.
	Progressing	2.4.9 The Muswellbrook Heritage Museum remains a longstanding concept included in Council's Muswellbrook Town Centre Strategy. Throughout 2021-22, Council has sought long-term tenure of a preferred site, and is reviewing a draft concept design for a Muswellbrook Heritage Museum.
	Completed	2.4.10 Construction of the Sandy Hollow Pocket Park has been completed and is available for the enjoyment of the community and visitors.
	Completed	2.4.11 Work to develop a plan for improved accessible pedestrian links to the Muswellbrook Marketplace is being achieved by undertaking civil survey and preparing a design for improvements within the Hill Street car park, including an accessible continued path of travel from the proposed bus stop in Hill Street to the facility and improved access from Bridge Street.

Strategic Directions

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
2.5 Develop agricultural industry opportunities in the Shire	Completed	2.5.1 Staff participated in a Climate Change Risk assessment with Council's insurers and have identified best practice examples from other areas of NSW on which to base a best practice Climate Change Resilience Policy.
	Completed	2.5.2 The Upper Hunter Country Tourism Committee has reviewed its 2021-23 Strategy. Council continues to deliver a diverse range of events and activities, focusing on building community identity, and has worked in partnership with Destination Sydney & Surrounds North, identifying further opportunities to enhance and develop tourism locally.

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 The completion of the Donald Horne building is expected by September 2022. The refurbishment of Loxton House will likely be completed over Financial Year 2022/2023 due to the structural repair work required to be completed.

Goal 4 – Develop Muswellbrook as a Regional Centre

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
4.1 Council will apply to IPART for a permanent continuation of IPART's approved one-off Special Rate Variation for 2018/19 of 12.43% (plus 2.3% rate peg) and increasing the 2018/19 rate base for 2019/20 by IPART's 2.7% rate peg	Completed	4.1.1 Council has provided annual reports against its Special Rate Variation program as part of the Annual Report and the annual financial statements to the NSW Audit Office.

Strategic Directions



02. SOCIAL EQUITY AND INCLUSION

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 report providing a list of prioritised capital sport and recreation projects was approved by Council at the 28 September 2021 Ordinary Council Meeting.
	Progressing	5.1.2 The new Recreation Needs Study is expected to be completed by December 2022.
5.2 Continue town centre revitalisation projects	Progressing	5.2.1 The Max Watters Sculpture is a permanent installation in the forecourt of the Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre. The location of the statue of this local icon has activated this space and provided a sense of pride in the local community.
5.3 Facilitate investment in entertainment opportunities, particularly for young people	Completed	5.3.1 The library has hosted school holiday activities in line with the NSW Public Health Orders. These activities, both face to face and online, have been well supported by young people. Children's programming has been extended to the Denman branch with regular story time sessions and school visits now resuming. Targeted Reading Challenges have been delivered alongside reading platform Beanstack. Book Club and Writers Club welcomes participation from all ages.
	Completed	5.3.2 The Muswellbrook Indoor Aquatic Centre facilities has been under construction this reporting period. The Muswellbrook and Denman Outdoor Pools provided reduced Learn to Swim Programs to the community and participating schools. The Muswellbrook Fitness Centre continues to deliver modified fitness programs. Membership of young people accessing the gym and its facilities has increased.
	Completed	5.3.3 Development Application DA 2021-99, being for alterations and additions to the Muswellbrook Indoor Sports/Youth Centre at Rutherford Road, was approved by Council at the 28 June 2022 Ordinary Council Meeting. Tenders for construction will be sought in the first quarter of 2022-23.
	Completed	5.3.4 During 2021-22, Library Services responded to the NSW Public Health Order COVID restrictions and delivered a contactless home delivery service. This mode of delivery has increased the borrowing capacity of people with mobility and accessibility issues. The library has continued its expanded services and continues to deliver to a range of family groups and community members. Deliveries are offered in Muswellbrook, Denman and surrounding areas.
5.4 Improve access to waterways	Progressing	5.4.1 Following a resolution of Council at the 28 September 2021 Ordinary Council Meeting, a contractor has been formally engaged to undertake works for completion prior to 31 December 2022.

Strategic Directions

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
5.5 Promote and facilitate increased participation in active and passive recreation activities	Completed	5.5.1 Sporting and recreational facilities are being maintained to the standard specified in the Precinct Specifications Manual. Council also provides the additional measure of a winter oversow programme on five premier fields across Muswellbrook Shire.
	Completed	5.5.2 The Small Sport and Recreation Grants Programme for 2021/2022 was awarded and funded.
	Completed	5.5.3 The Large Sport and Recreation Grants Programme for 2021/2022 was awarded and funded.
	Completed	5.5.4 The programme of scheduled meetings for promotion of increased participation in active and passive recreational activities was interrupted by COVID-19 restrictions over the last two years but have now returned as scheduled.
	Completed	5.5.5 Following a resolution from Council at the 28 September 2021 Ordinary Council Meeting, the Hunter Beach project will include a Recreational Vehicle Parking Area.
	Completed	5.5.6 Draft Olympic Park and Denman Recreation Areas plans of management have been prepared for stakeholder consultation. Plans for Karoola Park and Weeraman Fields are now being drafted.
	Completed	5.5.7 Concept designs for Hunter Park and Wollombi Park have been approved by Council. Stages have been prepared for detailed design. Council was successful in attracting grant funding for the pump track stage at Wollombi Park.



Strategic Directions

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
5.6 Consider and deliver social inclusion principles across Council functions	Completed	5.6.1 In 2021/22 Council applied for more than 40 grants and was successful in attracting more than \$11.7 million in funding, mainly from the NSW State Government, to support the interests and aspirations of the Shire's communities.
	Completed	5.6.2 All designs include accessibility considerations as a core component of the design process. Specific projects were identified as requiring particular accessibility considerations and were progressed as part of the 2021-22 capital works programme.
	Completed	5.6.3 Council seeks to deliver responsive actions in relation to the changing needs of Information Services by progressing a number of projects designed to update, renew and consolidate our systems throughout the organisation. Such projects focus on security and governance, centralisation of systems and enhanced process efficiency.
	Completed	5.6.4 A major review of Council's Emergency Management Plan (EMPLAN) has been carried out, and was endorsed by the Muswellbrook Shire Local Emergency Management Committee quarterly meeting conducted 9 March 2022.
	Completed	5.6.5 Software systems have undergone improvement to ensure consistency and ease of data management in collaboration with Council's internal asset owners. Council's internal Asset Management Working Group has met regularly during 2021-22 and has implemented ongoing improvements to Council's Asset Management System.
	Completed	5.6.6 All levels of abilities are considered in the preparation of Council's plans and strategies, and are also a core consideration in the concept and design phase of all projects.
5.7 Facilitate the provision of affordable housing opportunities through development application process as encouraged through the Affordable Rental Housing SEPP 2009	Progressing	5.7.1 A schedule of approved subdivisions and medium density housing projects has been prepared to estimate expected delivery to market in the short-term.
	Progressing	5.7.2 Preliminary aspects of the affordable housing opportunities project are underway with consideration to advance alongside the Wollombi Park master plan concept.

Goal 6 – Stabilize 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	Completed	6.1.1 Council advocated to the NSW Government Committee of Community Services regarding options to improve access to existing and alternate accommodation to address local social housing shortages. Council entered into an agreement with a local not for profit community housing provider to provide an accommodation option for vulnerable individuals and families escaping domestic violence.

Strategic Directions

Goal 7 – Build Social Inclusion and improve the delivery of Social Services

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
7.1 Facilitate discussions with other levels of government to enhance the delivery of services to improve and promote social inclusion service	Completed	7.1.1 The Muswellbrook Healthy and Well Project has concluded, and delivered positive outcomes to the community of Muswellbrook.
7.2 Facilitate and implement improved disability access and inclusion across the Shire	Completed	7.2.1 Projects have been identified to improve accessibility in Council owned and public spaces, and project preparation works are underway.

Goal 9 – Facilitate opportunities to expand Senior's 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 Funded strategies and initiatives from the Ageing Strategy 2020-22 have been delivered or incorporated into Council works. Many of these strategies are now embedded in Council's operations, such as the production of a local Seniors Festival Brochure 2022. The redesign of local public spaces has considered the needs of people who are ageing, particularly promoting inclusiveness. This has resulted in increased participation in the main street of Denman, the Muswellbrook Indoor Aquatic Centre and Denman's Memorial Park.
	Completed	9.2.2 The local brochure of the 2022 Seniors Festival (25 March - 3 April) was developed and distributed widely throughout the community, advertising and promoting a range of events.
	Completed	9.2.3 The library reintroduced adult programs, including book clubs and adult writers' group, and these have increased engagement and membership of older people. Members aged 50+ currently account for 29% of total active Library memberships. An Aqua Aerobics program has been held at the Muswellbrook Outdoor Pool and Muswellbrook Fitness Centre, and there is 70% participation of older people in this activity.

Strategic Directions

Goal 10 – Further the process of reconciliation in the Shire

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
10.1 Collaborate with local Aboriginal people on projects which enhance an appreciation for, and which develop the vitality of, Aboriginal culture.	Completed	10.1.1 Council has worked with the Aboriginal Community to deliver events that celebrate and promote Aboriginal Art and Culture. A consultation meeting has been held with members of the Aboriginal Community to discuss and identify an artwork for inclusion in the second stage of the Tertiary Education Centre. In addition, a brief for the proposed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Centre was developed in conjunction with Wanaruah Local Aboriginal Land Council and MACH Energy. Other projects included the Aboriginal Flag raising event during National Reconciliation Week, display of Aboriginal artifacts and art work at the Muswellbrook Library, and exhibition of artwork from Aboriginal inmates at St Heliers Correctional Centre.
	Completed	10.1.2 The review of the workingwithindigenoustralians.info website content is complete. Work has commenced with 'In Our Own Words' participants compiling additional documents, photos, maps to further to enhance the Aboriginal Oral History Digitised Project.
	Completed	10.1.3 Conservation work for the Aboriginal Reconciliation Mural has been completed.
10.2 Raise awareness of the local Aboriginal Community and an appreciation of their long traditions and culture	Progressing	10.2.1 The Treaty Project is currently on hold. The project was severely impacted and delayed due to the impact of COVID NSW Public Health Orders. Community consultation work is complete, and a report will be presented to the appointed Councillor representatives for determination of the next steps.
	Completed	10.2.2 Due to Council elections and the impact of COVID Public Health Orders, the Muswellbrook Shire Council Aboriginal Reconciliation Committee did not meet in 2021-22. However, Treaty Project community consultation has identified issues and service gaps as well as potential projects. Partnerships projects this year include the development of a brief for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Centre, the National Reconciliation Week Aboriginal Flag Raising event, extensive inclusion of Aboriginal cultural practices in the 2022 Australia Day Ceremony and citizenship ceremonies throughout the year.
	Progressing	10.2.3 Identification of Aboriginal sites on Widden Valley Road has occurred and correspondence has been sent to NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service inviting a joint partnership to restore the site.

03. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

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 A first draft of a Mining and Extraction Policy has been prepared for internal review, including consideration of changes that could be made to Muswellbrook DCP 2009 rather than having a separate Policy.
	Completed	11.1.2 During 2021-22. comments have been provided on a number of wind farm proposals, battery storage facilities, Mine Modifications, the Liddell Ash Dam closure, and the Liddell Power Station closure.
	Completed	11.1.3 Staff and Councillors attend the various Community Consultative Committee meetings as scheduled.

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 Local Landcare projects reported to Council for approval on 31 August 2021 have been completed.
	Completed	12.1.2 The ongoing maintenance of rehabilitation works along Muscle Creek, Karoola Wetlands, and Denman Wetlands has been carried out through the establishment of a dedicated team within Council's Works - Parks section.
	Completed	12.1.3 Maintenance of rehabilitation works along Muscle Creek, Karoola Wetlands, and Denman Wetlands are being carried out to avoid degradation.
	Completed	12.1.4 National Tree Day was celebrated late July and early August 2021, with tree planting sites in Muswellbrook and Denman, on Council managed sites and school sites.
	Completed	12.1.5 The Possum Gully catchment study will inform potential tenure and access arrangements for the management of Possum Gully. This work is expected to be undertaken over several years, improving storm water management and native vegetation connectivity.
	Completed	12.1.6 Stormwater easements associated with development are progressively obtained as necessary through the planning approval process.

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 Due to safety and constructability concerns, a different section of footpath will now be constructed. Additional solar powered lights along the existing 40m of walkway behind the Muswellbrook Community Pool and a virtual augmented experience for track users will also be installed. Contracts have been issued for the identified works.

Strategic Directions

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 Project brief for a Catchment Management Plan has been completed. Quotations are being sought in order to engage a consultant to prepare the Catchment Management Plan.
	Completed	14.1.2 Staff attend Upper Hunter Air Quality Advisory Committee meetings and report air quality information to Council. Council monitors air quality through the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation.
	Completed	14.1.3 Council received the Net Zero Road Map and adopted a transition to net zero by 2050 policy position for Council’s operations at the 28 September 2021 Ordinary Council Meeting.
	Completed	14.1.4 Staff have recommenced face to face education programs regarding reducing food wastage, uploaded videos on using up food in a household’s fridge/pantry, shopping to a menu, and growing a backyard veggie patch, and provided grants to the community and businesses to reduce waste.
	Completed	14.1.5 Implementation of the NetZero roadmap has commenced. Staff have prepared internal procedures to guide sustainable procurement.
	Completed	14.1.6 Community War on Waste grants have been provided. Business War on Waste program grant applications have closed.
	Completed	14.1.7 Planning for the relocation and upgrade of the community garden at the new Sustainability Hub is advanced. The current garden is being maintained. Advice is being provided to households on establishing backyard vegetable gardens, and providing free seedling giveaways.
	Completed	14.1.8 Rangers follow up on community complaints and undertake regular surveillance of known trouble spots for illegal dumping.
	Completed	14.1.9 Staff have purchased clothes line and car covers for households affected by flying foxes and paid for removal of a number of privet and palm plants that attract flying foxes. Efforts to establish an out of town ‘Flying Fox Camp’ on rural land are continuing.
	Completed	14.1.10 DA 2021/58 for an Organics Recycling Facility at 252 Coal Road, Muswellbrook is currently under assessment with referral to state agencies for concurrence.
14.2 Require all development proposals to avoid and mitigate against potential environmental impacts and facilitate improved environmental outcomes where possible	Progressing	14.2.1 All development proposals are reviewed for compliance against legislation, state government policies and Council’s policies in regard to environmental impact, biodiversity conservation and minimising ongoing use of water, electricity and other resources through sustainable design.

Strategic Directions

04. CULTURAL VITALITY

Goal 16 – Conserve the Heritage and History of the Shire

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
16.3 New investment in heritage conservation and restoration made	Completed	16.3.1 Funding was made available for the restoration and conservation of allocated items, however COVID and current issues within the building industry have caused delays in project delivery.

Goal 17 – Facilitate options to improve cultural activities in the Shire

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
17.1 Construct a Regional Entertainment and Conference Centre (subject to Special Variation)	Progressing	17.1.1 A development application has been lodged for the project and is awaiting determination. Subject to approval, a scope of enabling works has been prepared to be tendered including demolition of redundant buildings and preliminary works related to Possum Gully.

Goal 18 – Facilitate cultural activities and events which engage the community and visitors, and which create a ‘sense of belonging’ and identity

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
18.1 Increase funding to the Blue Heeler Film Festival and the Bottoms Up beer and music festival with a view to engaging more locals and visitors	Completed	18.1.1 Develop an Events and Festival Strategy with Action Plan for the period 2021 to 2024 An Events and Festivals calendar has been developed on the Muswellbrook Shire Council website the calendar provides details on the upcoming events. The development of an Events an Festival Calendar has also been incorporated in Councils Event Committee Terms of Reference for the 2021/24 period.
	Completed	18.1.2 Deliver the funded actions in the approved Events and Festival Strategy with Action Plan for the period 2021 to 2024 during 2021/22 financial year Numerous events and actions have been delivered during this reporting period including; establishment of a Visitor Information Centre at Denman, the delivery of the Blue Heeler Film Festival 2021 in partnership with the University of Newcastle – School of Creative Industries; Australia Day 2022 Citizenship and Community Awards ceremonies and Family Fun Day; three Citizenship ceremonies were held throughout this reporting period welcoming 30 conferees; the annual Easter Family Fun Day attracted over 2000 local community members. Other partnerships included the screening of The Stranger Film, support was provided to the Westpac Helicopter Sandy Hollow Horse Ride and the Chamber of Commerce Main Street Markets.
Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment

Strategic Directions

18.1 Increase funding to the Blue Heeler Film Festival and the Bottoms Up beer and music festival with a view to engaging more locals and visitors	Completed	18.1.3 Council has worked with the Denman Chamber of Commerce to attract funds and to rebrand the Chamber's economic activities. The Chamber has resolved to refocus their events and activities. In 2021-22, the Chamber held the Denman Chamber of Commerce Discover Denman event, including Main Street Markets and a truck and other vehicles parade.
18.2 Continue the provision of arts appreciated through the Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre	Completed	18.2.1 The following exhibitions have been held: 1. Mullins Conceptual Photographic Prize; Gundi: There is No Place like Home - Healing Country Find Me (Inmates from St Heliers Correctional Centre); Introducing The Woods (Hanna Kay); Growth, Colour, Light, Life: Surrounding Nature (Georgina Mason) 2. Max's House: Todd Fuller & Max Watters: Art Is 3. Two Artist Tour Muswellbrook & From MANAWATU to MUSWELLBROOK 4. Muswellbrook Art Prize 2022. Three prize categories: Painting (\$50,000 acquisitive), Works on Paper (\$10,000 acquisitive), and Ceramics (\$10,000 acquisitive). 5. 'Viewpoints: Wollomi National Park - Travis De Vries, Mark Dober, Michelle Earl, Marie Mansfield and Rebecca Rath.
	Completed	18.2.2 Sponsorship was secured for the annual Muswellbrook Art Prize 2022.
	Completed	18.2.3 The Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre has worked extensively with Muswellbrook High School to exhibit Alternate Perspective: Seeing the World in a Different Way. This exhibition featured works from High School students.
	Completed	18.2.4 The Wollemi Artist in Residence Project was delivered in May, 2022. Michelle Napanangka Earl – weaver, basket maker and Wonnarua woman, undertook her fieldwork, collecting information about foliage, colours and bird life; whilst in December Travis De Vries – multidisciplinary artist and Gamilaroi man, undertook his fieldwork, taking sound recordings at various locations in Wollemi National Park. Viewpoints: Wollemi National Park works were displayed in concurrent exhibitions at the Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre and Singleton Culture and Arts Space.
	Completed	18.2.5 The Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre in partnership with the Australian Photographic Society delivered the 2021 Mullins Contemporary Photographic Prize. The Muswellbrook Art Prize 2022 attracted well known artists, including Rachel Milne, the winner of the \$50,000 Painting Prize, David Fairbairn, Works on Paper Prize and Fiona Hiscock, Ceramics Prize. The Prizes attract well known artist and adjudicators from across NSW and Australia.
18.4 Support Arts Upper Hunter as the peak organisation of Artist endeavour	Completed	18.4.1 Muswellbrook Shire Council made its annual financial contribution to Upper Hunter Arts and has provided ongoing support for 2022.
	Completed	18.4.2 Local applications for the Country Arts Support Program (CASP) were received for consideration. Council promotes the funding scheme through its local networks and social media platforms.



Strategic Directions

05. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Goal 19 – Our Communities Infrastructure is planned well, is safe and provides required levels of service

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
19.1 Improve and Maintain Civic Precincts	Completed	19.1.1 The 2021-22 Capital Program for Roads and Stormwater Drainage has been substantially delivered on time, on budget and in accordance with the relevant design and construction standards.
	Completed	19.1.2 Council awarded a new four year contract for street sweeping services in May 2022 with provision for extension subject to effective performance.
	Completed	19.1.3 Graffiti removal is managed in compliance with Council's Graffiti Management standards. Council maintains an effective management programme of monitoring and removal.
	Completed	19.1.4 The Best Practice Management Audit for the 2020-21 was completed in June 2022. Council was found to be substantially compliant in its Best Practice Management for Water Supply and Sewer Services for 2020-21.
	Completed	19.1.5 Council has endorsed a proposed location and preliminary concept for a new Muswellbrook cemetery site . The concept is being developed further together with relevant land management plans to be presented to Council and the community.
19.2 Maintain and continually improve asset management	Completed	19.2.1 The Corporate Asset Management Steering Committee meets regularly to develop and advance Council's centralised database incorporating all asset groups. Asset Management Hierarchies are developed along with efficient workflow procedures for new assets. Council is finalising its Water and Wastewater Valuation and has reviewed proactive maintenance objectives to minimise financial impacts and to deliver improved asset and safety outcomes to the community.
	Completed	19.2.2 Service levels are monitored for compliance with Level of Service targets in asset management plans and the Precinct Specifications Manual.
		19.2.3 National Tree Planting Day and corresponding projects assist to reduce passive mowing areas. All park and reserve development works include consideration of the principles of crime prevention through environmental design and Bush Fire Protection standards, and are aimed at reducing the areas that require passive mowing.
		19.2.4 Implementation of the funded components of the bus stop shelter upgrade and renewal program for Muswellbrook Shire is continuing. This project is a two (2) year program and carries over to 2022-23 where the infrastructure will be fully delivered.
		19.2.5 The Olympic Park concept for recycled water irrigation has been developed and is ready to be tendered as part of the capital works programme.

Strategic Directions

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
19.3 Facilitate investment in high quality community infrastructure necessary to a Regional Centre	Progressing	19.3.1 The new main animal care facility has been constructed and the kennels are nearing completion. The remaining works include the construction of storm water drainage to the Hunter River and final civil works including car park construction.
	Completed	19.3.2 A list of works proposed for design was developed to facilitate investment in high quality community infrastructure necessary to a regional centre.
	Completed	19.3.3 Designs for Capital Works and associated estimates of cost for the forward financial year are reported to Council prior to construction.
	Completed	19.3.4 The 2021-22 Roads Safety Action Plan was developed to investigate and recommend appropriate management treatments for road safety and traffic management in Muswellbrook Shire. Recommendations for appropriate traffic management treatments have been sought from the Local Traffic Committee.
	Completed	19.3.5 The capital works programme is being delivered substantially on time, on budget, is fit for purpose and in accordance with relevant design and construction standards. The programme is reported to Council quarterly for review of status.
	Completed	19.3.6 DA assessment timeframes have been consistent in providing well informed advice to deliver best outcomes to the community during a period of peak subdivision activity and regionally significant projects based both locally or impacting on Council's infrastructure.
	Completed	19.3.7 During 2021-22, the Muswellbrook Bypass Advisory Committee met regularly to consider key aspects associated with planning for the construction of the Muswellbrook bypass.
19.4 Maintain and continually improve community infrastructure across the Shire	Completed	19.4.1 Design for a flood warning system for Muscle Creek is underway. This is the highest priority project identified in the Floodplain Risk Management Plan.
	Progressing	19.4.2 Previous meetings with the Department of Environment and Heritage have agreed in principle to transfer the Muswellbrook and Denman levee systems to the Hunter Valley Flood Mitigation Scheme. This remains to be formalised.
	Completed	19.4.3 A comprehensive condition assessment for water and sewer assets has been completed as part of the 2022 revaluation, with road and bridge assets condition assessments completed concurrently. Planning for condition assessments for the stormwater drainage network are well advanced for undertaking in 2022-23.
	Completed	19.4.4 Council continues to focus on effectively managing customer service requests through on-going training, system and process improvement, in addition to investigating reporting options to continue to monitor performance.

Strategic Directions

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
19.4 Maintain and continually improve community infrastructure across the Shire	Completed	19.4.5 Construction waste avoidance and resource recovery strategies are considered as a key focus of all construction and maintenance projects. All Council reports include the consideration of waste implications.
	Completed	19.4.6 Council has progressed the formalisation of the Bengalla Link Road - Wybong Road route as an alternative over-mass, over-size vehicle route through it's nomination for reclassification to a State Road under Round Two of the NSW Government Road Reclassification Project.

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 Both Muswellbrook and Denman wastewater treatment processes satisfactorily met the conditions of Environment Protection Licences 1593, for Muswellbrook sewer treatment and sewage system, and 5059, for Denman sewer treatment and sewage system.
	Completed	20.1.2 The Water and Sewer Levels of Service for 2021-22 will be presented in a final report to Council at the September 2022 Ordinary Council Meeting. During 2021-22, Council continued substantial achievement of the Best Practice Water Supply and Sewerage Guidelines.
	Completed	20.1.3 All regulatory testing for drinking water and wastewater was satisfactorily sampled and tested in 2021-22.
	Completed	20.1.4 Inspections of business were undertaken on a regular basis throughout 2021-22.
	Completed	20.1.5 Liquid trade waste inspections and approvals have progressed satisfactorily throughout 2021-22.
	Completed	20.1.6 The Muswellbrook Recycled Water Treatment Works continues to produce high quality recycled water that is 100% utilised at the Muswellbrook Golf Course for irrigation purposes and at Mt Arthur mine for dust suppression. All recycled water from the Denman Recycled Water Treatment Works is utilised at the Denman Golf Course and sporting fields for irrigation purposes.
	Completed	20.1.7 A report listing Water & Wastewater capital construction priorities was approved by Council at the 26 October 2021 Ordinary Council Meeting.

Strategic Directions

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 A report listing priorities for construction was endorsed by Council at the 27 July 2021 Ordinary Council Meeting. The listed priorities allow Council to maintain and continually improve the Shire's footpath and cycleway networks to improve connectivity.
	Completed	21.1.2 The 2021-22 Capital Works Program for roads and stormwater has been delivered substantially on time, on budget, fit for purpose and in accordance with relevant design and construction standards.
	Completed	21.1.3 Council has carried out linemarking and delineation of Bylong Valley Way to improve road safety conditions.
	Completed	21.1.4 Permits for Over Size Over Mass (OSOM) vehicles have continued to be processed as received within the nominated timeframes. Asset inspections and escorting of vehicles is regularly carried out to manage OSOM vehicle movements and minimise impacts on Council's road network efficiency.

Strategic Directions



06. COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Goal 22 Collaborative and responsive Community Leadership that meets the expectations and anticipates the needs of the Community

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
22.1 Enhanced collaboration with Council's community and stakeholders to ensure Council and its elected arm is best place to make decisions in the best interests of the community.	Completed	22.1.1 A desk based exercise was carried out in the third quarter of 2021-22, whereby the effectiveness of the Emergency Operations Centre at the Muswellbrook Library in a severe weather event was tested. The seminar room at the Muswellbrook Library is now Council's Emergency Operations Centre.
	Completed	22.1.2 A review of Council's Emergency Management Plan (EMPLAN) has been carried out, and was endorsed by the Muswellbrook Shire Local Emergency Management Committee at the 9 March 2022 quarterly meeting of the Committee. The EMPLAN has also been endorsed by the Hunter Region Emergency Management Committee.
	Completed	22.1.3 Quarterly meetings of Muswellbrook Shire's Local Emergency Management Committee were conducted on 2 September 2021, 8 December 2021, 9 March 2022, and 9 June 2022.
	Completed	22.1.4 Throughout 2021-22, strategic advocacy has been undertaken with community, industry and government leaders in order to further the interests and aspirations of the communities of Muswellbrook Shire.
	Completed	22.1.5 A major review of Council's Emergency Management Plan (EMPLAN) has been carried out, and was endorsed by the Muswellbrook Shire Local Emergency Management Committee quarterly meeting conducted 9 March 2022.
	Completed	22.1.6 Attendance at Regional Emergency Management Committee meetings was carried out during 2021-22.
	Completed	22.1.7 Attendance at combined Muswellbrook-Singleton Bush Fire Risk Management Committee meetings was carried out as scheduled for 2021-22.
	Completed	22.1.8 All infrastructure projects consider emergency risk management as a core component of the design process.
	Completed	22.1.9 Council has worked with Hunter New England Health and the Local Emergency Management Command throughout the COVID-19 pandemic to support the delivery of testing and vaccine clinics, and in home delivery for food and library services. Council has also provided lease concessions to lessees for Council owned properties in compliance with NSW Government Guidelines.

Strategic Directions

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	Completed	23.1.1 In accordance with the adopted Community Participation Plan, Council has undertaken a comprehensive program of community consultation in preparation for the development of the 2022-2032 Community Strategic Plan, the 2022-2026 Delivery Program, the Resourcing Strategy and the 2022-2023 Operational Plan, including: a telephone survey of residents to gauge satisfaction with Council services and facilities, and identify key challenges and opportunities for the region; two online surveys targeting Council's community engagement database; and Listening Posts seeking feedback from residents, ratepayers, businesses and workers in relation to the ongoing relevance of goals articulated in the previous Community Strategic Plan.
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 The Muswellbrook Shire Council website was restructured during 2021-22, and an app has been introduced to enable access to the website via mobile phone. Regular communication videos are being produced, featuring an update from the Mayor, for publication on Council's website to provide information on Council's resolutions arising from Council meetings. The number of media releases has also been increased in order to promote Council and Muswellbrook Shire, and to share information through a range of communications media.

Goal 24 – A Council that is well Managed, efficient and properly resourced and that is responsive to it's 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	Progressing	24.1.1 The management of Council's Future Fund in line with the Future Fund Investment Strategy continues its refinement through an iterative policy process. A review of the Future Funds assets is underway to ensure the best investment options for Council.
24.2 Implement a comprehensive and targeted business improvement program	Completed	24.2.1 Council is continuing to employ positions to drive the identification and implementation of business improvement measures to achieve efficiencies and improved service delivery outcomes.
	Completed	24.2.2 Council has complied with statutory reporting obligations during 2021/22
	Completed	24.2.3 The number of new applications has plateaued at a level significantly higher than prior to COVID. Staff have resolved a number of long-standing development applications. Details are provided in monthly information reports submitted to Council.

Strategic Directions

Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
24.2 Implement a comprehensive and targeted business improvement program Cont'd.	Completed	24.2.4 Council has a statutory obligation to accept any appointment to act as a Principal Certifier (formerly known as a Principal Certifying Authority), a requirement which Council fulfills. Council acts as the certifier for most applications involving ancillary developments, a high percentage of new residential development and some commercial development; for which the services provided are competitive with the industry and present a cost-effective option for the residents of the Shire. Council's Registered Certifiers participate in continuing professional development programs to continually improve the quality of the service that Council provides.
	Completed	24.2.5 Council has a statutory obligation to undertake inspections at critical stages in construction, and to show due diligence in the assessment or regulation of developments. These inspections are continuing to be undertaken in accordance with the legislation and are documented/ tracked within Council's systems accordingly.
	Completed	24.2.6 Council effectively executed the food shop routine inspections for the 2021-2022 period. Compliance was high across the shire, and this was impressive considering the inspections were carried out notwithstanding the multiple interruptions from the Coronavirus pandemic. Council officers adapted their program to include the provisions from the state to ensure that premises were compliant with public health orders and public safety remained protected. Council's officers conducted an audit of skin penetrations business, with a number required to register with Council. Council officers also initiated their skin penetration program to monitor the regulatory requirements of such premises.
	Completed	24.2.7 All animal registration, care and control services have operated as normal. Council participates in the National Desexing Scheme to provide discounts for low-income households to desex pets.
	Completed	24.2.8 Council maintains a fire safety register of buildings within the Shire, facilitating the issue of annual reminders, fire safety schedules and orders. Council tracks annual fire safety statements, follows up complaints diligently and responds with appropriate actions in kind.
	Progressing	24.2.9 Inspection of pool safety fences continues, predominantly for properties being sold or rented. Details are provided in monthly reports to Council.
	Progressing	24.2.10 Council's policy review framework is currently under revision to align with organisational and industry expectations.
	Completed	24.2.11 Throughout 2021/22, the Governance Team has provided support services for the elected Council and executive in line with Council's adopted Code of Conduct and Code of Meeting Practice.
	Completed	24.2.12 Council adopted the Muswellbrook Shire Council Resourcing Strategy, comprising the 2022-2032 Long-Term Financial Plan, the 2022-2032 Strategic Asset Management Plan, and the 2022-2026 Workforce Management Plan, at the 28 June 2022 Ordinary Council Meeting.

Strategic Directions

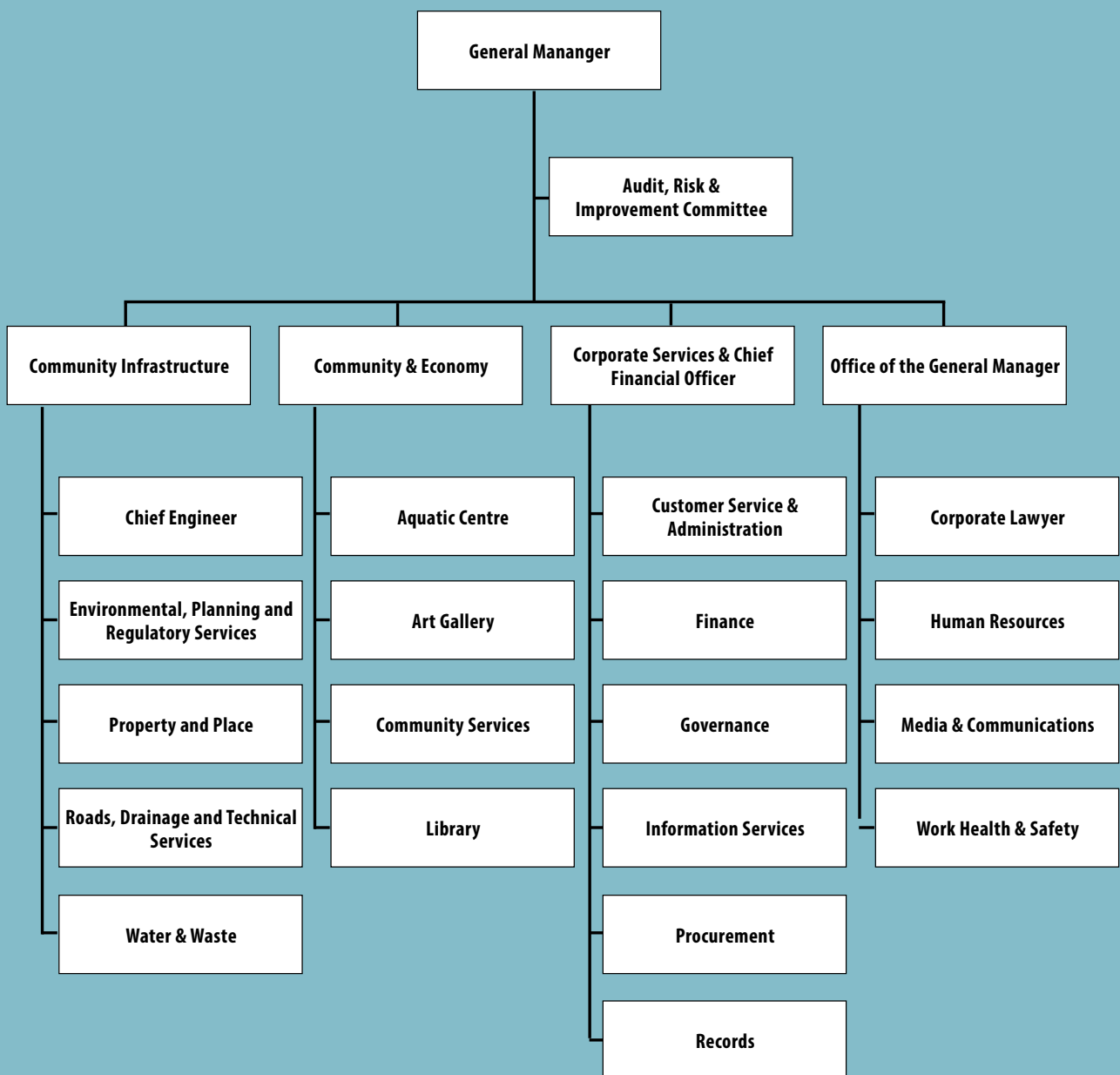
Delivery Program Objective	Status	Comment
24.2 Implement a comprehensive and targeted business improvement program Cont'd.	Completed	24.2.13 All recover at work requirements are carried out in line with regulators and insurer. Statecover measures that Muswellbrook Shire Council is currently providing best practice in the area of Return To Work. Management of recover at work has minimised loss time injury claims.
	Completed	24.2.14 Council has developed a new website and digital media strategy and platform that have improved the timing and frequency of information provided to the community.
	Completed	24.2.15 During 2021-22, Council has provided presentations on Council's priorities to the interim NSW Task Force for Royalties for Rejuvenation and Regional NSW's Diversification Working Group. In addition, Council has worked closely with the Hunter Joint Organisation on regional priorities, and has consulted with Regional NSW particularly to support the continued development of the Muswellbrook Hospital and provision of health services for the community. Council has also worked in collaboration with Transport for NSW to further progress the Muswellbrook Bypass project.
	Completed	24.2.16 Council has contributed to the revised Hunter Regional Plan and has provided information to the Royalties for Rejuvenation Task Force. Council has also worked with the Hunter Joint Organisation regarding regional project priorities, and with AGL regarding the closure of Liddell Power Station and future projects.

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	Completed	25.1.1 Council's Work, Health and Safety Committee has met on a monthly basis throughout 2021-22, and separate Health and Safety Representative meetings have regularly been held to ensure Work, Health and Safety remains Council's highest priority.

Organisational Chart

DEPARTMENTAL STRUCTURE



The Leadership Team



Derek Finnigan, Acting General Manager

Derek has served in a variety of roles with Council, focusing primarily on infrastructure services

and operational sustainability, and is Council's Local Emergency Management Officer. Derek's tertiary qualifications include a Master of Business Administration, Bachelor of Business Administration, Diploma of Occupational Health and Safety, and Bachelor of Arts (English Literature).



**Matthew Lysaught
Director Property and Place**

Matthew joined Council in 2011 and is responsible for Council's Property and Place directorate which includes

Council's Works Department and property assets.

He works with a dedicated team responsible property management, construction, and maintenance of assets.

Matthew has a Bachelor of Economics, graduate and postgraduate degrees in visual arts, and Certificate IV training in property services.



**David Walsh
Director Corporate Services and CFO**

David joined Council in 2021 and is a Certified Practising Accountant

with experience in finance, IT, procurement, and company secretariat and brings experience in change management, process improvement and whole of organisation system integration to Council

David's qualifications include a Bachelor of Business (Economics), Master of Professional Accounting and a Master of Business Administration and he is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



**Shaelee Welchman
Director - Community & Economy**

Shaelee has nearly 25 years' experience in local government in

Queensland and in NSW as well as in the private sector. She is focused on delivering economic and community development outcomes for the Shire and brings to the role diverse skills in infrastructure lead industrial and urban precinct development, investment and business attraction, jobs growth and diversification strategies.

Before moving to the Hunter, she was involved in multi-government projects such as Gold Coast Light Rail, revitalisation of the Gold Coast CBD and Surfers Paradise, Gold Coast Chinatown, Yatala Enterprise Area, Gold Coast Health and Knowledge Precinct and the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games.



**Sharon Pope
Director Environment and Planning**

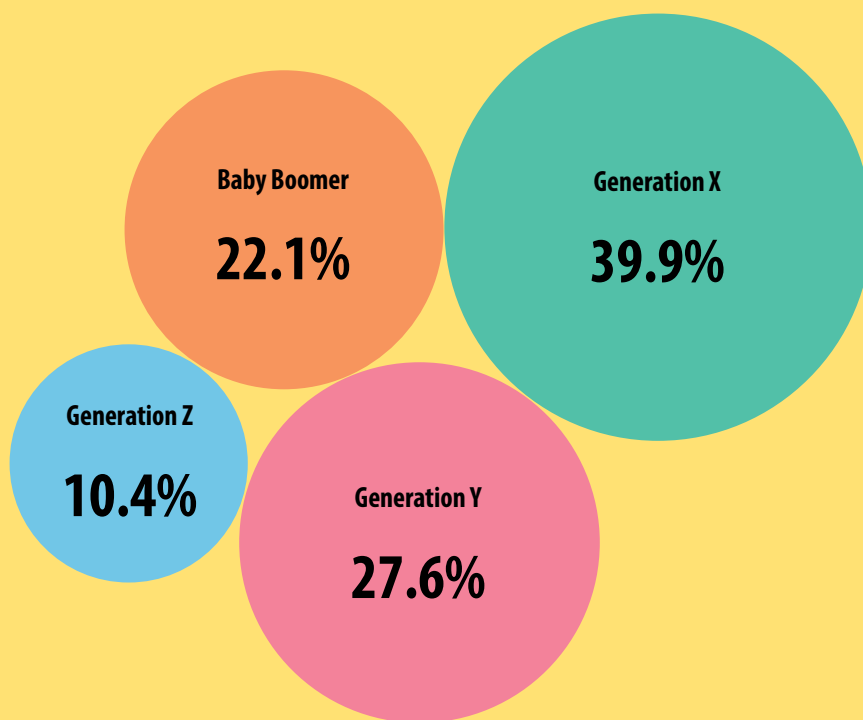
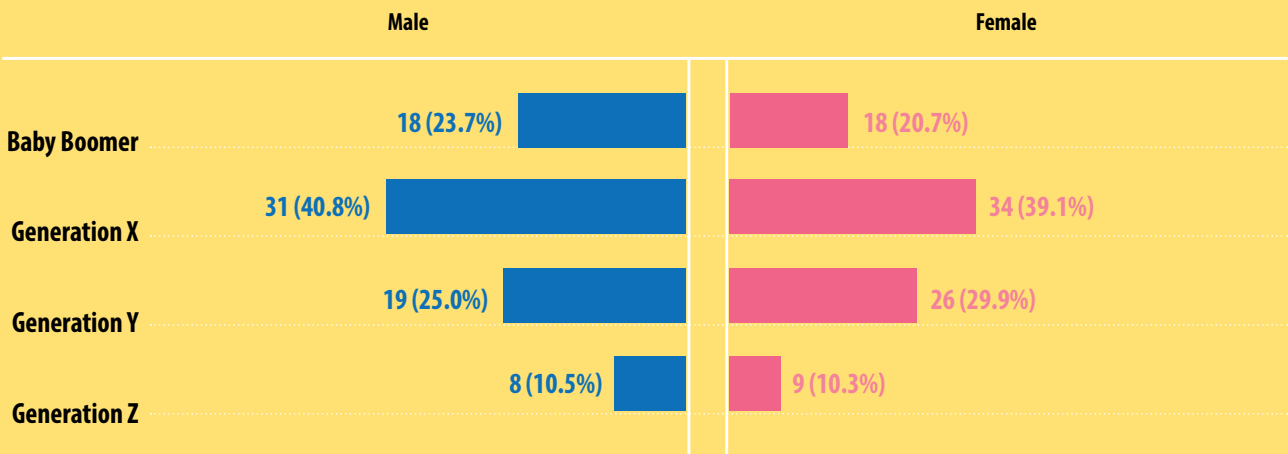
Sharon is a Fellow of the Planning Institute of Australia, has a degree in

Urban and Regional Planning and has vast experience in Local Government having started her career as a Trainee Town Planner at Greater Taree City Council.

Her broad range of experience in strategic land use planning, the development assessment process and community collaboration make her an invaluable member of Muswellbrook Shire Council leadership team.

Organisation's Employment Status

GENDER BY GENERATIONAL SPLIT



155 FULL TIME EQUIVALENT

163 TOTAL 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 process

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	2020	2021	Result (below/ met/ exceeded target)	Improvement/ Comments	Who
Number of incidents reported including near misses	92	186	339	113	92	N/A	Decrease in incident reports due to a heavy focus on contractor management and number of workers still working remotely.	WHS
Near Misses	23	24	39	14	14	N/A	Near misses continue to be reported as directed to ensure Council is being proactive to reduce or eliminate the risk in the future	All Staff
Lost time	0	3	1	0	0	N/A		All Staff
Public Liability (Incidents)	15	60	114	28	28	N/A	Low number due to the closure of the Muswellbrook Aquatic Centre	All Staff
Medical Treatment	6	18	29	9	12	N/A		All Staff
Injury/Illness Related	36	78	166	52	40	N/A		
Property Related	14	43	72	32	21	N/A		All Staff
Security Related	7	8	14	5	6	N/A		All Staff
Environmental	1	2	1	1	1	N/A		
Abuse	1	5	12	8	6	N/A		
Number of incidents investigated	13	59	95	31	34	N/A	Incident investigation requirements are determined during incident evaluations based on the nature and severity of the incident.	WHS
Number of corrective actions completed (Target: 100% completion of corrective actions raised)	9	64	90	33	29	Below	Majority of incident investigations were conducted by WHS who are under resourced. Incident Reporting and Investigation training is required to ensure supervisors and HSRs conduct investigations as required.	WHS
Number of risks eliminated	2	26	29	3	0	N/A	Number of risks eliminated using the hierarchy of controls.	WHS
Number of Hazard reports logged	1	3	17	6	9	N/A		WHS
WHS Committee Meetings (Target: 100% of 12 meetings held/year)	9	11	11	10	10	Below	Given the interruption to the workplace, the Committee meeting were still managed to be held.	WHS
Number of Hazard Safety Inspections completed per Month (Target: 100% of 59 63 inspections per year)	0	36	45	40	39	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	780	1,543	Met	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



Muswellbrook Library

The Governing Body

The Governing Body of the Council consists of twelve (12) councillors elected for four years. The Chair of Muswellbrook Shire Council (the Mayor of Muswellbrook) and the Deputy Chair are elected by Councillors every two years.

The Mayor and Councillors

The Mayor holds a number of Council delegations and some statutory responsibilities to make determinations on behalf of the Governing Body of the Council between Council meetings. The Mayor is responsible to the Governing Body for the determinations he or she makes.

MAYOR – Councillor Steve Reynolds



Second term councillor Steve was born and raised in Muswellbrook and is now raising his own family in the Shire. He was elected Mayor of Muswellbrook in January 2022 and, as a lifetime local, fully understands the history, spirit and

needs of the town and its surrounding areas. His priorities include upholding the pledge to improve communication and engagement within the community and delivering key capital projects alongside a team of dedicated councillors.

Steven.Reynolds@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au

DEPUTY MAYOR – Councillor Jennifer Lecky



As a life member of the Australian Local Government Women's Association (NSW) and offering many years of invaluable experience on Council, Jennifer's passions are her community and supporting women entering politics.

During the current term she would like to see revenue contributions from mining companies used to benefit the community and work towards developing a vibrant region.

Jennifer.Lecky@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au

Councillor Amanda Barry



First term councillor and Denman resident, Amanda wants to be part of a strong council that can be trusted and respected.

An advocate of community engagement, she wants to create a shared vision for the future which includes efficient and effective services and protection and enhancement of the natural environment.

Amanda.Barry@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au

Councillor Mark Bowditch



Second term councillor Mark is involved in the environmental revegetation industry and runs trainee programs for young people giving them practical skills to enhance future opportunities.

He wants to represent the community without an agenda, support homeowners on issues around development in the Shire and focus on listening to residents.

Mark.Bowditch@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au

Councillor De-Anne Douglas



First term councillor and long-term Muswellbrook resident, De-Anne brings a wealth of local knowledge and experience to the role.

As manager of the Muswellbrook PCYC for more than 15 years she has developed deep community connections and a strong local voice. Her priorities include improved access to medical services and delivering the planned Community Hub.

De-Anne.Douglas@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au

Councillor Jeff Drayton



Born and raised in Denman before relocating to Muswellbrook and with previous experience on Council Jeff wants to see this new Council refocus on real issues and best outcomes for the community.

While acknowledging that Council is financially strong he wants to ensure that consultations with stakeholders are clear and transparent.

Jeff.Drayton@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au

The Governing Body

Councillor Louise Dunn



Long-term resident, schoolteacher and first term councillor Louise has a strong sense of community and has resolved to bring the Shire back to being caring and compassionate.

While acknowledging that carbon neutrality and sustainable energy is the way of the future, she also understands that coal mining is vital to the economy and would also like to see more parks and open spaces.

Louise.Dunn@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au

Councillor Graeme McNeill



Incumbent councillor Graeme is in his third term on Council. As spokesperson for sport and recreation in the previous two terms, Graeme's priorities include pathways, cycleways, improvements to roads and investment in the Shire's youth.

His hope for this new term is for Council to have a strong focus on community engagement.

Graeme.McNeill@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au

Councillor Rohit Mahajan



Born in India, Rohit is now a proud Australian citizen, Muswellbrook resident and successful businessman. Running his own business puts him face-to-face with the community daily and he shares their concerns regarding local business

and employment opportunities. With sound relationships in place, he wants to be their voice on Council.

Rohit.Mahajan@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au

Councillor Rod Scholes



Third term councillor and Muswellbrook resident since 1982 Rod and his family have contributed greatly to the Shire community.

He has served as deputy mayor and mayor during his time on Council and brings a wealth of experience to the table. He wants to continue to improve the Shire's liveability, infrastructure and services.

Rod.Scholes@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au

Councillor Darryl Marshall



A shire resident for 56 years, first term councillor Darryl has worked across the wine, agriculture and coal industries and ran his own contracting business for 20 years.

Now semi-retired he has the time to commit to Council and pledges to serve the people of the region, work hard for the community and bring a vibrant voice to Council.

Darryl.Marshall@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au

Councillor Brett Woodruff



With strong connections to the Shire spanning four decades, Denman resident Brett wants to continue to represent the region with both head and heart.

Council's longest serving councillor, this is his sixth term, he is determined to provide residents with guidance, support and governance. His mantra is to look back and appreciate the past, enjoy the now and plan for the future.

Brett.Woodruff@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au

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 a total of nine ordinary meetings of the Council took place together with six extraordinary meetings, which were convened by necessity to consider specific matters.

MEETING DATES

Ordinary Meetings	Extraordinary Meetings
27 July, 2021	12 October, 2021
32 August 2021	11 January, 2022
28 September 2021	22 February, 2022
26 October 2021	26 April, 2022
1 February 2022	31 May, 2022
1 March 2022	14 June, 2022
5 April 2022	
24 May 2022	
28 June 2022	

COUNCIL ATTENDANCE

2021 – July to December

Councillor	Meetings Attended	Meetings Absent
Rod Scholes	5	
Mark Bowditch	4	1
Janelle Eades	5	
Jason Foy	5	
Jacinta Ledlin	5	
Graeme McNeill	5	
Steven Reynolds	4	1
Stephen Ward	5	
Brett Woodruff	4	1

2022 – January to June

Councillor	Meetings Attended	Meetings Absent
Steven Reynolds	9	1
Amanda Barry	9	1
Mark Bowditch	9	1
De-anne Douglas	10	
Jeff Drayton	9	1
Louise Dunn	10	
Jennifer Lecky	10	
Rohit Mahajan	10	
Darryl Marshall	10	
Graeme McNeill	7	3
Rod Scholes	8	2
Brett Woodruff	8	2

Democratic Governance

COUNCILLOR INDUCTION TRAINING AND ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

During 2021/22 Muswellbrook Shire Councillors participated in the following induction training and professional development:

Training Course/ Event	Councillor											
	Reynolds	Lecky	Barry	Bowditch	Douglas	Drayton	Dunn	Mahajan	Marshall	McNeill	Scholes	Woodruff
Shire and Council Facilities Bus Tour	1	1	1		1	1	1	1				
OLG Hit the Ground Running: webinar 1			1				1	1	1			
LGNSW Mayoral Induction - Day 1	1											
LGNSW Elected Life - Day 1	1	1	1		1		1	1	1	1		
LGNSW Elected Life - Day 2	1	1	1		1		1	1	1	1		
OLG Hit the Ground Running: webinar 2	1		1				1		1			
Strategic Planning Workshop - Day 1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Strategic Planning Workshop - Day 2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
OLG Hit the Ground Running: webinar 4								1				
OLG Hit the Ground Running: webinar 5							1		1			
OLG Hit the Ground Running: webinar 6	1											
LGNSW Code of Meeting Practice Follow-up	1	1	1				1	1	1	1	1	
OLG Hit the Ground Running: webinar 7								1	1			
OLG Hit the Ground Running: webinar 9												
OLG Hit the Ground Running: webinar 10									1			
OLG Hit the Ground Running: webinar 11												
OLG Hit the Ground Running: webinar 12												

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 objective of the ARIC is to provide independent review and oversight of various areas of Council's operations. The ARIC Charter lists the Committee's responsibilities under the following headings:

1. Risk Management
2. Control Framework
3. External Accountability
4. Legislative Compliance
5. Internal Audit
6. External Audit
7. Business Improvement

The inaugural meeting of the Muswellbrook Shire Council ARIC was held on 20 November 2019.

Council's ARIC includes two independent members, and two Councillor Members are as follows:

- › Mitchell Morley - Independent Committee Chair
- › Paul Quealey – Independent Committee Member
- › Cr Rod Scholes – Councillor Representative (until December 2022)
- › Cr Jennifer Lecky – Councillor Representative (since March 2022)

During 2021/2022 the Muswellbrook Shire Council ARIC met on five occasions. The ARIC Charter requires the Committee to meet at least four times per annum. Meetings were held on:

- › 6th October 2021
- › 20th October 2021 (extraordinary meeting to discuss financial statements)
- › 15th December 2021
- › 2nd March 2022
- › 8th June 2022

All members were present at each meeting with the exception that no councillor representative attended the meeting on 15th December 2021 as the results of the 2021 council election had not been declared at that time.



Corporate Governance

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



Mitchell is a Director of InConsult and has over 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.

Cr Rod Scholes, Councillor – Muswellbrook Shire Council



Third term councillor and Muswellbrook resident since 1982 Cr Rod Scholes and his family have contributed greatly to the Shire community. He has served as deputy mayor and mayor during his time on Council and brings a wealth of experience to the table. He wants to continue to improve the Shire's liveability, infrastructure and services.

Independent Member 2: Paul Quealey, Partner – Lambourne Partners



Paul has been in the Audit and Assurance industry for over 19 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 four Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee's, holding the position as Chairperson for three of those Committee's.

Cr Jennifer Lecky, Deputy Mayor – Muswellbrook Shire Council



Council's Deputy Mayor, Cr Jennifer Lecky was appointed as the Councillor Member of the ARIC at the March 2022 Ordinary Meeting. As a life member of the Australian Local Government Women's Association (NSW) and offering many years of invaluable experience on Council, Cr Lecky's passions are her community and supporting women entering politics. During the current term she would like to see revenue contributions from mining companies used to benefit the community & work towards developing a vibrant region.

Fraud and Corruption Control

Council's Fraud and Corruption Control Policy was adopted by Council at the 29 June 2021 Ordinary Meeting and is scheduled for review during the current term of Council as part of the Policy Review Framework.

During 2021/2022 key staff participated in Fraud and Corruption and Public Interest Disclosures webinars, education and training workshops delivered by the Independent Commission Against Corruption and the NSW Ombudsman, including:

- › Maximising the impact of your corruption prevention education program
- › Slavery - the lesser known form of corruption;
- › Understanding the range of potential procurement-related corrupt conduct;
- › Business Ethics Decoded – Is that Business with Ethics, or as an extra?;
- › ICAC Corruption Prevention Forum 2021;
- › Update on corruption prevention-related standards;
- › Public Interest Disclosures Management.

Council staff are required to undertake annual e-learning training and assessment against the Code of Conduct. As at 1 June 2022, 31% of Council's employees had completed their annual e-learning Code of Conduct training.

Council received no reports of fraud or corruption during the 2021/2022 reporting period.

Financials



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 RATIO

Ratio	Benchmark	2021/22	Achieves Benchmark	2020/21	Achieves Benchmark	2019/20	Achieves Benchmark
Operating Performance	>0	8.34%	Yes	9.96%	Yes	12.38%	Yes
Own Source Revenue	>60%	63.53%	Yes	64.35%	Yes	74.30%	Yes
Building & Asset Renewal	>100%	68.33%	No	75.02%	No	102.90%	Yes
Infrastructure Backlog	<2%	2.13%	No	2.39%	No	2.93%	No
Asset Maintenance	>100%	53.41%	No	78.67%	No	106.41%	Yes
Debt Service Cover Ratio	>2%	2.16%	Yes	2.43%	Yes	2.56%	Yes
Real Operating Expenditure*	Decreasing	3.56	No	3.31	No	3	No

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 2021/2022 the following works were undertaken with income generated from the special variation.

Contribution to Economic Development	\$262,656
Environmental Impact	\$890
Roads and Parks	\$83,382
Olympic Park Project	\$526,092
Regional Entertainment Centre	\$418,993
TOTAL	\$1,292,013

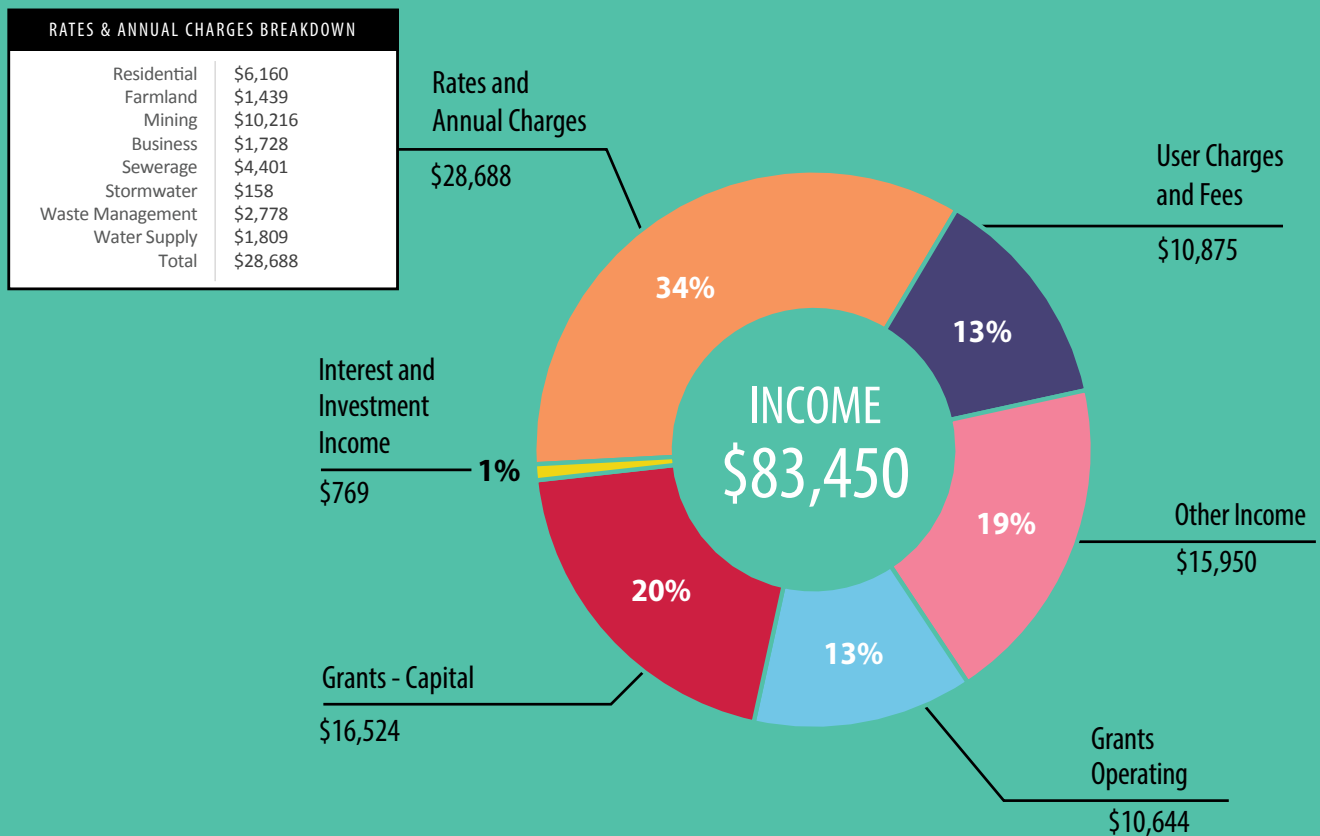
It is requirement for Council to report on the expenditure of the special variation until 2021/22.

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

Overall, the total comprehensive income for 2021/22 for the consolidated statements shows a surplus of \$113.1M (\$22.8M in 2020/21).

The \$90.3M increase in comprehensive income compared to the prior year is due to an \$86.0M improvement in the revaluation outcome for infrastructure, property, plant and equipment from a gain of \$1.9M in 2020/21 to \$87.9M in 2021/22, plus a \$9.0M increase in Fair Value Increment on Investment Properties, partially offset primarily by:

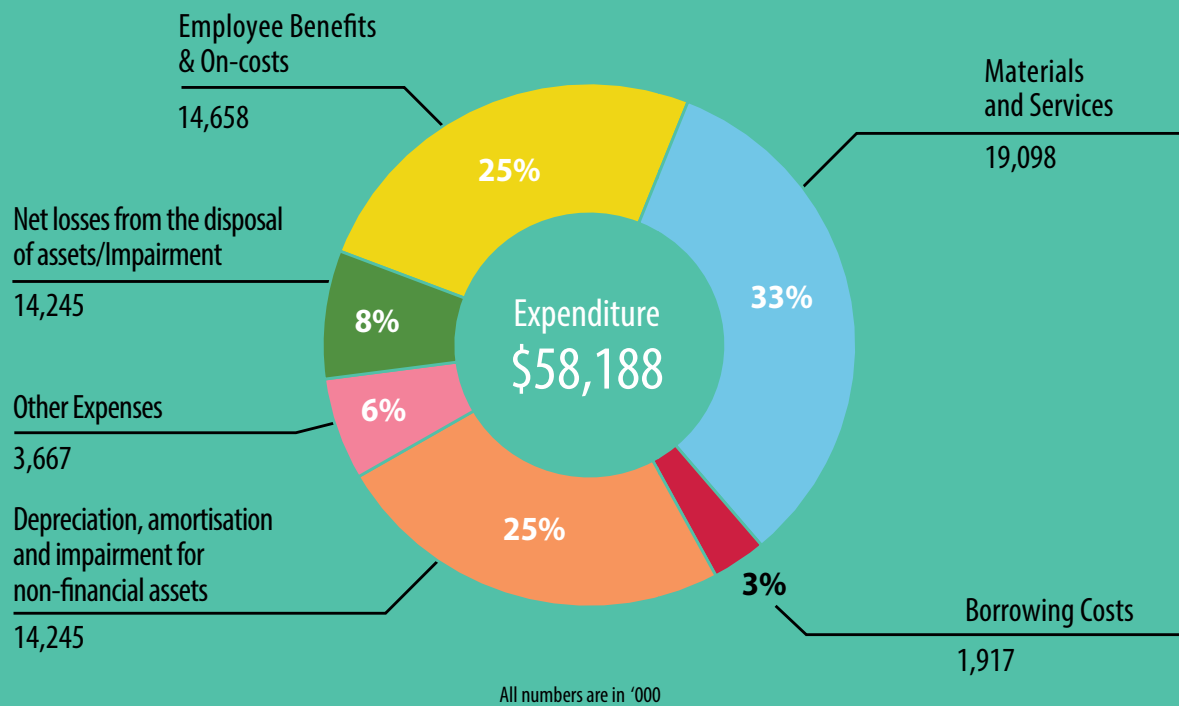
- \$3.0M increase in Materials & Services
- \$1.5M increase net loss from the disposal of assets



All numbers are in '000

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

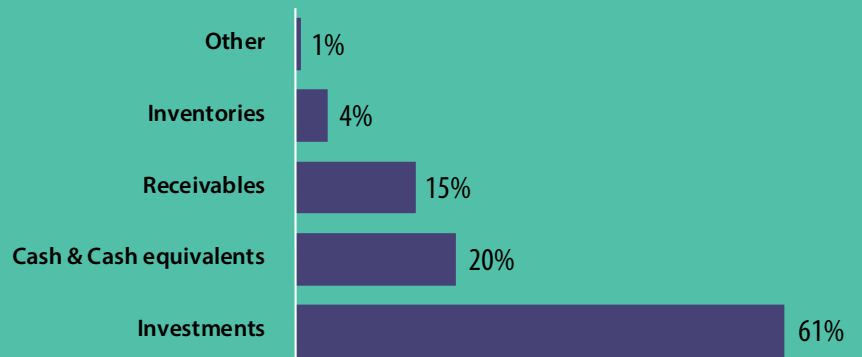
COUNCIL'S EXPENSES, AMOUNTING TO \$58.188M, ARE BROKEN DOWN AS FOLLOWS:



STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Council's total assets increased by \$109.3M to \$920.6M compared to the prior year, primarily due to infrastructure, property, plant and equipment revaluations.

Council's current assets, amounting to \$45.0M 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 2022.

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 2021/2022.

Refer to the Financial Statements 2021/2022 for a complete financial analysis and accompanying notes.

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

Muswellbrook Shire Council

Consolidated Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2022

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

The attached general purpose financial statements have been prepared in accordance with:

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

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

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

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

Signed in accordance with a resolution of Council made on 27/09/2022.



Steve Reynolds
Mayor

Nov 17, 2022



Jennifer Lecky
Deputy Mayor
Nov 17, 2022



Derek Finnigan
Acting General Manager

Nov 16, 2022



David Walsh
Responsible Accounting Officer

Nov 16, 2022

Income Statement

Muswellbrook Shire Council | Income Statement | for the year ended 30 June 2022

Muswellbrook Shire Council

Income Statement

for the year ended 30 June 2022

Original unaudited budget 2022	\$ '000	Notes	Actual 2022	Actual 2021
	Income from continuing operations			
29,399	Rates and annual charges	B2-1	28,688	27,810
13,569	User charges and fees	B2-2	10,875	12,029
1,053	Other revenues	B2-3	882	1,475
5,805	Grants and contributions provided for operating purposes	B2-4	10,644	6,766
17,825	Grants and contributions provided for capital purposes	B2-4	16,524	19,971
711	Interest and investment income	B2-5	769	881
6,604	Other income	B2-6	15,068	6,076
74,966	Total income from continuing operations		83,450	75,008
	Expenses from continuing operations			
14,761	Employee benefits and on-costs	B3-1	14,658	15,066
18,524	Materials and services *	B3-2	19,098	16,127
2,137	Borrowing costs	B3-3	1,917	2,086
14,528	Depreciation, amortisation and impairment of non-financial assets	B3-4	14,245	13,734
3,904	Other expenses *	B3-5	3,667	3,923
-	Net loss from the disposal of assets	B4-1	4,603	3,131
53,854	Total expenses from continuing operations		58,188	54,067
21,112	Operating result from continuing operations		25,262	20,941
21,112	Net operating result for the year attributable to Council		25,262	20,941
3,286	Net operating result for the year before grants and contributions provided for capital purposes		8,738	970

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

Statement of Comprehensive Income

Muswellbrook Shire Council | Statement of Comprehensive Income | for the year ended 30 June 2022

Muswellbrook Shire Council

Statement of Comprehensive Income

for the year ended 30 June 2022

\$ '000	Notes	2022	2021
Net operating result for the year – from Income Statement		25,262	20,941
Other comprehensive income:			
Amounts which will not be reclassified subsequently to the operating result			
Gain (loss) on revaluation of infrastructure, property, plant and equipment	C1-6	87,868	1,902
Total items which will not be reclassified subsequently to the operating result		87,868	1,902
Total other comprehensive income for the year		87,868	1,902
Total comprehensive income for the year attributable to Council		113,130	22,843

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

Statement of Financial Position

Muswellbrook Shire Council | Statement of Financial Position | for the year ended 30 June 2022

Muswellbrook Shire Council

Statement of Financial Position

as at 30 June 2022

\$ '000	Notes	2022	2021
ASSETS			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	C1-1	8,823	9,084
Investments	C1-2	27,500	20,550
Receivables	C1-4	6,648	7,350
Inventories	C1-5	1,675	1,661
Other		314	250
Total current assets		44,960	38,895
Non-current assets			
Investments	C1-2	26,765	34,733
Receivables	C1-4	–	880
Infrastructure, property, plant and equipment (IPPE)	C1-6	777,119	674,629
Investment property	C1-7	71,720	61,984
Investments accounted for using the equity method	D2-1	–	158
Total non-current assets		875,604	772,384
Total assets		920,564	811,279
LIABILITIES			
Current liabilities			
Payables	C3-1	9,245	8,966
Contract liabilities	C3-2	4,376	4,970
Borrowings	C3-3	6,055	7,149
Employee benefit provisions	C3-4	2,965	3,338
Provisions	C3-5	1,000	–
Total current liabilities		23,641	24,423
Non-current liabilities			
Borrowings	C3-3	57,313	60,873
Employee benefit provisions	C3-4	332	–
Provisions	C3-5	9,360	9,195
Total non-current liabilities		67,005	70,068
Total liabilities		90,646	94,491
Net assets		829,918	716,788
EQUITY			
Accumulated surplus	C4-1	415,729	390,467
IPPE revaluation reserve	C4-1	414,189	326,321
Council equity interest		829,918	716,788
Total equity		829,918	716,788

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

Statement of Changes in Equity

Muswellbrook Shire Council | Statement of Changes in Equity | for the year ended 30 June 2022

Muswellbrook Shire Council

Statement of Changes in Equity for the year ended 30 June 2022

\$ '000		2022			2021		
		Accumulated surplus	IPPE revaluation reserve	Total equity	Accumulated surplus	IPPE revaluation reserve	Total equity
Opening balance at 1 July		390,467	326,321	716,788	369,526	324,419	693,945
Restated opening balance		390,467	326,321	716,788	369,526	324,419	693,945
Net operating result for the year		25,262	–	25,262	20,941	–	20,941
Other comprehensive income							
Gain (loss) on revaluation of infrastructure, property, plant and equipment	C1.6	–	87,868	87,868	–	1,902	1,902
Other comprehensive income		–	87,868	87,868	–	1,902	1,902
Total comprehensive income		25,262	87,868	113,130	20,941	1,902	22,843
Closing balance at 30 June		415,729	414,189	829,918	390,467	326,321	716,788

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

Statement of Cash Flows

Muswellbrook Shire Council | Statement of Cash Flows | for the year ended 30 June 2022

Muswellbrook Shire Council

Statement of Cash Flows

for the year ended 30 June 2022

Original unaudited budget 2022	\$ '000	Notes	Actual 2022	Actual 2021
Cash flows from operating activities				
<i>Receipts:</i>				
29,399	Rates and annual charges		29,401	27,714
13,569	User charges and fees		10,731	12,252
711	Interest received		718	897
26,294	Grants and contributions		21,897	30,231
–	Bonds, deposits and retentions received		101	1,734
6,604	Other		8,874	8,048
<i>Payments:</i>				
(14,761)	Payments to employees		(14,699)	(15,809)
(18,524)	Payments for materials and services		(19,971)	(17,187)
(2,137)	Borrowing costs		(1,917)	(2,086)
(1,053)	Other		(2,057)	(2,401)
40,102	Net cash flows from operating activities	G1-1	33,078	43,393
Cash flows from investing activities				
<i>Receipts:</i>				
9,000	Sale of investments		–	5,314
–	Sale of real estate assets		785	194
–	Proceeds from sale of IPPE		607	321
<i>Payments:</i>				
(6,000)	Purchase of investments		6,560	–
–	Acquisition of term deposits		(5,700)	(5,800)
–	Purchase of investment property		(773)	(8,005)
(45,602)	Payments for IPPE		(30,098)	(34,211)
–	Purchase of real estate assets		(224)	(4)
–	Contributions paid to joint ventures and associates		158	–
(42,602)	Net cash flows from investing activities		(28,685)	(42,191)
Cash flows from financing activities				
<i>Receipts:</i>				
–	Proceeds from borrowings		–	9,585
<i>Payments:</i>				
(5,447)	Repayment of borrowings		(4,654)	(6,685)
(5,447)	Net cash flows from financing activities		(4,654)	2,900
(7,947)	Net change in cash and cash equivalents		(261)	4,102
8,989	Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		9,084	4,982
1,042	Cash and cash equivalents at end of year	C1-1	8,823	9,084
51,463	plus: Investments on hand at end of year	C1-2	54,265	55,283
52,505	Total cash, cash equivalents and investments		63,088	64,367

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 general purpose financial statements

Muswellbrook Shire Council

To the Councillors of Muswellbrook Shire Council

Opinion

I have audited the accompanying financial statements of Muswellbrook Shire Council (the Council), which comprise the Statement by Councillors and Management, the Income Statement and Statement of Comprehensive Income for the year ended 30 June 2022, the Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2022, the Statement of Changes in Equity and Statement of Cash Flows for the year then ended and notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

In my opinion:

- the Council's accounting records have been kept in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1993*, Chapter 13, Part 3, Division 2 (the Division)
- the financial statements:
 - have been prepared, in all material respects, in accordance with the requirements of this Division
 - are consistent with the Council's accounting records
 - present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Council as at 30 June 2022, and of its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards
- all information relevant to the conduct of the audit has been obtained
- no material deficiencies in the accounting records or financial statements have come to light during the audit.

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.

Other Information

The Council's annual report for the year ended 30 June 2022 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 special 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 special 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 in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and the *Local Government Act 1993*, and for 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.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

My objectives are to:

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

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

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

Independent Auditor's Reports (Auditor General)

The scope of my audit does not include, nor provide assurance:

- that the Council carried out its activities effectively, efficiently and economically
- on the Original Budget information included in the Income Statement, Statement of Cash Flows, and Note B5-1 Material budget variations
- on the Special Schedules. A separate opinion has been provided on Special Schedule - Permissible income for general rates
- 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

18 November 2022
SYDNEY

Report on the Conduct of the Audit



Cr Steve Reynolds
Mayor
Muswellbrook Shire Council
PO Box 122
MUSWELLBROOK NSW 2333

Contact: Furqan Yousuf
Phone no: 02 9275 7470
Our ref: D2224533/1765

18 November 2022

Dear Mayor

Report on the Conduct of the Audit for the year ended 30 June 2022 Muswellbrook Shire Council

I have audited the general purpose financial statements (GPFS) of the Muswellbrook Shire Council (the Council) for the year ended 30 June 2022 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 2022 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

	2022 \$m	2021 \$m	Variance %
Rates and annual charges revenue	28.7	27.8	3.2
Grants and contributions revenue	27.2	26.7	1.9
Operating result from continuing operations	25.3	20.9	21.1
Net operating result before capital grants and contributions	8.7	1.0	770

Report on the Conduct of the Audit

Rates and annual charges revenue (\$28.7 million) increased by \$0.9 million (3.2 per cent) in 2021–22 due to:

- annual rate peg increase applied to ordinary rates (2.0 per cent)
- increase of \$0.3 million in sewerage services revenue.

Grants and contributions revenue (\$27.2 million) increased by \$0.5 million (1.9 per cent) in 2021–22. Significant movements were as follows:

- increase of \$1.5 million of financial assistance grant revenue
- increase of \$2.4 million of special purpose economic development grant revenue
- increase of \$2.1 million in other non-cash contributions revenue
- decrease of \$6.8 million in other roads and bridges grant funding received during the year.

The Council's operating result from continuing operations (\$25.3 million including depreciation and amortisation expense of \$14.2 million), was \$4.4 million higher than the 2020-21 result. This was mainly due to increased other revenue relating to fair value increment of investment properties by \$9.0 million. This was offset by an increase in materials and services costs by \$3.0 million and increase in net loss from disposal of assets by \$1.5 million.

The net operating result before capital grants and contributions (\$8.7 million) was \$7.7 million higher than the 2020-21 result.

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

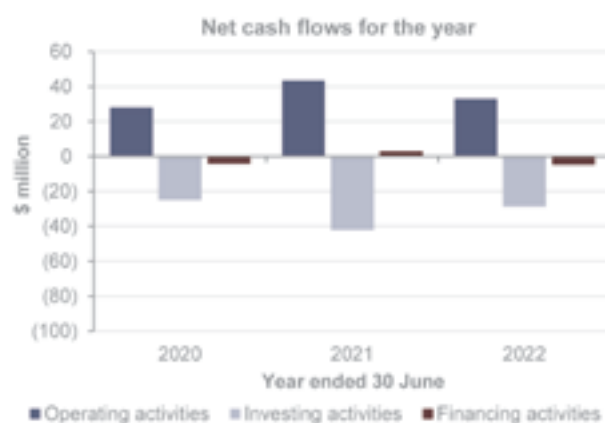
The Statement of Cash Flows illustrates the flow of cash and cash equivalents moving in and out of Council during the year.

The decrease in cash provided from operating activities is mainly due to increased payments for materials and services during the year.

The decrease in cash used in investing activities is mainly due to less acquisition of investment property and IPE assets compared to the prior year.

The decrease in cash used in financing activities is mainly due to no additional borrowings during the current the year.

The Council's cash and cash equivalent balances at 30 June 2022 was \$8.8 million (2021: \$9.1 million). The net cash flow for the year was a decrease of \$0.3 million.



Report on the Conduct of the Audit

FINANCIAL POSITION

Cash and investments

Cash and investments	2022	2021	Commentary
	\$m	\$m	
Total cash, cash equivalents and investments	63.1	64.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cash and investments decrease by \$1.2 million. Externally restricted cash and investment are restricted in their use by externally imposed requirements. Council's externally restricted cash and investments have decreased by \$5.6 million primarily due to a decrease in restricted reserves relating to developer contributions - general, water fund and Road Network Efficiency programs.
Restricted and allocated cash, cash equivalents and investments:			
• External restrictions	29.4	35.0	
• Internal allocations	33.6	29.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internally restricted cash and investments are due to Council policy or decisions to restrict funds for forward plans including strategic capital projects. The increase in internally restricted cash and investments is mainly due to increases in cash reserves relating to financial assistance grants, economic development, natural disaster and carry over works funding.

Debt

The Council has \$63.4 million of borrowings as at 30 June 2022 (2021: \$68.0 million).

The Council has an accumulated drawdown facility limit of \$0.8 million as at 30 June 2022 (2021: \$0.8 million), which remained unutilised at the end of the year.

Report on the Conduct of the Audit

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 and Environment.

Operating performance ratio

The Council met the OLG benchmark for the current reporting period.

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.



Own source operating revenue ratio

The Council met the OLG benchmark for the current reporting period.

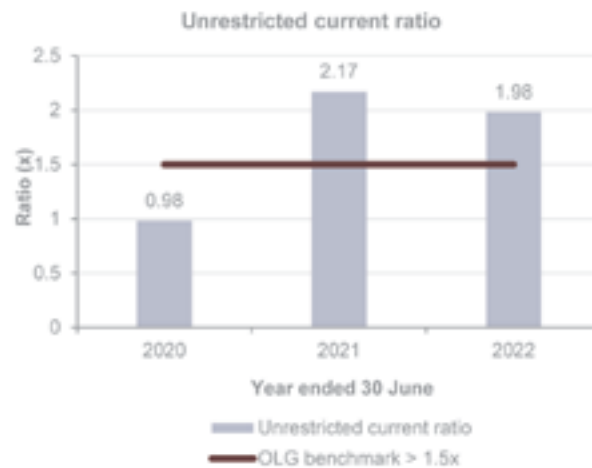
The 'own source operating revenue ratio' measures council's fiscal flexibility and the degree to which it relies on external funding sources such as operating grants and contributions. The benchmark set by OLG is greater than 60 per cent.



Report on the Conduct of the Audit

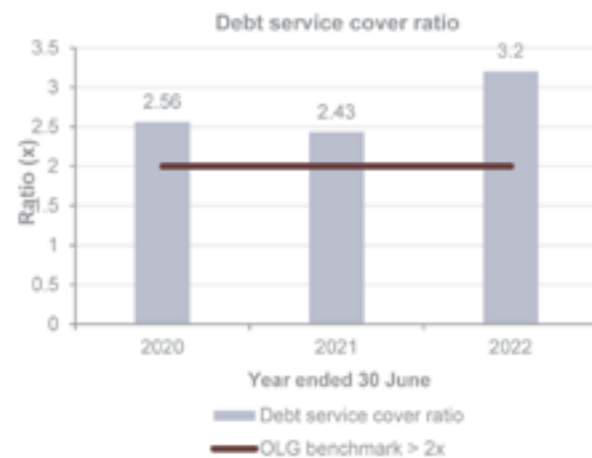
Unrestricted current ratio

The Council met the OLG benchmark for the current reporting period. 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.



Debt service cover ratio

The Council met the OLG benchmark for the current reporting period. 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.



Report on the Conduct of the Audit

Rates and annual charges outstanding percentage

The Council met the OLG benchmark for the current reporting period.

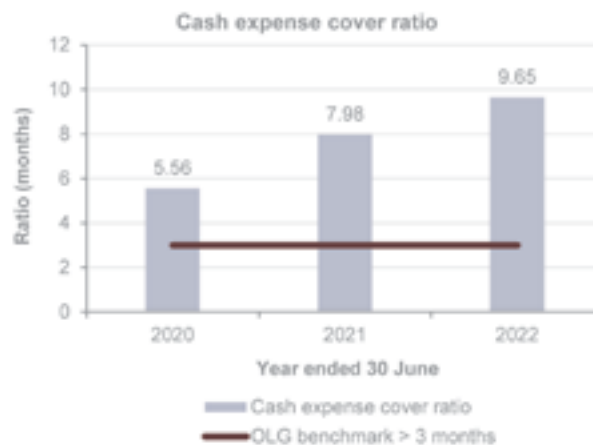
The 'rates and annual charges outstanding percentage' assesses the impact of uncollected rates and annual charges on council's liquidity and the adequacy of debt recovery efforts. The benchmark set by OLG is less than 10 per cent for regional and rural councils.



Cash expense cover ratio

The Council met the OLG benchmark for the current reporting period.

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.



Infrastructure, property, plant and equipment renewals

Council reported asset renewals of \$4.5 million in 2021-22 (\$8.0 million in 2020-21). Significant renewals included:

- water supply network renewals of \$1.2 million (\$1.5 million in 2020-21)
- stormwater drainage asset renewals of \$0.9 million (\$0.3 million in 2020-21)
- sewerage assets renewals of \$0.8 million (\$0.7 million in 2020-21).

Report on the Conduct of the Audit

OTHER MATTERS

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.



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

cc: Mr Derek Finnigan, Acting General Manager
Mr Mitchell Morley, Chair of the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee

Report on the Conduct of the Audit



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 2021/2022 period and are detailed hereunder in accordance with the Regulation:

Mayoral Allowance	\$24,295.81
Councillors Fees	\$125,799.61
Councillors Expenses	
Office Equipment	
Telephone Calls	\$3,742.20
Conference & Seminars	\$10,720.38
Training & skills development	\$8,715.29
Interstate Visits	\$8,972.12
Overseas Visits	
Spouse/Partner Expenses	
Transport	
Catering	\$580.88
Child Care	\$53.59
Other	\$484.57
Officer Insurance	\$65,741.93
Councillor Expenses sub-total	\$99,010.96
Total	\$249,106.38

Interstate and overseas travel

No overseas travel was undertaken by Councillors in 2021/2022.

The Mayor travelled to Canberra to attend the National General Assembly 20/06/2022 to 22/06/2022

Legal expenses

Legal expenses for the 2021/2022 comprised of the following.

Item	Expense
Planning and Development	\$8,500.00
Debt Recovery	\$4,389.93
Other	\$951,027.29
Total	\$963,917.22

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.

On one occasion, due to extenuating circumstances, Council undertook work on private land that was fully subsidised by Council.

Contributions granted under section 356 of the Local Government Act 1993

During the year 2021/2022, Council made contributions, under section 356 of the Act in the total amount of \$133,551.

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.

Statutory Report

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

Baerami Memorial School Of Art	\$2,864
Early Links Inclusion Support	\$1,195
Muswellbrook Men's Shed	\$1,195
Muswellbrook Chamber of Commerce	\$3,500
Hunter Councils	\$50,028
Muswellbrook Race Club Limited	\$45,000
St Martins Women's Guild	\$1,444
Northern NSW Helicopter Rescue	\$3,520
Parkrun Australia	\$7,000
Rotary Club of Muswellbrook	\$4,300
The Red Door Community Inc	\$2,500
Upper Hunter Conservatorium	\$6,000
Upper Hunter Youth Choir Inc	\$2,000
Wybong Community Hall Committee	\$2,000

Exercise of Council functions by external bodies

The following organisations exercised functions delegated by Council during the 2021/2022 year:

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

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

Council is a partner with other Hunter Region councils in the Strategic Services Australia Ltd joint venture, which has been established to improve the quality and efficiency of local government services throughout

the Hunter Region. The activities of the joint venture are not controlled by any one council. Strategic Services Australia Ltd provides a purpose-built training facility, negotiates bulk purchasing arrangements and provides legal services for member councils.

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

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. Equal Opportunity Officer's have completed Domestic Violence Training and Mental Health First Aid Training. HR will continue to sought ongoing training to assist these employees in their roles as EEO Officer's. An EEO Officer contact list is made available to all Council staff.

Human Resources (HR) has updated all grievance and dispute resolution policies, procedures and forms.

Senior Staff and Remuneration Package for Senior Staff

In accordance with the Local Government General Regulations clause 217(1)(b)(i), (ii), (iii), (iv), (v), the General Manager's total remuneration package for 2021/22 was \$263,530.

In accordance with the definitions outlined in Section 332 and 334 of the Local Government Act 1993 and in accordance with the Local Government General Regulations clause 217(1)(c)(i), (ii), (iii), (iv), (v) during 2021/2022 the total remuneration package for Council's senior staff was \$230,787.

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This includes the:

- › total value of salary components of each package
- › total amount of any bonus, performance or other payments that do not form part of salary components of their packages
- › total amount payable by the council by way of the employer's contribution or salary sacrifice to any superannuation scheme to which any of the above may be a contributor
- › total value of any non-cash benefits for which any of them may elect under the package
- › total amount payable by way of fringe benefits tax for any such non-cash benefits.

Awarded contracts

Following are details of each contract awarded by Council during the year 2021/2022 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	\$245,292.00

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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 2021/2022 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	\$173,186.00
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. Council participates in the National Desexing Network to provide discounts for low income households.
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	152	124
Released to owner	45	10
Sold/Adopted	33	31
Rescue	102	54
Euthanised	8	29

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Stormwater Management Services

In 2021/2022, 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 2021/2022 the transactions that occurred in relation to the funding are outlined below;

Opening balance (funds unspent from previous allocation)	\$881,000
Funds raised	\$158,000
Allocation spend	\$9,000
Available to spend	\$1,030,000

The remaining balance has been carried over to 2022/2023 and will be used to fund future projects.

Rates & Charges Written Off

Council wrote off or abandoned the following amounts during 2021/2022 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)	\$11,103.58
Double charged water consumption through two meters	\$0
Council used water on private property during works	\$0

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 2022, Muswellbrook Shire Council received one (1) disclosure made under the PID Act.

Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009

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

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

Statutory Report

Reviews carried out by the agency	No
Information made publicly available by the agency	NA
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	10

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										
Members of Parliament										
Private sector business										
Not for profit organisations or										
Members of the public (by legal representative)										
Members of the public (other)	6				2	2			10	100%
Total	6				2	2			10	
% of Total	60%				20%	20%				

* 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.

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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*	2								2	20%
Access applications (other than personal information applications)	4			2		2			8	80%
Access applications that are partly personal information applications and partly other										
Total	6			2		2			10	
% of Total	60%			20%		20%				

* 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

Council is required 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	

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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	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	3	100%
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	3	100%

Table F: Timeliness

	Number of applications*	% of Total
within the statutory timeframe (20 days plus any extensions)	10	100%
Decided after 35 days (by agreement with applicant)		
Not decided within time (deemed refusal)		
Total		100%

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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				
Review by Information Commissioner*				
Internal review following recommendation under section 93 of Act				
Review by NCAT				
Total	0	0	0	
% of Total				

*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	

Statutory Report



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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 Conference Centre	The project is under development assessment. The construction tender was postponed until planning approval is received and until enabling works and a drainage design solution for Possum Gully is resolved.
Muswellbrook Aquatic Centre Upgrade	The renewal of the 50 m pool and the construction of the water play space, Learn to Swim/Warm water pool is complete.
Olympic Park Precinct Master Plan	The construction of the bridge from Wilkinson Avenue to Wilder Street is continuing. A draft Plan of Management has been reported to Council for stakeholder consultation. The Development Application for the amenities and grandstand has been submitted.

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	Status	Expenditure 2019/20
Hunter Valley Energy Coal Pty Ltd	Resources for Regions VI	\$598,000.00
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	0
Inspections of premises on which there are more than two dwellings	2
Compliance Certificates issued	62
Non-Compliance Certificates issued	26

Statutory Report

Statement of the total number of persons who performed paid work for Muswellbrook Shire Council on Wednesday 25 May 2022

In their 2021/22 annual reports, councils must publish a statement of the total number of persons who performed paid work for them on Wednesday 25 May 2022 including, in separate statements, the total number of the following:

- › the number of persons directly employed by the council:
 - on a permanent full-time basis
 - on a permanent part-time basis
 - on a casual basis, and
 - under a fixed-term contract
- › the number of persons employed by the council who are “senior staff” for the purposes of the Local Government Act 1993
- › the number of persons engaged by the council, under a contract or other arrangement with the person’s employer, that is wholly or principally for the labour of the person, and
- › the number of persons supplied to the council, under a contract or other arrangement with the person’s employer, as an apprentice or trainee.

Total number of persons directly employed by Muswellbrook Shire Council who performed paid work on 25/5/22	143
Permanent Full time	115
Permanent Part time	13
Casual	5
Fixed-term contract	9
The number of persons employed by the council who are “senior staff” for the purposes of the Local Government Act 1993	1
The number of persons engaged by the council, under a contract or other arrangement with the person’s employer, that is wholly or principally for the labour of the person, and	72
The number of persons supplied to the council, under a contract or other arrangement with the person’s employer, as an apprentice or trainee.	4

Disability Inclusion Action Plan

The implementation of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017-21 has been impacted by COVID 19 Public Health Orders. The strategy has focused on policies and actions that promote social inclusion and participation in Muswellbrook Shire and included the delivery of existing employment, community events and activities that provide improved liveability, services and facilities that support people of all abilities and their families to effectively participate in the community.

Residents from across the Shire have access to a wide range of government and non-government support services appropriate to their age and needs. Council actively works with health, educational and the government and non-government sector to improve

outcomes for people living with a disability and their families through liaison, advisory support, and the provision of meeting spaces.

The 2017-2021 DIAP actions and highlights include:

i. Building positive attitudes and behaviours

- › Community education of inclusion and acceptance, a partnership activity with Ability Links, involved a try a sports day inviting people with disabilities to participate in a sport such as netball, football etc and was held at Karoola Park Muswellbrook.
- › Promotion of existing Art Exhibitions for adults and children with disability, supported exhibition talks and workshops including the provision of a signing interpreter for the hearing impaired, was well received by participants and carers.
- › Provision of accessible events, Australia Day Community Awards, Australia Day Family Fun Day, Citizenship Ceremonies, Easter Family Fun Day, Blue Heeler Film Festival, Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre Exhibition openings and workshops, Library activities in Muswellbrook and Denman.

ii. Creating liveable communities

- › Muswellbrook Shire Libraries secured funding to develop a sensory courtyard to provide a safe space for children with mobile and sensory disabilities to play and interact with the environment.

- › Improved accessible public toilets at the Denman Memorial Park provided facilities for families and individuals to participate in community events and spaces in particular the inclusion of an adult change table.
- › Footpath renewal programs enabled the redesign of footpaths and pram ramps to provide people with disabilities connectivity and ease to move about the community independently.

iii. Supporting access to meaningful employment

- › Supporting people with disabilities to work from home during COVID 19 restrictions, relevant equipment was provided to ensure that this was achievable.
- › Ensuring buildings and workplaces are accessible for people with disabilities with the installation of ramps, elevators, and accessible toilet facilities.

iv. Accessible systems, information or processes

- › Improved understanding in assistive technologies through an auditory audit of the Council Administration was carried out and a final report was provided. The recommendations were implemented to improve access for employees with hearing impairments.
- › During the COVID 19 lockdown periods the Muswellbrook Shire Libraries innovatively developed a click and collect program for all residents of the Muswellbrook Local Government Area, this program proved to be vital for our vulnerable ageing community members providing them with reading materials delivered to their door and much need social contact.
- › Provision of the Muswellbrook Shire Council Facebook and website provides regular information to community members about events, projects and importantly emergency information such as fires and flooding events.

The Community Services Team have commenced the development of a revised Disability Inclusion Action Plan, this plan currently is in draft format and will be presented to Council in the near future.



