

Annual Report 2019 – 2020



**We acknowledge the Widjabal/
Wia-bal people of the Bundjalung
nation, Traditional Owners of the lands
and waters on which we operate our
business. We honour their unique
cultural and spiritual relationship
to the land and waters and their
continuing and rich contribution
to Lismore City Council and the
community. We pay our respects to
them and their culture, their Elders
and community leaders both past and
present. Additionally, we acknowledge
the vibrant contribution that young
Aboriginal people make as emerging
leaders of the community.**



Contents

Mayor's Message	6
General Manager's Message	7
Who We Are	8
Delivery Program Report*	14
Community Finance Report	62
Statutory Information	68

*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are warned this publication contains an image of a deceased person.

An aerial photograph of Lismore City Council buildings and surrounding greenery. The image shows a dense cluster of multi-story office buildings with various roof colors (blue, grey, yellow) and a prominent church with a tall spire in the background. A river flows through the scene, with a bridge crossing it on the left. The foreground is dominated by lush green trees and a large body of water.

Executive summary

Welcome to the 2019/20 Annual Report for Lismore City Council.

The Annual Report is a document that we develop each year to report on our progress to the community. It combines information we are required to report on under the *Local Government Act 1993* as well as our most noteworthy achievements in the last 12 months.

The Annual Report is part of what is called the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework.

As part of this framework, the NSW Government requires Council to develop a Community Strategic Plan (10-year document), a Delivery Program (four-year schedule of works) and an Operational Plan (an annual list of activities and budget).

We are also asked to create an Annual Report so the community can see how well we are delivering on the visions and projects detailed in the documents above.

This year's Annual Report is different to previous years, as Council has had to adapt in a changing and challenging environment that has included droughts, bushfires and COVID-19.

Like our community, we have had to be resilient, innovative and focused on ensuring we deliver the essential services our community needs throughout these challenging times.

We have also progressed a range of short and long-term projects which are growing Lismore as a liveable regional city and a major centre of services, sport and culture.

We hope the Annual Report provides you with a unique insight into how we are continuing to enhance and enrich Lismore and our villages for today's community and future generations.

We are proud to live and work in the heart of the Northern Rivers.



Mayor's Message

It is my pleasure to introduce Lismore City Council's Annual Report.

This has been a year like no other in living memory. COVID-19 has changed the world we live in, and all of us have been forced to adapt in our personal and professional lives.

The thing that truly humbles me about the Lismore community is how we respond in times of crisis. Last year when I introduced the Annual Report we were still recovering from the flood. Then we experienced a major fire at our waste facility, the drought gripped our region and the devastating bushfires swept through. Not long after, coronavirus changed our reality forever.

And yet, as always, our community has shown tenacity and resilience in the face of change and hardship.

Our people, our businesses and our Council have adapted, met challenges with innovation, supported our neighbours, and weathered the storm.

There is still a long way to go. The impact of these disasters has been far reaching for all of us.

Despite the obstacles we have faced in the last 12 months, Council has continued to provide essential services to our community, sometimes in unique and interesting ways.

From our workforce adapting to working from home to running online Storytime sessions and virtual gallery tours, we have delivered our services and supported our people when it mattered most.



Economic development and business activation have been a focus over the last 12 months and will continue to be into the future as we implement our Economic Development Strategy. This is key to Lismore thriving in the wake of COVID-19.

We have developed a new Local Strategic Planning Statement to guide growth and development over the next 20 years and we are embedding better systems, technology and governance into our practices to ensure transparency and good fiscal management into the future.

It has not been an easy year, but it has been one of major growth and change for this community and this Council.

General Manager's Message

This has been a challenging year for Lismore City Council, but reading the Annual Report fills me with pride.

Our staff, Councillors and community have worked together and achieved some incredible wins and gains for this region in the last 12 months, despite some big obstacles and unforeseen events.

Resilience is now a mandatory skill for everyone in our Council and our community.

Resilience translates to being able to adapt and be innovative in the face of change. We have excelled at this during the bushfires and COVID-19. I have felt very humbled watching our Council staff and our local businesses adapt during this latest crisis.

Taking services online, moving towards takeaway or delivery services, adapting to working from home and putting in place health and safety plans at a moment's notice... there has been more work behind-the-scenes than you can imagine.

We now know we need to take those learnings and embed resilience into our future workplace plans and our budget processes. We need resilience to be our 'new normal' so that we can respond swiftly and with certainty to future disasters.

In terms of Council's core business, we are on a journey to transform this organisation into a modern and efficient workplace. During the last 12 months we spent a lot of time investigating Council's real financial position and laying the foundation for better accounting, governance, risk assessment and management practices into the future.

With better technology, procurement systems, data analysis and governance, we can make smarter decisions based on accurate information. This in turn will improve our efficiency and financial performance into the future.



Our staff have also been quietly achieving so much for our community.

One thing Council does not always do well is tell people about the incredible depth and breadth of services and programs we provide.

It is truly extraordinary what we have delivered in the last 12 months while dealing with multiple disasters both local and global.

This Annual Report tells our story and demonstrates how we are delivering for our community.

I am now looking to the future and a very busy 12 months of working to recover, reactivate and reinvigorate our city and our region as a whole.

Who we are

Lismore is known as the heart of the Northern Rivers.



As a thriving regional city and services hub, Lismore supports a large urban population and provides vital services for many outlying villages, hamlets and rural areas.

Lismore's population of around 44,000 encompasses a diverse range of people from all walks of life: business owners, artists, musicians, farmers, students and academics, nurses and medicos, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, tree-changers, tradies, entrepreneurs, and a vibrant LGBTQI+ community.

Lismore is a city where difference is embraced and community is strong. The region is more broadly known as the Rainbow Region in honour of this diversity.

The demographics of our community continue to change over time. In the last five years, the average age of residents has increased, families are having fewer children and there are more people living alone. The number of migrants is also rising as more people choose to call Lismore home.

Lismore continues to strengthen its status as a regional city with the expansion of health and education sectors, the growth of cottage industries, and enhanced sporting and aviation infrastructure. Lismore's workforce has also grown, with more people securing employment and tertiary qualifications, and average weekly incomes rising.

All of this combines to create a truly unique Local Government Area.

Lismore at a glance...

Source: Australian Bureau
of Statistics



43,692

Total population

63%

Urban population

37%

Rural population

43

Average age

19,103

Total dwellings

2.38

Average household size

4,128

Total businesses

\$1,062

Average weekly income

**Compared to NSW,
Lismore has a higher
proportion of:**

Single-person households

Older workers, pre-retirees and
empty nesters

People employed in health care
and social assistance

People that need assistance in
their day-to-day lives due
to disability

76.8%

People who travel
to work by car

5.4%

Unemployment

29%

Single-person
households

5%

Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander people

90.6%

Born in Australia

73.6%

Homes connected
to the internet

Your Councillors

Lismore City Council is made up of 11 Councillors who were elected for a four-year term in September 2016.

Due to COVID-19, the NSW Office of Local Government extended the term of Council by 12 months. The next local government elections will now be held in September 2021.

Our Mayor

Mayor Isaac Smith

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** Please note: Councillor Gianpiero Battista resigned from Council in August 2020 and Councillor Greg Bennett resigned from Council in September 2020.*

Role of Councillors

- Provide strong and effective leadership, planning and decision-making.
- Represent the collective interests of residents, ratepayers, and the local community.
- Plan strategically, allocate resources, and provide services and regulation that meet the diverse needs of the local community.
- Facilitate communication between the community and the Council.

Councillor Entitlements

Councillors are eligible for a range of entitlements and allowances associated with their role, including reimbursement of expenses incurred in carrying out their civic duties and provision of facilities to assist in fulfilling their obligations. These are provided in accordance with Council's Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy, which ensures entitlements are transparent, accountable, and meet the expectations of the community. A copy of the Policy can be downloaded from Council's website at www.lismore.nsw.gov.au.

In 2019/20, a total of \$268,100 was provided in allowances, including:

- \$45,400 for a Mayoral allowance
- \$222,700 in total for Councillor allowances

Councillors were also eligible for the following allowances, expenses and facilities:

Councillor Expenses & Facilities	\$
Office equipment and facilities	2,442
Telephone calls	1,262
Conferences and seminar attendance	17,072
Training	4,130
Interstate visits (including transport, accommodation and other out-of-pocket travelling expenses)	519
Overseas visits (including transport, accommodation and other out-of-pocket travelling expenses)	0
Expenses for spouses (who accompanied a Councillor)	0
Child care	1275
Total	26,700

Council Meetings

Council meetings have been live-streamed on Council's website since 2017. Council expanded this service in May 2020 by adding this live-stream to its social media.

All meetings are now live-streamed on Facebook, allowing more people to view and interact with the local democratic process. These sessions are moderated live so Council can answer questions from residents in real-time.

To view the meetings, go to the Lismore City Council Facebook page or visit our website at www.lismore.nsw.gov.au.

18 Council meetings held
172 resolutions made



DID YOU KNOW?



Since May 2020, Council meetings have received more than 18,400 views on Facebook. Since live streaming commenced in 2017, a total of 27,955 people have tuned in.

Council Travel and Training

Councillors did not undertake any overseas travel during 2019/20. However, Councillors did attend various conferences and awards ceremonies within NSW and interstate during the year, at a total cost of \$17,591.

In 2019/20, Mayor Isaac Smith and Councillors Elly Bird, Darlene Cook and Vanessa Ekins also received training on media relations and interviewing techniques from Clarity Solutions. This was designed to provide Councillors with insights and knowledge on how to successfully and confidently engage in TV, radio, print and online interviews with local media outlets.

Your Council

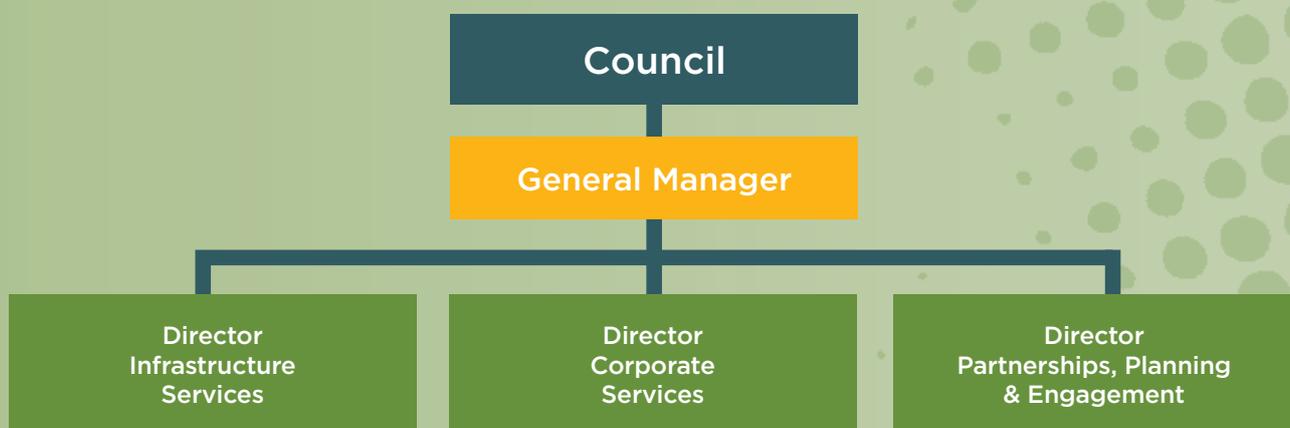
Organisational Structure

Every four years, Council adopts a staff structure to support the Council and General Manager to deliver the programs and activities in the Imagine Lismore Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

A structure reconfiguration commenced in March 2019, commencing with the top level of the structure. This included the creation of a new Director of Corporate Services position, which was incorporated into the permanent structure in February 2020. The new management structure is detailed below.

In 2019/20, Council began a process to reconfigure and align the lower levels of the organisation to this new structure with a particular focus on the Partnerships, Planning & Engagement directorate.

This reconfiguration enabled Council to realise significant savings in the 2020/21 budget.



368.3

Council full-time equivalent employees

8.5

Full-time equivalent Council staff per 1,000 residents

59.7

Richmond Tweed Regional Library full-time equivalent employees

12%*

Employee turnover rate



**Combined figures for Council and Richmond Tweed Regional Library.*

General Manager

General Manager Shelley Oldham is spearheading major change within Council to transform the organisation into a modern and efficient business that has excellent governance practices and responsible and transparent fiscal management.

Whilst the General Manager did not undertake any international travel in the last financial year, she travelled to several interstate conferences and meetings to strengthen Council's relationship with the NSW and Australian Governments.

The total remuneration package for the General Manager position for 2019/20 was \$329,414.

Further information about remuneration can be found in the Statutory Information section of this report.



Meet the Executive Team

Council's executive team underwent significant change in the last two years as part of an ongoing process to transform Council and improve its technology, governance, finance and management practices.

In May 2019, Council appointed a new Interim Director of Corporate Services, Graeme Towers. Graeme completed his 12-month interim tenure as a director at the end of June 2020 and Council began recruiting for a permanent Director of Corporate Services. He was asked to stay on in the position until such time as the permanent occupant of the role was appointed.

Dr Sharon Harwood was appointed the new Director of Partnerships, Planning & Engagement in July 2019.

Peter Jeuken – the former Manager of Development & Compliance at Lismore City Council – was appointed the Director of Infrastructure Services in September 2019.

The total remuneration package for directors in 2019/20 was \$565,433. This included salary, superannuation, non-cash benefits and fringe tax benefits for non-cash benefits. Council did not pay any bonuses or performance payments in 2019/20.

Further information about remuneration can be found in the Statutory Information section of this report.

Director – Partnerships, Planning & Engagement
Dr Sharon Harwood



Director – Infrastructure Services
Peter Jeuken



Interim Director – Corporate Services
Dr Graeme Towers



Delivery Program Progress Report



Our Progress

Lismore City Council provides a broad range of services to meet the day-to-day needs of the community.

Every program, project, activity, and service Council delivers to the community is planned for and documented in the Imagine Lismore Delivery Program.

The Delivery Program seeks to achieve a range of strategic objectives identified by the community in the Imagine Lismore Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027.

A revised Delivery Program was adopted by Council in June 2020.

This section of the Annual Report focuses on Council's progress during 2019/20 in implementing the third year of the original Imagine Lismore Delivery Program 2017-2021.

This section of the report details progress, achievements, and statutory information prescribed by the *Local Government Regulation 2005* for each of the five key themes.



DID YOU KNOW?

Council consulted with more than 1,200 Lismore residents to create the current Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program. These can be downloaded from our website at www.lismore.nsw.gov.au.

A An inclusive and healthy community



10-year objectives

A1 Our community is safe, happy and healthy.

A2 We recognise our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and cultures.

A3 Our sporting facilities and recreational spaces encourage active and passive community participation.

A4 Our community is a desirable place to live, an easy place to work and a welcoming place to visit.

A5 Our community has access to essential services.

Key Highlights

Council has completed or is currently working on more than \$21 million worth of sporting upgrades across the Local Government Area.

Kadina Park underwent a \$235,000 upgrade including the construction of the first 'mouse house' in the Northern Rivers.

Stage two of the \$12 million redevelopment of Oakes Oval and Crozier Field is currently underway.

More than 1,700 competitors and sports lovers descended on Lismore to celebrate the Masters Games 20th anniversary event.

Council adopted its new Lismore Sport & Recreation Plan to transform our city and village sporting infrastructure, improve open spaces, and deliver enhanced passive and active recreational opportunities.

The Goonellabah Sports & Aquatic Centre and the Lismore Memorial Baths won two awards at the Swim Australia and Australian Swimming Coaches & Teachers Association Awards.

R U Okay? Day promotion included advertising on a waste collection truck to spread the message about mental health awareness in our community.

Stage two of the \$6.95 million Albert Park Baseball and Softball Complex upgrade is currently underway, transforming the facility into a world-class playing and training hub in the Asia-Pacific region.

Council received a grant of \$99,769 from the NSW Government to help upgrade the Nesbitt Park BMX bike track into an asphalt pump track.

Public Health and Safety

Council has a responsibility to look after the health, wellbeing and safety of our community and our staff. Some of the ways we do this is through public health and amenity inspections, environmental compliance, companion animal management, and by responding to public health and safety incidents. Each year, we undertake thousands of inspections and respond to community requests and complaints.

78 private swimming pool fence inspections

137 public amenity inspections

633 on-site sewage management (septic system) inspections

543 food safety inspections



116 dog attack incidents investigated

78 fines for breaches of companion animal laws



Shining a spotlight on mental health and wellbeing

Council is committed to providing support to staff around mental wellbeing and raising awareness in the community about mental health issues.

Council marked R U OK? Day in 2019 by hosting a special breakfast for staff and emblazoning the R U OK? Day message on one of its urban waste collection trucks.

The aim was to inspire and empower everyone to meaningfully connect with people around them and support anyone struggling in life.

The idea of truck advertising was instigated by a Council staff member who wanted to promote the campaign in a more visible and public way.

"Our collection trucks travel all over town at all times of day. If someone sees the artwork and that encourages them to ask one person 'Are you ok?' then it's done its job," WHS Committee member Jody Hinds said. "The essence of the campaign is that a simple conversation could change a life."

Council takes the mental health of its community and its staff very seriously.

General Manager Shelley Oldham took the R U OK? Day breakfast as an opportunity to openly share her own previous struggles with mental health in a brave speech to hundreds of staff.

Council has been rocked by the loss of several staff members in recent years affected by mental health issues, including young Bundjalung man Cory James.

The 19-year-old's loss was felt keenly by his fellow staff, who wore black armbands in his memory and formed a guard of honour at his funeral.

To help raise awareness and pay tribute to Cory, many Council workers can now be seen wearing the beautiful Cory James memorial work shirt. This high-vis shirt bears his original artwork and helps us remember Cory and all those who have lost their lives too young.



Companion Animals in Your LGA

Council spent a total of \$405,000 on companion animal management activities in 2019/20. This funded enforcement, education and information activities such as:

- Community education programs to promote and assist in responsible pet ownership, microchipping and de-sexing of dogs and cats, which contributes to fewer companion animal seizures.
- Maintenance of four off-leash areas: Riverside Park, Lismore Gasworks, Elizabeth Gardens and Hepburn Park.
- Management and care of animals that come into Council's custody at the Lismore Pound.
- Investigation of 116 reported dog attack incidents (includes when a dog threatens, harasses, chases, or bites a person or another animal).

Dogs



153*
seized

58
re-homed

81
released to owners

13
euthanased

*One dog still in care.

Alternatives to Euthanasia

Council has an obligation under the *Companion Animal Act 2008* to consider alternative courses of action before euthanasing any animals that come into its care. Council chooses not to euthanase healthy animals that arrive at the Lismore Pound, instead allowing animals to stay at the facility until a forever home can be arranged.

Where possible, animals are released back to owners or re-homed via animal rescue organisations such as the Animal Rights and Rescue Group, Animal Welfare League NSW and others. Council also puts animals up for adoption directly through the Lismore Pound.

Sadly, sometimes animals may not be suitable for re-homing, due to poor health or temperament, and in these cases, animals are euthanased.

Cats



12
seized

8
re-homed

3
released to owners

1
euthanased

Skyhe's the limit for Council Ranger

We were very proud when Council Ranger Skyhe Hoyt was named the 2019 Lismore Business Awards Outstanding Young Employee of the Year.

Skyhe, 28, joined Council in 2016 as a Trainee Law Enforcement Officer and completed a Certificate IV in Regulatory Services. She is currently studying a Certificate IV in Government Investigations and is now a permanent Law Enforcement Officer with Council.

In 2018, Skyhe also won the North Coast and Mid North Coast Regional Trainee of the Year award sponsored by the NSW Training Awards.

Skyhe undertakes a variety of roles from parking enforcement to dealing with abandoned vehicles and dog attacks, but particularly loves finding forever homes for animals at the Lismore Pound.

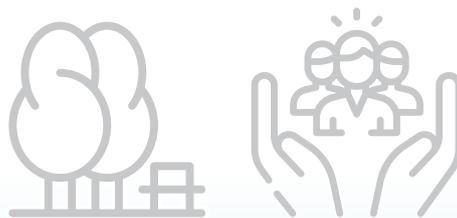
"As an animal lover, helping people to find their lost animals, educating them on how to be a



responsible pet owner, and rehoming animals is the best part of the job," she said. "Not every person can go home at the end of their shift and say they made a difference in someone's life; I am proud to say that I can."

A Diverse Community

Council is working towards a community that is accessible and inclusive of everyone, and one that provides equal opportunity for people with disability to utilise and enjoy the public spaces and life in our city, towns and villages.



A Diverse Council Workforce

Council's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Plan details our commitment to deliver equal employment opportunity through the Reconciliation Action Plan, Disability Inclusion Action Plan and other measures, to ensure a workforce that is representative of the demographics of our community.

Key achievements in 2019/20 in implementing the EEO Plan include:

- Significant improvement in the % of supervisory employees who are female.

30% of supervisory employees were female

30% of staff aged 55 years and over

32 staff identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

7 staff identified as living with a disability

**Please note: Figures are combined for Council and Richmond Tweed Regional Library*

Reconciliation at Council

In 2019/20, Council reviewed and developed a new Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).

The 2020-2022 RAP has been developed as an Innovate RAP and is our commitment to the reconciliation process, supporting our workforce and community to build respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge, culture and traditions to enhance our relationships and generate opportunities for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in our community.

The Innovate RAP – Council's third since 2013 – was completed in April 2020 and is currently with Reconciliation Australia for review and final approval. Key highlights of the RAP include:

- Host annual NAIDOC Celebration Day and Reconciliation Week events.

- Facilitate an Aboriginal Advisory Group to provide advice to Council on matters affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
- Continue to support opportunities to increase Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment outcomes and establish a Council scholarship/traineeship.
- Work with the Ngulingah Local Aboriginal Land Council and Aboriginal Advisory Group to develop guiding principles for future community engagement.
- Engage employees in cultural learning to increase respect and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture.
- Investigate dual language naming of public places within the Lismore LGA.



An Accessible Lismore

Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) promotes equal rights for everyone in our community.

It also recognises Council's responsibility to support people living with disabilities to access the same human rights as everyone else in the community. Key achievements in 2019/20 in implementing the DIAP include:

- Waiving of fees for development applications for accessibility improvements.
- Bi-monthly meetings of the Access and Inclusion Advisory Group to provide advice to Council on disability access and inclusion.
- Continued provision of a hearing loop in the Council Chambers and live-streaming of Council's ordinary meetings and events.
- Provision of funding for AUSLAN interpreters for meetings.
- Continued incorporation of accessible standards e.g. footpath and cycleways (shared paths) into infrastructure design.

International Day of People with a Disability

Council took part in activities at the International Day of Disability for the first time in December 2019 at The Quad.

Council spoke with community members and service providers who were interested to learn about some of the services and assistance Council provides to people living with disability and their families/carers.

These activities and services include the following:

- Free hire of an all-terrain beach wheelchair. This wheelchair is available year-round and can be used on all patrolled beaches or suitable walking tracks and can be folded for transportation in any medium-sized vehicle.
- Printing and distribution of the free *Tradies Guide to Good Access*, which provides builders and other construction workers with a quick reference guide to Australian standards for accessibility. Free copies are available from Council's Corporate Centre in Goonellabah.
- ReadSpeaker technology on Council's website, which provides text to speech services enabling people who are vision impaired to have website content read aloud at the click of a button.
- A Missed Business Guide to help businesses with hints, tips and simple ways to improve accessibility. The Missed Business Guide is free for all businesses to download from Council's website.
- A beachfront entrance and handrail at the Goonellabah Sports & Aquatic Centre for accessibility and an automatic wheelchair hoist. There is also lift access to the SWITCH 24-hour gym and a hoist at the Lismore Memorial Baths.
- The Lismore and Goonellabah Libraries are both accessible and provide a range of services and resources for people living with a disability including large print books, talking books, CDs, eBooks and eAudiobooks.
- Our libraries also provide a home delivery service and one-on-one tech training (bookings required) plus access to Victor Stratus Readers and Victor Stream Readers.



DID YOU KNOW?

In the last Census, 2,747 people or 6.4% of the population in the Local Government Area reported needing help in their day-to-day lives due to disability.



Sport and Recreation

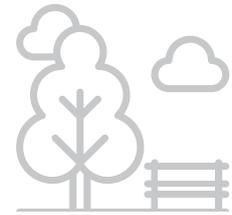
Council provides a range of sporting and recreational facilities to encourage active and passive community participation.

Continued investment in our sport and recreation assets also brings significant economic benefits to the region and secures Lismore's reputation as a regional sports hub.

3 major recreational facilities, including GSAC, Lismore Memorial Baths and Nimbin Pool

36 sporting ovals and fields

121 hectares of open spaces, parks and gardens



Lismore City Sports Hub takes shape

Lismore will soon be a major centre for sporting excellence on the east coast of NSW.

The Lismore City Sports Hub will be the culmination of a \$12 million redevelopment of the Oakes Oval and Crozier Field sporting precincts to connect the two facilities and create a premier sporting venue that can accommodate national and international sporting events.

Stage one of the redevelopment included the redevelopment of Oakes Oval with the expansion of the ground to accommodate AFL games as well as new grandstands, upgraded change-rooms, and a new electronic scoreboard.

Stage two works are currently underway and include refurbishment of the Gordon Pavilion and a covered terrace connecting the two sports fields, as well as new grandstands, new amenities blocks and landscaping.

The transformation of the area into the Lismore City Sports Hub is expected to attract new sporting tournaments to Lismore, create an exciting venue for major events, and bring an additional 20,000 tourists to Lismore each year.

The Lismore City Sports Hub is due for completion by the end 2021.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Lismore City Sports Hub will attract more than 20,000 additional tourists per year and will create 21 new jobs during construction.



New Sport & Rec Plan developed

Our city and village lifestyles will be enhanced even further with a new Lismore Sport & Recreation Plan to guide the development of sporting and recreation activities over the next four years.

Some of the major activities detailed in the plan include:

- Development of an Open Space Strategy to improve parks and create networks for walking, cycling and passive recreation across the LGA.
- Advocacy to support the development of a rail trail in the Lismore LGA to facilitate cycling, walking and rail trail cottage industries.
- Applications for significant state and federal government grants to deliver the \$25 million Lismore Park development.



- Attracting new sporting events and major tournaments to bring more sports tourists and spectators to Lismore.

The new Lismore Sport & Recreation Plan was formally adopted by Council in July 2020.

Swim staff make a splash at major awards

Our sensational swimming staff won two gongs at the Swim Australia and Australian Swimming Coaches & Teachers Association Awards announced in May 2020.

The Swimsations swim school at Goonellabah Sports & Aquatic Centre (GSAC) and the Lismore Memorial Baths was named the 'Best Small Swim School in Australia' for marketing and promotion, which includes use of social media and bus signage, and ongoing promotions for special activities such as Water Safety Week, Grandparents Week and swimming clinics.

The award is designed to highlight the importance that Swim Australia places on the swim safety message, and acknowledges the outstanding work being done around water safety by the teams at GSAC and the Baths.

Trish Bailey (*pictured*) was also awarded Teacher of the Year for Learners with a Disability. Trish has worked at GSAC for eight years and has taught many local children with additional needs, building a great relationship with students and their families, while achieving amazing results with the children.



The awards come on the back of a tough year for the teams at GSAC and the Baths, which both experienced significant upheaval in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Facilities were forced to close due to health restrictions in early 2020 for many months. GSAC re-opened in June 2020 with strict new health restrictions and rules in place to protect and support the community to exercise and lead healthy lifestyles during the pandemic.

201,053 GSAC visitors and
19,244 casual pool visits





Masters Games reaches 20th milestone

The 20th Masters Games was held in September 2019 with more than 1700 sports lovers attending the popular biennial celebration of sports.

The Masters Games started in 1999 with support from the Lismore Workers Club, which remains the naming rights sponsor to this day.

The event injects more than \$1 million into the Lismore economy and is made possible thanks

to the hundreds of local sporting volunteers who give their time and energy to celebrate friendship and sportsmanship.

The current major upgrades to sporting facilities such as the Albert Park Baseball and Softball Complex and Oakes Oval will provide a significant boost to this event and help grow attendance into the future.

Kadina Park upgrade brings new visitors

Visitors to Kadina Park in Goonellabah have been thrilled with the recent \$235,000 park upgrade.

The upgrade included new playground equipment such as a carousel, flying fox and an exciting new 'mouse house' which has proven a hit with visitors. The mouse house is the first built in the Northern Rivers and is essentially a life-sized hamster wheel for kids!

Ten new individual fitness stations targeting beginners through to the fit and healthy were also installed.

The upgrade was made possible with \$115,000 from Council combined with a NSW Government grant of \$100,000 and a generous contribution of \$20,000 from the Goonellabah Rotary Club.

There has been a marked increase in visitors to Kadina Park since the upgrade was completed.



Sport and recreation upgrades 2019/20

Residents will see enhanced sports facilities across the LGA, with Council having completed or currently working on multiple upgrades worth more than \$21 million. These works are predominantly funded through state and federal government grants. Projects include the following:

- **Oakes Oval/Crozier Field** – major redevelopment to transform the two facilities into a premier sporting precinct called the Lismore City Sports Hub, attracting national and international sporting codes and 20,000 additional visitors each year. Funded with \$12 million from state and federal government grants and contributions by Council and other sporting associations such as AFL Queensland, Lismore Swans AFL and NSW Cricket. Work currently underway. Due for completion by December 2021.
- **Albert Park** – \$6.95 million redevelopment of the facility including new playing fields, grandstands, clubhouse and other amenities to create a world-class training and playing facility in the Asia Pacific region. Funded by state and federal governments, Council and Baseball Australia. Work currently underway. Due for completion by June 2021.
- **Kadina Park** – installation of new playground equipment including a mouse house and new fitness stations. Funded with \$115,000 from Council, \$100,000 from the NSW Government and \$20,000 from the Goonellabah Rotary Club. Officially opened in August 2019.
- **Wade Park** – new equipment to replace the playground vandalised by fire. Funded with \$71,000 from Council and insurance. Officially reopened in October 2019.
- **Heritage Park** – installation of new playground equipment and some play structures as well as construction of a new water play area. Funded with \$626,000 from the NSW Government. Work currently underway.
- **Lismore Netball Courts** – facility upgrade including two new asphalt courts, grass court improvements, and a new shade structure. Funded with \$337,000 from the NSW Government, Council and the Lismore District Netball Association. Work completed July 2020.
- **Hepburn Park** – installation of new state-of-the-art lighting for the football fields. Funded with \$288,000 from the NSW Government and Lismore Touch Football Association. This investment brings the lighting up to Australian football code standards, allows players to better see the ball at night, reduces spill lighting upon neighbouring residents in the new Waterford Park Estate, and cuts power consumption by half. Work completed in October 2019.
- **Hepburn Park** – installation of six new grandstands at the North Coast Regional Hockey Centre. This will provide an additional 360 seats in the shade for spectators. Funded with \$154,000 from the NSW Government. Work completed in October 2019.
- **Lismore Basketball Stadium** – building and stadium refurbishment, new carparking and landscaping. Funded with \$274,000 from the NSW Government. Work completed in December 2019.
- **Riverview Park** – refurbishment of old amenities block into new undercover gathering area. Funded with \$120,000 from the NSW Government. Work currently underway.
- **Italo Soccer Club** – installation of new lights, new grandstand, fence repairs and barrier netting for the goals. Funded with \$121,000 from the NSW Government. Work currently underway.



DID YOU KNOW?



The Albert Park upgrade will include nine new playing diamonds, 18 new dugouts, 125 metres of new handrails, 1,800 metres of new fencing and 4.5 football fields of new turf.

B A prosperous and vibrant city



10-year objectives

B1 Our community has diverse business and industry as well as opportunities for investment and growth.

B2 Our city and villages are attractive meeting places that provide for diverse activity and strengthen our social connections.

B3 Our community has a diverse and thriving arts and cultural life.

B4 Our community is connected and convenient.

Key Highlights

The \$1 million Hannah Cabinet was purchased for the Lismore Regional Gallery's permanent collection through community fundraising efforts and government grants.

Lismore's annual street food festival, Eat the Street, won gold in the events category at the North Coast Tourism Awards.

Council engaged with more than 200 business owners, entrepreneurs, interest groups and community members to develop a new Economic Development Strategy to guide future investment and CBD/village activation over the next four years.

Council worked closely with Australian company CannaPacific to help establish a modern medicinal cannabis cultivation and research facility in the Northern Rivers that has the potential to create up to 100 jobs.

Lismore and Goonellabah Library branches were refurbished with state and federal government funding.

Council undertook the 'Shaping the Lismore CBD' report with \$100,000 in NSW Government funding to determine how best to activate the CBD.

Consultation was undertaken for the Lismore Laneways Project to activate Lismore's CBD laneways. The project is fully funded with a \$510,000 grant from the NSW Government.

Growing the Heart of Lismore

Council delivers a range of programs and services to provide opportunities for growth and investment in business and industry and a resilient economy. Council also plays a vital role in activating the CBD.

62 enquiries about new developments

4,128 registered businesses

9.42% CBD vacancy rate



300,000 visitors to the Visit Lismore website

Your rates at work

Special Rate Variation Expenditure for Business Promotion

Business promotion activities are managed through the Lismore Business Promotion Program.

This has been funded by a special rate variation applied to Inner CBD and Urban Business ratepayers since 1998. In 2013, the NSW Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal approved an additional five-year Special Business Rate Variation Levy (SBRVL) to increase the level of promotional funding for the program.

This was extended for a further five years in 2018 and Council is required to report to the community on this expenditure each year through the Annual Report.

In 2019/20, \$123,240 was collected through the additional SBRVL for marketing and promotions, placemaking and events, which was administered through Council's Tourism & Events unit. Council is currently conducting a review of the SBRVL process and structure, and how this will be delivered in future.

Expenditure Program for 2019/20	
CBD Events and Placemaking	\$59,000
Marketing	\$52,740
Contingency	\$11,500
Total	\$123,240

Some key achievements in 2019/20 include:

- Ongoing marketing activities to promote Lismore businesses and attract shoppers including the Stocktake Sale, Mother's Day Sale, What's On campaign and more.
- Marketing and event management of Santa's Wonderland, including photos with Santa, letters to Santa, a treasure hunt, window display competition, and major retail giveaways to attract shoppers to the CBD in the lead up to Christmas.
- Event management for the award-winning Eat the Street food festival.
- Sponsorship of the Carols in the Heart event, with a crowd in excess of 4000 people.
- Sponsorship of the 11th Lismore Masters Games in September 2019, which attracted 1,700 competitors to Lismore over the three-day event.
- Ongoing retail marketing and city centre promotions including further development of digital assets (Facebook and Instagram), TV, radio and print. This includes management of the Visit Lismore website, which attracted over 300,000 unique visitors.

A full list of activities funded by the SBRVL for 2019/20 can be found in the Statutory Information section of this report.



New Economic Development Strategy launched

Driving growth, jobs, visitation and improving our city and village centres are the key focus areas of the new Economic Development Strategy adopted in December 2019.

The strategy was developed following a major consultation that included more than 200 business owners, entrepreneurs, community members, sporting and environmental groups, community organisations, manufacturers, and agricultural and industry leaders.

The new Economic Development Strategy will drive investment and growth opportunities over the next four years, encourage new development in Lismore and the local region, and guide amenity improvements in the Lismore CBD and village centres.

Council was successful in obtaining a NSW Government grant to deliver its first project – the activation of Lismore’s inner-city laneways.



Eat the Street good as gold

Eat the Street added another gong to its impressive string of awards, winning gold in the events category at the North Coast Tourism Awards in August 2019.

Since its inception in 2015, Eat the Street has grown to become a signature event for Lismore, attracting more than 25,000 people to the city centre for entertainment, street food and fun.

DID YOU KNOW?



Eat the Street 2020 was the last major event Council hosted before COVID-19 health restrictions came into force.

Bringing new business to Lismore

Encouraging new investment in Lismore and nurturing new business and industry to establish in the region is essential to driving Lismore's growth as a regional city.

In November 2019, Australian company CannaPacific announced it would establish a modern medicinal cannabis cultivation and research facility in the Northern Rivers, potentially creating up to 100 new jobs.

Council worked closely with CannaPacific to guide the company through the approval process and ensure this important new industry could establish in our region.

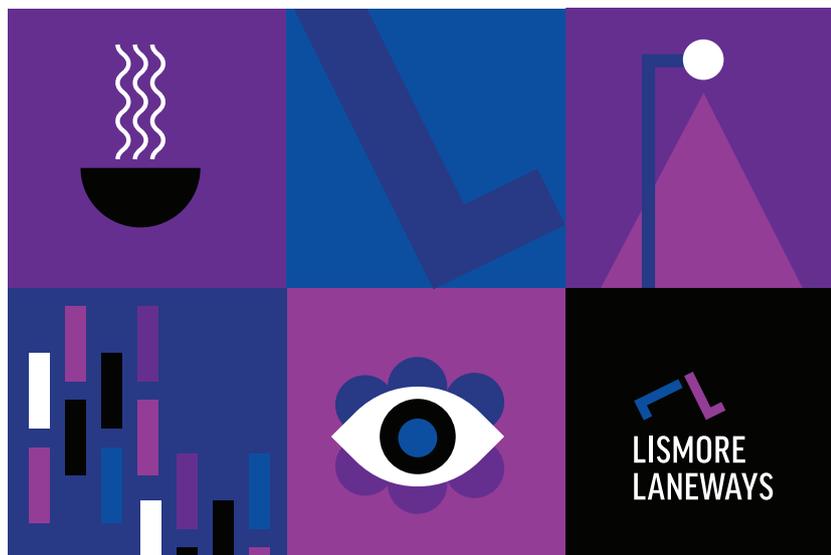


It is the only licenced medicinal cannabis facility in the Northern Rivers and one of the first in the country. CannaPacific, which expects to commence cultivation by late 2020, will also serve as an advanced Cannabis Plant Research and Development Unit in collaboration with the University of Newcastle.

In 2019/20, Council provided business and development support to 62 new developers who were interested in establishing business and industry in Lismore.

Activating our city laneways

Council was successful in obtaining NSW Government funding of \$510,000 for the Lismore Laneways Project. This project will transform Lismore's inner-city areas and bring life back to the CBD through urban design and amenity improvements.



The project will be delivered by a team of expert urban design specialists, who will work collaboratively with local businesses and community members to bring new life to some of Lismore's most under-utilised spaces.

Already rich with local art, the aim is to implement things like new lighting, greenery and pop-up events to make the city laneways a destination that is truly unique to Lismore.

The Lismore Laneways Project is due for completion by June 2021.

Nurturing Creative Spirit

Council promotes a thriving arts and cultural scene for residents and visitors through support for creative industries, which make a significant contribution to the local economy, as well as through the provision of the Lismore Regional Gallery and Quadrangle, which have transformed the city centre and showcase the region's creative spirit.

293 events, tours and workshops

9,125 participants in our events, tours and workshops

492 Friends of the Gallery

21 major exhibitions staged



The Hannah Cabinet comes home

The Hannah Cabinet, a masterpiece by world-renowned cabinet maker Geoff Hannah, now happily calls Lismore home.

The Lismore Regional Gallery officially purchased the \$1 million cabinet in March 2020 and it now proudly features in the gallery's permanent collection.

The funds were raised through a mammoth fundraising effort over 18 months by a dedicated team of volunteers and these were matched with state and federal government funding.

Master craftsman Geoff Hannah is one of the finest cabinet-makers in the world, who still works from his small studio in the heart of suburban Lismore.

The Hannah Cabinet is the result of 5,000 hours of labour and contains 34 fine timbers and veneers, 17 types of stone, four types of shell, and 23-carat gold leaf. It has 18 doors and 140 draws.

The cabinet was first exhibited in 2009, and this remains one of the most popular exhibitions in the history of the gallery, drawing thousands of visitors from near and far.



The Hannah Cabinet is now permanently on display and will continue to attract national and international visitors.

This purchase was a 'first' for regional Australia. Never before has an iconic work of art, independently valued at such a significant cost, been housed in the town where it was created by a renowned master craftsman. Council believes it is the highest amount raised by a regional gallery in NSW to purchase a work of art for its collection.

Support from the state and federal government was critical in bringing this project to fruition and Council welcomes their continued support to create a rich arts and cultural environment in Lismore.

DID YOU KNOW?

More than 4,380 people donated to *The Hannah Cabinet* fundraising effort to purchase this iconic masterwork for the gallery's permanent collection.



Keeping arts and culture alive...

Despite the bushfires and COVID-19 forcing numerous cancellations and the closure of facilities, the 2019/20 year still featured some incredible arts and cultural activities at the Lismore Regional Gallery and The Quad.



Lismore Regional Gallery

- British author Michael Hall – author of *Art, Passion & Power: The Story of the Royal Collection* – gave a presentation on the Royal Collection, which contains over a million works of art and other historic objects, and is the largest private art collection in the world.
- *Chesta Drawz and the Lowboys* – an exhibition of fine woodwork by students of acclaimed cabinet-maker Geoff Hannah.
- *Gesture of Balance* – another exhibition of fine woodwork by Northern Rivers artist Grant Vaughan.
- *Idol Worship* – featuring artists working across installation, video, performance, sculpture, painting and textiles exploring contemporary notions of reverence, worship and idolisation.
- In partnership with Byron Writers Festival, Ailsa Piper returned to the gallery with a performance inspired by the exhibition, *Object Therapy*. Using both found and crafted words, Ailsa reflected on the way you think about the place of things in your life.

The Quad

- Dark Science – an adults-only festival of science meeting magic and mystery with circus, sideshow, dance, performance, lighting, theatre and more.
- Playground Festival – a day filled with high-wire antics, laughter, imagination and storytelling for those young and young at heart.
- Lismore Designers Market – filling The Quad with the creative makings of our many local artisans and designers.
- Free tai chi classes – bringing people together for exercise and meditation.
- Pop-up music events – free gigs with acoustic musos, live DJs and other local artists. Picnic blankets optional.

DID YOU KNOW?



In 2019/20, 90 works valued at \$158,000 were donated to the gallery's permanent collection from artists and collectors in Australia.

Library branches get a new look

Council was successful in obtaining funding for refurbishments at the Lismore and Goonellabah Libraries in the 2019/20 year.

Lismore's was funded by a NSW Government grant of \$198,000 and Goonellabah's was part of a broader upgrade of the Goonellabah Community Centre.

The Lismore Library makeover included:

- new shelving (some of which hasn't been replaced since 1972);
- new front counter circulation desks;
- a new automated returns system that undertakes automatic sorting; and
- new carpets, painting etc.

Meanwhile, Goonellabah Library was spruced up with new carpet and painting, new front counter circulation desks and other amenity improvements to create a fresh and appealing environment.



Both branches continued to deliver services during COVID-19 with innovative online programming and a 'Click and Collect' service.

A highlight of the library's social media programs was when long-time Librarian Lucy Kinsley shared a special Storytime reading of the book *Harry the Highlander* sitting in a paddock with her own highland cow Jock on her farm at Wyrallah. Our IT guru Michael Schubert also joined the fun, broadcasting a live Storytime with his two young kids on his knee.

DID YOU KNOW?

Community members have borrowed 250,821 items from the Lismore and Goonellabah Libraries and the Mobile Library.



Getting creative during COVID



During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Lismore Regional Gallery and The Quad continued to welcome creative discourse with open arms by moving their presence online throughout the crisis.

From dance workshops to music concerts, children's activities and artist residencies, our cultural organisations adapted quickly to deliver arts, culture and thought-provoking creativity directly into people's homes and hearts.

Our regular children's programming included the gallery's kid's tour guide Peggy Popart delivering a number of tours and art-making sessions for children. A new monthly drop-in drawing class, The Quick Draw Club, was transitioned online with a range of people taking part in drawing exchanges with various Northern Rivers artists.

The gallery's monthly discussion series presented in partnership with Southern Cross University, Thursday Night Live, was also delivered online and locals were joined by audiences from Perth, Melbourne and Sydney.

In a partnership between the gallery and The Quad, funded by Create NSW, at-home creative residencies were also offered to makers, artists, musicians, dancers, designers, crafters and idea innovators affected by the coronavirus.

The Together//Alone program saw creative responses counteracting our lack of access to shared creative community gathering places, and asked: 'How do we remain connected to community places from our homes?'



C Our natural environment



10-year objectives

C1 Our waterways and catchments are healthy.

C2 We are committed to resource recovery, waste management and recycling innovation.

C3 We are committed to environmental sustainability.

C4 Our diverse natural environment is protected and enhanced.

Key Highlights

Council reviewed the 20-year Biodiversity Management Strategy to ensure actions were relevant and effective for the next five years of delivery.

The Rural Landholder Initiative continued, providing incentives and education to private landholders to protect biodiversity and habitat.

Training on Natural Sequence Farming was delivered to government leaders and employees. This is a unique regenerative agricultural technique that could assist with flood and agricultural challenges in the Northern Rivers.

Council partnered with TAFE NSW for the Upcycle Artist in Residence Project at the Lismore Revolve Shop. Artists were invited to exhibit works that repurposed waste materials and inspired people to re-use resources and keep materials out of landfill.

Council hosted the second biennial Lismore Biodiversity Awards to recognise and reward excellence in environmental protection and biodiversity conservation.

Council used 1,500 tonnes of recycled crushed glass as pipe bedding for the \$8.2 million South Lismore Flood Mitigation Project.

More than 13,000 tonnes of waste, recycling and organics were collected from households.

The Lismore Recycling & Recovery Centre sustained significant damage following a fire at the facility in August 2019. Repairs are underway.

Supporting Biodiversity



Council works hard to protect and enhance our region's biodiversity and conserve our environment to grow habitat, improve water quality and provide natural amenity for all.

8,463 native trees planted

1,016 koala food trees planted

81.9 hectares of native vegetation regenerated

1.57km of roadside weed control in areas of high conservation value vegetation

Your rates at work

Special Rate Variation for Biodiversity Management

Since 2016, Council's Biodiversity Management Strategy has been funded by a Special Rate Variation applied to Farmland, Residential Rural and Residential Urban/Village ratepayers.

In 2019/20, \$533,190 in levies was collected from ratepayers. A total of \$578,260 was expended for a range of activities. The reason for the difference in income is that we carried forward projects from the previous year into this financial year.

Expenditure Program for 2019/20	
Cleaning up our own Backyard	
Planning and processes	\$53,629
Supporting the community	\$50,480
Working with landholders	\$353,510
Working in the urban environment	\$88,241
Koala Plan of Management	\$32,400
Total	\$578,260

Some key achievements in 2019/20 include:

- Weed control undertaken on 1.57km of high conservation value roadside vegetation.
- Biodiversity Management Strategy reviewed and updated to incorporate feedback from the community and address changes to regulatory and operating environments.
- Four events and workshops attended by 251 people in rural and urban areas.
- Forty-four Rural Landholder Initiative projects have come to completion and a further 24 continue to second stage.
- Bush regeneration work on 81.92ha of native vegetation; 8,463 trees planted; 3.6km of fencing installed for habitat protection; 8.68km of riparian area restored; 7.63km of riparian areas excluded from stock; and seven off-stream watering units installed.
- Weed management on 56.17ha of koala habitat with 1,016 koala food trees planted and revegetation of 2.14ha of koala habitat.
- Field surveys identified and mapped 91 areas of high conservation value vegetation and 21 locations of threatened plant species in road reserves.

A full list of activities funded in 2019/20 by the SRV can be found in the Statutory Information section of this report.

DID YOU KNOW?

Council has planted more than 35,300 trees since the Biodiversity Management Strategy was adopted in 2016.



Rural Landholder Initiative continues

Despite a hiatus in the first half of 2020 due to COVID-19, Council is continuing to deliver major environmental outcomes through its Rural Landholder Initiative.

The Rural Landholder Initiative is a central component of Council's Biodiversity Management Strategy and involves Council working with rural landholders to improve biodiversity on private land, build habitat corridors, improve water quality of our streams and rivers, and share knowledge about how to tackle local environmental challenges.

To facilitate this, Council delivers an ongoing small grants program to help farmers improve biodiversity on their properties and hosts field days for local landholders so they can connect, learn and share knowledge.

In 2019/20, the Rural Landholder Initiative has achieved the following:

- 44 projects have come to completion and a further 24 continue to second stage.
- 81.92ha of native vegetation has been regenerated.
- 8,463 trees have been planted.
- 3.6km of fencing has been installed for habitat protection.
- 8.68km of riparian areas have been restored.
- 7.63km of riparian areas have been excluded from stock.
- Seven off-stream watering units have been installed.

Achieving action through partnerships

Council is aware that one dollar in Council's hands can be worth 10 in community hands.

Council actively supports and partners with many local organisations to help them achieve their aims and add value to the enormous efforts already put in by their volunteers.

Some of the partnerships Council has been involved in during 2019/20 include:

- Providing funding to Landcare groups for tree planting and weed control.



Council is currently assessing Expressions of Interest for the next round of the Rural Landholder Initiative. This was delayed due to COVID-19 but is now underway with plans to announce the successful recipients by the end of 2020.

Council is also looking at innovative new ways to deliver its field days, with plans for online events featuring guest presenters on Zoom and streamed videos of land management techniques being applied by local landholders.



- Collaborating in delivering community awareness programs with Friends of the Koala.
- Providing assistance, support and funding to deliver training for Landcare volunteers.

Council is always open to partnering with local environmental groups on projects to conserve the local environment or raise awareness about how to protect habitat, wildlife and biodiversity.

Tackling climate change through innovation

Climate change will bring many changes to the Northern Rivers region, with residents likely to face more drought, flood and bushfire conditions in the years and decades to come.

Council is exploring ways to combat the effects of climate change by looking at innovative land management solutions with other farmers, researchers and government organisations across the region.

In 2019, Council hosted training in Natural Sequence Farming to look at this unique farming technique and how it could help to future-proof farms and landscapes in the Northern Rivers from more extreme weather conditions.

Staff from Council, Rous County Council, Southern Cross University and members of the Floodplain Management Committee attended the training to learn how this unique method of land management can restore arid and degraded landscapes.

Natural Sequence Farming was pioneered by Bylong Valley farmer Peter Andrews on his property Tarwyn Park and is a technique of regenerative agriculture and landcare. It is a system of farming focused on transforming dry landscapes by improving water retention and promoting plant growth.



Peter Andrews' work has been nationally and internationally recognised. In 2011, he received an Order of Australia Medal and he has been featured on ABC's Australian-Story twice.

"While the theories and practices largely focus on the application of Natural Sequence Farming at a micro level, we were keen to ultimately collaborate across the region to investigate the feasibility of applying these principles at a macro level," Council's General Manager Shelley Oldham said.

"There is potential here for these systems to be used as flood mitigation strategies and, additionally, to investigate it as a means through which whole landscapes of degraded country might be restored."

Feel blue? Touch green...

To mark Mental Health Month in October 2019, Council co-hosted two events to help people improve their mental health through spending time in nature and discussing difficult issues.

The first event was part of Council's Feel Blue Touch Green project to encourage people to spend time in nature to relax,



de-stress and improve mental health. Healing with Nature was a sharing circle for women on mental health and healing with nutrition, natural therapies and nature.

The second event was a special Thursday Night Live! event at Lismore Regional Gallery with a panel of experts discussing suicide and how it can be discussed and addressed in regional communities.

Feel Blue Touch Green is an ongoing project of Council's Biodiversity Management Strategy.

It is based on a project pioneered in Victoria which has linked spending time in nature with improved physical and mental health.

Recognising community excellence

Recognising and rewarding environmental excellence in our community is an important goal of the Biodiversity Management Strategy.

Council held the second biennial Lismore Biodiversity Awards in September 2019 to pay tribute to the many community groups, landholders, schools and individuals that are acting to protect biodiversity, improve catchment health and demonstrate sustainable agriculture.

The winners were announced in an awards ceremony at Lismore City Hall with each award recipient receiving \$1,000 as a thank you for their achievements.

Our 2019 winners included a diverse range of local people doing extraordinary work, including:

- A Whian Whian farming couple who have used large-scale composting to build soil health, constructed a wetland to filter runoff and increase biodiversity, and planted a koala corridor along their boundary.
- A passionate Landcare volunteer and educator who gives her time to assist local rural landholders and schools to restore the land.

- The founding member of a 250-acre community at The Channon, where a heavily cleared dairy and banana farm has been regenerated with healthy native rainforest over many decades.
- The Friends of the Koala, which has operated for more than 30 years, caring for more than 5,000 koalas and distributing more than 150,000 koala food trees.

Council would like to thank all those nominated for the Lismore Biodiversity Awards. These people demonstrate a genuine passion for the environment and an enduring love for the land that is evident in the legacy they are creating.



Raising environmental awareness

Taking part in community events and raising awareness about environmental issues is a vital part of supporting the community to engage with, respect and look after our natural environment.

Some of the activities Council has hosted or partnered to deliver during the 2019/20 financial year include:



- **Water Wednesday** – a school holiday fun day at Rocky Creek Dam with an educational purpose. Games, activities and information were used to celebrate water as a precious resource and help young people understand how to conserve and protect our waterways.

- **Aussie Backyard Bird Count** – a nation-wide community effort to build data and provide a more accurate understanding of what birds are found where. This helps Council to better manage and preserve habitat for these species now and into the future.
- **Big Scrub Rainforest Day** – a series of activities to build knowledge about the history of the Big Scrub rainforest and the importance of preserving this magnificent habitat for the unique species of plants and animals that call it home.
- **National Tree Day** – a community tree planting day to help revegetate and restore our riverbanks and public spaces.

Council also actively promotes and helps other organisations to raise awareness on important local environmental issues, such as protecting our urban koala population, reducing noxious weeds, controlling Indian Myna birds, and growing native gardens to increase habitat for wildlife.

Environmental Sustainability

Council is actively working to protect our natural assets, use our resources wisely, and grow sustainability. We are committed to responsible waste management, reducing our impact on the environment, and becoming a model of sustainability.

19 solar systems

40% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions since 2012

16% of Council's energy generated by renewable sources



13,345 tonnes of waste collected from households

New landfill cell provides future capacity

Council has completed the construction of the \$2 million landfill cell 2B at the Lismore Recycling & Recovery Centre.

This new landfill cell provides increased capacity for rubbish disposal and is allowing Council to dispose of waste on site.

In late 2019, Council was forced to send waste to Queensland for several months when the current landfill site reached capacity before the new landfill cell was in operation.

Learning from this experience, Council will investigate sites for landfill cell C to ensure capacity for future waste disposal is identified and scoped well in advance.

Over the next several years, Council will also undertake phytocapping of landfill cell 1 and 2A. This will result in the old landfill cells being safely capped with a forest of native vegetation and koala food trees, providing important habitat for our threatened koala population.



DID YOU KNOW?

More than five million containers have been recycled through the Return and Earn bulk collection centre at Wyrallah Road in 2019/20. Of these, around 41% are glass, 45% are aluminium and 12% are PET.



Staff respond swiftly to major recycling centre fire

The Lismore Recycling & Recovery Centre in Wyrallah Road was partly destroyed by fire in August 2019, with drought conditions sparking a fire in the centre's large composting piles.

The fire broke out at 1am, spewing smoke across the city, but thanks to the quick-thinking and rapid response of staff, fire crews were soon on site and free masks were available to residents by 7am. Care for the community was the top priority for all involved in the immediate response.

The complicated nature of the fire coupled with the prevailing weather conditions meant that it burnt for a further 10 days before being fully extinguished.

The fire destroyed part of the \$3.65 million Materials Recovery Facility and caused extensive damage to composting and recycling facilities.

The disaster disrupted waste services and Council's regional collection of recyclables and organics from neighbouring councils. Staff had to find alternative solutions during this time, such as sending compost to a private operator and trucking recyclables to Queensland for processing.



The front half of the waste facility was reopened as quickly as possible. Staff were instrumental in ensuring the facility could continue to provide essential services while an in-depth insurance and repairs claim was undertaken.

Repairs to the damaged compost area and Materials Recovery Facility were underway as at 30 June 2020.

Community safety paramount during COVID-19

Community safety has been the ongoing priority at the Lismore Recycling & Recovery Centre in 2020 since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The World Health Organisation stated that the COVID-19 virus could exist on surfaces for several

days in favourable environments where it is undisturbed – potentially including metal, plastic and timber surfaces, and things like food waste, bottles, furniture and mattresses.

This resulted in Council having to close many service's from general recycling drop-off to the Return and Earn bulk collection centre and the Lismore Revolve Shop to ensure safe practices were in place.



Between April and June 2020, Council progressively reopened services with new social distancing and safe handling measures in place to limit handling of waste materials and contact between customers and staff.

By the end of June 2020, all services were back in operation excluding the Lismore Revolve Shop.

Diversifying resources in the pipeline...

Reusing and recycling resources not only reduces waste to landfill but also has the added benefit of saving the community money.

Council has started using recycled glass sand as pipe bedding in our own projects as well as providing it for use in road base for the M1 highway upgrade.

Pipe bedding is the sand that lines channels where underground pipes or cables are being laid. It is a further diversification for our recycled glass sand, which we already use in road base.

The glass sand is made by crushing household glass bottles, jars and crockery that is collected from household kerbside bins in the LGA.

This glass sand was most recently used for pipe bedding during the \$8.2 million South Lismore Flood Mitigation Project. This project is designed to ease flooding in the Lismore area by excavating land at South Lismore to increase the flow of water away from the city.

During the works, Council relocated two major sewer mains, which were 'bedded' using 1,500 tonnes of the crushed glass sand from the Lismore Recycling & Recovery Centre.

As well as reducing the need to mine virgin material, using this recycled product instead of traditional crushed rock represented a significant cost saving to the project.

Using recycled resources for new purposes is an area where Council is continually experimenting and innovating – it makes sense both environmentally and economically.



Raising awareness and decreasing waste

Raising awareness about the importance of reducing waste and re-using household items is a vital part of changing community attitudes and improving recycling rates.

Council operates the Lismore Revolve Shop to sell second-hand goods and supports events and initiatives to educate our community about the importance of reducing and re-using the waste we create.

Some of the events and activities Council supports include:

- **Second Hand Saturday** – the largest garage sale day on the North Coast, helping people to de-clutter and sell unwanted items. Around 2000 wheelie bins' worth of second-hand items exchange hands.

- **World Environment Day** – an annual fun day with local primary schools to teach students about the importance of protecting our natural environment, improving water quality and reducing pollution.
- **North Coast National and Nimbin Show** – an annual event with activities and games to teach families about the importance of following our recycling rules and reducing waste.
- **Waste Wise Challenge** – an annual competition for local primary schools that sets targets for reducing food waste, growing food on-site, reducing water use and managing waste.
- **Ongoing school tours** – tours of the Lismore Recycling & Recovery Centre to teach primary school children about the lifecycle of waste and what happens to the rubbish and food waste we create in our own homes.

Embracing renewable energy

Implementing energy efficiency measures and embracing renewable energy has resulted in a significant reduction in Council's greenhouse gas emissions and major cost savings for the community.

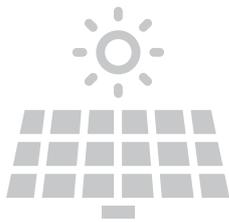
Council's Renewable Energy Master Plan, adopted in 2014, set out a pathway for Council to generate 100% of its electricity needs from renewable sources by 2023.

Key actions of the plan include:

- Increasing energy efficiency measures at Council facilities.
- Improving lighting and street-lighting efficiency.
- Installing solar on facilities to reach 25% of the renewable energy goal.
- Investigating options for sourcing the remaining 75% by 2023, ideally from a local renewable energy source.

Energy efficiency initiatives have included air conditioning upgrades, heat reflective paint, LED lighting, solar hot water, street-lighting LED retrofits and installation of solar systems, including two 100kW community solar farms.

Council now has the capacity to generate 16% of its total energy requirements – or 1,395MWh of solar power – from its 19 solar systems.



In 2019/20, Council's greenhouse gas emissions declined a further 2.4% on the previous year. Electricity consumption decreased by 10%, which was influenced by the closure of some sites due to COVID-19. Electricity costs increased by 10% due to price rises, however, this would have been significantly higher without energy efficiency initiatives.

A key initiative for 2019/20 was the \$65,000 Heritage Near Me project, funded by the Office of Environment and Heritage. This enabled Council to install heat reflective blinds and LED lighting at the Lismore Library to reduce the annual energy load of the building by 10%.

In addition, solar monitoring devices were installed at all Council sites to enable real-time monitoring and reporting on solar performance and solar maintenance.

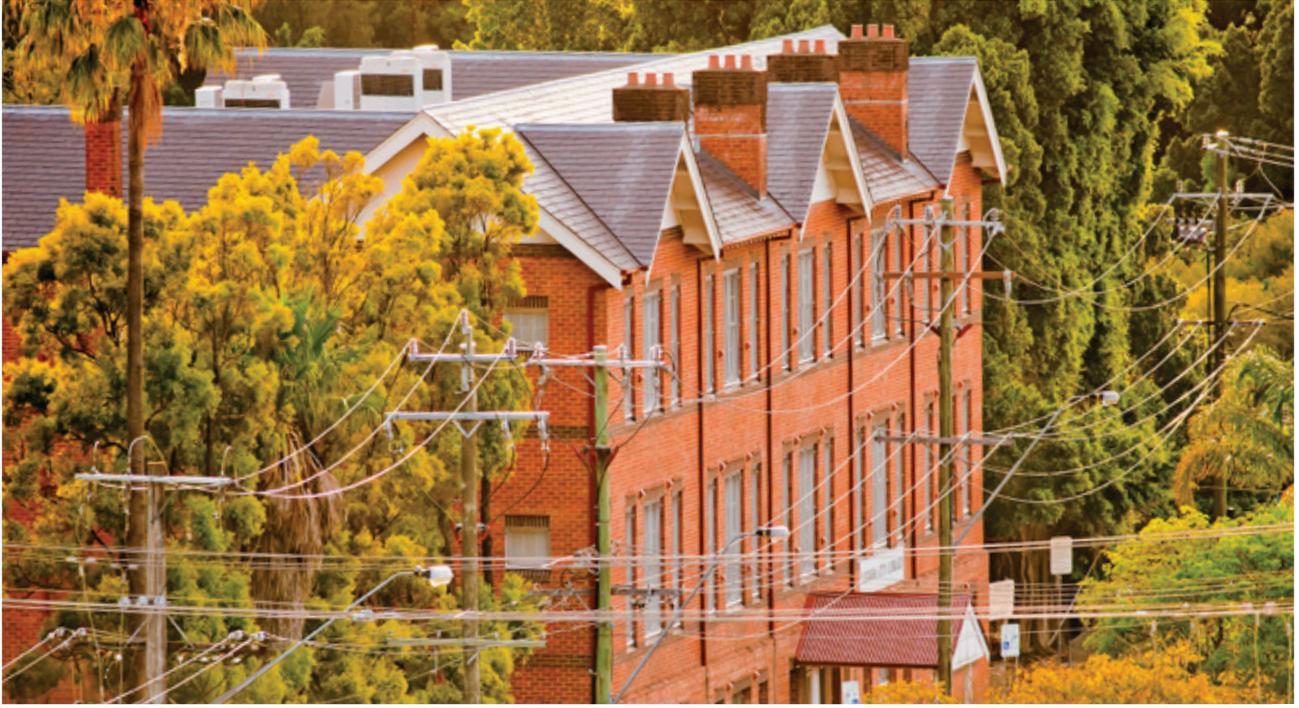


DID YOU KNOW?

Energy efficiency measures have enabled Council to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by a remarkable 41% since 2012.



D Our built environment



10-year objectives

D1 Our city and village services are well managed and maintained.

D2 Our built environment is managed and enhanced to meet the needs of our growing community.

D3 Our land use planning caters for all sectors of the community.

D4 Our community has a diversity of affordable housing options.

Key Highlights

Council secured more than \$14 million in state and federal government funding for roadworks in the next financial year.

The \$8.2 million South Lismore Flood Mitigation Project is under construction to help protect Lismore from future flooding.

Council adopted a Local Strategic Planning Statement to guide development and growth over the next 20 years.

Major repairs to the Wilsons River cycleway and landslips at Oakey Creek Road and Beardow Street have concluded, marking completion of flood repairs from the 2017 Cyclone Debbie natural disaster.

A record number of development applications were submitted, assessed and processed since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Council graded more than 300km of gravel roads and resurfaced or reconstructed 31.4km of sealed roads.

Council spent \$8.1 million on building and renewing water and wastewater infrastructure.

Assets and Infrastructure

Infrastructure assets deliver important services to communities. Within our built environment, they comprise roads, water, stormwater, wastewater, buildings, quarries and land. Council's Asset Management Strategy allows us to create, acquire, maintain, operate, rehabilitate and dispose of these assets.

300km of unsealed roads graded and 28.5km of sealed roads resurfaced

\$18.8 million on repairing our road network



\$8.1 million spent on building and renewing water and wastewater infrastructure

Fixing the Roads

Council's largest asset group is its transport network, which provides essential access throughout the Lismore LGA for residents, businesses and visitors.

In 2019/20, Council spent \$18.8 million on preserving, restoring and enhancing the 1200km road network in the LGA.

Major works included:

- 30,000 potholes repaired (approximately 82 every day).
- 300km of unsealed roads graded.
- 28.5km of roads resurfaced.
- 2.9km of roads reconstructed.

In recent years, maintaining the area's vast road network has been an ongoing challenge for Council and there is a significant backlog of work.

Some of the reasons include:

- The road network requires more funding than it receives.

- The community has consistently indicated it wants more work done on roads.
- Community expectations have increased, putting further pressure on the roads budget.
- The cost of roadworks has risen faster than revenue.

Council continues to drive internal savings to free up funding for roads and has campaigned for additional funding from state and federal governments.

In 2019/20, Council successfully applied for NSW Government Safer Roads funding, Australian Government Black Spot funding, NSW Government and Australian Government Fixing Local Roads funding and the Australian Government Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program.

In total, Council will receive \$14,729,326 to be used in the 2020/21 financial year for installation of roundabouts at intersections with an accident history and to fix country roads that have fallen into disrepair.

The road network includes:

780km of sealed roads

420km of unsealed roads

DID YOU KNOW?

Lismore roads are upcycled with glass. We recycle your bottles, jars and crockery at our waste facility and crush them into glass sand, which is used in our road base.



Grant funds flood mitigation works

Lismore will be further protected from major flooding as a result of the \$8.2 million South Lismore Flood Mitigation Project.

This project is 100% funded by the NSW Government and is one of several projects identified in the Lismore Floodplain Risk Management Plan to help flood-proof the city.

The project includes the excavation of 410,000m³ of material from a 58-hectare parcel of Council-

owned land to divert floodwater overflow from Leycester Creek south of the city.

This work is predicted to reduce peak water levels in the CBD, North Lismore and South Lismore by as much as 100mm in a 1-in-100-year flood event.

Excavated material is being used to fill nearby industrial land within Lismore's floodplain, facilitating the ongoing expansion of the South Lismore Industrial Estate.



Saving on sewer

Council has saved a remarkable \$1 million of the \$1.7 million budgeted for a significant sewer project simply by using in-house teams.

The works were required to facilitate the South Lismore Flood Mitigation Project and included relocating two major sewer pipelines that service thousands of households in Lismore, North Lismore, South Lismore and Girards Hill.

Council made the decision to use in-house teams rather than contractors to upgrade these sewer mains – a practice Council has been progressively implementing in recent years to reduce the cost of works to ratepayers.

Despite this being a complicated project relocating the biggest sewer pipelines Council's teams had ever worked on, it proved that using in-house teams is quicker and more cost-efficient.

This method will continue to be used wherever possible to find ongoing savings in this area.



Flood repairs complete

Residents affected by the Cyclone Debbie flood in 2017 have been incredibly patient and will be happy to hear that the final flood repairs are now complete.

The Wilsons River cycleway and landslips at Oakey Creek Road in Georgica and Beardow Street in Lismore Heights were all major projects that encountered obstacles along the way.

The Oakey Creek Road landslip required very complex engineering solutions, with geotechnical designs requiring several redesigns due to unusual soil types and topography.

Meanwhile, the Beardow Street landslip was complicated when soil was found to be contaminated. This led to investigations by the Environmental Protection Authority and works were suspended while all contaminated soil on site was removed and disposed of safely.

In June 2020, Council finalised work on the Wilsons River cycleway, marking completion of all major flood repairs around the LGA.



These works were funded by the National Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements program, which is a joint state and federal government initiative to fund major disaster relief projects.

Council would like to thank all residents affected by these works for their understanding and patience in the face of some very challenging circumstances.

No easy fix for ageing road network

In 2019/20, Council graded more than 300km of gravel roads and resurfaced and reconstructed 31.4km of sealed roads.

Lismore has one of the largest road networks in regional NSW, with a road maintenance backlog that has been allowed to build up over many decades and now exceeds \$65 million.

In 2019/20, Council voted not to go ahead with a proposed Special Rate Variation to raise an additional \$3.74 million annually for roads.

On top of this, Council experienced a revenue reduction of between \$1 million and \$1.5 million from the fall-out of COVID-19.

The financial impact of these factors combined has significantly reduced planned work in the next financial year and residents will experience a delay in maintenance works such as fixing of potholes.

Despite these challenges, an increase in state and federal government grants means that Council will

still be able to deliver its major roadworks schedule in the next financial year.

The grants were very welcome news in these challenging times.

If there is no significant increase in roads funding in the future, Council will be forced to reduce the level of work it can achieve, including less grading of certain gravel roads and decreased maintenance of potholes.



Your rates at work

Stormwater Management Services Levy

Council is responsible for capital works, maintenance, operation and renewals of an extensive stormwater management system valued at over \$64 million.

In 2019/20, Council collected \$382,654 in levies, of which \$261,548 was spent on our large stormwater network and the remainder kept in reserves.

The Stormwater Management Services levy funds inspections, maintenance and operational costs. It was also spent on various capital and renewal works including:

- Captain Rous Park and Hamley Road – stormwater improvements (currently underway).
- Cathcart Street, Girards Hill – localised flooding reduction works (completed).



- Kookaburra Terrace – stormwater basin renewal (completed).
- Upper Monaltrie Creek – stormwater concept design (currently underway).
- Zadoc Street – stormwater conveyance concept design (currently underway).

The remaining unspent funds are placed in reserves and can only be used for future stormwater-related works as outlined in the Stormwater Management Plan.

The stormwater management system is a complex network of 'grey' and 'green' infrastructure. It includes devices such as litter and sediment traps, rain filtration gardens, constructed wetlands and street sweeper trucks, which help to prevent tonnes of pollutants and sediments from entering our waterways each year.

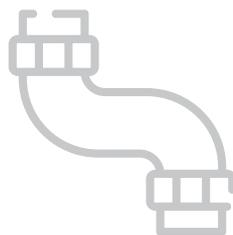


181km of stormwater pipes, culverts, lined and unlined channels

5,434 stormwater pits

38 bio-detention basins and filtration structures

1 street sweeper truck



DID YOU KNOW?

The street sweeper truck collects approximately 480 tonnes of debris from our city and village streets every year. Dust, dirt, leaves, tyre rubber, litter, plastics and a range of contaminants that would otherwise end up in our stormwater lines, creeks and rivers are collected and disposed of at the waste facility.

Planning for the LGA's Future

Council plays a vital role as a regulator for building, development and environmental control. Housing outcomes are delivered for the LGA by assessing rezoning and development applications and conducting inspections to ensure compliance with relevant planning controls, laws and standards.

514 development applications determined

1,249 building inspections conducted

39 days average DA processing time



Growing the built environment

Building new and sustainable communities and increasing supply is important for housing affordability and meeting the needs of our population.

In 2019/20, Council determined 514 development applications (DAs) for new homes, renovation projects and commercial developments.

Council is committed to the ongoing improvement of its development system to make it easier and therefore more attractive for people wanting to build a home or establish a commercial enterprise in the LGA.

In recent years, Council has introduced new policies to reduce the time it takes to determine DAs. This includes providing pre-lodgement support to help applicants improve the quality of their applications to make the assessment process as fast and smooth as possible and the introduction of the Electronic Lodgement Portal, which enables Council to undertake a preliminary review prior to applications being formally assessed.

In 2019/20, the average processing time for a residential DA was 39 days, which meets the Development Assessment Best Practice Guide target of 40 days, set by the Department of Planning & Environment Guidelines.

Record number of development applications

Council's Development & Compliance section has been busier than ever in 2020 with a record number of development applications submitted since 1 March, corresponding with the commencement of COVID-19 restrictions.

These development applications total almost \$50 million in capital value.

Despite the onset of COVID-19, the number of enquiries to Council about DAs and developments

continues to grow, possibly as a result of people deciding to undertake home improvement during isolation or looking for ways to generate income, such as secondary dwellings.

This is good news for the local construction industry and is one of the many ways Council is working to support local businesses and local jobs.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2019/20, Council issued 298 construction certificates to the value of \$41 million.



New Local Strategic Planning Statement

Local communities now have a clear vision for future development and growth of the region with the adoption of a new Local Strategic Planning Statement in 2020.

The purpose of the new Local Strategic Planning Statement is to set out:

- the land use vision for the Local Government Area for the next 20 years;
- how growth and change will be managed into the future; and
- the strategic land use planning priorities for the Local Government Area.

The Local Strategic Planning Statement was developed in consultation with the community and engagement included six workshops in urban, village and rural areas as well as a 28-day public exhibition period of the draft document.

The Local Strategic Planning Statement consolidates a range of land use planning and related initiatives that are already being undertaken as well as reflecting priorities in other Council strategies including the Growth Management Strategy, Economic Development Strategy and Biodiversity Management Strategy.



The document will inform updates and amendments to the Local Environmental Plan, Development Control Plans, Development Contributions Plans and other key Council documents, policies and strategies that relate to land use planning.

The new Local Strategic Planning Statement is a requirement of the NSW Government for all NSW councils and will guide regional development and growth in the next 20 years while helping Council to retain the unique village and rural character of the Lismore LGA.

Crown Land Plans of Management project



Council is undertaking a project to prepare Plans of Management to guide the ongoing management and maintenance of public Crown reserves managed by Council.

This is a requirement of the NSW Government and will include the development of plans of management for all 31 Crown reserves managed

by Council. This includes public land such as the Lismore CBD riverbank and Lismore City Hall as well as reserves that have significant environmental value such as Rotary Park and Currie Park.

The Crown Land Plans of Management project will provide long-term strategic direction for the future of these public reserves.

The individual plans of management will determine the ecological, heritage and/or social value of Crown reserves and how they should be managed into the future.

They may detail anything from a simple mowing or maintenance commitment to a more detailed and broad development of a public reserve, such as activation and redevelopment of the Spinks Park riverfront area to encourage more visitation and usage.

The Crown Land Plans of Management project will include extensive community consultation prior to any plan being formally adopted.

E Leadership and Participation



10-year objectives

E1 We engage and communicate with our community.

E2 We collaborate with other agencies to achieve great outcomes.

E3 Our decisions and actions are open, transparent, effective and in the interests of all.

E4 We provide effective management and responsible governance.

E5 We continue to grow our reputation and capacity as a regional city.

Key Highlights

Council has adjusted its governance and work plans to reflect the NSW Office of Local Government's decision to postpone local government elections until September 2021 and extend the term of Council by 12 months.

Council undertook the first half of a major community consultation exercise to gather feedback for a review of the 10-year Community Strategic Plan.

23,700 people visited the Your Say Lismore online community engagement hub and 1,500 new registered users signed up.

More than 28 casual and permanent Council staff were retrained and/or redeployed to other areas of Council as a result of COVID-19.

The Richmond Tweed Regional Library's 82,726 members borrowed 1,341,642 physical items and 192,502 eResources.

Council is continuing an organisation-wide transformation to make Lismore City Council a modern, accountable and efficient workplace.

Council adopted a new Community Engagement Strategy to guide internal and external community engagement activities.

Council delivered its fifth recycled Christmas tree as a gift to the community.

Governing our Regional City

Lismore is the heart of the Northern Rivers. For tens of thousands of people living on the NSW North Coast, it is considered the business, sporting, education and medical capital of the Northern Rivers. Council has a duty to provide responsible governance for our regional city as well as oversee regional library services as the Richmond Tweed Regional Library's executive council.

1,341,642 items borrowed from the Richmond Tweed Regional Library

16,283 Richmond Tweed Regional Library members living in the Lismore LGA

33% of all eResources on loan were borrowed since COVID-19 started



Local government elections postponed

The NSW Government has postponed the September 2020 local government elections for 12 months due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The decision was deemed necessary to ensure the health and safety of voters, NSW Electoral Commission staff and election candidates.

The current term of Council has been extended for 12 months and local government elections are now planned for September 2021.

Current Councillors and the Mayor will continue to hold their civic offices until the rescheduled local government elections are held.

The postponement will not change the future schedule of council elections, and the subsequent elections will still proceed in September 2024.

DID YOU KNOW?

Lismore City Council is governed by 11 Councillors including a popularly elected Mayor. Elected representatives are elected for a four-year term.

Informing a new generation of councillors

Community members from all walks of life are encouraged to consider standing as a councillor at the next local government elections.

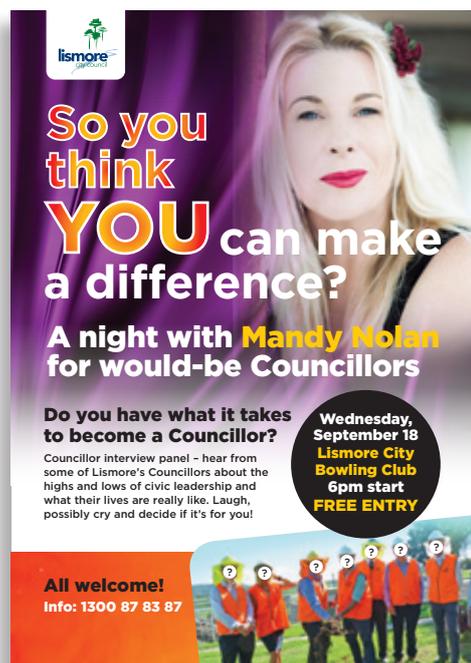
Council provides education and training for potential new candidates to help them decide if politics is for them and what they can contribute to the community as a local government councillor.

In September 2019, Council hosted a special event with comedian Mandy Nolan for potential nominees to gain insights into the weird and wonderful world of local politics.

The night included a panel discussion with current Lismore councillors at the Lismore City Bowling Club to delve into the highs and lows of civic leadership.

The free event was a huge success and one of a series of events planned to help raise awareness about the local government elections. Other events were cancelled when COVID-19 broke out and the Office of Local Government postponed the September 2020 election for 12 months.

Information sessions will be rescheduled for early 2021 to coincide with the lead-up to the September local government elections.



Delivering regional library services

Richmond Tweed Regional Library (RTRL) provides a modern and vibrant library service for nearly 250,000 residents across the Northern Rivers region.

As the executive council of RTRL, Lismore City Council works with Tweed Shire, Byron Shire and Ballina Shire councils to ensure the commitments in the regional Deed of Agreement, signed in 2017, are met.

Lismore City Council is also responsible for providing the executive functions for RTRL, such as financial and IT support.

The RTRL Strategic Plan 2019-2029 was signed by the RTRL Committee in May 2019 and provides the long-term direction needed to build the libraries of the future that will meet and fulfil the needs of the community.

Library services involve more than just lending books. The RTRL's mission is to occupy a central place in community life, by fulfilling learning needs and facilitating community connections and wellbeing.

In 2019/20, the RTRL began a staff review to determine how staff are employed across the Northern Rivers region. Options are being explored about how to employ staff in the most cost-effective manner and the review is due for completion by November 2020.

During the first half of 2020, the RTRL also developed a new Click and Collect service in response to COVID-19 as branches were forced to shut from March to June. This immediate response to the pandemic was well received by the community as it allowed residents to continue to access physical resources safely throughout the crisis. The use of eResources increased by 33% in the financial year.

Individual library branches also showed great initiative during COVID, with staff delivering many programs such as Storytime and Baby Bounce via social media platforms or through the website.

Creativity and flexibility are hallmarks of what make our libraries so popular.

DID YOU KNOW?

Residents used the RTRL's free public computers 77,423 times in the last financial year. Membership of the RTRL is free to all residents of the Lismore LGA.

Engaging and Communicating

Council has systems and policies in place to ensure decisions and actions are open, transparent and in the interests of all. It also has a responsibility to ensure it is as efficient and effective as possible internally, so it is able to provide the most efficient and effective services to the community.

86,901 phone enquiries to Council's Customer Contact Centre

23,700 visitors to Council's online community engagement portal

25 applications for public access to Council information

Council transformation to modernise and streamline

Council continued its internal transformation program in 2019/20, with changes to systems and processes to become a more efficient and accountable organisation.

Highlights of the transformation program include:

- Establishment of a new Audit, Risk & Improvement Committee with members independent of Council to oversee the finance, governance and risk functions of Council.
- Audits of and upgrades to current information technology systems to ensure modern technology practices such as online forms are in place for residents.
- Implementation of improved governance oversight and systems to ensure compliance with all regulatory and statutory functions required by the NSW Office of Local Government.
- Establishment of a Project Management Office.
- Adoption of 'Going to Zero' safe work practices campaign to reduce lost-time injuries.
- Establishment of a new procurement system to streamline procurement and ensure legislative compliance.
- Staff restructures to gain greater efficiencies with more cohesive teams where skills and experience align with organisational needs.

The transformation program was implemented following a due diligence study undertaken in January 2019, which highlighted Council's outdated systems as a critical reason for inefficiencies. It recommended the implementation of new systems and processes across the organisation to deliver greater productivity and internal savings.

The transformation program is expected to take three years to complete.



“We need to modernise our technology and systems, improve our accountability and project management capability, and tighten controls around governance, compliance and risk. We have a great team of dedicated staff and we are all working hard to transform this organisation and be the best Council we can be.”

- General Manager Shelley Oldham

Community creates future vision

Community members came together in early 2020 to share ideas and discuss community aspirations as part of a major community consultation to shape Council's next 10-year Community Strategic Plan and its first Local Strategic Planning Statement.

The project – Planning for Lismore's Future – included six workshops in urban and village areas as well as an online survey and consultation with local primary schools.

Council also undertook its four-yearly Community Satisfaction Survey in April 2020, which establishes how Council is performing in the eyes of the community and where improvement in the next four years is required. This also feeds into the Community Strategic Plan and helps determine Council's key focus areas for the future.

Some elements of the consultation were delayed due to COVID-19 and the NSW Government's decision to extend Council's term for an additional 12 months. This has also extended the date for adoption of a new Community Strategic Plan.

Council will conduct further community consultation to inform the Community Strategic Plan in 2020/21.



All feedback will be included to help shape the new Plan, which is now due for adoption in June 2022.

The Local Strategic Planning Statement was adopted in mid-2020 (see page 51 for more details).

The Community Strategic Plan is a strategic document that guides the direction of Council and helps inform ongoing work plans and project delivery.

New Community Engagement Strategy adopted

Engaging and having meaningful conversations with our community is essential for Council to deliver the services people want and need into the future.

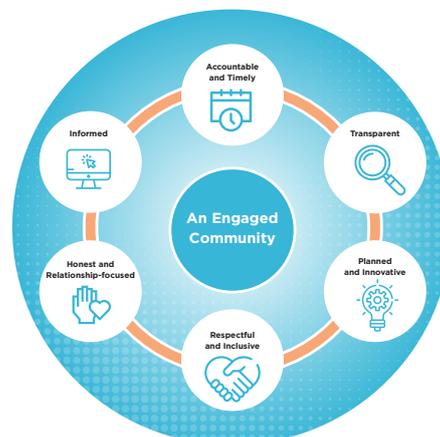
Enshrining community engagement principles in the organisation's practices is the purpose of the new Community Engagement Strategy, adopted in December 2019.

This strategy informs Council's engagement approach across the organisation and is accompanied by a Community Participation Plan which details how Council informs and notifies the community around planning and development proposals.

These documents are requirements for Council under both the *Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979* and *Local Government Act 1993*.

In addition to meeting these legislative requirements, the purpose of the Community Engagement Strategy is to:

- Provide staff and Councillors with a strategy to guide Council's approach to informing and engaging with our community.
- Use the strategy within Council's governance framework to promote best-practice community engagement within the whole organisation.
- Provide a commitment to our community about how, what, why and when we inform and/or engage with them about Council business.



Engaging with our community

Engaging and talking to our community has been a major focus in the 2019/20 year.

A new Community Engagement Strategy was adopted to ensure that best-practice community consultation and engagement informs Council decision-making.

Council has also been operating its 'Your Say Lismore' online community engagement hub since 2017 with great success. This has become an important online tool to host surveys, community polls, advertise items on public exhibition and deliver information on roads and infrastructure projects.

Engaging with the community gathers important insights and feedback to help Council make informed decisions on behalf of the community. It also enhances Council's relationship with the community and builds a sense of trust and shared ownership.

Council's community engagement team has run countless engagement projects in 2019/20 and the Your Say Lismore online community engagement hub has attracted 1,500 new registered users in this financial year alone.

23,700 visits to Your Say Lismore online community engagement hub

5,440 documents downloaded

2,460 submissions to Council

245 engagement projects and surveys

Some of the major community engagement activities undertaken in 2019/20 include:

Special Rate Variation

- 4,100 Your Say Lismore website visitors
- 1,440 survey responses
- Two community workshops and 14 information kiosks
- Social media reach of 14,897 people

Economic Development Strategy

- 71 survey responses
- Six community workshops
- More than 200 community members and business owners engaged

Community Strategic Plan

- 106 survey responses
- Six community workshops
- 76 online contributions and ideas submitted
- More than 200 community members engaged
- And more to come in 2020/21!

Community members are encouraged to register for Your Say Lismore at yoursay.lismore.nsw.gov.au to stay informed of ongoing community consultations and engagement activities.

DID YOU KNOW?



Items that Council places on public exhibition must be open for community feedback for a minimum of 28 days.

Public Access to Government Information (GIPA)

The *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (GIPA) aims to make government information more accessible to the public by providing an open and transparent process for public access to this information. Government agencies must make information available via open access or in response to access applications, unless there is an overriding interest against disclosure.

In 2019/20, Council received 25 applications for public access to government information. Of these, three were granted in full, 12 were granted in part, and the remainder were either withdrawn, refused or the information was either already available or not held.

A full list of statutory GIPA statistics can be found in the Statutory Information section of this report.

Communicating and connecting during COVID

Providing important and timely communication during any crisis is a vital part of Council's role as a leader in the community and a provider of essential services.

Following a full emergency response to provide communications support at a regional level during the bushfire crisis, Council also implemented emergency communications following the outbreak of COVID-19.

Council immediately established several targeted webpages to ensure residents were kept up to date on changes to services and the closure of facilities as well as ensuring fact sheets and educational materials were readily available to residents and businesses.

Other communications support included providing online information about the virus and the services Council provides, Mayoral videos to keep the community informed and involved, media releases

to spread the word among local news outlets, social media posts to reach our online audiences, eNewsletters for our online subscribers and printed materials direct to letterboxes.



Transparency and accountability

Ensuring our governance and leadership is accountable is an important aspect of being open and transparent.

In 2019/20, Council added a 'Your Councillors at Work' segment to the Lismore City Council website to ensure residents can see what meetings and briefings Councillors have attended.

The new Councillor Attendance Register ensures there is a public record of how Councillors are performing their duties as elected officials.

The Mayor has also launched a new Mayoral video to wrap-up each Council meeting and communicate the most important issues to the public. The video is posted on Council's social media platforms.



Staff redeployment response to COVID

Café workers have picked up stop/go signs, librarians have been doing IT and gym staff have been answering phones as part of a major redeployment initiative at Council to save jobs during the COVID-19 crisis.

Many staff were affected by the impacts of COVID-19, with forced closures of major facilities such as the Goonellabah Sports & Aquatic Centre, Lismore Regional Gallery and libraries, as well as the cancellation of many events and projects.



More than 28 casual and permanent staff were retrained and/or redeployed to other areas of Council such as the Contact Centre, road crews, finance and IT.

Lily Harrison was happily working in the Goonellabah Sports & Aquatic Centre café but once COVID-19 restrictions came into force, she found herself doing traffic control on a roadworks site at Tregeagle.

"It's was very different to what I normally do but it was fun learning new skills and meeting new work crews," she said.

"As well as the stop/go work I learnt about how to move and reposition signs to meet the requirements of the Traffic Management Plans and how to work the temporary traffic lights.

"I'm just super grateful I still had work and an income, and also had a reason to leave the house and do something productive with my day. I was very grateful to get the call for redeployment."

Manager of People & Safety Ashley Wing said Council had adapted quickly and provided immediate training opportunities to ensure staff could be redeployed across the organisation.

"Council is one of the biggest employers in the Lismore area with more than 400 full-time, part-time and casual employees," Ashley explained.

"We redeployed skilled staff to help our areas that were overloaded or retrained staff where necessary to take on new roles. From the get-go, we have been committed to providing essential services for our community and retaining as many jobs as possible during this time."

Council also had to review and revise its procedures to enable hundreds of staff to work flexibly from home. This included a huge mobilisation effort by Council's IT team to provide appropriate resources and equipment.

"It's made us grow as an organisation," Ashley said.

"We are a much more flexible and adaptable organisation

now than we were before COVID, and I think we are better prepared for disasters than we were before this crisis.

"We now have excellent IT systems in place that are fit-for-purpose and agile, and we have been forced to mature how we work and develop a flexible and mobile workforce to serve the community of Lismore.

"This in turn has resulted in greater productivity and improved work/life balance for many of our employees. This has been such a challenging time but we have become more resilient as an organisation and as a workforce. That is a real positive."

Christmas tree carries on Lismore tradition

The community was once again presented with its annual Christmas gift from Council staff in 2019, in the form of a living Christmas tree created with plants.

The seven-metre tree was made from more than 300 potted plants, 100 metres of tinsel, 250 metres of LED strip lighting powered by solar, and 16 pairs of work trousers and matching boots.

The tree was made by Council staff volunteering their time and purchasing all the plants and decorations from their own pockets.

This is the fifth Christmas tree Council staff have erected on the corner of Keen and Magellan streets to celebrate the festive season and Lismore's commitment to recycling and sustainability.

The tradition began in 2015, when Council staff created a Christmas tree as a gift for the community from old bicycles painted in many colours. In 2016, the tree was made from old car tyres, and in 2017 it was fashioned from old road signs with a 'Give Way' star. In 2018, 49 second-hand umbrellas created a very colourful and talked-about tree.

The 2019 creation was a nod to our beautiful natural environment while also being sustainable, recycled, colourful and quirky – just like the Lismore community!



Council turns purple in fight against cancer

Council joined hundreds of other local organisations for the Lismore and Village's Relay for Life event in March 2020.



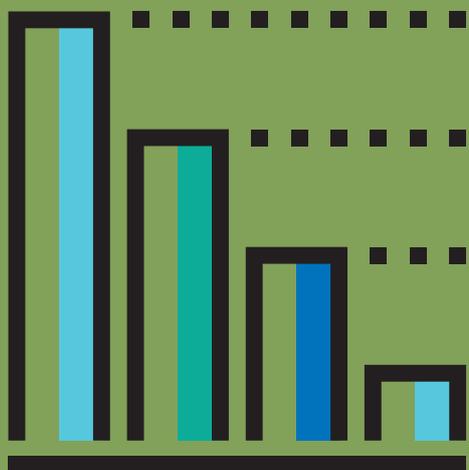
Businesses and organisations were encouraged to dress up their shopfronts during 'Purple Week' to inspire participants in the Relay for Life and raise money for the fight against cancer.

Purple balloons, purple streamers and purple hats greeted visitors at Council's front desk, with staff raising awareness and money for the Cancer Council.

The annual Relay for Life is an overnight community event where thousands of Australians relay non-stop around local ovals and sporting fields to celebrate cancer survivors, remember those that have been lost, and fight back against the disease by raising funds for research and support.

About 50 teams and 300 participants took part in the Lismore Relay for Life in 2020, along with almost 70 survivors and carers.

Community Financial Report 2019/20



What information is included?

The Community Financial Report provides a plain English explanation of our financial statements so that they can be easily understood by our community, business partners, customers and employees. It's a snapshot of:

- our financial performance for 2019/20;
- our financial position at 30 June 2020; and
- what the results mean in terms of financial sustainability.

What were the highlights?

In the 2019/20 financial year, Council worked to improve financial performance and move toward the goal of financial sustainability.

Council began the financial year with a strong and continued focus on its transformation program, which includes improving technology and systems to increase efficiency and realise internal savings.

However, like many businesses and organisations during the last 12 months, Council's financial position was impacted by several unforeseen events.

Drought and bushfire conditions contributed to a devastating fire at the Lismore Recycling & Recovery Centre in August 2019 which had a negative effect on Council's budget. As the region began to recover from the impact of the bushfires, the global COVID-19 pandemic emerged, resulting in loss of income from closures at some of Council's major facilities including libraries, pools, the gym, art gallery and waste facility.

To offset some of these negative impacts and increase revenue, Council worked with state and federal governments to increase grant funding.

This was successful with approximately \$9.7 million in additional grant funds secured across federal and state governments.

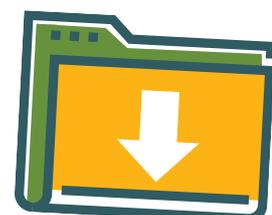
Council finished the financial year with an operating surplus of \$22.6 million, but after excluding capital grants and contributions an improved deficit over the previous year of \$635,000 is reported. Council invested over \$39.4 million into infrastructure, property, plant and equipment for the year, seeing total equity increase by \$258.7 million to \$1.6 billion.

Looking to the longer-term, Council continues to face an ongoing challenge to adequately fund the maintenance and renewal of its assets, particularly roads, as our community grows and expectations and needs increase. This is not a unique issue to Lismore, but one experienced by many other local governments in NSW.

Council's challenge into the future will be to address this ongoing issue and find further funds to ensure Lismore's infrastructure is renewed and improved for future generations.

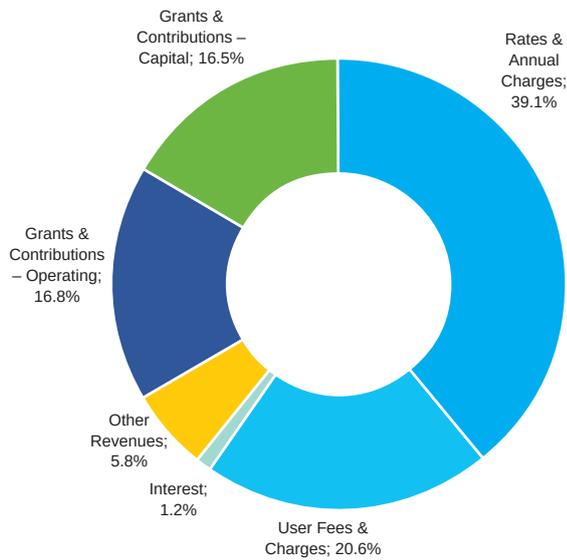
DID YOU KNOW?

More detailed information about our financial performance and position is provided in the audited Financial Statements and Auditor's Report (Appendix 1), which is available from our website at www.lismore.nsw.gov.au.

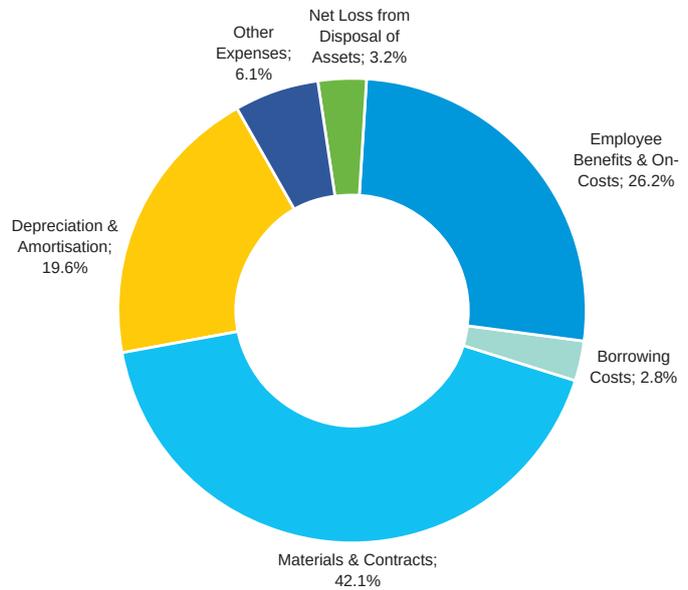


Financial Performance

Total Revenue: \$141.5 million
up \$9.9 million from last year



Total Expenses: \$118.9 million
down (\$4) million from last year



What was the result?

\$22.6 million surplus

(after capital grants and contributions)
A \$13.9 million improvement on last year

Net Result: \$0.6 million deficit

(before capital grants and contributions)
A \$7.8 million improvement on last year

Major changes from 2018/19

- \$9.7 million increase in grants (bushfire resilience and recovery, floodplain management, Oakes Oval/Crozier Field) and non-cash developer contributions.
- \$7.1 million reduction in net loss from disposal of assets as the prior year included a one-off item.
- \$3.8 million reduction in depreciation expenses as prior year included a one-off item.
- \$6.5 million recognition of revenue received in 2018/19 but restated in 2019/20 as required by Australian Accounting Standards.
- \$9.4 million increase in materials and contracts expenses, due mainly to expenditure related to floodplain management, transport and disposal of waste during repair of the waste facility, and costs associated with the waste facility fire.

DID YOU KNOW?

A capital grant or contribution includes money provided by the Government or contributions from developers for Council to renew or build new community assets. The money cannot be spent on Council's day-to-day operating activities or services.

Financial Position

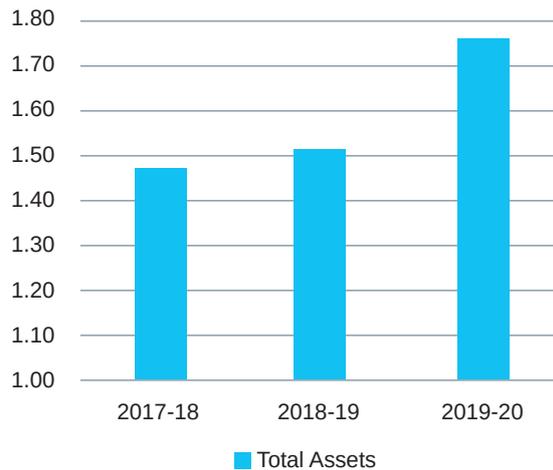
Total Assets: \$1.77 billion

up \$257.46 million from last year

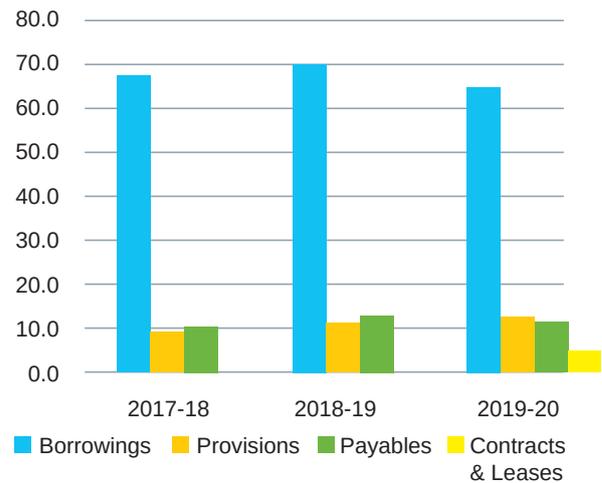
Total Liabilities: \$95.3 million

down (\$1.3) million from last year

What do we own? (\$ billion)



What do we owe? (\$ million)



93% of Council's assets were infrastructure, property, plant and equipment, including:

- Roads, bridges and footpaths
- Water infrastructure
- Wastewater infrastructure
- Stormwater infrastructure
- Land and buildings
- Plant and equipment
- Open space and recreation assets (including parks)

Grants improve annual revenue

Council placed a renewed focus on obtaining grant funding from state and federal governments in the 2019/20 financial year. There is recognition that revenue is simply not keeping pace with the escalating cost to deliver services to residents.

By advocating to all levels of government for more funding and having shovel-ready projects in place, Council gives itself the best possible chance of securing additional funds. While this revenue is uncertain, it can play a significant role in improving our regional city and infrastructure.

What was the result?

Net Worth: \$1.67 billion

A \$258.7 million improvement on last year

Major changes from 2018/19

- \$253.2 million increase in infrastructure, property, plant and equipment of which \$230 million related to transport assets revaluation.
- \$7.9 million increase in cash and investments.
- \$6.1 million reduction in loan liabilities.

Financial Sustainability

Each year, we report a series of performance measures, which are local government benchmarks set by the NSW Government and reflect expectations for financial sustainability. The measures use figures from the Audited Financial Statements (Appendix 1) to demonstrate relationships between key numbers.

There are two types of measures:

- Financial measures, which show how well Council is managing its finances.
- Infrastructure asset measures, which show how well Council is managing its assets.

Financial Measures

Operating Performance Ratio

This measures the extent to which revenue raised covers operational expenses.

Benchmark: > 0%

Council's result: **2.6%**



Debt Service Cover Ratio

This measures the availability of Council's operating cash to service its debt, including interest, principal and lease payments.

Benchmark: > 2 times

Council's result: **2.5 times**



Own Source Operating Revenue Ratio

This measures financial flexibility by assessing Council's reliance on external funding sources such as grants and contributions.

Benchmark: > 60%

Council's result: **66.7%**



Rates and Annual Charges Outstanding Percentage

This measures the impact of uncollected rates and annual charges on Council's liquidity, and the adequacy of Council's recovery efforts.

Benchmark: < 10%

Council's result: **9.2%**



Unrestricted Current Ratio

This measures whether Council has enough short-term resources to cover short-term financial obligations.

Benchmark: > 1.5 times

Council's result: **2.3 times**



Cash Expenses Cover Ratio

This measures the number of months Council can continue paying for its immediate expenses without additional cash inflows.

Benchmark: > 3 months

Council's result: **9.6 months**



Infrastructure Asset Measures

Asset Maintenance Ratio

This measures actual maintenance for the year as a percentage of the required maintenance for the year.

Benchmark: > 100%

Council's result: **91.3%**



Infrastructure Backlog Ratio

This measures Council's infrastructure backlog as a proportion of the total value of Council's infrastructure assets.

Benchmark: < 2%

Council's result: **10.9%**



Asset Renewal Ratio

This measures the rate at which existing assets are being renewed against the rate at which they are depreciating.

Benchmark: > 100%

Council's result: **49%**



What do the results mean?

Our financial sustainability measures for 2019/20 suggest that we had enough resources to cover immediate expenses, service our debts, and fund operating expenses during the year. These are all shorter-term ratios, and the results suggest that we effectively managed our finances during the financial year.

However, the infrastructure asset measures, which are focused on longer-term sustainability, suggest that Council faces an ongoing challenge

to adequately fund the maintenance and renewal of its assets. For 2019/20, the measures highlight that Council was not able to find enough funding to cover the required asset maintenance and renewal costs.

To be financially sustainable, Council will need to find and allocate increased funding to infrastructure to meet the benchmarks. This is best achieved through the current review of the Long Term Financial Plan.

Statutory Information 2019/20



Annual Report 2019/20

Statutory Information Contents

Beneficiaries of Financial Assistance (grants and donations)	70
Capital Expenditure Reviews	70
Companion Animal Enforcement	70
Contracts Awarded	71
Councillor Expenses and Facilities	73
Disability Inclusion Action Plan	74
Government Information (Public Access) Applications	74
Environmental Upgrade Agreements	77
External Bodies (controlled by Council)	77
External Bodies (delegated by Council)	77
External Bodies (participated in by Council)	77
Equal Employment Opportunity	78
Legal Proceedings	78
Overseas Visits	79
Public Interest Disclosure	79
Rates and Charges Written Off	79
Recovery and Threat Abatement Plans	80
Remuneration (General Manager)	80
Remuneration (Senior Staff)	81
Special Rate Variation Expenditure (Business Promotion)	81
Special Rate Variation Expenditure (Biodiversity Management)	83
Stormwater Management Services	85
Swimming Pool Inspections	85
Voluntary Planning Agreements	86
Works on Private Land	86

Beneficiaries of Financial Assistance (grants and donations)

In accordance with Local Government Regulation 2005 cl217(1)(a5), an annual report must include details of the total amount contributed or otherwise granted under the Local Government Act s356 to financially assist others.

Assistance Category	Amount (\$)
FNC Life Education Van Relocation	2,340
Mayor's Discretionary Funding	1,050
Community Grants Scheme	21,619
Rural Halls – Maintenance and Insurance	58,000
Rural Halls – Rates	17,855
Contribution to Friends of Lismore Rainforest Botanic Gardens	47,700
Total	148,564

Capital Expenditure Reviews

In accordance with the Division of Local Government Capital Expenditure Guidelines (2010), councils must provide a report on capital works projects in the annual report, for which a capital expenditure review has been completed.

Council did not submit any capital expenditure review reports to the OLG for the reporting period.

Companion Animal Enforcement

In accordance with the Local Government Regulation 2005 cl217(1)(f), an annual report must include a statement of the Council's activities during the year in relation to enforcing and ensuring compliance with the Companion Animals Act 2008.

Council funded a total of \$405,000 on companion animal management activities in 2019/20.

This covered enforcement, education and information activities such as:

- Community education programs and community liaison to promote and assist in responsible pet ownership, microchipping and de-sexing of dogs and cats. For example, through the National Desexing Network and community events such as the North Coast National Lismore Show.
- Maintenance of four off-leash areas at Riverside Park South (fenced area), Lismore Gasworks, Elizabeth Gardens, and Hepburn Park Recreational Area.
- Provision of appropriate management and care of animals that come into Council's custody at the Lismore Pound.
- Investigation of 116 reported dog attack incidents (includes when a dog threatens, harasses, chases, or bites a person or another animal).

Council has an obligation under the Companion Animal Act 2008 to consider alternative courses of action before euthanasing any animals that come into its care and supports a no euthanasia policy for healthy animals that can be rehomed. Where possible, animals are released back to owners or put up for adoption directly through Lismore Pound or released for rehoming to animal rescue organisations. Animals not suitable for rehoming due to poor health or temperament are euthanased. In 2019/20, of the 153 dogs seized, 13 were euthanased, and of the 12 cats seized, one was euthanased.

Contracts Awarded

In accordance with the Local Government Regulation 2005 cl217(1)(a2), an annual report must provide details (names, nature, amounts) of contracts awarded for amounts exceeding \$150 000.

Contract No.	Contract Details	Contractor	Tender Amount
T2019-14	Environmental Sampling and Analytical Services Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecoteam • ENV Solutions Pty Ltd • NSW DPI, Wollongbar Environmental Laboratory • "GeoLINK" • Groundwater Data Collection Services Pty Ltd • Hazmat Services Pty Ltd • JBS&G Australia Pty Ltd • Richmond Water Laboratories • Site Environmental & Remediation Services (WA) Pty Ltd • EAL Southern Cross University • Environmental & Laboratory Solutions Pty Ltd ATF ELS Trust 	Schedule of Rates
T2019-20	Lismore Flood Diversion Channel	SEE Civil Pty Ltd	\$4,706,085.10
T2019-21	Prescribed Person Contract - LGP ELO519 - Supply of Electricity and Green Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unmetered Street Lighting – ERM Power Retail Pty Ltd • Large Sites – Origin • Small Sites – AGL 	Schedule of Rates
T2019-23	Lismore Memorial Baths Solar Pool Heating System	Laser Plumbing	\$294,391
T2019-27	Diadem Street Road Reconstruction	Eire Constructions	\$923,414.46
T2019-32	Water Main Renewal Program - Contracted Package of Works	NTS Group Pty Ltd	\$631,739.73
T2020-1	Unsealed Gravel Road Maintenance Services	WF & SL Sullivan T/A Richmond Sand, Gravel & Landscaping Holmes Pty Ltd Smith Plant Hire (NSW) Pty Ltd Keegan Civil Pty Ltd (aft Keegan Family Trust) McNamara & Tierney Pty Ltd T/A Kyogle Earthworx Durack Civil Pty Ltd CivilCS Pty Ltd P&C Roach Contracting and Plant Hire Pty Ltd	Schedule of rates
T2020-2	Supply of Quarry Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • F & G Bazzana (Bazzana's Quarry) • WF & SL Sullivan T/A Richmond Sand, Gravel & Landscaping • Smith Plant (Lismore) Pty Ltd • R & S Contracting Pty Ltd T/A Bentley Quarry • Quarry Solutions • Holmes Pty Ltd • Grahams Quarry 	Schedule of rates

T2020-3	Expression of Interest Request Civil Works Panel of Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aitken Civil Engineering Pty Ltd • Australian Marine & Civil • Brockon Pty Ltd • C & K Shannon Earthmoving, Landscapes & Designs Pty Ltd • CD Excavations ATF SK330 Trust • CivilCS Pty Ltd • Coffs Harbour City Council t/a Coastal Works • Compass Equipment Hire Pty Ltd • Conlan Bros Pty Ltd • Coscivil • Durack Civil Pty Ltd • Eire Construction Pty Ltd • Fortec Australia Pty Ltd • Hazell Bros (QLD) Pty Ltd • Hiway Stabilizers Australia Pty Ltd • HXR Construction Pty Ltd • John Cormack Earthmoving Contractor • Koker Civil • Ledonne Construction Pty Ltd • G&R Brown & Sons Pty Ltd T/A Brown Contractors • McNamara and Tierney Pty Ltd T/A Kyogle Earthworks • Cambra Holdings Pty Ltd T/A Morgan Earthworks • Ocon Services Pty Ltd • P&C Roach Contracting & Plant Hire Pty Ltd • Piling & Concreting Australia (PCA) Pty Ltd T/A PCA Ground Engineering • Rugendyke and Bashforth Contracting Pty Ltd • SEE Civil Pty Ltd • Shadforth's Civil Pty Ltd T/A Shadforth • Smith Plant Hire (NSW) Pty Ltd • Stabilised Pavements of Australia Pty Ltd • The Rix Group Pty Ltd • Tom Thumb Earthmoving Pty Ltd • WF & SL Sullivan Pty Ltd T/A Richmond Sand Gravel & Landscaping • D & J's Contractors 	Schedule of rates
T2020-5	Materials Recovery Facility - Building Reinstatement	AGS Commercial Pty Ltd	\$494,000.08
T2020-6	Materials Recovery Facility - Fixed Plant	RDT Engineering	\$429,550
T2020-16	Traffic Control Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack Group Traffic Pty Ltd • Altus Traffic Pty Ltd • Workforce Road Services Pty Ltd • Complete Staff Solutions Pty Ltd • The Control Group Pty Ltd. 	Schedule of rates
T2020-18	Vacuum Excavation and Flow Control (Pump Out) Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summerland Environmental • Mega Waste Industries Pty Ltd • O'Brien Electrical & Plumbing Lismore • The Control Group Pty Ltd • Tunnel Vision Services • Dynamic Hydro Excavation Pty Ltd • Pipe Management Australia • SureSearch. 	Schedule of rates

Councillor Expenses and Facilities

In accordance with Local Government Regulation 2005 cl217(1)(a1), an annual report must include details of the total cost during the year of the payment of the expenses of, and the provision of facilities to, councillors in relation to their civic functions (as paid by the council, reimbursed to the councillor or reconciled with the councillor), including separate details on the total cost of each of the following:

Councillor Expenses & Facilities	\$
Office Equipment and Facilities	2,442
Telephone calls	1,262
Conferences and Seminar Attendance	17,072
Training and Professional Development Inc Induction	4,130
Interstate Visits (including transport, accommodation and other out-of-pocket travelling expenses)	519
Overseas Visits (including transport, accommodation and other out-of-pocket travelling expenses)	0
Expenses for spouses (spouse, partner or other person who accompanied a Councillor, being expenses payable in accordance with the Guidelines)	0
Childcare (or expenses involved in the provision of care for an immediate family member of a Councillor)	1,275
Total	26,700

Allowances	\$
Mayoral Allowance	44,250
Total Councillor Allowances	223,080
Total	267,330

The name of the Mayor and each individual Councillor that completed council's induction program (where an induction program has been delivered during the relevant year)

N/A.

The name of the Mayor and each Councillor who participated in any ongoing professional development program during the year

Mayor Smith, Councillors Bird, Cook and Ekins.

The number of training and other activities provided to the Mayor and Councillors during the year as part of a professional development program:

One.

Disability Inclusion Action Plan

Disability Inclusion Act 2014, s. 13

Council must include in its annual report information on the implementation of its Disability Inclusion Plan

Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) promotes equal rights for everyone in our community.

It also recognises Council's responsibility to support people living with disabilities to access the same human rights as everyone else in the community.

Key achievements in 2019/20 in implementing the DIAP include:

- Bi-monthly meetings of the Access and Inclusion Advisory Group to provide advice to Council on disability access and inclusion.
- Continued provision of a hearing loop in the Council Chambers and live-streaming of Council's ordinary meetings and events.
- Provision of funding for AUSLAN interpreters for meetings.
- Continued incorporation of accessible standards e.g. footpath and cycleways (shared paths) into infrastructure design.
- Waiving of fees for development applications for accessibility improvements.

Government Information (Public Access) Applications

In accordance with the Government Information (Public Information) Act 2009 s125 and Regulation 2009 cl7(3), an annual report must provide:

- Details of the review of its program for the release of government information in the public interest
- Statistical information about access applications received during the reporting year

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
Media	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Members of Parliament	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Private sector business	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not for profit organisations or community groups	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Members of the public (application by legal representative)	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
Members of the public (other)	2	11	0	4	2	2	0	3

* 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.

	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
Personal information applications*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Access applications (other than personal information applications)	3	12	0	5	3	2	0	3
Access applications that are partly personal information applications and partly other	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).

Reason for invalidity	No of applications
Application does not comply with formal requirements (section 41 of the Act)	5
Application is for excluded information of the agency (section 43 of the Act)	0
Application contravenes restraint order (section 110 of the Act)	0
Total number of invalid applications received	0
Invalid applications that subsequently became valid applications	4

	Number of times consideration used*
Overriding secrecy laws	0
Cabinet information	0
Executive Council information	0
Contempt	0
Legal professional privilege	0
Excluded information	0
Documents affecting law enforcement and public safety	0
Transport safety	0
Adoption	0
Care and protection of children	0
Ministerial code of conduct	0
Aboriginal and environmental heritage	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*
Responsible and effective government	0
Law enforcement and security	0
Individual rights, judicial processes and natural justice	11
Business interests of agencies and other persons	2
Environment, culture, economy and general matters	0
Secrecy provisions	0
Exempt documents under interstate Freedom of Information legislation	0

Table F: Timeliness	
	Number of applications
Decided within the statutory timeframe (20 days plus any extensions)	23
Decided after 35 days (by agreement with applicant)	0
Not decided within time (deemed refusal)	1

Table G: Number of applications reviewed under Part 5 of the Act (by type of review and outcome)		
	Decision varied	Decision upheld
Internal review	0	1
Review by Information Commissioner*	0	0
Internal review following recommendation under section 93 of Act	1	0
Review by NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal	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
Applications by access applicants	2
Applications by persons to whom information the subject of access application relates (see section 54 of the Act)	0

Table I: Applications transferred to other agencies under Division 2 of Part 4 of the Act (by type of transfer)	
	Number of applications transferred
Agency-initiated transfers	0
Applicant-initiated transfers	0

Environmental Upgrade Agreements

In accordance with Local Government Act 1993 s54D(2) and s54P(1), an annual report must include particulars of any environmental upgrade agreement entered into by the council.

A council may enter into an environmental upgrade agreement with a building owner and a finance provider in relation to a building. An environmental upgrade agreement is an agreement under which:

- a building owner agrees to carry out environmental upgrade works in respect of a building, and
- a finance provider agrees to advance funds to the building owner to finance those environmental upgrade works, and
- the council agrees to levy a charge on the relevant land for the purpose of repaying the advance to the finance provider.

Council did not enter into any Environmental Upgrade Agreements during the reporting period.

External Bodies (controlled by Council)

In accordance with Local Government Regulation 2005 cl217(1)(a7), an annual report must include a statement of all corporations, partnerships, trusts, joint ventures, syndicates or other bodies (whether or not incorporated) in which the council (whether alone or in conjunction with other councils) held a controlling interest during the year.

NIL for 2019/20.

External Bodies (delegated by Council)

In accordance with Local Government Regulation 2005 cl217(1)(a6), an annual report must include a statement of all external bodies that during that year exercised functions delegated by the council.

Council recognises Richmond Tweed Regional Library (RTRL) as an associate in its financial reporting.
Council has a 23% share in RTRL's equity.

External Bodies (participated in by Council)

In accordance with Local Government Regulation 2005 cl217(1)(a8), an annual report must include a statement of all corporations, partnerships, trusts, joint ventures, syndicates or other bodies (whether or not incorporated) in which the council participated during the year.

Council has an interest in a joint operation – North East Weight of Loads Group (NEWLOG). This organisation is responsible for reducing damage to Council roads.

Equal Employment Opportunity

In accordance with Local Government Regulation 2005 cl217(1)(a9), an annual report must include a statement of the activities undertaken by the council during the year to implement its equal employment opportunity management plan.

Council's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Plan details our commitment to deliver equal employment opportunity through the Reconciliation Action Plan, Disability Inclusion Action Plan and other measures, to ensure a workforce that is representative of the demographics of our community.

Key achievements in 2019/20 in implementing the EEO Plan include:

- Appointment of Council's first female Director.
- Significant improvement in the % of supervisory employees who are female.
- Review of working from home procedure and enhanced flexible working practices to ensure barriers are removed.
- Ongoing employment of five local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander trainees within Council.
- Active and ongoing communication with local networks to encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to apply for traineeships and employment opportunities.

Legal Proceedings

In accordance with the Local Government Regulation 2005 cl217(1)(a3), an annual report must include a summary of the amounts incurred by the council during the year in relation to legal proceedings taken by or against the council (including amounts, costs and expenses paid or received by way of out of court settlements, other than those the terms of which are not to be disclosed) and a summary of the state of progress of each legal proceeding and (if it has been finalised) the result.

Details	Costs (\$)	Status	Result
Council & Ors ats Widjabul Wai Bai Native Title Federal Court Proceedings No SAD1174/2013		Ongoing	
LCC v AAA Horticulture and Hydroponics Farm Pty Ltd (Singh)	28,962	Finalised	Found in Council's favour
Ryan v Northern Region Planning Panel & LCC & Winten		Decision on DA consent has been finalised but matter is ongoing	Land & Environment Court found in favour of Applicant
LCC v Allport	16,668	Finalised	Found in Council's favour
LCC v Massussi	8,340	Finalised	Order issued as sought by Council
LCC v Dajoco Investments Pty Ltd & Coyne		Ongoing	
LCC v Mount Pleasant Estate Pty Ltd		Ongoing	
Total Legal Expenses	53,970		

Overseas Visits

In accordance with Local Government Regulation 2005 cl132, an annual report must include details (including the purpose) of overseas visits undertaken during the year by councillors, council staff or other persons while representing the council (including visits sponsored by other organisations).

No overseas travel was undertaken by Councillors or Council staff during the reporting period.

Public Interest Disclosure

In accordance with the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1994 s31 and Regulation 2011 cl4, Council must include the following information:

Component	#
Number of public officials who have made a public interest disclosure to the public authority.	0
The number of public interest disclosures received by the public authority in total and the number of public interest disclosures received by the public authority relating to each of the following:	3
• corrupt conduct	2
• maladministration	1
• serious and substantial waste of public money or local government money (as appropriate)	0
• government information contraventions	0
• local government pecuniary interest contraventions	0
Number of public interest disclosures finalised by the public authority in this reporting period	3
Whether the public authority has a public interest disclosure policy in place	Yes
what actions the head of the public authority has taken to ensure that his or her staff awareness responsibilities under section 6E (1) (b) of the Act have been met	Online Code of Conduct training was implemented for all staff

Rates and Charges Written Off

Local Government Regulation 2005 – cl132

The annual report must include the amount of rates and charges written off during 2019/20.

Details	Amount (\$)
Pensioner Abandonments	
• General	732,055
• Water	232,904
• Wastewater	220,942
• Domestic Waste	183,433
Other Abandonments	0
Postponed Rates & Interest	0
Rates & Charges Hardship Policy	11,596
Total	1,380,930

Recovery and Threat Abatement Plans

Fisheries Management Act 1994, s220ZT (2)

Recovery and threat abatement plans - Councils identified in a recovery and threat abatement plan as responsible for implementation of measures included in the plan, must report on actions taken to implement measures as to the state of the environment in its area.

Local Councils have partial responsibility for three actions in the Threat Abatement Plan for Removal of Large Woody Debris from NSW Rivers and Streams. These are:

CRA 2: Ensure the development, administration and implementation of legislative and policy frameworks to protect riparian vegetation and maintain future supply of large woody debris. This includes development consents, State Environmental Planning Policies, property vegetation plans, private native forestry codes of practice, native vegetation regulations, integrated forest operations approvals and forest operating procedures.

CRA 3: Review environmental impact assessment processes and procedures used by consent and determining authorities when considering developments or activities that have the potential to impact on large woody debris. Identify anomalies, inconsistencies or deficiencies and modify processes as required.

CRA 4: Identify options to utilize regulatory and voluntary incentive based mechanisms to protect large woody debris in priority areas known to support threatened species populations or ecological communities and implement as appropriate.

Lismore City Council assessment processes include referral to a staff ecologist to ensure compliance with the Biodiversity Conservation Act and relevant plans under the Fisheries Management Act. During the reporting period, no development applications involving removal of large woody debris from a river or stream was received.

Remuneration (General Manager)

In accordance with Local Government Regulation 2005 cl217(1)(b), an annual report must include a statement of the total remuneration package of the General Manager during the year that includes the total of the following:

Component	Amount (\$)
Salary	287,568
Bonus/Performance/Other payments	0
Superannuation	27,358
Non-cash benefits	7,528
Fringe Benefits Tax payable	6,960
Total Remuneration	329,414

Remuneration (Senior Staff)

In accordance with Local Government Regulation 2005 cl217(1)(c), an annual report must include a statement of the total remuneration packages for senior staff members (expressed as the total, not of individual members) during the year that includes the total of the following:

Component	Amount (\$)
Salary	507,018
Bonus/Performance/Other payments	0
Superannuation	58,095
Non-cash benefits	162
Fringe Benefits Tax payable	158
Total Remuneration	565,433

Special Rate Variation Expenditure (Business Promotion)

Councils must report on special rate variation expenditure (granted under s508) in accordance with conditions of any instruments of approval made by the Minister. For the Business Promotion SRV, Council is required to report in its annual report:

- the program of expenditure that was actually funded by the Special Variation;
- any significant differences between the Proposed Program and the program of expenditure that was actually funded by the Special Variation and the reasons for those differences; and
- the outcomes achieved as a result of the Special Variation

Total Income Received (\$):		\$123,240		
Details (Expenditure as funded by SRV)	Budget (\$)*	Actual (\$)	Diff (\$)	Reason for \$ Difference
Marketing		52,740		
• Stocktake Sale	4,153			
• Christmas Campaign	16,592			
• Marketing and production	31,995			
CBD Events and Placemaking		57,500	344	
• Eat the Street	25,000			
• Events and placemaking assets	-			
• Masters Games	10,000			
• Pop-up activities	1,860			
• Santa's Wonderland	10,296			
• Carols by Candlelight	10,000			
Event Initiatives		1,500		
• Event Activation – Placemaking	1,500			
Contingency	7,662	11,500	3,838	
Coordination and Overheads CCM role	0	0		
Total Expenditure	119,058	123,240	4,182	

Strategy Area/Project	Outcome
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing marketing activities to promote Lismore businesses and attract shoppers including the Stocktake Sale, Mother's Day Sale, What's On campaign and more. • Marketing and event management of Santa's Wonderland, including photos with Santa, letters to Santa, a treasure hunt, window display competition, and major retail giveaways to attract shoppers to the CBD in the lead up to Christmas. • Ongoing retail marketing and city centre promotions including further development of digital assets (Facebook and Instagram), TV, radio and print. This includes management of the Visit Lismore website, which attracted over 300,000 unique visitors.
Events and Placemaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event management for the award-winning Eat the Street food festival. • Sponsorship of the Carols in the Heart event, with a crowd in excess of 4,000 people. • Sponsorship of the 11th Lismore Masters Games in September 2019, which attracted 1,700 competitors to Lismore over the three-day event. • Support of other events throughout calendar year which attract thousands of visitors to the City Centre which boosts the local economy.

Special Rate Variation Expenditure (Biodiversity Management)

Councils must report on special rate variation expenditure (granted under s508) in accordance with conditions of any instruments of approval made by the Minister. For the Biodiversity Management SRV, Council is required to report in its annual report:

- a) the program of expenditure that was actually funded by the Special Variation;
- b) any significant differences between the Proposed Program and the program of expenditure that was actually funded by the Special Variation and the reasons for those differences; and
- c) the outcomes achieved as a result of the Special Variation

No.	Details (Program/ Project Expenditure as funded by SRV)	Budget (\$)*	Actual (\$)	Diff	Reason for \$ Difference
1	Cleaning up our own backyard: Planning and processes	38,000	53,629	-15,629	Operations scheduled in the previous year that were postponed due to weather were completed this year.
2	Cleaning up our own backyard: Supporting the community	49,000	50,480	-1,480	
3	Working with rural landholders	306,000	353,510	-47,510	Partnerships that were in a development phase in the previous year progressed to implementation phase in this year.
4	Working in the urban environment	97,000	88,241	8,759	Some on-ground works were postponed due to COVID-19.
5	Koala Plan of Management	50,000	32,400	17,600	Some habitat restoration projects had to be postponed due to drought conditions followed by COVID-19. The population density survey was also postponed due to COVID-19.
Total Expenditure		540,000	578,260	-38,260	

Strategy Area/Project	No. (SRV area)	Outcome
Identification and inspection of areas of High Conservation Value roadside vegetation and implementation of weed control	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Field surveys conducted in the north-west section of the LGA identified and mapped 91 areas of high conservation value vegetation and 21 locations of threatened plant species in road reserves. Weed control undertaken on 1.57km of HCV roadside vegetation. Improved protection of threatened species on roadsides. Decision-making and resource allocation for biodiversity protection based on high quality information.
Baseline fauna surveys.	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline fauna surveys in four reserves in the Urban Green Corridors network identified 30 native species (excluding birds), including three threatened species, and six introduced species. Establishes a baseline for monitoring changes over time, to identify both improvements and threats. Decision-making and resource allocation for habitat restoration and biodiversity protection based on high quality information.
BMS review	2	BMS has been reviewed and updated to incorporate feedback from the community, address changes to the regulatory and operating environments, and resolve identified barriers to implementation.
Support to 10 urban Landcare groups	2	Enhanced capacity of community groups working on biodiversity outcomes.
Biodiversity events and workshops	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four events and workshops attended by 251 people in both rural and urban areas. 772 residents participated in the citizen science project called Aussie Backyard Bird Count. Strengthened connections between community and environment, and enhanced capacity in the community to support biodiversity outcomes.
Biodiversity Awards	2	The contributions of volunteers and landholders to biodiversity are valued and recognised.
Individual landholder projects under the Rural Landholder Initiative	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 44 projects have come to completion at the end of 19/20 and a further 24 continue to second stage achievements. Bush regeneration work on 81.92ha of native vegetation; 8463 trees planted. 3.6km of fencing installed for habitat protection. 8.68km of riparian area restored and 7.63km excluded from stock. Seven off-stream watering units installed. Strengthened relationships between LCC and rural landholders. Enhanced capacity of rural landholders to maintain and improve the biodiversity values of Lismore's rural lands. Enhanced landscape connectivity and habitat values on privately-owned rural land.
<p>Three Rural Industry partnership projects under the Rural Landholder Initiative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Native bee habitat on macadamia properties, including on ground works and a highly successful showcase field day. Tea tree and biodiversity continued on-ground riparian works. Engaging with graziers on health soil and water, two projects sponsored with on ground activity. 	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthened relationships between LCC and rural industries. Enhanced capacity of rural industries to maintain and improve the biodiversity values of Lismore's rural lands.

Bush regeneration in urban reserves	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SRV funded works at four sites, covering 20.8ha including 3ha of primary work. Enhanced landscape connectivity and habitat values. Improved protection of threatened species on Council-managed land.
Bush regeneration in high value riparian vegetation	4	Restoration work undertaken along 2km of the Wilsons River.
Feel Blue Touch Green program	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One event attended by 12 people. Strengthened connections between community and environment. Supporting mental health and well-being as well as biodiversity.
Koala habitat restoration projects	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weed management on 56.17ha of koala habitat. 1016 koala food trees planted. Revegetation of 2.14ha and assisted regeneration of 5.5ha of koala habitat. 922m of riparian habitat restored. 308m fencing installed to protect koala habitat. Improved quantity and quality of koala habitat.
Contributions to collaborative research into distribution pathways and strategies for koala conservation	5	Decision-making and resource allocation for habitat restoration based on high quality information.

Stormwater Management Services

In accordance with Local Government Regulation 2005 cl217(1)(e), an annual report must include a statement detailing the stormwater management services provided by the council during the year.

Council collected \$382,654.70 in levies in 2019/20, of which \$261,548 was spent on our large stormwater network, and the remainder kept in reserves. The SMS charge was spent on inspections, maintenance and operational costs. It was also spent on various capital and renewal works including:

- Captain Rous Park and Hamley Road – stormwater improvements (started)
- Cathcart Street, Girards Hill – localised flooding reduction works (completed)
- Kookaburra Terrace – stormwater basin renewal (completed)
- Upper Monaltrie Creek – stormwater concept design (started)
- Zadoc Street – stormwater conveyance concept design (started)

The remaining unspent funds are placed back into reserves and can only be used for future stormwater related works as outlined in the Stormwater Management Plan.

Swimming Pool Inspections

In accordance with Swimming Pools Act 1992 s22F(2) and Regulation 2008 cl18BC, an annual report must include information in relation to swimming pool inspections carried out in accordance with the Act and Regulation.

Details	#
Number of inspections of tourist and visitor accommodation	11
Number of inspections of premises with more than two dwellings	6
Number of inspections that resulted in issuance of a certificate of compliance under s22D of the Act	0
Number of inspections that resulted in issuance of a certificate of non-compliance under s18B of the Regulation	0

Voluntary Planning Agreements

Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 No 203, Division 7.1(2)(7.5)(5) (formerly s93G)

A planning authority that has entered into one or more planning agreements must, while any such planning agreements remain in force, include in its annual report particulars of compliance with and the effect of the planning agreements during the year to which the report relates.

1. Cameron Road Development - DA10/77 - Voluntary Planning Agreement

The approved subdivision development at Cameron Road is subject to a Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA) under Development Consent 2010/77 for the following works:

- Upgrading Cowlong Road
- Upgrading Boatharbour Road
- Upgrading McLean Ridges Hall

The infrastructure contributions identified in the VPA are required to meet the demand for services and facilities arising from the increased residential population.

Council currently holds contributions collected from previous subdivision lots released in restricted funds that are to be directed to the identified road improvements.

2. 214 Molesworth Street – DA14/236 – Voluntary Planning Agreement

The approved commercial building at 214 Molesworth Street, Lismore, is subject to a VPA under Development Consent 2014/236 for the following works:

- Provision of 34 formalised public car parking spaces in the Lismore CBD

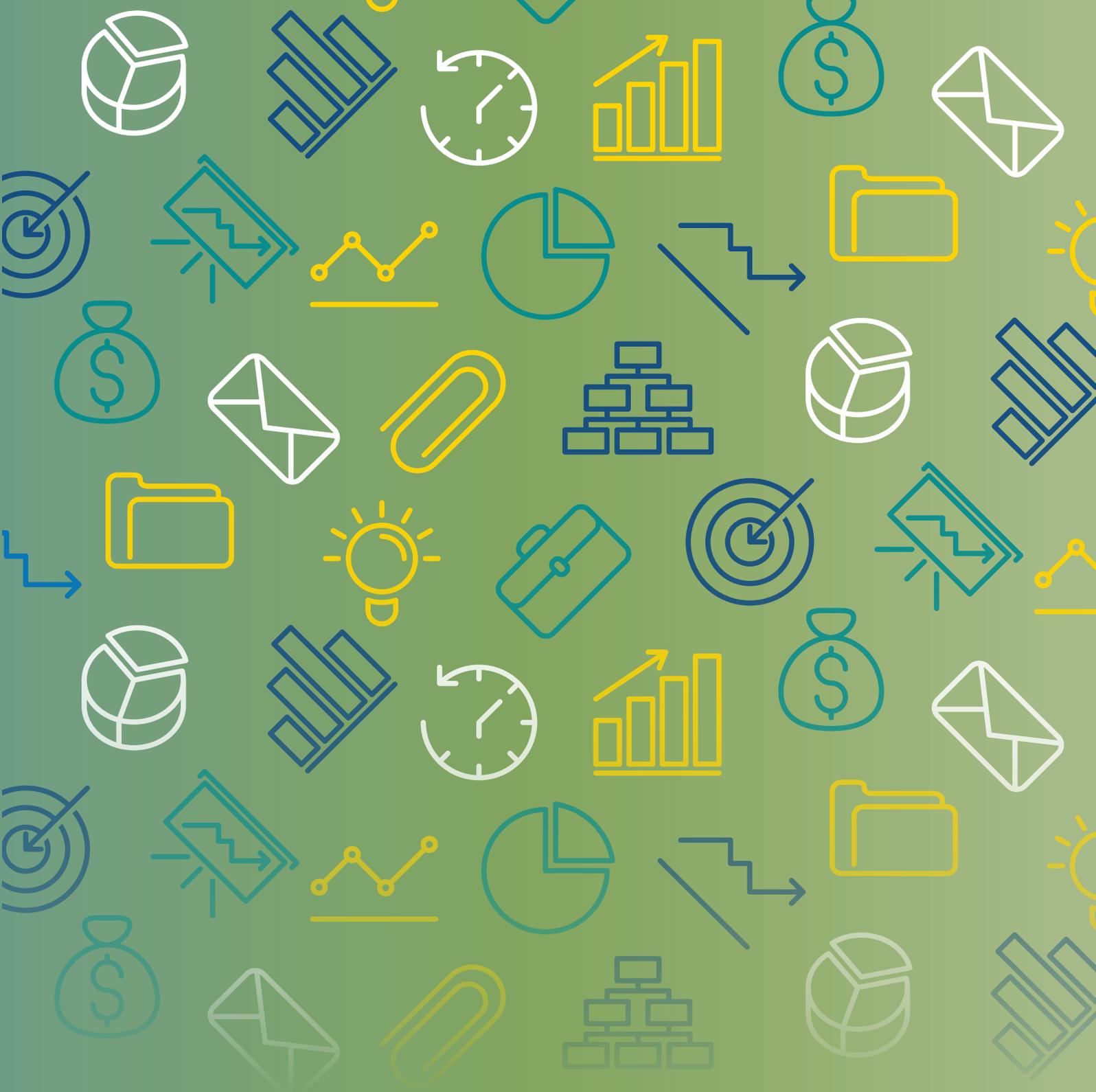
The infrastructure works undertaken by the developer will assist in compensating for the loss of publicly available car spaces on the subject land as originally approved by Council.

Works on Private Land

In accordance with Local Government Regulation 2005 cl217(1)(a4), an annual report must include details or a summary of resolutions made during that year under Local Government Act s67 concerning work carried out on private land and details or a summary of such work if the cost of the work has been fully or partly subsidised by the council, together with a statement of the total amount by which the council has subsidised any such work during that year

Council has not performed any works on private property for the reporting period.





For more information phone
Lismore City Council

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