



Warrumbungle Shire Council

End of Term Report 2022/2024



CONTENTS

2022-2024 Term Of Council Overview	3
Councillors	5
Council Structure	6
Community Strategic Plan.....	7
Council Highlights	9
Caring For The Environment	14
Civic Leadership	18
Strengthening Our Local Economy.....	23
Supporting Our Community Life	27

2022-2024 TERM OF COUNCIL OVERVIEW

The recent Council term has been marked by significant and unprecedented challenges, reflecting a period of extraordinary disruption and adaptation. Initially set to last four years, the term was shortened due to the outbreak of COVID-19. This global pandemic not only shortened the term but also fundamentally altered the way the Council operated, requiring rapid shifts to remote work, digital meetings, and new approaches to public engagement and service delivery.

In addition to the pandemic, the Council term has been severely impacted by a series of severe storms and natural disasters. These events have placed a substantial strain on resources, both in terms of financial expenditure and logistical coordination. The response to and recovery from these disasters have dominated much of the Council's agenda, diverting attention and resources from other planned initiatives and projects.

Furthermore, the term has been profoundly affected by the CWOREZ (Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone), a development set to have extensive repercussions for the Warrumbungle Local Government Area (LGA). The CWOREZ initiative is expected to bring about significant changes to regional planning and resource management, influencing both the immediate operational focus of the Council and the longer-term strategic direction of the LGA.

In summary, the Council's shortened term has been shaped by a combination of disruptive events, including a global pandemic, natural disasters, and major regional initiatives. Each of these factors has required the Council to adapt rapidly, prioritise emergency responses, and navigate significant changes in operational dynamics.

Gratitude to our dedicated Councillors, Council staff and resilience for their unwavering commitment and exceptional efforts during this challenging term. Despite the unprecedented hurdles their resilience and adaptability have been truly commendable. Hard work and perseverance in navigating these complex issues have played a crucial role in ensuring a successful and productive Council term.



THIS DOCUMENT

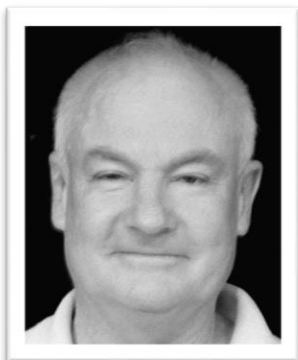
The *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW) requires that at the last meeting of an outgoing council a report be tabled that outlines how the council has worked towards implementing its Community Strategic Plan.

This End of Term Report details how the Warrumbungle Shire community's objectives contained in the Community Strategic Plan 2022-2037 (CSP) have been achieved over the term of Council.

Unusually, this document covers a three-year term due to the postponement of the local government elections in 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This report will become an adopted attachment to the Annual Report 2023/2024 in November 2024.

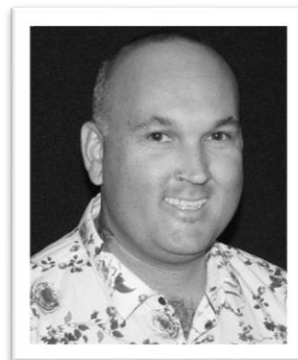
COUNCILLORS



Ambrose Doolan



Aniello Iannuzzi



Kodi Brady



Dale Hogden



Zoe Holcombe



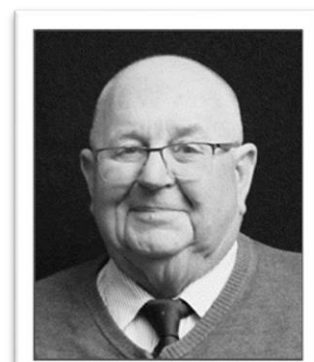
Carlton Kopke



Jason Newton



Kathryn Rindfleish

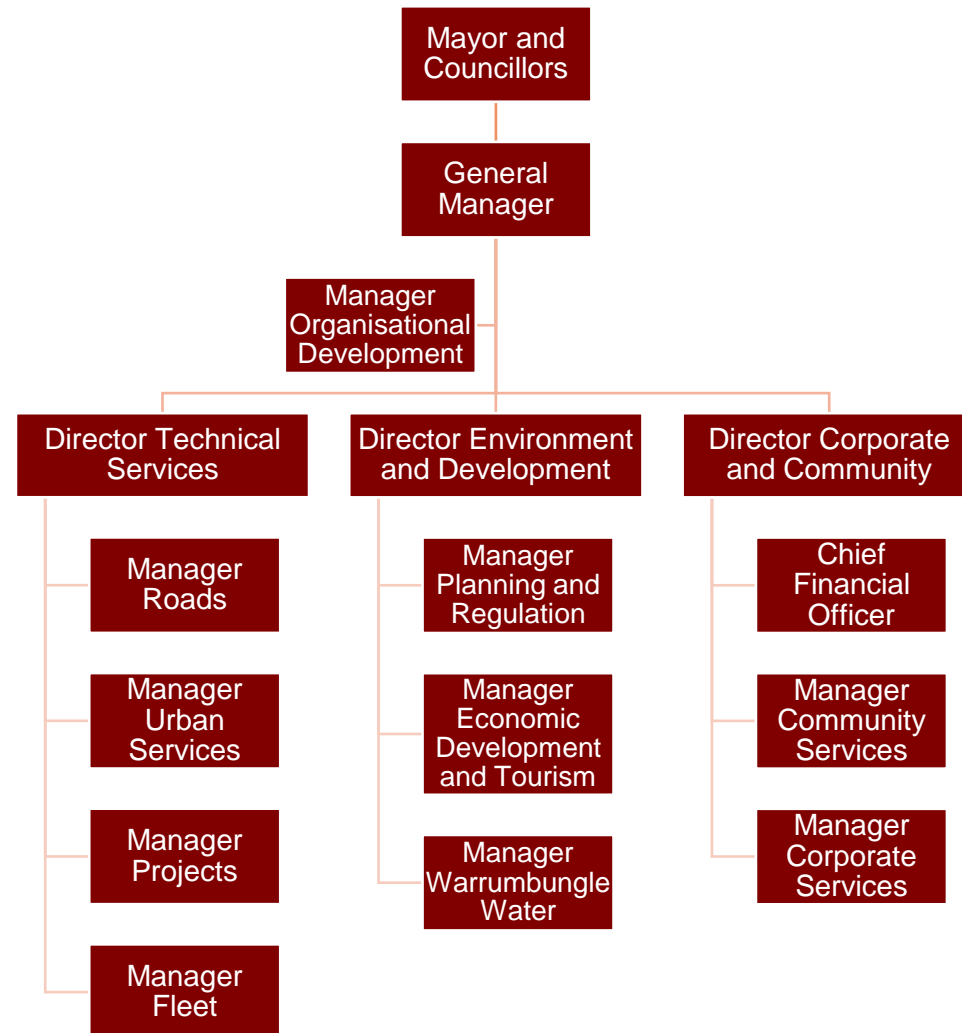


Denis Todd

Cr Ambrose Doolan was Mayor 2022-2024
Cr Aniello Iannuzzi was Deputy Mayor 2022-2023
Cr Kathryn Rindfleish was Deputy Mayor 2023-2024

COUNCIL STRUCTURE

Warrumbungle Shire Council is managed by a General Manager with three Directorates. The organisation structure as at the end of this term of Council is shown below.



COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN

The strategic, corporate and organisational planning framework used by Warrumbungle Shire Council (Council) has been developed in accordance with the NSW Office of Local Government's Integrated Planning and Reporting framework.

The Integrated Planning and Reporting framework includes a series of long- and short-term strategies and plans that:

1. Define the council's priorities and goals in providing infrastructure, services and leadership to the community and other stakeholders in the Warrumbungle local government area.
2. Comprehensively describe the range of ongoing activities, projects and initiatives to be undertaken by the council to achieve the targets and goals described in each strategy and plan.

The Community Strategic Plan (CSP) sits at the top of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework as the strategic document that informs the development of a council's priorities over the coming term. All projects and programs undertaken are linked back to the goals of the CSP and all are undertaken to implement the aims of the CSP. The End of Term Report outlines the progress made towards achieving the strategic vision during the term of office 2022-2024.

COMMUNITY VISION

What is most important to us is our sense of community spirit, our children and our homes. Our plan for the future will support the growth, resilience and health of our people, our neighbourhoods, the environment and local economy.

The overarching vision for our communities has been broken down into four (4) categories:

Caring for the Environment - we value our pristine, healthy, natural environment with clean water resources and diverse flora and fauna. We enjoy the close proximity to National Parks and large areas of forest and bushland. We love that we are surrounded by wide open spaces and spectacular mountain landscapes. We enjoy the peace and quiet, our temperate climate with four distinct seasons, the fresh, unpolluted air and clear night skies.

Civic Leadership – to look after the Warrumbungle community, a great deal of work happens behind the scenes to ensure there are planned, resourced, efficient and transparent systems in place to enable our community to function and prosper. The community expects responsible and transparent decision-making with a focus on public conversations and ownership.

Strengthening the Local Economy – our community has access to positive choices for investment, employment and study. This includes supporting our predominantly agricultural economy while also strengthening and diversifying the economy by targeting new and innovative industries. Our solid local tourism industry is based on local attractions including three National Parks, Siding Spring Observatory and a range of tailored facilities and amenities. The contribution of our varied agricultural industry is highly valued, made possible by good climate and rainfall, productive soils, clean water supplies and ready access to markets.

Supporting Community Life – our communities are strong, resilient and inclusive, and provide support and assistance to those in need. Our local government area is a great place to raise a family and we value the contributions and participation of our younger people who are provided opportunities to support their development. Our diverse community is reflected through a wide range of arts and cultural activities, festivals and events. People within the local government area have opportunities to participate in a diverse range of locally based sports catering for people of all ages, activity levels and interests. Our rural setting provides children with opportunities to play in and explore their natural environment and our communities have easy access to a wide range of active and passive recreational pursuits.

DELIVERY PROGRAM AND OPERATIONAL PLAN

Council has amalgamated the four (4) year Delivery Program with the one (1) year Operational Plan to better illustrate the link between the vision of the community and the strategies proposed by the current term of Council along with the annual tasks to be undertaken.

LONG-TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

The Community Strategic Plan informs the Delivery/Operational Plan and the Long-Term Financial Plan.

KEY COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (QBL)

The application of the Quadruple Bottom Line (QBL) framework allows projects to be assessed in terms of their total economic, social, environment and governance impacts. In the Community Strategic Plan, the criteria are documented in the four (4) categories.

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

2021 – 2022 HIGHLIGHTS

- With the generous support of the Australian Government, over \$3 million has been invested into various local roads and community infrastructure projects through the Australian Government's Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program Phase 3. This funding has allowed various projects across multiple towns across the Shire to commence, improving road networks and community infrastructure, benefiting our community members.
- The Australian Government also provided funding through nationwide Roads of Strategic Importance (ROSI) initiative to upgrade Purlewaugh Road. This project will saw millions of dollars put towards critical upgrades including road widening and sealing, as well as the rehabilitation of two curves, providing a safer connection for motorists travelling.
- Council was successful in receiving around \$5.6 million from the Australian and NSW Governments, including \$1.8 million being carried over from previous programs, to help shape plans for new and improved infrastructure in Dunedoo.
- One of the largest Natural Disaster claims has been submitted to the NSW Government for funding assistance with the repair of roads and infrastructure damage across the Shire, after a major natural disaster flooding event in November 2021. This claim for assistance is one of the largest funding claims Council has ever submitted with the estimated costs of repairs have resulted in massive claims for assistance with road repairs of over \$10 million.
- Released a collaborative tourism campaign 'Real Country' across Warrumbungle, Gilgandra and Coonamble LGAs.
- Council ran Building Our Warrumbungle Communities action plans developed by each town's key stakeholders and community organisations, from Peter Kenyon – Building Our Warrumbungle Communities Project, distributed throughout the region.
- WCC celebrated 50 years of Meals on Wheels across the Shire (1972-2022). WCC have demonstrated that they are here for the long haul and will be a strong and supportive service for our communities for another 50 years.
- A major \$1.7m project to upgrade the facilities at Robertson Oval in Dunedoo was completed. This project was funded by the Building Better Regions, Local Roads and Community Infrastructure funding programs and \$124,596 from council.



Photo: Robertson Oval new amenities building.

- Replaced 3km of water mains across Council's water supply schemes to improve the quality of reticulated water to customers and reduce breakages to ensure the continuous supply of water.

- Council successfully secured \$239,651 in funding from the NSW Government under the Reconnecting Regional NSW – Community Events Program. This program aims to promote economic and social recovery across all 93 regional NSW Local Government Areas (LGAs), particularly in the aftermath of COVID-19. The program has supported numerous community events across the Warrumbungle Region, most notably the inaugural Bungle Rumble and Wings n' Things.



Coonabarabran Aerodrome for Wings N Things

2022 – 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

- Castlereagh River Rehabilitation in Coonabarabran commenced which will see the improvement of the health and ecological conditions of the Castlereagh River ecosystem in Coonabarabran as well as encourage community involvement, improve access to the river and increase awareness of the river ecology and its cultural significance.
- The Australian Government, generously funded over \$3 million to be invested into various local roads and community infrastructure projects through the Australian Government's Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program Phase 3. This saw various projects across multiple towns across the Shire to commence, improving road networks and community infrastructure, benefiting our community members.
- Council was successful in obtaining nearly \$1 million through the Stronger Country Communities Program to complete much needed upgrades to sporting facilities and outdoor pools across the Shire and \$1.5 million through Resources for Regions for upgrades and expansions to the sporting ovals in Coolah, Coonabarabran and Mendooran, and investigation into the redevelopment of Coonabarabran Public Swimming Pool.
- Council finalised the Three Rivers Regional Retirement Community project and Council will be working with the Federal and State Government in the coming years to look for opportunities for the Sullivan Street site in Dunedoo.
- Council also had to deal with the largest Natural Disaster claims that Council has ever submitted to the NSW Government for funding assistance with the repair of roads and infrastructure damage across the Shire, after major natural disaster flooding events.
- Council delivered upgrades to pump stations in Coonabarabran, upgrading existing pumps to ensure the continuous and effective transport of sewerage within the scheme. The Mendooran Sewerage Scheme Options Study was finalised and completed. Planning works progressed towards delivering upgrades to Dunedoo, Coolah and Coonabarabran Sewerage Treatment Plants with planning works for the Dunedoo and Coonabarabran Sewerage Treatment Plants nearing completion. Planning works continued towards the delivery of a concept design and business case for the Binnaway Sewerage Scheme.

- Warrumbungle Community Care proudly won the 2022 NSW Local Government Award for Excellence (pop: under 150,000) for their Meal Voucher Program
- Replaced 3km of water mains across Council's water supply schemes to improve the quality of reticulated water to customers and reduce breakages to ensure the continuous supply of water.
- Completed the construction and commissioning of a new 8.2km water pipeline along Timor Road connecting the Coonabarabran Water Treatment Plant to newly constructed groundwater bores along Timor Road. This project will see improved water security for Coonabarabran.
- Constructed and commissioned a new Shire wide SCADA system to remotely manage and observe all water and sewer sites to ensure the continuous supply of both water and sewerage services to customers.
- Re-designed and construction of high-risk sections of water main to flooding failure in Coolah building water supply resilience into the network;
- Completion of a condition assessment of all twenty-three (23) groundwater bores and CCTV camera inspection of six (6) high risk bores to ensure the continuous supply of water services to customers.
- Two projects that were delivered this year include the Stop and Play Park at Neilson Park Coonabarabran and the Jump the Stump skate park at Bowen Oval Coolah.



Photo: Ariel of Jump the Stump Skate Park Coolah

2023 – 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

- Secured over \$2million worth of funding under Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program – Phase 4 for various roads and community projects in towns across the Shire.
- Children's Services, specifically Yuluwirri Kids is proudly participating in the *Yaama Gamilaraay!* Project.



Photo: Mary Jane Cain Bridge Mural as part of the Castlereagh River Rehabilitation

- The Warrumbungle Shire Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) has now reached the 10 million container mark!

- Ongoing mains replacement works have been rolled out across the Shire seeing improvements in the water reticulation space decreasing dirty water issuing within communities.
- Replaced 3km of water mains across Council's water supply schemes to improve the quality of reticulated water to customers and reduce breakages to ensure the continuous supply of water.
- Successfully applied for funding and commenced planning, design and construction of water treatment upgrades at the Baradine, Binnaway, Coolah and Mendooran Water Treatment Plants with upgrades valued at \$15.7 million;
- Relined 2km of gravity sewer mains across Coonabarabran, Coolah and Dunedoo to reduce environmental impacts and provide continuous sewerage services to customers;
- Council has collaborated with the Real Country Group, which includes the Coonamble, Gilgandra, and Warrumbungle LGAs. With Gilgandra Shire Council as the project lead, the group successfully acquired \$489,312 in funding from the NSW Government's Business Case and Strategy Development Fund. This major project led to the development of the Real Country Destination Strategic Plan, aimed at better understanding and leveraging a shared asset among the three councils—the Castlereagh River. The strategy will assist the councils in pursuing infrastructure and tourism opportunities.
- \$65,000 was allocated to Council through the NSW Government Country Passenger Transport Infrastructure Grant Scheme (CPTIGS) for bus stop upgrades around the Shire supporting the construction or upgrade of bus stop infrastructure (generally owned and maintained by local councils) across country NSW.
- Warrumbungle Community Care (WCC) were finalists in NSW Local Government Excellence Awards, this time for its work in partnering with various organisations to bring more support services to the Warrumbungle community.
- Council is continuing to assess the impacts of the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone (CWOREZ). Funding has been allocated to affected regions and opportunities may arise from thing funding in the new financial year. However, this is taking a lot of Council resources and concerns are still directly around the accumulative impacts for our communities.
- The popular Connect Five Mobile Play Sessions program is expanding to Purllewaugh.



Photo: Connect Five staff at the Purllewaugh Hall.



CARING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

We value our pristine, healthy, natural environment with clean water resources and diverse flora and fauna. We enjoy the close proximity to National Parks and large areas of forest and bushland. We love that we are surrounded by wide open spaces and spectacular mountain landscapes. We enjoy the peace and quiet, our temperate climate with four distinct seasons, the fresh, unpolluted air and clear night skies.

“The good health of our natural environment and biodiversity is preserved and enhanced.”

Objectives	Strategies
CE1 The impacts of climate change on our region are well managed and minimised.	CE1.1 Prepare for climate change through adaptation and mitigation strategies.
	CE1.2 Encourage residents to embrace sustainable living practices.
CE2 The extraction of natural resources from our local government area, including coal and coal seam gas, has minimal negative impact on our natural environment.	CE2.1 Monitor local mining and extractive activities to ensure that negative environmental impacts are identified and mitigated.
	CE2.2 Partner with other government agencies to ensure effective environmental oversight of local mining and extractive activities.
CE3 Local bushlands and forests are host to a healthy diversity of flora and fauna.	CE3.1 Partner with private and public landholders to build and maintain awareness of their responsibilities and requirements regarding environmental, land and natural resource management.
	CE3.2 Ensure development assessments and all reviews of environmental factors are completed with the aim of minimising damage to the environment.
	CE3.3 Partner with appropriate agencies and land holders to ensure that the proliferation of weeds and pest animals is monitored and minimised.
	CE3.4 Conduct regular community education programs and ensure that information is available regarding responsible domestic animal ownership and management.

CE4 Local natural water resources including waterways and aquifers remain unpolluted.	CE4.1 Conduct regular water quality monitoring activities.
	CE4.2 Seek co-operative input from State, regional and neighbouring local government agencies in the management of local water resources.
	CE4.3 Partner with agencies to minimise the effects of damage caused by salinity, riparian activity and ground water pollution.
CE5 Effective and efficient waste and recycling services are provided.	CE5.1 Identify options for the improvement of local waste and recycling services.
	CE5.2 Promote the range of recycling services.
CE6 Sustainable growth and respectful planning acknowledges the rural character of the area, values the natural environment and encourages ecologically sustainable development.	CE6.1 Engage with the community to develop plans for growth and development that value the local environment.
	CE6.2 Ensure best practice use of renewable energy options for Council and community projects.
	CE6.3 Development activity is monitored and controlled to prevent fragmentation of rural lands.

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED THIS TERM IN OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Compliance Services

Alcohol Free Zones are maintained throughout the urban areas of the Shire. Compliance Officers undertake inspections to ensure the Alcohol-Free Zone signage is current and in the correct position. Signs are replaced if they are old or unreadable.

Compliance Officers responded to a number of nuisance complaints relating to animals including cattle, horses and roosters being kept in urban areas. Officers also attended a number of calls for roaming stock. Correspondence and Penalty Infringement Notices are issued on an as-need basis.

Inspections on swimming pool barriers associated with houses for sale or rent have been continuous. Any pool barriers failing inspections are required to have works completed before a compliance certificate can be issued.

Routine checks of overgrown properties are carried out to ensure the health and safety of all residents. Officers respond to complaints regarding overgrown private land in urban areas

and issue correspondence and notices when needed. More frequent inspections are carried out after rain events and heading into fire season to ensure that grass is kept low to reduce the risk of fire.

Noxious Weeds

Membership of the Castlereagh Macquarie County Council was maintained; this group undertakes inspections and weed spraying on behalf of Council.

Environmental Health Services

The Environmental Compliance Officer assists other branches within the organisation to achieve best practice environmental outcomes. Advice is given as required.

Food premises inspections have been carried out throughout the period to ensure food businesses are abiding by Food Safety Standards and NSW Food Regulations.

Assessment and inspections are carried out on all new applications for on-site sewage management systems (OSSMS). Existing OSSMS are inspected as required on an ad-hoc basis.

Warrumbungle Waste

There is a landfill site at Coonabarabran, with transfer stations located in Baradine, Binnaway, Coolah, Dunedoo, Mendooran and Ulamambri. Warrumbungle Waste continued the weekly general waste collection and fortnightly recycling collection for residents throughout the Shire.

Coonabarabran Landfill and Dunedoo Transfer Station are both Container Deposit Scheme collection stations with people travelling from other Shires to deposit containers for the 10cents refund. Since the CDS collection stations opened in Coonabarabran and Dunedoo in 2019, over 10 million containers have passed through these collection depots.

Council undertook an EOI to sell scrap metal that had accumulated at its waste facilities across the Shire. The income will be used to forward plan the future of Council's waste facilities and to ensure legislative requirements for waste management are maintained.

Warrumbungle Water and Sewer

Potable water services are supplied to residents in Baradine, Binnaway, Bugaldie, Coolah, Coonabarabran, Dunedoo, Kenebri and Mendooran; non-potable services are supplied to residents in Merrygoen and connected customers along the raw bulk water main on Timor Road, Coonabarabran. In total there are 3,313 service connections. To provide these services, there are 20 groundwater bores, 4 river wells, 1 dam, 1 weir, 4 water treatment plants, 23 reservoirs including treatment plant clear water tanks and 300 km of water mains including head works, transfer and reticulation mains.

Sewage services are provided to residents in Baradine, Coolah, Coonabarabran and Dunedoo. In all, there are 2,418 connections. Infrastructure to support these connections includes 9 pumping stations, 4 sewage treatment plants and 250 km of sewer main.



CIVIC LEADERSHIP

To look after the Warrumbungle community, a great deal of work happens behind the scenes to ensure there are planned, resourced, efficient and transparent systems in place to enable our community to function and prosper.

The community expects responsible and transparent decision-making with a focus on public conversations and ownership.

“Leadership will foster collaborative approaches to the governance of our area across all levels of government, to focus on delivering results against our agreed strategic outcomes in the most cost-effective way. The community will be at the heart of decision-making and service delivery.”

Objective	Strategies
CL1 That Council is financially sustainable over the long term.	CL1.1 Ensure that Council is generating sufficient funds to provide the levels of service and infrastructure agreed with the community.
	CL1.2 Grant funding is sourced to value-add Council funded activities.
	CL1.3 Asset Management Plans for all of Councils assets include levels of service with forecasts identified for operations, maintenance renewals/upgrades and depreciation.
	CL1.4 Delivery Programs for all Council activities include levels of service provision, with specified periods of review for service levels.
CL2 Council meets its legislative and compliance requirements and implements opportunities for organisational improvement	CL2.1 Provide Council's leadership with a strong governance and management framework that promotes transparent and informed decision-making.
	CL2.2 Obtain structured independent assessment of Council's organisational compliance, practices and performance.
CL3 Council fosters a safe, productive and professional workplace, enabling Council staff to source, manage and maintain services to the community.	CL3.1 Provide a professional, skilled and customer-focussed workforce.

	CL3.2 Plan and prepare for future contemporary local government workforce structures.
	CL3.3 Provide professional learning and career development opportunities for all staff.
	CL3.4 Prioritise staff health and wellbeing.
CL4 To have a well-informed community that has confidence in Council's decision-making processes.	CL4.1 Deliver communication that is open, accessible, meaningful and regular across a range of media
	CL4.2 Promote organisational culture that delivers excellent customer service and continuous improvement.
	CL4.3 Provide opportunities for widespread and quality engagement and, where appropriate, shared decision-making.
CL5 To create leaders and foster leadership opportunities in our community.	CL5.1 Encourage and support residents to pursue leadership roles at Council.
	CL5.2 Ensure that councillors are well supported in fulfilling their role and in being accessible and actively involved in representing the local government area.
	CL5.3 Support community organisations and groups to deliver services and programs.
	CL5.4 Engage and train young people to develop our future leaders.
	CL5.5 Develop and encourage staff to pursue leadership within Council.
CL6 To build strong relationships	CL6.1 Work in partnership with other councils, regional organisations and State and Federal Governments.
	CL6.2 Advocate for the community to attract external funding to deliver services, facilities and programs.

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED THIS TERM IN CIVIC LEADERSHIP

Environment and Development Management

A review of the Local Environmental Plan (LEP) is underway to rectify zoning anomalies to reflect the needs of our communities and surrounding agricultural land to ensure fragmentation of agricultural land does not occur. Council is preparing three Planning

Proposals in-house to reflect the changes required, these being – Housekeeping; Policy; and Heritage. The Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure are assisting Council Staff complete the Planning Proposals to ensure that they meet the current State government requirements and specifications.

Town Planning

Council engaged a Contract Town Planner to assist with the assessing of Development Applications until a qualified Town Planner can be appointed. Council was successful in obtaining funding from Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure to assist with payment of tuition for a Cadet Planner; Council advertised and appointed a Cadet Planner in 2024.

Human Resources

The Local Government median turnover figures for the last 3 years as advised by Local Government NSW are 18.26% in 2021/2022 and 18.31% in 2022/2023. Warrumbungle Shire Council's turnover averaged 14.80% per annum over the term of Council, a slight increase on the previous term average of 12.27% per annum. Average tenure of staff is approximately 10 years, on a par with the Local Government average.

Recruitment practices were reviewed, aiming to both streamline the process and improve the customer experience. Council added online reference checking and updated its pre-employment medical processes to deliver more specific and relevant information as part of the selection process. Council also continued its relationship with external recruiters for a number of managements recruiting campaigns, with several hard to fill roles successfully recruited.

During this term Council has continued to support local youth through its apprentice and traineeship programs, including hosting a number of school-based traineeships. Council has also employed a Cadet Planner with a funding contribution from the Planning Institute of Australia, recognising the national skills shortage that exists in the planning profession.

With support from both StateCover and SafeWork Council made improvements to its WHS management system and practices. In particular, a verification of competency system was introduced, with 196 verification of competency assessments being undertaken for plant operators as part of the process. Council continued to embed the use of BeSafe incident reporting software, increasing accountability and monitoring of completion of corrective actions, and most recently has prioritised improvements to emergency plans and procedures.

In 2023 Council staff participated in the People at Work survey, which is a validated Australian psychosocial risk assessment survey. The survey assesses a number of the most common psychosocial hazards and factors, assisting Council in identifying and addressing psychosocial hazards in the workplace.

Human Resources staff undertook training which enabled the in-house delivery of audiometric and drug and alcohol testing. In 2023 the bi-annual audiometric testing for operational staff was successfully delivered in-house and introduced a one-to-one meeting with staff to increase their understanding of their results and how to better protect their hearing in the long term. In-house drug and alcohol testing has allowed more flexibility for post-incident and random testing programs.

Demonstrating Council's commitment to learning and development, there were more than 2,700 staff attendances at training over the term of Council, and increased utilisation of Council's online learning management system, Go1 to deliver training, including in critical areas such as cyber safety, public interest disclosure and fraud training.

In May 2024 Council adopted a new Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan, which will see increased training and actions around diversity, inclusion and equal employment opportunity over the next four years, and will complement Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP).

Governance

Developing strategic relationships with other levels of government is a Council objective in an effort to ensure that the Shire receives an equitable allocation of resources. Relationships with all levels of government have continued to be developed and maintained. We are proactive in communication with various State and Federal Ministers and Members of Parliament, and we regularly cooperate with other councils.

The community has expressed that an important function of Council is to encourage and support local business and industry in creating local employment, and to advocate for long-term creation and retention of high-quality services. Council has been active in advocacy of local business and industry. In particular, Council has been involved with the Inland Rail project, which will pass through the northern end of the Shire, as well as major developments associated with the Central West Orana Renewable Energy Zone in the south of the Shire. Council continues to advocate for the best economic outcomes for these communities.



STRENGTHENING OUR LOCAL ECONOMY

Our community has access to positive choices for investment, employment and study. This includes supporting our predominantly agricultural economy while also strengthening and diversifying the economy by targeting new and innovative industries.

Our solid local tourism industry is based on local attractions including three National Parks, Siding Spring Observatory and a range of tailored facilities and amenities. The contribution of our varied agricultural industry is highly valued, made possible by good climate and rainfall, productive soils, clean water supplies and ready access to markets.

“A strong and sustainable economy provides our community with localised employment opportunities and ease of access to markets, goods and services.”

Objectives	Strategies
LE1 Support agricultural activities as a foundation of our local economy while recognising that access to diverse local opportunities that are inclusive of people of all ages and skill levels is crucial to our success.	LE1.1 Local agencies, peak bodies and agricultural enterprises work together to ensure the long-term viability of our farming sector.
	LE1.2 Council's road priority strategy supports the ability of productive land owners to get produce to markets.
	LE1.3 Encourage and support local business and industry in creating local employment and training opportunities.
LE2 Identify, develop and coordinate tourism and economic development opportunities.	LE2.1 Capitalise on the character and lifestyle of the Warrumbungle local government area to remain a destination of choice for travellers.
	LE2.2 Work with local business and industry to foster local economic development, innovation and expansion.
	LE2.3 Encourage a 'buy local' and 'sell local' approach to business activity.
	LE2.4 Develop and attract events, festivals, and activities for locals and visitors, ensuring accessibility for all.
LE3 The community benefits from the economic returns of local renewable energy production, and mining and extractive industries.	LE3.1 Identify and develop opportunities to realise the local government area's potential as a location for the production of renewable energies.
	LE3.2 Work with public and private sector agencies to ensure that renewable energy production and mining and extractive industries operating within the LGA results in economic returns for our community.
LE4 Opportunities exist for the establishment of light industries and a range of housing options.	LE4.1 Ensure that Council maintains an approach to land use planning that will support the growth of light industrial activity in appropriate locations within the LGA.

	LE5.2 Identify opportunities to expand the availability of a range of housing options based on lifestyle choices and affordability.
--	---

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED THIS TERM IN OUR LOCAL ECONOMY

Tourism and Economic Development

Coonabarabran Visitor Information Centre (VIC) supplies and disseminates brochures and visitor's information to operators throughout the Shire and to neighbouring local government areas. Coonabarabran VIC has an extensive range of retail products, some of which are sourced locally.

Tourism and Economic Promotion

During the term local tourism campaigns and economic promotions included the following:

- Various Community Events under the Reconnecting Regional NSW – Community Event Program:
 - Various Community Sporting Events
 - Community Fun Days
 - Community Christmas Events
 - Mendooran 170th Celebrations
 - Wings N Things
 - Bungle Rumble (2022)
- Real Country Castlereagh River Business Case
- Various Workshops to upskill and digitize businesses into social media and the online space.
- Regional Lifestyle Magazine promotion campaign of the Real Country Group (Coonamble, Gilgandra and Warrumbungle)

Staff also attended Caravan and Camping shows in NSW and QLD to promote the Warrumbungle Region and its tourist attractions.

Community economic development is supported by Council along with the members of the Economic Development and Tourism Advisory Committee, the local community coordinators, Chambers of Commerce, Local Progress Associations, and their associated sub committees.

Manager of Economic Development and Tourism has established a network of government and business agencies to facilitate business development including Destination NSW, Business Connect business advisors, Regional Development Australia (Orana) and Service NSW. Manager of Economic Development and Tourism updates the advisory committee each meeting on Economic Development and Tourism initiatives.

Cemetery Services

Seventeen cemeteries are managed and maintained by Council across the Shire. Activities include management of a database of interments, liaison with Funeral Directors, excavation of burial sites, maintenance of grounds and fences at each cemetery.

A columbarium wall was installed at Dunedoo Cemetery this term.

Design Services Management

The design team investigates, designs and prepares drawings for roadworks, drainage works, kerbing and guttering and footpath works. The team also provides rural road

addressing services across the Shire and Geographic Information System (GIS) services to the organisation. The Team is active in preparing funding submissions for road projects, particularly projects under the State Government's Fixing Country Roads program, Fixing Country Bridges Program, Safer Roads Program and Active Transport Program, Get Active NSW program, Country Passenger Transport Infrastructure Grants Scheme.

Projects that were successful in receiving grant funds during the term include:

- Upgrades to Trainlink bus stops in Coonabarabran, Binnaway, Mendooran and Coolah.
- State Forest Road Coolah upgrade and bitumen sealing
- Footpath construction on near all three schools in Coonabarabran.
- Bitumen sealing on Tooraweenah Road.
- Warkton Bridge
- Black Gully Bridge
- Cassilis Street Coonabarabran footpath widening
- Purlewaugh Road widening
- Neilrex Road bitumen sealing

Fleet Services

To support Council's wide range of services, workshops are operated at Coolah and Coonabarabran. The mechanics in these workshops provide maintenance and support services for a fleet of around 200 vehicles.

Council workshops and mechanics also provide maintenance and registration services to 87 trucks and vehicles used by the Rural Fire Service.

Since January 2022 the following plant has been purchased:

- 4 x ride on mowers
- 38 x Light fleet vehicles
- 7 x Trailers

Heavy plant including one roller, one compactor, one excavator, one loader and one truck.

Property Management

Council's property portfolio, excluding public halls and medical centres, includes; two administration offices, nine residential houses, three preschools and a range of community buildings.

Thirty-one new hot water units were installed across a number of Council properties under the NSW Government's Energy Saving Scheme.

Workshops

There are workshops located in Coolah and Coonabarabran which support the fleet across all depots. Each workshop is also equipped with a truck configured to cover mobile servicing and breakdowns.



SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY LIFE

Our communities are strong, resilient and inclusive, and provide support and assistance to those in need. We enjoy the freedoms that are afforded through our safe, friendly and caring community. Our local government area is a great place to raise a family and we value the contributions and participation of our younger people who are provided opportunities to support their development. Our diverse community is reflected through a wide range of arts and cultural activities, festivals and events.

People within the local government area have opportunities to participate in a diverse range of locally based sports catering for people of all ages, activity levels and interests. Our rural setting provides children with opportunities to play in and explore their natural environment and our communities have easy access to a wide range of active and passive recreational pursuits.

“To maintain a community where people are welcomed, healthy and connected, with opportunities to prosper in their individual pursuits. Active community participation is supported by cultural and recreational facilities and inclusive services that cater to all residents.”

Objective	Strategies
SC1 Develop opportunities and support mechanisms to ensure the local government area attracts and retains young people and families.	SC1.1 Encourage apprenticeship programs amongst employers throughout the local government area and ensure higher education facilities remain.
	SC1.2 Provide appropriate services to ensure that young people and families have access to appropriate support services such as childcare.
SC2 Our local government area is home to vibrant arts, and cultural life is promoted and supported as an essential aspect of community well-being.	SC2.1 Work with local communities to develop and expand local arts and cultural activities, programs and events.
	SC2.2 Partner with key stakeholders to deliver cultural facilities and services that reflect the interests of a culturally diverse community.
	SC2.3 Celebrate and conserve the diverse cultural heritage of the urban, village and rural communities.
SC3 A healthy and active community is supported by sport and recreational infrastructure	SC3.1 Identify and deliver sport and recreation facilities to service the community into the future.

	SC3.2 Encourage the development of local sports and recreation programs and activities that are inclusive of diverse ages, abilities and interests.
	SC3.3 Agencies work together to ensure National Parks and Reserves; waterways and public spaces are appropriately equipped and accessible for recreation activities.
	SC3.4 Identify opportunities for innovative adaptation and/or sharing of open space and infrastructure for recreational purposes as well as regular maintenance and upkeep of parks, reserves, swimming pools and other recreational assets to ensure availability of such assets to residents of the shire.
SC4 The long-term wellbeing of our community is supported by ongoing provision of high quality services, health and aged care, education, policing and public safety, child, youth and family support, environmental protection and land management.	SC4.1 Partner with key stakeholders to ensure the long-term provision and retention of high-quality services.
	SC4.2 Ensure that local emergency services are equipped, trained and prepared to manage natural disasters and critical incidents.
	SC4.3 All levels of government work together to ensure our roads are safe and functional.
	SC4.4 The future requirements for water and power are identified and adequately planned for by service providers.
	SC4.5 Partner with appropriate government agencies and transport providers to establish a range of local and regional public transport options.

SC5 Resource allocation and service provision reflects the needs of our ageing population.	SC5.1 Lobby appropriate agencies across all levels of government to increase the provision of services and resources for an ageing population.
	SC5.2 Develop access plans for towns to ensure mobility of ageing residents.
SC6 Our towns and villages are characterised by their attractiveness, appearance, safety and amenity.	SC6.1 Take enforcement action against owners of properties with unsafe, dangerous or unhealthy conditions.
	SC6.2 Ensure that town streets and landscapes are kept clean and tidy through regular street and amenities cleaning, as well as maintenance and upgrades to current facilities.
	SC6.3 Work with local communities to develop and implement improvement plans for our streetscapes, main streets and town entrances.

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED THIS TERM SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY LIFE

Building Control

Building and plumbing inspections were carried out by Council's Building Certifier and Contract Building Certifier throughout the term ensuring the current standard and legislative requirements have been met. Building Certifiers inspect buildings to certify that all building works meet the requirements of the National Construction Code. Council commenced using a new software program from Building Compliance Systems to assist in the certification of applications.

Community Care

Warrumbungle Community Care (WCC) provides a range of programs across the Shire to assist the frail aged, people with a disability and their carers. Programs include: Community Transport (vehicles and wheelchair accessible bus), Meals on Wheels, In-home Respite, Social Support and Home Maintenance. WCC is also an Approved Home Care Package provider (HCP), allowing WCC staff to provide in-home domestic and personal care individually tailored to client needs.

The range of service support people to continue to live independently in their own homes. Services are provided to over 900 clients across the Shire. These services are provided by a dedicated and passionate team of six permanent staff, five part-time/casual staff and a team of approximately 190 volunteers.

Throughout the term Warrumbungle Community Care have provided the following services, on average per year:

- 14,000 Meals

- 5,500 hours of Social Support
- 2,000 hours of Home Maintenance
- 300 hours of respite
- 7,500 community transport trips
- 4,000 Taxi Vouchers
- 7,000 Meal Vouchers

WCC is a multi-award-winning service, who proudly won the 2022 NSW Local Government Award for Excellence (pop: under 150,000) for their Meal Voucher Program.

WCC also host and coordinate the Warrumbungle Community Services EXPOs held in both ends of the Shire, and regular “Information Days” in all towns across the Shire, in partnership with several services.

Community Development

The role of Community Development Coordinator includes seeking funding on behalf of their Community Development Group and/or Progress Association, and other community groups, providing support to locally based community groups and organisations to coordinate and promote local events, and to be a point of contact for Council in local towns.

Throughout the term the Community Development Coordinators have sourced funding for programs, activities and infrastructure in our local towns.

A highlight of the Community Development program is the value-added support provided to other groups in each of their local communities to help them to also source funding to implement a range of activities, infrastructure or service delivery.

Children’s Services

Warrumbungle Children’s Services help support community life through the delivery of Early Childhood Education and Care and Out of School Hours (OOSH) Care with a number of services including Preschool, Long Day Care, After School Care, Vacation Care and Mobile Services.

Yuluwirri Kids Preschool and Long Day Care offers 27 preschool places and 30 long day care places, five days a week at the Bundulla Street campus in Coonabarabran while the Monkey Room Mobile Preschool offers 20 places on Mondays and Fridays at the Robertson Street campus.

Connect Five provides mobile play sessions as a pathway to preschool in ten communities across four Shires – Warrumbungle, Coonamble, Walgett and Gilgandra. Over the term Connect Five increased play sessions at Coonabarabran and added a new venue at Purlewaugh due to community demand. Connect Five also offers a mobile Toy Library providing toys and equipment for enhancing children’s learning and is an essential service for isolated and disadvantaged families.

Coonabarabran After School and Vacation Care (Coonabarabran OOSH) provides After School Care during school terms, five days a week from 3.00pm to 5.30pm caring for children who are attending school in years K– 6. Vacation Care is provided during the school holidays and implements a play-based program in line with the National Framework for School Aged Care in Australia.

Libraries

Macquarie Regional Library (MRL) provides a range of services and collections to the communities across the Warrumbungle local government area. The library provides services

and collections at each of the three (3) libraries of Coolah, Coonabarabran, Dunedoo, and limited services to Baradine, Binnaway and Mendooran.

In addition to regular borrowing and utilisation of the internet and other library facilities, local libraries offer a number of other activities in our local communities including early literacy programs like Storytime, book clubs, school holiday programs and technology programs for Seniors.

Community Services Connections

The Targeted Earlier Intervention (TEI) Program under the Department of Justice and Communities is directed at improving connections across the Shire and through a variety of services including Community Sector planning and coordination, community outreach, social participation and community support and advocacy.

Ongoing support and information sharing were coordinated by the Community Services Connections Officer through the Warrumbungle Interagency Committee and other networks including the Warrumbungle Domestic Violence Committee; School Holiday Planning Groups; Coona Yarn, Support, Connect, Suicide Prevention Network; and the Warrumbungle Local Drug Action Team (LDAT).

Highlights included community campaigns, events and activities such as Pride in the Park, NAIDOC Week, Little People Fun Day and Mental Health and Wellbeing Awareness campaigns. School Holiday programs and Youth Week activities were held every year over the term with highlights including Mobile Rock Climbing, Skateboarding Workshops, Bubble Soccer, Colour Runs and Roller Skating.

Aerodromes

There is one registered aerodrome at Coonabarabran, and unregistered aerodromes at Baradine and Coolah. Maintenance tasks include grass slashing, weekly inspections and maintenance of the bitumen surface on the runway at Coonabarabran.

Linemarking of the taxiways at Coonabarabran Aerodrome was undertaken in June 2024.

Emergency Services Management

The Local Emergency Management Committee meets throughout the year. The meetings were well attended for the term with representatives from NSW Police, Fire & Rescue NSW, Rural Fire Service, Ambulance, State Emergency Service, Volunteer Rescue Authority and from the Regional Emergency Management Committee.

Council participates in the Bush Fire Management Committee which prepares plans for managing bush fire risks. The Committee also documents fire-trails within the Shire, which assists agencies in applying for funding to maintain fire-trails within the National Parks and also State Forest areas.

Local Roads and Infrastructure

Council is responsible for maintaining and making improvements to 2,276km of local rural roads, of which 450km are sealed, and 385km of regional main roads. Council also undertakes roadworks under contract for TfNSW on 186km of state roads, including sections of the Golden Highway, Newell Highway and Castlereagh Highway.

Throughout this term improvements to the road network were undertaken through the following roadwork projects:

- Pavement widening on MR334 Coonabarabran Rd at Wattle Springs

- Flood Damage restoration works across the shire, this has been the most significant work over recent years
- Delivery of the Natural Disaster Pothole Repair Program. Council repaired 21,262 potholes between January and December 2023.
- Rehabilitation on Black Stump Way
- Replacement of Warkton Bridge
- Replacement of Black Gully Bridge

Medical Facilities

Buildings are owned in Coonabarabran, Dunedoo and Mendooran that are leased for provision of medical services. These premises were well maintained and meet the professional service standards expected by the medical practitioners working within them.

Public Halls

Public halls are owned in Baradine, Binnaway, Coolah, Coonabarabran, Dunedoo, Goolhi, Mendooran, and Purlewaugh. The Coonabarabran Sport and Recreation building is also categorised as a hall for reporting purposes.

The halls are available for hire and activities. The halls in Coolah, Baradine and Purlewaugh are managed by volunteer groups.

This term upgrades to the Coonabarabran Town Hall kitchen were completed and include:

- Upgrade with a commercial-grade stainless steel kitchen and a new commercial dishwasher.
- Renewal of flooring with commercial-grade flooring.
- Sealing, painting and new LED lighting.
- Sealing of the storage cupboard.
- New stainless-steel shelving for crockery.

Private Works

Council staff possess a range of skills and are able to offer services to customers on a commercial basis. These services or private works are undertaken on an agreed fee for service basis and in accordance with rates published in the Fees and Charges section of the operational plan. The types of private works undertaken by staff include roadworks, slashing, mowing and minor concrete works.

Throughout this term, Council has received \$95,508 income from private works.

Ovals and other Sporting Facilities

Across the Shire there is an oval complex in each town and there are tennis courts in Baradine, Binnaway, Coolah, Coonabarabran, and Mendooran. The predominant maintenance activities at each oval include irrigation, mowing, line marking and cleaning up after sporting events.

There were significant renewal and improvement projects throughout this term with the following projects being completed, some with funding assistance:

- Binnaway and Mendooran Tennis Courts resurfacing
- Fencing of the tennis courts at Coolah and Mendooran
- Mendooran Sports Ground Fence
- Renewal of Netball Courts Bowen Oval Coolah plus an additional new court
- Amenities replacement at Robertson Oval Dunedoo
- Upgrade and improvements to the amenities and change rooms at Baradine Oval
- Coonabarabran Pump Park

Pools

Public pool complexes are owned and operated in each of the six towns within the Shire.

All of the pools except for Coolah and Mendooran are over 50 years old and they are experiencing chronic maintenance issues particularly in relation to pumps, filter equipment and water leakage.

Council was successful in the Stronger Country Communities Fund Round 5 with an application for \$511,476 to complete Shire Wide Swimming Pool Upgrades. Works include installation of continuous disinfectant dosing systems at Baradine, Binnaway and Coonabarabran Pools, which is complete. Accompanying works including electrical upgrades at Baradine, Binnaway, Coonabarabran and Dunedoo were also funded and are complete. Works for 2024/25 include pump, plant and plant shed upgrades at Coolah, Coonabarabran and Dunedoo Pools as well as leak detection and repair at Dunedoo Pool.

Council received \$199,440 from the Resources for Regions Round 9 Program to complete a Masterplan, design and construction plans for the redevelopment of the Coonabarabran Pool.

The amenity block at Dunedoo Pool is scheduled for replacement this term.

Council trialled free entry to all pools for the 2023-24 season during limited supervision hours at the pool. A total of 8,061 attendances were recorded for the free entry sessions. Overall attendances increased by just over 10,000 compared to the previous year. The largest increase was recorded for Baradine Pool with an additional 4,641 patrons for the season.

Horticulture

Nineteen park areas are owned and maintained throughout the Shire and there are nine sets of playground equipment. Some of the maintenance activities in these areas include: grass cutting, watering, weeding, tree pruning, amenities cleaning and maintenance, monitoring and maintenance of playground equipment, and general horticultural tasks associated with numerous garden beds.

Stop and Play Park was constructed at Nielson Park Coonabarabran; Jump the Stump Skatepark was installed at Bowen Oval Coolah and a number of gardens in the John Street median at Coonabarabran were replenished.

Street Cleaning

A street sweeper operates in each of the six towns within the Shire. Working on a three-week cycle, gutters are swept in accordance with the following schedule: Coonabarabran three days a week, 0.5 days per week in Coolah and Dunedoo and 0.3 days per week in Baradine, Binnaway and Mendooran.

Public Amenities

There are 18 public toilets located throughout the Shire. The toilets generally open at dawn and close at dusk, however there are some toilets that are opened 24 hours 7 days a week. Cleaning varies from daily; three times per week; weekly; and six facilities are cleaned every day of the year.

Town Streets

There are six urban areas in the Warrumbungle Shire Local Government Area: Baradine, Binnaway, Coolah, Coonabarabran, Dunedoo, and Mendooran. Within these areas there is a total of 139km of roads. Some of the maintenance activities carried out for these roads include emptying of street bins, street garden and tree maintenance, stormwater infrastructure maintenance and cleaning, and road and footpath maintenance.

Resealing was completed on a number of town streets this period.

Village Streets

Budget allocation has been consistent throughout the term to allow for mowing, maintenance grading and tree maintenance was undertaken in the streets of villages across the Shire including Bugaldie, Kenebri, Merrygoen, Neilrex, and Ulamambri.



FINANCIAL REPORTING

The nature of Council, being a geographically large rural area with low population density, presents significant challenges for financial sustainability, including:

- A small population;
- Lack of economies of scale in operations and distance from major centres;
- A high reliance on grant funding;
- A significant infrastructure network of around 2,600km of roads, 6 pools, 6 libraries, over 100 bridges and bridge-sized culverts, and over 400 buildings and structures;
- Recruiting and retaining staff in a competitive market;
- Revenue restraints such as rate pegging;
- Cost shifting by other levels of government.

Council's overall financial position has improved over the term of Council. The Financial Statements for 2023/24 were not yet available at the time of drafting this report, and will be included in the 2023/24 Annual Report.

Income Statement	2021/22 (\$,000)	2022/23 (\$,000)	2023/24 (\$,000)
Income from Continuing Operations			(unaudited, subject to change)
Rates and annual charges	14,722	15,156	15,607
User charges and fees	6,411	9,323	10,955
Other revenues	2,894	2,155	2,205
Grants and contributions (operational)	18,080	25,765	23,766
Grants and contributions (capital)	9,499	6,680	10,160
Interest and investment revenue	267	1,047	2,316
Other Income	46	18	0
Net gain from disposal of assets	412	0	223
Total Income	52,331	60,144	65,232
Expenses from Continuing Operations			
Employee benefits and on- costs	14,086	15,921	16,376
Material and contracts	13,181	14,317	24,214
Borrowing costs	120	248	155
Depreciation and impairment	10,990	11,337	13,666
Other expenses	1,410	1,748	1,695
Net loss from disposal of assets	0	3,045	0
Total Expenditure	39,787	46,616	56,106
Surplus/(Deficit)	12,544	13,528	9,126
Net result before capital grants and contributions	3,045	6,848	(1,034)



Coonabarabran Administration Office

14-22 John Street
Coonabarabran NSW 2357

Phone: (02) 6849 2000

Coolah Administration Office

59 Binnia Street
Coolah NSW 2843

Phone: (02) 6378 5000

Mailing Address:

PO Box 191
Coonabarabran NSW 2357

Email: info@warrumbungle.nsw.gov.au