

# Operational Plan 2025-2026





# Acknowledgement of Country

Muswellbrook Shire Council would like to respectfully acknowledge the local Aboriginal People who are the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land.

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# Message from the Mayor



It's Council's pleasure to present and endorse Muswellbrook Shire Council's Operational Plan – the next step in turning what we've agreed we need as a community into real, measurable outcomes.

Whereas Council's Delivery Program sets the long-term direction, this Operational Plan lays out the detailed work we'll do in the next 12 months to bring those goals to life.

It's a clear, practical guide for how Council will deliver services and plan for the future of our community. This is the business end of achieving the community's vision – the projects, budgets and timelines that turn ideas into action.

Whether it's improving roads and footpaths, enhancing our parks and public spaces, supporting local business or delivering community services, this plan shows how we're making progress towards that vision. We know the needs of our community are changing and we're committed to staying responsive and transparent.

This Operational Plan reflects the conversations we've had with residents, business and stakeholders across the Shire – and it's backed by the values and priorities you've told us matter most. It's also a commitment to accountability, delivering on what we have said we will do.

With every action in the Plan, we're making a pledge to deliver – and to report back honestly on how we're tracking. As always, thank you for your support and engagement. Your voice shapes the way forward. Together, we're not just planning for the future – we're getting on with the job of building it. Let's make it a year of meaningful progress for Muswellbrook.

**Councillor Jeff Drayton**  
Mayor  
Muswellbrook Shire Council

# Message from the General Manager



The Operational Plan is where strategy meets delivery – and I'm proud to present this year's plan as a clear, practical guide to the work Council will undertake to serve our community.

The Plan represents our commitment to realising the objectives of the Delivery Program into specific actions, budgets and responsibilities – ensuring that every day, Council staff are focused on delivering services and projects that make a difference for you.

Our team is committed to delivering reliable core services while also tackling the opportunities and challenges that come with growth and change. This year's Operational Plan includes targeted investments in infrastructure, community programs, environmental initiatives, and economic development – all designed to improve your quality of life in Muswellbrook Shire.

Crucially, this Plan is underpinned by strong governance and financial sustainability. Each initiative is resourced and tracked, with performance indicators that help us measure our progress and keep you, the community, informed.

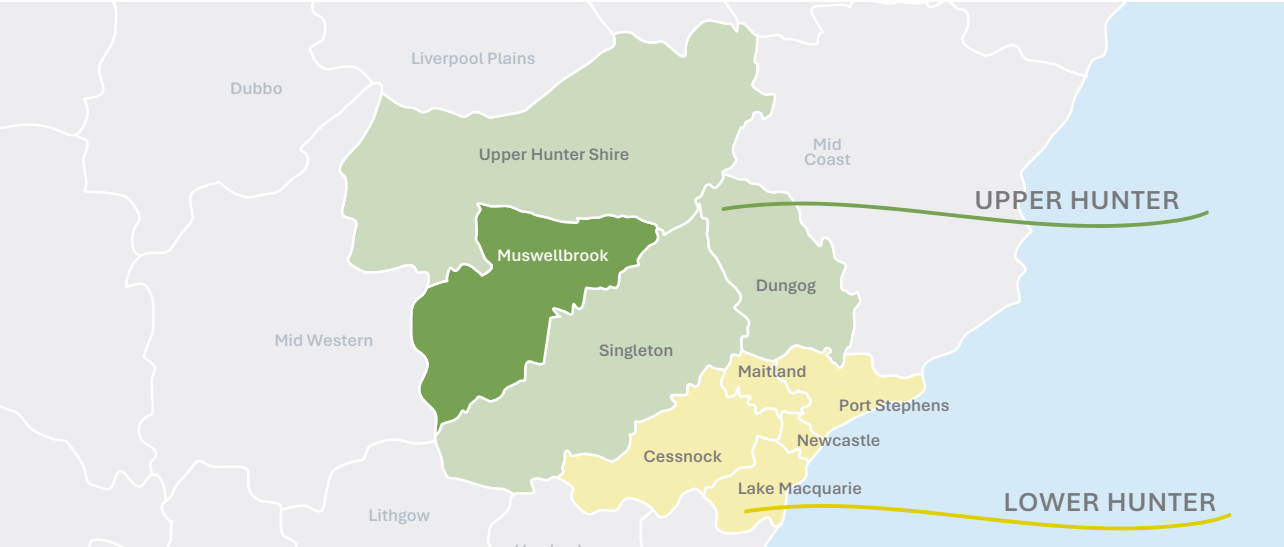
We continue to operate in a dynamic environment – one that demands flexibility, collaboration and a clear focus on long-term value. Across all areas of Council, our teams work hard to deliver with professionalism, responsiveness and care.

This Operational Plan reflects the trust you place in Council to manage your resources wisely and work towards a shared vision.

We take that seriously, and we're committed to working with you, and for you, for our community to thrive.

**Derek Finnigan**  
General Manager  
Muswellbrook Shire Council

# Our Shire



Muswellbrook Shire is home to more than **16,500 residents**, our community is young and hardworking, we are proud of our history in mining and energy generation and are surrounded by magical landscapes that have been the backdrop of indigenous stories for millions of years.

There’s a steady resilience here. For generations, our communities have worked the land and the seams below, powering the country and funding the nation. Muswellbrook and the Hunter Region is at the forefront of global change, as the world shifts, Muswellbrook is too – exploring diverse investments, technologies, smart agriculture and new industries.

We are building on what we know, are doing things our way and doing them better together.

We love our sport, equine pursuits and viticulture and are the birth place of the Australian Cattle Dog. Our local producers are trailblazers, founded in our agricultural roots and growing our tourism potential.

Council is investing in our community’s future, progressing opportunities to build economic resilience and create jobs. We have made a significant investments in projects which will inspire future generations, prepare business for new opportunities and leverage our lifestyle advantages.

Council is focused on improving liveability and our natural advantages. Muswellbrook Shire offers a comparatively affordable lifestyle with diverse housing options from in-town living to lifestyle properties.

regional sporting and recreational facilities with the Muswellbrook Aquatic Centre and redevelopment of Olympic Park as well as world-class cultural assets like the Muswellbrook Regional Art Gallery, Hunter Conservatorium of Music and the soon to be built Regional Entertainment Centre.

We are supporting the growth of Denman as a residential and tourist destination, creating new housing developments and developing the Denman Tourist Park.

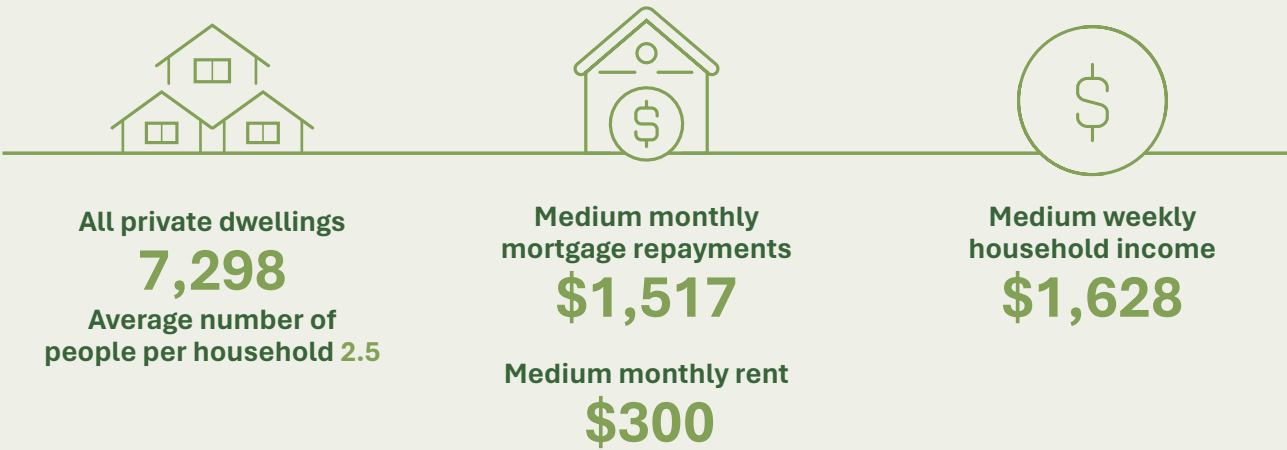
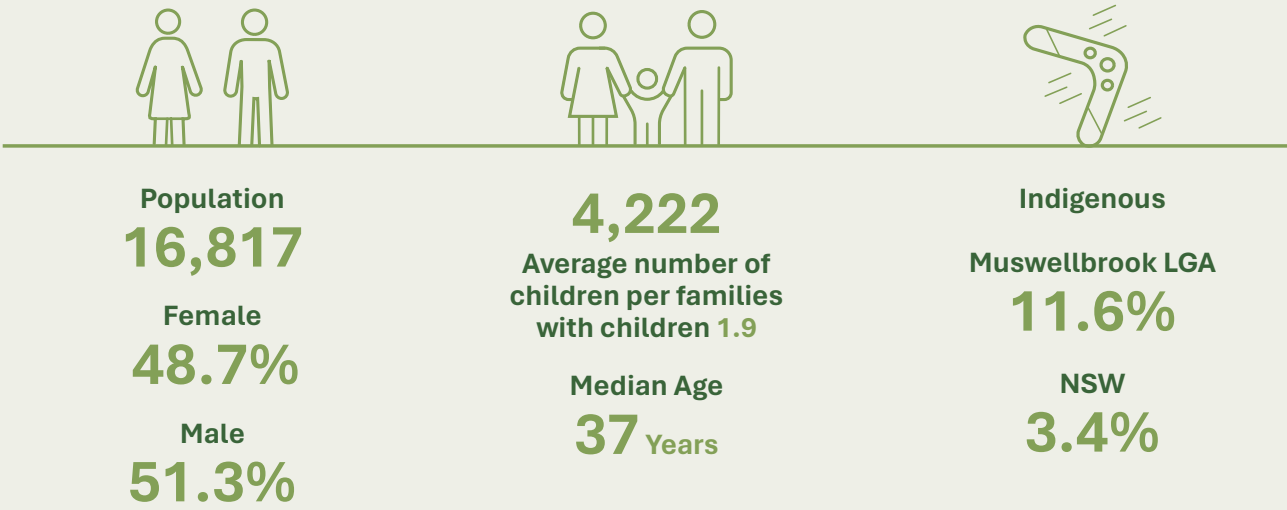
Council is ensuring all members of our community have improved access to health care, transportation, services, education and housing to improve their quality of life and opportunity.

Muswellbrook Shire faces the future without forgetting the story of this place we cherish. Being part of our community means respecting where we have come from, our people and buying into a future built together.



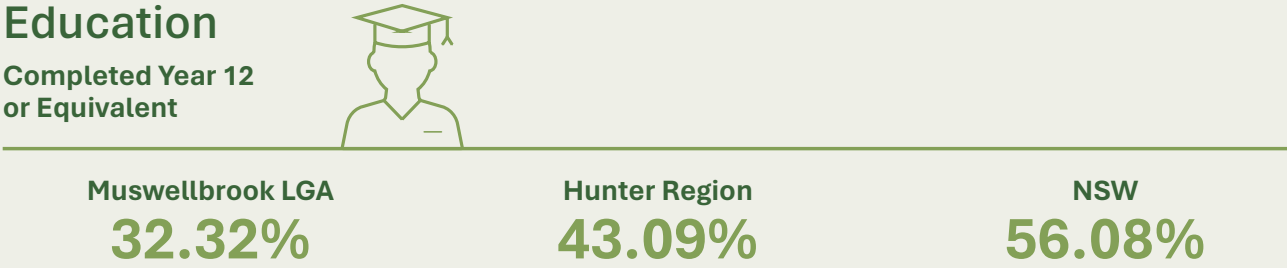
# At a Glance

## Population Profile



## Education

Completed Year 12 or Equivalent



Data taken from 2021 Muswellbrook, Census All persons QuickStats | Australian Bureau of Statistics



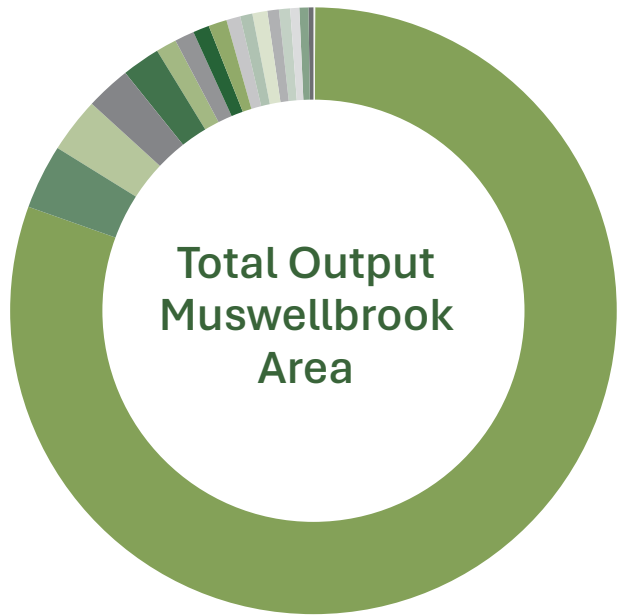
# Economic Output



Total Output in the area is estimated at  
**\$13,501.59m**



Total Employment in the area is estimated at  
**11,341 jobs**



Industry Sector	\$M
Mining	\$9,260.18
Electricity, Gas, Water & Waste Services	\$1,602.49
Construction	\$469.48
Manufacturing	\$401.06
Rental, Hiring & Real Estate Services	\$314.66
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	\$266.73
Health Care & Social Assistance	\$159.16
Public Administration & Safety	\$142.24
Wholesale Trade	\$113.04
Transport, Postal & Warehousing	\$110.97
Administrative & Support Services	\$107.09
Other Services	\$101.81
Retail Trade	\$101.60
Education & Training	\$93.98
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	\$86.56
Accommodation & Food Services	\$71.83
Financial & Insurance Services	\$52.41
Information Media & Telecommunications	\$27.92
Arts & Recreation Services	\$18.39
Total	13501.598





# Our Council

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

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



Back row (left to right): Cr Darryl Marshall, Cr Rod Scholes, Cr David Hartley, Cr Graeme McNeill, Cr Max Morris, Cr Clare Bailey, Cr Rohit Mahajan  
Front Row (left to right): Cr Stephen Ward, Cr Louise Dunn, Mayor Jeff Drayton, Deputy Mayor De-anne Douglas OAM, Cr Amanda Barry

# Executive Leadership Team



**Derek Finnigan MBA**  
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 has a profound commitment to working positively with the community, Council, and colleagues to ensure Council’s financial sustainability, the Shire’s economic growth, prosperity, and environmental health, and to continue to improve and promote Muswellbrook Shire as a wonderful place to live, work, and play.



**Shaelee Richards**  
Director Community and Economy

Shaelee has 25 years’ experience in local government in Queensland and NSW. She is focused on delivering economic and community development outcomes for the Shire and brings to the role diverse skills in infrastructure, industrial and urban precinct development, investment and business attraction, jobs growth and diversification strategies



**Josh Hogan**  
Chief Financial Officer

Josh leads Council’s Financial Services team, leveraging extensive experience garnered from diverse industries in Australia and internationally. As a Certified Practicing Accountant with a Master’s in Accounting and a Bachelor’s in Forensic and Analytical Chemistry, his interdisciplinary expertise informs strategic financial management across sectors.



**Matthew Lysaught**  
Director Infrastructure and Property

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.



**Alexandra Hathway**  
Legal Counsel

Alexandra is an accomplished solicitor with extensive experience in both private practice and government sectors. Admitted to practice law in the Supreme Court of New South Wales, Alexandra holds a Bachelor of Laws and a Bachelor of Psychological Science. With a deep commitment to community service, Alexandra has volunteered at various free community legal centres, offering legal advice and support to those in need.

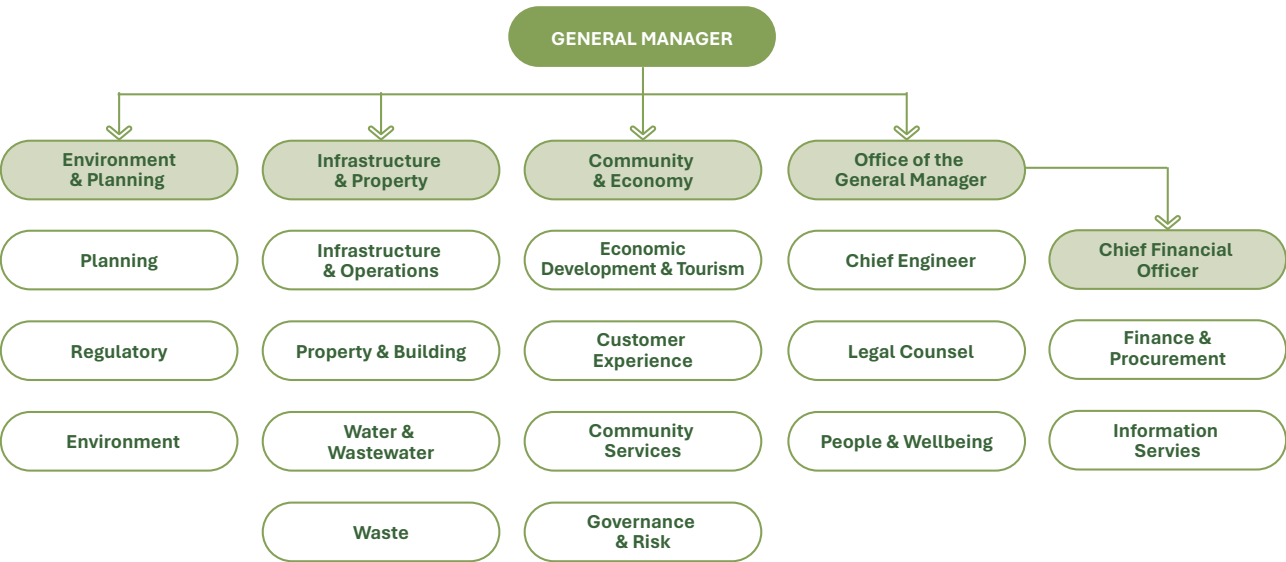


**Sharon Pope PSM**  
Director Environment and Planning

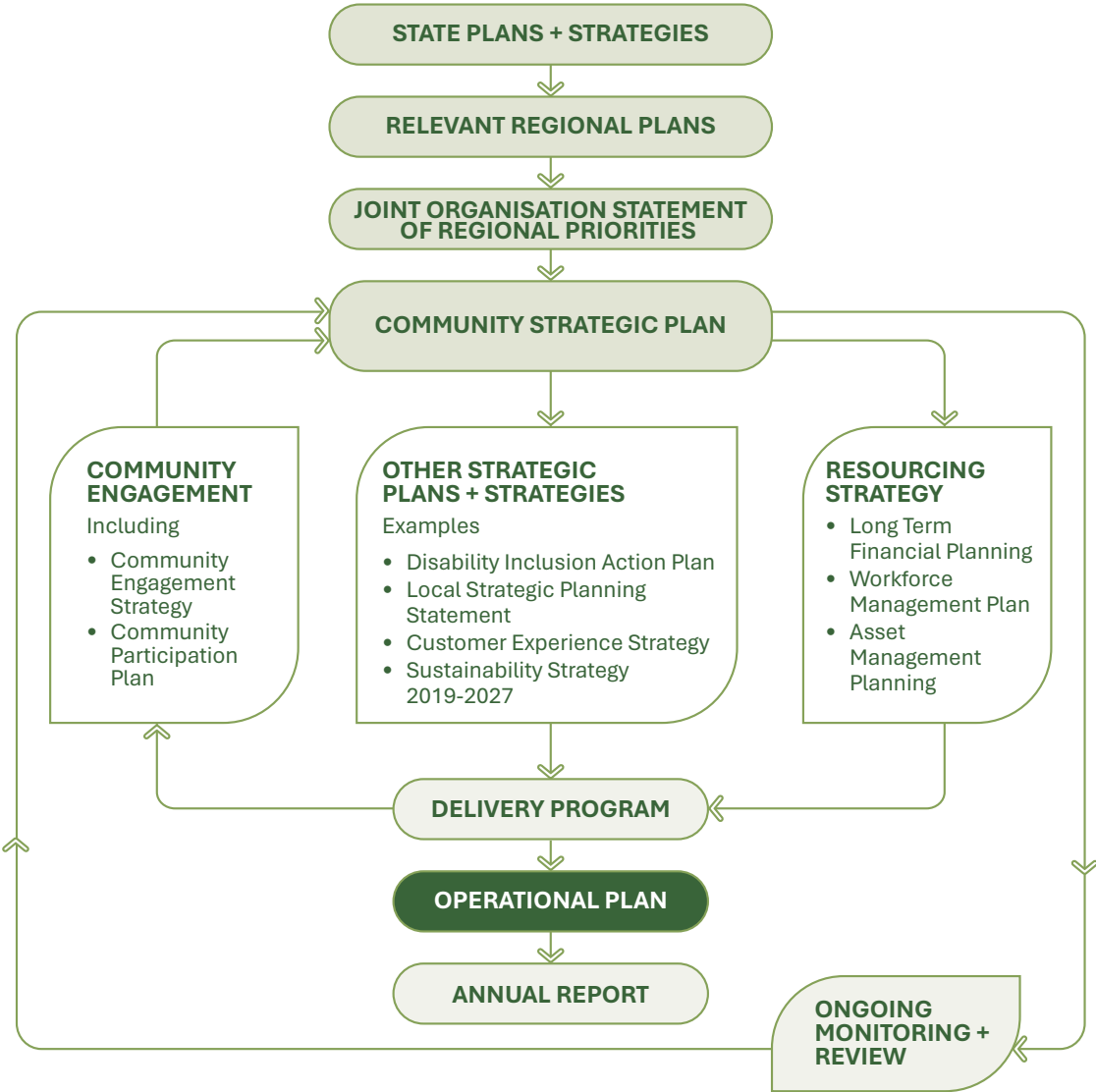
Sharon is a Fellow of the Planning Institute of Australia, has a degree in Urban and Regional Planning and has vast experience in Local Government having started her career as a Trainee Town Planner at Greater Taree City Council. Her broad range of experience in strategic land use planning, the development assessment process and community collaboration makes her an invaluable member of Muswellbrook Shire Council leadership team.



# Organisational Structure



# Integrated Planning & Reporting Framework



## Community Strategic Plan

The Community Strategic Plan provides a strong base for long-term planning for both Council and the community.

The Plan includes a shared vision for the future, connecting the community's goals with Council's decisions over the next 10 years. It will guide Council's plans, strategies, and policies, such as the Resourcing Strategy, Delivery Program and Operational Plan, this community vision will also be shared with other agencies, government departments, and stakeholders to help guide their long-term planning.

## Resourcing Strategy

The Resourcing Strategy is reviewed every year. It shows the time, money, assets and people needed in the long term to achieve the community's aspirations in the Community Strategic Plan. It consists of three components:

- Long-term Financial Plan (10 year)
- Asset Management Plan (10 year)
- Workforce Management Plan (4 year)
- Delivery Program (4 year)



Delivery Program

The Delivery Program is a 4-year plan that matches the term of the elected Council. It is based on the Community Strategic Plan and the Resourcing Strategy and outlines what can be achieved during the Council's term. The program is reviewed every year to make sure it still aligns with the community's aspirations.

Operational Plan (annual)

The Operational Plan lists the actions Council will take each year to achieve the priorities in the 4-year Delivery Program. It also shows how each priority will be funded. Council staff give regular updates to the elected Council on how the plan is progressing.

The Operational Plan is the annual plan that details the Councillor approved and budgeted actions to be undertaken by Council Staff, under the direction of the General Manager, in a particular financial year.

Via a community engagement process, the community tells the Councillors what they want for the future of the Shire, the Councillors listen to and consider the community's concerns and aspirations, determine the

priority outcomes and set the direction for the General Manager and Council Staff for their elected term in office.

All actions detailed in the Muswellbrook Shire Council 2025-2026 Operational Plan link to an objective described in the Muswellbrook Shire Council 2025-2029 Delivery Program, which in turn link to an aspiration listed in the Muswellbrook Shire 2025-2035 Community Strategic Plan.

Where the Delivery Program outlines the objectives that Council undertakes over the elected term in pursuit of the community's agenda articulated in the Community Strategic Plan, the Operational Plan details the individual actions that Council will undertake within the financial year.

Councillors monitor the implementation of Council's actions and activities via regular reports and, each year, Council reports to the community about Council's progress via the Annual Report.

Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting documents are available on Council's website at:

[www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au/council-integrated-planning-overview/](http://www.muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au/council-integrated-planning-overview/)

Council's Role and Services

Council plays an important role in providing services, building infrastructure and managing regulations for our community. The decisions we make at the local level directly affect life in our Shire.

We deliver everyday services like bin collection, fixing local roads and running public swimming pools in Denman and Muswellbrook. We also manage key utilities, such as water and sewer systems, across the Shire (only 89 out of 128 councils in NSW provide water services).

In addition to essential services, Council supports culture and community activities. We run facilities like the Regional Art Centre, Denman Memorial Hall and local libraries, we also organise events for residents and visitors, like the Rock'n the Brook and partnering with Community events such as Denman Food, Wine and Film Festival.

Council also, drives policy change, influences decisions and plans for our community's future through land use planning and preparing for new industries.

Council works with local businesses, key stakeholders, governments, and community groups to meet the needs of our community. We will deliver the objectives in this delivery program by:



### Delivering

When Council directly manages an asset, infrastructure, or program, we can meet community needs using our own operating budget and resources.



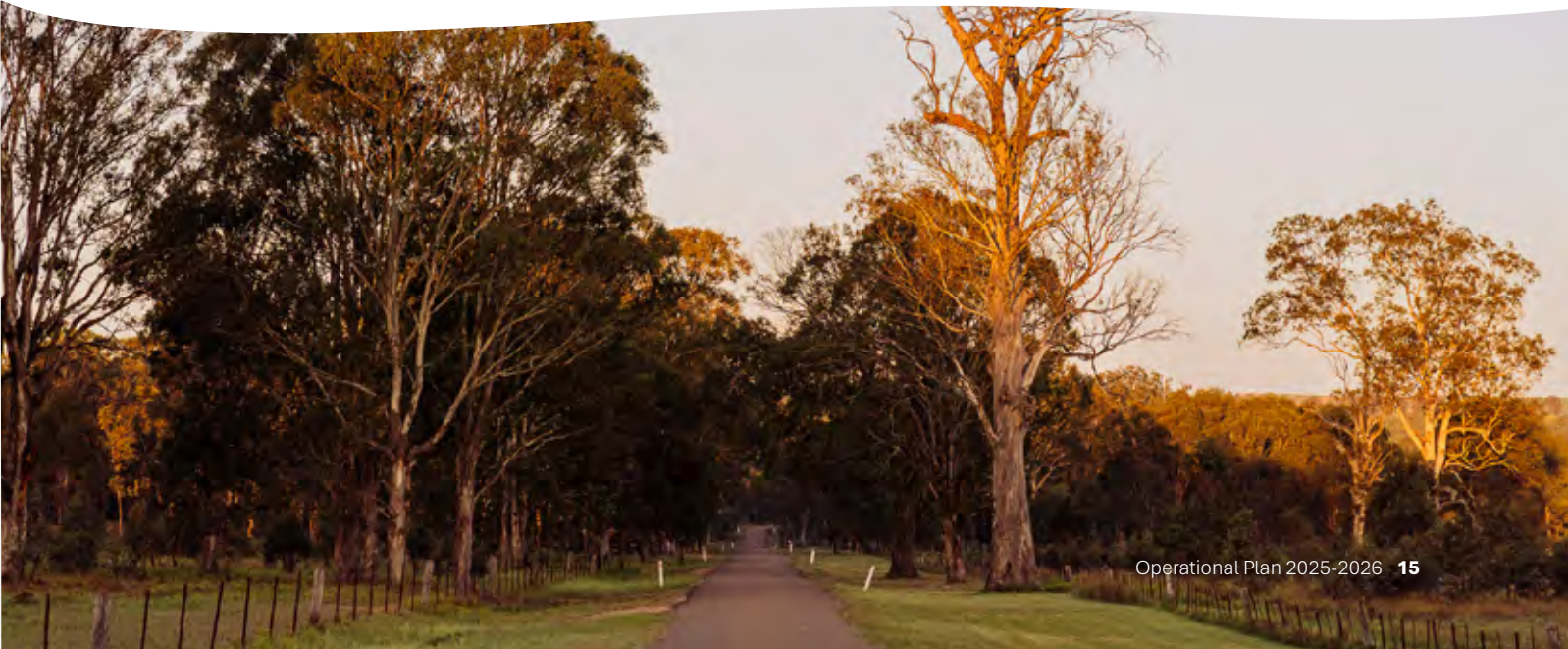
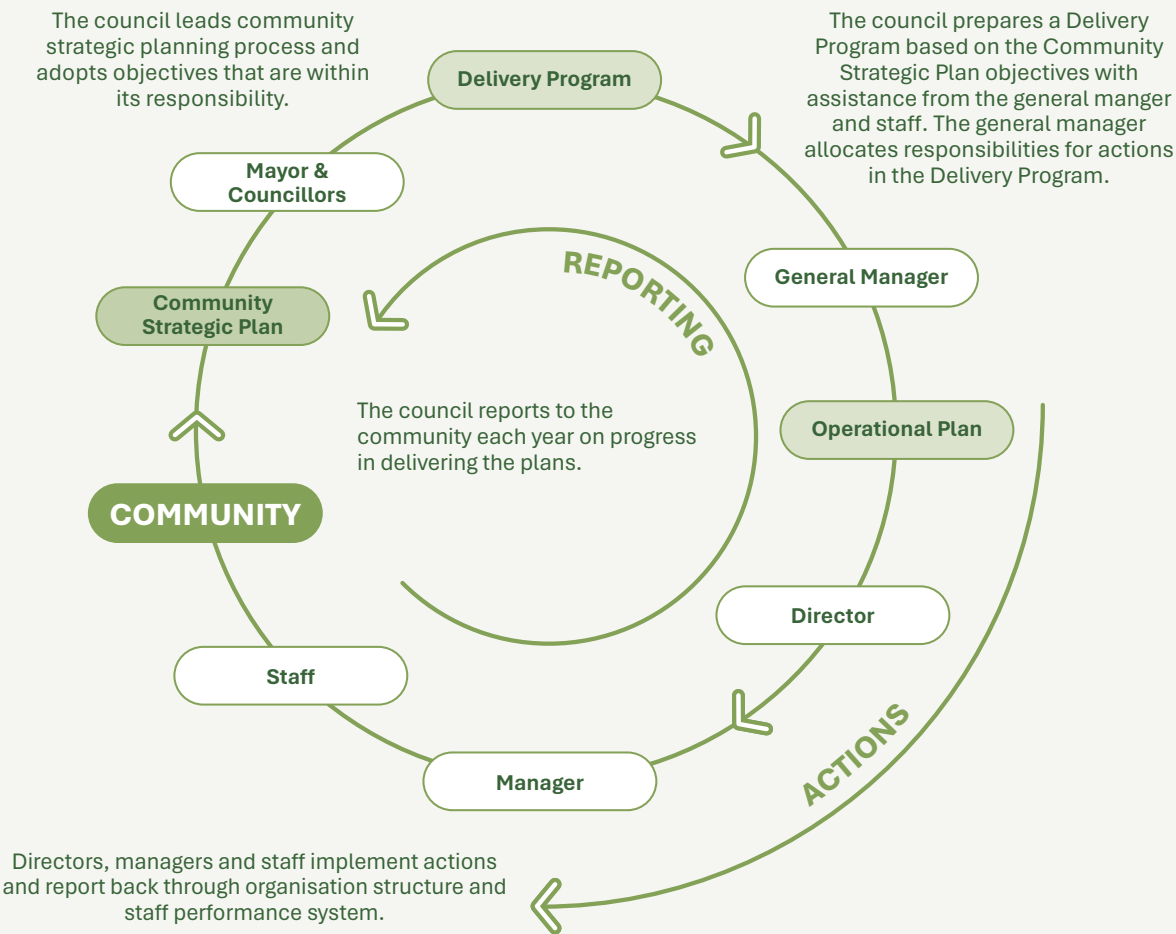
### Partnering and collaborating

When Council doesn't have control over things like emergency services, we will form partnerships, seek support, or work with other organisations and providers to help achieve results.



### Advocating

Council can speak up for our community to ask for more funding or better outcomes for things like public transport or health care services.





# United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are 17 goals created in 2015 to help solve global problems and build a better future for everyone by 2030. These goals focus on challenges like poverty, education, clean energy, and protecting the planet.

In this plan, we show how our community goals match the Sustainable Development Goals and how Council will work towards these goals. This helps both Council and the community understand their role in making a difference, not just in our Shire but as part of a bigger, global effort.



# How to read the Operational Plan

### Community Strategic Plan Aspiration

These are the long term aspirations for our LGA. Where we want to be in 10 years time

### Operational Plan Action

These are the actions we are planning to undertake annually to achieve our objectives.

### Measure & Source






















This describes how Council is going to achieve the actions outlined in the plan

### Delivery Plan Objective

These are our four year objectives  
and how we are supporting our  
10 year aspirations

### Primary Responsibility

This shows the Council service department responsible for delivering on the action

Community Strategic Plan Aspiration	Delivery Plan Objective	Operational Plan Action	Primary Responsibility	Measure & Source	
<b>2.1 Provide and maintain local transport infrastructure, including roads and footpaths to allow safe and easy movement around</b> 	2.1.1 Provide and maintain safe, cost effective and fit for purpose transport infrastructure	 2.1.1.1 Deliver annual transport operational and capital works programs	Infrastructure and Property	i) Develop and implement an endorsed capital works program ii) Conduct asset inspections in accordance with the asset management plans iii) Conduct regular maintenance inspections to identify maintenance defects and prioritise corrective actions based on a risk	
	2.1.2 Improve and promote active travel connections and opportunities	 2.1.2.1 Develop Active Transport Plan and implement prioritised actions	Infrastructure and Property	i) Finalise the review of the Walk and Cycle Plan to inform the development of an Active Transport Plan that aligns with the NSW Active Transport requirements ii) Report the Active Transport Plan to Council for adoption iii) Continue to implement the prioritised Walk and Cycle Plan actions iv) Commence construction of a connecting footpath from Muswellbrook CBD to Tarinpa	
<b>2.2 Advocate for effective public transport networks and transport planning to ensure infrastructure meets community need</b> 	2.2.1 Increase access to public transport options in and around the LGA	  2.2.1.1 Construct and install bus shelters across the Shire	Infrastructure and Property	i) Install prioritised bus shelters in Muswellbrook and Sandy Hollow	
<b>2.3 Manage increasing transport demands on our roads to ensure the community has safe and prioritised access</b> 	2.3.1 Participate in planning and decision making to leverage investment and ensure our communities needs are prioritised	2.3.1.1 Advocate and collaborate with Transport NSW to facilitate better outcomes for our Shire	Infrastructure and Property	i) Advocate for funding for the central link road to the Muswellbrook Bypass ii) Work with Transport for NSW to reclassify Bengalla Link Road and Wybond Road West as State Roads iii) Deliver an upgrade to Wybond Road as part of the NSW Infrastructure Betterment Funding Deed iv) Implement actions from the Thomas Mitchell Drive contributions plan	
		2.3.1.2 Work with industry and third parties to facilitate changes and impacts to the road network	Infrastructure and Property	i) Process section 138 and Overseas and/or Overseas vehicles applications and report on numbers processed	
<b>2.4 Advocate and provide services and facilities expected of a regional centre</b>  	2.4.1 Deliver, maintain and enhance education, transport, sport, entertainment and recreation facilities	2.4.1.1 Provide infrastructure and resources to implement a 24 Hour Gym and outdoor Gym space	Community and Economy	Business Case developed and resourced	
		2.4.1.2 Construct the new Muswellbrook Youth Venue	Infrastructure and Property	Construct and handover the Muswellbrook Youth Venue to Upper Hunter Youth Services	
		2.4.1.3 Carry out the staged delivery of Olympic Park Precinct Master Plan	Infrastructure and Property	i) Commence the procurement process for construction of the Olympic Park grandstand and field improvements ii) Construct new water main from Bell Street to Wilkinson Avenue	
		2.4.1.4 Carry out the staged delivery of the Muswellbrook Town Centre Precinct Master Plan	Infrastructure and Property	i) Submit the Development Application for the remaining buildings to be demolished ii) Finalise design and complete the Development Application for the Regional Entertainment Centre iii) Finalise design for stormwater and precinct car parking iv) Consolidate lots within the precinct for delivery of the master plan	
		2.4.1.5 Deliver prioritised and funded recommendations of the Recreational Needs and Management Study	Infrastructure and Property	i) Deliver funded recommendations of the Recreational Needs and Management Study	
	2.4.2 Ensure regional and state plans acknowledge Muswellbrook as a Regional Centre	2.4.2.1 Advocate for local and sub-regional and water priorities to be included in NSW and Hunter Regional Strategies	Infrastructure and Property	Collaborate with NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) in reviewing water strategies	
		2.4.2.2 Ensure Council's Planning land use strategies, policies and plans reflect the Shire's status as a regional centre	Environment and Planning	i) The Muswellbrook Shire Local Strategic Planning Statement is updated to include recommendations from the Hunter Region Plan, Muswellbrook Shire Local Housing Strategy and Upper Hunter Employment Lands Strategy	



## Vision

**Our Shire is powered by opportunity, with space to grow and shape a thriving future.**

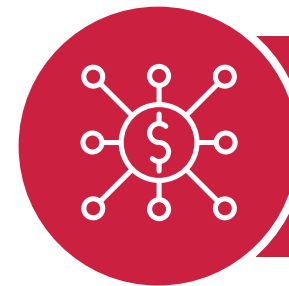
## Themes



*We are a...*  
**strong community**



*We are a...*  
**regional centre**



*We are a...*  
**thriving economy**



*We are a...*  
**great place to live**



*We are...*  
**working together**































# We are a... **strong community**

## Community Outcome

Our community contributes to community life,  
is safe and has access to services and facilities.



























Community Strategic Plan Aspiration	Delivery Plan Objective		Operational Plan Action	Primary Responsibility	Measure & Source	
<b>1.1 Deliver services to improve community health and inclusion at all stages of life</b>   	<b>1.1.1</b> Deliver a diverse range of social, recreational and educational programs and assistance to encourage community participation and a healthy lifestyle		1.1.1.1 Provide access to programs and technology to increase digital participation which reduces social isolation	Community and Economy	i) Number of initiatives relating to inclusion ii) Library program, event and exhibition attendance iii) Visits to Library physical service points iv) Number of Home Library Service items/members	
			1.1.1.2 Deliver exhibitions and programs that support engagement with the arts	Community and Economy	Number of exhibitions and programs delivered	
			1.1.1.3 Develop and implement a conservation program for the collection of works of art	Community and Economy	Number of works assessed, documented, and conserved	
			1.1.1.4 Deliver modern, community-responsive Library collections in line with recommendations and standards from the State Library New South Wales	Community and Economy	i) Number of Physical & Digital Loans ii) Number of new collection items added iii) Number of Community collection suggestions ordered	
	<b>1.1.2</b> Provide opportunities to participate in community life and feel a part of the community		1.1.2.1 Deliver the Welcome Experience Program	Community and Economy	i) Number of essential workers attracted to the region ii) Meeting the requirements of the funding agreement	
			1.1.2.2 Deliver a program of activities which increase the utilisation of the aquatic centres	Community and Economy	i) Number of participants in programs and users at the Centre(s) ii) Number of Members	
			1.1.2.3 Implement the prioritised actions identified in the Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP)	Community and Economy	Delivery of actions identified in the Disability Inclusion Action Plan	
			1.1.2.4 Deliver a range of targeted community events and activities	Community and Economy	Delivery of targeted events such as Youth Week activities, Seniors Festival Brochure etc	
<b>1.2 Advocate and collaborate with government and private partners to improve services relating to health with a strong focus on aged care, mental health and maternity services</b> 	<b>1.2.1</b> Advance health services suitable for a Regional centre		1.2.1.1 Advocate for the State Government to provide a level of health care service to the community in line with a regional Hospital	Community and Economy	Advocate to State Government	
			1.2.1.2 Advocate for funding for Domestic Family and Sexual Violence support services	Community and Economy	Funding opportunities investigated	
<b>1.3 Deliver programs, campaigns, facilities and infrastructure which improve community safety</b>  	<b>1.3.1</b> Design and manage public spaces to ensure people feel safe and welcome		1.3.1.1 Commence construction of the Pocket Park in the Muswellbrook Town Centre	Infrastructure and Property	Construction procurement process commenced	
			1.3.1.2 Review and maintain Precinct Service Levels Document for Parks & Reserves	Infrastructure and Property	i) Document reviewed and finalised ii) Periodic inspections conducted	
			1.3.1.3 Implement funded infrastructure priorities of the Wollombi Precinct Master Plan	Infrastructure and Property	Develop a staged delivery plan for infrastructure priorities of the Wollombi Precinct Master Plan	
	<b>1.3.2</b> Review and enforce council policies to enhance community safety and ensure compliance		1.3.2.1 Undertake regulatory compliance required by legislation and achieve agreed service levels	Infrastructure and Property	i) Swimming Pool Safety Fence inspections are carried out in response to applications or complaints ii) All food shops are inspected on an annual basis iii) Regulatory requirements governing companion animals are implemented and incidents are promptly investigated iv) Illegal dumping is monitored and complaints are promptly investigated v) Inspections of new construction are under taken in accordance with legislation	
			1.3.2.2 Manage trade waste efficiently and safely, complying with environmental regulations, and protecting infrastructure	Infrastructure and Property	Review currency of Liquid Trade Waste Agreements and prioritise actions	

Our role:  Delivering  Partnering and collaborating  Advocating



Community Strategic Plan Aspiration	Delivery Plan Objective	Operational Plan Action	Primary Responsibility	Measure & Source	
<b>1.4 Provide and support events and activities to encourage community pride and connection</b>  	<b>1.4.1</b> Grow the region as a vibrant events and visitor destination  	1.4.1.1 Deliver a range of Council events and activities which attract people to the shire	Community and Economy	Track and report on attendance, marketing reach and economic impact for Council-led events	
		1.4.1.2 Partner with and support event organisers to grow and attract events	Community and Economy	i) Report on the total number of external events supported through sponsorship funding, in-kind contributions, or promotional assistance ii) obtain a post-event report for sponsorship and community grant recipients iii) Monitor and report on the number of new events secured	
<b>1.5 Celebrate our culture and heritage by showcasing and preserving our history</b>  	<b>1.5.1</b> Recognise, protect and celebrate our heritage 	1.5.1.1 Commence refurbishment of Loxton House	Infrastructure and Property	Construction procurement process commenced	
		1.5.1.2 Celebrate local heritage through planning, design and delivery of improvements	Infrastructure and Property	Include preservation of local heritage in design and Undertake comprehensive heritage assessments for related projects	
		1.5.1.3 Deliver the Local Heritage Assistance Fund Grant Program	Infrastructure and Property	Make Local Heritage Grants available to owners of heritage listed properties	
	<b>1.5.2</b> Celebrate and recognise our local Indigenous culture  	1.5.2.1 Engage with the Indigenous Community to develop an inclusive consultation and engagement approach	Community and Economy	Engagement and consultation approach endorsed by Council, and then implemented	
<b>1.6 Develop programs to support the community and increase participation. enhance the capacity of volunteers and volunteer organisations</b>  	<b>1.6.1</b> Increase Volunteer participation to create community resilience and connection 	1.6.1.1 Increase Volunteer participation to create community resilience and connection	Community and Economy	Options presented to Council to increase volunteerism	 
	<b>1.6.2</b> Provide access to community grants and in-kind support to support the community. 	1.6.2.1 Manage the Community grants program and sponsorship requests	Community and Economy	i) Community grants provided in accordance with the policy ii) Sponsorship policy updated and provided in accordance with the policy	





# *We are a...* **regional centre**

## Community Outcome

Our community has access to regional services, infrastructure and facilities.



**SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

**4**

**QUALITY  
EDUCATION**



**7**

**AFFORDABLE AND  
CLEAN ENERGY**



**8**

**DECENT WORK AND  
ECONOMIC GROWTH**






























**9**

**INDUSTRY, INNOVATION  
AND INFRASTRUCTURE**




















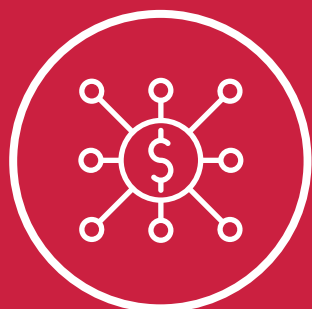
Community Strategic Plan Aspiration	Delivery Plan Objective		Operational Plan Action	Primary Responsibility	Measure & Source	
<b>2.1 Provide and maintain local transport infrastructure, including roads and footpaths to allow safe and easy movement around</b> 	2.1.1 Provide and maintain safe, cost effective and fit for purpose transport infrastructure		2.1.1.1 Deliver annual transport operational and capital works programs	Infrastructure and Property	i) Develop and implement an endorsed capital works program ii) Conduct asset inspections in accordance with the asset management plans iii) Conduct regular maintenance inspections to identify maintenance defects and prioritise corrective actions based on a risk	
	2.1.2 Improve and promote active travel connections and opportunities		2.1.2.1 Develop Active Transport Plan and implement prioritised actions	Infrastructure and Property	i) Finalise the review of the Walk and Cycle Plan to inform the development of an Active Transport Plan that aligns with the NSW Active Transport requirements ii) Report the Active Transport Plan to Council for adoption iii) Continue to implement the prioritised Walk and Cycle Plan actions iv) Commence construction of a connecting footpath from Muswellbrook CBD to Tarinpa	
<b>2.2 Advocate for effective public transport networks and transport planning to ensure infrastructure meets community need</b> 	2.2.1 Increase access to public transport options in and around the LGA	 	2.2.1.1 Construct and install bus shelters across the Shire	Infrastructure and Property	i) Install prioritised bus shelters in Muswellbrook and Sandy Hollow	
<b>2.3 Manage increasing transport demands on our roads to ensure the community has safe and prioritised access</b> 	2.3.1 Participate in planning and decision making to leverage investment and ensure our communities needs are prioritised	 	2.3.1.1 Advocate and collaborate with Transport for NSW to facilitate required outcomes for our Shire	Infrastructure and Property	i) Advocate for funding for the central link road to the Muswellbrook Bypass ii) Work with Transport for NSW to reclassify Bengalla Link Road and Wybong Road West as State Roads iii) Deliver an upgrade to Wybong Road as part of the NSW Infrastructure Betterment Funding Deed iii) Implement actions from the Thomas Mitchell Drive contributions plan	
			2.3.1.2 Work with industry and third parties to facilitate changes and impacts to the road network	Infrastructure and Property	i) Process section 138 and Oversize and/or Overmass vehicles applications and report on numbers processed	
<b>2.4 Advocate and provide services and facilities expected of a regional centre</b>  	2.4.1 Deliver, maintain and enhance Council owned facilities		2.4.1.1 Provide infrastructure and resources to implement a 24 Hour Gym and outdoor Gym space	Community and Economy	Business Case developed and resourced	
			2.4.1.2 Construct the new Muswellbrook Youth Venue	Infrastructure and Property	Construct and handover the Muswellbrook Youth Venue to Upper Hunter Youth Services	
			2.4.1.3 Carry out the staged delivery of Olympic Park Precinct Master Plan	Infrastructure and Property	i) Commence the procurement process for construction of the Olympic Park grandstand and field improvements ii) Construct new water main from Bell Street to Wilkinson Avenue	
			2.4.1.4 Carry out the staged delivery of the Muswellbrook Town Centre Precinct Master Plan	Infrastructure and Property	i) Submit the Development Application for the remaining buildings to be demolished ii) Finalise design and complete the Development Application for the Regional Entertainment Centre iii) Finalise design for stormwater and precinct car parking iv) Consolidate lots within the precinct for delivery of the master plan	
			2.4.1.5 Deliver prioritised and funded recommendations of the Recreational Needs and Management Study	Infrastructure and Property	i) Deliver funded recommendations of the Recreational Needs and Management Study	
			2.4.1.6 Seek planning approval for the construction of the Community Infrastructure Depot	Infrastructure and Property	Package of early works is prepared by December 2025	
	2.4.2 Ensure regional and state plans acknowledge Muswellbrook as a Regional Centre	 	2.4.2.1 Advocate for local and sub-regional and water priorities to be included in NSW and Hunter Regional Strategies	Infrastructure and Property	Collaborate with NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) in reviewing water strategies	
			2.4.2.2 Ensure Council's Planning land use strategies, policies and plans reflect the Shire's status as a regional centre	Environment and Planning	i) The Muswellbrook Shire Local Strategic Planning Statement is updated to include recommendations from the Hunter Region Plan, Muswellbrook Shire Local Housing Strategy and Upper Hunter Employment Lands Strategy	

Our role:  Delivering  Partnering and collaborating  Advocating



Community Strategic Plan Aspiration	Delivery Plan Objective	Operational Plan Action	Primary Responsibility	Measure & Source
<b>2.5 Provide well-maintain accessible sport, leisure and recreational infrastructure and facilities</b> 	<b>2.5.1</b> Manage existing community facilities to meet the needs of the community 	2.5.1.1 Monitor and service buildings and facilities to ensure suitability and accessibility	Infrastructure and Property	i) Periodic inspections based on hierarchy of assets and tasks prioritised ii) Periodic performance review for contractors iii) Prioritise funded actions from the Accessibility Audit iv) Develop and implement an endorsed capital works program 
		2.5.1.2 Manage program of continual review of buildings and recreation asset data to inform maintenance, capital programs, and asset management plans.	Infrastructure and Property	i) Asset data for buildings and recreation assets is current ii) Conduct external valuation of other structures and land improvements iii) Report contingency plans for critical infrastructure 
<b>2.6 Advocate and collaborate with government and educational providers to expand access to education opportunities which allow students to study locally</b>  	<b>2.6.1</b> Improve the availability and access to educational opportunities  	2.6.1.1 Work with educational providers to improve access to educational opportunities within the Shire	Community and Economy	Increase access to education opportunities for the community 
		2.6.1.2 Deliver the Art Gallery Café Training Centre in partnership with key stakeholders	Community and Economy	i) Finalise funding arrangement ii) Art Gallery Cafe operational and training courses provided to the community  
		2.6.1.3 Deliver the STEM Program	Community and Economy	STEM program outcomes collected and reported to Council 
		2.6.1.4 Manage Sam Adams College student accommodation to support local tertiary education delivery	Infrastructure and Property	Measure and report to Council on occupancy and reasons for stay  
		2.6.1.5 Seek full occupancy of the Tertiary Education Centre to support education services, research, and innovation delivery	Infrastructure and Property	Target leasing opportunities to attract education service providers, research and development organisations, and innovators 





# *We are a...* **thriving economy**

## Community Outcome

Our community has opportunities for employment, business and training and we drive investment into our economy to benefit our community.



4

QUALITY  
EDUCATION



7

AFFORDABLE AND  
CLEAN ENERGY



8

DECENT WORK AND  
ECONOMIC GROWTH










































9

INDUSTRY, INNOVATION  
AND INFRASTRUCTURE





Community Strategic Plan Aspiration	Delivery Plan Objective	Operational Plan Action	Primary Responsibility	Measure & Source	
<b>3.1 Lead the diversification of the local economy, including attracting new industry and businesses</b> 	<b>3.1.1</b> Retain our workforce and grow employment opportunities by attracting new industry and investment 	3.1.1.1 Deliver the Economic and Social Impact Assessment	Community and Economy	Report endorsed by Council	
		3.1.1.2 Work with Invest NSW and other government departments to attract new industry and investment	Community and Economy	Prospectus Developed Investment Attraction Activities conducted	
<b>3.2 Support businesses to grow and prepare for the opportunities of the future</b> 	<b>3.2.1</b> Provide a range of programs and facilities to assist business to diversify and grow 	3.2.1.1 Deliver the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan	Community and Economy	Strategy endorsed by Council	
		3.2.1.2 Work with local businesses to improve capability and access new supply chain opportunities	Community and Economy	i) Annual 'Doing business with Council' workshops facilitated ii) Apply for grants to deliver programs to support local businesses	
		3.2.1.3 Target leasing opportunities at local commercial properties to meet market gaps	Infrastructure and Property	Annually measure occupancy, and tenancy mix against market benchmarks	
		3.2.1.4 Planning polices and planning controls are reviewed to generate new employment activity	Environment and Planning	i) Funded actions of the Upper Hunter Employment Lands Strategy are completed ii) identify new industrial land, and adjust planning controls to enable new industrial development in the vicinity of Muswellbrook and the Thomas Mitchell Drive Industrial Area (Pilot Project) iii) Muswellbrook LEP 2009 and Muswellbrook DCP 2009 are reviewed and updated to ensure planning controls are not a barrier to new employment activity	
<b>3.3 Support the growth of tourism, a diverse retail and hospitality offering and a vibrant nightlife</b> 	<b>3.3.1</b> Support the growth of the Tourism Industry 	3.3.1.1 Develop a Destination Management Plan	Community and Economy	i) Development of the Destination Management Plan commenced ii) Collect tourism data to inform decision making	
		3.3.1.2 Investigate options for delivering an improved visitor information centre offering	Community and Economy	Report presented to Council on options for visitor information centre	
		3.3.1.3 Implementation of the Upper Hunter Regional Brand	Community and Economy	Plan for the implementation of the brand endorsed by Council	
	<b>3.3.2</b> Activate the Muswellbrook Town Centre 	3.3.2.1 Increase occupancy and activation of the public spaces in the town centre	Community and Economy	i) Increase in building occupancy ii) Wi-Fi installed iii) number of activations, events and installations	
		3.3.2.2 Deliver curated public art and murals through out the CBD.	Community and Economy	i) Locations of public art and murals identified ii) Engagement of suitable artists and delivery of priorities and funded art	

Community Strategic Plan Aspiration	Delivery Plan Objective		Operational Plan Action	Primary Responsibility	Measure & Source	
<b>3.4 Collaborate with key stakeholders and government to secure investment and long-term employment</b> 	3.4.1 Work with industry and government to fast-track land use planning and infrastructure to support future industry uses 		3.4.1.1 Coordinate with Transport NSW and EnergyCo to support the Port to Renewable Energy Zones (REZ) project	Infrastructure and Property	Ensure local road networks are upgraded as prioritised	
			3.4.1.2 Planning policies and planning controls are reviewed to remove barriers to new uses on land owned by mining companies or energy generating companies	Environment and Planning	i) Land use master planning is progressed for the AGL Macquarie Power Station sites (Bayswater & Liddell) ii) Next stage land use master planning progresses for the former Muswellbrook Coal Mine site iii) Next stage land use planning progresses for the BHP Mt Arthur mine site iv) Next stage land use planning progresses for the former Liddell Coal mine site v) Next stage land use planning commences for the Mangoola mine site	
			3.4.1.3 Advocate on behalf of the community on matters related to State Significant Development and the renewable energy roll-out	Environment and Planning	Report draft submissions on mining and energy related matters to Councillors to ensure community concerns are appropriately captured	
<b>3.5 Provide access to innovation and reskilling for future workforce needs</b>  	3.5.1 Develop and implement initiatives to attract, nurture and retain innovators		3.5.1.1 Manage the MELT contract, increase utilisation and promote outcomes to the community	Community and Economy	i) Quarterly meetings held with the General Manager and reports provided detailing activity in accordance with the contract ii) Increase in utilisation of the centre and promotion of success stories	 
	3.5.2 Increase opportunities for employment, skills and education for all ages	 	3.5.2.1 Investigate opportunities to deliver job re-skilling and training to support new industry growth	Community and Economy	i) Increased utilisation of TEC1 building and Loxton House	 
<b>3.6 Plan for the use of former mining and energy generation land for employment, recreation and environmental purposes</b>  	3.6.1 Deliver improved economic outcomes on mining and energy impacted lands  		3.6.1.1 Work with AGL to realise employment opportunities through the Hunter Energy Hub	Community and Economy	Undertake investment attraction activities	
			3.6.1.2 Work with Idemitsu to maximize economic opportunities on the Muswellbrook Coal site	Community and Economy	i) regular meetings held with Idemitsu ii) identify and progress opportunities to maximise employment outcomes	
			3.6.1.3 Identify suitable large scale land for intensive agricultural opportunities	Community and Economy	Suitable land identified and discussions held with landowners and proponents	































# *We are a...* **great place to live**

## Community Outcome

Our community offers a great lifestyle  
in a healthy natural environment.





















Community Strategic Plan Aspiration	Delivery Plan Objective		Operational Plan Action	Primary Responsibility	Measure & Source	
<b>4.1 Advocate and facilitate investment in a variety of housing, including affordable housing, to meet the needs of current and future residents</b> 	4.1.1 Implement the Local Housing Strategy that identifies how and where housing will be provided		4.1.1.1 Identify Council's assets to provide short term accommodation and unlock long term housing opportunities	Infrastructure and Property	Through the Future Fund continue investigation and development of Muswellbrook and Denman sites	
			4.1.1.2 Plan for and manage the impacts of temporary construction workers in the Shire		Develop a Council Policy position on temporary workers accommodation in the Shire	
	4.1.2 Streamline planning and development outcomes		4.2.1.1 Improve administrative processes to streamline the determination of Development Applications	Environment and Planning	i) Collaborate with other councils and the State Government to streamline processes ii) Work with Newcastle City Council to implement relevant parts of their 'Accelerated Development Applications' initiative in Muswellbrook Shire	 
<b>4.2 Manage development to protect our natural environment and heritage and be resilient to natural hazards</b> 	4.2.1 Improve the planning and preparedness for natural hazards	 	4.2.1.1 Implement prioritised actions from the Flood Risk Management Plan	Infrastructure and Property	i) Seek funding for the design of the Bell Street Levee ii) Closely collaborate with NSW Public Works towards the planning and delivery of upgrades to the Muswellbrook and Denman Levees	 
			4.2.1.2 Facilitate the Muswellbrook Local Emergency Management Committee (LEMC)	Infrastructure and Property	i) Participating in the Regional Emergency Management Committee ii) Organise two desktop emergency scenarios for the LEMC to test their plans and procedures iii) Collaborate with emergency services to ensure Council facilities are suitable for requirements iiii) Work with the NSW Reconstruction Authority to finalise the draft Pre-Event Recovery Plan	 
			4.2.1.3 Mitigate risks of natural hazards impacting Council's critical community infrastructure	Infrastructure and Property	i) Advocate for NSW RFS to conduct a fuel reduction burn-off on adjacent land to the Denman Water Treatment Plant and Denman Transfer Station ii) Undertake annual inspections of Council's critical infrastructure at natural hazard risk for compliance with standards	 
<b>4.3 Protect and enhance Council-managed water infrastructure and mitigate environmental and man-made impacts</b> 	4.3.1 Plan for and upgrade our water and waste water infrastructure to support residential and economic expansion		4.3.1.1 Progress the construction of Denman to Sandy Hollow Water Pipeline (DSHP) project	Infrastructure and Property	Subject to funding progress detailed design of the Denman to Sandy Hollow Water Pipeline, and construction commenced within agreed timeframe	
			4.3.1.2 Progress construction of the new Muswellbrook Sewer Pump Station (SPS) #1	Infrastructure and Property	Construction of Muswellbrook SPS #1 commenced	
			4.3.1.3 Manage program of continual review of water and wastewater asset data to inform maintenance, capital programs, and asset management plans.	Infrastructure and Property	i) Asset data for Water and Wastewater assets is current. ii) Report contingency plans for critical infrastructure.	
			4.3.1.4 Maintain the required water quality testing procedures in accordance with Australian Drinking Water Guidelines and NSW Health requirements	Infrastructure and Property	i) Water quality testing procedures are in Australian Drinking Water Guidelines and NSW Health requirements alignment with NSW Health requirements ii) Training of Water and Wastewater Operators meets position's roles and responsibilities requirements iii) Relevant reports submitted to regulatory bodies in full and within prescribed timeframes iv) Water quality reports published on Council's website for the community v) Council Drinking Water Management System DWMS internally reviewed and a report provided to NSW Public Health	
<b>4.4 Advocate for clean air and an improved natural environment</b> 	4.4.1 Advocate for improved air quality monitoring and reporting		4.4.1.1 Advocate on behalf of the community on air quality	Infrastructure and Property	i) Monitor air quality ii) participate in regional meetings on air quality iii) make submissions regarding air quality related to new development	
	4.4.2 Provide opportunities to participate in environmental learning activities and programs		4.4.2.1 Provide funds for the purpose of education or training of the local community on reducing environmental impact and for Landcare activities	Environment and Planning	Local Landcare and Environmental Sustainability Grants made available to the local community on an annual basis	

Our role:  Delivering  Partnering and collaborating  Advocating



Community Strategic Plan Aspiration	Delivery Plan Objective		Operational Plan Action	Primary Responsibility	Measure & Source	
<b>4.5 Manage the use of water and waste wisely, efficiently and sustainably to facilitate growth and economic opportunity</b> 	<b>4.5.1 Promote efficient water, energy and waste management and decrease waste</b>		4.5.1.1 Facilitate Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) for businesses in the Shire	Infrastructure and Property	Consult with businesses on a commercial FOGO model that meets their needs and mandated NSW Government target	
			4.5.1.2 Maintain construction and operational sustainable practices to decrease energy, waste and water usage	Infrastructure and Property	i) Track construction waste records showing a trend of decreasing waste and increased recycling ii) Inclusion of sustainable waste management practices in tender documentation	
			4.5.1.3 Deliver a range of programs to improve sustainability in the Community	Environment and Planning	i) The Sustainability Garden is open to the public through organised programs ii) A Community Garden Policy is prepared for adoption by Council iii) Quarterly reports to Council outlining activities undertaken	 
<b>4.6 Reducing emissions of Council owned assets to reach Net Zero targets</b> 	<b>4.6.1 Develop strategies to respond to climate policy and reduce carbon impacts</b>		4.6.1.1 Implementation of Council's Net Zero Roadmap	Environment and Planning	i) Implement funded recommendations in the Electric Vehicle Strategy ii) Establish a Revolving Energy Fund (REF) to support continued investment in sustainability initiatives	
			4.6.1.2 Investigate a strategy for gas capture of Council's waste voids	Environment and Planning	i) Expression of Interests called for waste void capture options ii) Develop a business case for Council's consideration	
<b>4.7 Maintain and enhance our open and public spaces and natural areas</b> 	<b>4.7.1 Enhance, protect and improve our natural environment and public spaces</b>		4.7.1.1 Maintain the natural areas and improve public access	Environment and Planning	i) Update the Precinct Service Specifications for Parks & Reserves to include management of Natural Areas. ii) Manage continual Natural Areas maintenance and improvement program	
			4.7.1.2 Actively engage with Mine Operators and the Natural Resource Regulator to ensure best practice mined land rehabilitation occurs	Environment and Planning	Staff Regularly meet with Resource Regulator staff to discuss mine rehabilitation plans and efforts by mines	
			4.7.1.3 Implement funded aspects of the Flying Fox Management Plan	Environment and Planning	i) Participate in regular Flying Fox counts to monitor presence and impact ii) Distribute tools and equipment to residents and business to reduce the impact of flying foxes	
			4.7.1.4 Improve tree canopy ratio in urban areas	Environment and Planning	Coordinate planting sites and materials for National Tree Day Activities	

























# We are... working together

## Community Outcome

Our community is involved in decision making and resources are managed to align with the values and priorities.


























Community Strategic Plan Aspiration	Delivery Plan Objective	Operational Plan Action	Primary Responsibility	Measure & Source
<b>5.1 Increase community awareness and understanding of Council business</b> 	5.1.1 Effectively inform the community about Council's responsibilities, business and activities 	5.1.1.1 Meet Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting requirements	Community and Economy	Ensure all IP&R deadlines are met and reported to Council 
	5.1.2 Provide timely and factual information on key issues impacting our community 	5.1.2.1 Deliver a positive customer experience	Community and Economy	i) Increased satisfaction in Council's customer service in the Community Satisfaction Survey ii) Implement a Customer Experience Charter iii) Develop Service Standards Guidelines iv) All community engagement activities are conducted in accordance with the Community Engagement and Participation Plan 
		5.1.2.2 Provide accurate and timely information to the community	Community and Economy	i) Increase engagement with Council's Website and digital media platforms ii) Communication and Media Policy reviewed and implemented 
<b>5.2 Ensure a wide range of community engagement programs to enable effective Council decision making</b> 	5.2.1 Engage, involve and empower our community and stakeholders to inform Council on the issues impacting them  	5.2.1.1 Conduct the Annual Community Satisfaction Survey	Infrastructure and Property	i) Survey conducted and Reported to Council ii) Workshops completed with Internal staff to advise of results 
		5.2.1.2 Establish and facilitate the Muswellbrook Shire Youth Council	Infrastructure and Property	i) Engage with the schools to support the Youth Council ii) Facilitate 6-8 Youth Council Meetings per year  
		5.2.1.3 Facilitate committees of Council to inform decision making	Infrastructure and Property	i) Meetings with key stakeholders are facilitated as scheduled ii) Meeting information is published to Council's website within 3 days of the meetings 
<b>5.3 Deliver sustainable projects, services and programs through sound financial management</b> 	5.3.1 Continue to seek funding to provide infrastructure, programs, services or events which meet the needs of our community  	5.3.1.1 Secure grant funding to deliver priority projects and address budget deficits	Community and Economy	Reports to Council on Funding secured and applied for 
		5.3.1.2 Ensure Development Contributions Plans are updated	Environment and Planning	Update one of Muswellbrook Development Contributions Plans 
		5.3.1.3 Consider whole of life asset costs considering the construction and acquisition of new assets	Infrastructure and Property/Finance	i) Whole-of-life cost analysis framework developed and implemented ii) Consideration of new assets include a process of review including Investment Logic Mapping, Business Case Reviews, and Capital Expenditure Reviews as required 
		5.3.1.4 Continually improve asset management	Office of the General Manager	i) Undertake regular condition assessments of Council's assets ii) Undertake valuation of Council's assets in accordance with NSW Audit Office requirements iii) Asset management improvements as identified by Council's Asset Management Maturity Assessment 

Community Strategic Plan Aspiration	Delivery Plan Objective	Operational Plan Action	Primary Responsibility	Measure & Source
<b>5.4 Ensure Council has long-term financial sustainability</b>	<b>5.4.1 Support financial sustainability through planning, budget management and accurate reporting to the community</b>	5.4.1.1 Continuously improve Council's Procurement Framework and value-for-money	Finance and ICT	i) Procurement category strategies established ii) Supplier reporting suite implemented iii) Request for Tenders assessed for best value for money outcomes and reported to Council iv) Procedures and training reviewed for alignment with legislation and operational requirements. v) Efficiency of the procurement framework tested through an annual sample compliance audit of Tenders and Request For Quotations
		5.4.1.2 Ensure the provision of value for money legal services and effectively manage external legal service providers	Office of the General Manager	Report on external legal services expenditure
		5.4.1.3 Implement and report the adopted Internal Audit and Service Review Plan	Community and Economy	i) Quarterly report to the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC) ii) Prioritise the Actions from Internal Audits and Open Management Letter
		5.4.1.4 Maintain and continuously improve the Enterprise Risk Management Framework	Community and Economy	Reports to Council and ARIC
		5.4.1.5 Monitor and manage annual budgets and long term financial plans	Finance and ICT	i) Long-Term Financial Plan (LTFP) is implemented and reviewed ii) Annual Budget and Quarterly Budget Reviews developed iii) Financial Management reporting to Council, Management and Community
		5.4.1.6 Actively manage the Future Fund to increase revenue for Council and commercial development opportunities	Finance and ICT	Financial performance of the Future Fund provided to Council quarterly
		5.4.1.7 Continually improve financial management across Council	Finance and ICT	i) Financial Sustainability strategy developed and implemented ii) Finalise the General Ledger restructure
	<b>5.4.2 Ensure Council's rate structure and revenue streams address Council's long term financial challenges</b>	5.4.2.1 Investigate a Special Rate Variation	Office of the General Manager	Proposal and application for an equitable Special Rate Variation for 2026/27 Financial Year developed
		5.4.2.2 Establish and manage the Community Benefit Fund	Community and Economy	i) Community Benefit Fund Advisory Committee and governance established ii) Investment Logic Mapping framework established.



Community Strategic Plan Aspiration	Delivery Plan Objective		Operational Plan Action	Primary Responsibility	Measure & Source	
5.5 Improve efficiency of Council systems 	5.5.1 Support the continual innovation of Council processes and technologies to enhance efficiency and productivity		5.5.1.1 Investigate systems to seek efficiencies and increase employment engagement	Office of the General Manager	Report to Directorate Leadership Group on systems for increased employee engagement	
			5.5.1.2 Implement a comprehensive and targeted business improvement program	Community and Economy	i) Implement a new Governance System to meet legislative compliance ii) Develop and review policies in accordance with statutory and operational requirements iii) Business Continuity and Disaster Recovery Plans comprehensively reviewed and implemented	
			5.5.1.3 Council’s Enterprise Record Management System is fit for purpose	Community and Economy	i) Upgrade of Content Manager is completed ii) Training of Content Manager is rolled out to staff iii) State Records new retention and disposal authority is implemented	
			5.5.1.4 Increase effectiveness of Council's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) systems	Finance and ICT	i) Operation of Critical Systems is managed, supported and improved ii) IT Infrastructure and systems upgraded	
			5.5.1.5 Increase security of Council systems	Finance and ICT	i) Upgrade Council's IT infrastructure ii) Cyber security footprint is enhanced	
	5.5.2 Use technology to make it easy for customers to engage with Council and access information		5.5.2.1 Investigate and implement improvements to make it easier for Customers to access information	Community and Economy	i) Improvements are made to Council's MyHub Portal ii) Review Customer Request Management (CRM) processes and training of staff	
			5.5.2.2 Subject to funding, make geographical information regarding Council’s land use policies available to the community	Environment and Planning	Relevant Council GIS land use mapping and aerial photography is available for free online	
5.6 Ensure Council attracts and retains adequately skilled staff 	5.6.1 Be an employer of choice by investing in the development and growth of our people		5.6.1.1 Develop a Training and Professional Development Framework for the organisation	Office of the General Manager	i) Training and Professional Development policy and procedure developed ii) Training programs identified and incorporated within the framework	
			5.6.1.2 Undertake a review of the salary and performance management framework	Office of the General Manager	Report to Directorate Leadership Group to assess the salary review proposal	
			5.6.1.3 Develop a suite of policies and training that responds to legislation and creates a safe, equitable and healthy culture	Office of the General Manager	Policies developed and training implemented	
5.7 Council provides effective leadership 	5.7.1 To lead and represent the interests of our community in an ethical and transparent way		5.7.1.1 Provide an internal legal service and support for the General Manager and the directorates	Office of the General Manager	i) Report on the number of new matters arising ii) Number of matters finalised iii) Number of ongoing matters	
			5.7.1.2 Provide Governance support to the Elected Council and Executive	Community and Economy	i) Training and development program for Councillors is agreed and implemented iii) Meetings of Council and committees are conducted in accordance with legislative compliance	
			5.7.1.3 Ensure Council is meeting the Statutory Reporting requirements	Community and Economy	Co-ordinate across Council to meet the Statutory Reporting Deadlines and provide periodic reports to the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee	
			5.7.1.4 Assess new development and land use activity in accordance with legislative requirements	Environment and Planning	i) Development Applications are assessed in accordance with relevant planning controls ii) Improve Council average assessment timeframes for Development Applications to below 130 business days	



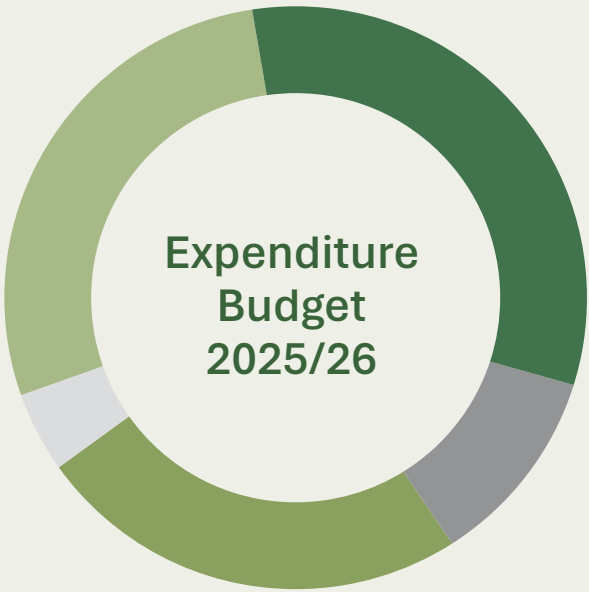
# Funding our Plan

Council generates income to fund our services and invest in our assets. This income comes from rates, developer contributions, interest on investments, government grants, user charges and Council’s business activities.

This funding is used to ensure we can maintain and improve our LGA as well as deliver a wide variety of services to the community.



Sector	\$M	%
Rates & Charges	\$37.9	52
User Charges & Fees	\$22.4	31
Operating Grants & Contributions	\$8.2	11
Interest & Investments Revenues	\$3.4	5
Other Revenues	\$0.3	1



Sector	\$M	%
Materials & Services	\$21.6	33
Wages & Salaries	\$18.5	28
Depreciation	\$16.3	24
Other Costs	\$7.2	11
Borrowing Costs	\$2.6	4



Sector	\$M
Roads, Bridges & Drainage	\$17.8
Recreation	\$9.1
Community & Cultural Vitality	\$7.2
Water Supply Infrastructure	\$6.3
Other Community Infrastructure	\$4.7
Sewer Infrastructure	\$4.5
Plant & Fleet	\$3.0
Future Fund	\$0.4
Other	\$0.3



# Revenue Policy

## Muswellbrook Shire Council Revenue Policy 2025/2026

The objective of this policy is to outline the framework for rating and charges for the Muswellbrook Shire Council for the financial year 2025/2026, in compliance with the *NSW Local Government Act 1993*.

The Council has declared and categorised all rateable land into one of the following four main categories in accordance with Section 514 of the Local Government Act:

- **Farmland**
- **Residential**
- **Mining**
- **Business**

A general revaluation of all land parcels in the Muswellbrook Shire occurred in 2024, with a base date of 1 July 2024. These valuations will be used for rating purposes starting 1 July 2025 and will remain until revised.

Under Section 497 of the Local Government Act, Council has adopted the use of a base amount to which an ad valorem amount is added dependant on the rating category or sub- category declared.

Ad Valorem Rates: Calculated by multiplying the land value on each assessment by a specified rate in the dollar determined within each rating category.

Base Amounts: a set charge for every assessment in a certain rating category to ensure equitable distribution of costs among all ratepayers.

### Categories and Descriptions

#### Residential

- **General Residential:** land used dominantly for residential purposes and is not subject to a sewer service availability charge.
- **Residential – Muswellbrook & Denman:** land used dominantly for residential purposed and is located within the urban areas of Muswellbrook and Denman, subject to sewer service availability charges.

#### Farmland

- **Farmland – General:** Land primarily used for agricultural purposes with a significant commercial character, engaged in continuous profit-making activities.
- **Farmland – Irrigable:** Land primarily used for agricultural purposes with a significant commercial character, engaged in continuous profit-making activities and has irrigation capabilities and is subject to water rights, ensuring effective agricultural practices.

#### Mining

- **Mining – General:** All land held or used for the purposes of coal mining.

#### Business

- **Business – General:** Commercial properties not classified as farmland, residential, or mining, encompassing various business activities.
- **Business – Power Generation - Non-Renewable:** Properties involved in generating or storing electricity from non-renewable sources, such as coal, natural gas, oil or nuclear energy resources.
- **Business – Thomas Mitchell Drive Industrial Centre:** Properties located within the designated industrial area aimed at fostering business growth and development.
- **Business – Showground Release Area:** Land earmarked for commercial development within the Showground precinct.
- **Business – Mine Rehabilitation:** Land that has been used and is being rehabilitated after being disturbed by mining operations.
- **Business – Power Generation - Non-Renewable – Rehabilitation:** Land that is being rehabilitated after being used for generating or storing non-renewable energy.

Increases in ordinary rate income are subject to the percentage variation as determined by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART). This is referred to as the rate peg limit. For the 2025/2026 rating year, IPART has set Muswellbrook Shire’s rate peg at 3.9%.

In accordance with section 494 of the Act, the following Ordinary Rates will be levied:

Rate Type	Category	Sub-Category	Ad Valorem Cents in \$	Base Amount/Min \$	Base Amount % of Total Rate Levied	Yield (Est.)
Ordinary	Residential	Residential – General	0.297626	\$240	18.08%	<b>\$1,285,190</b>
Ordinary	Residential	Residential – Muswellbrook & Denman	0.425976	\$290	31.11%	<b>\$5,579,060</b>
Ordinary	Farmland	Farmland – General	0.185010	\$400	12.62%	<b>\$1,131,600</b>
Ordinary	Farmland	Farmland – Irrigable	0.210000	\$440	9.66%	<b>\$491,804</b>
Ordinary	Mining	Mining – General	0.630100	\$15,000	1.24%	<b>\$13,314,820</b>
Ordinary	Business	Business – General	0.851417	\$250	7.62%	<b>\$1,536,161</b>
Ordinary	Business	Business – Power Generation – Non-Renewable	5.499070	\$25,000	15.65%	<b>\$319,454</b>
Ordinary	Business	Business – Thomas Mitchell Drive Industrial Centre	0.799326	\$275	9.95%	<b>\$414,543</b>
Ordinary	Business	Business – Showground Release Area	0.178168	\$250	1.90%	<b>\$13,185</b>
Ordinary	Business	Mine Rehabilitation	0.630100	\$15,000	0%	<b>\$0</b>
Ordinary	Business	Power Generation – Non-Renewable – Rehabilitation	5.499070	\$25,000	0%	<b>\$0</b>

### Charges Summary

Section 501 of the Local Government Act permits a Council to make and levy an annual charge for the following services provided, or proposed to be provided, on an annual basis by the Council:

- water supply services;
- sewerage services;
- drainage services (through the Stormwater Levy);
- waste management services (other than domestic waste management);
- any services prescribed by the Local Government Regulations.

Water Charges

**Availability Charge:** is levied on each parcel of rateable land that is supplied with

water from a water pipe of the Council or land that is situated within 225 metres of a water pipe of the Council (whether or not actually supplied with water from any water pipe of the Council). The Water Service Availability Charges to be levied is based on the service size of the connection to the water supply line.

Availability Charge Category	Amount
AC - Availability Charge (Not Connected)	\$280.50
AC - Availability Charge (Connected)	
20mm service	\$280.50
25mm service	\$438.00
32mm service	\$718.00
40mm service	\$1,122.00
50mm service	\$1,753.00
65mm service	\$2,963.00
80mm service	\$4,488.00
100mm service	\$7,013.00
150mm service	\$15,778.00

**Usage Charge:** A variable charge based on the volume of water consumed.

Residential	Tier 1	1-350 Kl per annum	\$3.00
	Tier 2	>350Kl per annum	\$4.50
Non Residential	\$4.10/Kl		

Sewerage Charges

Residential Sewer: An annual charge for sewer is applicable to each parcel of rateable land except:

- a) Land which is more than 75 metres from a sewer of the Council and is not connected to the sewer; and
- b) Land from which sewage could not be discharged into any sewer of the Council.

Residential Sewer Availability Charge	\$436.00
Residential Sewer Charge	\$1,119.00

**Non-Residential Sewer Charge:** A Non-Residential Sewer Service Availability Charge is levied on each parcel of rateable land not categorised as residential for the purposes of ordinary rates for which the service is provided or proposed to be provided.

SC = SDF x (AC + (C x UC))

Availability Charge Category	Amount
AC - Availability Charge (Not Connected)	\$436.00
AC - Availability Charge (Connected)	
20mm service	\$436.00
25mm service	\$681.25
32mm service	\$1,116.16
40mm service	\$1,744.00
50mm service	\$2,725.00
65mm service	\$4,605.25
80mm service	\$6,976.00
100mm service	\$10,900.00
150mm service	\$24,525.00

Non-Residential Sewer Usage Charge      \$4.10/Kl

**Stormwater Management Charge:** Pursuant to section 496A of the Local Government Act, Council will levy a Stormwater Management Service Charge on each parcel of rateable land within the Muswellbrook and Denman urban areas and included in the Town Planning Zones of R1 General Residential, B2 Local Centre, SP2 Infrastructure, IN2 Light Industrial, IN1 General Industrial and RU5 Village, except where an exemption or variation to the charge is provided in accordance with the document titled “Stormwater Management Service Charge Guidelines” issued by the Office of Local Government in July 2006, at a rate of \$25.00 per Residential parcel of rateable land and \$12.50 per Residential strata unit.

Non Residential

Area Sqm Charge	Amount
0 - 1,199	\$25.00
1,200 - 4,999	\$100.00
5,000 - 9,999	\$375.00
>10,000	\$725.00

Domestic and Waste Management Charges

Charge	Amount
Domestic Waste - 3 bin service	\$599.00
Waste Management & Rural Waste Management – 2 bin service	\$456.00
Additional Red	\$145.00
Additional Yellow	\$115.00
Additional Green	\$100.00
Waste Availability Charge – Vacant land	\$135.00
Weekly Red Bin	\$160.00
Upsize to 240L Red Bin	\$180.00
150mm service	\$24,525.00

**On-Site Sewer Management System Fee:** A fee for the inspection and approval of on-site sewer management systems to ensure compliance with health and safety standards. See Council’s Fees and Charges document.

Interest on Overdue Amounts

The maximum interest rate for the 2025/2026 financial year has been determined by the minister. The rate set for 2025/2026 will be 10.5%. This remains the same as 2024/2025 rate.

Conclusion

This Revenue Policy aims to ensure the financial sustainability of Muswellbrook Shire Council, providing essential services while maintaining fairness and transparency in the rating process.



# Our Operating and Capital Budget

## 2025/26 Budget Estimates

The Annual Budget translates Council’s strategic objectives into tangible actions. It supports the objectives set out in the Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program by outlining annual funding commitments— defining investment priorities, directing expenditure, and articulating the expected outcomes for the community. By aligning long-term vision with short-term financial planning, the Budget enables Council to maintain strategic focus, respond proactively to emerging challenges, and continue providing essential services and infrastructure to support community wellbeing.

## The Four Funds of Muswellbrook Shire Council

Muswellbrook Shire Council operates four separate funds to manage its operations. Each fund is maintained independently to ensure transparency and accountability in how council services are funded and delivered.

In accordance with Council's Financial Management Policy, Council has prepared a DRAFT 2025/26 Budget with a minimum of a break-even bottom line in each of the four Funds. The General Fund has a break-even bottom line. The Water and Sewer Funds show small surpluses to help build reserves for future infrastructure investment and contingency. In line with its growth objectives, the Future Fund shows a surplus.

### General Fund



### Future Fund



### Water Fund



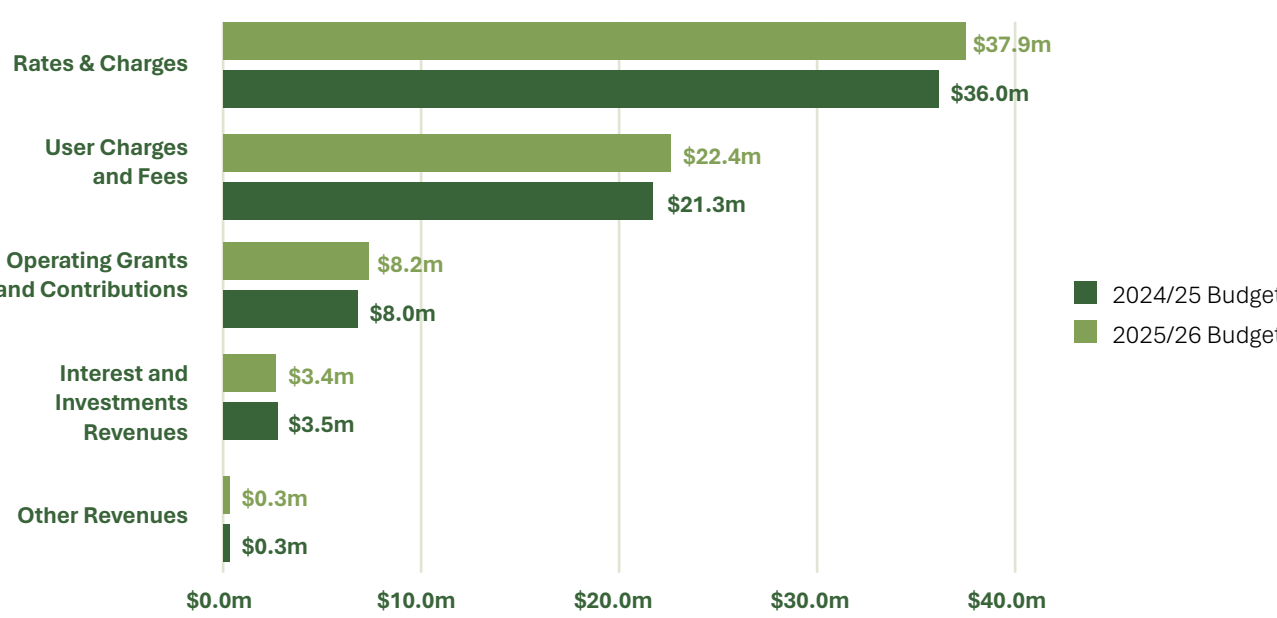
### Sewer Fund



2024/25 Budget 2025/26 Budget

## Consolidated Operating Income - Budget 2025/26

**Rates and Charges include:** Ordinary Rates plus Water, Sewer and Domestic Waste annual charges.  
**User Charges and Fees include:** Water usage charges, Waste Management fees, Planning Services fees, Aquatic Centre and other Community Services fees plus commercial property rental income.  
**Operating Grants & Contributions include:** Federal Financial Assistance Grants, Roads & Drainage grants and Emergency Services contributions.  
**Interest & Investment Revenues:** includes interest income from financial investments.



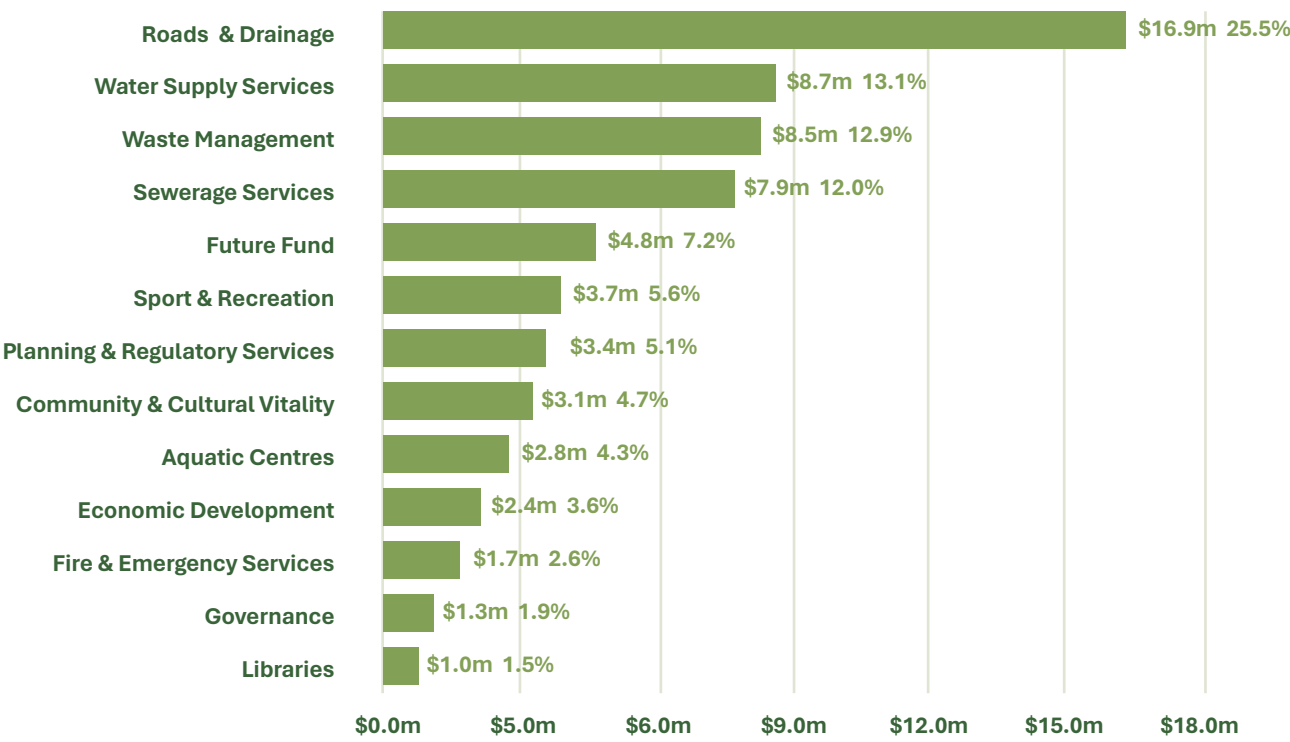
## Consolidated 2025/26 Budget Rates and Annual Charges

**Ordinary Rates:** 8,050 rateable land parcels Rate Peg set by IPART: 3.9% gives a total Permissible Income of \$24.1M  
**Domestic Waste Annual Charges:** \$4.0M, increase of ~7% to cover increasing costs  
**Water & Sewer Access Charges:** Increase of ~5% and 4%, respectively, to cover increasing costs



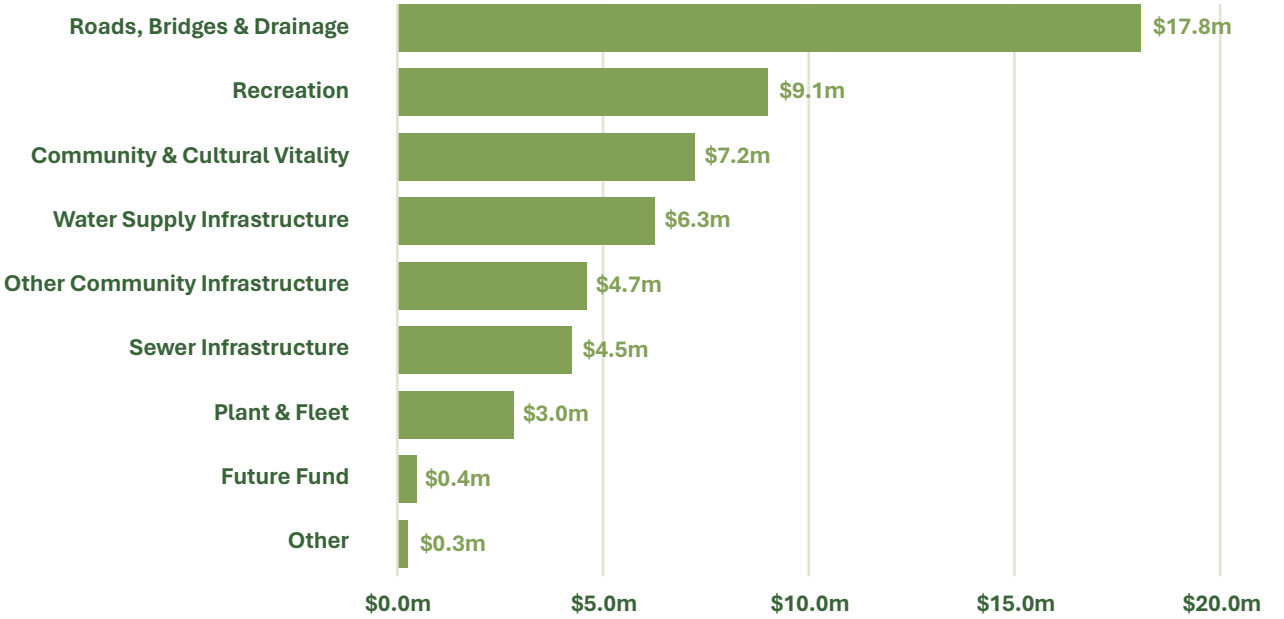
Consolidated 2025/26 Budget Operating Expenditure

Roads and Drainage, Water Supply, Waste Management and Sewerage Services together account for 64% of Council’s expenditure. Future Fund expenditure is more than offset by the investment returns.



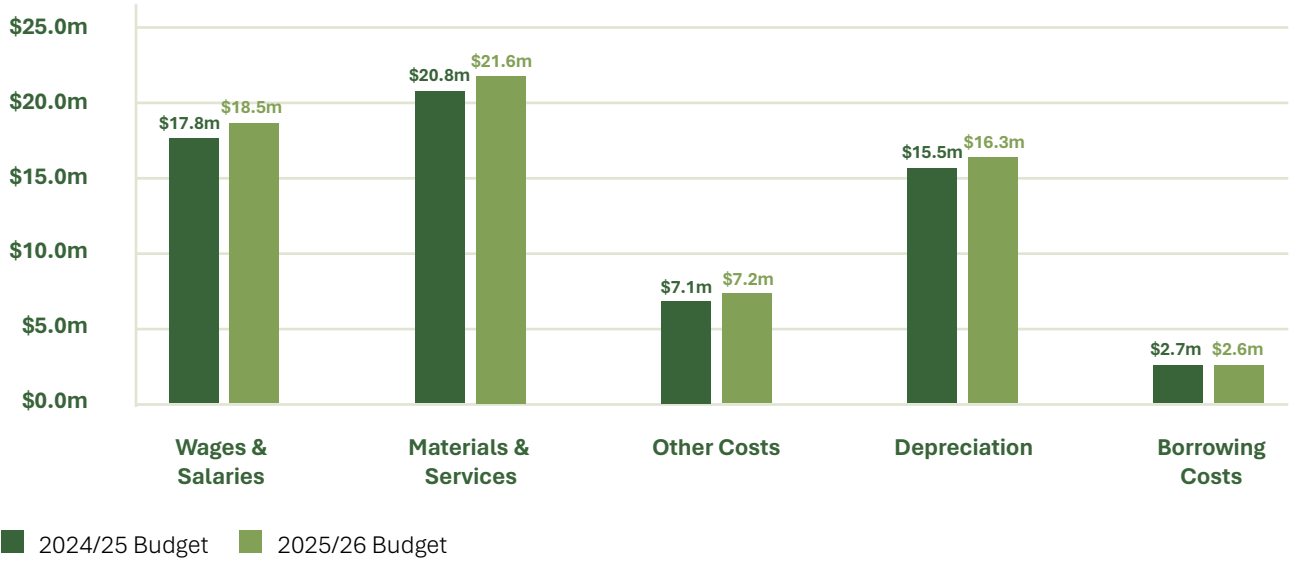
Capital Works 2025/26

Council's 2025/26 capital works program focuses on key renewal works and completing the mutli-year projects already in the pipeline. Only confirmed grant funding is included in the budget.  
**Roads, Bridges & Drainage:** extensive renewals program and major projects for Wybong Rd and Bylong Valley Way.  
**Recreation:** Tarinpa to CBD Pathway, Denman Tourist Park, Olympic Park and other projects.  
**Community and Cultural Vitality:** Civic Precinct, Pocket Park, Regional Entertainment Centre, reactivation of Campbell's Corner and other projects.  
**Other Community Infrastructure:** Community Infrastructure Depot and other projects.



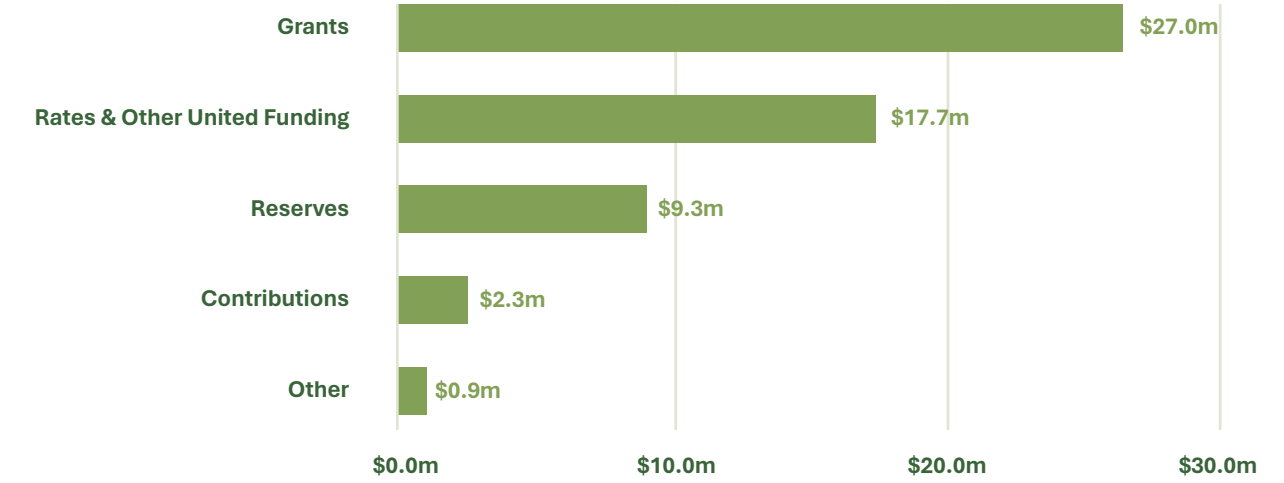
Consolidated 2025/26 Budget Operating Expenditure

**Wages and Salaries:** Up \$740k: 3% Award increase + one-off Award payments and 0.5% Superannuation increase.  
**Materials and Contracts:** up \$863k (4%); increasing Water and Domestic Waste costs and other inflation effects.  
**Depreciation:** projected to increase by 5%; combined effect of asset revaluations and new asset acquisition/



Capital Funding 2025/26

Capital works are funded through grants and contributions.







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shire council**

**[muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au](http://muswellbrook.nsw.gov.au)**