



# **STATE OF THE SHIRE**

## **2021 - 2024**

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

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muswellbrook shire council

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# DEREK FINNIGAN

## A MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER



I wish to extend my congratulations to Councillors, staff and the broader community for their vision, commitment and dedication to the Muswellbrook Shire and the delivery of a wide range of projects and programs designed to improve amenity and liveability during the 2021-2024 term of Council.

Council is responsible for urban and regional planning, environmental management, local roads, water and wastewater infrastructure and services, waste management, sporting fields, parks and recreation facilities, aquatic centres, libraries, and the Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre.

Council will continue to show leadership in the community and on the issues nominated as major challenges in the Shire, including economic growth and diversification, job creation, the future of the mining industry, improved air quality and in continuing to make our Shire an attractive, welcoming and healthy place to live.

Local governments, and in particular rural and regional Council's depend on the support, resources, and grants from State and Federal governments to provide an enhanced level of services and community facilities to support our communities.

Council will continue to advocate for a long-term commitment and equal share from the NSW Government which recognises the importance of mining to the NSW economy and provides certainty for our mining communities.

### NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS DURING THE 2021-2024 TERM INCLUDE:

#### TARINPA:

(previously known as Hunter Beach) is a dedicated area between the Karoola Wetlands and the Hunter River, with direct access to the river, paths, picnic areas and walking trails.

#### ANIMAL CARE FACILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY HUB:

The centre point for animal care throughout the Shire and home to the Sustainability Hub and community garden.

#### WOLLOMBI PARK PUMP TRACK:

The new pump track, funded by the NSW Government's Places to Play Program, and designed and constructed by Common Ground Trails, is the first stage of the upgrade to Wollombi Park.

#### MERTON STREET DRAINAGE AND ROAD UPGRADE:

Council was successful in gaining funding from the NSW Government Disaster Ready Fund 2023-2024 Round One and Resources for Regions Round 9 Funding for construction of new stormwater drainage and road upgrade in Merton Street, Denman.

#### TURTLE ST DENMAN SHARED PATH:

Funding through the 2023-2024 Get NSW Active Program for a project to create safe, easy, and enjoyable walking and cycling trips. The shared path provides an important accessible linkage path for the Denman community.

#### SIMPSON PARK PLAYGROUND UPGRADE:

Equipment and facilities at Simpson Park in Muswellbrook were upgraded through the NSW Government's Everyone Can Play program to improve inclusivity and provide access to quality, walkable, green and open spaces for people of all ages and abilities.

#### VICTORIA ST REHABILITATION:

A new road surfacing material, containing recycled content derived from waste streams that would otherwise be bound for landfill was used to renew and strengthen the road pavement on Victoria Street (between Carl Street and Dolahenty Street) and in the carpark at Muswellbrook Railway Station.

#### ROAD RESEALING PROGRAM:

The 12-month program in various locations around the Shire commenced in October 2023. Increasing the frequency of road reseals leads to greater protection of the underlying pavement, which in turn prevents deterioration and maximises the lifespan of the road.

**YARRAMAN BRIDGE:** The upgrade of a portion of Yarraman Road and the construction of a high-level bridge over Wybong Creek will greatly improve the accessibility and safety of the road network in this location.

**Derek Finnigan**  
General Manager  
Muswellbrook Shire

# 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



## 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

## 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



## 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



## 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



## 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

## 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



## 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.

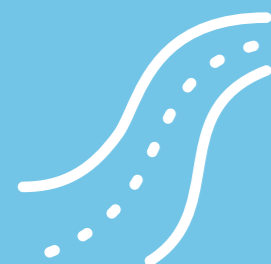
Brett.Woodruff@muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au





# ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

DELIVERY PROGRAM	RESPONSIBILITY	COMPLETED	COMMENTS
<b>1.1.1 Facilitate the expansion of existing and the establishment of new industry and business</b>	General Manager	Yes	The Upper Hunter Employment Land Strategy was adopted by Council at the 26 March 2024 Ordinary Council Meeting. The Study provides recommendations on actions Council can take to increase employment land opportunities.
<b>1.2.1 Facilitate the diversification of the Shire's economy and support growth of existing industry and business enterprise</b>	General Manager	Yes	Initiatives carried out by Council to diversify the Shire's economy and support the growth of existing industry and business enterprise include: 1. Activities of the Upper Hunter Country Tourism Association. 2. Development of creative content for social media and promotion: 3. Engagement of a production company to prepare a lifestyle promotional video; and 4. Endorsement from Council to partner with Upper Hunter Shire Council on the Upper Hunter Regional Place Brand.
<b>1.2.2 Complete the Employment Land use Strategy</b>	General Manager	Yes	The Employment Land Use Strategy has been completed and was endorsed by Council at the 26 March 2024 Ordinary Council Meeting.
<b>1.2.3 Review the Local Environment Plan and Development Control Plan to improve investment certainty for industry</b>	Director Environment & Planning	Yes	Updates have been finalised for stormwater management and flooding. A separate Community Participation Plan enabled removal of Notification provisions from the Development Control Plan (DCP). Work has begun on a new section in the DCP for Agritourism.
<b>1.2.4 Implement the Muswellbrook and Denman Town Centre Masterplans and the Sandy Hollow Village Masterplan</b>	Director of Property & Place	Yes	The Development Application for the demolition of 88-108 Bridge Street buildings has been approved. Tenders for demolition of the buildings will be submitted to Council in the first quarter of 2024-25. An architect has been engaged to progress with the detailed design of the Muswellbrook civic centre pocket park. The Feasibility Design for the Possum Gully Diversion Study is in progress.
<b>1.2.5 Develop a Rural and Environmental Land Strategy</b>	Director Environment & Planning	No	Staff resources were reallocated to work with EnergyCo and Transport for NSW to address issues of transportation of Over Size Over Mass vehicles through the Shire to the New England Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) and the Central-west Orana REZ, the new 500KV transmission line projects, and preparation of a local housing strategy (grant funded). Work on implementing recommendations of the Employment Land Strategy and updating Policy following the Local Government elections will push this project back to 2025/26.
<b>1.2.6 Review the Local Strategic Plan in response to changes to the NSW Planning Act</b>	Director Environment & Planning	Yes	The review highlighted that to implement actions in the Hunter Regional Plan Council needs to complete an employment lands strategy and housing strategy and include recommendations from these strategies into the Local Strategic Planning Statement.
<b>1.3.1 Advocate to maintain the Hunter TAFE campus and advocate to activate the University of Newcastle campus</b>	General Manager	Yes	Council is working with the University of Newcastle and other education institutions to increase the occupancy of the Hunter Innovation Precinct.
<b>1.4.1 Complete current infrastructure projects and identify future opportunities for the Shire</b>	Director of Property & Place	Yes	Projects have been completed as approved by Council. 2024-25 infrastructure renewal project proposals will be reported to Council in the first half of 2024-25.
<b>1.4.2 Advocate for increased medical services in the Shire</b>	General Manager	Yes	Council was successful in securing funding from the State Government to continue to deliver and expand the Welcome Experience programme. This programme has been instrumental in assisting a number of health care professionals to relocate to Muswellbrook Shire, including what is now a full complement of paramedics residing locally. Ongoing advocacy is also being carried out with the State Government.



## Square meters of roads sealed / rehabilitated

**2021** 127,707m<sup>2</sup>  
**2022** 128,402m<sup>2</sup>  
**2023** 69,029m<sup>2</sup>  
**2024** 132,186m<sup>2</sup>  
**Total = 457,325m<sup>2</sup>**

## Square meters of footpaths new and replaced

**2021** 7,400m<sup>2</sup>  
**2022** 2,220m<sup>2</sup>  
**2023** 2,286.2m<sup>2</sup>  
**2024** 512m<sup>2</sup>  
**Total = 12,418.2m<sup>2</sup>**





# SOCIAL EQUITY

## Community Population

**2021** 16,086  
**2022** 16,357  
**2023** 16,357  
**2024** 16,778  
**Total increase = 692**



## Council Website views

**2021** 305,705  
**2022** 344,515  
**2023** 285,005  
**2024** 258,094

## Cats and dogs rescued

**2021** Cats & Dogs 186  
**2022** Cats & Dogs 156  
**2023** Cats & Dogs 152  
**2024** Cats & Dogs 81  
**Total = 575**



DELIVERY PROGRAM	RESPONSIBILITY	COMPLETED	COMMENTS
2.1.1 Implement the funded outcomes of the Recreation Needs Study	Director of Property & Place	Yes	Recreation projects have been carried out in accordance with Council's approved priorities. At the 23 July 2024 Ordinary Council Meeting, Council endorsed the 2023-24 Recreation Needs and Management Study.
2.1.2 Promote and facilitate increased participation in active and passive recreation activities	Director of Property & Place	Yes	Meetings with sports facility user groups and Sport and Recreation Committee meetings were conducted as scheduled. With regards to the Muswellbrook Aquatic Centre, the Learn to Swim programme is being delivered to over 350 participants over a six-day-per-week schedule. Aqua aerobics classes are also being delivered twice per week, as are boxing classes.
2.1.3 Consider and deliver social inclusion principles across Council functions	General Manager	Yes	Council has implemented actions arising from the adopted Disability Inclusion Action Plan in consultation with community partners. All Council projects consider full accessibility as a core component of planning and design.
2.1.4 Advocate for affordable housing	General Manager	Yes	Council convened and facilitated the Upper Hunter Community Services Interagency and participated in the Homelessness in the Upper Hunter Forum Working Group that focused on raising community awareness regarding the referral process to assist homeless persons.
2.2.1 Advocate for the needs of people in social housing	General Manager	Yes	Council conducted meetings with Home in Place to advocate for the needs of people residing in social housing in Muswellbrook Shire.
2.3.1 Facilitate investment in child-care services across the Shire	General Manager	Yes	Funding has been secured to assist the Muswellbrook Childcare Centre to develop a Business Plan. A tender has been awarded for extensions to the Denman Childcare Centre.
2.4.1 Advocate to enhance the delivery of services to support older people to live in the Muswellbrook Shire	General Manager	Yes	Programmes to support older people have been regularly provided at the Muswellbrook Shire libraries. The Local 2024 Senior Festivals Brochure was completed and provided to the community in both hard copy and digital versions.
2.5.1 Raise awareness of the local Aboriginal Community and an appreciation of their long traditions and culture	Manager Community Services	Yes	Meetings of the Aboriginal Cultural Inclusion Committee were conducted during 2023-24. The Committee assisted in the planning of the annual Reconciliation Aboriginal Flag Raising ceremony, which included the 20-year anniversary of the Reconciliation Mural.
2.5.2 Engage with the Wanaruah Local Aboriginal Land Council on development of the Common	Manager Community Services	Yes	Regular meetings have been conducted with representatives of the Wanaruah Local Aboriginal Land Council.
2.6.1 Engage with young people in the Shire to better inform projects and programs for youth and children	Manager Community Services	Yes	Tenders have been called for the construction of a new Muswellbrook Youth Centre. The Child Safe Action Plan has been adopted, and is being implemented by a staff working group. The Youth Engagement Strategy is under development.

# ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY



## National Tree Day

**2021** 1,500 trees/ shrubs/ grasses  
**2022** 1,700 trees/ shrubs/ grasses  
**2023** 1,600 trees/ shrubs/ grasses  
**2024** 1,600 trees/ shrubs/ grasses

**Total = 6,400 trees/ shrubs/ grasses**

## Approved Mining Developments

**2021** 7  
**2022** 8  
**2023** 8  
**2024** Mines in Operation 6 / Mines in Rehabilitation Phase 2



## Litres of fuel / fossils

### 2021

Electricity used by Council 6,120MWH  
 Water consumed in Muswellbrook Shire 1,398 Megalitres  
 Water used by Council 99 Megalitres  
 Fuel used by Council Vehicles 296,798.88 Kilolitres

### 2022

Electricity used by Council 5,390 MWH  
 Water consumed in Muswellbrook Shire 1,368 Megalitres  
 Water used by Council 84 Megalitres  
 Fuel used by Council Vehicles 268,4877.07 Kilolitres

### Totals

Electricity used by Council MWH 25,808MWH  
 Water used by Council 521Megalitres

### 2023

Electricity used by Council 7,488MWH  
 Water consumed in Muswellbrook Shire 1,466 Megalitres  
 Water used by Council 155 Megalitres  
 Fuel used by Council Vehicles 291,782.54 Kilolitres

### 2024

Electricity used by Council 6,810MWH  
 Water consumed in Muswellbrook Shire 1,632 Megalitres  
 Water used by Council 183 Megalitres  
 Fuel used by Council Vehicles 314,600 Kilolitres

Water consumed in Muswellbrook Shire 5,864 Megalitres  
 Fuel used by Council Vehicles 3,588,05849 Megalitres

DELIVERY PROGRAM	RESPONSIBILITY	COMPLETED	COMMENTS
<b>3.1.1 Meet with other levels of government to achieve improved rehabilitation outcomes for disused mining lands and ongoing employment for the local workforce</b>	Director Environment and Planning	Yes	Staff hold meetings four times a year with the Resources Regulator on rehabilitation. The Regulator has adopted new Form & Way procedures requiring mines to upload information on the NSW Gov portal, and the Regulator has commenced a Targeted Assessment Program focusing on key areas of mine operations. The meetings have now moved to two per year.
<b>3.2.1 Support Landcare initiatives and advocate for programs to enhance native vegetation connectivity across the Shire and upper hunter region</b>	Director Environment & Planning	Yes	Funding has been provided annually to local land care groups. Education programs are in place for community on land care initiatives.
<b>3.3.1 Implement funded actions of the adopted Urban Riparian Masterplan</b>	Director Environment & Planning	Yes	Tarinpa construction was carried out, and is a very popular recreation and educational facility. Muscle Creek, Karoola Park, Tarinpa, and the Denman wetlands natural areas were maintained.
<b>3.3.2 Develop a Catchment Management Plan for Muscle Creek and Possum Gully</b>	Chief Engineer	Yes	A final draft of the Catchment Management Pan for Muscle Creek and Possum Gully has been completed and placed on public exhibition until September 2024.
<b>3.4.1 Continue Community Engagement Program on water, waste and energy efficiency</b>	Director Environment & Planning	Yes	Local grants provided to community groups and businesses to implement water, energy and waste reduction projects. Education programs are in place for the community and business owners.
<b>3.4.2 Require all development proposals to avoid and mitigate against potential environmental impacts and facilitate improved environmental outcomes where possible</b>	Director Environment & Planning	Yes	New development required to submit a Statement of Environmental Effects or Environmental Impact Statement, which is reviewed by staff. Conditions of consent focus on delivering improved environmental outcomes.
<b>3.4.3 Advocate and support Circular Economy principles and Waste Management Initiatives</b>	General Manager	Yes	Standardised sustainability schedules have been implemented for tender and quotation processes. The contract for Food Organics Garden Organics (FOGO) commenced 1 July 2024.
<b>3.5.1 Increase the proportion of the energy used by Council from renewable sources</b>	General Manager	Yes	Council's new energy agreement for major sites will require 100% of energy sourced from renewables.
<b>3.5.2 Develop a recycled water plan for community parks</b>	Deputy General Manager	No	A draft Recycled Water Management Plan is underway. This will include consideration of recycled water to be used to irrigate nominated community parks.



# CULTURAL VITALITY

DELIVERY PROGRAM	RESPONSIBILITY	COMPLETED	COMMENTS
4.1.1 Support the conservation and restoration of the Shire's heritage item	Director Environment & Planning	Yes	Council employs a highly trained heritage advisor 7 hours/month to provide feedback on development proposals and restoration projects for heritage items. A local Heritage Grant program also provides some financial assistance annually for the conservation of heritage items.
4.1.2 Ensure sites or artifacts of Aboriginal significance are protected where new development proposals are considered	Director Environment & Planning	Yes	New developments are required to submit a Statement of Environmental Effects or Environmental Impact Statement, which is reviewed by staff. Aboriginal Heritage is one of the heads of consideration.
4.2.1 Progress a Regional Entertainment and Conference Centre	Director of Property & Place	Yes	Meetings of the Regional Entertainment Centre Development Advisory Committee have been facilitated monthly or as required. A revised design is being undertaken to ensure the project may be constructed within Council's approved budget.
4.3.1 Develop and implement a program of Shire events to engage more locals and attract more visitors	General Manager	Yes	Council has established a temporary tourism and events structure, and is working to deliver a number of events, delivered by Council and community groups, including: 1. Blue Heeler Film Festival - 1 November 2024; 2. Denman Wine, Food & Film Affair - 2 November 2024; New Year's Eve - 31 December 2024. Council has also supported the TV and Movie Nostalgia Festival and a range of other community events across the Shire.
4.3.2 Deliver an arts program	Manager Community Services	Yes	A range of exhibitions were provided through the arts programme at the Muswellbrook Regional Arts Centre, including the Muswellbrook Art Prize and the Viola Bromley Art Prize. LiddellWORKS also opened on 8 June 2024, showcasing artworks made as part of the residency programme, along with community and participatory artworks.
4.3.3 Support Arts Upper Hunter as the peak organisation of artist endeavour	Manager Community Services	Yes	Arts Upper Hunter have been supported to provide a range of activities, including the LiddellWORKS exhibition. The Arts Upper Hunter Funding Deed has been exchanged and signed by Arts Upper Hunter.

THE  
COMMUNITY  
HAS THEIR  
SAY.....

"New campus  
of Newcastle  
University"

"Hunter Beach has  
been really good"

## Service Requests Lodged

2021 3,914  
2022 4,616  
2023 4,000  
2024 3,571  
Total = 16,101





# COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

## Development Applications Lodged

2021	168
2022	192
2023	228
2024	147
Total = 735	



DELIVERY PROGRAM	RESPONSIBILITY	COMPLETED	COMMENTS
5.1.1 Review, develop and maintain liveable town and village precincts	Director of Property & Place	Yes	Muswellbrook's civic precinct continues to develop as an innovation and education precinct. Designs for the development of a pocket park are progressing in alignment with Council's endorsed concept design. The development of Memorial Park, Denman, has resulted in increased patronage and visitation of the Denman civic precinct and is a highly utilised and appreciated community asset. In Sandy Hollow, a pocket park has been developed, and planning is in place for the provision of public toilets.
5.1.2 Maintain and continually improve asset management	Deputy General Manager	Yes	A draft Road Asset Management Plan has been completed and is under review. Draft Sewer and Water Asset Management Plans have also been completed and are under review. A road and stormwater asset inspection programme will commence during the first half of 2024-25.
5.1.3 Facilitate investment in high quality community infrastructure necessary to a Regional Centre	General Manager	Yes	Muswellbrook's civic precinct continues to develop as an innovation and education precinct. Designs for the development of a pocket park are progressing in alignment with Council's endorsed concept design. A design for the replacement of the public toilets in Simpson Park will be carried out in 2024-25, with the aim of replacing the public toilets with a changing places facility. The construction of the Donald Horne building has contributed greatly to the development of the Hunter Innovation Hub in the MUSwellbrook civic precinct. Design for a Regional Entertainment and Conference Centre is well advanced.
5.1.4 Maintain and continually improve community infrastructure across the Shire	Deputy General Manager	Yes	Prioritised works programs are reported to Council, to ensure that community infrastructure is maintained and continually improved. Regular asset condition inspections are carried out to inform the development of infrastructure renewals.
5.2.1 Facilitate and implement improved all abilities access and inclusion across the Shire	Director of Property & Place	Yes	Council has implemented actions arising from the adopted Disability Inclusion Action Plan in consultation with community partners. All Council projects consider accessibility as a core component of planning and design.
5.3.1 Water, sewerage and waste services are provided in compliance with regulatory requirements	Operations Manager – Water and Waste Water	Yes	Water, sewerage, and waste services have been delivered in alignment with regulatory requirements. Regular compliance reports have been submitted to Council.
5.4.1 Maintain and continually improve the Shire's shared pathway networks to increase connectivity	Chief Engineer	Yes	Council has provided annual budgets for new and renewed shared pathways, and has been successful in being awarded grant funding to construct new sections of shared pathway. New shared pathways have been constructed to enhance accessibility and to improve liveability, and has also provided options for alternative transport.



THE  
COMMUNITY  
HAS THEIR  
SAY.....

"Hospital expansion"

"Swimming  
pool upgrades  
were good"

"There is a skate  
park for the kids"



muswellbrook  
shire council

# COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

DELIVERY PROGRAM	RESPONSIBILITY	COMPLETED	COMMENTS
6.1.1 Engage with the community and other stakeholders to determine service level expectations and appropriate measures	Manager Governance	Yes	Community Satisfaction Surveys have been conducted during the term of Council. These surveys have been undertaken in a manner to ensure comparability over time.
6.1.2 Utilise best practice models of community engagement to ensure decision making is meeting the expectations of the community	Manager Governance	No	Council's Community Engagement Strategy has been implemented to build awareness and understanding of Council's activities and community needs. Community engagement activities have been regularly reported to Council and the Grants Review Committee.
6.1.3 Enhance Council's communication with the community to build awareness and understanding of Council's activities and Community needs	General Manager	Yes	Council's digital media platforms have been expanded to include Instagram and LinkedIn. Community engagement has increased in line with this expansion.
6.2.1 Maintain a strong focus on financial discipline to enable Council to properly respond to the needs of the communities it serves	Director Corporate Services & CFO	Yes	Council's financial reporting processes have been continually improved to provide greater transparency, increased efficiency and accountability, and to facilitate optimal strategic and operational decision making. Monthly financial reports and quarterly budget reviews have been reported to Council.
6.2.2 Develop and implement a Service Review Program	Director Corporate Services & CFO	No	A Service Review Program is being developed to enhance organisational service reviews.
6.2.3 Implement an Internal Audit Program in consultation with the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee	Director Corporate Services & CFO	Yes	Internal audits have been conducted in compliance with a prioritised internal audit program.
6.2.4 Regulatory activities undertaken to maintain public safety and companion animal wellbeing	Director Environment and Planning	Yes	Council employs two Rangers. A large percentage of their time is spent on managing straying and surrendered cats and dogs, dog attacks and educating people on responsible pet ownership. A program to financially assist households to desex cats is in place.
6.2.5 Implement a comprehensive and targeted business improvement program	Director Corporate Services & CFO	Yes	Policies to support business improvement have been reviewed. Policies will continue to be developed and reviewed in accordance with statutory and operational requirements.
6.3.1 Continue to prioritise safety and risk management initiatives and upgrades to Council Facilities	General Manager	Yes	Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design principles are a core component of Council project design. Council's Work Health & Safety Committee has assisted to ensure safety and risk management initiatives are included as the highest priority on all works programmes.
6.3.2 Continue to prioritise employee welfare initiatives	General Manager	Yes	A Staff Satisfaction Survey has been carried out, and Council's internal Staff Consultative Committee will develop a prioritised list of improvements to enhance staff satisfaction and welfare. A Staff Training and Professional Development Officer has been engaged to develop organisational and individual staff training plans.

# LONG TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

## STATE OF THE SHIRE REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 2021-2024 - LTFP

### OPERATING PERFORMANCE

The key financial measures of Operating Performance are in line with the Long-Term Financial Plan (LTFP) and have performed above expectation due to higher revenue from grants, interest on investments and user fees and charges.

Council has been consistent with maintaining its own source of operating revenue which is in line with the LTFP projections.

Council has been proactively managing its expenditure within budget and has taken additional controls to ensure it is maintained throughout each year.

### CAPITAL PERFORMANCE

Council has faced challenges in meeting the major asset performance benchmarks for the Office of Local Government (OLG) and the LTFP.

Although capital grants have significantly increased over the period, changes in scope and other factors have led to project delays.

Council will be focusing more on building and infrastructure asset renewals and reducing the infrastructure backlog.

#### Report from Chief Financial Officer



**THE  
COMMUNITY  
HAS THEIR  
SAY.....**

"Beautification  
of the shopping  
precinct"

"Council has been  
trying harder in  
their work"

"Sustainable Futures  
Program - growing  
more native saplings  
and trees"

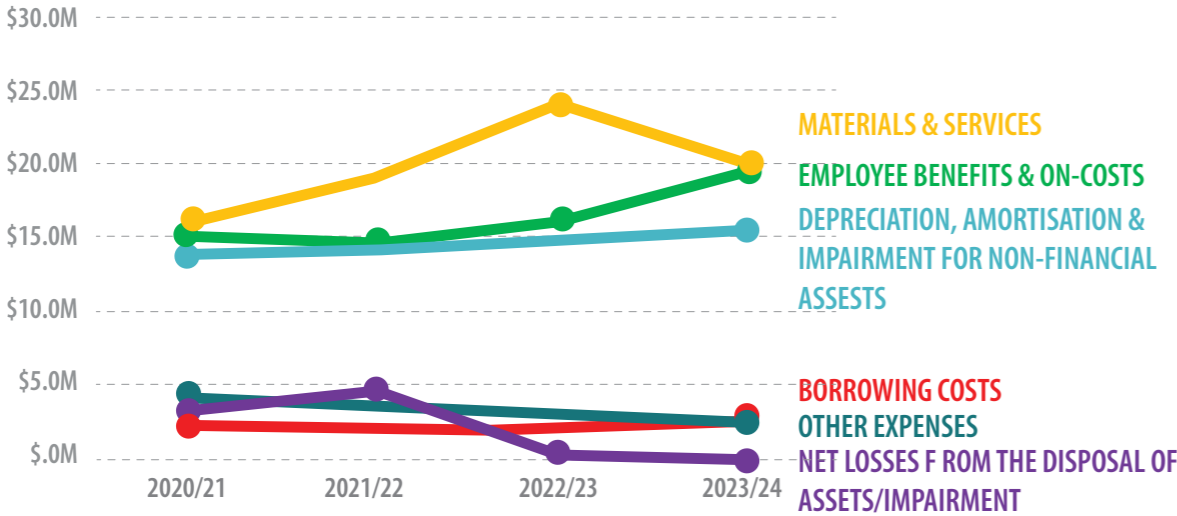
"Attempt to clean  
up the creeks"

"Announcement  
of the bypass"

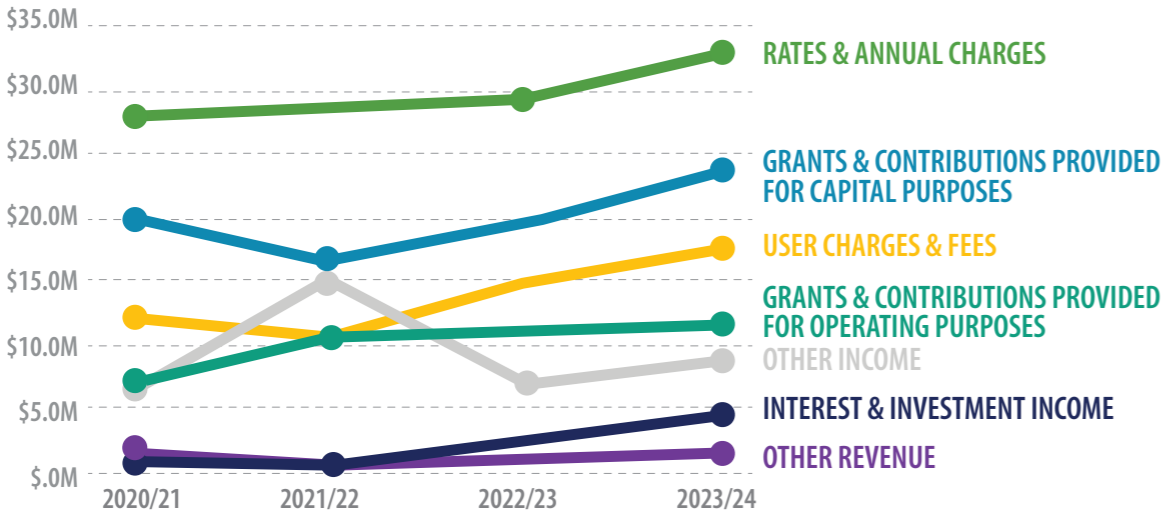


STATE OF THE SHIRE  
GRAPHS 2021 - 2024

EXPENDITURE TYPES

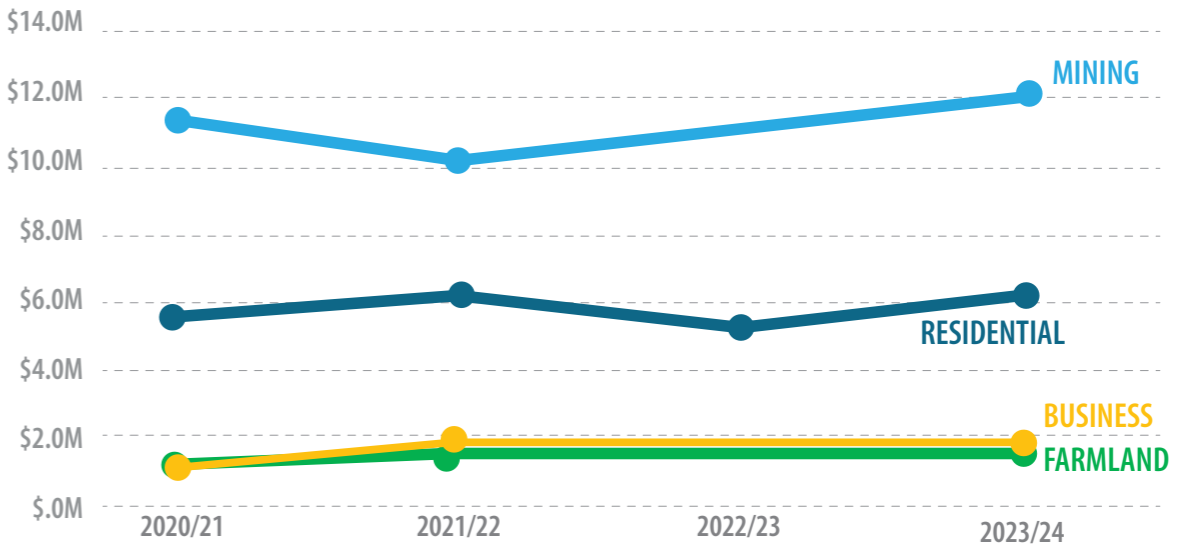


REVENUE SOURCES

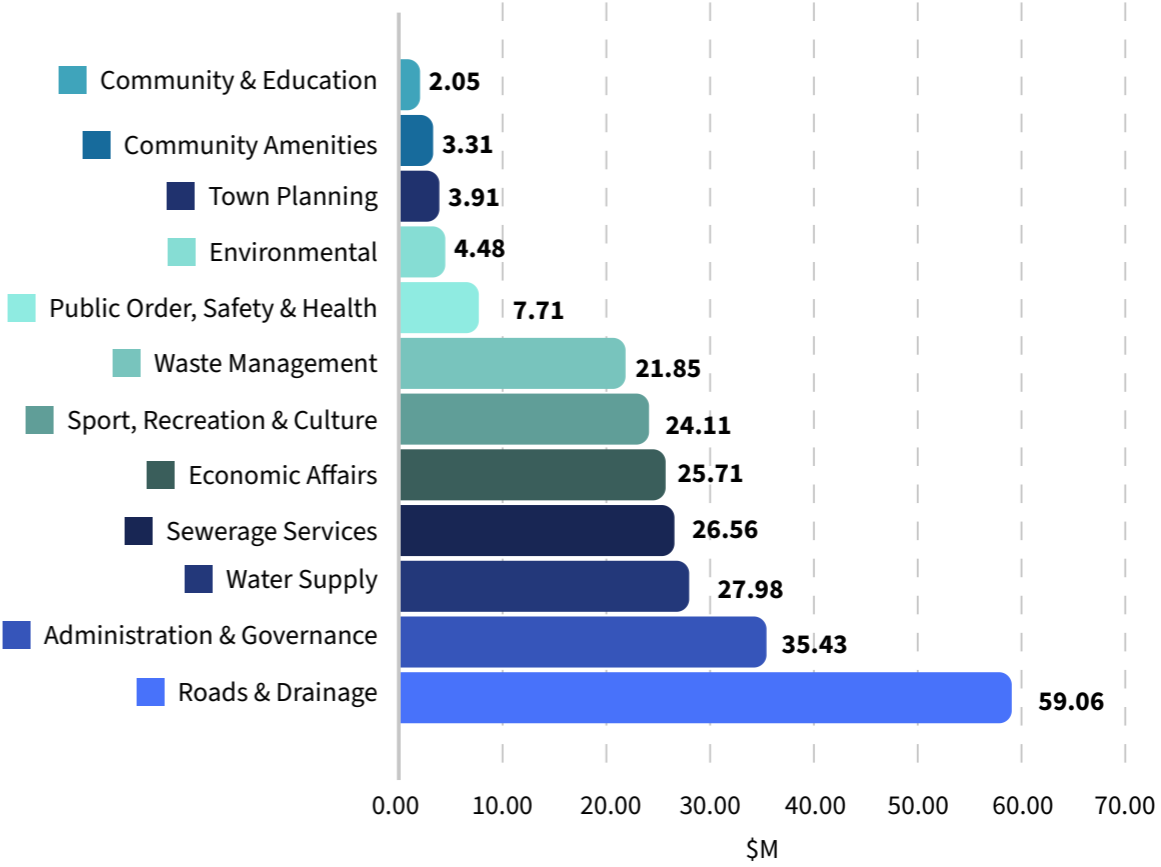


STATE OF THE SHIRE  
GRAPHS 2021 - 2024


RATES REVENUE




EXPENDITURE OF SERVICES 2021-2024







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