



muswellbrook  
shire council

# ANNUAL REPORT 2022 - 2023



**MUSWELLBROOK SHIRE COUNCIL RESPECTFULLY  
ACKNOWLEDGES THE LOCAL ABORIGINAL PEOPLE WHO ARE THE  
TRADITIONAL OWNERS AND CUSTODIANS OF THE LAND**



# CONTENTS

Presenting Muswellbrook Shire Council's 2022/2023 Annual Report.....	5
A Message from the Mayor.....	6
A Message from the General Manager.....	7
The Governing Body .....	9 - 11
The Leadership Team .....	12 - 13
Organisational Chart.....	14
Organisation's Employment Status .....	15
Democratic Governance.....	16 - 17
Corporate Governance.....	18 - 19
Highlights 2022/2023 .....	21
Muswellbrook at a Glance.....	22 - 23
Council at a Glance .....	24 - 25
An Overview of Muswellbrook Shire.....	27
Our Shire.....	29
We Are Here.....	30 - 31
Muswellbrook LGA Output Job Comparison .....	33
Economic Resilience.....	34 - 35
Muswellbrook Tourism .....	37
Community Engagement.....	38
Our Stakeholder Engagement.....	39
Our Stakeholders.....	40 - 41
Sustainability Engagement.....	43 - 45
Events .....	46 - 53
Staff Excellence .....	54 - 55
Hunter Joint Organisation Group Entities .....	57
Integrated Planning & Reporting Cycle.....	59
2017/2027 Community Strategic Plan.....	60 - 61
Strategic Directions .....	63 - 79
Spirit Values .....	81
Work Health & Safety .....	83
Modern Slavery Statement .....	85 - 87
Fraud and Corruption Control .....	89
Financials.....	91
Understanding Council's Financial Statements .....	93
Satutory Report.....	94 - 105
Disability Inclusion Action Plan.....	106





**THE DONALD HORNE BUILDING**

140



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# PRESENTING MUSWELLBROOK SHIRE COUNCIL'S 2022/2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Muswellbrook Shire Council's Annual Report provides a snapshot of the Shire and an update on how Council is progressing plans and projects for the future of the community.

## THE FOLLOWING CHAPTERS INCLUDE:

- ▶ an overview of Council's highlights and challenges over the past year
- ▶ a summary of Council's operational performance
- ▶ a detailed analysis of financial performance and expenditure for 2022/2023
- ▶ information prescribed by Local Government (General) Regulation, including a detailed progress report on Council's Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

The 2022/2023 Annual Report demonstrates Council's commitment to the Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027, adopted by Council in February 2017, which articulates the community's priorities and aspirations for the Shire.

The goals outlined in the Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027 are aligned with the strategic vision and direction outlined in the Hunter Regional Plan 2041 and 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.

Aligning state and local government strategic planning will support growth and change in the Upper Hunter. Vibrant communities must be supported by a robust economy. The regional plan repositions the Upper Hunter as a diverse energy, innovation and industry centre with efficient freight and transport connections.

Diversifying the economy, with a focus on renewable energy, agriculture, tourism and biodiversity, will deliver greater prosperity to communities across the Upper Hunter, including those in the Muswellbrook Shire.



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# CR STEVE REYNOLDS

## A MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR



During the 2022/2023 financial year, I am proud to say, our commitment to greater transparency and wider community consultation and our goal to take several of Council's major projects to completion, has been achieved.

Our region is on the move, and it is important during a period of change to make sure that we are moving in the right direction; a direction that improves the liveability of the Shire and enhances the quality of our lives.

Council is investing in the future by 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.

Completed and open, the Donald Horne Building houses a Stem Innovation Lab, available to all schools in the Shire providing students with the skills and mentorship to develop problem solving, critical thinking, teamwork and communications.

The building also houses an Advanced Manufacturing Centre. Innovation is the lifeblood of the economy, and this Centre offers acceleration and incubation for startups with access to tools, equipment, industrial designers, engineering and technical specialists for prototyping and product development.

The forward-looking development reflects Muswellbrook Shire Council's commitment to the redevelopment of the town centre and completes the Hunter Innovation Precinct, which includes the University of Newcastle Upper Hunter Campus, TAFE, the Muswellbrook Library and the visitor information centre.

Hunter Beach – to be renamed as Tarinpa following community consultation and input from the Wanaruah Local Aboriginal Land Council, is also open for business. Meaning Red River Gum Tree Place, the alternative to the working title will preserve, protect and honour the local language of the Indigenous people and ancestors of the region.

Other major projects to open before years end include the new Animal Care Facility and Sustainability Hub and the Denman and District Heritage Village, while progress has been made on plans to improve Olympic Park and a major upgrade to Muswellbrook's CBD.

Greening the Shire with trees and native plantings in urban areas and waterways to enhance the environment and public spaces continues and plans are underway for several new parks and recreation areas. Conducting regular drop-in sessions and listening posts throughout this period has been invaluable in determining what is important to the community.

### **Projects I consider to be crucially important at this time include:**

The Muswellbrook Bypass, critical infrastructure to ensure the safe and efficient passage of heavy vehicles through the valley and the safety and liveability of our residents, has been the subject of funding commitments from State and Federal governments to a total of approximately \$340M.

The Denman to Sandy Hollow water pipeline is a crucially important water infrastructure project aimed at unlocking economic development in the western sector of Muswellbrook Shire. Funding of \$18.9M has been provided through the State Government's Growing Local Economies grant program but, due to increases in project costs, requires further funding of \$9.5M for the project to proceed.

Funding of \$9.5M is required to construct a Muswellbrook Bypass link road connecting the Muswellbrook Bypass central interchange to the Muswellbrook CBD. The link road is required to provide swift access to the Muswellbrook District Hospital and the emergency services precinct.

I thank our committed Councillors, Council's Leadership Team and staff, who all strive to make Muswellbrook Shire the best it can be.

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

**Steve Reynolds**  
**Mayor**  
**Muswellbrook Shire**

# DEREK FINNIGAN

## A MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER



I am pleased to present Muswellbrook Shire Council's 2022/2023 Annual Report. Muswellbrook Shire continues its development as an important regional centre providing a wide range of services and support to our vibrant and engaged community.

A key focus of 2022/2023 has been continuing to ensure the financial health and sustainability of Council whilst delivering positively on the key strategic priorities of the 10-year Community Strategic Plan, the four-year Delivery Plan, and the annual Operational Plan.

Economic development and evolution continues to be a key strategic focus of Council. The advanced manufacturing hub and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) programmes provided in the Donald Horne Building, located in the Upper Hunter Innovation Precinct, support the educational and creative development of our students and innovators, and is a critically important feature of our Shire.

Recently completed projects such as the Donald Horne Building, the Muswellbrook Animal Care and Sustainability Hub, Tarinpa (Hunter Beach), and the Denman Heritage Village contribute not only to the unique characteristics and landscape of our Shire, but provide a combination of essential, educational, recreational, and cultural services that enhance our Shire's attractiveness and liveability.

In addition, the Shire's last remaining timber bridges, at Widden Valley and Rosebrook Creek, have been replaced with concrete structures, and represents the finalisation of a decades-long programme of the replacement of the Shire's timber bridges with concrete structures.

Council's major achievements in 2022/2023 are provided 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 2022/2023 Operational Plan as we continue to serve our community and progress 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 our major challenges and opportunities for the future, including economic diversification and attracting new industry, job creation, and making our Shire an appealing and healthy place to live, focusing on the key initiatives of prosperity, sustainability, liveability, and accessibility.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Derek Finnigan'.

**Derek Finnigan**  
**General Manager**  
**Muswellbrook Shire**



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# THE GOVERNING BODY

## DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

The governing body of the Council consists of twelve councillors elected for four years. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor are elected by Councillors every two years. The mayor holds a number of Council delegations and statutory responsibilities to make determinations on behalf of the governing body of Council between Council meetings and is responsible to the governing body for the determinations he makes.



### CR STEVE REYNOLDS - MAYOR

Second term councillor Steve has been Mayor of Muswellbrook Shire since January 2022 and, as a lifetime local, fully understands the history, spirit and needs of the town, villages and surrounding areas. Steve's priorities include upholding his pledge to improve communication and engagement within the community and to deliver key capital projects with the assistance of a team of dedicated councillors.

[Steven.Reynolds@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Steven.Reynolds@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au)

### CR GRAEME MCNEILL - DEPUTY MAYOR

Incumbent councillor Graeme is serving his third term on Council. With a special interest in sport and recreation and long-time involvement with the Olympic Park project, Graeme's priorities include pathways, cycleways, improvements to roads and investment in the Shire's young people. His hope for this term is to build a strong, united Council to drive a strong united community.

[Graeme.McNeill@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Graeme.McNeill@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au)



### CR AMANDA BARRY

First term councillor and Denman resident, Amanda wants to be part of a strong council that can be trusted and respected. As an advocate of community engagement, she wants to work towards creating a shared vision for the future, including developing more efficient and effective community services and a focus on the protection and enhancement of the Shire's natural environment.

[Amanda.Barry@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Amanda.Barry@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au)

### CR MARK BOWDITCH

A second term councillor, Mark works in the environmental re-vegetation industry and is involved in running trainee programs for youth with the goal of providing them with the practical skills needed to enhance future opportunities. His priorities during this term of Council are the protection of the environment, transparency, education, the development of employment opportunities, support for homeowners and a focus on listening to residents.

[Mark.Bowditch@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Mark.Bowditch@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au)



# THE GOVERNING BODY



## CR DE-ANNE DOUGLAS

First term councillor and long-term Muswellbrook resident, De-anne brings a wealth of local knowledge and experience to the role. De-anne is a former manager of the Muswellbrook PCYC and has deep community connections and a strong local voice. Her immediate priorities include improved access to medical services and the delivery of the planned Youth Centre.

[De-anne.Douglas@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au](mailto:De-anne.Douglas@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au)

## CR JEFFREY DRAYTON

With previous extensive experience on Council Jeffrey wants to see Council refocus on important issues and best outcomes for the community and to respond, react and rectify social issues, such as homelessness, domestic violence, child safety and protection that some in the community are currently dealing with. He would also like to see Council address the benefits the mining industry should be providing to the community, including jobs for residents of the LGA.

[Jeff.Drayton@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Jeff.Drayton@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au)



## CR 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 to all. 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 throughout the LGA.

[Louise.Dunn@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Louise.Dunn@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au)

## CR 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 a wide range of community members on a daily basis and he shares their concerns regarding local business and employment opportunities. With sound relationships in place, he wants to be their voice on Council and believes local government can only be deemed to be successful if the community is happy and contented.

[Rohit.Mahajan@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Rohit.Mahajan@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au)



# THE GOVERNING BODY



## CR 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 more than 20 years. Now that he is semi-retired, he has the time to make a commitment to Council and pledges to serve the people of the region, work hard for the community and bring a truly local voice to Council.

[Darryl.Marshall@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Darryl.Marshall@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au)

## CR JENNIFER LECKY

As a life member of the Australian Local Government Women's Association (NSW) and many years of 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 more vibrant region.

[Jennifer.Lecky@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Jennifer.Lecky@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au)



## CR 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. During this term he wants to continue to improve the Shire's liveability, infrastructure and services, and advocate for better local health services.

[Rod.Scholes@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Rod.Scholes@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au)

## CR 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](mailto:Brett.Woodruff@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au)





# THE LEADERSHIP TEAM



## **DEREK FINNIGAN - GENERAL MANAGER**

Derek was appointed as General Manager in March 2023 after serving in a variety of roles with Council, including as Deputy General Manager, over a career spanning more than 30 years, focusing primarily on infrastructure services and operational sustainability. 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).

## **SHARON POPE - PSM (PUBLIC SERVICE MEDAL) 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 makes her an invaluable member of Muswellbrook Shire Council leadership team.



# THE LEADERSHIP TEAM



## **MATTHEW LYSAUGHT - DIRECTOR PROPERTY AND PLACE**

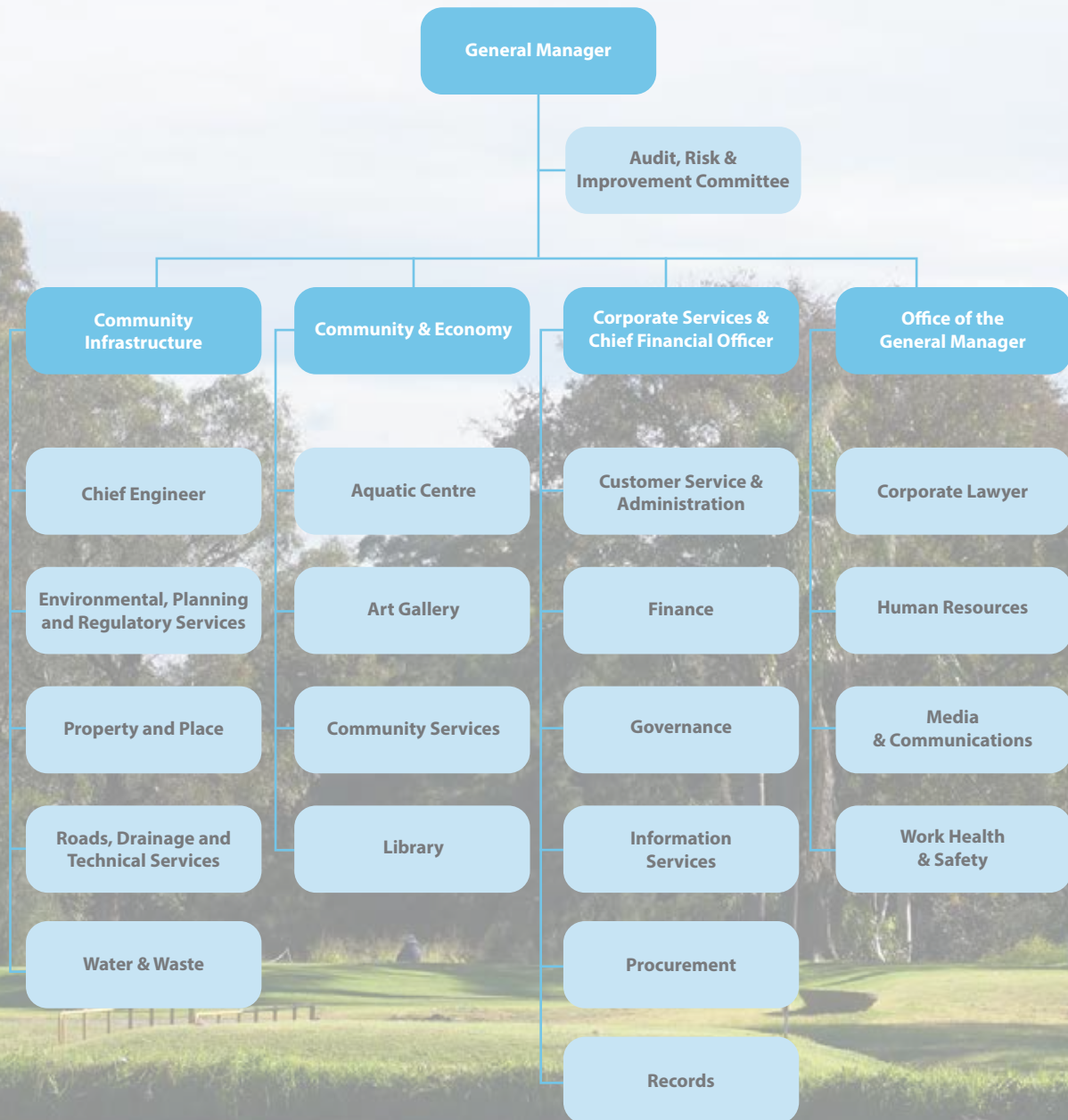
Matthew joined Council in 2011 and is responsible for Council's Infrastructure and Property directorate which includes Council's asset and operational teams. He works with a dedicated team responsible for the management, renewal, and construction of community assets, maintenance and operations. Matthew has a Bachelor of Economics, graduate and postgraduate degrees in visual arts, and qualifications in Property Services.

## **SHAELEE WELCHMAN - DIRECTOR COMMUNITY AND ECONOMY**

Shaelee has 25 years' experience in local government in Queensland and 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.



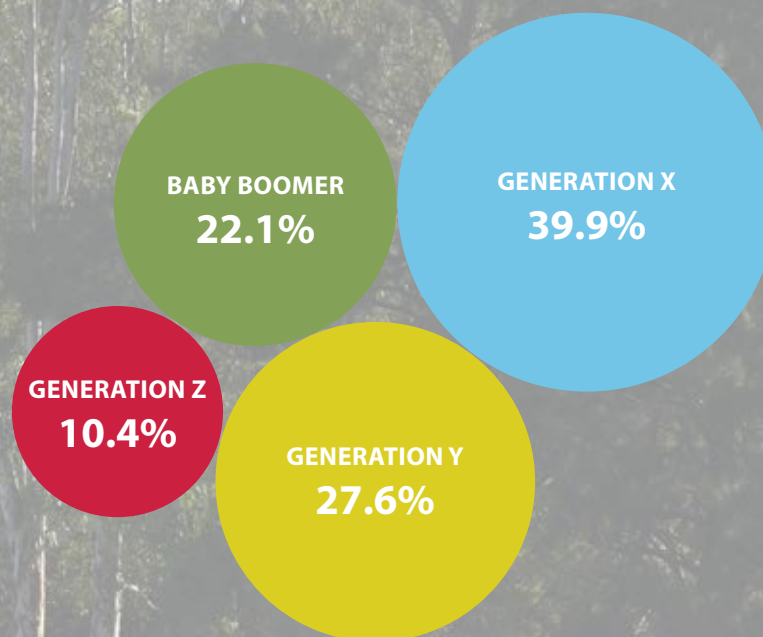
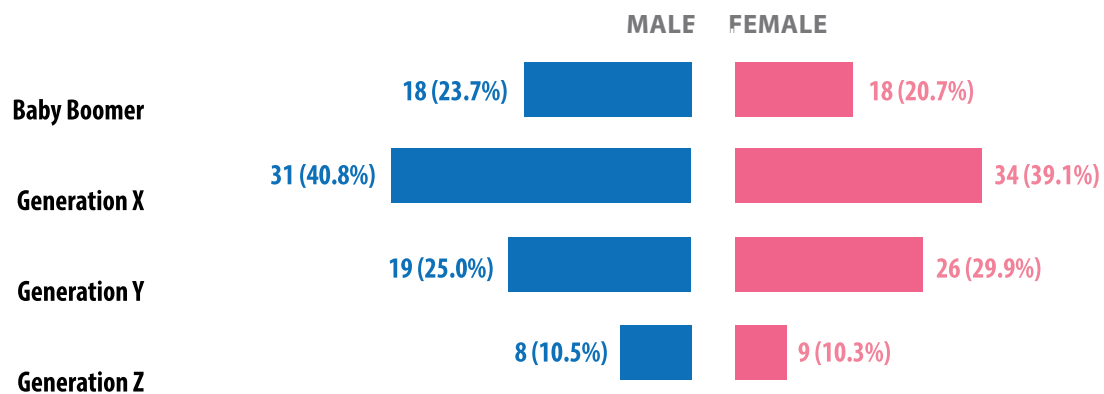
# ORGANISATIONAL CHART





# ORGANISATION'S EMPLOYMENT STATUS

## GENDER BY GENERATIONAL SPLIT



**121 FULL TIME EQUIVALENT  
163 TOTAL EMPLOYEES**

# 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 2022/2023 twelve (12) Ordinary meetings of the Council took place together with four (4) Extra-Ordinary meetings, which were convened by necessity to consider specific matters.

## MEETING DATES

26 July, 2022

22 August, 2022

30 August, 2022

21 September, 2022

27 September, 2022

25 October, 2022

22 November, 2022

20 December, 2022

24 January, 2023

28 February, 2023

22 March, 2023

27 April, 2023

23 May, 2023

27 June, 2023

## COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS

	ORDINARY	EXTRAORDINARY
Cr Amanda Barry	12	4
Cr Mark Bowditch	12	3
Cr De-anne Douglas	10	4
Cr Jeffrey Drayton	12	4
Cr Louise Dunn	12	4
Cr Jennifer Lecky	11	3
Cr Graeme McNeill	11	4
Cr Rohit Mahajan	12	4
Cr Darryl Marshall	11	4
Cr Steven Reynolds	10	4
Cr Rod Scholes	10	4
Cr Brett Woodruff	11	4

# DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

## COUNCILLOR INDUCTION & ONGOING PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

During 2022/2023 Muswellbrook Shire Councillors participated in the following training and professional development.

Training Course / Event	Date	Venue	Provider	COUNCILLOR											
				Barry	Bowditch	Douglas	Drayton	Dunn	Lecky	McNeill	Mahajan	Marshall	Reynolds	Scholes	Woodruff
ERM Foundations training	27/07/2022	Council	Statewide Mutual	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗
Code of Conduct (conflicts of interest & interactions with staff)	26/09/2022	Council	Moray & Agnew	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
ALGWA Conference 2022	07/07/2022 - 09/07/2022	Warwick Farm	ALGWA	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
LGNSW Conference	23/10/2022 - 25/10/2022	Pokolbin	LGNSW	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗
LGNSW Rural & Regional Summit	20/05/2022	Sydney	LGNSW	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗
ALGWA Conference 2023	27/04/2023 - 29/04/2023	Forbes	ALGWA	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Waste 2023 Conference	09/05/2023 - 28/06/2023	Online		✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗
Water Management Conference 2023	26/06/2023 - 28/06/2023	Parkes	LGNSW	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓
ALGA - Annual Conference	13/06/2023 - 16/06/2023	Canberra	ALGA	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗





# 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 (ARIC) Charter in 2020.

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

- ▶ Compliance
- ▶ Risk Management
- ▶ Fraud Control
- ▶ Financial Management
- ▶ Governance
- ▶ Implementation of IP&R Strategies and Plans
- ▶ Service Reviews
- ▶ Performance Measurement
- ▶ 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 one Councillor member are as follows:**

**Mitchell Morley** - Independent Committee Chair

**Paul Quealey** – Independent Committee Member

**Cr Jennifer Lecky** – Councillor Representative (since March 2022)

**During 2022/2023 the Muswellbrook Shire Council ARIC met on five (5) occasions. The ARIC Charter requires the Committee to meet at least four times per annum. Meetings were held on:**

- ▶ 13 October, 2022
- ▶ 17 November, 2022
- ▶ 19 January, 2023
- ▶ 6 April, 2023
- ▶ 29 June, 2023



# 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.

## **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, MUSWELLBROOK SHIRE COUNCIL**

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.





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# HIGHLIGHTS 2022/2023

Council has made significant progress towards the realisation of the Community's interests and aspirations in 2022/2023.

## SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

### ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Council continued to work with the Hunter Joint Organisation of Councils and 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 seeking ways to use current mining land to create future employment.

### CULTURAL VITALITY

A number of live cultural events returned in 2022/2023 following the lifting of pandemic restrictions. The inaugural Rock'n the Brook event held on March 4, a 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 - a new Muswellbrook Animal Care Facility and Sustainability Hub and The Donald Horne Building, home to the Hunter Innovation Centre

A major upgrade of the Muswellbrook Aquatic Centre which included two heated pools and children's water splash play area was completed.

### ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Council continued the reclamation of weed-affected riparian areas along Muscle Creek and commenced 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 3 of the Muswellbrook Hospital re-development.

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.

# MUSWELLBROOK

## AT A GLANCE



### Population

16,357

Male 51.3%  
Female 48.7%



### Families

4,222

Average number of children per family  
for families with children  
1.9



### All private dwellings

7,298

Average number of people per  
household  
2.5



### Median weekly household income

\$1,628



### Median monthly mortgage repayments

\$1,517

Median weekly rent  
\$300



### Average number of motor vehicles per dwelling

1.9



### 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)	%	New South Wales	%
<b>Median Age</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>N/A</b>
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	16,493	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**  
69,029 m<sup>2</sup>



**Square metres of footpaths works (new & replaced)**  
2,286.2 m<sup>2</sup>



**Dogs and Cats returned home**  
44

**Dogs and Cats registered**  
144 (20 Cats, 124 Dogs)

**Dogs and Cats rescued**  
152



**Library visits**  
Muswellbrook 37,419  
Denman 2,189

**Library loans Muswellbrook & Denman**  
46,845

**Library Events**  
349 events &  
3,792 attended



### Social Media

**Council Page**  
Page new likes 837  
Followers 10,554

**Aquatic Centre Page**  
Page new likes 299

**Libraries**  
Facebook followers 1,271  
Engagement 62,354

**Sustainability**  
Sustainable Futures 1670 likes  
& 1,850 followers

**Arts Centre**  
Facebook visits 2,795 & reach 55,356  
Instagram visits 5,884 & reach 5,553



**Council-run Community Events**  
8



**Website Page Visits**  
285,005

**Aquatic & Fitness Centre Website hits**  
31,610



**Council Committees**  
13



**Citizenship Ceremonies**  
4

**New Australian Citizens**  
62



**Art Centre Visits**  
5,780

**Muswellbrook Art Prize Entrants**  
702  
**Viola Bromley Art Prize Entrants**  
44  
**Mullins Conceptual Photography Prize**  
405



**Council Service Requests Lodged**  
4,000



### Aquatic & Fitness Centre Visits

**Muswellbrook Aquatic** 58,933  
**Muswellbrook Fitness Centre** 8,168  
**Denman Aquatic** 6,979



**Occupation Certificates issued**  
61

**Issued by Council:** 21  
**Issued by Private Certifiers:** 40

# COUNCIL

## AT A GLANCE



**Development Applications  
Lodged**  
228



**Fuel used by Council Vehicles**  
291,782.54 Litres



**Chemical Collection Day**  
Collected 2.755 Tonne  
(81 visitors)



**Waste Disposed of into Landfill**  
13,560.42 Tonnes

**Household Bin Waste Disposed of  
Household-Red Bin collected**  
3,524.7 Tonnes



**Recycling Collected**  
Kerbside 1,007.1 Tonnes  
Dropped at Facility 48.49 Tonnes

**Organics Processed**  
2,154.06 Tonnes

**Tonnes of e-Waste Collected**  
19 Tonnes



### **Sustainability Events**

**National tree Day**  
Over 150 people planted  
1,600 trees/shrubs/grasses

**Clean Up Australia Day**  
230 participants  
Waste Collected 1 Tonne

**Renewable Energy Target for 2025**  
40%



**Community Complaints**  
Odour 14  
Noise 13  
Dust 4  
Erosion Sediment 2  
Illegal Dumping 45  
Wood Smoke 7



**Electricity used by Council**  
7,488 MWH



**Water consumed in  
Muswellbrook Shire**  
1,466 Megalitres

**Water used by Council**  
155 Megalitres



**Approved Mining  
Developments**  
8







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# 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.





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# 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, Darkinjung, 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 3,402km<sup>2</sup> 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.

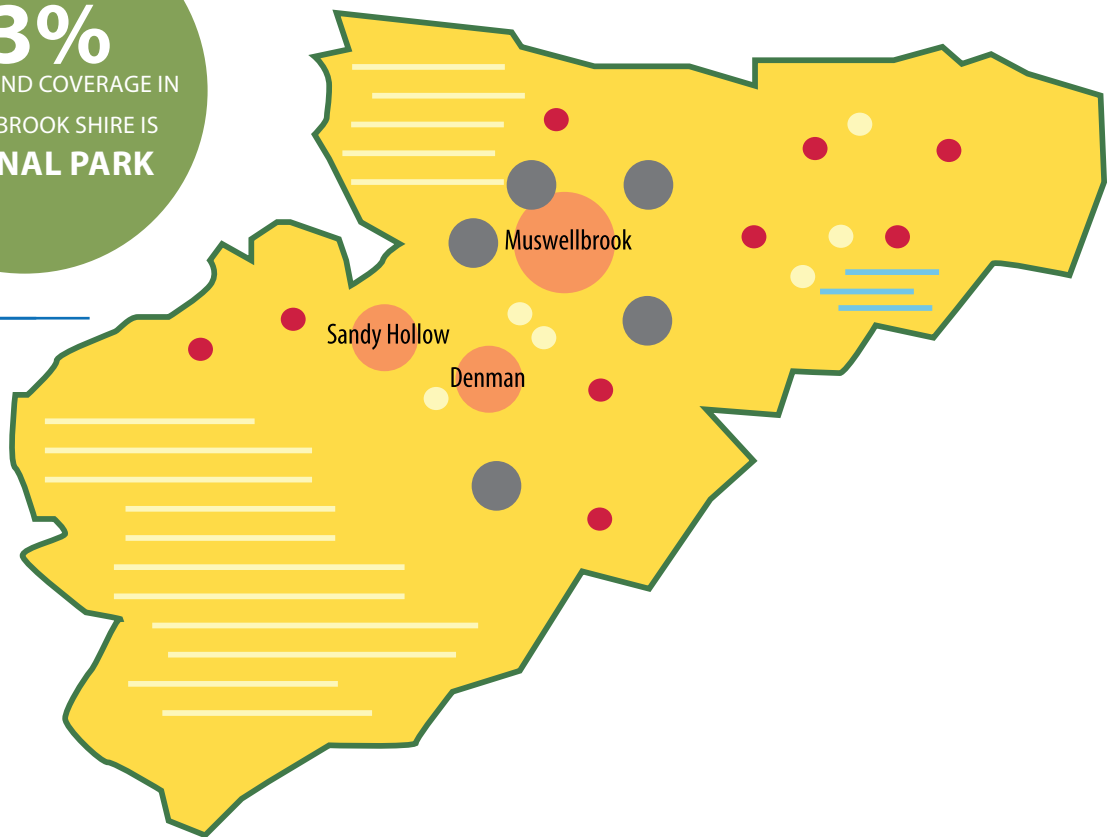


# WE ARE HERE



# 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







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# MUSWELLBROOK LGA OUTPUT JOBS COMPARISON

## MUSWELLBROOK (A) (2022 RELEASE 2)

Industry Sector	\$M	%	Jobs	%
Mining	\$5,276,956	58.5%	3,751	33.1%
Electricity, Gas, Water & Waste Services	\$1,465,807	16.2%	869	7.7%
Construction	\$416,753	4.6%	847	7.5%
Manufacturing	\$314,271	3.5%	764	6.7%
Rental, Hiring & Real Estate Services	\$269,100	3.0%	655	5.8%
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	\$221,118	2.5%	591	5.2%
Health Care & Social Assistance	\$127,895	1.4%	561	4.9%
Public Administration & Safety	\$121,197	1.3%	556	4.9%
Administrative & Support Services	\$111,536	1.2%	493	4.3%
Wholesale Trade	\$110,412	1.2%	453	4.0%
Other Services	\$95,382	1.1%	446	3.9%
Transport, Postal & Warehousing	\$92,499	1.0%	287	2.5%
Retail Trade	\$91,479	1.0%	272	2.4%
Education & Training	\$82,862	0.9%	250	2.2%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	\$74,428	0.8%	244	2.2%
Accommodation & Food Services	\$65,990	0.7%	110	1.0%
Financial & Insurance Services	\$47,040	0.5%	87	0.8%
Information Media & Telecommunications	\$24,718	0.3%	65	0.6%
Arts & Recreation Services	\$15,542	0.2%	40	0.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$9,024,986</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>11,341</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## EMPLOYMENT REPORT

This report shows the number of employees whose place of work is located within Muswellbrook (A). The total employment estimate for Muswellbrook (A) is 11,341 jobs.

## OUTPUT REPORT

This report shows the gross revenue generated by businesses and organisations in Muswellbrook (A).

Output data represents the gross revenue generated by businesses/organisations in each of the industry sectors in a defined region. Gross revenue is also referred to as total sales or total income.

The total output estimate for Muswellbrook (A) is \$9,024,986 million.

**Disclaimer:** All figures, data and commentary presented in this report are based on data sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), most of which relates to the 2021, 2016, 2011, 2006 and 2001 Censuses. Using ABS datasets and an input / output methodology industrial economic data estimates for defined geographic regions are generated. This report is provided in good faith with every effort made to provide accurate data and apply comprehensive knowledge. However, REMPLAN does not guarantee the accuracy of data nor the conclusions drawn from this information. A decision to pursue any action in any way related to the figures, data and commentary presented in this report is wholly the responsibility of the party concerned. REMPLAN advises any party to conduct detailed feasibility studies and seek professional advice before proceeding with any such action and accept no responsibility for the consequences of pursuing any such action.

# 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 extracted its last coal and closed its coal mining operations in March 2023. 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.

The BHP owned Mt Arthur coal mine are looking to modify current approvals to extend coal mining from 2026 before closure in 2032 and employs 2,200 workers.

## POWER GENERATION

AGL is one of the country's biggest energy producers. The company's Liddell power station based in the Muswellbrook Shire closed in April 2023 with the neighbouring Bayswater power station planned to close in 2032.

Between them, the power stations have historically generated enough electricity to power over three million homes each year and produced around 30 percent of the State's electricity.

AGL is progressing a strategy to create an energy hub and is actively exploring renewable energy, industry and agricultural opportunities as future options. 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.



# ECONOMIC RESILIENCE

## 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.

## 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.

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.





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# MUSWELLBROOK TOURISM

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

The tourism sector was severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. 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.





# 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 and collaborates with local media to keep the community informed on council services and facilities.

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, ensuring the community is well informed regarding Council's activities.

## 2023 COMMUNITY SATISFACTION SURVEY AND COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN REVIEW

Over the previous 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 are invited to share 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:

- ▶ Random and statistically representative telephone surveys
- ▶ Series of community panels
- ▶ Online survey
- ▶ Regular Listening Posts at Denman Memorial Hall and Muswellbrook Marketplace
- ▶ Regular drop-in sessions at the mayor's office.

A 2023 Community Satisfaction Survey, a random telephone survey of 402 adult residents in Muswellbrook Shire, conducted by Micromex Research and Consulting on behalf of Council was conducted in May 2023. The 2023 survey replicated a baseline study conducted in 2021 to ensure comparability over a period of time.



# OUR STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

WHO WE ENGAGE	HOW WE ENGAGE	WHY WE ENGAGE
<b>Community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Web: <a href="http://www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au">www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au</a></li> <li>▶ Social media</li> <li>▶ Publications</li> <li>▶ Community Panel</li> <li>▶ Events &amp; ceremonies</li> <li>▶ Council offices</li> </ul>	<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>
<b>Ratepayers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Web: <a href="http://www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au">www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au</a></li> <li>▶ Rates notices</li> <li>▶ Ratepayers Rewards Program</li> <li>▶ Social media</li> <li>▶ Publications</li> <li>▶ Community forums</li> </ul>	<p>Ratepayers contribute knowledge, cultural experience, resources, ideas and feedback.</p> <p>Council generates sustainable growth and return to the community.</p>
<b>Council Staff</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ General Manager's Newsletter</li> <li>▶ General Manager's Forums</li> <li>▶ Manex</li> <li>▶ Managers' Meetings</li> <li>▶ Tool box talks</li> <li>▶ Posters</li> <li>▶ Intranet</li> <li>▶ Email</li> <li>▶ Staff events and training</li> <li>▶ Staff Awards</li> </ul>	<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>
<b>Community &amp; Sporting Organisations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Web: <a href="http://www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au">www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au</a></li> <li>▶ Social media</li> <li>▶ Publications</li> <li>▶ Community Panel</li> <li>▶ Events &amp; ceremonies</li> <li>▶ Council offices</li> <li>▶ Grants programs</li> <li>▶ Sustainability Hub</li> </ul>	<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>
<b>Muswellbrook Business and Industry Community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Web: <a href="http://www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au">www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au</a></li> <li>▶ Participation in MCCI breakfasts</li> <li>▶ Annual Report</li> <li>▶ Other publications</li> <li>▶ Meetings</li> </ul>	<p>The local business and industry community provides employment and economic growth.</p> <p>Council provides guidance, support and opportunity.</p>
<b>Visitors</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Web: <a href="http://www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au">www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au</a></li> <li>▶ Visitor Information Centre - Denman</li> <li>▶ Upper Hunter Country Visitor Guide</li> <li>▶ Events</li> </ul>	<p>Visitors bring economic benefits to the Shire including more local employment opportunities.</p> <p>Council provides high standard facilities and services.</p>
<b>Government</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Web: <a href="http://www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au">www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au</a></li> <li>▶ Formal meetings</li> <li>▶ Correspondence</li> <li>▶ Forums and Conferences</li> </ul>	<p>The Federal and NSW State Governments provide partnerships, funding and network opportunities</p> <p>Council provides resources, partnerships and networks.</p>
<b>Media</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Media releases</li> <li>▶ Media alerts and briefings</li> <li>▶ Social media</li> <li>▶ Interviews</li> <li>▶ Paid advertising</li> </ul>	<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 Girl Guides
- ▶ Muswellbrook Golf Club
- ▶ Muswellbrook High School
- ▶ Muswellbrook Junior Cricket Club

# OUR STAKEHOLDERS

- ▶ Muswellbrook Junior Rugby League
- ▶ Muswellbrook Little Athletics Club
- ▶ Muswellbrook Men's Shed
- ▶ 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

Muswellbrook Shire Council has made a firm commitment to a sustainable future. The following activities carried out by Council's two-person Sustainability Unit over 12-months is testament to that commitment.

- ▶ Participation in the Openair project, a collaboration with several universities, the National Smart Sensing Network, and other councils, is ongoing. The installation of clarity sensors highlights differences in air quality in the Muswellbrook township.
- ▶ An updated Flying Fox Camp Management Plan was adopted by Council.
- ▶ A target of Net Zero Emissions by 2050, working in conjunction with the Hunter Joint Organisation, has been set.
- ▶ Two Electric Vehicle charging stations were installed at the Muswellbrook Marketplace for use by residents and visitors.
- ▶ Winner of a Local Government NSW Excellence in the Environment Award - Division A – Natural Environment Protection, Enhancement: On-Ground Works category - for the Rehabilitation of Muscle Creek Project
- ▶ Winner of a Keep Australia Beautiful Habitat and Wildlife Conservation Award for re-vegetation works along Muscle Creek.
- ▶ Muswellbrook Connect, a group aimed at connecting different groups in the community through partnerships continues to meet regularly.
- ▶ Community War on Waste Grants were distributed amongst six local community groups and schools.
- ▶ The energy reduction program assisted with lighting design, upgrade and installation at Muswellbrook SES headquarters and Muswellbrook Pre-School underwent a full LED lighting upgrade, resulting in a substantial reduction in energy consumption.
- ▶ Resourceful Living workshops, focused on plastic recycling, were held at local schools and pre-schools.
- ▶ Landcare Grants were awarded to four local land care groups.
- ▶ The Rehabilitation of Muscle Creek Project, assisted by the NSW Government through its Environmental Trust, saw 3,000 native seedlings planted and 1ha of weed control completed.
- ▶ Community volunteers planted 400 native seedlings at Tarinpa (Hunter Beach).
- ▶ The AGL Muscle Creek Walkway Project was completed with the installation of six augmented reality (AR) experiences along the Muscle Creek walking loop. The project also involved planting 1,200 native seedlings, installing solar lights and a new footpath.
- ▶ Over 1,200 native seedlings have been given away to residents.
- ▶ The Sustainability Hub hosted Muswellbrook High School students for a Circular Economy field trip, Upper Hunter Youth Service and Polly Farmer Foundation students on regular visits and 80 students from The University of Newcastle.





# SUSTAINABILITY ENGAGEMENT



- ▶ Homeschool students visited Muscle Creek and 120 students, teachers and parents from Muswellbrook Public School completed a field trip to the Sustainability Hub and Muscle Creek.
- ▶ Council supported Muswellbrook Public School with the purchase of two Water Refill Stations.
- ▶ The Denman Lookout Trail and Denman Nature walk were completed and opened.
- ▶ The Sustainability Unit collaborated with the Saving Our Species Program and local schools on the endangered Denman Pomaderris project.
- ▶ The Sustainability Unit have collaborated with the community groups to improve sustainability at events, including the collection of bottles and cans for recycling and setting up portable water refill stations.
- ▶ Placement students from the University of Newcastle completed periods in the Unit as part of work experience requirements.
- ▶ Staff attended the Sustainability in Local Government Conference.
- ▶ Subsidised worm farms and compost bins have been sold to residents to help promote food waste reduction.
- ▶ On National Tree Day, Council, with the support of Muscle Creek Landcare volunteers, Pacific Brook Christian School, Warrior Disability Services, Denman St Joseph's students and residents, more than 2000 native seedlings were planted at sites in Muswellbrook and Denman.
- ▶ An area on Denman Golf Course was set aside for wildlife carers to harvest plants for native wildlife in care. Muswellbrook Shire Council, NSW Wildlife Information Rescue & Education Service Inc. and St Joseph's Primary School, Denman planted 300 native seedlings at the site.
- ▶ On Clean Up Australia Day, Muswellbrook Preschool Kindergarten was visited by a garbage truck and puppet show. Thirty people attended Clean Up Australia day activities in Simpson Park along with Warrior Disability Services and Muswellbrook High School.





# SUSTAINABILITY ENGAGEMENT

- ▶ The Unit visited Muswellbrook High School to assist with Clean Up Australia Day. Business and community groups, including BHP, Denman Lions and 1st Denman Scout Group, removed rubbish in Denman.
- ▶ Two activity and colouring books, written and illustrated by Warrior Disability Services, have been produced for distribution at community events to help promote waste reduction.
- ▶ Regular bird watching walks have been conducted along Muscle Creek with local volunteers and experts and a Birding Route brochure was produced with assistance from Hunter Bird Observer Club.
- ▶ Bird Statues created by local chainsaw artist Mark Ray have been installed - a magpie at Simpson Park, kookaburra at Denman Memorial Park and a galah at Sandy Hollow Pocket Park.
- ▶ The Unit have helped in community education program ahead of a Food Organics Garden Organics (FOGO) service being introduced in 2024. An audit of residential kerbside bins was conducted during this period, along with community consultation on possible extension of waste services.
- ▶ An ISO Sustainable Procurement Training session was attended, and the Unit prepared for the relocation of the Sustainability Hub in October 2023.
- ▶ The popularity of the Sustainable Futures – Muswellbrook Facebook page continues to grow, with 1,818-page followers and continues to be an effective tool in engaging with the community around a range of sustainability topics.



# EVENTS



## NATIONAL TREE DAY

A National Tree Day event was held at Highbrook Park in Muswellbrook with 80 people attending where there were 1,700 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

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.



## CLEAN UP AUSTRALIA DAY



Clean Up Australia Day was held with over 30 community volunteers in Muswellbrook and Denman. 1,390kg of waste was removed from the local environment. Council also supported over 500 school students to participate.



# EVENTS

## 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.
- ▶ 20,000m<sup>2</sup> 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 1,500 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

## 2023 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.

2023 Muswellbrook Art Prize winners: Painting – Tuppy Ngintja Goodwin, 'Antara' 2022; Works on Paper – Allie Webb, 'Giant Crab' 2022; Ceramics – Casey Chen, 'Big Robot 5' 2022.





# EVENTS



## 2023 MULLINS CONCEPTUAL PHOTOGRAPHY PRIZE

The Australian Photographic Society's Mullins Conceptual Photography Prize is a national \$25,000 acquisitive prize that seeks to find Australia's best conceptual photographic works. Finalists of the prize are exhibited annually at Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre with the prize-winning work joining the Muswellbrook Shire Art Collection, and a collection of contemporary photographic works acquired through the Muswellbrook Photographic Award (1987 – 2014). Means of work presentation are

unrestricted, inviting photographers to illustrate the intent of their works through a myriad of mediums.

2023 Mullins Conceptual Photography Prize winner: Chris Bowes, 'Sun Kissed #1, #2, #3, #4' 2023.

## 2022 VIOLA BROMLEY ART PRIZE

Viola Bromley was part of a small group invited to arrange the Festival of the Valley Art Prize in 1958 – the forerunner to the Muswellbrook Art Prize. Bromley also played a significant role in the construction of an art gallery at the Muswellbrook Town Hall site in 1975/1976, and in gaining the newly built Muswellbrook Municipal Art Gallery regional gallery status.

The Viola Bromley Art Prize is a celebration of local art across the disciplines of painting, works on paper, sculpture and photography, and open to all artists resident to the Dungog, Muswellbrook, Singleton and Upper Hunter Shires. The winning acquisitive work from each section will be awarded \$1,500 and join the Muswellbrook Shire Art Collection alongside key local artists including Max Watters, James Clifford and Viola Bromley herself.

The exhibition of the Viola Bromley Art Prize affords visitors to the gallery the opportunity to experience the art of our region, and that which builds our collection and the community's story through the visual arts.

2023 Viola Bromley Art Prize winners: Painting: Marie Lunney, 'Days in the Sun (after Blue House)' 2022; Works on Paper: Gail Southwell, 'Accidently Kelly Street' 2022; Sculpture: Joanne Van Hees, 'Deep Dark Claze' 2022; Photography: Michael Rayner, 'Garden' 2022.

## 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.

2023 Muswellbrook Artist in Residence, photographer Julie Williams, explored identity, the mythology of bushranging and the invisible histories of women, paying homage to the solitary, camouflaged figure of Jessie Hickman – the Lady Bushranger, who spent the latter part of her short life in the Widden Valley, Muswellbrook Shire.

A contemporary reinterpretation of the life of the Lady Bushranger, utilising elements of the Australian bush will be presented in exhibition at Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre in 2025.

# EVENTS

## MUSWELLBROOK REGIONAL ARTS CENTRE - PUBLIC PROGRAMS

**Art Detectives** – suitable for children aged 4-10, and available for participation anytime during the gallery's opening hours, the ever-popular Art Detectives program calls upon young participants to complete a fun, treasure hunt style activity designed to tune their skills of observation.

**Art Station** – perfect for families, the Art Station, held the third Saturday of each month, invites children of all ages and their caregivers to participate in exploratory art activities inspired by the exhibitions.

**Annual Launch Party** – celebrating the launch of the 2023 gallery programs, the 2023 Launch Party featured art experiences including live portraiture, artist-led clay making, live music, face painting and Rotary sausage sizzle.

## MUSWELLBROOK REGIONAL ARTS CENTRE - COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

In 2023, Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre and St Heliers Correctional Centre partnered to provide a continuous space at the gallery for the display of work by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander inmates taking part in St Heliers' Gundi Program. Initiated in 2011, the Gundi Program supports inmates by strengthening their experience of culture, gaining vocational skills and employment, and re-establishing their lives once they leave custody. Artwork from the Gundi Program will be presented on a continuing basis in the gallery shop alongside the work of other local artists.

## GREAT CATTLE DOG MUSTER 2022

The Great Cattle Dog Muster thrilled attendees in its 2022 return on Saturday, September 9th, featuring dynamic Cattle Dog Championship Shows, Sports Events, and Working Cattle Dog Trials. The event, alive with the sounds of Live Country Music and the charm of special guests Bluey & Bingo, offered a delightful day of family fun and entertainment.



Amidst the festival feel, Food Trucks, Market Stalls, a Cattle Dog History Exhibit, and the Upper Hunter Showcase added to the vibrant atmosphere. Drawing visitors from across Australia and around the world, The Great Cattle Dog Muster celebrated the bond between humans and dogs, showcasing the region's culture and creating lasting memories for all who attended.



## 2022 BLUE HEELER FILM FESTIVAL

Heartfelt congratulations are in order for the participants, finalists, and victors of the 2022 Blue Heeler Film Festival! The immense dedication and effort poured into this year's event were truly commendable, and everyone involved has every reason to be proud of their contributions. A special acknowledgment goes to the outstanding Open Category winners, Jason King, Jeanette Thompson, and Jac the Kelpie, who claimed the coveted

\$10,000 Prize and the prestigious Golden Bluey for their exceptional work on 'Rover.' Equally deserving, Erin Ryan secured the Secondary Category's \$5,000 prize and Golden Bluey for her compelling film, 'Spoons.' These triumphs underscore the festival's commitment to celebrating and honoring the diverse talents of filmmakers, making the 2022 Blue Heeler Film Festival a resounding success.



# EVENTS

## MBK NYE 2022

The unforgettable New Year's Eve celebration at the Muswellbrook Showground, took place on Saturday, 31 December 2022, starting at 5pm and culminating in a dazzling fireworks display at 9pm. Organized by the Muswellbrook Shire Council, this free community event offered a night of family-friendly festivities.

The crowd was treated to an electrifying performance by Katie Jayne and The Collective, who rocked the stage with their music. Children were delighted with an array of free attractions and activities, including face painting, a giant maze, a magician, jumping castles, fire shows, bubble mermaids, and more. Families gathered on picnic rugs to enjoy an alcohol-free night of fun, savoring a variety of food options available for purchase. The highlight of the evening was a spectacular 10-minute fireworks display that brought the celebration to a close, marking the end of 2022 with a bang and creating lasting memories for all who attended.

## MUSWELLBROOK COLOUR RUN 2023

The Muswellbrook Colour Run, held on 11 February 2023, was an outstanding success, drawing an estimated attendance of nearly 1000 participants! A heartfelt thank you goes out to the dedicated volunteers and community groups, including Muswellbrook Cats AFC, Muswellbrook Eagles FC, Muswellbrook Rams Senior RLFC, Warrior Disability Services, and Sustainable Futures - Muswellbrook, for their invaluable contributions to making this event a triumph.



We extend our gratitude to Sarah English Marketing for generously donating their time to design and promote the Colour Run, enhancing its visibility and appeal. Additionally, a special acknowledgment goes to Muswellbrook Shire Council for their pivotal role as sponsors, providing grant funding that allowed the event to thrive and fulfill its mission of re-connecting communities. The Colour Run's success is a testament to the collaborative efforts of the Muswellbrook community and its supporters, reinforcing the council's commitment to fostering vibrant and connected communities. Photo: Alyssa Mahony



## EASTER FAMILY FUN DAY 2023

Held on Easter Saturday, 8 April 2023, from 10am to 2pm, Highbrook Park transformed into a haven of joy and laughter as families gathered for an Eggciting Easter Extravaganza. The event was a smashing success, with a delightful array of free activities, including Jumping Castles that added an extra bounce to the festivities. From the sweet allure of free Fairyfloss and Zooper Doopers to the countless Easter Eggs generously shared, the event was a treat for both young and old.

Attendees reveled in the spirit of the season, enjoying a variety of free offerings, while those looking for a heartier bite indulged in a \$2 Sausage Sizzle and Hotdogs. The park echoed with the sounds of laughter and the joyous atmosphere of families coming together for an Eggcellent time. Whether hopping around the Jumping Castles or enjoying a picnic on the lush grounds, Highbrook Park's Easter celebration created lasting memories and marked a festive start to the holiday weekend.

# EVENTS



## ROCK'N THE BROOK 2023

On 4 March 2023, Muswellbrook came alive with the electrifying energy of Rock'n the Brook, and what a day it was! With a staggering attendance of over 4,500 enthusiastic individuals, the event reverberated with good vibes, creating an unforgettable experience for all.

From pulsating music to a sea of smiling faces, #rocknthebrook proved to be a spectacular celebration of community spirit and lively entertainment. The success of the day wouldn't have been possible without the dedication and hard work of everyone involved. A massive THANK YOU is extended to the organizers, volunteers, performers, and, most importantly, the 4,500+ attendees who contributed to making Rock'n the Brook 2023 a resounding success. Your collective energy and enthusiasm made this event truly special and one to be remembered with fondness. Here's to the magic of music and community coming together







**SPLASH ZONE**



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# EVENTS

## NAIDOC WEEK 2022

Muswellbrook Shire came alive with vibrant colors and cultural celebrations during NAIDOC Week 2022, as the community gathered to honor and recognize the rich history, culture, and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. From 3 July to 10 July 2022, various events and activities took place, providing Australians with an opportunity to learn, engage, and celebrate the oldest continuous living cultures on earth.

## YOUTH WEEK FAMILY FUN DAY 2023

Youth week main event went down a treat at Muswellbrook Showground, 19 April 2023. Lots of activities for the kids to do and of course, lots of fun to be had.

The event was sponsored by NSW Govt grant funding and was run by the Upper Hunter Youth Services team. Lots of organisations collaborated to make it happen. So thanks to:

Upper Hunter Community Services Inc, Rotary Club of Muswellbrook, Warrior Disability Services , Muswellbrook Shire Council, GJ's By the Lake, CrossFit Muswellbrook, 98.1 Power FM and Upper Hunter Show.



## MUSWELLBROOK AQUATIC CENTRE

On Saturday 17 September 2022, the centre was declared officially open by Mayor Steve Reynolds, State Member for Upper Hunter David Layzell and Federal Member for Hunter Dan Repacholi. Captain Splash was also there for giveaways and plenty of fun – including a free ice block and bottle of water for the first 500 people.



# MUSWELLBROOK SHIRE COUNCIL 2022/2023 STAFF EXCELLENCE

## COUNCIL OFFICER IS NSW TRAINEE OF THE YEAR

The NSW Training Awards are conducted annually by Training Services NSW within the Department of Education to recognise outstanding achievement in the vocational education and training sector and acknowledges the effort that individuals, employers and registered training organisations put into vocational educational and training. For individuals, the awards are a unique way to celebrate their achievements and hard work and can provide career stepping stones.

Mellanie Sutton started her traineeship at Muswellbrook Shire Council as a trainee Environmental Health Officer and during that time completed a Certificate IV in Local Government specialising in Health and Environment.

Amongst the tasks within her traineeship, Mellanie identified businesses offering food service or skin penetration, such as acupuncture, to ensure that registration and compliance details were current.

"While completing the certificate with Arrow Collaborative Services I found the mix of skills required in this field to be exactly the challenge I was after," she said.

During her traineeship Mellanie used her existing software skills to help streamline processes within Council to improve efficiency for a wide range of everyday procedures.

"I am a passionate driver in promoting vocational education and firmly believe continuous learning can provide a healthier, happier lifestyle," Mellanie said

Mellanie will now progress to Australian Trainee of the Year Awards which will involve further training and mentoring, attending vocational education training events and providing motivation to future students.

General Manager Derek Finnigan said Council was very proud of Mellanie's achievements.

"This is a wonderful achievement and opportunity for both Mellanie and Muswellbrook Shire Council, and we will be supporting this growth and development opportunity for Mellanie in the coming years," he said.

One of the overall goals of the program is to identify potential vocational education and training



ambassadors. During the regional phase applicants who are outstanding in their industry are shortlisted and interviewed. The state phase evaluates regional winners and looks further for character values and virtues that will contribute to the qualities required to become an individual ambassador.

"We cannot think of a better candidate than Mellanie to represent the Hunter region and wish her all the best for the national awards," Mr Finnigan said.

### MESSAGE FROM MELLANIE'S DEPARTMENT SUPERVISOR – LACHLAN REGULATORY COORDINATOR

*"To be selected as NSW Trainee of the Year is an outstanding achievement, and we are all very proud of Mellanie. It is no small feat that can only be achieved through the drive and passion that Mellanie displays each and every day. It is not only representative of the calibre of Environmental Health Officer that she has become but as a person of integrity and compassion - Well done!"*

### MESSAGE FROM MELLANIE'S SUPERVISOR CLAIRE - SENIOR ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH OFFICER

*I am incredibly proud and honoured that Mellanie, Muswellbrook Shire Council's Trainee Environmental Health Officer, has been recognized as NSW 2022 Trainee of the Year.*

*Mellanie's dedication to the community and lifelong learning is an asset not only to Muswellbrook Shire but to NSW as a whole. Her devotion to continuous improvement has been beneficial for Council, as she improves processes and efficiencies, but also invaluable to the community as Mellanie consistently finds innovative ways to promote the knowledge, safety, and general well-being of her community. I am honoured to have been a part of Mellanie's extraordinary journey and know she will have a bright and prosperous future.*



# MUSWELLBROOK SHIRE COUNCIL 2022/2023 **STAFF EXCELLENCE**



Congratulations to Michelle Cleary for being awarded the LG Professionals – Workforce Planning and Development Dux Award. This prestigious award was presented to Michelle at Dolton House in Sydney, on 1 June 2023.

This was the first time LG Professionals have given an award in the category of Workforce Planning and Development.







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# 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 60 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, 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 the community.

### ARROW COLLABORATIVE SERVICES LIMITED

*(and its wholly owned subsidiaries Hunter Councils Legal Services Limited and Arrow Collaborative Communications)*

Companies limited by guarantee under the Corporations Act 2001 and established to improve the quality and efficiency of local government services throughout the Hunter Region. These organisations offer tailored local government services through three divisions: Local Government Legal, GoodChat TV, and Regional Procurement; and the Hunter JO Policy and 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 Joint Organisation member councils and Central Coast Council).

### HUNTER COUNCILS INCORPORATED

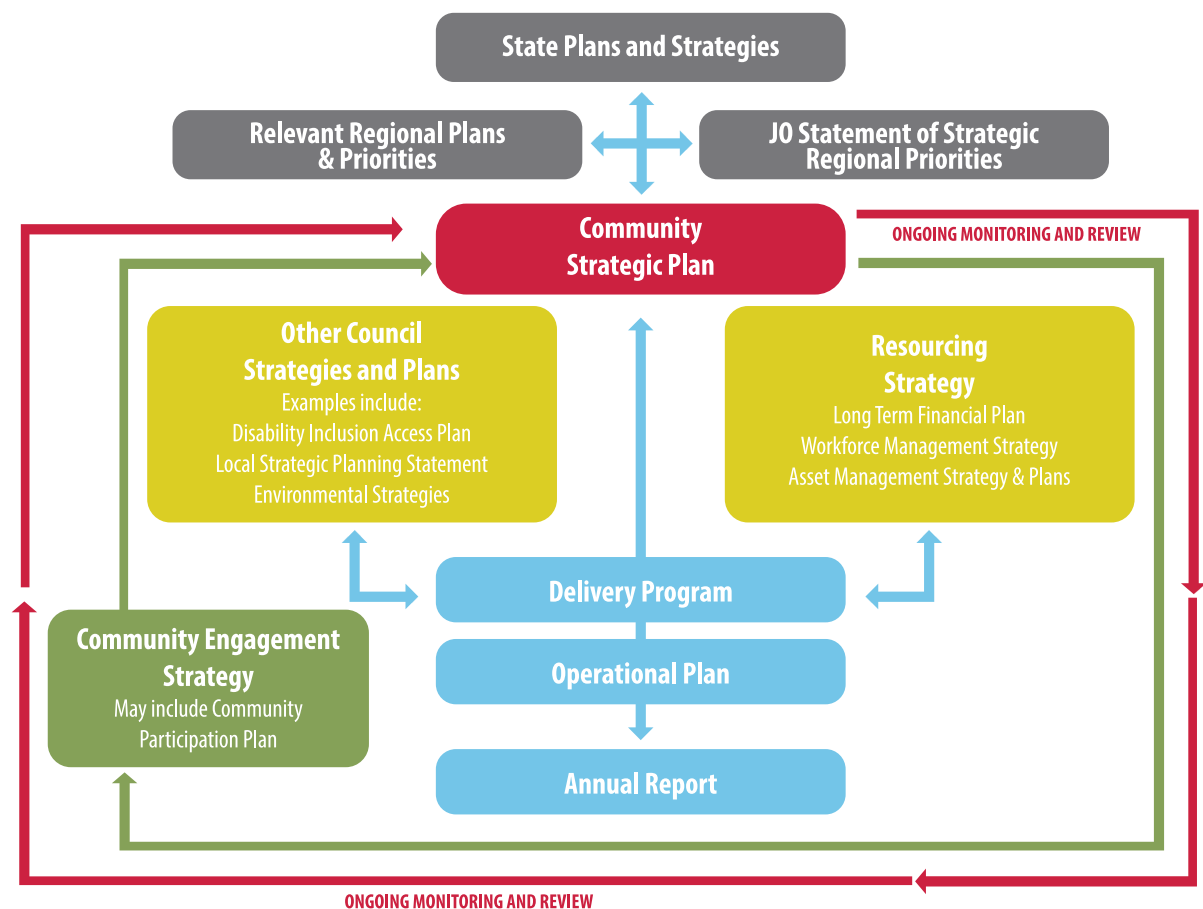
An incorporated association under the Associations Incorporation Act 2009 that holds property assets for the Hunter Joint Organisation group.

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.

# 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.





# 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 be 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.

## 2022/2023 END OF YEAR POSITION

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

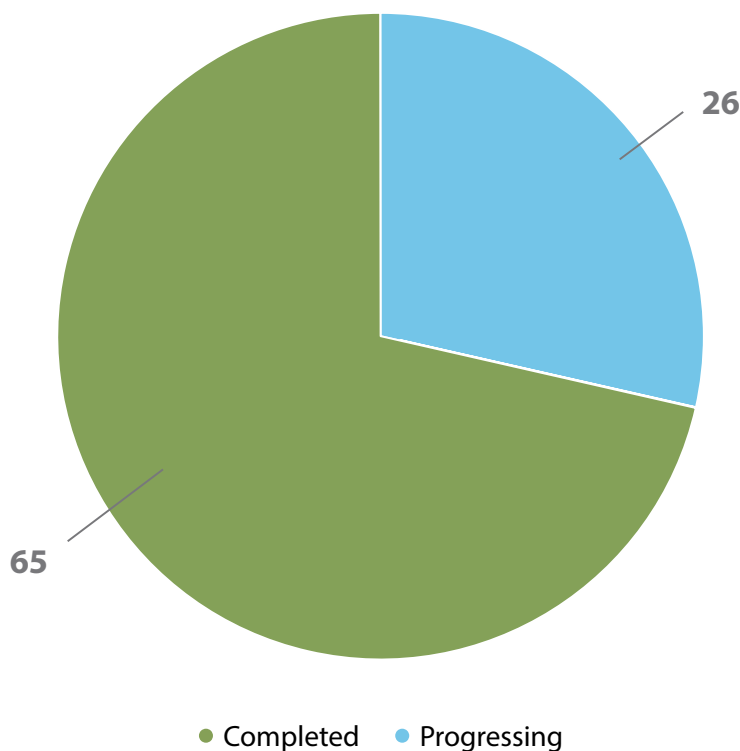
More details of key achievements, challenges and highlights in each area of the program is provided throughout the remainder of this section.

Operational Plan performance snapshot 2022/2023

Of the 93 activities committed to by the Council:

- ▶ 65 were completed
- ▶ 26 are progressing

## 2022/2023 OPERATIONAL PLAN PERFORMANCE SNAPSHOT







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# STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

## 1. ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

**A dynamic local economy with full employment for current and future residents in a diverse range of high value industries**

### CSP Strategy 1.1: Support job growth within the Shire

Delivery Program Activity	2022/2023 Operational Plan Action	Completion Status	Annual Comment
<b>1.1.1 Facilitate the expansion of existing, and the establishment of new, industries and business</b>	1.1.1.1 Masterplan for transition of the Muswellbrook Coal site to alternative employment uses presented to Council for endorsement.	60%	Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) will take the lead in land use planning for site transition through the Place Delivery Group and Urban Development Program Committee. Council staff attend meetings with Muswellbrook Coal and DPE to progress the planning work.
	1.1.1.2 Discussion paper on the approach to planning approvals for new land uses on the Muswellbrook Coal Mine and Liddell Power Station sites prepared.	100%	This Action has been incorporated into the programs established by the Department of Planning and Environment - the Urban Development Committee and the Place Delivery Group. Staff contributed to a briefing paper to the Hunter Expert Panel on the need for financial and staff resources to support planning for the transition, and a scope of works. A modification to the Muswellbrook Local Environmental Plan 2009 to support a defined number of new uses on the Liddell Power Station site is anticipated to be lodged with Council in August 2023.
	1.1.1.3 Upper Hunter Employment Land Strategy presented to Council for exhibition.	70%	The Upper Hunter Regional Employment Land Strategy has been developed by Muswellbrook Shire Council in collaboration with Singleton Council, Upper Hunter and Dungog Shire Councils, State Government Department of Regional NSW, Department of Planning and Environment, and NSW Minerals Council. The strategy is set to inform each of the LGA's land use and economic development strategies. Muswellbrook Shire Council are the project managers of the project, a project working group was established and HillPDA were appointed as the consultant. The strategy was developed through stakeholder consultation, desktop and on the ground research and the use of the Regional NSW employment land tool. The final report is expected to be provided in the first quarter of 2023-24.

# STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

## CSP Strategy 1.2: Diversify the economy, facilitate the development of intensive agriculture, innovative manufacturing, health services and other growth industries

Delivery Program Activity	2022/2023 Operational Plan Action	Completion Status	Annual Comment
<b>1.2.1 Diversify the economy, facilities the development of intensive agriculture, innovative manufacturing, health services and other growth industries</b>	1.2.1.1 Establish Advanced Manufacturing Hub.	100%	The Donald Horne Building was officially opened by the Prime Minister of Australia Anthony Albanese, Federal Member for the Hunter Dan Repacholi, State Member for the Upper Hunter Dave Layzell, Mayor Steve Reynolds and General Manager Derek Finnigan on 18 July 2023. The Donald Horne Building is the latest addition to the Hunter Innovation Precinct (HIP) which includes the University of Newcastle, TAFE, the library and the recently opened visitor information centre. The Donald Horne Building houses a 200m <sup>2</sup> Melt modern manufacturing centre to help businesses turn ideas into reality, and the STEM Innovation Lab where students have access to the latest technologies and programs focused on robotics, aeronautics, design and coding. Council has a 10 year contract with the Melt to deliver the modern manufacturing centre and have employed an Innovation Coordinator to deliver bespoke STEM curriculum.
	1.2.1.2 Establish Community and Economy Directorate at Council	100%	A Directorate of Community and Economy has been established at Muswellbrook Shire Council. Ms Shaelee Welchman is Council's Director Community and Economy.
<b>1.2.2 Complete the Employment Landuse Strategy</b>	1.2.2.1 Seek funding for the development of the Upper Hunter Employment Land Strategy.	100%	A draft Employment Land Strategy has been completed, and will be reported to Council in the first quarter of 2023-24.
<b>1.2.3 Review the Local Environmental Plan and Development Control Plan to improve investment certainty for industry</b>	1.2.3.1 The transition of business and Industrial zones to new employment zones under the Standard Instrument (Local Environmental Plans) Order 2006 is finalised	100%	Muswellbrook Local Environmental Plan 2009 maps and written instrument updated 26 April 2023.
	1.2.3.2 Prepare a Local Approvals Policy for adoption by Council	25%	Progress has been temporarily suspended, as staff have been diverted to new projects commenced by Regional NSW for a Regional Housing Strategy. Once this essential work has been completed, work will recommence on developing a Local Approvals Policy in 2023-24.
<b>1.2.4 Implement the Muswellbrook and Denman Town Centre Masterplans and the Sandy Hollow Village Masterplan</b>	1.2.4.1 Commence enabling works for Muswellbrook Town Centre	50%	Council endorsed the pocket park design and a development application is being prepared to construct the park and commence enabling works.
	1.2.4.2 Determine the realignment of the lower piped portion of Possum Gully	75%	Alternative concepts are being developed for the alignment of the lower portion of Possum Gully to be informed by the completion of the Possum Gully Catchment Management Plan.
	1.2.4.3 Implement improved pedestrian links to the Muswellbrook Marketplace	75%	Concepts for improved pedestrian access between the Town Centre and the Marketplace have been prepared.
	1.2.4.4 Construct the Denman and District Heritage Village	100%	The construction of the Denman and District Heritage Village is complete. The building will be handed over to the Denman and District Heritage Village to complete landscaping and prepare exhibits. An official opening is tentatively scheduled for late November.
<b>1.2.5 Develop a Rural and Environmental Land Strategy</b>	1.2.5.1 Prepare a scope of works and background paper for a Rural and Environmental Land Strategy.	20%	Progress has been temporarily suspended, as staff have been diverted to projects that involve the update of Contributions Plans and preparation of a Planning Agreement Policy and Community and Economic Development Fund Policy. Once these essential projects have been completed, work will recommence on preparing a scope of works and background paper for a Rural and Environmental Land Strategy.
<b>1.2.6 Review the Local Strategic Plan in response to changes to the NSW Planning Act</b>	1.2.6.1 Assist DPIE to complete the Upper Hunter Vineyards Structure Plan	100%	Staff have provided feedback to the Department of Planning and Environment on a final draft scenic assessment report and strategy. The Department of Planning and Environment has indicated the report is with the Minister for approval.



# STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

## CSP Strategy 1.3: Facilitate greater access to higher education

Delivery Program Activity	2022/2023 Operational Plan Action	Completion Status	Annual Comment
<b>1.3.1 Advocate to maintain the Hunter TAFE campus and advocate to activate the University of Newcastle Muswellbrook campus</b>	1.3.1.1 Mayor to meet regularly with Member for Upper Hunter and Federal Member for Hunter to advocate for TAFE and UON campuses.	100%	During 2022-23, the Mayor met on a number of occasions with University of Newcastle representatives to facilitate a tertiary education pathways programme to be conducted at the Muswellbrook Tertiary Education Centre during 2023-24. Confirmation has been provided that a university pathways programme will be conducted in Muswellbrook during 2023-24. Both the TAFE and University of Newcastle leases are active. In addition, during 2022-23, the Mayor met regularly with the Member for Upper Hunter and the Federal Member for Hunter to advocate for increased utilisation of the TAFE and Newcastle University campuses.

## CSP Strategy 1.4: Develop Muswellbrook as a regional centre

Delivery Program Activity	2022/2023 Operational Plan Action	Completion Status	Annual Comment
<b>1.4.1 Develop Muswellbrook as a regional centre</b>	1.4.1.1 Commence Olympic Park field improvements	50%	The works and funding for the Olympic Park field improvements will ideally be timed alongside the Grandstand and Amenities works.
	1.4.1.2 Seek development approval for grandstand and amenities design for Olympic Park	100%	The Development Application for the Olympic Park Grandstand and Amenities is under assessment by the Regional Planning Panel.
	1.4.1.3 Develop Pocket Park design for the Muswellbrook Town Centre	100%	The Pocket Park concept design for the Muswellbrook Town Centre has been completed.
<b>1.4.2 Advocate for increased medical services in the Shire</b>	1.4.2.1 Provide subsidised practice space to attract Obstetrics medical service providers to the Shire	50%	Throughout 2022-23, advocacy was carried out with NSW Health and the State Member for the Upper Hunter with the aim of a specialist obstetrics service provider becoming established in Muswellbrook Shire. Advocacy will continue during 2023-24. Additionally, Council will consider opportunities to provide subsidised practice space to attract an obstetrics medical service provider to Muswellbrook Shire.

# STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

## 2. SOCIAL EQUITY & INCLUSION

**An inclusive and interconnected community, where everyone enjoys full participation.**

### CSP Strategy 2.1: Improve the affordability, liveability and amenity of Shire communities

Delivery Program Activity	2022/2023 Operational Plan Action	Completion Status	Annual Comment
<b>2.1.1 Implement the funded outcomes of the Recreation Needs Study</b>	2.1.1.1 Report a list of prioritised capital sport and recreation projects	100%	The General Recreation Programme for 2022-23 has been completed.
	2.1.1.2 Deliver projects prioritised for financial year	100%	The 2022-23 General Recreation Programme has been delivered.
<b>2.1.2 Promote and facilitate increased participation in active and passive recreation activities</b>	2.1.2.1 Maintain an annual calendar of meetings with user groups	100%	Sports and Recreation Committee meetings for all user groups are scheduled three times per year together with regular specific facility user group meetings.
	2.1.2.2 Continue matched funding Sport and Recreation Grants Programmes	100%	The 2022 Sport and Recreation Grants Programme for small and large matched funding applications were awarded.
	2.1.2.3 Develop staged detailed designs for Hunter, and Wollombi Park concept plans	75%	Detailed designs for the Wollombi Park - Pump Track and connector road between Skellatar Stock Route and Wollombi Park are being prepared.
	2.1.2.4 Complete Everyone Can Play improvements for Simpson Park	50%	Contractor awarded tender for Everyone Can Play improvements is preparing to commence construction and installation.
	2.1.2.5 Council events are planned to be accessible by all people, as far as possible.	100%	Procedures and checklists have been created for use by staff to plan events to be accessible by passive transport and at sites suitable for people with mobility or visual impairment and will continue to be refined and improved as a core consideration of the management of Council events.
<b>2.1.3 Consider and deliver social inclusion principles across Council functions</b>	2.1.3.1 Review the Muswellbrook Shire Council Disability Inclusion Action Plan	100%	The review of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan is now complete and will be reported to the 22 August 2023 Ordinary Council Meeting to be placed on public display for 28 days.
<b>2.1.4 Advocate for affordable housing</b>	2.1.4.1 Council advocates for the needs of people residing in low to moderate income households.	100%	During 2022-23, the Mayor and senior staff met with Home in Place representatives to advocate for the housing needs of people residing in low to moderate income households in Muswellbrook Shire. The Mayor also regularly advocated with the State Member for Upper Hunter and the Federal Member for Hunter in relation to the cost of living challenges experienced by many residents of Muswellbrook Shire.

### CSP Strategy 2.2: Promote social cohesion and improve connectivity and the delivery of social services within the Shire

Delivery Program Activity	2022/2023 Operational Plan Action	Completion Status	Annual Comment
<b>2.2.1 Advocate for the needs of people in social housing</b>	2.2.1.1 Council meets with local social housing provider(s)	100%	During 2022-23, a range of meetings were held with senior representatives of Home in Place and Upper Hunter Homeless to advocate for the needs of people residing in social housing in Muswellbrook Shire. Advocacy will continue to be held with the State Government regarding the need to increase social and affordable housing stock in Muswellbrook Shire.



# STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

## CSP Strategy 2.3: Retain and expand quality and affordable childcare services

Delivery Program Activity	2022/2023 Operational Plan Action	Completion Status	Annual Comment
<b>2.3.1 Facilitate investment in childcare services across the Shire</b>	2.3.1.1 Council Project Manages the construction of the Denman Childrens Centre	100%	Council is project managing the detailed design and construction project.

## CSP Strategy 2.4: Facilitate opportunities to expand seniors living

Delivery Program Activity	2022/2023 Operational Plan Action	Completion Status	Annual Comment
<b>2.4.1 Advocate to enhance the delivery of services to support older people to live in the Muswellbrook Shire</b>	2.4.1.1 Facilitation of aged care networks and activities to improve their wellbeing outcomes	100%	Monthly Community Service reports were submitted to Council throughout 2022-23, advising of activities provided for senior citizens at Council's libraries, aquatic centres, and Art Gallery. Meetings were held with TransCare to facilitate an increased presence in Muswellbrook Shire, with arrangements made for TransCare to be co-located at the Muswellbrook Senior Citizens Centre.

## CSP Strategy 2.5: Enhance relationships and engagement with the local indigenous communities

Delivery Program Activity	2022/2023 Operational Plan Action	Completion Status	Annual Comment
<b>2.5.1 Raise awareness of the local Aboriginal Community and an appreciation of their long traditions and culture</b>	2.5.1.1 Funding is sought for the delivery of a local Aboriginal Language Program	100%	Funding was secured through NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet, the Introduction to Wonnarua/Wanaruah/Wanarruwa Language Program was delivered to 30 Indigenous people.
<b>2.5.2 Engage with the Wanaruah Local Aboriginal Land Council on development of the Common</b>	2.5.2.1 Muswellbrook Common project design and concept plan brief is developed	100%	The Community Gathering Place: Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Cultural Centre project design and brief is completed, the document is used to promote and discuss the concept with relevant stakeholders.

## CSP Strategy 2.6: Investigate opportunities to expand services and facilities for youth and children within the Shire

Delivery Program Activity	2022/2023 Operational Plan Action	Completion Status	Annual Comment
<b>2.6.1 Engage with young people in the Shire to better inform projects and programs for youth and children</b>	2.6.1.1 In consultation with Councillors, develop a youth engagement program for inclusion in the Community Engagement Strategy	100%	The Grants and Community Engagement Advisor has worked with a team of staff from across the organisation to capture Council's current activities in terms of engagement with young people under the age of 25 years and also to develop strategies for future engagement.
	2.6.1.2 Construct the new Muswellbrook Youth Venue	50%	The project will progress to construction following the preparation of detailed design documentation.
	2.6.1.3 Develop a cross Council Child Safe Action Plan in response to Child Safe Standards	100%	A Draft cross Council Child Safe Action Plan has been developed in response to the Child Safe Standards.

# STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

## 3. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

**An environmentally sensitive and sustainable community.**

**CSP Strategy 3.1: Advocate for best practice mined-land rehabilitation to include local workforce participation, progressive, quality final landforms, and fewer and shallower voids**

Delivery Program Activity	2022/2023 Operational Plan Action	Completion Status	Annual Comment
<b>3.1.1</b> Meet with other levels of government to achieve improved rehabilitation outcomes for disused mining lands and ongoing employment for the local workforce	3.1.1.1 Update Council's policy position regarding voids and mine rehabilitation	100%	Staff have prepared an update to Council's Development Control Plan and the current Policy. A report requesting public exhibition of the updated documents is intended to be submitted to the September 2023 Ordinary Council Meeting.

**CSP Strategy 3.2: Improve native vegetation connectivity across the upper hunter region**

Delivery Program Activity	2022/2023 Operational Plan Action	Completion Status	Annual Comment
<b>3.2.1</b> Support Landcare initiatives and advocate for programs to enhance native vegetation connectivity across the Shire and Upper Hunter region	3.2.1.1 Provide funds for local Landcare activities	100%	Successful applicants completed approved projects. Details provided in the Monthly information report to Council.
	3.2.1.2 Liaise with Local Land Services to advocate for projects in the Shire	100%	Staff have provided comments to Local Land Services on their proposed grants program for 2022-23.

**CSP Strategy 3.3: Enhance our local rivers and creeks to improve environmental outcomes and access for recreation**

Delivery Program Activity	2022/2023 Operational Plan Action	Completion Status	Annual Comment
<b>3.3.1</b> Implement funded actions of the adopted Urban Riparian Masterplan	3.3.1.1 Construction of the funded portions of Hunter Beach	100%	All components of the Hunter Beach project have now reached Practical Completion, and the site has been opened for the enjoyment of the community.
	3.3.1.2 Maintain rehabilitation works along Muscle Creek, Karoola Wetlands and Denman	100%	Council has established a small dedicated team to maintain rehabilitated and natural areas in accordance with specifications.
<b>3.3.2</b> Develop a Catchment Management Plan for Muscle Creek and Possum Gully	3.3.2.1 Provide guidance and documented plan for the stabilisation, restoration and management of Possum Gully and Muscle Creek	50%	A consultant has been engaged, following a competitive Request for Quotation process, to commence the Catchment Management Plan study, with investigations confirmed to be carried out in the first quarter 2023-24, with a final report to be completed in the second quarter of 2023-24.



# STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

## CSP Strategy 3.4: Support initiatives which reduce the community's impact on the environment

Delivery Program Activity	2022/2023 Operational Plan Action	Completion Status	Annual Comment
<b>3.4.1 Continue Community Engagement Program on water, waste and energy efficiency</b>	3.4.1.1 Assist Council, households and businesses to manage waste effectively and use water and energy efficiently	100%	Details of activities provided in monthly report to Council.
<b>3.4.2 Require all development proposals to avoid and mitigate against potential environmental impacts and facilitate improved environmental outcomes where possible</b>	3.4.2.1 Provide guidance material on Council's website to help applicants for new development to prepare and submit improved Statements of Environmental Effect with their applications.	100%	Guidelines on required meta data for plans and reports being submitted with Development Applications has been prepared.
<b>3.4.3 Advocate and support Circular Economy principles and Waste Management Initiatives</b>	3.4.3.1 Develop a Policy and a Procedure relating to Sustainable Procurement related to Council's Net Zero by 2050 Policy and the Circular Economy Procurement Project	100%	The entire Procurement Policy Framework has been reviewed for alignment with best practice and legislation. Implementation of the revised Procurement Policy Framework will be conducted in the upcoming Financial Year under Operational Plan Action 6.2.5.1.
	3.4.3.2 Facilitate the introduction of FOGO collection and processing for households and businesses in the Shire	100%	A report providing information regarding the progress of the Food Organics Garden Organics (FOGO) kerbside collection and processing project was submitted to the 25 October 2022 Ordinary Council Meeting. A report providing information regarding submissions received under a non-binding expression of interest process for managing Muswellbrook Shire's FOGO kerbside collection was submitted to the 27 April 2023 Ordinary Council Meeting. Tenders for the collection of FOGO and for the processing of FOGO will be invited in the first quarter of 2023-24.

## CSP Strategy 3.5: Support federal and state initiatives to reduce the impacts of climate change

Delivery Program Activity	2022/2023 Operational Plan Action	Completion Status	Annual Comment
<b>3.5.1 Increase the proportion of the energy used by Council from renewable sources</b>	3.5.1.1 Council's energy contractor supplies energy from renewable sources	100%	Council participated in Local Government Procurement's tender process for a long term renewable power purchase agreement. The outcome was a short term non-renewable power purchase agreement, due to the electricity prices at the time of tender influenced by Force Majeure events. The subsequent electricity contracts will remain in force until December 2024.
<b>3.5.2 Develop a recycled water plan for community parks</b>	3.5.2.1 Develop strategic recycled water plan.	75%	A Strategic Recycled Water Management Plan is being developed for community parks, including Olympic Park.
	3.5.2.2 Develop recycled water implementation strategy	75%	A Strategic Recycled Water Management Strategy is being developed for community parks, including Olympic Park. Once completed, a draft Strategy will be submitted to Council for review.





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# STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

## 4. CULTURAL VITALITY

A culturally rich and diverse Community with strong identities, history and sense of belonging

### CSP Strategy 4.1: Conserve the heritage and history of the Shire

Delivery Program Activity	2022/2023 Operational Plan Action	Completion Status	Annual Comment
4.1.1 Support the conservation and restoration of the Shire's heritage items	4.1.1.1 Make Local Heritage Grants available for owners of heritage listed properties	100%	Successful applicants have completed their nominated projects. Council's Heritage Advisor has inspected the works, and a report has been forwarded to the Department of Planning and Environment seeking approval to reimburse applicants.
	4.1.1.2 Review and adopt a heritage strategy for 2022/23 and 2023/24	100%	A review of the Strategy has been completed by Council's Heritage Advisor. A report will be submitted to the 22 August 2023 Ordinary Council Meeting.
	4.1.1.3 Complete the refurbishment of Loxton House	50%	Refurbishment of Loxton House is ongoing and design amended to include tenant requirements. The building is expected to be fully tenanted when completed.
4.1.2 Ensure sites or artifacts of aboriginal significance are protected where new development proposals are considered	4.1.2.1 Ensure applications for subdivision generally or for development in rural areas adequately consider sites or artifacts of aboriginal significance	100%	Heritage impact assessments are required with Development Applications in greenfield locations.

### CSP Strategy 4.2: Facilitate options to improve participation in cultural activities in the Shire

Delivery Program Activity	2022/2023 Operational Plan Action	Completion Status	Annual Comment
4.2.1 Progress a Regional Entertainment and Conference Centre	4.2.1.1 Begin precinct enabling works	50%	A Development Application for the demolition of identified Bridge Street buildings is being lodged following an endorsed concept design of the civic pocket park by Council.
	4.2.1.2 Review design value management options for theatre and community hall	50%	Council is working with the architect to review and value manage the design of the Regional Entertainment Centre in the proposed new location.

### CSP Strategy 4.3: Host and support a diverse range of cultural activities and events which create a sense of identity and belonging, engage the local community and attract visitors

Delivery Program Activity	2022/2023 Operational Plan Action	Completion Status	Annual Comment
4.3.1 Develop and implement a program of Shire events to engage locals and attract visitors	4.3.1.1 Council works in partnership with community groups to deliver a minimum of six events a year	100%	Council's renewed focus on events will continue to support the growth and attraction of events in the Shire. Council worked in partnership with various groups to deliver a number of events across the Shire including: 1. Australia Day Commemorations and Awards; 2. New Years Eve 3. Karoola Park Run Colour Run; 4. Rock'n the Brook; 5. Easter Family Fun Day; 6. Blue Heeler Film Festival; 7. ANZAC Day Commemorations; 8. Denman Dust and Rust; 9. Planning for the Cattle Dog Muster; 10. Providing assistance to conduct the Science and Engineering Challenge. In addition, Council has worked in partnership with the Hunter JO on the Events10 initiative to attract new events and event organisers to the Hunter region.
4.3.2 Deliver an arts program	4.3.2.1 Develop a 12-month Art Program	100%	The Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre has delivered a 12 months Art Program featuring the Viola Bromley Art Prize and The Muswellbrook Art Prize attracting Artist from all over Australia. The 12 month Art Program has featured 10 separate exhibitions displaying a variety of art forms celebrating the importance of art in our community. The Community Art Station, People's Studio and workshops have actively engaged local community members to explore and discover art.
4.3.3 Support Arts Upper Hunter as the peak organisation of Artist endeavour	4.3.3.1 Develop a Funding Agreement with Arts UH	100%	The Arts UH Funding Agreement has been developed and finalized.

# STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

## 5. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

**Effective and efficient infrastructure that is appropriate to the needs of our community.**

**CSP Strategy 5.1: Construct and maintain well-planned community infrastructure that is safe, reliable, and provides agreed levels of service**

Delivery Program Activity	2022/2023 Operational Plan Action	Completion Status	Annual Comment
<b>5.1.1 Review, develop and maintain liveable town and village precincts</b>	5.1.1.1 Develop an Active Transport Plan supplement to Muswellbrook Shire Council's adopted Walk and Cycle Plan (2009)	75%	All existing and proposed/priority footpath areas have been identified for Muswellbrook, Denman and Sandy Hollow, with progress advancing towards the final draft report expected to be completed and submitted for Council's review in the first quarter of 2023-24.
	5.1.2.1 Review Strategic Asset Management Plan	50%	Council's Strategic Asset Management Plan is currently under review and, once completed, will be submitted to Council for final review.
<b>5.1.2 Maintain and continually improve asset management</b>	5.1.2.2 Regularly review Asset Management Plans	50%	The Roads Asset Management Plan and Schedule of Asset Management Plans are currently under review, with the draft approaching completion. Once finalised, the Roads Asset Management Plan will be submitted for the review of Council in the first quarter of 2023-24.
	5.1.2.3 Review Roads Asset Management Plan	90%	The Roads Asset Management Plan and Schedule of Asset Management Plans are currently under review, with the draft approaching completion. Once finalised, the Roads Asset Management Plan will be submitted for the review of Council in the first quarter of 2023-24.
<b>5.1.3 Facilitate investment in high quality community infrastructure necessary to a Regional Centre</b>	5.1.3.1 Funding received for an extension to the Muswellbrook Regional Art Gallery	75%	A concept design for an extension to the Muswellbrook Regional Art Gallery has been completed. Development Applications being prepared for external painting and extension.
<b>5.1.4 Maintain and continually improve community infrastructure across the Shire</b>	5.1.4.1 Capital works programmes prioritised to demonstrate continual improvement in community infrastructure	100%	In 2022-23, capital works programmes across all asset classes were reported to Council for approval, and were developed and prioritised to demonstrate continual improvement in community infrastructure assets.
	5.1.4.2 Asset condition assessment inspections provided regularly	100%	Asset condition inspections of the State Road network, mine affected roads, and the urban and rural roads and stormwater drainage networks are regularly carried out, with the results of the inspections informing capital and operational works programmes. Prioritised capital works programmes, based on asset condition, were submitted for Council review and approval in the first quarter of 2022-23.



# STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

## CSP Strategy 5.2: Improve all abilities access to Council facilities

Delivery Program Activity	2022/2023 Operational Plan Action	Completion Status	Annual Comment
<b>5.2.1 Facilitate and implement improved all abilities access and inclusion across the Shire</b>	5.2.1.1 Develop a targeted program to improve accessibility in Council owned and public spaces	100%	Programme reported to Council in September 2022 and works at various stages of completion.
	5.2.1.2 Included prioritised actions in capital programmes	75%	The ramp for the Muswellbrook Library is constructed and the Country Women's Association ramp is delayed.

## CSP Strategy 5.3: Provide safe, secure and reliable water supply and sewer services

Delivery Program Activity	2022/2023 Operational Plan Action	Completion Status	Annual Comment
<b>5.3.1 Water and wastewater services are provided in compliance with regulatory requirements</b>	5.3.1.1 Carry out Best Practice audit of water and wastewater services	100%	The Final Review Report for 2020-21 was submitted to the 20 December 2022 Ordinary Council Meeting. The final review confirmed that Council's Best Practice Management of Water Supply and Sewer Services for 2020-21 was substantially compliant with best practice.
	5.3.1.2 Ensure compliance with all Licence conditions	100%	As was reported to the 27 June 2023 Ordinary Council Meeting, Council's water, wastewater and sewerage services were generally compliant with regulatory requirements throughout 2022-23.

## CSP Strategy 5.4: Ensure road, footpath and cycleway networks are integrated and allow for the safe movement of residents and visitors

Delivery Program Activity	2022/2023 Operational Plan Action	Completion Status	Annual Comment
<b>5.4.1 Maintain and continually improve the Shire's shared pathway networks to increase connectivity</b>	5.4.1.1 Implement priority funded portions of the Walk and Cycle Plan and Supplementary Active Transport Plan	100%	A report providing a prioritised program of funded portions of the Walk and Cycle Plan and Supplementary Active Transport Plan was endorsed by Council at the 26 July 2022 Ordinary Council Meeting.



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# STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

## 6. COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

**Collaborative and responsive leadership that meets the expectations and anticipates the needs of the community**

### CSP Strategy 6.1: Enable genuine and well-informed community participation in decision making

Delivery Program Activity	2022/2023 Operational Plan Action	Completion Status	Annual Comment
<b>6.1.1 Engage with the community and other stakeholders to determine service level expectations and appropriate measures</b>	6.1.1.1 Facilitate an annual Community Satisfaction Survey	100%	Micromex Research and Consulting were the successful vendors to conduct the 2023 Muswellbrook Shire Community Satisfaction Survey. The survey was conducted from 3 May 2023 to 10 May 2023, involving interviews with 402 residents. The 2023 survey replicated a baseline study conducted in 2021, to ensure comparability over time. The results of the survey will be reported to Council and the community in the first quarter of 2023-24.
	6.1.1.2 Develop and implement a community panel engagement process to establish agreed levels of service between Council and the community	100%	A Community Engagement Panel was recruited, with two face-to-face meetings held at Denman, on 20 August 2022, and at Muswellbrook, on 24 September 2022. A series of seven video presentations were distributed to Panel Members in place of the scheduled 10 September 2022 face-to-face session. The final report on the outcomes of the 2022 Community Engagement Panel was submitted to the 20 December 2022 Ordinary Council Meeting for the information of Councillors and the community. Feedback received from the Community Engagement Panel assisted to inform Council's service review program and the 2023-24 Operational Plan endorsed by Council at the 27 June 2023 Ordinary Council Meeting.
<b>6.1.2 Utilise best practice models of community engagement to ensure decision making is meeting the expectations of the community</b>	6.1.2.1 Develop and implement a Community Engagement Strategy	100%	The Muswellbrook Shire Council Community Engagement Strategy 2022 (CES) was adopted by Council at the 22 November 2022 Ordinary Council Meeting. The next steps will be to implement the CES and ensure that community engagement complies with the adopted Strategy.
<b>6.1.3 Enhance Council's communication with the community to build awareness and understanding of Council's activities and Community needs</b>	6.1.3.1 Digital media strategy revised and implemented	100%	Council continues to grow its social media and digital following. Notable improvements during 2022-23 were the creation of a bi-monthly digital newsletter and the dissemination of information to the community from the Weekly Digest. Engagement continues to increase with Council's digital platforms, and the creation of the Communications and Media Policy will ensure that accurate and timely information continues to be provided to the community in an improved and cohesive manner.
	6.1.3.2 Report Council's progress in implementing the Delivery Program and Operational Plan to the community and other stakeholders	100%	The 2023/2024 Operational Plan was adopted by Council at the 27 June 2023 Ordinary Council Meeting. The Operational Plan ensures Council is meeting specified goals and standards to ensure Council effectively progresses the adopted 2022/2026 Delivery Plan actions.
	6.1.3.3 Update Council's Community Participation Plan	50%	Staff are reviewing Council's Community Participation Plan to identify areas where changes will be required to reflect the move to a more digital community engagement. Once the review has been completed, the Community Participation Plan will be reported to Council for placement on public exhibition.

# STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

## CSP Strategy 6.2: Ensure Council is well managed, appropriately resourced, effective, efficient, accountable and responsive to its communities and stakeholders

Delivery Program Activity	2022/2023 Operational Plan Action	Completion Status	Annual Comment
<b>6.2.1</b> Maintain a strong focus on financial discipline to enable Council to properly respond to the needs of the communities it serves	6.2.1.1 Provide transparent reporting to the community about Council's finances	100%	Council's Finance Team continues to ensure frequent discussions are held with Directors and departmental managers regarding Council's financial management. Further work is being done, on an iterative basis, to improve reporting to the community regarding Council's finances, including restructuring the general ledger and upgrading the reporting systems to facilitate greater efficiency and transparency in reporting. Monthly financial reports are submitted to Council, the Financial Review Advisory Committee, and Council's executive management team.
	6.2.1.2 Seek funding opportunities to support the interests and aspirations of the Shire identified by the Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program	100%	Council receives monthly progress reports advising of recent grant applications submitted, grant funding recently announced or to be announced shortly, and of upcoming grant opportunities. During 2022-23, Council formed a Grants Review Advisory Committee, which provides effective guidance and oversight to Council's grant management process.
<b>6.2.2</b> Develop and implement a Service Review Program	6.2.2.1 Develop an outline and timeline for the implementation of Service Reviews across Council	100%	A Service Delivery Review Program Plan was submitted to the 29 June 2023 meeting of the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC). The plan outlines the service review timeline over a three year period. Service Reviews will be carried out in compliance with the approved priorities, and the results will be submitted to the ARIC and Council.
<b>6.2.3</b> Implement an Internal Audit Program in consultation with the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee	6.2.3.1 Deliver on the Internal Audit Program	100%	The following internal audits were carried out during 2022-23: 1) Phishing campaign - completed in November 2022; 2) Independent, external penetration test - completed in February 2022; 3) Payroll and leave audit - completed in December 2022; and 4) Water and sewer audit - completed in June 2023.  The results of internal audits are provided to Council and Council's Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee.
	6.2.3.2 Implement control recommendations as identified by the auditor	100%	Council's Internal Auditor continues to work with action owners to ensure all outstanding actions arising from internal audits are implemented expeditiously. Audit reports are provided to Council and Council's Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee. In 2023-24, Council's Internal Auditor will continue to work with Council's internal audit action owners to ensure all issues are resolved in a satisfactory and timely manner.
<b>6.2.4</b> Regulatory activities undertaken to maintain public safety and companion animal wellbeing	6.2.4.1 The Local Orders Policy is reviewed	100%	The revised Local Orders Policy was adopted by Council at the 20 December 2022 Ordinary Council Meeting.
	6.2.4.2 Swimming Pool Safety Fence inspections	75%	The number of inspections temporarily decreased with the vacancy in the Senior Ranger position. Inspection numbers are reported to Council monthly.
	6.2.4.3 Food shops are inspected on an annual basis	100%	All inspections completed by 30 June 2023. Information is reported to Council on a monthly basis.



# STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

## CSP Strategy 6.2: Ensure Council is well managed, appropriately resourced, effective, efficient, accountable and responsive to its communities and stakeholders

Delivery Program Activity	2022/2023 Operational Plan Action	Completion Status	Annual Comment
<b>6.2.5 Implement a comprehensive and targeted business improvement program</b>	6.2.5.1 Monitor and review Council's Procurement and Tendering System, associated policies and procedures	100%	Compliance with the Procurement Policy was reviewed via Sample Audit. The revised Procurement Policy Framework addressing key risks identified will be implemented under Operational Plan Action 6.2.5.1 in the upcoming Financial Year. Compliance and efficiency of the revised Policy Framework will be tested via sample audit at the end of Financial Year 2023-2024.
	6.2.5.2 Review the policy management framework	100%	In line with a review of Council's Policy Framework, Council's Policy Register has been reviewed by Council's executive management team to ensure policies are reviewed and/or created in priority order. Since the 4 December 2021 local government elections, one policy has been reviewed and adopted by Council's executive management team and 23 policies have been reviewed and adopted by Council, including five policies in the fourth quarter of 2022-23. Seven policies are currently in the Public Exhibition process and will be considered for adoption by Council at the July and August 2023 Ordinary Council Meetings. Ten policies have been rescinded by Council due to being outdated, no longer applicable or covered by another policy. Progress on the implementation of Council's Policy Framework is reported to each meeting of the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee. Policies will continue to be developed and reviewed in accordance with statutory and operational requirements.
	6.2.5.3 Increase effectiveness of Council's ICT systems	90%	The folder structure and mapping has been completed for the Electronic Document and Record Management System (EDRMS) upgrade from Magiq to Content Manager. Training has been supplied to all staff. The go-live date has been postponed to October 2023 due to project complexity relating to the migration of documents from Magiq to Content Manager. This action has been included in the 2023-24 Operational Plan proposing to "Increase effectiveness of Council's Information and Communication Technology systems."
	6.2.5.4 Develop, implement and monitor a calendar of compliance to support Council's statutory reporting obligations	100%	The population of the Local Government Legal Compliance Module is on track. Council continues to manage and monitor statutory reporting obligations via subscription to the Office of Local Government Council Portal, with notifications of reporting requirements and deadlines communicated to applicable responsible officers.
	6.2.5.5 Provide governance support services for the elected Council and executive	100%	At the 28 February 2023 Ordinary Council Meeting, Council resolved to attend a number of Conferences which forms part of the Councillor Training and Development program as follows: 1. Local Government NSW (LGNSW) Annual Conference; 2. Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) National General Assembly of Local Government; 3. Australian Local Government Women's Association (ALGWA) NSW Conference; 4. Local Government NSW (LGNSW) Destination and Visitor Economy Conference; 5. Local Government NSW (LGNSW) Water Management Conference; 6. Local Government Aboriginal Network Conference; 7. Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) National Local Roads and Transport Conference; and 8. Waste Conference.
	6.2.5.6 Facilitate Council's participation in the Local Government Professionals/ Price Waterhouse Coopers Performance Excellence Program	100%	Council participated in the Local Government Professionals Price Waterhouse Coopers Performance Excellence Program (PEP) for 2022-23, with all required data collected and submitted in compliance with PEP deadlines. The final report was submitted to the 27 April 2023 Ordinary Council Meeting.





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# STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

## CSP Strategy 6.3: Ensure Council is a best practice employer providing a safe, happy, suitably resourced and productive workplace

Delivery Program Activity	2022/2023 Operational Plan Action	Completion Status	Annual Comment
<b>6.3.1</b> Continue to prioritise safety and risk management initiatives and upgrades to Council facilities	6.3.1.1 New Works Depot – tender for works called	75%	A conceptual design of a new Works Depot to be located at the Muswellbrook Waste and Recycling Facility has been agreed on by stakeholders. Tenders to be called for a Principal Design Consultant to manage the design through to design and construct tender.
	6.3.1.2 FOGO facility concept design to council	100%	A report providing information regarding the progress of the Food Organics Garden Organics (FOGO) kerbside collection and processing project was submitted to the 25 October 2022 Ordinary Council Meeting. A report providing information regarding submissions received under a non-binding expression of interest process for managing Muswellbrook Shire's FOGO kerbside collection was submitted to the 27 April 2023 Ordinary Council Meeting, Tenders for the collection of FOGO and for the processing of FOGO will be invited in the first quarter of 2023-24.
<b>6.3.2</b> Continue to prioritise employee welfare initiatives	6.3.2.1 Council's Wellbeing Program and antibullying training program delivered	100%	Council's Wellbeing Program and antibullying training programme was delivered during 2022-23.





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# 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

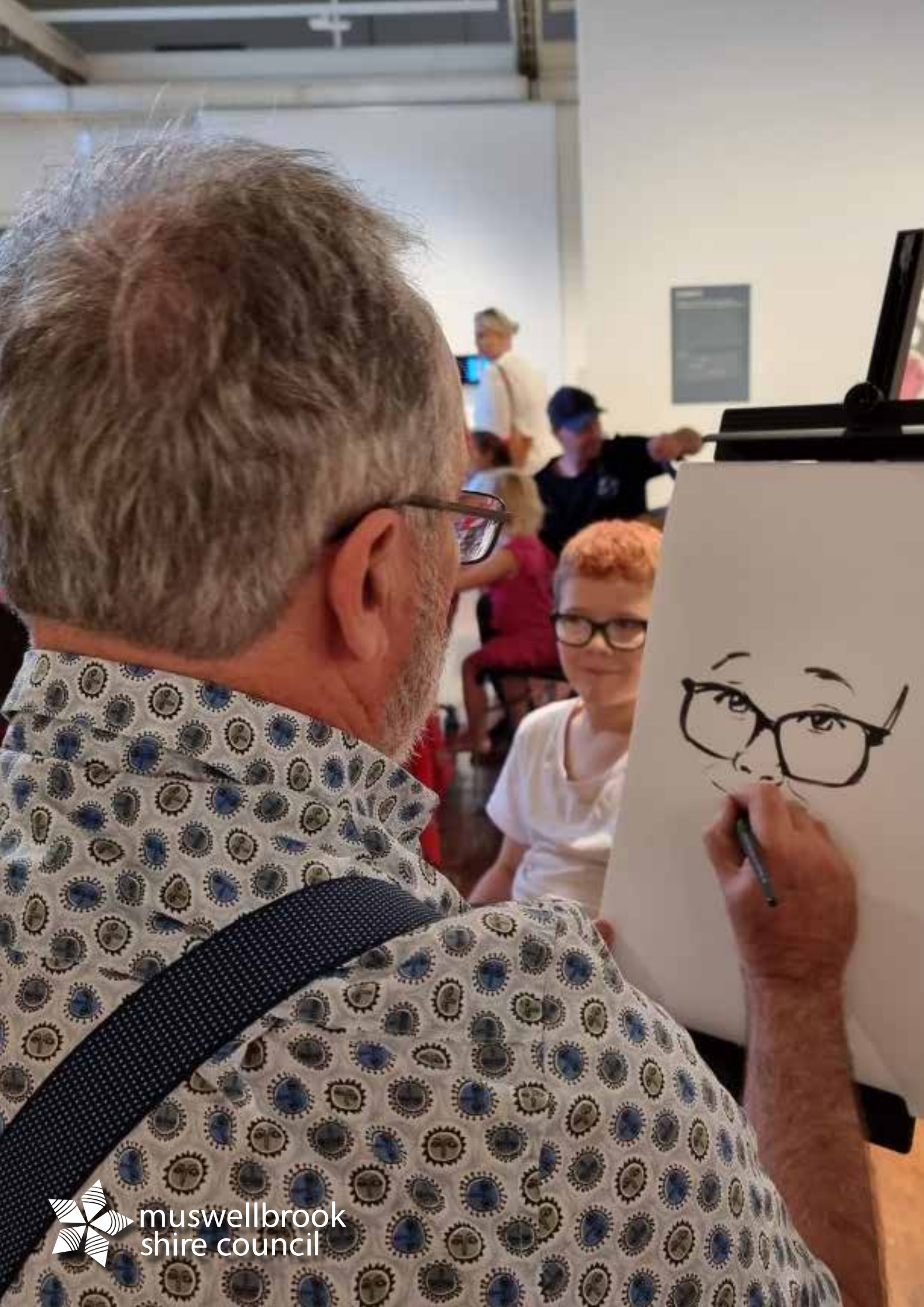
- ▶ We embrace diversity
- ▶ We listen to the opinions of others
- ▶ We listen and communicate with each other honestly
  - ▶ We show our appreciation

## 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



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# WORK HEALTH & SAFETY

Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	2018/ 2019	2019/ 2020	2020/ 2021	2021/ 2022	2022/ 2023	Result (below/ met / exceeded target)	Improvement / Comments	WHO
<b>Number of Incidents Reported including Near Misses</b>	186	339	113	92	109	N/A	Decrease in incident reports due to a heavy focus on contractor management and number of workers still working remotely.	WHS
<b>Near Misses</b>	24	39	14	14	10	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
<b>Lost Time</b>	3	1	0	0	0	Met		All Staff
<b>Public Liability (Incidents)</b>	60	114	28	28	47	N/A		All Staff
<b>Medical Treatment</b>	18	29	9	12	18	N/A		All Staff
<b>Injury/Illness Related</b>	78	166	52	40	47	N/A		
<b>Property Related</b>	43	72	32	21	13	N/A		All Staff
<b>Security Related</b>	8	14	5	6	14	N/A		All Staff
<b>Environmental</b>	2	1	1	1	3	N/A		
<b>Abuse</b>	5	12	8	6	12	N/A		
<b>Number of Incidents Investigated</b>	59	95	31	34	28	N/A	Incident investigation requirements are determined during incident evaluations based on the nature and severity of the incident.	WHS
<b>Number of Corrective Actions Completed</b> (Target: 100% completion of corrective actions raised)	64	90	33	29	24	Below	Corrective actions aren't always actioned as assigned. SafeHold can now reflect this.	WHS
<b>Number of Risks Eliminated</b>	26	29	3	0	0	N/A	Number of risks eliminated using the hierarchy of controls.	WHS
<b>Number of Hazard Reports Logged</b>	3	17	6	9	10	N/A		WHS
<b>WHS Committee Meetings</b> (Target: 100% of 12 meetings held/year)	11	11	10	10	10	Below	Lack of attendance by committee members affected the number of meetings held.	WHS
<b>Number of Hazard Safety Inspections completed per annum.</b> (Target: 100% of 59 64 inspections per year)	36	45	40	39	50	Below	Hazard/Safety Inspection timetable and Monthly report to the WHS Committee. Number of inspections has improved due to WHS sending weekly reminders to the Committee.	WHS
<b>Communication – Number of Toolbox Talks Completed</b> (Target: 780 per year – which is equal to 3x work crews x 5 days/ week x 52 weeks)	1,356	1,327	780	1,543	1,778	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

**WHS** = Work, Health & Safety Management System



**Blue Heeler Country**  
Australia's first and only Blue Heeler Country  
Muswellbrook Shire Council  
Muswellbrook, New South Wales

This sculpture is a tribute to the Blue Heeler dog, a breed that has played a vital role in the history of the Blue Heeler Country. The dog is a symbol of strength, loyalty, and hard work. It is a breed that has been bred for centuries and is known for its ability to work in the most difficult conditions. The Blue Heeler dog is a breed that has been bred for its ability to work in the most difficult conditions. The Blue Heeler dog is a breed that has been bred for its ability to work in the most difficult conditions. The Blue Heeler dog is a breed that has been bred for its ability to work in the most difficult conditions.



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# MODERN SLAVERY STATEMENT

## INTRODUCTION

This Modern Slavery Statement is provided by Muswellbrook Shire Council in accordance with Section 428 (4) of the NSW Local Government Act 1993.

This statement outlines Muswellbrook Shire Council's commitment to combating modern slavery and the measures implemented during this reporting period to reduce the risk of Council's procurement activities resulting in or contributing to human rights violations.

## ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND SUPPLY CHAIN

Muswellbrook Shire Council's procurement structure is mostly decentralised, with any procurement below the tendering threshold undertaken by Council Staff throughout the organisation, supported by an electronic Go-to-Market platform. The procurement function maintains the policy and procedure framework, delivers staff training and facilitates all tendering activity undertaken by Council.

Council's procurement spend was approximately \$50 million across capital and operating expenditure with construction related spend accounting for approximately 53% of total spend. Other categories of significant spend include Electricity Supply, Facilities Management, Legal Services, Waste Collection Services and IT (Hardware and Software).

We recognise the importance of taking steps to ensure that goods and services procured by and for our council are not the product of modern slavery.

## POLICY

Muswellbrook Shire Council revised its procurement policy and submitted it for public exhibition at the end of FY 2022/2023.

The revised policy outlining Council's commitment to preventing and addressing modern slavery in all its procurement activities has since been adopted.

### **Full policy available:**

<https://www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Procurement-Policy-MS01E.pdf>

## OUTCOMES

Implementation of the above policy has resulted in the following actions undertaken and future initiatives planned in relation to Council's procurement processes.

# MODERN SLAVERY STATEMENT

Activity	Description	Status	Actions Taken	Future Initiatives
Staff Awareness and Training	Staff awareness of modern slavery and Council's policy and expectations	Partially actioned	Procurement policy revised to include reference to Modern Slavery obligations.	Revision of procedures, templates and guides to provide adequate training to staff to improve decision making.
	Staff training	Partially actioned	Organisational structure reviewed to assess basic versus in depth training requirements.	Implementation of revised procurement onboarding module and annual refresher training for key staff.
Supplier Engagement	Awareness of Council's policy and expectations	Partially actioned	Modern Slavery schedules included in high value procurements.	Implementation of new Creditor Details Form collecting modern slavery maturity assessments for every new supplier.  Revision of Council's website (Doing business with Council) to provide suppliers with information on Council's Modern Slavery reporting obligations. Inclusion of links to resources for suppliers to better understand what modern slavery is and how to prevent it in their own supply chain planned.
	Supplier training	Action planned		Workshops for suppliers on how to engage with Council. The workshops will provide an overview of legislative requirements including Modern Slavery mitigation measures.
	Supplier self-assessment questionnaire (SAQ)	Action planned		Supplier survey to be conducted in FY23-24.
	High risk supplier engagement	Partially actioned	Modern Slavery clause inserted in some contracts.	Implementation of a standard contract document suite with appropriate modern slavery clauses in progress.
Risk Assessment	Inherent risk assessment at a category level	Yet to be actioned		Risk assessment to be actioned once SAQ has been completed.
	Pre-purchase checklist to identify higher risk procurements	Action planned		Modern slavery risk assessment to be included in procurement plans (applicable to procurements >\$150,000 incl. GST).
	Supplier risk assessment – existing suppliers	Yet to be actioned		Supplier maturity to be assessed once SAQ is complete.
	Supplier risk assessment – new and potential suppliers	Action planned		Implementation of a standardised Creditor Details Form with modern slavery maturity questionnaire.
Tendering and Contracting	Modern slavery tender criteria	Actioned	Modern Slavery schedule developed (mandatory inclusion).	
	Procurement process/ procedure includes the requirement to assess that the tendered price allows for at least the minimum level of wages and other entitlements required by law.	Yet to be actioned		
	Modern slavery contract clauses	Partially actioned	Modern Slavery clauses included in some contracts.	
	Implementation of a standard contract document suite with appropriate modern slavery clauses in progress.			
	Supplier Code of Conduct	Yet to be actioned		
Reporting and Grievance Mechanisms	Confidential reporting mechanism/process for staff, contractors, community to report concerns related to modern slavery.	Yet to be actioned		
Response and Remedy Framework	Response and remedy framework involving actions, such as facilitation of access to health, legal or psychosocial services, financial compensation, and prevention of future harm.	Yet to be actioned		
Monitoring and Review	Monitoring and review of the effectiveness of modern slavery related processes.	Yet to be actioned		



# MODERN SLAVERY STATEMENT

## MANAGEMENT OF HIGH-RISK CATEGORIES

Category	Due Diligence Measure	Status	Action taken	Planned
ICT Hardware	Supplier engagement	Partially actioned	ICT procurement centralised in the IT function.	Risk assessment following SAQ.
	Modern slavery risk assessment of suppliers	Partially actioned	Process amended to utilise LGP contracts where possible.	SAQ for existing suppliers.
	Modern slavery tender criteria	Partially actioned	Modern Slavery criteria included in tender schedules.	Inclusion of schedules in RFQ processes.
	Modern slavery contract clauses	Yet to be actioned		
	Supplier Code of Conduct	Yet to be actioned		
	Contract KPIs in relation to modern slavery in place	Yet to be actioned		
	KPI measurement	Yet to be actioned		
Renewable Energy (Solar Panels)	Supplier engagement	Partially actioned	Tender schedules developed to be included in all new procurements.	
	Modern slavery risk assessment of suppliers	Partially actioned		
	Modern slavery tender criteria	Actioned	Included as conformance schedule.	
	Modern slavery contract clauses	Action planned		Implementation of a standard contract document suite with appropriate modern slavery clauses in progress.
	Supplier Code of Conduct	Yet to be actioned		
	Contract KPIs in relation to modern slavery in place	Yet to be actioned		
	KPI measurement	Yet to be actioned		
Cleaning Services	Supplier engagement	Action planned		SAQ for existing suppliers.
	Modern slavery risk assessment of suppliers	Partially actioned	Tenders for current contracts included a schedule to ascertain if employees are paid under an award.	Status of the Providers' supply chain to be determined in the SAQ.
	Modern slavery tender criteria	Actioned	Included in all future tenders.	
	Modern slavery contract clauses	Partially actioned	Not included in current contracts but drafted to be included in future contracts.	
	Supplier Code of Conduct	Not yet actioned		
	Contract KPIs in relation to modern slavery in place	Not yet actioned		
	KPI measurement	Not yet actioned		

### Full policy available:

<https://www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Procurement-Policy-MS01E.pdf>



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# FRAUD AND CORRUPTION CONTROL

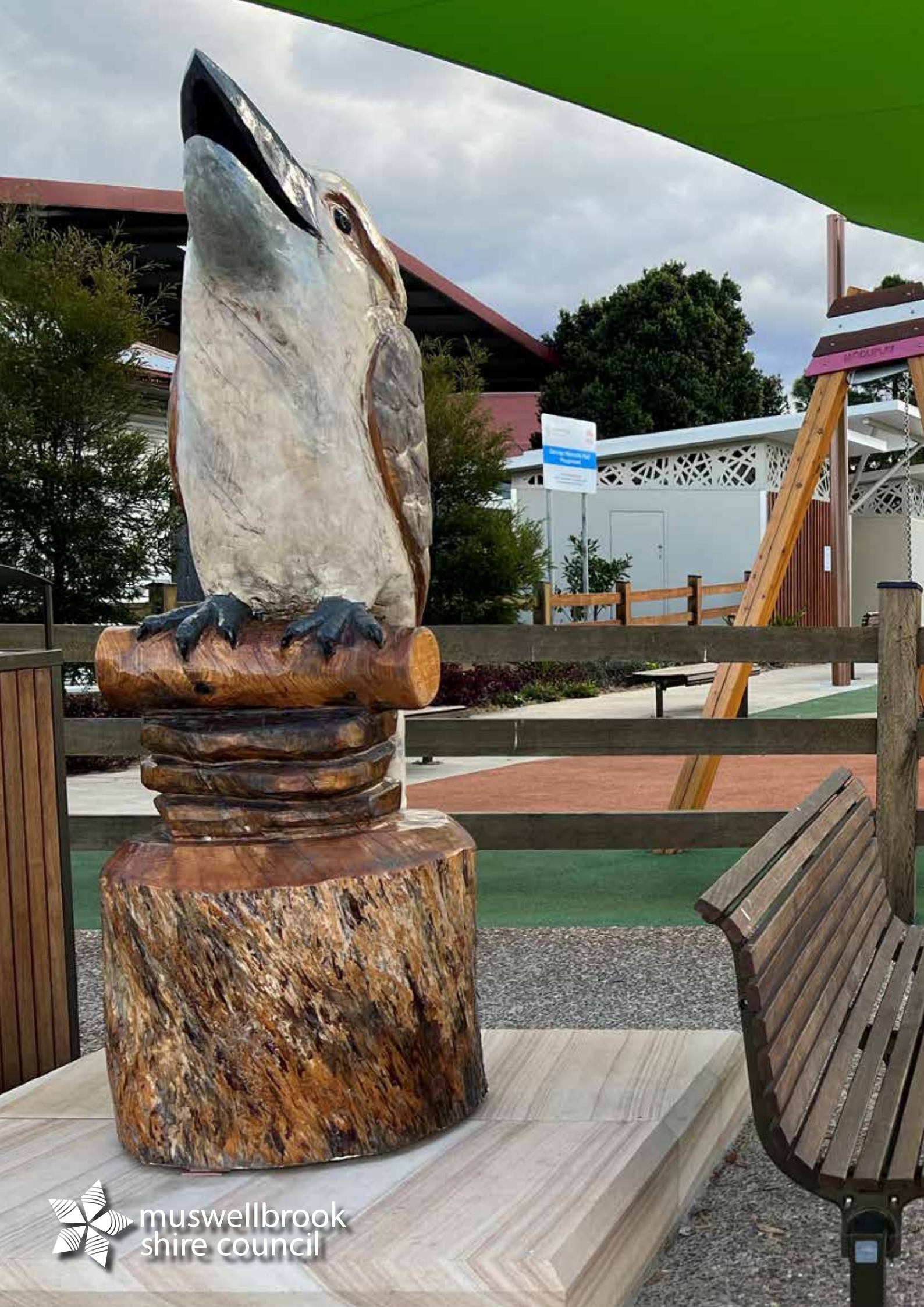
**Council received no reports of fraud or corruption during the 2022/2023 reporting period.**

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 procurementrelated 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 to undertake annual e-learning training and assessment against the Code of Conduct.







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# FINANCIALS

## This section includes:

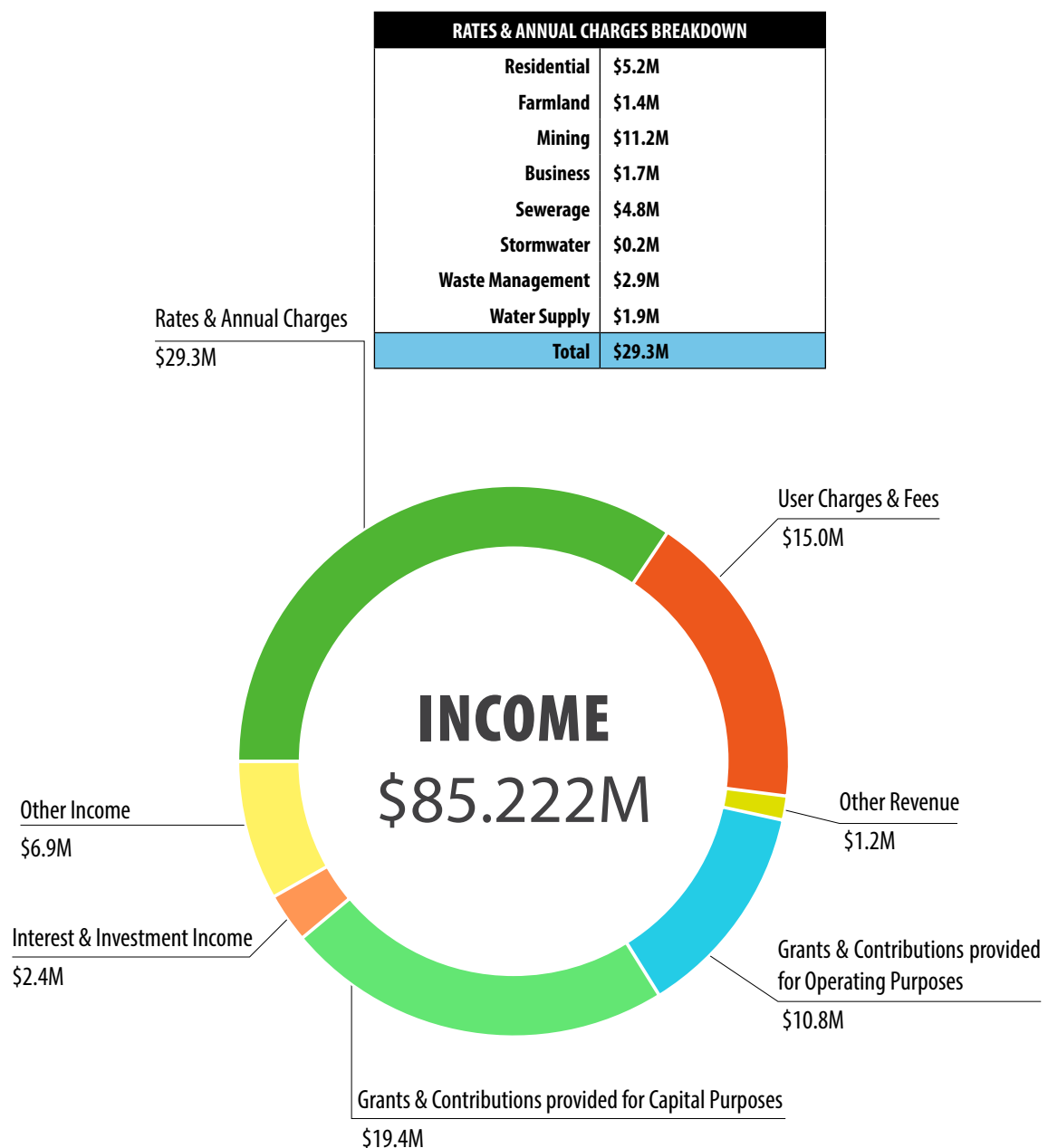
- ▶ Statement by Councillors and Management (signed by GM, Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Responsible Accounting Officer)
- ▶ Income Statement
- ▶ Statement of Comprehensive Income
- ▶ Statement of Financial Position
- ▶ Statement of Changes in Equity
- ▶ Statement of Cash Flows
- ▶ Independent Auditors Report (Auditor General)
- ▶ Report of the Conduct of the Audit (Auditor General)



# WHERE DOES OUR MONEY COME FROM AND HOW IS IT SPENT?

The \$9.7M decrease in comprehensive income compared to the prior year is due to:

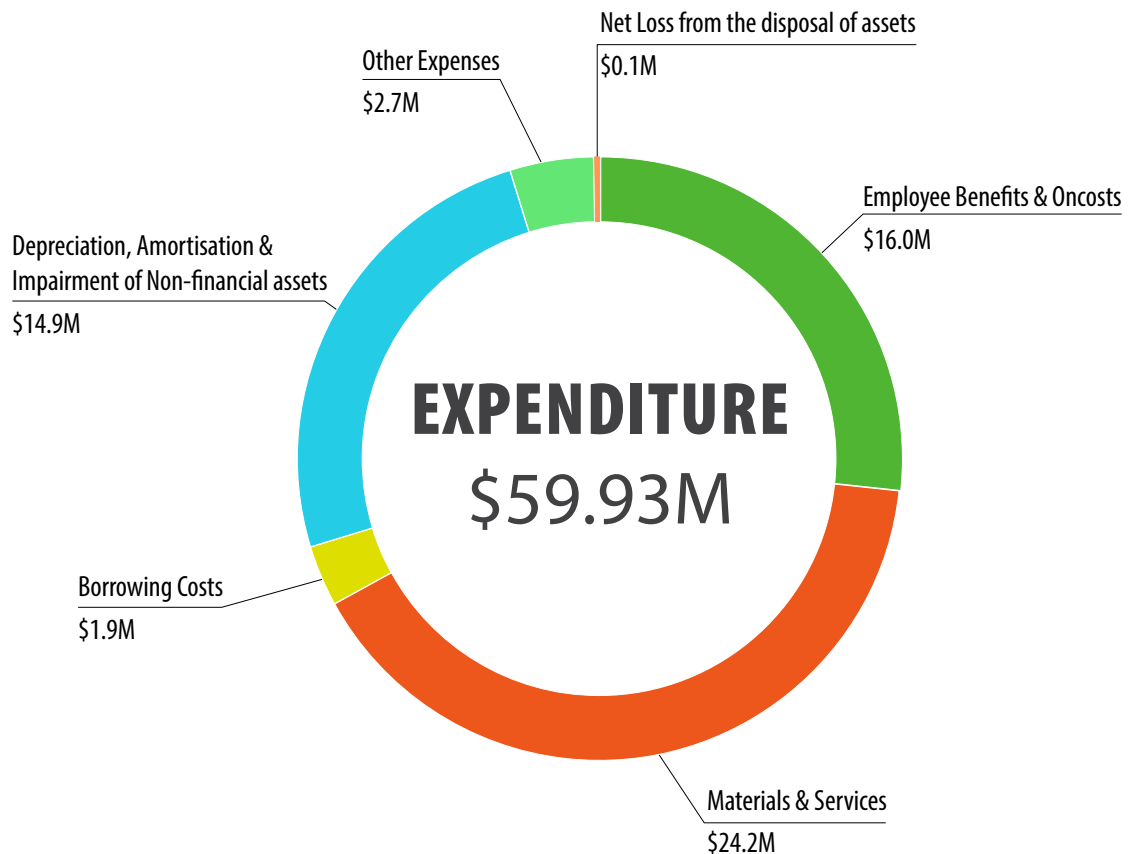
- ▶ \$9.7M decline in the revaluation outcome for infrastructure, property, plant & equipment from \$87.9M in 2021/2022 to \$78.2M in 2022/2023





# WHERE DOES OUR MONEY COME FROM AND HOW IS IT SPENT?

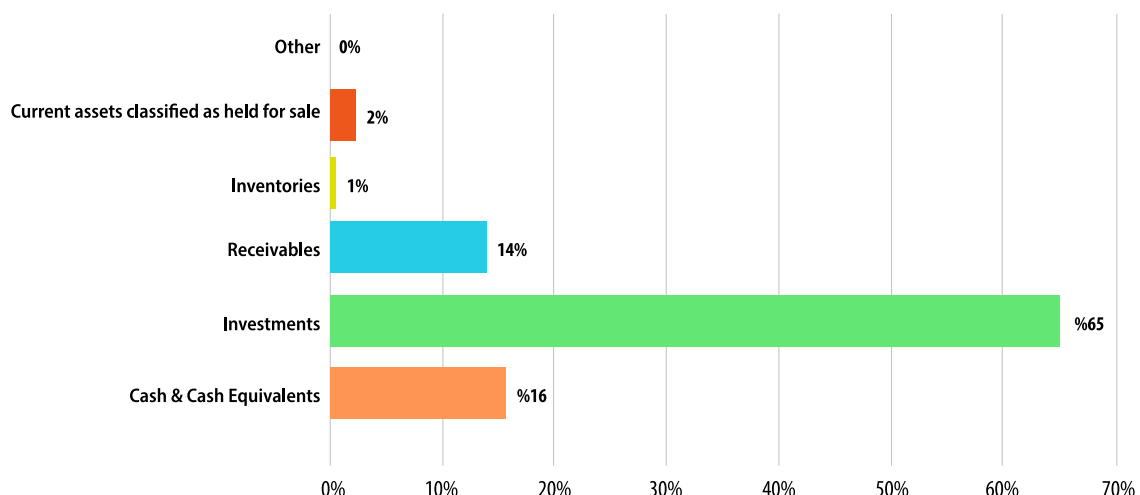
**COUNCIL'S EXPENSES, AMOUNTING TO \$ \$59.932M,  
ARE BROKEN DOWN AS FOLLOWS:**



## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Council's total assets increased by \$105.95M to \$1,026.5M compared to the prior year, primarily due to infrastructure, property, plant and equipment revaluations.

Council's current assets, amounting to \$48.9M are comprised as follows:





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# 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 2023.

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

*Refer to the Financial Statements 2022/2023 for a complete financial analysis and accompanying notes. Council has received an extension to finalise and submit its 2022/2023 financial statements to the Office of Local Government by 29 February 2024.*



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# FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

## Muswellbrook Shire Council

### ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

for the year ended 30 June 2023

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*To do what is best for our community through leadership,  
excellent service and encouragement of sustainable  
development.*



## Muswellbrook Shire Council

### GENERAL PURPOSE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

for the year ended 30 June 2023

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*To do what is best for our community through leadership,  
excellent service and encouragement of sustainable  
development.*



# GENERAL PURPOSE STATEMENTS

## Muswellbrook Shire Council

### General Purpose Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2023

Contents	Page
<b>Statement by Councillors and Management</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Primary Financial Statements:</b>	
Income Statement	4
Statement of Comprehensive Income	5
Statement of Financial Position	6
Statement of Changes in Equity	7
Statement of Cash Flows	8
<b>Notes to the Financial Statements</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Independent Auditor's Reports:</b>	
On the Financial Statements (Sect 417 [2])	85
On the Financial Statements (Sect 417 [3])	88

## Overview

Muswellbrook Shire Council is constituted under the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW) and has its principal place of business at:

Muswellbrook Shire Council Administration Centre  
Campbell's Corner 60-82 Bridge St, Muswellbrook NSW 2333

Council's guiding principles are detailed in Chapter 3 of the LGA and includes:

- principles applying to the exercise of functions generally by council,
- principles to be applied when making decisions,
- principles of community participation,
- principles of sound financial management, and
- principles for strategic planning relating to the development of an integrated planning and reporting framework.

A description of the nature of Council's operations and its principal activities are provided in Note B1-2.

Through the use of the internet, we have ensured that our reporting is timely, complete and available at minimum cost. All press releases, financial statements and other information are publicly available on our website: [www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au](http://www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au).



# GENERAL PURPOSE STATEMENTS

## Muswellbrook Shire Council

### General Purpose Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2023

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 25 July 2023.



Mr S Reynolds

Mayor


27 February 2024



Mr G McNeill

Deputy Mayor

27 February 2024



Mr D Finnigan

General Manager

27 February 2024



Mr J Hogan

Responsible Accounting Officer

27 February 2024

# INCOME STATEMENT

Muswellbrook Shire Council | Income Statement | for the year ended 30 June 2023

## Muswellbrook Shire Council

### Income Statement

for the year ended 30 June 2023

Original unaudited budget 2023 \$ '000		Notes	Actual 2023 \$ '000	Actual 2022 \$ '000
<b>Income from continuing operations</b>				
30,796	Rates and annual charges	B2-1	29,336	28,688
13,909	User charges and fees	B2-2	15,010	10,875
790	Other revenues	B2-3	1,195	882
7,023	Grants and contributions provided for operating purposes	B2-4	10,846	10,644
2,830	Grants and contributions provided for capital purposes	B2-4	19,395	16,524
510	Interest and investment income	B2-5	2,463	769
6,604	Other income	B2-6	6,977	15,068
62,462	<b>Total income from continuing operations</b>		<b>85,222</b>	<b>83,450</b>
<b>Expenses from continuing operations</b>				
16,792	Employee benefits and on-costs	B3-1	16,006	14,658
17,413	Materials and services *	B3-2	24,158	19,098
2,227	Borrowing costs	B3-3	1,960	1,917
15,200	Depreciation, amortisation and impairment of non-financial assets	B3-4	14,951	14,245
3,905	Other expenses *	B3-5	2,756	3,667
—	Net loss from the disposal of assets	B4-1	101	4,603
55,537	<b>Total expenses from continuing operations</b>		<b>59,932</b>	<b>58,188</b>
6,925	<b>Operating result from continuing operations</b>		<b>25,290</b>	<b>25,262</b>
6,925	<b>Net operating result for the year attributable to Council</b>		<b>25,290</b>	<b>25,262</b>
4,095	<b>Net operating result for the year before grants and contributions provided for capital purposes</b>		<b>5,895</b>	<b>8,738</b>

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



# COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

Muswellbrook Shire Council | Statement of Comprehensive Income | for the year ended 30 June 2023

## Muswellbrook Shire Council

### Statement of Comprehensive Income for the year ended 30 June 2023

	Notes	2023 \$ '000	2022 \$ '000
<b>Net operating result for the year – from Income Statement</b>		<b>25,290</b>	25,262
<b>Other comprehensive income:</b>			
Amounts which will not be reclassified subsequently to the operating result			
Gain (loss) on revaluation of infrastructure, property, plant and equipment	C1-7	78,454	87,868
Other movements		(266)	—
<b>Total items which will not be reclassified subsequently to the operating result</b>		<b>78,188</b>	87,868
<b>Total other comprehensive income for the year</b>		<b>78,188</b>	87,868
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year attributable to Council</b>		<b>103,478</b>	113,130

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

# FINANCIAL POSITION

Muswellbrook Shire Council | Statement of Financial Position | for the year ended 30 June 2023

## Muswellbrook Shire Council

### Statement of Financial Position

as at 30 June 2023

	Notes	2023 \$ '000	2022 \$ '000
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>Current assets</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	C1-1	7,856	8,823
Investments	C1-2	32,500	27,500
Receivables	C1-4	6,960	6,648
Inventories	C1-5	281	1,675
Current assets classified as held for sale	C1-6	1,114	—
Other	C1-9	196	314
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>48,907</b>	<b>44,960</b>
<b>Non-current assets</b>			
Investments	C1-2	33,772	26,765
Infrastructure, property, plant and equipment (IPPE)	C1-7	877,029	777,119
Investment property	C1-8	66,807	71,720
<b>Total non-current assets</b>		<b>977,608</b>	<b>875,604</b>
<b>Total assets</b>		<b>1,026,515</b>	<b>920,564</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Payables	C3-1	8,869	9,245
Contract liabilities	C3-2	12,844	4,376
Borrowings	C3-3	6,588	6,055
Employee benefit provisions	C3-4	3,005	2,965
Provisions	C3-5	1,000	1,000
<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<b>32,306</b>	<b>23,641</b>
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>			
Borrowings	C3-3	50,720	57,313
Employee benefit provisions	C3-4	323	332
Provisions	C3-5	9,770	9,360
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>		<b>60,813</b>	<b>67,005</b>
<b>Total liabilities</b>		<b>93,119</b>	<b>90,646</b>
<b>Net assets</b>		<b>933,396</b>	<b>829,918</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>			
Accumulated surplus	C4-1	441,019	415,729
IPPE revaluation reserve	C4-1	492,377	414,189
<b>Council equity interest</b>		<b>933,396</b>	<b>829,918</b>
<b>Total equity</b>		<b>933,396</b>	<b>829,918</b>

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



# CHANGES IN EQUITY

Muswellbrook Shire Council | Statement of Changes in Equity | for the year ended 30 June 2023

## Muswellbrook Shire Council

### Statement of Changes in Equity for the year ended 30 June 2023

	Notes	2023			2022		
		Accumulated surplus \$ '000	IPPE revaluation reserve \$ '000	Total equity \$ '000	Accumulated surplus \$ '000	IPPE revaluation reserve \$ '000	Total equity \$ '000
Opening balance at 1 July		415,729	414,189	829,918	390,467	326,321	716,788
Net operating result for the year		25,290	–	25,290	25,262	–	25,262
<b>Other comprehensive income</b>							
Gain (loss) on revaluation of infrastructure, property, plant and equipment	C1-7	–	78,454	78,454	–	87,868	87,868
Other reserves movements		–	(266)	(266)	–	–	–
<b>Other comprehensive income</b>		–	78,188	78,188	–	87,868	87,868
<b>Total comprehensive income</b>		<b>25,290</b>	<b>78,188</b>	<b>103,478</b>	<b>25,262</b>	<b>87,868</b>	<b>113,130</b>
<b>Closing balance at 30 June</b>		<b>441,019</b>	<b>492,377</b>	<b>933,396</b>	<b>415,729</b>	<b>414,189</b>	<b>829,918</b>

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

# INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT



## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

### Report on the general purpose financial statements

#### Muswellbrook Shire Council

To the Councillors of the Muswellbrook Shire Council

#### Opinion

I have audited the accompanying financial statements of the 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 2023, the Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2023, 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 2023, 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).



# INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

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

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 2023 includes other information in addition to the financial statements and my Independent Auditor's Report thereon. The Councillors are responsible for the other information.

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 in 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.

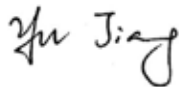
Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but does not guarantee an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect material misstatements. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error. Misstatements are considered material if, individually or in aggregate, 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](http://www.auasb.gov.au/auditors_responsibilities/ar4.pdf). The description forms part of my auditor's report.

# INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

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

- that the Council carried out its activities effectively, efficiently and economically
- 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.



Reiky Jiang  
Delegate of the Auditor-General for New South Wales

29 February 2024  
SYDNEY

# REPORT ON THE CONDUCT OF THE AUDIT



Cr Steven Reynolds  
Mayor  
Muswellbrook Shire Council  
Campbell's Corner 60-82 Bridge St  
MUSWELLBROOK NSW 2333

Contact: Reiky Jiang  
Phone no: 02 9275 7281  
Our ref: R008-16585809-50505/1765

29 February 2024

Dear Mayor

## Report on the Conduct of the Audit for the year ended 30 June 2023 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 2023 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 2023 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

	2023	2022*	Variance
	\$m	\$m	%
Rates and annual charges revenue	29.3	28.7	2.1
Grants and contributions revenue	30.2	27.2	11.0
Operating result from continuing operations	25.3	25.3	-.1
Net operating result before capital grants and contributions	5.9	8.7	32.2



# REPORT ON THE CONDUCT OF THE AUDIT

Rates and annual charges revenue (\$29.3 million) increased by \$0.6 million (or 2.1 per cent) in 2022–23 due to the rate peg increase of 2.5 per cent.

Grants and contributions revenue (\$30.2 million) increased by \$3.0 million (or 11.0 per cent) in 2022–23 due to:

- the increase of \$3.3 million of grants recognised for recreation and culture
- the increase of \$1.3 million of developer contributions recognised during the year
- the above are offset by a decrease in grants for economic development of \$2.5 million.

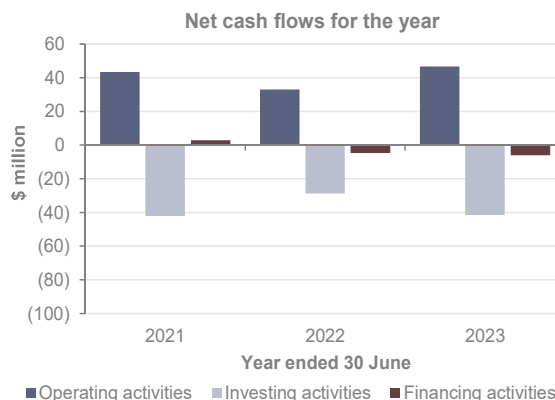
The Council's operating result from continuing operations (\$25.3 million including depreciation, amortisation and impairment expense of \$15.0 million) remained relatively stable.

The net operating result before capital grants and contributions (\$5.9 million) was \$2.8 million lower than the 2021–22 result. This was primarily due to an increase in grant and contribution revenue provided for capital purposes of \$2.9 million, while revenue and expenses remained relatively stable year-on-year.

## STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

Cash balances decreased by \$1.0 million, mainly due to the:

- increase in grants and contribution receipts of \$13.9 million
- increases in outflows from investing activities of \$12.9 million and financing activities of \$1.4 million.



## FINANCIAL POSITION

### Cash and investments

Cash and investments	2023	2022	Commentary
	\$m	\$m	
<b>Total cash, cash equivalents and investments</b>	<b>74.1</b>	<b>63.1</b>	Externally restricted balances comprise mainly of specific purpose unexpended grants - general fund, developer contributions, water and sewer funds.
Restricted and allocated cash, cash equivalents and investments:			The increase in externally restricted fund is mainly due to the increase in specific purpose unexpended grants - general fund of \$9.7 million.
• External restrictions	38.8	29.4	Internal allocations are determined by council policies or decisions, which are subject to change.
• Internal allocations	35.3	33.6	Significant internal restrictions include waste management centre of \$6.1 million, deposits, retentions and bonds of \$5.5 million and financial assistance grant of \$4.5 million.

# REPORT ON THE CONDUCT OF THE AUDIT

## Debt

At 30 June 2023, Council had:

- \$57.3 million in secured loans (\$63.4 million in 2021-22)
- \$750,000 in approved overdraft facility with \$nil drawn down
- \$62,000 in credit card facility with \$nil used.

## PERFORMANCE

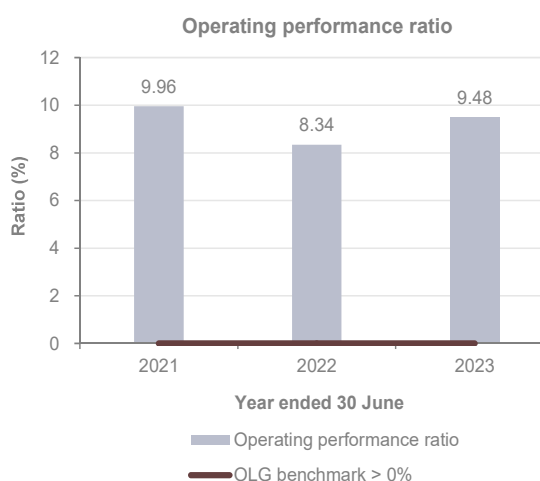
### Performance measures

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, Housing and Infrastructure.

#### Operating performance ratio

The Council exceeded the 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 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.

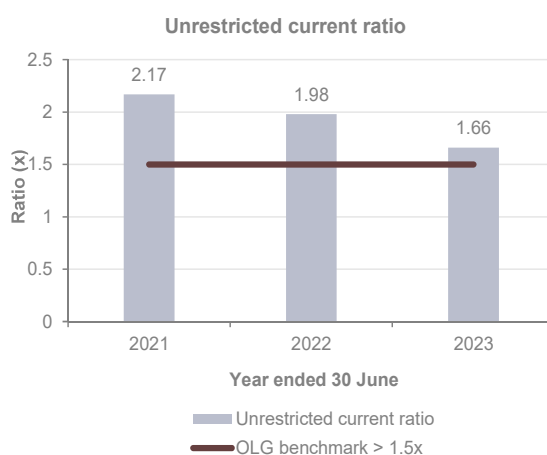


# REPORT ON THE CONDUCT OF THE AUDIT

## Unrestricted current ratio

The Council met the benchmark for the current reporting period.

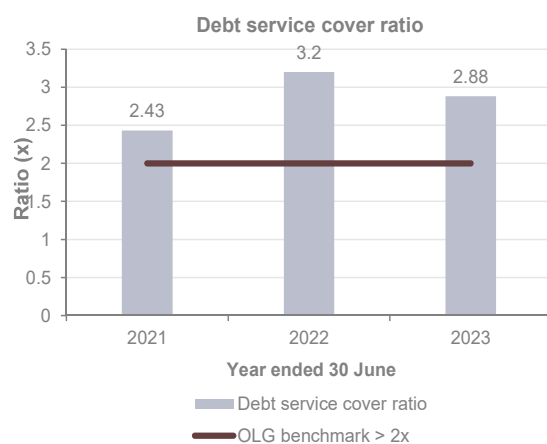
The 'unrestricted current ratio' is specific to local government and represents council's ability to meet its short-term obligations as they fall due. The benchmark set by OLG is greater than 1.5 times.



## Debt service cover ratio

The Council met the 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.



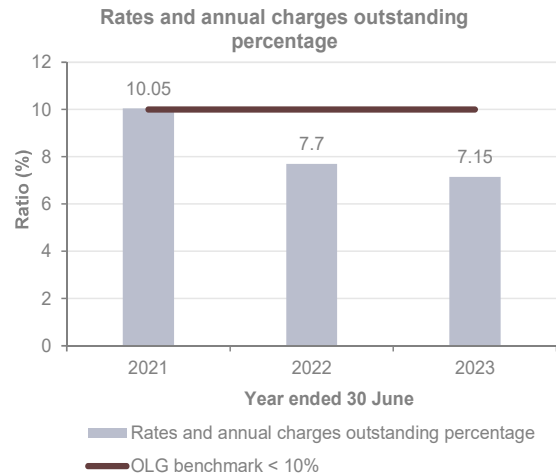


# REPORT ON THE CONDUCT OF THE AUDIT

## Rates and annual charges outstanding percentage

The Council met the benchmark for the current reporting period.

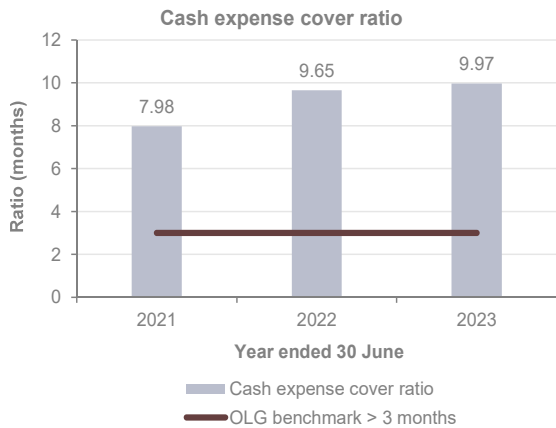
The 'rates and annual charges outstanding percentage' assesses the impact of uncollected rates and annual charges on council's liquidity and the adequacy of debt recovery efforts. The benchmark set by OLG is less than 10 per cent for regional and rural councils.



## Cash expense cover ratio

The Council exceeded the 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 renewed \$9.6 million of infrastructure, property, plant and equipment during the 2022-23 financial year. This was mainly spent on roads, including, repairing assets damaged by natural disasters. A further \$21.5 million was spent on new assets including work-in-progress, roads, land improvements and other structures.

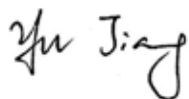
# REPORT ON THE CONDUCT OF THE AUDIT

## 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.



Reiky Jiang  
Director, Financial Audit

Delegate of the Auditor-General for New South Wales



muswellbrook  
shire council



# 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](http://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:

Expense Type	2022 / 2023 Total Actuals
Mayoral Fees	\$27,600.00
Councillor Fees	\$151,800.00
Telephone Calls	\$6,009.00
Conference & Seminars	\$6,402.00
	\$320.00
Training & Skills Development	\$6,007.00
Interstate Visits	\$8,372.00
Catering	\$11,047.00
Child Care	-
Other	\$1,102.00
Insurance	\$71,592.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$290,251.00</b>

## INTERSTATE AND OVERSEAS TRAVEL

No overseas travel was undertaken by Councillors in 2022/2023.

The Mayor travelled to Canberra to attend the National General Assembly 13/06/2023 to 16/06/2023

## LEGAL EXPENSES

Legal expenses for the 2022/2023 comprised of the following.

Item	Expense
Planning and Development	\$3654
Other	\$1,000,436
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,004,090</b>

## 2022/2023 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 adopted rates.

Council did not carry out private works for an approved fee or resolve to carry out private works for a fee that was fully or partly subsidised by the Council.

# STATUTORY REPORT

## CONTRIBUTIONS GRANTED UNDER SECTION 356 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1993

During the year 2022/2023, Council made contributions, under section 356 of the Act in the total amount of \$106,281.

Council introduced a new program of Community Grants in 2019/2020, which encourages community organisations to make applications for funds to support a range of initiatives and events with small matched contributions, together with its regular allocation of funds to schools and program of events. The program will continue in future years.

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

Row Labels	Sum of Total Value
<b>Arts Upper Hunter</b>	<b>\$ 11,444</b>
Arts Upper Hunter - Regional Officer Contribution	\$ 11,444
<b>Denman Chamber Of Commerce</b>	<b>\$ 6,030</b>
Denman Christmas Market	\$ 4,530
Sponsorship for Market Day April 2023	\$ 1,500
<b>Hunter Joint Organisation</b>	<b>\$ 51,294</b>
Annual Subscription to Core Funding - Hunter Joint Organisation	\$ 33,840
Annual Subscription to Core Funding - Regional Program and Policy Division	\$ 17,454
<b>Muswellbrook Chamber Of Commerce</b>	<b>\$ 2,500</b>
Sponsorship for Muswellbrook Business Awards 2023	\$ 2,500
<b>Muswellbrook Race Club Limited</b>	<b>\$ 15,500</b>
Annual Sponsorship Gold Cup Race Day 2023	\$ 10,000
Muswellbrook Race Club Sponsorship - The Mayor's	\$ 5,500
<b>Muswellbrook RSL Sub-Branch</b>	<b>\$ 1,818</b>
Mayor's Cup Golf Day Sponsorship - 11th March 2023	\$ 1,818
<b>Please Hunter Community Leg</b>	<b>\$ 1,695</b>
Community Grants 2022-23 Round 1	\$ 1,695
<b>Radio Hunter Valley P/L</b>	<b>\$ 6,000</b>
2022 Upper Hunter Christmas Spectacular	\$ 6,000
<b>Rotary Club Of Muswellbrook</b>	<b>\$ 1,000</b>
Community Grants 2022-23 Round 1	\$ 1,000
<b>Upper Hunter Conservatorium</b>	<b>\$ 6,000</b>
Muswellbrook Shire Band - Directors Fee 2022/2023	\$ 6,000
<b>Westpac Rescue Helicopter Service Denman</b>	<b>\$ 3,000</b>
Community Grant - Sandy Hollow Charity Horse Ride	\$ 2,000
Sponsorship - Westpac Denman Charity Horse Ride	\$ 1,000
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 106,281</b>

# STATUTORY REPORT

## EXERCISE OF COUNCIL FUNCTIONS BY EXTERNAL BODIES

The following organisations exercised functions delegated by Council during the 2022/2023 year:

Organisation	Function
Upper Hunter Weeds Authority	Control of noxious weeds
Upper Hunter Regional Library Network	Library service
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 seek 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.





# STATUTORY REPORT

## 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 as at 30/06/2023 was \$300,000

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 2022/2023 there were no staff members on a Senior Contract.

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 2022/2023 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
Specialised Pavement Services Pty Ltd	Provision of Street Sweeping Services (4 year duration) Contract start on 01.07.2022 - Awarded before EOFY	\$195,650.00 excl. GST (p.a.)
Waeger Constructions Pty Ltd	Replacement of Rosebrook Bridge Contract start on 06.07.2022 - Awarded before EOFY but not listed on last year's list	\$1,110,000.00 excl. GST
RDO Equipement Pty Ltd	Supply and Delivery of a Motor Grader	\$596,300.00 excl. GST
Hunter Wide Civil Pty Ltd	Oakleigh Bridge Replacement	\$432,190.00 excl. GST
LEATL Holdings Pty Ltd T/As Hunter Events Group	Event Management Services	\$202,185.00 excl GST
KCE Pty Ltd	Hill Street Road Works and Car Parking Upgrade	\$425,900.00 excl. GST
Hi-Vis Group	Supply and Installation of LED Fire Signs	\$153,409.58 Incl. GST
CleanPeak Pty Ltd	Cleaning Services for Buildings and Public Toilets (3 year duration)	\$213,457.10 excl. GST (p.a.)
Hunter Wide Civil Pty Ltd	Bylong Valley Way Road CH 5.9km and Drainage Upgrade	\$501,195.00 excl. GST
Prominent Fluid Controls Pty Ltd	Design, Supply and Installation of a Flouride Dosing System at the Muswellbrook Water Treatment Plant	\$144,419.00 excl. GST
Dalski Pty Ltd	Indoor Sports Centre Renovations - Muswellbrook and Denman	\$238,220.00 excl. GST
Austek Constructions Pty Ltd t/as Austek Play	Upgrade of Equipment and Facilities at Simpson Park, Muswellbrook	\$228,706.71 excl. GST

# STATUTORY REPORT

## 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.

<b>Lodgment of animal impoundment data collection returns with the Office of Local Government</b>	Council lodged all animal impoundment data with the Office of Local Government at the end of 2022/2023 through the NSW Government's Companion Animals Registry database.
<b>Lodgment of data about dog attacks with the Office of Local Government</b>	Details of each dog attack incident were recorded in the NSW Government's Companion Animals Registry database.
<b>Cost of Council's companion animal management and activities</b>	\$146,019.00
<b>Companion animal community education programs carried out and strategies Council has in place to promote and assist the desexing of dogs and cats</b>	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.
<b>Council's strategies for complying with the requirement under section 64 of the Act to seek alternatives to euthanasia for unclaimed animals</b>	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.
<b>Off leash areas provided in the council area</b>	Council maintains two off leash areas within the Shire: one in Karoola Park, Muswellbrook and the other in Arbour Park, Denman.

	Dogs	Cats
<b>Incoming</b>	199	52
<b>Released to Owner</b>	37	1
<b>Sold/Adopted</b>	14	7
<b>Rescue</b>	107	28
<b>Euthanised</b>	31	22

# STATUTORY REPORT

## STORMWATER MANAGEMENT SERVICES

In 2022/2023, 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;

<b>Residential Property</b>		\$25.00
<b>Residential Strata Unit</b>		\$12.50
<b>Non-Residential Impervious Land</b>	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 2022/2023 the transactions that occurred in relation to the funding are outline below;

<b>Opening Balance</b> (funds unspent from previous allocation)	\$1,030,000
<b>Funds Raised</b>	\$159,000
<b>Allocation Spent</b>	0
<b>Available to Spend</b>	\$1,189,000

## RATES & CHARGES WRITTEN OFF

Council wrote off or abandoned the following amounts during 2022/2023 in rates and annual charges. All abandonments were made either under the General Manager's delegated authority or Council resolutions.

<b>Undetected Water Leaks</b> (in accordance with Council Policy W5/4 - Water Management Policy Undetected Water Leaks)	\$38,723.75
<b>CFO Approved - Dirty Water</b>	\$64.41
<b>Rates EOY Sml Debt Writeoff</b>	\$658.72
<b>Water EOY Sml Debt Writeoff</b>	\$268.90
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$39,716.78</b>

## 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 2023, Muswellbrook Shire Council received zero (0) disclosure made under the PID Act.



# STATUTORY REPORT

## GOVERNMENT INFORMATION (PUBLIC ACCESS) ACT 2009

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

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

Reviews carried out by the agency	No
Information made publicly available by the agency	N/A

**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	9
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**Clause 7C:** The total number of access applications received by the agency during the reporting year that the agency refused either wholly or partly, because the application was for the disclosure of information referred to in Schedule 1 to the Act (information for which there is conclusive presumption of overriding public interest against disclosure).

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

**TABLE A:**

NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS BY TYPE OF APPLICANT AND OUTCOME\*

	Access Granted in Full	Access Granted in Part	Access Refused in Full	Information not Held	Information Already Available	Refuse to Deal with Application	Refuse to Confirm/Deny Whether Information is held	Application Withdrawn	Total	% of Total
Media										
Members of Parliament										
Private Sector Business										
Not for profit organisations or community groups										
Members of the Public (by legal representative)	1				2				3	33%
Members of the Public (other)	3			1	2				6	67%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4</b>			<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>				<b>9</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>% of TOTAL</b>	<b>45%</b>			<b>10%</b>	<b>45%</b>					

\* 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.

# STATUTORY REPORT

**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*										
Access Applications (other than personal information applications)	4									44%
Access Applications that are partly personal information applications and partly other				1	4					55%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4</b>			<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>				<b>9</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>% of TOTAL</b>	<b>45%</b>			<b>10%</b>	<b>45%</b>					

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

**TABLE C:**

**INVALID APPLICATIONS**

Reason for invalidity	Number 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%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>

# STATUTORY REPORT

**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%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>

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

**TABLE E:**

**OTHER PUBLIC INTEREST CONSIDERATIONS AGAINST DISCLOSURE: MATTERS LISTED IN TABLE TO SECTION 14 OF ACT**

	Number of times consideration used*	% of total
Responsible and Effective Government	0	0%
Law Enforcement and Security	0	0%
Individual Rights, Judicial Processes and Natural Justice	0	0%
Business Interests of Agencies and Other Persons	0	0%
Environment, Culture, Economy and General Matters	0	0%
Secrecy Provisions	0	0%
Exempt Documents Under Interstate Freedom of Information Legislation	0	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>

**TABLE F:**

**TIMELINESS**

	Number of times consideration used*	% of total
Decided within the Statutory Timeframe (20 days plus any extensions)	0	0%
Decided after 35 days (by agreement with applicant)	0	0%
Not decided within time (deemed refusal)	0	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>



# STATUTORY REPORT

**TABLE G:**

NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS REVIEWED UNDER PART 5 OF THE ACT (BY TYPE OF REVIEW AND OUTCOME)

	Decision Varied	Decision Upheld	Total	% of Total
Internal Review	0	0	0	0%
Review by Information Commissioner*	0	0	0	0%
Internal Review following recommendation under Section 93 of Act	0	0	0	0%
Review by NCAT	0	0	0	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>
<b>% of TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>

\*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%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>

**TABLE I:**

APPLICATIONS TRANSFERRED TO OTHER AGENCIES.

	Number of Applications for Transferred	% of total
Agency - Initiated Transfers	0	0%
Applicant - Initiated Transfers	0	0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>



# STATUTORY REPORT

## 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 was under development assessment, but the application withdrawn primarily due to a design clash with Possum Gully watercourse. Council is now proposing to relocate the Regional Entertainment Centre within the same town centre block. The previous Capital Expenditure Review will be updated for currency.
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 and operational.
Olympic Park Precinct Master Plan	The construction of the bridge from Wilkinson Avenue to Wilder Street is completed. Council is awaiting confirmation of grant funding. The Development Application of the amenities and grandstand is under assessment by the Regional Planning Panel. The previous Capital Expenditure Review will be updated for currency.

## 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	2022 / 2033 Allocation
Hunter Valley Energy Coal Pty Ltd	CBD Stage 7
	Muswellbrook Youth Centre / Indoor Sports Centre
Bengalla Mining Company Pty Ltd	Denman Heritage Building
	Loxton House Upgrade
Mangoola Coal Operations Pty Ltd	Denman Heritage Building
MACH Energy Australia Pty Ltd	Denman Heritage Building
	CBD Stage 7

## 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	1
Inspections of Premises on which there are more than two dwellings	0
Compliance Certificates Issued	84
Non-Compliance Certificates Issued	2

# STATUTORY REPORT

## STATEMENT OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PERSONS WHO PERFORMED PAID WORK FOR MUSWELLBROOK SHIRE COUNCIL ON WEDNESDAY 23 NOVEMBER 2022

In their 2022/2023 annual reports, councils must publish a statement of the total number of persons who performed paid work for them on Wednesday 23 November 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

<b>Total number of persons directly employed by Muswellbrook Shire Council who performed paid work on 23/11/2022</b>	<b>156</b>
<b>Permanent Full time</b>	<b>121</b>
<b>Permanent Part time</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Casual</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Fixed-term Contract</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>The number of persons employed by the council who are “senior staff” for the purposes of the Local Government Act 1993</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>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</b>	<b>127</b>
<b>The number of persons supplied to the council, under a contract or other arrangement with the person’s employer, as an apprentice or trainee</b>	<b>7</b>



# DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN

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.

**During this reporting period the Disability Inclusion Action Plan achievements include:**

## BUILDING POSITIVE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS

Wider Promotion of Art Exhibitions including the livestreaming of exhibition openings has improved accessibility for people of all abilities to enjoy and connect with events.

Provision of accessible events, Australia Day Community Awards, Australia Day Family Fun Day, Citizenship Ceremonies, Easter Family Fun Day, Blue Heeler Film Festival, 'Rock in the Brook' Community Concert, New Years Fireworks Event, Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre Exhibition openings and workshops, Sustainability Hub activities, Library activities in Muswellbrook and Denman.

## CREATING LIVEABLE COMMUNITIES

Muswellbrook Shire Libraries secured funding and installed a sensory courtyard. This space provides a safe space for children with mobility and sensory disabilities to play and interact with the environment. The Library Service has seen an increase of individuals and groups accessing the Muswellbrook Library purposely to use this space, this interactive space has been incorporated alongside the children's reading area, glass sliding glass doors connects the inside and outside areas allowing children and their parents to enjoy a contained space to learn and relax together.

Design and construction of accessible community assets such as Hunter Beach recreational area, redevelopment of the Muswellbrook Aquatic Centre including the incorporation of an accessible warm water pool, the Donald Horne Building which incorporates The Melt and the STEM Innovation Centre, Denman Heritage Village and the Olympic Park Precinct.

Footpath renewal programs in Muswellbrook and Denman has enabled the redesign of footpaths and

the provision of pram ramps has provided people with disabilities connectivity and ease to move about their community independently.

## 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 that buildings and workplaces are accessible for people with disabilities. Council spaces are physically accessible by the installation of ramps, elevators, toilet facilities.

## ACCESSIBLE SYSTEMS, INFORMATION OR PROCESSES

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 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 Councils next Disability Inclusion Action Plan, the community consultation phase has occurred during this reporting period including an online survey, listening posts, targeted stakeholder workshops including consumers and service providers and internal Council workshops.







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