

ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019





THE GUMBAYNGGIRR COMMUNITY VISION ...

A place where there is genuine respect for the land and the original people of this country.

A place where the ancestors' way of holding country is recognised.

A place where there is respect for custodial people who carry this tradition today and for Elders and the children of the future.

A place where we all walk together, where we can all be here in harmony with the land and all life.

The land around here has a great capacity to do that, to heal... in a way that's not separating.

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MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR AND GENERAL MANAGER

Bellingen Shire Council as the custodian of our Community Vision has worked together with our community to address the opportunities and challenges our Shire presents us. This report details council and the community's continued efforts to ensure our shared vision for the future is realised.

A variety of challenges including local government reform, funding constraints, infrastructure and maintenance costs and a low proportion of rateable land has meant that Council has had to be innovative and resourceful to balance the needs of the organisation with community aspirations.

We have continued to use our community's hopes and aspirations to guide our decision making and this year we have once again translated our shared vision of the future into programs, projects and initiatives that will address these regional issues of importance for years to come.

Our efforts have focussed on issues of critical importance such as our environment, financial sustainability, resilience, water security and disaster preparedness to protect the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of our communities.

A University of Technology Sydney independent review of council's financial sustainability concluded that Council's low levels of debt, prudent spending, and the steady improvement in asset condition all indicate that Council is doing an extraordinarily successful job in challenging conditions.

Accordingly, Council's strategic asset management planning activities and investment strategies have guided Shire wide road and bridge infrastructure maintenance activities and the staged delivery of maintenance, repair and rehabilitation activities.

Our road network renewal program has resurfaced an additional 16 kilometres of sealed roads, reconstructed 3.5 kilometres of road that was in too poor a condition to reseal and graded 80 kilometres of our unsealed road network.

Council has also championed the formation of the Mid North Coast Joint Organisation (MNCJO), with Port Macquarie Hastings and Kempsey Shire Councils to collaborate with key stakeholders and lobby the State Government to support our regional priorities.

A \$10 million investment by Council and a further \$10 million in State Government funds has also progressed the development of detailed designs and will fund the delivery of the Coastal Villages Sewer Project, which will connect seaboard homes and properties to a reticulated sewer network protect the environmental health of the Bellinger and Kalang Rivers.

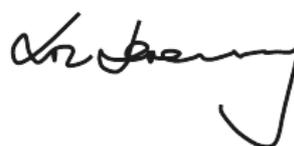
With drought still impacting our region, water security has never been more important, and Council has invested in the shire's water future, with a new two megalitre drinking water reservoir at South Bellingen and a new 90 kilolitre wastewater pump station at Urunga.

Our collaborative efforts to develop a new Growth Management Strategy to sustainably manage growth in the shire and maintain its existing character has also won the 2019 New South Wales Local Government Professionals Excellence Awards' Community Partnerships and Collaboration Category.

Ultimately, Council provides 31 diverse services and our collective achievements demonstrate what's possible when you harness the talents and skill of a small team of councillors and staff that are dedicated to working with our community to discover our Shire's true potential.



Cr Dominic King, Mayor



Liz Jeremy, General Manager

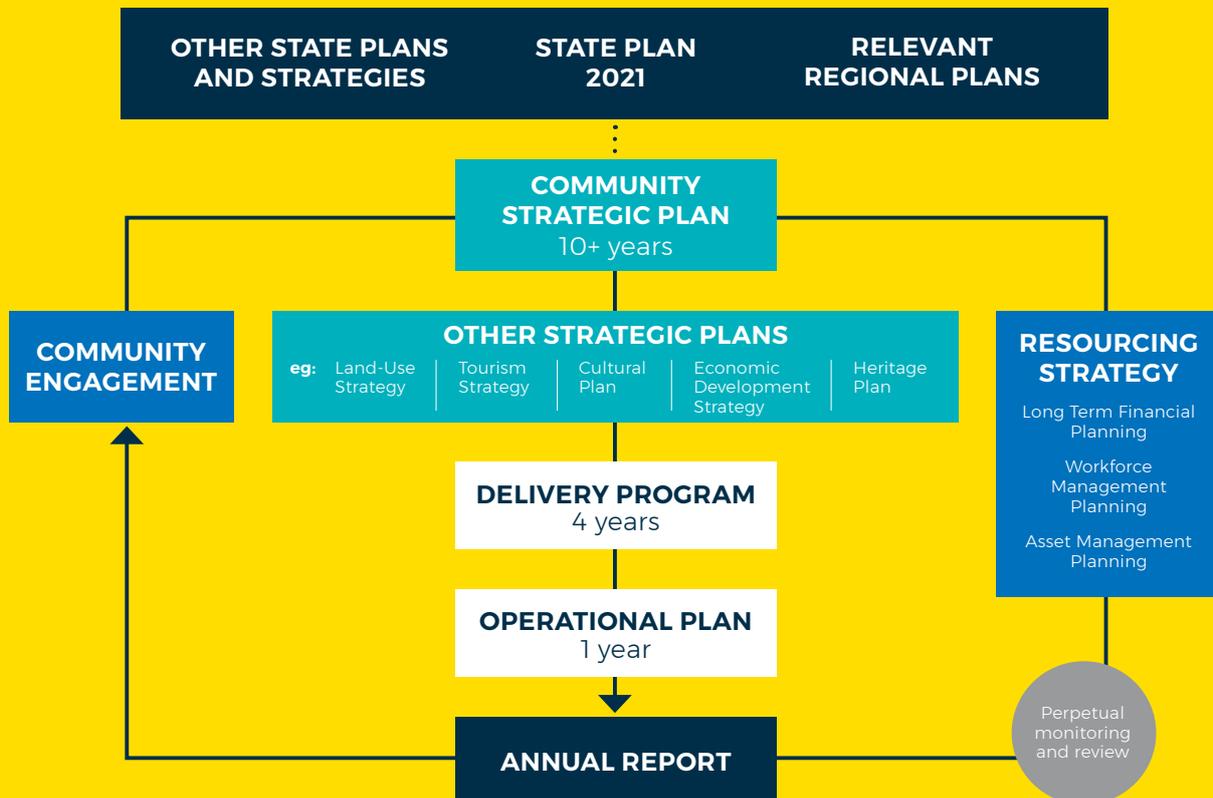


...TO ENSURE OUR
SHARED VISION
FOR THE FUTURE
IS REALISED.

THE ANNUAL REPORT IN CONTEXT

The Annual Report is a component of Councils Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework, and outlines Councils achievements during the financial year in implementing its Delivery Program. It also provides the information that the Council is required to disclose.

The IP&R framework is shown below.



STRUCTURE OF THE ANNUAL REPORT

The Annual Report is one of the key components of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework. The report helps Council to keep our community informed about outcomes and achievements in the previous financial year.

PART A - ACHIEVEMENTS IN IMPLEMENTING THE DELIVERY PROGRAM

Reports on the achievements in implementing the Delivery Program and measures the effectiveness of the principal activities undertaken in achieving the objectives in the Community Strategic Plan.

A

PART B - STATUTORY INFORMATION

Council is required to publicly report on the legislated obligations Council must meet each year as well as other information the NSW Government believes should be provided to the community.

B

PART C - FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The full, audited Financial Statements of Council can be found in this section.

C

OUR PROFILE

The Bellingen Shire is currently home to 12,946 people (ABS Estimated Resident Population 2017), who come from many different countries and are involved in diverse occupational, cultural, and social activities.

Our Shire has three distinct geographical areas – ocean, river, and mountains incorporating the communities of Mylestom, Repton, and Urunga on the coast, Bellingen nestled in the river valley, and Dorrigo on the plateau. Each is a vibrant and rich community with its own characteristics.

Our Local Government Area is made up of many beachside and inland localities, villages, towns and suburbs. These are Urunga, Raleigh, Repton, Mylestom, Fernmount, Bellingen, Gleniffer, Kalang, Darkwood, Orama, Brinerville, Thora, Bostobrick, North Dorrigo, Dorrigo, Cascade, Megan, Brierfield, and Deer Vale. Situated about half way between Sydney and Brisbane, with a total area of 160,205 hectares, our

Shire is a lifestyle region with an emphasis on cultural activities and social cohesion. Agricultural practices have diversified over the years and are now a mix of traditional and non-traditional farming methods.

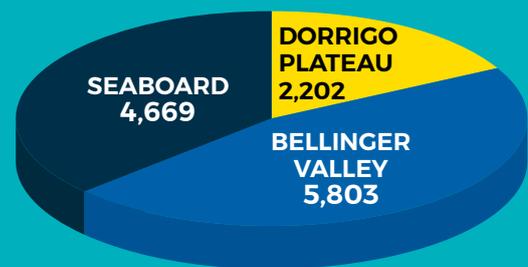
Many of today's residents operate small to medium-size enterprises in creative industries involving artists, crafts people, writers, musicians, and horticulturists.

Bellingen Shire has an abundance of natural assets. Some 57% of the Shire is State Forest (21.26%), National Parks (32.36%) and Crown land. This and our cultural attractions have created a thriving tourism industry with 210,000 visitors coming to our Shire each year spending a total of \$58.9 million. Numerous festivals, ranging from jazz, classical and world music, to environmental, food and wine events, attract distinct audiences enhancing the social and economic fabric of the region.

LAND



POPULATION



MEDIAN AGE



EMPLOYMENT



Source: ABS census 2016

OUR COUNCIL

As a local government organisation, Bellinghen Shire Council is charged with the responsibility for the delivery of a diverse range of services each and every day.

Council has 149 approved positions (as at 30 June 2019).

The elected Council comprises 7 councillors who represent the entire Local Government Area. The Mayor is elected by popular vote once every four years and the Deputy Mayor is nominated and elected annually by fellow Councillors.



Image: (l to r): Cr Steve Jenkins, Cr Jennie Fenton, Cr Garry Carter, Cr Steve Klipin, Cr Dominic King (Mayor), Cr Toni Wright-Turner, (Deputy Mayor), Cr Desmae Harrison.

53 
SPORT & REC FIELDS

9 
HALLS

3 
LIBRARIES

3 
SWIMMING POOLS

2 
SURF CLUBS

1 
SALEYARD

1 
HELIPAD

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

TRANSPORT

577 
ROADS

135 
BRIDGES

29 
SHARED PATHWAYS

3 
CAR PARKS

SERVICES

170 
WATER MAINS

10 
RESERVOIRS

101 
WASTEWATER MAINS

39 
STORMWATER DRAINS

5 
TREATMENT PLANTS



ACHIEVEMENTS IN IMPLEMENTING THE DELIVERY PROGRAM



MEETING YOUR ASPIRATIONS: RESILIENT ECONOMY

We have meaningful work and vibrant businesses within our community.

Council continues to work at a regional level and collaborate with the State Government to pursue key strategic targets identified in the Regional Economic Development Scheme (REDS), and to advance the commercial prospects of our shire.

Our own Economic Development and Tourism Plan aligns with the key economic strategies identified in the scheme, and focusses on the key priorities of innovation, investment and infrastructure to advocate and support the growth of our key industry sectors.

Our plans also identify and capitalise upon the economic and environmental diversity of the shire's three main townships of Bellingen, Urunga and Dorrigo and places a strong focus on nature based tourism and supportive commercial opportunities.

We have balanced, sustainable tourism.

Our Shire offers visitors a broad range of tourist experiences which feature our creative communities including craftspeople, writers and musicians and Council has worked in partnership with our tourism operators to ensure our regional tourism assets are promoted, encouraged, enhanced and remain successful and sustainable.

The Festival Shire

Bellingen Shire is renowned for its eclectic range of festivals and events which have created a thriving tourism industry with 210,000 visitors coming to our Shire each year spending a total of \$58.9 million.

Council provides support via the provision of an events hub and through grant funding initiatives and promotional avenues to numerous festivals, ranging from jazz, classical and world music, to environmental, food and wine events, which attract distinct audiences and enhance the social and economic fabric of the region.

Our Community Event Sponsorship Fund recently injected more than \$21,000 of funds across a suite of festivals and events including, but not limited to:

- Arts Mid-North Coast / Screenwave International Film Festival;
- Dorrigo Folk & Bluegrass Festival Inc. Dorrigo Folk & Bluegrass Festival;
- Bellingen Community Arts Council Inc. Bellingen Fine Music Festival;
- Readers and Writers Festival Readers and Writers Festival;
- Arts Mid-North Coast / Screenwave Rec Ya Shorts Youth Film Festival;
- Bellingen Readers and Writers Festival; and
- Bellinger River Agricultural Society EJ Mantova Art Exhibition.

Council has also attracted almost \$4 million in investment to deliver the Bellingen Memorial Hall Transformation Project, which will significantly increase the original footprint of the building and deliver a suite of improvements that will cater for the current 220 events per annum the venue currently attracts and anticipated future usage rates.

Council also engages in collaborative leadership, advocacy and constructive partnerships across a range of cultural and artistic programs and activities to support projects such as the Youth Mentorship Program, which gives aspiring young musicians the opportunity to be mentored by an established artist from the line-up of the Bellingen Winter Music Festival and perform live during the event.

Waterfall Way Tourism Campaign

Waterfall Way was recently voted as one of the best scenic drives in New South Wales and boasts 185 kilometres of winding roads that link the New England Tablelands to the Mid North Coast.

The route meanders through five national parks and makes its way from the Shire's seaboard town of Urunga through Bellingen's lush green farm paddocks and ultimately to the Dorrigo Plateau and on towards the New England Tablelands.

Bellingen Shire Council championed a funding submission through Destination NSW with the support of Armidale City, Coffs Harbour City and Nambucca Shire Councils, to develop a tourism campaign to increase visitation rates and attract additional investment and economic growth to the region.

The \$100,000 campaign showcased a video which received more than 500,000 views and also featured television and digital media advertising which generated more than 13,000 clicks with an enviable click-through rate of 63%.

Dangar Falls - Dorrigo. Tourism Development Project

Waterfall Way, which was recently voted as one of the best scenic drives in New South Wales, winds through five national parks via Bellingen's lush green farm paddocks and delivers you to the Dorrigo Plateau.

Once there, you will discover Dangar Falls, one of the Shire's major nature based tourist attractions located just two kilometres north of Dorrigo town centre.

The falls, which are set amidst scenic agricultural and dairy farmland, provide a truly unique experience featuring a beautiful 30-metre waterfall cascading down to an expansive swimming hole.

Council secured close to \$1m in 2018 to invest in infrastructure that would increase visitation rates, length of stay times and provide attractive, safe and convenient access for all who visit the falls.

To enhance the visitor experience, upgrade works will include the construction of two new viewing platforms, carpark and walking track upgrades and the installation of interpretive signage.

The project will be completed by 2020.

Discovery Apps

Council has partnered with a local service provider to place a comprehensive list of shire wide events and attractions plus links to food, accommodation and community service providers in the palm of your hand.

The Discovery App, which is downloaded for free to a smart phone or tablet, has proven to be a tremendous asset for local businesses and a significant leap forward for the advertising and marketing of tourism in the shire.

Council collaborated in the development of three separate apps for the shire centres of Bellingen, Urunga and Dorrigo, and has funded the installation of a suite of QR posts and codes at numerous points of interest and tourist locations throughout the shire.

Features of the Discovery App and QR posts include:

- Individual business listings which provide users with a brief description of products and services, a thumb nail photo, location via Google Maps, contact details and website or Facebook page links
- The Discovery App contains a QR code reader allows the user to scan the code and view and audio visual file relative to their location which also promotes accessibility as vision impaired visitors can hear the information;
- Discovery App content can be updated remotely and regularly and provides tourist information seven days a week and 24 hours a day; and
- Radio station 2BBB now broadcasts live over the Discovery App keeping locals and visitors up to date with shire wide events.

Further, to maintain momentum, the Discovery App will remain free for general users and council has now subsidised the previous \$99 annual registration cost for businesses to register on the app.



MEETING YOUR ASPIRATIONS: COMMUNITY WELLBEING

Our children, youth and seniors are valued, involved and supported

Our Shire's children, youth and seniors are involved and supported with access to services and activities that support their wellbeing. Council actively provides and a broad range of youth and seniors programs and opportunities to promote intergenerational learning and a sense of community.

The HUB

Council's Youth HUB, or the HUB as it's known, is arguably one of the busiest council community facility in our shire, and in the past six months alone the HUB has engaged with more than 83 community organisations, hosted 1,241 events and attracted more than 13,838 guests.

The HUB is supported by our full-time Coordinator and management committee, which provides in-kind support to a suite of social, cultural and artistic programs, and during the reporting period council invested more than \$178,000 towards the HUB's operational revenue pool.

That's because the community's wellbeing is a key strategic focus of our 2027 Community Vision, and we are committed to providing outcomes that ensure our young people are valued, involved and supported with access to programs, services, activities and resources that support their wellbeing.

It's no surprise that the HUB has become a trusted and valued community resource that is regularly accessed by youth and young adults seeking support, advice, inspirational guidance and resources and sometimes simply somewhere to laugh, cry, create and play.

The HUB's program of activities boast a suite of programs including the Bello Youth Clinic, which provides free weekly access to doctors, youth workers and mental health specialists and the HUB's own Learner Driver Support Program, which provides free driving supervision in a community car to help under 25's accumulate supervised hours and enhance their driving skills.

The HUB has also delivered some remarkable metrics of success with instances of anti-social behaviour at an all-time low, and glowing endorsements from local police, juvenile justice and youth service providers confirming the positive impact the HUB's youth engagement activities have had in the reduction of youth crime rates since its inception.



“On behalf of the Dorrigo, Bellingen and Urunga communities, I congratulate council for putting these projects forward. It is very pleasing to see that work come to fruition and it will be exciting to see these major works get underway.”

Member for Oxley, Melinda Pavey MP.

Urunga Tidal Pool & Coronation Park

To ensure our seniors are valued, involved and supported, council has championed two signature projects to provide greater socialisation opportunities for our ageing population and promote their health and wellbeing.

Council successfully advocated for funding to deliver the \$326,880 redevelopment of Dorrigo’s Coronation Park, which has provided improved access and infrastructure to enable seniors and those with a disability to easily access and use the park.

These works aim to address the issues of loneliness and isolation that can contribute towards health and wellbeing issues, given that seniors make up 57% of the population for the area and that 36% of Dorrigo residents live alone.

The project features accessible entryways, improved path network, accessible toilets, picnic shelter, playground equipment, disability swing, safety fencing, formalised parking area with designated accessible parking space and landscaping works.

Council has proactively worked over a number of years to develop a feasibility study for the original Lido facility located on the foreshore at Urunga. Grant funding in the amount of \$112,000 was secured from the Department of Industry & Tourism under the Tourism Demand Driver Infrastructure Program. This was matched by an additional \$113,000 from Council to complete dredging and foreshore protection works.

The next stage of the project will be managed by Reflections Holiday Park Trust which has received grant funding to complete the project with the construction of a jetty & floating pontoons and the reinstatement of boardwalks within the newly dredged Lido area.

The new tidal pool at Urunga will provide everyone including our shire’s seniors with a safe and accessible recreational, remedial and social facility and the redeveloped park at Dorrigo promotes social inclusion and an active and healthy lifestyle.

Section 355 Committees

Our Volunteer Strategy provides inclusive opportunities for our community to volunteer their time and efforts to support our community facilities network, which host a broad range of recreational, sporting, arts and cultural activities.

The strategy, which guides the activities of more than 160 dedicated volunteers, is supported by council’s Volunteer Coordinator who administers the shared responsibility of managing and maintaining these valuable community assets.

Council also supports 22 individual Section 355 Management Committees across the shire and co-submits grant applications to fund the operation and maintenance of these facilities, which regularly host community events including sporting fixtures, yoga classes, social activities and music events.



We are a learning and creative community

We understand the importance our community places on acquiring and retaining lifelong learning skills and Council provides a diverse range of educational and artistic opportunities where people, information, art, ideas and technology are brought together to ensure we are a learning and creative community.

Shire Library Network

Our library network operates across three separate locations in the shire at Bellingen, Dorrigo and Urunga, and was open to the public for more than 4,000 hours during the reporting period welcoming 106,000 members of our community.

We recognise our library networks growing popularity and will continue to invest in and champion their emerging roles as a community hub resource where people, information, ideas and technology are brought together.

That's why council secured grant funding to provide online training to 60 seniors at the Bellingen and Dorrigo libraries, to help seniors stay connected with friends and family by taking advantage of online technologies.

In addition, our library network also hosted 484 events which attracted 4,459 people across the shire, and library members borrowed more than 70,000 items, downloaded 11,500 electronic resources and accessed the Wi-Fi nearly 23,000 times.

We have also continued our efforts to deliver accessible and inclusive library facilities and services, with a 2018 submission to the Public Library Infrastructure Grant Program securing \$153,260 in funds to deliver the Urunga Library Redesign & New Technology Project.

The project features an internal refurbishment of the existing facilities to enhance the user experience of all library visitors including the disabled, the elderly, young families and children.

The refurbishment features new mobile shelving units, a flexible floor plan to cater for community events, installation of a unisex, accessible toilet to current accessibility standards and the relocation and lowering of the customer service desk to enhance accessibility.

The project will be completed late 2019.



Bellingen Valley Historical Society's Heritage Walk

To ensure our community facilities network supports a broad range of arts and cultural activities, council relies on our network of Section 355 Management Committees staffed by more than 160 dedicated volunteers, and the Bellingen Valley Historical Society is one of the many council volunteer committees that support cultural and artistic programs and activities across the shire.

During the reporting period a dedicated group of Historical Society volunteers celebrated the museum's new focus on The Alternative Lifestyle People of the Bellingen Valley - 1970s & 80s, by organising a Heritage Walk through Bellingen.

"Tucked away in our museums, buildings and landscapes big and small all over the Mid North Coast are some rare treasures and some very everyday objects. All of them tell the story of the fascinating and varied history and changing lifestyles of our region."

Kevin Williams, Director of Arts Mid North Coast.

The Arts Space @ Urunga

Council provides support through funding initiatives and promotional avenues to a range of cultural and artistic events, and a recent collaboration with local artists, sculptors and crafts folk has transformed an old butcher shop on the corner of Urunga's Main Street into a thriving arts hub.

Urunga's Art Space began as a temporary pop up gallery, but has proven to be so successful and popular with local artists, residents and visitors, that council has made the Art Space and permanent gallery and subsidises the rent for the premises to support its operation.

"A pop-up gallery is ideal, because it gives exposure to local artists, supports the Creative Industries and helps the Council in promoting the space -and for the town, it helps brighten up busy corner in the Urunga CBD"

Local photographer Gethin Coles.

The Arts Space has now secured more than 140 participating local artists, hosted 22 individual exhibitions, attracted 10,000 visitors and generated more than \$80,000 in sales revenue.

The Arts Space project delivers the results our Arts & Cultural Plan identify as key strategic priorities because the gallery continues to deliver artistic, cultural, community, social and economic returns.

PoP Art (Paint our Poles Art) Project

Council's Youth Hub, supported by our full-time Youth Centre Coordinator and management committee, provide in-kind support to a suite of cultural and artistic programs including the PoP Art (Paint our Poles Art) project.

This mentoring project has received input from the whole community including local schools and arts groups, and connects young people with local artists to paint designs on power poles around Bellingen that are inspired by their own creative vision of our community.

Each painting is a unique collaboration between the individual and artists and fosters stronger creative relationships within our community.

"The idea of local artists collaborating together, guiding the process as well as mentoring youth is tremendously exciting".

Grace Menzies, PoP Co-ordinator.

We value, honour and actively acknowledge our Gumbaynggirr culture and heritage

It is essential to recognise and celebrate the oldest, continuing living culture on the planet and Council is committed to supporting and acknowledging our Gumbaynggirr heritage in consultation with our community.

Bush Tucker School Education

A community grant of \$5000 has funded the establishment and maintenance of an outdoor classroom for Bellingen Public School to learn more about Aboriginal culture and the continuation of connection to country.

Ongoing activities will include the planting of 250 new bush tucker specimens, associated weed control activities, regeneration of more than 500m² of bushland and the improvement of 75 metres of riverbank.



We are connected, safe and healthy with a strong sense of community

As the custodian of our Shire's Community's Vision, Council actively communicates and collaborates with our community to identify and reflect their aspirations via the provision of programs, services and infrastructure that promote connected communities.

Inclusive community

Council remains committed to promoting and supporting programs and initiatives that increase the community's awareness and understanding of the actions identified in our Disability Inclusion Action Plan.

Specifically, our efforts during the reporting period have focussed on educating and training our staff and the business community about disability awareness, associated accessibility issues and best practice inclusive tourism practices.

Council has partnered with expert trainers from Inclusive Tourism to roll out the first of a series of staged workshops across the shire's three town centres of Bellingen, Urunga and Dorrigo, to provide industry based training regards disability awareness, accessibility issues and inclusive tourism.

A second round of shire wide workshops are pending that will focus on disability awareness training in a customer service environment and will cover topics inclusive of the types of visible and invisible disabilities, appropriate language, behaviour, etiquette and relevant legislation.

Council has significantly subsidised the cost of these training workshops and has worked with the shire's three Chambers of Commerce to secure free host venues to ensure this important initiative remains financially accessible and that the training reaches with widest audience possible.

Our Disability Inclusion Action Plan also prioritises the delivery of accessible and inclusive library facilities and services, and during the reporting period council has invested in the innovative DAISY Player Digital Access Information System.

The DAISY Player, which is a complete audio substitute for print material, plays talking books and music and is specifically designed for use by people with print disabilities, including blindness, impaired vision, and dyslexia.

Council recognises the importance of this technology and has delivered a series of Daisy Player demonstration sessions to introduce this new product to library users, who can now borrow a Daisy Player from any of the three libraries in our network, which are conveniently located in the townships of Bellingen, Dorrigo and Urunga.



MEETING YOUR ASPIRATIONS: PLACES FOR PEOPLE

We have a diversity of beautiful spaces that foster community happiness and wellbeing

Council remains committed to delivering recreational facilities and multipurpose community spaces that accommodate artistic, cultural and social activities.

Bellinghen Main Street Master Plan

Council is investing in one of its key strategic priorities, the upgrade of signature local assets and infrastructure, via the staged delivery of the Bellinghen Main Street Beautification and Accessibility Project.

The project, which features four stages, aims to beautify our town centre, activate our central commercial and café precinct, and deliver pedestrian infrastructure and facilities which cater to the needs of all pedestrians.

The Church Street North Precinct Project is the fourth stage of works and builds on previous stages that have delivered significant streetscape improvements including new footpaths, disability ramps and crossings, seating, street lighting and high quality landscaped spaces.

Council secured an \$885,000 grant from the Stronger Country Communities Fund to deliver Stage Four works which were mostly completed during the reporting period. Items left to complete included the installation of a feature trellis shade structure along Church Street's al fresco dining strip.

Complimentary Stage Four works have also included the installation of new landscape walls, feature footpaths and cobble stones, kerb and guttering and road and carpark resurfacing.

The total value of investment for the Bellinghen Main Street Beautification and Accessibility Project is \$3.5 million, and once completed, will ensure Bellinghen's town centre is transformed into a beautiful, accessible and safe gathering space where tourism and commerce can flourish. The remaining stage being entrance statements will hopefully be funded so that the project can realise its full potential.



“We greatly appreciated the accessibility of planning staff and the range of ways that they sought community input.”

Kerry Pearse, Convenor, Bellingen Nambucca Affordable Housing Action Group

Memorial Hall

Memories will be brought back to life at Bellingen’s Memorial Hall thanks to almost \$4 million in grant funding that will see this iconic building restored to its former glory.

Our 90-year-old heritage listed hall, which was built to honour the 960 men and women from our shire who served in World War One, required significant investment including maintenance and repair works to prevent further deterioration.

Council staff worked tirelessly on grant submissions and secured a \$335,151 grant from the Stronger Country Communities Fund, \$92,243 in funding from the Heritage Near Me Activation Grants program and a further \$3.3 million grant from Create NSW’s Regional Cultural Fund.

Preliminary works have been undertaken by local tradesmen and artisans to restore the iconic Soldiers Window, repair leaking roof panels and address significant water damage issues on the upper floor.

By investing in its future, we have ensured our community will be able to create their own special memories in the Memorial Hall. This project will continue through to late 2021.



We have a mixture of affordable sustainable housing options for all in our community

Council has translated the community’s hopes and aspirations into a meaningful Growth Management Strategy for our Shire, which will guide decision-making and investment in the region for decades.

Growth Management Strategy

Working together is a winning combination for Bellingen Shire Council and the local community according to the Judges of the 2019 New South Wales Local Government Professionals Excellence Awards.

That’s because our collaborative efforts to develop a new Growth Management Strategy for our Shire were recently announced as the winner of the Awards’ Community Partnerships and Collaboration Category.

Council’s submission featured our Homes for Our Future Community Engagement Project, which saw council and our community come together to create a shared vision on how to sustainably manage growth in the shire and maintain its existing character.

Engagement activities focussed on identifying our community’s long-term views on how we wanted our shire to grow, our priorities for future planning and ideas on how to address complex challenges facing our shire.

Council’s Strategic Land Use Planning Team gathered feedback from a truly diverse range of stakeholders and engaged with more than 500 community members, collected 250 detailed submissions and logged 1900 comments during the Homes for Our Future Community Engagement Project.

This shared vision has subsequently been used to translate the community’s hopes and aspirations into a meaningful Growth Management Strategy for our shire, which will guide decision-making and investment in the region for decades.

We are connected and able to move around in a safe, accessible, affordable, healthy and environmentally friendly way

Council's strategic asset management planning activities and investment strategies have guided Shire wide road and bridge infrastructure maintenance and renewal activities including the staged delivery of footpaths and cycleways.

Investing in Infrastructure

Our road and bridge networks present council with a suite of significant challenges, given that 28% of our urban roads and 41% of our rural roads are in a poor condition, and that we also manage the fourth largest timber bridge network (by length), in the state.

Addressing these challenges remains a priority for council, however asset management planning activities that focus on the financial sustainability and management of our asset base, has allowed council to employ a strategic approach towards infrastructure maintenance, repair and renewal.

This strategic approach continues to guide council's investment in its road and bridge network infrastructure, which has featured the following activities and achievements:

Road Network: Our road network renewal program has resurfaced an additional 16 kilometres of poor condition sealed roads, reducing our worst condition rural sealed road length from a total of 109 kilometres down to 67 kilometres.

Council has also reconstructed 3.5 kilometres of road that was in too poor a condition to reseal, which has reduced the level of roads in poor condition by 15%, and council's adopted Special Rate Variation investments have funded the completion of 61% of our sealed road renewal works backlog.

80 kilometres of our unsealed road network has also been graded, which equates to 40% of the total network, and gravel re-sheeting works were undertaken on 7.8 kilometres of the network.

Bridge Network: Council has conducted a detailed assessment of its 85 timber bridge assets, 22 of which were subject to load limits during the review period.

This activity has informed the development of our Timber Bridge Rehabilitation and Renewal Program, which features an investment program of \$29 million during the next 11 years, representing council's most significant infrastructure investment to date.

Timber Bridge Rehabilitation and Renewal Program data has also provided council with the supportive information necessary to lodge robust grant funding submissions which have resulted in the injection of a further \$3.98 million of funds into our bridge renewal program during the reporting period.

Our preliminary focus is the renewal or rehabilitation of council's load limited bridges, which has significantly impacted council's ability to provide essential access to commuters, the local agricultural and industrial sectors and subsequently, has also compromised the operations of our shire's emergency service agencies and utility providers.

During the reporting period however, council's maintenance teams have worked tirelessly to significantly reduce the shire's total of 22 load limited bridges down to 15, with a further 10 load limited timber bridges programmed for rehabilitation or renewal works for the next financial year.

In May 2018 council also championed the formation of the Mid North Coast Joint Organisation (MNCJO), with Port Macquarie Hastings and Kempsey Shire Councils to collaborate with key stakeholders and lobby the State Government to support our regional priorities.

These efforts have led to council leading the development of the MNJCO Timber Bridge Renewal Prospectus, which represents a \$20.5 million investment to address a total of 91 bridges or 42% of the regions ageing timber bridges

Road Improvements in 2018/19

ROAD NAME	AMOUNT
Bowraville Road	40,803
Heavy Patching and Resealing*	51,136
Kerb & Gutter Renewal*	58,741
Martells Road*	3,316
North Bank Road*	215,200
Cedar Street Dorrigo*	11,273
Coramba Road*	3,397
Darkwood Road Thora*	95,667
Deervale Road Dorrigo*	14,978
Elliston Lane Urunga*	12,000
Gordonville Road Gleniffer *	39,207
Gravel Re-sheeting*	164,693
Guardrail Renewal*	21,786
Hickory Street Dorrigo*	66,400
Hydes Creek Road Hydes Creek*	61,160
Kalang Road*	296,467
Lourdes Ave Urunga*	12,471
Marina Crescent Urunga*	4,957
Marshall Place Newry Rd*	5,895
Martells Road - Brierfield*	420,374
Martells Road*	6,960
Moonpah Road*	8,108
Moore Place Bellingen*	6,501
Muldiva Road*	2,240
Myrtle Street Dorrigo*	26,924
Newry Island Drive Urunga*	20,630
North Street Raleigh - Repton*	228,523
Old Coast Road Dorrigo*	13,638
Renewals Unsealed Roads*	198,499
Repton Road Repton*	14,282
Scotchmans Road Bellingen*	37,245
Shepherds Road Dorrigo*	20,743
South Arm Road Urunga*	76,867
Summervilles Road*	80,813

ROAD NAME	AMOUNT
Tyringham Street Dorrigo*	7,861
Valery Road*	235,872
Vernon Close Urunga*	25,269
Vine Street Dorrigo*	22,738
Whiskey Creek Rd Dorrigo*	39,444
Yellow Rock Road - Raleigh*	185,297
Yellow Rock Road Urunga*	13,208
Roses Bridge - Roses Rd*	153,751
Summervilles Road*	18,353
Valery Road*	21,617
Total	3,065,304
Roses Bridge - Roses Rd*	153,751
Summervilles Road*	18,353
Valery Road*	21,617
Total	3,066,650

BRIDGE NAME	AMOUNT
Cleavers Bridge - Darkwood Road	11,315
Cob O Corn Bridge - Reids Road	34,125
Duffys Bridge - Kalang Road	18,700
Feeneys Bridge	198,572
Johnsens Bridge - Johnsens Rd	17,872
Newry Island Bridge seal	6,744
Plains Bridge	198,418
Rodgers Bridge	60,986
Whiskey Creek Bridge	188,103
Total	734,835

*SRV funding used

We have the facilities and services needed to be a healthy and active community

Council provides infrastructure to encourage active participation in a range of active and healthy recreational pursuits and supports community organisations that promote healthy lifestyle practices.

Hungry Head Bike Track

Stage Four of the Hungry Head Pathway Project has connected Hungry Head's beautiful beaches to the recreational oasis of Urunga at the mouth of the Kalang and Bellinger Rivers.

The 1.4 kilometre, 2.5 metre wide shared pathway is part of Council's staged investment strategy to provide our community with facilities that support and promote an active and healthy lifestyle.

So far, stages one to four have delivered 3.4 kilometres of pathway that provide a safe environment for pedestrians and cyclists and encourage a range of complimentary sporting and recreational pursuits.



Atherton Drive Master Plan

The Atherton Drive foreshore precinct is located north of the Urunga central business district and features a four hectare, 1.3 kilometre strip of public land along the shores of the beautiful Kalang River.

Recognising the foreshore serves as an iconic gateway to the Kalang River and Urunga, Council extensively engaged with the community and collaborated with the Bellinger Heads State Park Trust and Crown Lands to co-develop the Atherton Drive Master Plan.

This initiative brought council and the community together throughout a Master Planning process creating a shared vision on how best to preserve and enhance the significant scenic qualities and recreational values of the area.

The Master Plan will now guide the future use and development of the precinct, which will be progressively implemented as resources and funding become available.

Preliminary grants totalling \$504,000 have progressed riverbank erosion and bank stabilisation works. Future stages of the Master Plan identify the following priorities:

- The Kalang Riverside Walk, a 2.5 metre shared pedestrian / cycleway following the foreshore;
- Strategic installation of 'vista friendly' barbeque facilities and park furniture suites throughout the precinct;
- Improved boating infrastructure and soft launching access to the river;
- New public amenities; and
- Atherton Drive upgrade works to retain a vehicular circuit through the foreshore area.

North Beach Surf Club Redevelopment

To support community organisations that promote access to recreational and sporting activities, Council secured a \$54,000 grant from the Stronger Country Communities Fund to refurbish the Bellinger Valley North Beach Surf Club.

The club house refurbishment addressed potential safety issues that would affect patrolling operations and improved access to the facility to accommodate all patrons including people with disability, seniors, young families and children.

In parallel, an application to Stronger Country Communities Grant Fund was submitted to build a 540m pathway in Mylestom which will improve accessibility and promote recreational opportunities in the area.



MEETING YOUR ASPIRATIONS: LIVING ENVIRONMENT

We reduce, reuse and recycle

Council's journey to improve its waste management facilities, services and performance has been supported via a suite of strategic investments in alternative waste technologies to optimise service delivery and environmental sustainability.

Waste Management

Council's journey to improve its waste management facilities, services and performance commenced 12 years ago with a suite of strategic investments in alternative waste technologies to optimise service delivery and environmental sustainability.

Our efforts were recognised in the last NSW Local Government Waste and Recovery Data Report, which ranked Bellingen Shire as the number one recycler in NSW for diverting an impressive 80% of kerbside waste collected from landfill.

Bellingen Shire was also one of the first in the state to introduce a three bin system, which no doubt contributed towards our exemplar diversion rates, with food organics and garden organics (FOGO) collected by the green bin and material collected from the red bins diverted and processed at an alternative waste treatment facility in our region.

Council collects 7740 bins per week and operates three transfer stations at the Waste Management Facilities. Investment in best practice and innovative systems also continues today via the staged upgrade of our three waste management facilities located at Bellingen, Dorrigo and Raleigh to improve sustainability outcomes and customer service levels at all three sites.

Features of our \$866,000 investment in recent upgrade works have included:

Raleigh Waste Management Centre

- Community Recycling Centre - residents can dispose of problem waste household items free of charge;
- E-waste disposal - council has partnered with a resource recovery provider to recycle e-waste and prevent e-resources from going to landfill;
- Weighbridge - weighbridge data will assist with identifying better waste management practices; and
- Polystyrene recycling - polystyrene is reprocessed and recycled.

Bellingen Transfer Station

- new operational concrete hard-stand and asphalt reseal works;
- two new compactor bins and unloading zone awning; and
- improved operational site configuration and drainage upgrades.



We live sustainably and reduce our ecological footprint and contribution to climate change

Our Climate Challenge

Our commitment to invest ethically has seen council work collaboratively with NSW Treasury to investigate and identify sustainable investment options and map our divestment from the fossil fuel industry.

This collaborative approach has seen 61% of council's total investment funds being strategically placed with institutions divested of the fossil fuel industry, and a further 34% invested in accordance with the NSW Treasury Corporation's Environmental, Social and Governance framework.

Council's ongoing solar investment program has also produced more than 220kW of free and renewable power, the savings from which have been reinvested into our \$285,000 Revolving Energy Fund (REF) to address our next priority project, the shire's water and wastewater facilities.

Our revolving reinvestment approach has also delivered \$90,000 towards funding the staged roll out of solar PV systems and has already reduced our carbon emissions by more than 465 tonnes which equates to 6,708,879 kilometres driven by an average passenger vehicle.

In March 2019 council also declared a state of climate emergency and is currently developing the agenda for a Climate Emergency Workshop scheduled late 2019 to examine our community strategic plan, works program and planning documents, to operationalise our emergency declaration.

To support these efforts, council is also currently reviewing its Emission Reduction Program to identify opportunities to reduce its carbon footprint to leverage off significant advances in technology and community expertise and setting stronger targets to reflect those advancements.

We protect and enhance our biodiversity

Never Never Reserves restoration

The Gleniffer Reserves Masterplan outlines sustainable management solutions for these reserves, and during the reporting period council worked in partnership with the Never Never Catchment Group to deliver one of the priority actions identified via the Master Plan.

The \$179,000 Earl Preston Reserve Restoration Project saw council collaborate with the New South Wales Government's Environmental Trust and Soil Conservation Services, and featured instream riverbank stabilisation works and the restoration and rehabilitation of 1.6 hectares of riparian zone land within the reserve.

Coastal Management Program

Our 2027 Community Vision confirms that we will work together with our community to protect and enhance our living environment, by providing opportunities to become informed, educated and get involved.

That's why council has commenced Stage One of our Coastal Management Program (CMP), which invites our community to participate in a preliminary scoping activity that will establish CMP objectives, determine key coastal management issues and review current management practises.

Stage One of the CMP is being co-funded by council's Environmental Levy and the NSW Government Coastal and Estuary Grants scheme. This provides our community with an exciting opportunity to address key issues within our coastal catchments and prioritise management activities during the next 10 years.

We work together to protect and enhance our environment

Environmental Levy Fund

During the reporting period, council invested more than \$511,000 of Environmental Levy funds towards 18 projects, and \$40,000 via the Levy's Community Fund Grant Program, to support eight community groups to deliver projects that provide positive environmental and sustainability outcomes.

The Bellingen Riverwatch project received a community grant of \$5,000 to deliver a citizen science program to monitor and care for the health of the Bellingen and Kalang Rivers.

The project is led by 25 local community volunteers and five schools, which collect monthly water quality data to develop an evidence-based approach towards monitoring river system health and support conservation actions for endangered species.

Bellingen Riverwatch volunteers and research data also contributed to a multi-agency response to a 2015 mortality event, where 90% of the estimated 4,500 snapping turtles living in the Bellingen River were wiped out by a virus within three months.

In May 2019, thanks to the collaborative efforts of the NSW Government, Bellingen Riverwatch volunteers, council's Sustainability Team and Taronga Zoo staff, snapping turtles from the zoo's successful captive breeding program were released into the Bellingen River to boost the numbers of this endangered species.

Gleniffer Reserves Master Plan

Nestled at the base of the Great Dividing Range, the Promised Land in Gleniffer is one of the hidden gems of our shire featuring idyllic waterholes in the crystal clear waters of the Never Never River.

Council has invested \$250,000 to develop The Gleniffer Reserves Masterplan, which aims to promote passive outdoor recreational opportunities, and provide sustainable design and management solutions and guide usage of the site.

Council has also developed a Plan of Management, which provides a regulatory framework on suitable and permissible activities and establishes the physical

and social carrying capacity of the reserves to achieve a symbiotic relationship between visitors the natural eco system.

A Vegetation Management Plan has also been developed, addressing ongoing land and social management issues across the four reserves, and has guided the significant investment of more than \$100,000 of instream works at Arthur Keough Reserve.

These works addressed impacts associated with vehicular access to the riparian zone and involved the removal of a compacted gravel bench and installation of four instream abutments to invigorate and disrupt water flow, as well as the removal of invasive weeds.

A key objective of this work was to also deepen the river at this location and encourage swimming and recreation back to this area of the reserve and away from areas where there is no complimentary infrastructure in place.

Council also secured funding from Destination NSW to install digital interpretive signage at four strategic locations within the reserve to help visitors identify ways to reduce their environmental footprint.

Advantages of the digital signage include the ability to regularly update content with complimentary messages that relate to environmental management initiatives, native flora and fauna, Indigenous and European history.

Great Koala Park

Council has collaborated with Destination North Coast and Destination Coffs Coast to identify opportunities to protect one of our greatest commercial assets, our natural environment and its flora and fauna.

Consequently, with only 20,000 koalas remaining in New South Wales, council has provided seed funding to develop a business case to attract funding that will support the work of the Great Koala National Park initiative.

The initiative secures additional habitat for koalas to establish a sustainable population within protected State Forest areas located in our shire and aligns with our own Koala Plan of Management.

We have clean water which is protected and used sustainably

Council's own ongoing Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy which aims to optimise the water, wastewater and stormwater services and ensure we are resilient community that is prepared for the future challenges our ever changing environment presents us.

Investing in the Shire's Water Future

With drought still impacting our region, water security has never been more important so Council has invested in the shire's water future, with a new two megalitre drinking water reservoir at South Bellingen, and a new 90 kilolitre wastewater pump station at Urunga having just come online.

The two projects, which follow a \$9m investment at Dorrigo's waste water treatment plant, were constructed during the past 12 months, have doubled Bellingen's drinking water storage capacity and tripled the capacity and performance of Urunga's Pilot Street wastewater pump station.

Council invested close to \$2.5 million to ensure Bellingen had access to clean drinking water and to protect the environmental health of the Bellinger and Kalang Rivers.

Previously, in the event of major treatment plant, pump or power failure Bellingen had to rely on its 0.9 mega litre reservoir, which provided less than one days' emergency drinking water supply.

The new reinforced concrete reservoir stands 12 metres tall, has a diameter of 16 metres and boasts a two mega litre capacity, so Bellingen's emergency drinking water supply has more than doubled.

Council's new Urunga Pilot Street wastewater pump station facility has also significantly improved upon the 30 kilolitre capacity and performance of the old pump station.

The new pump station's 90 kilolitre capacity and improved infrastructure will enable the facility to meet the needs of the Urunga community, inclusive of a South Urunga 300 lot subdivision currently under construction, and accept additional loads in the future from Mylestom, Repton and the Raleigh Industrial Estate.

Council has also committed \$10 million and secured a further \$10 million in State Government funds to develop detailed designs and deliver the Coastal Villages Sewer Project, which will connect seaboard homes and properties to a reticulated sewer network protect the environmental health of the Bellinger and Kalang Rivers.



MEETING YOUR ASPIRATIONS: CIVIC LEADERSHIP

Council is an organisation that embraces business excellence

Council has had to be innovative, brave and resourceful to balance the needs of the organisation with community aspirations and it is encouraging to see what can be achieved when we all work together.

Our Financial Future is Bright

Council commissioned University of Technology Sydney (UTS) to conduct an independent review of council's financial sustainability, to provide recommendations on potential areas for improvement and inform future corporate planning processes.

The review examined council's performance across 45 unique metrics and compared our performance with 15 comparable New South Wales local government authorities responsible for water and sewer businesses.

The review examined and reported on the following: technical efficiency, expenditure/staffing, water, sewer, roads, depreciation, profit/loss, cash flow/liquidity, assets/liability, debt/borrowings, infrastructure, budget accuracy, relationship between income and service provision (nexus rate), population/demographics.

The review found council is performing well despite a variety of challenges faced, including local government reform, funding constraints, infrastructure and maintenance costs and a low proportion of rateable land across the shire.

The key findings of the UTS report were:

- Council has achieved two consecutive operating surpluses in recent years (2017 and 2018). By delivering small surpluses, UTS believe that Council has struck the right balance between achieving surpluses that are too high (inappropriate taxation);
- 'Councils current assets outweigh its liabilities. This is a good outcome for future residents and is testament to the prudent and ethical conduct of Council's finances'; and
- 'Council has been increasing the level of spending on asset maintenance for each of the three years analysed, which is consistent with the profile of a council making prudent and steady improvements to its overall financial sustainability

These findings are accompanied by recommendations of further initiatives which will be systematically implemented and reported through our Audit and Risk Committee. The findings are especially rewarding as they have been enabled by a systematic process of significant organisational reform supported by the current and previous elected councils, involving corporate structure, work practices, leadership, organisational culture and financial sustainability delivering a transition from an operating deficit of \$9M to a surplus of \$0.4M (2018).

UTS report author, Associate Professor Joseph Drew noted that:

'It is our conclusion that Council's long-term financial sustainability is tracking well. In particular, the improving technical efficiency, low levels of debt, prudent spending, and the steady improvement in asset condition all indicate that Council is doing an extraordinarily successful job in challenging conditions'.

'The future looks bright for the residents of Bellingen Shire Council and they can have the utmost faith in the stewardship of council'.

Professor Roberta Ryan added, "Associate Professor Joseph Drew is "the most cited academic in the most prestigious journal in the world in his field".

Customer Experience Standards

Our journey begins with the creation of a customer service culture amongst our employees, and it continues as we roll out continuous improvement initiatives to maintain and enhance our customer experiences across no less than 31 individual council services.

To promote a cycle of continuous improvement, Ratelt tablets were installed at Bellingen's Customer Service Centre to seek real time feedback from customers, to identify experience satisfaction ratings and to provide feedback on opportunities to improve our current service levels.

Data from the 279 surveys completed since the Ratelt tablets were installed in July 2018, identify council's average customer experience score is 8.8 out of 10, with 70% of respondents confirming their expectations were exceeded.

The 2017/18 facts and figures below demonstrate our successes given the challenges faced.



Additionally, Bellingen Shire Council’s Customer & Business Services Team also won the 2019 National Local Government Customer Service Network Awards’ *Customer Service Team of the Year* Category for the second time since their last win at the Award’s Inaugural 2015 event.

Work Health and Safety & SafetyNet

The proactive, efficient and effective management of Work Health and Safety and Return to Work of injured workers during the reporting period has produced the following performance highlights and Local Regional Group of Councils (LRG) data comparisons:

- Our premium rate of 1.81% is below the LRG rate of 2.36% and premium costs have decreased by 70% since 2010;
- Our claim frequency per 100 employees is 2.94 compared to the LRG’s 5.87;
- 100% of incidents were reported to StateCover within 48 hours;
- Our average claim cost is lower than the LRG’s average of \$8,932; and
- Implementation of our SafetyNet corporate safety management system.

Ongoing review

As part of Council’s transformation journey, our Executive Team with the support of UTS, undertook an extensive Service Delivery Review addressing our organisational effectiveness and strategic capacity to deliver on council’s priorities.

The review featured extensive engagement with staff and identified opportunities to enhance programs, reduce costs and improve efficiency, accountability and communication across the organisation, which has resulted in implementation of structural changes and functional improvements.

Further, to support current service delivery and better position the organisation to address emerging challenges in the future, ongoing outcomes will be measured through identified metrics and reported through the Audit and Risk Committee.

Digital transformation

Council’s Digital Transformation Project will deliver a new enterprise software system and IT infrastructure to accommodate our progressive transition towards automation, improved customer service and a contemporary managed service platform.

The project, which is being rolled out in accordance with our Project Governance Framework, is being led by a dedicated project management team who are actively engaged with the broader organisation during its staged delivery.

New software system modules are currently being deployed and with the project’s anticipated completion date of mid-2021, council’s aim to incorporate modern and responsive solutions into its service delivery model is one step closer.

REFLECT - Improved Asset Management

Council has invested significant internal resources to develop Reflect, an in-house infrastructure asset management, inspection and decision support tool that provides office and field based staff with the flexibility to capture and track maintenance requests, incidents, asset defects and maintenance activities.

The Reflect system also integrates seamlessly with council's enterprise software suite, features an intuitive user interface and employs risk based metrics to prioritise the scheduling of repair and maintenance activities, in turn protecting council against potential public liability claims.

The Reflect system has also consolidated multiple processes into a single platform, which has enabled council to gain a holistic view of its asset network and associated management requirements and this data continues to inform the organisations strategic planning decisions.

Our community is informed and engaged with a strong sense of civic leadership

Council has collaborated with our community to identify their shared aspirations and has enhanced its corporate structure and operational resources to develop our community engagement capacity and inform Council decisions.

Why Local Government Matters

Social research conducted by local government experts from the University of Technology Sydney (UTS), has confirmed Bellinghen Shire is an extraordinary place to live.

The Why Local Government Matters (WLGGM) research was championed by Bellinghen Shire Council and saw the Mid North Coast Joint Organisation of Councils commission UTS to investigate how and why residents value the activities and role of local government.

WLGGM revealed regional councils tend to demonstrate a 'roads, rates and rubbish' view, however Bellinghen's data has bucked that trend, and is more aligned with the national sentiment of placing a greater value on a wider range of services provided by councils.

Our community is also particularly sceptical of market-based service delivery models, and prefers a direct government service delivery model for essential services and infrastructure, with a greater emphasis on participatory decision-making.

These results align with the strategic intent of the Shire of Bellinghen 2027 Community Vision, which articulates Council's role as the custodian of collaborative efforts to identify and reflect community aspirations to inform council decisions.

That's why council commissioned UTS to conduct a separate review of our organisation and identify the corporate structure and operational resources necessary to support the establishment of a deliberative community panel.

Accordingly, council has invested in suite of continuous improvement activities during the reporting period to develop and operationalise our community engagement capacity, inclusive of the following:

- UTS WLGGM research project;
- whole-of-shire survey to identify/recruit demographically representative deliberative community panel members;
- Recruitment of Executive Manager Organisational Strategy & Communications and Communications & Engagement Specialist positions; and
- International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) training and certification of 18 Senior Leadership Team members and the establishment of a deliberative community panel.

Investing in resources that enhance an understanding of local issues and facilitate opportunities to reflect, discuss and question information will empower the community to discover their shared aspirations, and inform strategic planning and decision making that guides the future of our shire.

'Create' Engagement Hub

Our 2027 Community Vision articulates council's role as the custodian of collaborative efforts to identify and reflect community aspirations to inform council decisions.

Accordingly, to support leadership and innovation by both council and community, we introduced Create, an online engagement platform that facilitates two way dialogue and provides the opportunity to reflect, discuss and question information.

Create has also enabled council to establish a new network of collaborative links with individuals, community groups and our business community, which has proven to be an ingenious and inventive way of discovering and delivering innovative solutions to the shared challenges we face.

Since its inception in 2017, Create has informed the community of 66 projects and has received 26,200 visits and logged 1,680 submissions from 893 people, and during the reporting period, Create featured 20 projects which attracted 4,200 visits and 253 submissions from 198 people.

Council is proactive in representing the needs of our community

Council has established a platform to work collaboratively with our community and advocate on their behalf to increase our capacity as a local government to address and fund the opportunities and challenges our Shire presents.

Regional collaboration and advocacy

In May 2018 Council drove the formation of the Mid North Coast Joint Organisation (MNCJO), with Port Macquarie Hastings and Kempsey Shire Councils.

Building on our reputation for championing regional collaboration and advocacy, both as an individual council and via the Mid North Coast Region of Councils (MIDROC), council instigated the WLGm initiative with the MNCJO and led the development of the MNJCO Timber Bridge Renewal Prospectus, which represents a \$20 million investment to address a total of 91 bridges or 41% of the regions ageing timber bridges.





STATUTORY AND OTHER INFORMATION



Community Engagement Activities

Council regularly engages with the community on diverse issues that may influence or affect the community and uses meaningful tools to ensure that the community is informed, has opportunities to contribute to the policy making process and is educated about matters that may impact their lives.

In line with Council's Community Engagement Framework the following methods were utilised to share information and seek feedback as well as promote the services and projects of Council.

- Regular paid advertising in local newspapers
- Media Releases distributed to local media or posted online.
- Community updates regarding local infrastructure including letterbox drops to affected residents and stakeholders
- Reinstatement of the fortnightly Mayoral columns for Bellingen Shire Courier Sun newspaper
- 2 of 4 Quarterly Community Newsletters produced and distributed
- Create Project newsletters

Community Surveys via Survey Monkey:

- Customer Service Survey - ongoing
- Surveys for projects via Create website (see below)

Workshops & Forums/Community Meetings

This list does not include the Youth Centre or regular Library activities.

- Inclusive Tourism Workshops in Urunga, Bellingen and Dorrigo
- Healthy Business, Healthy You workshops.
- Annual Engagement workshops held to refine and update Engagement Toolkit including incorporation of Deliberative Engagement.
- Disability Awareness Training
- Monthly meetings with Chambers of Commerce
- 26 events supported include EJ Mantova art prize, Readers and Writers Festival, Bellingen youth Orchestra, A Day on the Hill in Dorrigo, Arts Council of Dorrigo youth workshops and street sculpture, Camp creative, 2 BBB outdoor broadcasting, Growing (In) visible art exhibition.
- 6 Wellbeing and Enablement workshops held including carers and clients.

Community Celebration Activities:

- NAIDOC Week Celebration
- International Day of People with Disability - Ian Cooper Awards
- Children's Book Week
- Mental Health Month
- Citizenship Ceremonies held in Council Chambers
- Australia Day Awards and Community Celebrations
- Library Lovers Day
- National Youth Week
- Seniors Week Festival
- Anzac Day Recognition with Library display and educational presentation

Create Community Engagement Hub

On 30 January 2017 Council launched its online public engagement platform using the Bang the Table software platform.

Intended to supplement existing engagement activities, this tool has enabled Council to have a one-stop-shop to distribute information, conduct surveys, add images and videos as well as gather feedback on its current projects and services. During the reporting period July 2018 to June 2019 the following 22 projects were published on Create which attracted 4,200 site visits with 224 engaged visitors logged.

- Bellingen Coastal Management Program
- Bellingen Main Street Project – Church Street North Precinct
- Bellingen Memorial Hall
- Bellingen Shire Timber Bridge Renewal Program
- Bellingen Shire Signage Strategy
- Biodiversity Strategy 2019
- Community Fire Updates
- Councillor Community Forums
- Bellingen Town Centre Beautification
- Customer and Business Services Activity
- Bellingen Town Centre Beautification
- Draft Housing Strategy
- F.O.I Public Art Works in Church Street North
- Mylestom Pathway Project
- Hungry Head Lagoon Entrance Management Strategy
- Lower Bellinger and Kalang Rivers Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan
- Our Financial Future Look Bright
- Property Leases and Licences Policy
- Reclassify Land at Lookout Road from Community to Operational
- Stronger Country Communities Fund
- Town Centre Car Parking Strategies
- Why Local Government Matters

Special Variations in General Income

Special Rate Variation 2014/15

The ordinary rates include an 11.8% Special Rate Variation which was approved by the Minister in June 2014. The SRV applies to all rateable land within the Shire.

The 2014/15 SRV generated approximately \$0.61M in additional revenue in 2018/19, and is estimated to generate an additional \$6.42M over the first 10 years. The increase is funding, and servicing a loan of \$4.85M for Councils capital works program to address the transport infrastructure backlog, and additional maintenance on the road network. The \$0.61M SRV funds were spent in the following way:

- Repayment of loan \$0.48M (subsidised by an interest rate subsidy under the Local Government Infrastructure Renewals Scheme)
- Roads Maintenance expenditure \$0.13M

All expenditure in 2018/19 was made in accordance with the approved SRV application and Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal Determination.

Special Rate Variation 2017/18 – 2020/21

In addition to the 2014/15 SRV, the ordinary rates include two of the four consecutive 6% Special Rate Variation's which were approved by the Minister in May 2017 and May 2018. The SRV's apply to all rateable land within the Shire.

The first two consecutive 6% SRV's generated approximately \$0.59M in additional revenue in 2018/19, expecting to generate an additional \$6.8M over the first 10 years. The increase is partially funding Councils capital works road reseal program to address the transport infrastructure backlog. The \$0.59M SRV funds were spent in the following way:

- Roads resealing program \$0.59M

All expenditure in 2018/19 was made in accordance with the approved SRV application and Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal Determination.

Environmental Levy Projects 2018-2019

Introduction

Bellingen Shire Council applied to the Minister for Local Government in May 2005 for a special variation to General Income for environmental projects. On the 30th June 2005 Council received notice that an increase of 4% was approved on an on-going basis.

As identified in the Shire of Bellingen 2030 Community Vision, the environment levy supports the implementation of projects to achieve the strategic directions, outcomes and aspirations for the future from our local community. The key focus areas are as follows;

- Invasive plant management;
- Biodiversity management;
- Coastal and river ecosystem management;
- Sustainable food production;
- Climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Expenditure of the Environmental Levy budget for the 2018/19 financial year to the value of \$240,418

Summary

PROJECT	FUNDING
Biodiversity Strategy	85,000
Past project maintenance	25,000
River & Biodiversity Community support, assistance and grant application/scoping time	25,988
Weeds Action Program	40,000
Fish Habitat Action Grant (FHAG) implementation	22,800
Bellingen Shire Roadside Environmental Management Plan	10,570
Bellinger Riverwatch 'Our River, Our Future'	15,560
Bellingen Landcare Incorporated	7500
Bellingen Urban Landcare - \$8k (plus a further \$20k from reserve (total \$28k)	8,000
TOTAL	\$240,418

Overseas Visits

There were no overseas visits undertaken by Councillors, Council Staff or other persons representing the Council during the period 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019

Elected Members' Expenses

Mayor and Councillor Fees

The total fees paid to the Mayor and Councillors in 2018-19 was \$110,097 compared to \$105,290 in 2017-18.

Councillor Support and Expenses

EXPENSES	2017-18 \$	2018-19 \$
Councillor support and provision of facilities (including provision of dedicated office equipment allocated to councillors and telephone calls made by councillors)	8,205	7,131
Attendance at conferences and seminars	8,672	3,689
Training of councillors and provision of skill development	6,234	9,620
Interstate visits undertaken during the year by councillors while representing the council, including the cost of transport, the cost of accommodation and other out-of-pocket travelling expenses	0	0
Overseas visits by councillors while representing the council, including the cost of transport, the cost of accommodation and other out of pocket travelling expenses	0	0
Expenses of any spouse, partner or other person who accompanied a councillor in the performance of his or her civic functions	0	2,418
Expenses involved in the provision of care for a child or an immediate family member of a councillor	105,290	110,097
Fees paid to Mayor and Councillors	6,575	7,154
Motor Vehicle Allowances	9,624	8,723
Mayoral vehicle operational costs and depreciation	32,095	32,095
Insurance costs for Councillors and Officers liability		
Total costs for the year	176,695	182,861

Major Contracts (Greater than \$150,000) Awarded

GOODS OR SERVICES	TOTAL CONTRACT VALUE \$,000	SUPPLIERS
Replacement of existing bridge	\$,000	Suppliers
Provision of electricity and metering services	600	ERM - Contestable Sites AGL - Street Lighting
Supply of pre-cast bridge components	150	Various Panel
Remediation of land slip	283	Specialist Site Services
Scheduled plant replacement	267	UD Trucks

Legal Proceedings

Council was not formally involved in any legal proceedings in the 2018/19 financial year, other than undertakings regarding recovering rates which are reported in the financial statements..

MATTER	ISSUE	STATUS/RESULT	EXPENSES	RECEIVED
Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil

Works Subsidised on Private Land

No resolutions were made during this period concerning work subsidised by Council and carried out on private land.

Donations and Contributions

Community Support and Community Event Sponsorship Funds

Community Event Sponsorship Fund

ORGANISATION	CONTRIBUTION (\$)
Bellingen River Agricultural Society (EJ Mantova Memorial Art Prize)	\$1,200
The Grub Club (Sgt Matthew Locke MG Charity Event)	\$3,000
Bellingen Readers & Writers Festival Inc. (Bellingen Readers & Writers Festival)	\$1,000
Bellingen River Agricultural Society (The Bellingen Show)	\$3,000
Bellingen Youth Orchestra (Music Under the Stars Event) BSC Ops support	\$5,000
Bellingen Neighbourhood Centre (Affordable Housing Local Solutions Forum)	\$5,000
Dorrigo Chamber of Commerce (A Day on the Hill)	\$1,650
Arts Council of the Dorrigo (Youth Workshops)	\$1,200
SUB-TOTAL	\$21,050

The Community Support Fund

ORGANISATION	CONTRIBUTION (\$)
Gleniffer School of Arts (Purchase BBQ, dishwasher, trestle tables)	\$ 2,000
Camp Creative (3 x Scholarships for students)	\$ 726
Urunga Mylestom Chamber of Commerce (Seating, table, interpretive signs)	\$ 4,300
SUB-TOTAL	\$ 7,026

The Creative Placemaking Fund

ORGANISATION	CONTRIBUTION (\$)
2bbb (Extend outdoor coverage of Sgt Matthew Locke event weekend)	\$700
Nicole Hind and Bruce Jacups (Growing (in) Visible event and exhibition)	\$2,987
Arts Council of the Dorrigo (Street Sculpture project)	\$750
SUB-TOTAL	\$ 4,437

HERITAGE FUND GRANTS	LOCATION	\$
Repaint & repair external trimmings	34 Hyde Street Bellingen	\$1,030
Roof replacement & flashing repairs	39 Bellingen Street Urunga	\$2,000
Repaint part of building	1A Oak Street Bellingen	\$2,000
Roof repair / replacement	61 Hyde Street Bellingen	\$3,000
Restoration of interior vestibule	19 Cudgery Street Dorrigo	\$3,000
Restoration of two stained glass windows	100 Hyde Street Bellingen	\$2,800
Remove roller door & replace with timber & glass entry door	6A Church Street Bellingen	\$2,001
Fix, render and paint wall and remove signage	40 Hyde Street Bellingen	\$1547
	SUB-TOTAL	\$17,378

TOTAL	\$49,891
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The total actual amount contributed or otherwise granted by Council under Section 356 of the Act for 2018-19 was \$49,891.

Functions Delegated by Council

External bodies that exercised functions delegated by Council during the period were:

ORGANISATION	CONTRIBUTION (\$)
EXTERNAL BODIES	
Clarence Regional Library Committee	Library Service
NSW Rural Fire Service	Rural Fire Services
COMMUNITY COMMITTEES (SECTION 355 NSW LGA 1993)	
Audit Committee	Monitor, review and advise Council on matters of accountability and internal control
Australia Day Committee	Australia Day Activities
Bellingen Citizens Centre Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Centre
Bellingen Island Reserve Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Reserve
Bellingen Memorial Hall Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Hall
Bellingen Shire Youth Centre	Care, Control and Management of the Bellingen Shire Youth Hub
Bellingen/Connell Park Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Parks
Bellingen Valley Historical Society Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Bellingen and Urunga Museums
Brierfield Hall Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Hall

ORGANISATION	CONTRIBUTION (\$)
Burdett Park Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Park
Deervale Hall and Recreation Reserve Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Hall and Reserve
Dorrigo Public Hall Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Centre
Dorrigo Recreation Grounds Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Reserve
Dorrigo Saleyards Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Saleyards
Hickory House and Neighbourhood Bus Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Centre
Megan Hall and Recreation Reserve Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Hall and Reserve
Mylestom Hall Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Hall
North Bellingen Children's Centre Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Centre
North Dorrigo Recreation Reserve Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Reserve
Raleigh Hall and Recreation Reserve Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Hall and Reserve
Thora Community Hall Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Hall
Urunga Literary Institute and Senior Citizens Centre Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Centre and the Literary Institute Hall
Urunga Recreation Reserve Management Committee	Care, Control and Management of the Reserve

Corporations, Partnerships, Joint Ventures or Other Bodies in which Council Held a Controlling Interest

Council did not participate in any corporations, partnerships, joint ventures or other bodies in which it held a controlling interest.

Corporations, Partnerships, Joint Ventures or Other Bodies in Which the Council Participated

ORGANISATION	ROLE
Southern Phone Company Limited	Shareholder
Arts Mid North Coast	Board Member
Mid North Coast Weight of Loads Group	Member
Hunter Councils Inc. - Regional Procurement Initiative	Partner
Statewide Mutual Limited	Member, Board Member
StateCover Mutual Limited	Member
Mid North Coast Regional Organisation of Councils	Member
Mid North Coast Joint Organisation	Member

ORGANISATION	ROLE
Coffs Coast Regional Waste Services	Member
Our Living Coast Regional Sustainability Alliance	Member

Implementation of Workplace Equity and Diversity Plan

The priorities for Council's human resources and organisational development activities are driven by the Workplace Equity and Diversity Plan 2014-2018. Council has worked towards addressing a number of action items contained in the plan and is committed to being an inclusive organisation by continuing to hold strong relationships with the local aboriginal, aged care, people with disability and youth services community members.

Council has facilitated and participated in NAIDOC Week events, school holiday programs at its libraries and continues to facilitate citizenship ceremonies. Staff of Council have been offered opportunities to participate in Disability Awareness training, Mental Health First Aid and R U OK? wellbeing programs.

As an activity of the Work Health and Safety Committee, council is in the process of developing a Health and Wellbeing Policy and has conducted a staff survey in order to progress the development and implementation of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

A number of young people have been hired into the workforce through Council's apprentice and traineeship program with 4 staff commencing in the last 12 months that fall within the 15 - 24 year age bracket. Council has also drafted an MOU with Charles Sturt University to investigate opportunities for a cadet program.

Council has a number of women in non-traditional roles, particularly in the Sustainable Environment and Waste team. In addition to these positions, Council has recruited an additional 14 female staff in 2018/19 increasing the female headcount to 46.

Workplace Health and Safety

Bellingen Shire Council (BSC) has continued to improve its WHS systems, processes, and performance. Currently, BSC is implementing a new WHSMS, SafetyNET, which will be the framework for all safety systems and is an update of our current WHSMS. SafetyNET will include a review of all WHS policies and procedures, a complete review of all SWMS's and SOP's to ensure consistency with content, method, and relative legislation. SafetyNET will also see the introduction of online forms used to complete risk assessments, first aid treatment, workplace inspections, pre-starts, confined space permits, and any other WHS function which will benefit from such an approach.

Bellingen Shire Council is proactively managing its WHS responsibilities in the following ways:

- Introduction of SafetyNET;
- Health monitoring programs including lung screening, skin cancer checks, and flu shots;
- HSR training provided to all new HSR's;
- CPR training rolled out to existing first aiders to ensure currency;
- The establishment of a health and wellbeing workgroup as part of the HSC;
- The development of a Health and Wellbeing policy including a survey of workers to understand their wellbeing needs;
- The review of the WHS Policy to ensure it aligns with regulatory needs;
- The development of a Smoke-free Workplace policy;
- A review of EAP services including the provision of face to face counselling; and

- A stronger focus on workers compensation management.

Bellingen Shire Council is committed to a strong WHS culture and actively consults with our workers to achieve positive outcomes.

General Manager and Senior Staff Remuneration

Senior Staff Salaries

There are three positions within Council designated as Senior Staff as at 30 June 2019. These include the General Manager, Deputy General Manager, Operations and Deputy General Manager, Corporate and Community. The total remuneration package of \$268,792 payable to the General Manager included salary, FBT costs associated with the provision of a Council owned motor vehicle and superannuation costs.

The combined total remuneration package cost of \$429,315 payable to the two Deputy General Managers included salary, additional leave, FBT costs associated with the provision of a Council owned motor vehicle under leaseback arrangement and superannuation.

Stormwater Management Services

Council did not levy a stormwater management levy during the reporting year.

Coastal Protection Services

Council did not levy an annual coastal protection charge during the reporting year.

Companion Animals Act - Compliance

Companion Animals Act - Compliance Pound

- Forty two (42) dogs were seized, surrendered or found roaming free during the 2018/2019 year. Twenty three (23) of these dogs were returned to their owners prior to being impounded and nineteen (19) of these dogs were transferred to Council's animal shelter. Two (2) dogs remained in the pound from the previous year. No dogs remained in the pound at the end of this reporting period. All impounded dogs were either returned to their owner or re-homed. One dangerous dog was euthanised.
- Six (6) cats were seized, found abandoned or stray, and were transferred to the animal pound. One (1) cat was feral which had been trapped and was euthanised. The remaining five (5) impounded cats were re-homed.
- Recently implemented processes and one on one education has seen a significant increase in compliance and a decrease in the number of dogs that have been seized.
- Council works closely with Nambucca Shire Council and the Macksville Pound and numerous rescue organisations. This relationship has allowed us to re-home all suitable dogs and cats that can't be adopted out via our subsidised sale and de-sexing program.
- In line with Council's adopted Companion Animals Management Plan, Council aims to return companion animals to their owners, or to rehouse those animals which have been surrendered to the pound. Only in situations where rehousing is not possible for reasons of suitability or temperament, will euthanasia be considered as a management option.

FINANCIAL YEAR - DOGS	SEIZED OR SURRENDERED	IMPOUNDED	EUTHANISED
2014 - 2015	141	94	30
2015 - 2016	62	32	15
2016 - 2017	59	28	6
2017 - 2018	51	28	4
2018 - 2019	42	19	0

FINANCIAL YEAR - CATS	SEIZED OR SURRENDERED	IMPOUNDED	EUTHANISED
2014 - 2015	15	12	12
2015 - 2016	9	7	7
2016 - 2017	16	13	13
2017 - 2018	8	5	5
2018 - 2019	6	6	1

Statement on activities relating to enforcing and ensuring compliance with Companion Animals Act and Regulation

- Council's Customer and Business Services Team in conjunction with Ranger Services interrogate the Companion Animals Register on a monthly basis and send notices to owners of all unregistered dogs in the Shire. Three notices are sent with intervals of 14 days, 7 days and a final notice after another 7 days. Following the final notice if the animal is still not registered a Penalty Notice (PN) is issued for non-compliance. If after 3 months the animal has still not been registered the processes starts again.
- Service requests are investigated and if animals are found to be not identified with a microchip and/or are not registered their owners are issued with a written notice to comply. Non-compliance results in penalty notices being issued.
- A barking dog process has been implemented to deal with dog noise.
- Regular patrols are conducted and one on one education and warnings are issued to offenders in the first instance. PN's are issued for subsequent breaches and for serial offenders Nuisance Orders are issued.
- Nil (0) Dangerous Dog Orders, One (1) Menacing Dog Order and Five (5) Nuisance Dog Orders were issued. Nil (0) Nuisance Cat Orders were issued.

Dog Attack data

- Eleven (11) dog attacks were investigated and lodged with the Office of Local Government

COMPANION ANIMAL MANAGEMENT FUNDING	
Registration commissions	15,734.00
Impounding fees, charges	1,712.00
Fines	17,685.00
Total Income	35,131.00

COMPANION ANIMALS - ACTIVITY 2018/19 FY		
	DOGS	CATS
IN		
Seized	39	6
Abandoned/stray	2	0
Surrendered	1	0
OUT		
Returned to owner	23	0
Sold	3	1
Released to owner	13	0
Released to organisation for rehoming	4	4
Escaped pound	1	0
EUTHANISED		
Dangerous dog	1	NA
Owner request	0	0
Illness/disease/injury	0	0
Unable to rehome	0	0
Feral/infant	0	1
Unsuitable for rehoming	0	0
IN POUND AT END OF YEAR		
	0	0

Companion Animal Community Education Programs

Council undertakes one-on-one compliance education with owners who have been found to be in breach of the Companion Animals Act.

Strategies to promote and assist the de-sexing of dogs and cats

Council does not currently have any strategies in place for the promotion of and/or assistance with de-sexing of dogs or cats.

Particulars of Any Environmental Upgrade Agreement Entered Into

Council has not entered into any arrangements during the period 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019

Report on Capital Works Projects

Council's capital projects for infrastructure facilities, including renovations and extensions have not exceeded 10% of Council's annual rate revenue during the period 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019

Rates and Charges Written Off

The total value of rates and charges written off for the year 2018 /2019 was \$ 250,070.32 as follows:

RATES AND CHARGES WRITTEN OFF		2015/16 \$	2016/17 \$	2018/19 \$
PENSION REBATES				
General Rates-Residential	A100	103,414.61	101,766.66	101,863.05
General Rates-Farmland	A101	4,922.36	4,387.63	4,304.18
General Rates-Business	A102	583.21	591.81	467.63
Water Annual Charges	A110	44,247.56	43,672.50	42,945.41
Water Usage Charges	A115	-	34,720.81	12,340.34
Sewer Annual Charges	A120	34,893.07	101,766.66	34,321.88
DWM Charges	A130	51,914.56	52,280.77	49,910.72
		239,975.37	237,420.17	233,812.86
RATES-Residential				
RATES-Residential	A100	4,681.32	2,160.61	2,872.71
RATES-Business	A102	-	-	-
DWM	A130	0.01	-	-
Non DWM	A135	700.00	0.37	358.00
WATER-ANNUAL CHARGES				
WATER-ANNUAL CHARGES	A110	--	0.14	-
WATER-USAGE CHARGES				
WATER-USAGE CHARGES	A115	6,979.71	9,879.94	12,340.34
SEWER-ANNUAL CHARGES				
SEWER-ANNUAL CHARGES	A120	-	0.53	-
SEWER-USAGE CHARGES				
SEWER-USAGE CHARGES	A123	-	-	0.02
LIQUID TRADE WASTE ANNUAL CHARGES				
LIQUID TRADE WASTE ANNUAL CHARGES	A145	-	-	-
LIQUID TRADE WASTE USAGE CHARGES				
LIQUID TRADE WASTE USAGE CHARGES	A146	-	-	278.90
INTEREST-RATES				
INTEREST-RATES	A150	1,199.80	620.90	370.01
INTEREST-WATER				
INTEREST-WATER	A156	65.21	280.48	33.56
LEGAL FEES/COSTS				
LEGAL FEES/COSTS	A155	1,116.21	-	3.92
		14,742.26	12,942.97	16,257.46
TOTALS		254,717.6	250,363.14	250,070.32

Planning Agreements

Council did not enter into any planning agreements during 2018/19.

Private Swimming Pool inspections

PRIVATE SWIMMING POOL INSPECTIONS		2018/19
Number of inspections of tourist and visitor accommodation		
	Total	0
Number of inspections of premises with more than 2 dwellings		
	Total	0
Number of inspections that resulted in issuing a certificate of compliance under s22D of the SP Act		
	Total	9
Number of inspections that resulted in issuing a certificate of non-compliance under cl21 of the SP Reg		
	Total	3

Public's Right to Access Government Information

The Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA Act) came into effect on 1 July 2010 and replaced the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) and Section 12 of the NSW Local Government Act 1993.

The aim of the GIPA Act is to provide an open, accountable, fair and effective government. This means that all government agencies in NSW are required to make more information freely available and more processes and documents of Government will be available following an application process.

In 2018/19 no (0) formal valid applications for access to information were received.

Review of Proactive Release Program - Clause 7(a)

Under section 7 of the GIPA Act, agencies must review their programs for the release of government information to identify the kinds of information that can be made publicly available. This review must be undertaken at least once every 12 months.

Council's program for the proactive release of information involves updating Council's Agency Information Guide and Privacy Management Procedures and Plan to ensure that staff are provided with clear guidance as to what information should and should not be proactively released.

During the reporting period, we reviewed this program by analysis of the types of requests made to Council and what proportion could be answered through open access means.

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

REVIEWS CARRIED OUT BY THE AGENCY	INFORMATION MADE PUBLICLY AVAILABLE BY THE AGENCY
Yes	Yes

As a result of this review, we released the following information proactively through Councils interactive community engagement portal "Create":

Bellingen Coastal Management Program Brochure

Bellingen Main Street Project - Church Street North Precinct

- Number Proposed Overall Church Street Landscape Plan
- Existing Overall Church Street Layout
- Options 2 and 3 Church Street North Cafe Precinct
- Final - Church Street Cafe View 031
- Final - Church Street Cafe View 034
- Final - Church Street Cafe View 033
- Final - Church Street Cafe View 032
- Final - Church Street Cafe View 035
- Final - Church Street Cafe View 042
- Final - Church Street Cafe View 041
- Final - Church Street Cafe View 040
- Final - Church Street Cafe View 039
- Final - Church Street Cafe View 036
- Final - Church Street Cafe View 038 of Access Applications Received - Clause 7(b)

Bellingen Memorial Hall

- Concept Plans - Memorial Hall Transformation Project
- FAQs - Memorial Hall
- Concept Design - Interpretative Signage
- Memorial Hall Memoirs Blog courtesy of the Promised Land Retreat
- Original Memorial Hall Plans 3
- Original Memorial Hall Plans 2
- Original Memorial Hall Plans 1
- Timber Bridge Prioritisation -10 Year Renewal Program

Biodiversity Strategy 2019

- Biodiversity Bellingin and Kalang River Systems
- Bellingin Shire Council Coastal Area Koala Management Strategy and Plan
- Bellingin Island Flying-fox Camp Management Plan 2017

Bellingin Town Centre Beautification

- List of Proposed Tree Species for Bellingin Town Centre Beautification
- Briefing Note on the options considered in removing camphor laurel trees in Church Street Bellingin

- Section 1a - Oak/Hyde Street Intersection - Kerb & Footpath Demolition
- Church Street North Street Revitalisation 2010
- 76-SK-Bellingin Playground Concept
- Confirmation from Director EH&P all relevant conditions complied with
- Adopted Bellingin Main Street Plan - May 2015
- Heritage Advisor Comments on Church Street Revitalisation Project
- Church Street - Arborists Recommendations 2010
- Works Commencing Monday September 25th
- 76-L06 Church Street Soft Landscape Plan-Issue 5
- RMS Main St Funding
- Concept Plan - Hyde & Church Streets
- Bellingin Main Street Plan - Artists Impression
- Bellingin Main Street Plan 2015 - Church Street Intersection Upgrade
- 76-L13 Playground Drawing
- Final Tree Selection for Bellingin Town Centre
- Oak Street Parking Restrictions - 27/07/17 - 11/08/17
- Comments from Senior Health & Building Surveyor.
- Works Management Plan - Church St Bellingin Tree Removal 2011
- Detail of Replacement Tree Submitted for Approval
- Concept Plan - Hyde & Oak Street
- Community Vision
- BellinginMainStreetPlan_OrderOfCosts_RevD_190815
- Bellingin Shire Council - Mainstreet Pedestrian Improvements Stage 4
- Master Plan 0027/26
- Main Street Upgrade Design
- Church Street North Revitalisation 2010 - Artists Impression
- 76-L09 Bridge Street Soft Landscape Plan-Issue 5
- 76-L08 Oak Street Soft Landscape Plan-Issue 5
- 76-L10 Typ Gateway Plan Soft Landscape Schedule Details-Issue 5
- Traffic Control Plan Court House Demo Works
- Notification to Businesses & Residents - Church and Hyde Street Works
- Traffic Control Plan - Water Reticulation Upgrade - Oak Street-Hyde Street Intersection
- Oak Street Parking Restrictions 07/08/2017 - 11/08/2017
- Oak Street Daytime Traffic, Parking and Pedestrian Arrangements 07/08/2017 - 11/08/2017

- Oak Street After Hours Traffic, Parking and Pedestrian Arrangements 07/08/2017 - 11/08/2017
- Playground Concept Drawings
- Playground Concept Diagram
- Parking Restrictions in Oak Street 13/7/17 - 29/07/17
- Section 1B - Oak/Hyde Street Intersection - Kerb & Footpath Demolition
- Photo showing replacement tree and infrastructure reinstatement 8 November 2012
- File Note from Development Planner confirming compliance with Conditions 3,4, & 10.
- PAMP & Bike Plan Council Meeting
- Hyde Street Bellingin - Active Transport Project
- Concept Plan - Hyde & Bridge Street including crossings
- Concept Plan - Bellingin 40kph Ped Zone
- Bellingin Shire Council - Mainstreet Pedestrian Improvements Stage 3
- Bellingin Shire Council - Mainstreet Pedestrian Improvements Stage 2
- Bellingin Shire Council - Mainstreet Pedestrian Improvements Stage 1
- Bellingin Main Street Plan submission
- Bellingin Main St Plan J Mongard
- Delivery Program
- active-transport-scoring-sheet Bellingin Town Centre
- Mayor Dominic King talking with 2BBB's Leo Bradney-George - 14-03-17

Customer and Business Services Activity

- SMT Agenda - 2019-04

Draft Community Participation Plan

- Consolidated Draft Development Control Plan 2017 (2019 Amendment)
- Bellingin Local Environment Plan 2010
- Draft Community Participation Plan

Draft Housing Strategy

- Factsheets: Population & Housing for Dorriggo & Plateau; Urunga & Seaboard; Bellingin & Valley
- Homes for Our Future Discussion Paper - Apr 2018
- Summary of Homes for Our Future - PowerPoint - May 2018
- Bellingin Factsheet - Draft Housing Strategy
- Choices for Growth - Extract from Discussion Paper (7 pages)
- Summary of Draft Housing Strategy for Bellingin Shire

- Rezoning Requests Analysis
- Infill Design Study
- Infill Capacity Study
- Draft Housing Strategy Bellingin Shire
- Action Plan - Draft Bellingin Shire Housing Strategy
- Urunga Factsheet - Draft Housing Strategy
- Dorriggo Factsheet - Draft Housing Strategy
- Engagement Report - Homes for Our Future - Nov 2018

Expressions of Interest sought for Public Art Works in Church Street North

- Submission Details for Public Art in Church Street
- Bellingin Shire Public Art Plan

Gleniffer Reserves - river bank & public infrastructure works

- Gleniffer Reserves Master Plan 2016
- Gleniffer Reserves Consultation Report
- Map - location of project works
- Instream works design

The Mylestom Pathway Project, a New South Wales Government Stronger Country Communities funded project

- Round Two Program Guidelines - Stronger Country Communities Fund
- Draft Mylestom Pathway Project Section Two Design
- Draft Mylestom Pathway Project Section One Design
- Bellingin Shire Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan and Bike Plan

Hungry Head Lagoon (Dalhousie Creek) Entrance Management Strategy

- Dalhousie Creek Entrance Management Strategy - Part 1
- Dalhousie Creek Entrance Management Strategy - Part 2 - Review of Environmental Factors

Lower Bellinger and Kalang Rivers Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan

- BK Community Newsletter Floodplain Risk Management Study July18

Property Leases & Licences Policy

- PO - 0012 Property Leases & Licences Policy

Reclassify land at Lookout Road from Community to Operational (Planning Proposal No. 15)

- Attachment 2 - Map showing location
- Planning Proposal 15 - Reclassify land at lookout road, Bellingen from community to Operational
- Attachment 5 - Evidence of public reserve creation and vesting in Council
- Attachment 1 - Council report
- Attachment 3 - Proposal Information Checklist
- Attachment 4 - Project Timeline
- Attachment H - Public Hearing Report

Town Centre Car Parking Strategies

- Bellingen Parking Strategy
- Bellingen CBD Study Zone
- Agenda Council Meeting 26/09/2018. (Refer Item 11.1 on pages 41-83)
- Urunga CBD Study Zone
- Dorrigo CBD Study Zone

Why Local Government Matters

- Why Local Government Matters Presentation

During the reporting period, our agency received no formal and valid access applications (including withdrawn applications but not invalid applications).

Clause 7(b): The total number of access applications received by the agency during the reporting year (including withdrawn applications but not including invalid applications).

TOTAL NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS RECEIVED
0

Number of Refused applications for Schedule 1 Information - Clause 7(c)

During the reporting period, Council did not refuse any applications.

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

NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS REFUSED	WHOLLY	PARTLY	TOTAL
	0	0	0
% of Total	0%	0%	

Statistical information about access applications - Clause 7(d) and Schedule 2

TABLE A: NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS BY TYPE OF APPLICANT AND OUTCOME*										
	Access Granted in Full	Access Granted in Part	Access Refused in Full	Information not Held	Information Already Available	Refuse to Deal with Application	Refuse to Confirm/ Deny whether information is held	Application Withdrawn	Total	% of Total
Media	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Members of Parliament	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Private sector business	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Not for profit organisations or community groups	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Members of the public (by legal representative)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Members of the public (other)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
% of Total	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%		

* More than one decision can be made in respect of a particular access application. If so, a recording must be made in relation to each such decision. This also applies to Table B.

TABLE B: NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS BY TYPE OF APPLICANT AND OUTCOME*										
	Access Granted in Full	Access Granted in Part	Access Refused in Full	Information not Held	Information Already Available	Refuse to Deal with Application	Refuse to Confirm/ Deny whether information is held	Application Withdrawn	Total	% of Total
Personal information applications*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Access applications (other than personal information applications)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Access applications that are partly personal information applications and partly other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	
% of Total	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%		

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

TABLE C: INVALID APPLICATIONS

Reason for invalidity	No of applications	% of Total
Application does not comply with formal requirements (section 41 of the Act)	0	0%
Application is for excluded information of the agency (section 43 of the Act)	0	0%
Application contravenes restraint order (section 110 of the Act)	0	0%
Total number of invalid applications received	0	0%
Invalid applications that subsequently became valid applications	0	0%

TABLE D: CONCLUSIVE PRESUMPTION OF OVERRIDING PUBLIC INTEREST AGAINST DISCLOSURE: MATTERS LISTED IN SCHEDULE 1 OF ACT

	Number of times consideration used*	% of Total
Overriding secrecy laws	0	0%
Cabinet information	0	0%
Executive Council information	0	0%
Contempt	0	0%
Legal professional privilege	0	0%
Excluded information	0	0%

TABLE D: CONCLUSIVE PRESUMPTION OF OVERRIDING PUBLIC INTEREST AGAINST DISCLOSURE: MATTERS LISTED IN SCHEDULE 1 OF ACT

Documents affecting law enforcement and public safety	0	0%
Transport safety	0	0%
Adoption	0	0%
Care and protection of children	0	0%
Ministerial code of conduct	0	0%
Aboriginal and environmental heritage	0	0%
Total	0	

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

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

	Number of times consideration used*	% of Total
Responsible and effective government	0	0%
Law enforcement and security	0	0%
Individual rights, judicial processes and natural justice	0	100%
Business interests of agencies and other persons	0	0%
Environment, culture, economy and general matters	0	0%
Secrecy provisions	0	0%
Exempt documents under interstate Freedom of Information legislation	0	0%
Total	0	

TABLE F: TIMELINESS

	Number of applications*	% of Total
Decided within the statutory timeframe (20 days plus any extensions)	0	0%
Decided after 35 days (by agreement with applicant)	0	0%
Not decided within time (deemed refusal)	0	0%
Total	0	

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

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

*The Information Commissioner does not have the authority to vary decisions, but can make recommendations to the original decision-maker. The data in this case indicates that a recommendation to vary or uphold the original decision has been made by the Information Commissioner.

TABLE H: APPLICATIONS FOR REVIEW UNDER PART 5 OF THE ACT (BY TYPE OF APPLICANT)

	Number of applications for review	% of Total
Applications by access applicants	0	0%
Applications by persons to whom information the subject of access application relates (see section 54 of the Act)	0	0%
Total	0	

TABLE I: APPLICATIONS TRANSFERRED TO OTHER AGENCIES

	Number of applications transferred	% of Total
Agency-Initiated Transfers	0	0%
Applicant - Initiated Transfers	0	0%
Total	0	

Complaint and Compliment Reporting

Bellingen Shire Council Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures

2018-2019	COMPLAINTS	COMPLIMENTS
Total	20	77

Code of Conduct Reporting

1 October 2018 to 30 September 2019

NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS AND ASSOCIATED COSTS MODEL CODE PROCEDURES REFERENCE: 12.1

1 a)	The total number of code of conduct complaints made about councillors and the general manager under the code of conduct in the year to September.	1
b)	The number of code of conduct complaints referred to a conduct reviewer.	1
c)	The number of code of conduct complaints finalised by a conduct reviewer at the preliminary assessment stage and the outcome of those complaints. <i>No further action pursuant to clause 6.10(a) of the Procedures.</i>	0
d)	The number of code of conduct complaints investigated by a conduct reviewer.	1
e)	The number of code of conduct complaints investigated by a conduct review committee.	0
f)	Without identifying particular matters, the outcome of code of conduct complaints investigated by a conduct reviewer or conduct review committee under these procedures.	Not finalised
g)	The number of matters reviewed by the Division and, without identifying particular matters, the outcome of the reviews.	0
e)	The total cost of dealing with code of conduct complaints made about councillors and the general manager including staff costs.	Not finalised

Public Interest Disclosures Reporting

Organisations are required under the Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994 (PID Act) to collect and report on information about public interest disclosures (PIDs).

The Public Interest Disclosures Regulation 2011 outlines what information public authorities are to record and include in both the six month report to the NSW Ombudsman and the public authority's annual report:

STATISTICAL INFORMATION ON PIDS	MADE BY PUBLIC OFFICIALS PERFORMING THEIR DAY TO DAY FUNCTIONS	UNDER A STATUTORY OR OTHER LEGAL OBLIGATION	ALL OTHER PIDS
Number of public officials who made PIDs	0	0	0
Number of PIDs received	0	0	0
OF PIDS RECEIVED, NUMBER PRIMARILY ABOUT:			
Corrupt conduct	0	0	0
Maladministration	0	0	0
Serious and substantial waste	0	0	0
Government information contravention	0	0	0
Local government pecuniary interest contravention	0	0	0
Number of PIDs finalised	0	0	0

Note: The number of PIDs finalised only refers to PIDs that have been received since the commencement of the relevant period.

Commentary on PID Obligations

Council has established an internal reporting policy. The policy was adopted by Council on 24 September 2014 and is available on Council's IT network.

Council's General Manager has taken action to make staff aware of their obligations through provision of relevant information on Council's Intranet, both as a reminder on the "News" section and as a static page containing:

- a policy extract,
- a link to Council's internal reporting policy,
- a link to Council's Public Interest Disclosures Guidelines and Procedures, and
- a link to the NSW Ombudsman's PID e-News

Posters encouraging internal reporting and hard copies of Council's Public Interest Disclosures Guidelines and Procedures have also been placed at all of Council's principal work locations.

Compliance with the Carers (Recognition) Act 2010

Council has actively acknowledged and recognised the role of carers in the Bellingen Shire Community through its services provided by the Dorrigo Support Centre in providing six Wellbeing and Enablement Workshops “New Year, Knew You” throughout 2018 – 2019 on the Dorrigo Plateau.

Carers are invited to participate in time-limited periodic breaks away with the service which gives them time to recharge from their caring role.

The NSW Carers Charter is displayed at the Dorrigo Support Centre and staff are aware of and practice its principles. All carers and clients are treated with the respect and dignity as defined by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Recovery & Threat Abatement Plans

Council was not identified in any Recovery & Threat Abatement Plan by the Department of Industry, Skills and Regional Development during this period.

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