

Dungog Shire Council



End of Term
Report –
2018-2021

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DUNGOOG

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MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR



The term of this Council commenced in September 2017 and will end on the 4th December 2021. A total of 5 years and 4 months, the election having been postponed from September 2020 due to Covid-19.

Tracy Norman was elected Mayor in September, 2017 for a term of 2 years and was re-elected in September 2019 for a further 2 year term but resigned as Mayor in February, 2020 and from Council in April 2021.

I commenced as Mayor on 2nd of March 2020 and will have served 21 months when the term of council comes to an end on the 4th December 2021.

Who could have expected a council term to be so disrupted. April 2018 saw Coralie Nichols appointed as General Manager and February, 2020 saw her resign. This was immediately followed by the resignation of the Mayor and the beginning of the Covid-19 impact on Council and its operations.

Despite the impact of Covid-19 Council was able to appoint Gareth Curtis as General Manager commencing on 1 July, 2020 and stability became the norm for the balance of the term.

The term commenced with two dominant planning aspirations – the drafting of a Rural Lands Strategy and the re-drafting of the s. 94 contributions plan. The contributions plan has been completed and implemented but unfortunately due to a series of factors the Rural Lands Strategy has only now reached the stage of being placed on public exhibition. The approval by IPART of the Special Rate Variation in 2018, whilst not universally popular, has enabled Council to survive and has enabled an increased level of grants for roads due to council being in a position to make the contributions demanded by Government. The 2019 NSW State election saw a promise for funding to replace all 24 timber bridges in the shire for a total of \$18M. At this time there was also a revitalising of the funding for Clarence Town Road and further promises of funding for the Brig O'Johnston bridge at Clarence Town.

The last two years of the term of council has seen the funding promises come to fruition together with a \$25M Special Purpose Grant for roads enabling an unprecedented capital works programme of in excess of \$30M for 2020/2021 and it is anticipated that there will be a similar programme for 2021/2022 and beyond.

This Council with its very small rate base is dependent on grant funding to carry out the necessary upgrades to the extensive road network and to provide the facilities that make living in this Shire ever more desirable. The population already exceeds the government's 2040 projections, which is proof that it is already a great place to live.

John Connors
Mayor of Dungog

GENERAL MANAGER'S MESSAGE



This end of term report covers the period from 2017-18 to 2020-21, being current term of the outgoing elected Council. The Council was elected, after some delay by the NSW Government, in September 2017 and the current term expires at the next local government elections in December 2021.

The purpose of the end of term report is to highlight to the community, how the Council has progressed towards achieving the strategic goals of the Dungog Shire Community Strategic Plan 2030 (CSP).

The Council spent some time consulting with the communities across the shire in order to prepare the CSP, and most recently revised and endorsed an updated plan in December 2018.

The strategic report card approach we provide in this report will also help us plan for our next round of Integrated Planning and Reporting in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1993 and NSW Government Guidelines.

Some of the highlights from the last four years relate to improved delivery of services and capital works, with significant improvement in the Council's financial capacity, primarily due to the Special Rate Variation approved on 13 May 2019 and record levels of grant funding from all levels of government. All this while enduring uncertainty over amalgamations in the early term of the Council, to ongoing natural disasters bushfires and flooding, climate change impacts and a declared COVID-19 global pandemic

Council has progressed well in these circumstances and the community should have confidence that their overarching vision and strategic direction outlined in the CSP is being well progressed within the resources available to the Council.

Council also relies on our volunteers to help us manage our facilities and assets and to help deliver on the community's vision. I thank all those volunteers on our s355 management committees, Visitors information Centre and other local groups across the shire for giving up their time, for all their hard work and contributions to our community.

Some facts about improving sustainability and growth in the shire over the period from 2017-18 to 2020-21:

- Population growth of 6.2% from 9,101 residents to 9,664 (ABS 2020)
- 43.5% Increase in income from continuing operations from \$21.85M to \$31.36M
- 43% increase in grants and contributions from \$12.57M to \$17.95M
- 31.4% increase in development applications approved from 188 up to 247 annually

Our next cycle of planning for the future will focus on continuing to improve our services and working closely with the community and the new Council.

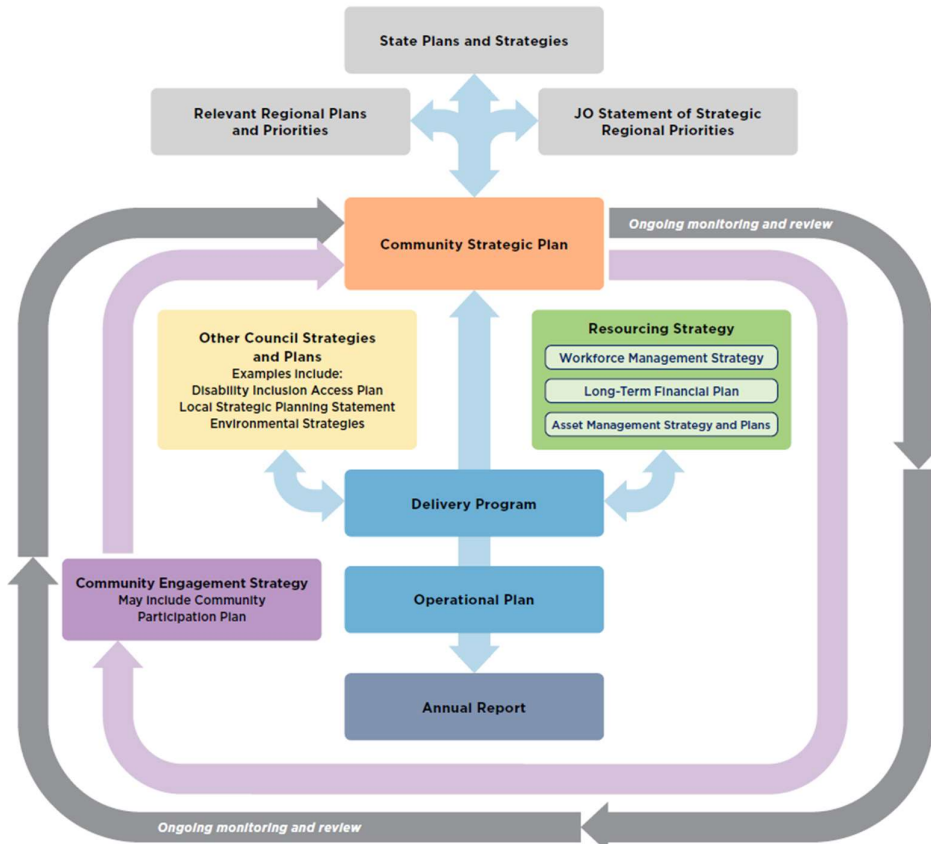
I am pleased to provide the end of term report of our outgoing Council's progress and achievements, and look forward to moving into the next round of integrated planning and reporting.

Gareth Curtis
General Manager

CONTEXT OF THE END OF TERM REPORT

The Office of Local Government (OLG) requires an End of Term report to be tabled at the last meeting of the outgoing Council and included in the Annual Report due 30 November in the year in which an ordinary local government election is held.

To help understand the context of the report, the updated Integrated Planning and Reporting framework diagram is provided below. The End of Term report is considered part of the *annual report* and is not specifically included in the framework diagram by OLG.



Reference: Office of Local Government, IPR Handbook 2021

The End of Term report provides an update to the community on how Council has progressed towards achieving the *strategic goals* of the Dungog Shire Council Community Strategic Plan 2030.

The End of Term Report is a higher level strategic report, which does not provide a detailed report on the operational plan and delivery program actions. The progress against the operational actions are reported separately at least every 6 months to Council and align with Council's financial update reports each quarter.

This report provides the strategic goals identified in the CSP 2030 and updates progress against the indicators. It should be clear that the report is about progress and achievement –towards community aspirations leading up to 2030.

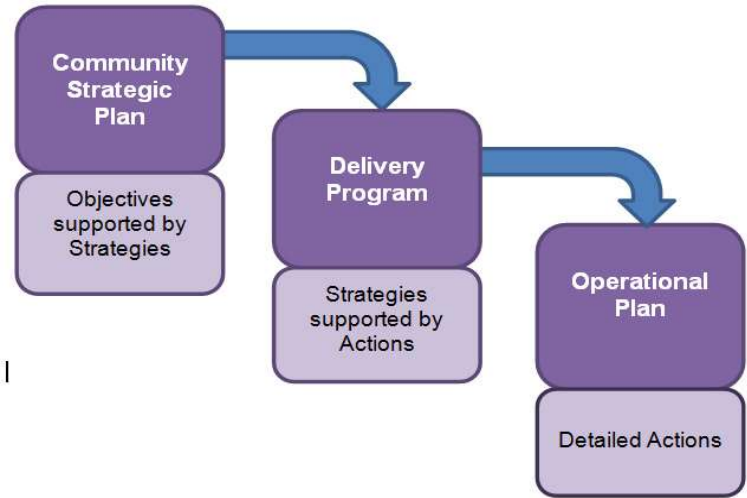
This End of Term report will be the last in the current format under the outgoing IPR Guidelines. Under the new guidelines, the end of the term of the incoming Council (from the December 2021 elections), will be replaced with a "State of the Shire" report. The incoming Council elected in December 2021 will have a term of 2 years and 9 months only. The new Guidelines require the State of the Shire report to be presented at the second meeting of the new Council elected in September 2025.

DUNGOG SHIRE COUNCIL – COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN 2030

The Office of Local Government Integrated Planning and Reporting Handbook for Local Government 2013 describes the Community Strategic Plan as:

The Community Strategic Plan sits above all other council plans and policies in the planning hierarchy. The purpose of the Plan is to identify the community’s main priorities and aspirations for the future, and plan strategies to achieve them. These strategies will take into consideration the issues and pressures that may affect the community and the level of resources that will realistically be available. While a council has a custodial role in initiating, preparing and maintaining the Community Strategic Plan on behalf of the local government area, it is not wholly responsible for its implementation. Other partners, such as state agencies and community groups may also be engaged in delivering the long term objectives of the Plan

The updated NSW Governments Integrated Planning and Reporting framework outlines the hierarchical relationship between the CSP, Delivery Program and Operational Plan in the following diagram:



The **Dungog Shire Council Community Strategic Plan 2030** (CSP2030) was first endorsed by Council on 27 June 2012. It was revised on 28 June 2018 and again revised, finalised and endorsed by Council on 19 December 2018.

The engagement component of the current CSP2030 involved a community survey and a series of community workshops held in Gresford, Clarence Town, Dungog and Paterson, as well as a Business and Government Forum. Staff were also consulted during the development of the CSP2030. Results of the community engagement are published on Council’s website.

Following consultation and preparation of the CSP2030, there were seven (7) identified strategic themes and related goals to address the community’s aspirations for the Shire.

The following table outlines each of the seven (7) strategic themes and related goals:

Strategic Theme	Goal
1. The Natural Environment	The health of our natural environment and biodiversity is preserved and enhanced
2. Our Local Economy	Our economy is strong, innovative and sustainable, providing employment opportunities and ease of access to goods and services
3. Community and Culture	We enjoy a safe supportive community characterised by vibrant cultural life and a strong sense of local heritage
4. Rural and Urban Development	Growth is achieved through a balanced mix of development which acknowledges our unique scenic qualities, rural amenity and country lifestyle
5. Recreation and Open Space	Access to a range of places, activities and facilities which cater for diverse sporting and recreational interests
6. Public Infrastructure and Services	Our community is supported by safe, functional, accessible and well maintained infrastructure and effective local and regional transport networks.
7. Governance and Finance	Dungog Shire Council is recognised for strong community leadership, financial sustainability and ethical, accountable and responsive governance




In the CSP2030, each of the seven strategic themes and goals are supported by multiple strategies and measured by the indicators of success. This report will outline our progress against those indicators from 2017/18 to 2020/21 in an effort to show progress against each of the strategic themes and goals.

HOW TO READ OUR PROGRESS REPORT

During the development and endorsement of the CSP2030, strategic indicators were included to allow progress to be measured over the period of the elected Council.

For each of the seven (7) strategic themes and goals, a series of endorsed strategic indicators has been included in a table as a strategic “report card”. Progress updates are provided and an indicator of progress towards or away from the community’s desired outcomes is provided. Where there has been a maintaining of existing approaches, a blue dash is provided.

Indicators of our progress towards the strategic goals of CSP2030 are represented by the following icons:

Progress against strategic indicator and community desired outcomes	Icon
Moving towards achieving outcomes and goals	
Maintaining our current position	
Moving away from achieving outcomes and goals	

Our Progress – 1. Natural Environment


Goal: The health of our natural environment and biodiversity is preserved and enhanced.


Community Priorities (outcomes) identified during consultation:



- The potential impacts of climate change on our natural environment need to be monitored and addressed.
- Weeds and pest animals need to be effectively managed and their impacts on our local area minimised.
- Natural assets in our Shire need careful management to protect them from degradation arising from human activity.
- Appropriate access to our local national parks, forests and waterways needs to be maintained.


Strategies developed by Council to address the Community priorities and goal:


- Ensure that appropriate agencies at all levels are involved in addressing issues surrounding climate change.
- Manage public access and use of natural areas to enhance our environmental experience and to preserve and promote ecological values.
- Support and manage the responsible use of resources including the minimization of waste and the promotion of recycling practices in homes, work places, development sites and public places.
- Raise public awareness of the responsibilities of landholders regarding management of land.
- Involve the community in maintaining and enhancing environmental health.
- Ensure that Dungog Shire Council's policies and procedures adequately protect and enhance the Shire's natural environment and biodiversity.
- Ensure that local waterways and riparian areas in the Shire are clean and healthy.
- Manage and reduce the impact of pest animals on the natural environment.
- Ensure that appropriate regulatory and enforcement agencies are proactive in addressing environmental issues in our Shire.
- Maintain a strong regional approach to the management of our natural environment

Indicators of success	Progress Update	Progress towards goals
National Parks, State Forests and public recreation areas in our region are accessible and well managed.	<p>In 2018 4010km², or 17.8% of the Dungog Shire LGA area, was reserved as protected areas- these include national parks, Forestry, Nature Reserves and Conservation areas. (ABS 2021).Between 2016 and 2018 -156 hectares was added as protected areas in Dungog Shire LGA, mainly consisting of 151 hectares added to National Park estates.</p> <p>NSW State Forests are managed for harvesting, but can contain protected areas such as the Mount Allyn Flora Reserve. In 2018/19 121km² of land in Dungog Shire LGA was managed as State Forest Area (Forestry Corporation 2020) and provides a form of managed habitat.</p> <p>Council works in partnership with the managers of protected areas in the areas of emergency management, waste disposal and connectivity of the road network, ensuring that these areas are accessible.</p>	

<p>We enjoy our natural environment for its clean air, healthy rivers and waterways and large tracts of bushland.</p>	<p>While the Hunter catchment area was provided with a good-fair rating condition in 2008 many of the data assessment points were not located within Dungog Shire LGA making assessment of river health in the LGA difficult. It is therefore difficult to assess ongoing river health. The number of algal red alerts significantly increased in 2017/18 to 2019/20 with Lostock Reservoir and the Williams River at Clarence Town being sites with higher numbers of alerts. During the period, the following projects were delivered aimed at improving river and catchment quality-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Onsite sewage management program <p>From 2016/17 to 2020/21 an average of 126 systems were inspected each year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dairy Improvement project <p>HWC collaborated with 13 dairy facilities in the Williams River catchment to improve water quality from operational practices. Over \$1 million was invested realising the capture of over 18.5 tonnes of nitrogen and 4.3 tonnes of phosphorous that would have entered the river system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River Management advocacy <p>Council resolved in 2020 to advocate for more structured management of water catchments, or the formation of an overarching agency for catchment management but has received no correspondence from the NSW Premier regarding this request.</p> <p><u>Hunter Catchment contribution projects</u></p> <p>The Hunter Catchment Contributions are collected from a levy on rateable land within the Hunter River catchment. The funds collected are used for projects to improve the catchment. Hunter LLS have undertaken erosion management and waterway rehabilitation within Dungog Shire LGA including projects at Bedding Down Creek at Alison and the Williams River at Glen William.</p>	
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<p>Waste is minimised and effectively managed across the Shire.</p>	<p>In Dungog Shire LGA the total amount of waste collected or received by Council annually has increased by 22.8% from 2016/17 to 2019/20. In 2019/20 over 6700 tonnes of waste was collected by Council with almost 5000 tonnes (73% of total waste) landfilled.</p> <p>The total tonnage of waste diverted from landfill in Dungog Shire LGA has decreased from 1979t in 2016/17 to 1829t in 2019/20.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the above several new waste diversion streams were made available to the community during the period including soft plastics and e-waste along with the introduction of a disposable coffee cup rescue network. A return and earn kiosk was also established in Dungog to accept eligible drink containers- aimed at promoting recycling and reducing litter.</p> <p>Between 2017 and 2020 Council has conducted 12 waste education workshops with schools and the community.</p>	
<p>Local land holders and appropriate agencies co-operate in effectively managing weeds and pest animals across the Shire.</p>	<p>In the past ten years Council has undertaken an average of 249 property inspections annually with an increased average of 272 inspections/year from 2017-2021 along with the treatment of an average of 552km of roadsides per year. This treatment program is undertaken through a combination of grant funding through the NSW Weeds Action Program, administrated by Department of Primary Industries, and Council operational funds in a cooperative partnership.</p> <p>During the period Council was an active stakeholder and member on the Hunter Weeds Advisory Committee, involved in the establishment of the Hunter Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan 2017-2022.</p> <p>Councils own Local Biosecurity and Weed Management committee, a partnership between Council, agencies and landholders met on 7 occasions and delivered 3 field days in association with community groups.</p> <p>Pest animal control programs are being undertaken across Dungog Shire LGA with coordination by Hunter LLS under the Hunter Regional Strategic Pest</p>	

	<p>Animal Management Plan 2018-2023 (LLS 2018). These control programs</p> <p>have been undertaken across several land tenures including each of the National Parks in the LGA.</p> <p>A multi-outcome project is also being undertaken with private landholders in the Mount Breckin area of Dungog Shire LGA.</p>	
<p>There is a reduction in the Shire's carbon footprint and measured energy and water usage.</p>	<p>In Dungog Shire the agricultural sector was the highest energy consumer from 2016-2019. However, the agricultural sector in the LGA has seen a decline in emissions from 41% of total LGA emissions in 2016 to 34% in 2019.</p> <p>Transport related emissions have risen from 31% of total LGA emissions in 2016 to 34% in 2019.</p> <p>Electricity consumption within the LGA steadily increased by 4.75% from 2013/14 to 2016/17, but subsequently decreased since, particularly between 2018/19 and 2019/20 realising a reduction in our overall carbon footprint.</p> <p>Renewable energy source capacity, such as solar energy, has significantly increased in Dungog Shire LGA since 2014. The number of solar installations has increased from 541 in 2014 to 1445 by the end of 2020, a 166% increase in the number of installations.</p> <p>The annual energy export to the grid has increased from 1524MWh in 2013/14 to 4650MWh in 2019/20, a 205% increase in exported energy. The energy exported to the grid has resulted in the equivalent reduction of 3295t of CO2 emissions in 2019/20 and 13899t of CO2 emissions since 2013/14.</p> <p>From 2016-2019 annual greenhouse gas emission has decreased by almost 7.5% within the LGA.</p> <p>In 2019/20 total water consumption in Dungog Shire LGA was 514839kL. Total water consumption in Dungog Shire LGA increased from 2014/15 to 2017/18 by nearly 20%. However, LGA-wide water consumption has decreased since 2017/18 to a level that is 0.4% less than the 2014/15 consumption level.</p> <p>This result is likely attributable to drought conditions and in response to the introduction of water restrictions by HWC during a major portion of the period.</p>	

<p>Communities across the Shire are well educated in practical measures to achieve sustainable living.</p>	<p>Sustainable Communities Awards In 2019 Dungog was presented with six awards in the Keep Australia Beautiful NSW Sustainable Communities Tidy Towns Awards including Dungog being named the overall winner for towns between 200-6000 pop. These awards were in the areas of waste minimisation, circular economy, habitat conservation , Waterways Protection and community Spirit.</p> <p>Landcare Council has entered a memorandum of understanding with Hunter Region Landcare to undertake bush regeneration projects at Council owned/managed sites. Three Landcare groups are active in Dungog Shire</p> <p>Plastic Free Dungog The Plastic Free Dungog initiative, in partnership with Dungog Shire council, saw soft plastics recycling introduced in 2017 resulting in over 20 tonnes of soft plastics being diverted from landfill so far. In 2019, Dungog became Australia and the World's 1st take away coffee Cup Rescue town. Over 200kg of coffee and drink cups and lids have been collected by the Cup Rescue and upcycled into 'circular economy' products that come back into the community – such as carpark bump stops, kerbing, bike rails and reusable coffee cup. The Plastic Free Dungog initiative has enjoyed strong community and local industry support, with over 45 local businesses awarded a Blue Planet or Green Planet Status for their commitment to 'no more single use plastics' and efforts in recycling/upcycling responsible/sustainable best practice. The commitment of groups like Plastic Free Dungog have not only changed the behaviour of their local communities, but have lead to wider political and legislative change with the NSW State Government announcing the phase out of single use plastics in NSW in their 40 year waste strategy.</p> <p>Paterson Allyn Williams Science Hub The Patterson Allyn Williams Science Hub delivers year-round science focused events and activities that aim to engage the Dungog Shire community with STEM issues and build a deeper understanding of how science relates to the environment and other aspects of life.</p>	
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Our Progress – 2. Our Local Economy

Goal: Our economy is strong, innovative and sustainable, providing employment opportunities and ease of access to goods and services










Community Priorities (outcomes) identified during consultation:

- Economic and agricultural diversity across our Shire needs to be expanded.
- Local employment opportunities need to be explored.
- Increase awareness of Dungog Shire as a tourism destination for visitors.
- Promote and support a range of tourist accommodation and facilities.
- Extend the day and overnight stay visitation to the Dungog Shire so as to enhance visitor expenditure supporting a range of infrastructure including restaurants, cafes, accommodation, and retail all which actively contribute to developing liveable communities.
- Land needs to be identified and appropriately zoned by Dungog Shire Council for industrial growth.
- We need to focus on remaining competitive with our regional neighbours in attracting businesses, investors and workers to the Shire.
- Our community needs to be supported by comprehensive telecommunications infrastructure including mobile and internet services.
- Growing local business confidence and capacity is important.

Strategies developed by Council to address the Community priorities and goal:

- Ensure that economic growth and expansion across the Shire is supported by improvement of local public and private infrastructure.
- Ensure that appropriate public and private sector agencies and businesses work co-operatively to strengthen and expand the Shire's economic base.
- Promote the Shire as a good location for the establishment of innovative, small to medium scale, sustainable businesses.
- Dungog Shire Council to work closely with relevant Chambers of Commerce and Progress Associations to promote and share best business practice, offer platforms to lobby government on behalf of business where required, undertake advocacy for education, transport and health, make representation to government on critical Shire issues, and seek out grant and other funding opportunities.
- Work with Dungog Regional Tourism to develop a strategic approach to growing visitor numbers across the Shire
- Encourage a *'buy local – sell local'* approach to goods and services.
- Develop a unique brand, identity and value proposition for the Dungog Shire to promote local economic growth and tourism development.

- Identify and develop in partnership with local business operators, local tourism opportunities with a focus on overnight stay visitors to the Shire.
- Improve the availability of telecommunications infrastructure to our communities and visitors.

Indicators of success	Progress Update	Progress towards goals
Our local commercial and retail areas are diverse and well patronised.	The Township of Dungog in particular has seen a surge in patronage and the diversity of retail businesses since 2017.	
There is a wide range of goods and services available locally.	The diversity of goods and services has similarly increased since 2017, with important gains in arts and culture, adventure tourism and retail sectors.	
The Shire has a well-recognised identity and brand that drives economic outcomes.	Since 2017, the Shire identity and brand has gained stronger recognition with investors, government and visitors, largely due to the success generated by the Dungog Common.	
Our local agricultural sector is innovative, healthy and well supported.	The agricultural sector remains the Shire's largest employment sector, supporting some 421 jobs. Recent beef price increases have favoured the sector, mitigating some of the losses sustained in the dairy market.	
Tourism is a significant contributor to our local economy.	Tourism continues to be a significant and growing contributor to our local economy, supporting an estimated 179 jobs or 8.1% of the employment sector in 2019.	
There is increased visitor expenditure in Dungog Shire.	The increase in visitor numbers since 2017 have had a positive flow through effect on retail and tourism sectors businesses.	
There are increased local employment opportunities.	New employment opportunities have been created in the Shire since 2017 as a result of the arrival of new, self-employed residents and the set-up of several new businesses. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data, the number of jobs in the shire has increased from 6130 (2016 Census) to 6826 in 2018, an increase of approximately 11.3% during that period.	
Communities across the Shire enjoy access to good quality telecommunications infrastructure.	The telecommunication infrastructure across the Shire has remained largely unchanged since 2017, with demands for improved services increasing.	
Our unemployment rate in the Shire remains lower than 5.5% of the working population.	There are no updated statistics to indicate Dungog Shires current unemployment rate. This is reported each census with 2016 having recorded a figure of 5.5% according to Abs Data.	

Our Progress – 3. Community & Culture

Goal: We enjoy a safe supportive community characterised by vibrant cultural life and a strong sense of local heritage







Community Priorities (outcomes) identified during consultation:

- Public involvement in community activities including volunteering needs to be maintained and encouraged.
- Partner with key stakeholders (schools, not-for-profit organisations, membership clubs etc.) in the Dungog Shire, and relevant State Government agencies to develop effective and appropriate local responses to underlying social issues.
- Planning and provision of local community services and facilities need to reflect population growth, change and diversity.
- Embrace and cater for an ageing population.
- There needs to be greater community awareness of local Aboriginal heritage and culture.
- Young people in our community would benefit from a greater involvement in an improved range of age-appropriate facilities and events.
- Build community resilience and enhance preparedness for natural disasters and rapid onset events within the Shire
- Our service provision and planning needs to account for the distinctiveness of our towns and villages.
- Local European and Indigenous heritage and history need to be preserved and promoted.
- Recognise the value of celebrating and building the Shire's creative and cultural communities to enhance community wellbeing and identity.
- Dungog Shire Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan embraces the inclusion of people with a disability in all aspects of community life. We are committed to creating a more inclusive and welcoming community for people with a disability.

Strategies developed by Council to address the Community priorities and goal:

- Continue to develop programs/initiatives to welcome and support new residents into the Shire.
- Create options for community participation through volunteerism.
- Acknowledge and celebrate the contribution volunteers make to the Dungog Shire.
- Raise public awareness of local activities and events that provide a foundation for community building
- Develop and initiate opportunities for greater participation of young people in local community activities.
- Foster the cohesiveness of local community groups.
- Enhance resident capacity to prepare for and withstand the effects of natural disasters and rapid onset events within the Shire.
- Seek external funding from State and Federal Government to assist with better engagement and participation by young people in the Dungog Shire.

- Foster and support the cultural life of the Shire.
- Ensure that there are locally available services and facilities to cater for people of all ages.
- Ensure that community health and safety issues are identified and addressed.
- Assist community organisations to secure funding and other resources.

Indicators of success	Progress Update	Progress towards goals
There is a high level of local public participation in community activities and events	Through activation spaces created inclusion for participation in community based activities and events, collaboratively working together with local businesses/creative artists for safe community connections that are used both during the day and night	
Communities within the Dungog Shire are well connected through social, sporting and cultural activities and a unifying Shire identity	In partnerships with local sporting/service organisations have delivered improvements in playgrounds, shade shelters, public seating and ground facilities to encourage and support active participations in local communities both passive recreation and structured activities	
There is strong community awareness of local heritage, history and culture	Identifying the priority to develop culture plan through “conversations” with local shire organisations. Working with local shire schools to develop sense of community, history and culture. This will also progress on the development of Council’s shire wide Cultural Plan funding identified for delivery in the next financial year.	
Community needs are addressed through local availability of appropriate facilities and services	Council’s commitment to improved infrastructure to support accessibility and inclusion. Providing ongoing support/infrastructure for community groups including shire preschools, senior citizens and local community organisations	
Young people form an integral part of community life across the Shire.	Youth networks established through specific projects eg mural projects in 2 shire locations– developing links to local schools and unengaged youth	
Success in securing funding/grants from State and Federal Government to assist with better planning and the provision of community and cultural programs/events in Dungog Shire.	Over the period form 2017/18 to 2020/21, Council has secured a total of \$54.291M in federal and state funded grants. The trend is increasing over time which has also been reflected in Council audited financial statements for the period.	

Our Progress – 4. Rural & Urban Development



Goal: Growth is achieved through a balanced mix of development which acknowledges our unique scenic qualities, rural amenity and country lifestyle



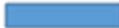


Community Priorities (outcomes) identified during consultation:


- Our local area would benefit from market driven allocation of more industrial/employment land.
- Sufficient local land holdings need to be preserved to sustain viable agricultural activities.
- Local land use planning needs to ensure the retention of the character of the area whilst encouraging ecologically sustainable development.
- A range of housing options across the Shire, including aged and affordable housing, need to be encouraged and supported.

Strategies developed by Council to address the Community priorities and goal:

- Ensure that there is adequate land supply to accommodate future expected population growth.
- Maintain a long term planning approach that caters for diversity and choice in rural and village living.
- Ensure the availability of land to facilitate commercial and industrial growth.
- Ensure that our land use planning for the Shire acknowledges the importance of our rural character and agricultural activities.
- Ensure the heritage and streetscapes of our villages are preserved and enhanced and our town entrances are signposted.

Indicators of success	Progress Update	Progress towards goals
Our rural amenity and lifestyle is retained	The Dungog Shire Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) was adopted by Council in July 2020. The LSPS provides a long-term vision for the future of the Dungog LGA, setting out clear planning priorities based on themes identified by the community. The LSPS reinforces the need to balance development and promote sustainability to maintain rural amenity and lifestyle. The objectives of the Dungog Local Environmental Plan also continue to promote rural amenity within the rural, village and environmental land use zones when assessing development applications.	
We have sustainable population growth across the Shire	ABS Data indicates the resident population has increased from 9101 (2016) to 9664 (2020) or 6.2%. This is a sustainable rate of growth The population is not declining which	

	is a common feature of smaller rural communities.	
Population growth and diversity is consolidated around our existing urban centres	Subdivision patterns indicate growth is occurring in areas appropriately zoned closer to existing centres, including Vacy, Gresford and particularly Clarence Town.	
There are a range of housing options available across the shire	<p>Range of dwelling types approved include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dwelling houses (new construction) • Alterations and additions • Change of use of existing building to a dwelling • Dual occupancy • Manufactured homes • Secondary dwellings • Temporary occupation of sheds • Boarding house <p>Single dwellings (new construction) continues to be the dominant form of housing (288 new dwellings) making up approx. 66% of all housing DA's during the 2016/17 to 2020/21 period. Alterations and additions to existing dwellings accounted for approx. 18% of housing DA's, followed by change of use to dwellings (4.7%), dual occupancy (4%), manufactured dwellings (3.5%), secondary dwellings (2.3%) and temporary occupation of sheds and boarding houses making up less than 1% of the approvals. It is notable that no DA's for dedicated aged care housing have been received during the period.</p>	 
Our main streets and town entrances are attractive and well maintained	<p>Council has sought grant funds successfully to update the main street of Dungog. Works included road rehabilitation, kerb and gutter, landscaping and streetscape improvements totalling \$2.7M.</p> <p>In addition, works have also been undertaken on Durham Road, Gresford and Park Street in East Gresford with further works proposed in 2022.</p>	
The importance of local agricultural activity is recognised in Council's strategic planning documents and decision-making	<p>Council's Rural Lands Strategy (RLS) development commenced in the period and progressed towards finalisation. The project commenced in 2019/20 with a four (4) stage process:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rural Issues Paper 2. Policy Directions Paper 3. Draft Rural Lands Strategy 4. Final Rural Lands Strategy. <p>A steering committee consisting of local residents, land owners and councillors was also formed. This resulted in the Dungog Rural Lands Strategy Policy Directions</p>	

	<p>Paper being exhibited and adopted by Council in 2020.</p> <p>The draft RLS was finalised for exhibition in 2021 and the exhibition is being carried out in the 2021/22 financial year.</p> <p>The RLS was jointly funded by Council (\$50,000), NSW DPIE (x4) and Hunter Water (\$X) The policy direction [paper was released for public comment.</p> <p>The RLS is progressing however has taken some time and has been delayed by resourcing limitations.</p> <p>The current planning framework and LEP remain in place to guide development however future trends and planning amendments to the framework will only occur after adoption of the final RLS.</p>	
<p>Local land use planning that is flexible and reflects local needs and supports diverse activities including population growth, industry needs and a range of agricultural activities.</p>	<p>Development application data indicates a broad range of development has occurred across the shire from 2017/18 to 2020/21. The number of development applications approved across the shire in 2017/18 was 188 and in 2020/21 was 247. Council does process significantly larger volumes of development applications than the group 10 average in NSW. The group 10 council average in 2017/18 was 95 and figures are not available for the data from 2020/21 from the NSW DPIE for Group 10 Council's.</p> <p>Approvals are a general indicator that development meets the strategic goals of Council's local Environmental Plan (LEP).</p> <p>Sustainable population growth of 6.2% between the 2016 census and 2020 also indicates the planning framework supports sustainable population growth and development activity.</p> <p>Business data from ABS indicates the number of business has increased variably in the 4 year period from 1036 in 2017 to 1053 in 2020, however the trend is increasing.</p> <p>An independent survey of users of the planning service at Council, indicated 88% satisfaction rating with planning staff and 91% satisfaction rating with the building surveying staff at Council. This indicates good progress towards the community's goal and the strategic indicators.</p>	

Our Progress – 5. Recreation & Open Space


Goal: Access to a range of places, activities and facilities which cater for diverse sporting and recreational interests



Community Priorities (outcomes) identified during consultation:




- Planning and management of local parklands and recreational facilities needs to reflect community growth and change across the Shire.
- Access to and within areas of our local national parks and forests needs to be appropriately managed and expanded
- Ensure that our local parks, sporting and recreation facilities are safe and well maintained.

Strategies developed by Council to address the Community priorities and goal

- Apply for a Special Rate Variation to the NSW Government via the IP&R process with the specific purpose of creating general revenue opportunities for Dungog Shire Council to fund recreational maintenance and upgrades in the Shire.
- Seek external funding from State and Federal Governments to assist with better planning and the provision of recreational and open space areas in Dungog Shire.
- Ensure that local recreational and sporting facilities reflect the needs and interests of a growing community.
- Ensure that sporting and recreational spaces are well maintained and provide appropriate facilities and amenities for locals and visitors.
- Review the provision of improved camping and caravan facilities throughout the Shire.
- Encourage and support a diversity of sporting and recreational activities throughout the Shire.
- Ensure that appropriate access to public land is maintained.
- Liaise with appropriate agencies to ensure that recreational areas including national parks, forests and waterways are accessible and well cared for.

Indicators of success	Progress Update	Progress towards goals
Community sporting and recreation needs are addressed through provision of appropriate local facilities and services	During the five year period, Council has provided a number of new or upgraded sport or recreation facilities including:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An accessible sports building including amenities and canteens at Clarence Town; • Netball Courts in Dungog; • Multipurpose court at Paterson Sportsground; • Improvements to the facilities at Bennett Park; • Improved lighting at:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Reg Ford Oval o Clarence Town Reserve; 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Dungog Showground o Dungog Netball Courts <p>Grant funding has also been received for:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new sports facility building at the Gresford Sportsground; • Improvements to the Bennett Park surface and internal fencing. <p>Asset Management Plans were reviewed and updated in 2018 with a further review scheduled for 2022.</p> <p>A new section 7.11 Development Contributions Plan has been developed and adopted by Council identifying key infrastructure requirements.</p> <p>A Recreation and Open Space Plan will be developed in 2022.</p>	
<p>Community health is enhanced through high levels of participation in local sporting and recreational activities</p>	<p>Participation in organised sporting activities has generally increased throughout the Shire. In particular, there has been noted female participation in sports such as Ladies League Tag, Cricket and Soccer.</p> <p>Grant applications and new facilities have been designed to incorporate accessibility and gender friendly standards.</p>	
<p>Local sporting and recreational facilities and areas are safe and widely accessible and have well maintained infrastructure and amenities</p>	<p>During the five year period, Council has provided a number of new or upgraded sport or recreation facilities including:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An accessible sports building including amenities and canteens at Clarence Town; • Netball Courts in Dungog; • Multipurpose court at Paterson Sportsground; • Improvements to the facilities at Bennett Park; • Improved lighting at:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Reg Ford Oval o Clarence Town Reserve; o Dungog Showground o Dungog Netball Courts <p>Grant funding has also been received for:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new sports facility building at the Gresford Sportsground; • Improvements to the Bennett Park surface and internal fencing. <p>Grant applications and new facilities have been designed to incorporate accessibility and gender friendly standards.</p> <p>Asset Management Plans were reviewed and updated in 2018 with a further review scheduled for 2022.</p>	

	<p>A new section 7.11 Development Contributions Plan has been developed and adopted by Council identifying key infrastructure requirements.</p> <p>A Recreation and Open Space Plan will be developed in 2022.</p>	
Increased visitation in national parks, state forests and private lands.	<p>Tourism continues to be a significant and growing contributor to our local economy, supporting an estimated 179 jobs or 8.1% of the employment sector in 2019. Anecdotal information indicates increased visitation for recreation and nature based tourism is occurring, with the Dungog Common being a significant attractor prior to COVID-19 restrictions coming into force.</p> <p>Visitation data is not available from state agencies at this time and has been impacted by the COVID1-19 restrictions.</p>	
Successful application for a Special Rate Variation.	<p>On 13 May 2019 the Independent Pricing & Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) provided partial approval of Council's special rate variation (SRV) application.</p> <p>Further detail is provided in the Finance and Governance Progress report.</p>	
Success in securing funding/grants from State and Federal Government to assist with better the planning and provision of recreational and open space areas in Dungog Shire.	<p>Over the period form 2017/18 to 2020/21, Council has secured a total of \$54.291M in federal and state funded grants. The trend is increasing over time which has also been reflected in Council audited financial statements for the period.</p>	

Our Progress – 6. Public Infrastructure & Services



Goal: Our community is supported by safe, functional, accessible and well maintained infrastructure and effective local and regional transport networks.




Community Priorities (outcomes) identified during consultation:

- The long term retention and enhancement of local services provided by Governments at all levels needs to be ensured (eg. Health, Rail, Education, and Policing).
- Our road and bridge network is safe, well maintained and able to provide appropriate vehicular access across the Shire
- Public facilities across the shire need to be provided and maintained to an appropriate standard.
- The ongoing provision of local health and medical facilities needs to reflect the requirements of our community including our ageing population.
- Appropriate public transport options are needed to connect us locally and regionally.
- Our community would benefit from easier access to post-secondary education and training opportunities.

Strategies developed by Council to address the Community priorities and goal:

- Improve the safety and functionality of our road network.
- Ensure a local police presence throughout the Shire.
- Ensure that our communities have access to quality educational institutions and health and social services/facilities.
- Ensure our local bridge network is safe and able to accommodate heavy vehicle load requirements
- Improve the provision of transport services to communities within the Shire.
- Ensure that community assets, facilities and public infrastructure are planned for, maintained and improved to a reasonable standard.
- Ensure that the provision of public infrastructure and services reflect the needs of a growing and changing population.
- Advocate for improved rail services/timetables for the Dungog Shire
- Seek external funding from State and Federal Government to assist with better planning and provision of public infrastructure in the Dungog Shire.
- Apply for a Special Rate Variation to the NSW Government via the IP&R process with the specific purpose of creating general revenue opportunities for Dungog Shire Council to fund public infrastructure maintenance and upgrades in the Shire, with a keen focus on the road and bridge network.

Indicators of success	Progress Update	Progress towards goals
<p>The road network across the Shire is safe and well maintained</p>	<p>Council has secured significant grant funding for the various road networks and bridges over the past 5 years including:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$13.3M for Clarence Town Road; • \$25M for various Regional Rural and Local Roads scheduled to commence in 2022; • Over \$23M for timber bridge replacements; • \$6.6M for local roads under Fixing Local Roads program; <p>As a result of the above and the Special Rate Variation, Council's Road & Bridge Capital Expenditures have increased as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2017/2018 - \$6.5M • 2018/2019 - \$8.7M • 2019/2020 - \$9.4M • 2020/2021 - \$13.0M • 2021/2022 - \$31M (projected) <p>One section of the Clarence Town Road upgrade is complete with a further section currently under construction.</p> <p>Deeds are being finalised for the \$25M road rehabilitation funds.</p> <p>Three bridges are currently under construction with further tenders released for other structures.</p> <p>Works have commenced on the four (4) Fixing Local Roads projects.</p>	
<p>Local public facilities and infrastructure caters for the needs of the Shire and is appropriately maintained and improved</p>	<p>During the five year period, Council has provided a number of new or upgraded facilities including:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An accessible sports building including amenities and canteens at Clarence Town; • Accessible public amenities at Tucker Park (Paterson); • Netball Courts in Dungog; • Multipurpose court at Paterson Sportsground; • Improvements to the facilities at Bennett Park; • Improved lighting at:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reg Ford Oval ○ Clarence Town Reserve; ○ Dungog Showground ○ Dungog Netball Courts <p>Grant funding has also been received for:-</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new sports facility building at the Gresford Sportsground; <p>Improvements to the Bennett Park surface and internal fencing.</p> <p>Grant applications and funding have continued to increase over the five (5) year period. Specifically, improvements to roads and bridges will enhance accessibility to local businesses, farmers and the broader community.</p> <p>Asset Management Plans for Transport, Recreation & Open Space and Buildings were reviewed and updated in 2018 with a further review scheduled for 2022.</p> <p>A new section 7.11 Development Contributions Plan has been developed and adopted by Council identifying key infrastructure requirements in both transport and sporting/recreational facilities</p>	
Local services provided by Governments at all levels are retained and reflect the needs of a growing and changing community.	All Government Services have been maintained throughout the Shire with recent restricted access in some areas due to COVID requirements.	
Successful application for a Special Rate Variation.	On 13 May 2019 the Independent Pricing & Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) provided partial approval of Council's special rate variation (SRV) application. Further detail is provided in the Governance and Finance progress report.	
Success in securing funding/grants from State and Federal Governments to assist with better planning and provision of public infrastructure in the Dungog Shire.	Over the period from 2017/18 to 2020/21, Council has secured a total of \$54.291M in federal and state funded grants. The trend is increasing over time which has also been reflected in Council audited financial statements for the period.	

Our Progress – 7. Governance & Finance




Goal: Dungog Shire Council is recognised for strong community leadership, financial sustainability and ethical, accountable and responsive governance






Community Priorities (outcomes) identified during consultation:

- We will strengthen our financial position and invest in our people, systems and governance to firmly establish Dungog Shire Council as an efficient and effective service organisation
- Council needs to improve community engagement with residents and stakeholders across the Shire.
- Council needs to improve communication (quality and reach) across the Shire regarding Council business.
- Council shall continue to conduct its activities and decision-making in an open, accountable and inclusive manner.
- Council will demonstrate strong and accountable leadership embracing collaboration, agility and a determination to succeed
- Council needs to plan and manage its resourcing and expenditure to ensure its long term financial sustainability.
- Council needs to promote Shire-wide unity guided by a long term vision and plan.

Strategies developed by Council to address the Community priorities and goal:

- Councillors are responsive, accessible and actively involved within local communities
- Decision-making processes are open, transparent and inclusive
- Council undertakes broad and effective communication and engagement with the communities across the Shire
- Council's governance and organisational structure reflects the vision, priorities and directions outlined in the Community Strategic Plan
- Council undertakes prudent financial management to ensure its long-term viability
- Review of Council's Workforce Management Plan to ensure Council has the right employees, with the right skills, to deliver the services required by the community, both now and in the future in accordance with the Dungog Shire Council Delivery Program 2018-2022.
- Council maintains a regional outlook and seeks opportunities for strategic alliances with neighbouring councils.
- Council will advocate for our communities by actively pursuing constructive relationships with other spheres of government
- Communities across the Shire have access to a range of communication formats for receipt and exchange of information

Indicators of success	Progress Update	Progress towards goals
<p>Council undertakes all its activities and decision-making to ensure equity in provision of community services, facilities and other resources</p>	<p>Council's community engagement processes are guided by the NSW Government's social justice principles, Council's sustainability principles, the Community Vision Statement and Council's Mission Statement. Council wants everyone in the community to have the opportunity to access a range of services, facilities and resources.</p> <p>Council engaged with the community on a broad range of projects some of which included;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The special rate variation; in total, Council held 12 community meetings at various locations and times/dates across the Shire, 3 workshops and independent community surveys regarding the Special Rate Variation proposal. * Small Grants program; Council provides the opportunity for community organisations to develop programs and activities which will enhance the lives of the residents of Dungog Shire. Council provides funding to improve the quality of community services in the Shire, to encourage innovative approaches that address identified community needs and address community priorities identified in Dungog Shire Council's Community Strategic Plan 2030. 	
<p>Increased numbers of candidates at Local Government Election</p>	<p>Council has assisted the NSW Electoral Office in promoting Local Government elections through it's media channels, being successful in attracting candidates to enable elections to take place and let the community determine the councillors to take office.</p>	
<p>Improved level of satisfaction with Council services as expressed by the community.</p>	<p>Community surveys conducted during the special rate variation consultative process in 2018 told Council that 73% of residents were satisfied or somewhat satisfied with councils performance.</p> <p>The community also told us that assets such as roads, bridges, public spaces, parks and community facilities are important to them, and that Council needs to improve their condition. Successful funding applications during the term has ensured significant funds being spent on these services important to the community.</p> <p>A recent community survey on Council's Planning services has indicated an 88% satisfaction level on the services provided by planning staff and a 91% satisfaction level on the service provided by building services staff.</p>	

<p>Increase in the number of members of the public who attend Council meetings and forums</p>	<p>Prior to Covid-19 council meetings attracted a consistent but small number of attendees each month. Covid-19 lockdowns and changes to legislation now permit council meetings to be attended and watched electronically. Council live streams its council meetings via the internet and Facebook-live which permits residents to attend and watch meetings from their own homes. This has resulted in a significant increase in numbers accessing the live stream.</p>	
<p>Increase in the number of members of the public who address Council in the Chambers as part of the Ordinary Meeting.</p>	<p>Community members addressing council is usually commensurate with development in the shire. The last term of council has seen growth in the shire, a rise in the population and also an increase in development applications lodged with council. These increases have contributed to an increase in members of the public addressing Council.</p>	
<p>Council secures adequate funding from external sources to enhance our service provision to the community.</p>	<p>The last term of council has seen it build on the platform laid by staff and the previous council to secure significant infrastructure funding for enhancements to community infrastructure such as, \$500,000 towards the Dungog Shire Library refurbishment, \$1.5 million toward the Clarence Town Sports Facility, \$23 million toward timber bridge replacement, \$25 million for regional, rural and local road improvements, \$13.3 million towards Clarence Town Road.</p>	
<p>Percentage of the local population who feel that they have had the opportunity to have their say on regional matters under the control of Local Government.</p>	<p>Council continued to be an active member of the Hunter Joint Organisation of Council's which together with the other Hunter Region Council's provides a united voice on regional matters. Council's has worked on improving its social media presence over the past term with council now engaging and providing the community with a number of different channels on which to have their say, including Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. We feel this is a positive way to build our relationship with the community and provide them an opportunity to have their say on matters of importance to them.</p>	
<p>Successful application for a Special Rate Variation to strengthen Dungog Shire Council's financial position to enable Council to deliver the services and infrastructure that our community needs both now and into the future</p>	<p>On 13 May 2019 the Independent Pricing & Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) provided partial approval of Council's special rate variation (SRV) application. Council's amended SRV, as approved by IPART, is being rolled out from 2019-20 to 2023-24 in the following way:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2019/2020: 15% increase per annum • 2020/2021: 15% increase per annum 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2021/2022: 10% increase per annum • 2022/2023: 10% increase per annum • 2023/2024: 10% increase per annum. <p>The increase is inclusive of the rate peg amount and the funds from this increase are being used for the purposes noted in council's application i.e. to fund operating and capital expenditure for key assets including the road network, timber bridges and community facilities, enhancing financial sustainability and beginning to reduce council's infrastructure backlog.</p>	
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WHAT ARE OUR NEXT STEPS?

The End of Term report 2017-18 to 2020-21 is included as a part of Council's Annual report for the year ended 2020/21 and published on Council's website www.dungog.nsw.gov.au

A copy of the website link is also provided to the Minister for Local Government in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993.

The progress information and trends in our strategic "report card" will be considered in the next round of integrated planning and reporting to commence with the new Council to be elected in December 2021.

The next steps include:

- Completion of an updated community engagement strategy for the review of the Community Strategic Plan (CSP2030)
- A review of the CSP2030 to ensure it is still relevant, and if an update is needed, to ensure the preparation of an updated CSP reflecting any changes to reflect community engagement outcomes.
- Council is also to review the Resourcing Strategy, which includes the Workforce Plan, Asset Management Strategy and Long Term Financial Plan.
- Council will need to prepare a new/revised Delivery Program for the next four (4) years (2021-22 to 2024-25)
- Council will need to prepare the new Operational Plan and Budget for 2021/22 being the first year of the new/revised Delivery Program to deliver the revised/updated CSP2030.

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