



Delivery Program 2025-2029 & Operational Plan 2025-2026

Adopted 18 June 2025

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Dungog Shire Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Cultural Custodians of Country in the Dungog Shire, including the Gringai, Geawegal/Geawal, Wanaruah/Wonnarua, and Worimi peoples. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and emerging.

“The Valley was always there in the Dreaming, though mountains, trees, animals and people were not yet formed. Everything was sleeping. Until the Great Sky Spirit Baiame opened his eyes.”

Wanaruah/Wonnarua Creations Story

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A Message from the **Mayor**

I am delighted to introduce the Delivery Program, which details our initiatives and actions for the four-year council term. As your Mayor, I am committed to community engagement and ensuring our Council remains responsive and aligned with the community's goals and aspirations.

This delivery program builds upon the Community Strategic Plan, focusing on strategies that will guide us closer to realising our shared vision and values.

Our priorities include roads, infrastructure, financial sustainability, growth, and improving the quality of life for all residents.

I look forward to working together with you to ensure Dungog remains a place we are all proud to call home.

Cr Digby Rayward
Mayor of Dungog Shire

***“...the Delivery Program,
which outlines our
programs and actions
for the council term”***

A Message from the **General Manager**

It is my pleasure to present the Delivery Program 2025-2029 & Operational Plan 2025-2026 outlines Council's 4 year program activities and the 1 year actions the Council will undertake to achieve the Communities Strategic Vision.

This document builds on the work undertaken during the review of the Community Strategic Plan and delivers a more streamlined approach with clearer and easier to understand deliverables.

Our Operational Plan lays out the specific actions we will undertake in the coming year to fulfill these objectives under each community value. We are committed to transparency and accountability in all our actions, ensuring that we effectively utilise time, money, assets, and personnel to meet community goals.

Together, we can drive positive change and progress within our community.

Gareth Curtis
General Manager

***"Together, we can drive
positive change and
progress within our
community."***





Our Vision

“A vibrant, united community, with a sustainable economy. An area where rural character, community safety and lifestyle are preserved.”

Part 1: Introduction

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Our Shire

Dungog Shire Council is located inland about 220 kilometres north of the Sydney CBD, roughly halfway between Sydney and Port Macquarie.

The Council is situated in the Barrington Tops region and has a population of approximately 9,767.

Dungog Shire Council has a land area of 2,251 square km. Of this land almost 60% is deemed unsuitable for agricultural cultivation and activity. Dominant agricultural enterprises include dairying, poultry and beef cattle. Forestry is the other major land-based industry although it has waned in recent years.








The major towns and villages within the Shire include:

- Dungog
- Gresford
- East Gresford
- Paterson
- Vacy
- Martins Creek
- Clarence Town

Our Community Values

Our Community Values describe what is important to us and how we would like to live as a community. These are the values our community identified during consultation in 2016, 2022 and reaffirmed in 2024.

 Our Community	That we all enjoy a safe, supportive community, characterised by vibrant cultural life and a strong sense of local heritage.
 Our Environment and Planning	That we balance the needs of the natural and built environment, by ensuring the natural environment is enhanced and that growth is achieved through a balanced mix of development which acknowledges our unique scenic qualities, rural amenity and lifestyle.
 Our Economy	That we ensure our economy is strong, creative, innovative and sustainable and provides us with jobs, business and creative opportunities and easy access to goods and services.
 Our Infrastructure	That we aim to provide safe, functional, accessible, resilient and well maintained infrastructure, services and transport networks and that we all have access to a range of activities and facilities that cater for our sporting and recreational needs.
 Our Leadership	That we aim for strong community leadership, financial sustainability and ethical, accountable and responsive governance.

Our Councillors



Digby Rayward
Mayor



Michael Dowling
Councillor
Ward A



Liam Ley
Councillor
Ward A



Steve Low AM
Councillor
Ward B



James Campbell
Councillor
Ward B



Alexandria Carruthers
Councillor (Deputy Mayor)
Ward C



Fred Paton
Councillor
Ward C

Delivering our Plan

The Delivery Program represents a commitment to the community by each newly elected council, turning the community's strategic goals into tangible actions.

It is the main reference for all activities undertaken by the council throughout its term. It helps the council identify what can be realistically achieved over the next four years, establish priorities, and plan the scheduling of programs.

The Operational Plan acts as the council's one-year action plan aimed at accomplishing the activities outlined in the Delivery Program for the upcoming financial year.

Each year, the Operational Plan is developed and approved by the Council. It details the projects, programs, and activities that the council will implement to achieve the commitments made in the Delivery Program.

This document encompasses both the 2025-2029 Delivery Program and the 2025-2026 Operational Plan.

“The Delivery Program represents a commitment to the community by each newly elected council”

Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

The NSW Local Government Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework acknowledges most communities share similar aspirations; reliable infrastructure, education and employment, opportunities for social interaction and a safe, healthy and pleasant place to live. The difference lies in how each community prioritises and responds to these needs. Now, more than ever, councils and communities need a robust, flexible and cohesive integrated planning and reporting framework that can support them as they work together to respond to rapidly changing circumstances and opportunities.

The IP&R includes a suite of integrated plans that set out a vision and goals and strategic actions to achieve them. It involves a reporting structure to communicate progress to council and the community as well as a structured timeline for review to ensure the goals and actions are still relevant.

Community Strategic Plan (CSP)

The CSP is the key document in the framework and is a 10-year plan, reviewed every 4 years. The purpose of the plan is to identify the community's main priorities and aspirations for the future, and outline objectives and strategies to achieve them. These objectives and strategies will take into consideration the issues and pressures that may affect the community and the level of resources that will realistically be available. The CSP is organised under five Community Values (key focus areas) that reflect the community's vision and values.

The Delivery Program and Operational Plan use the same five community values and they also provide clear strategic alignment between Council's long-term, mid-term and annual planning and reporting.

Delivery Program

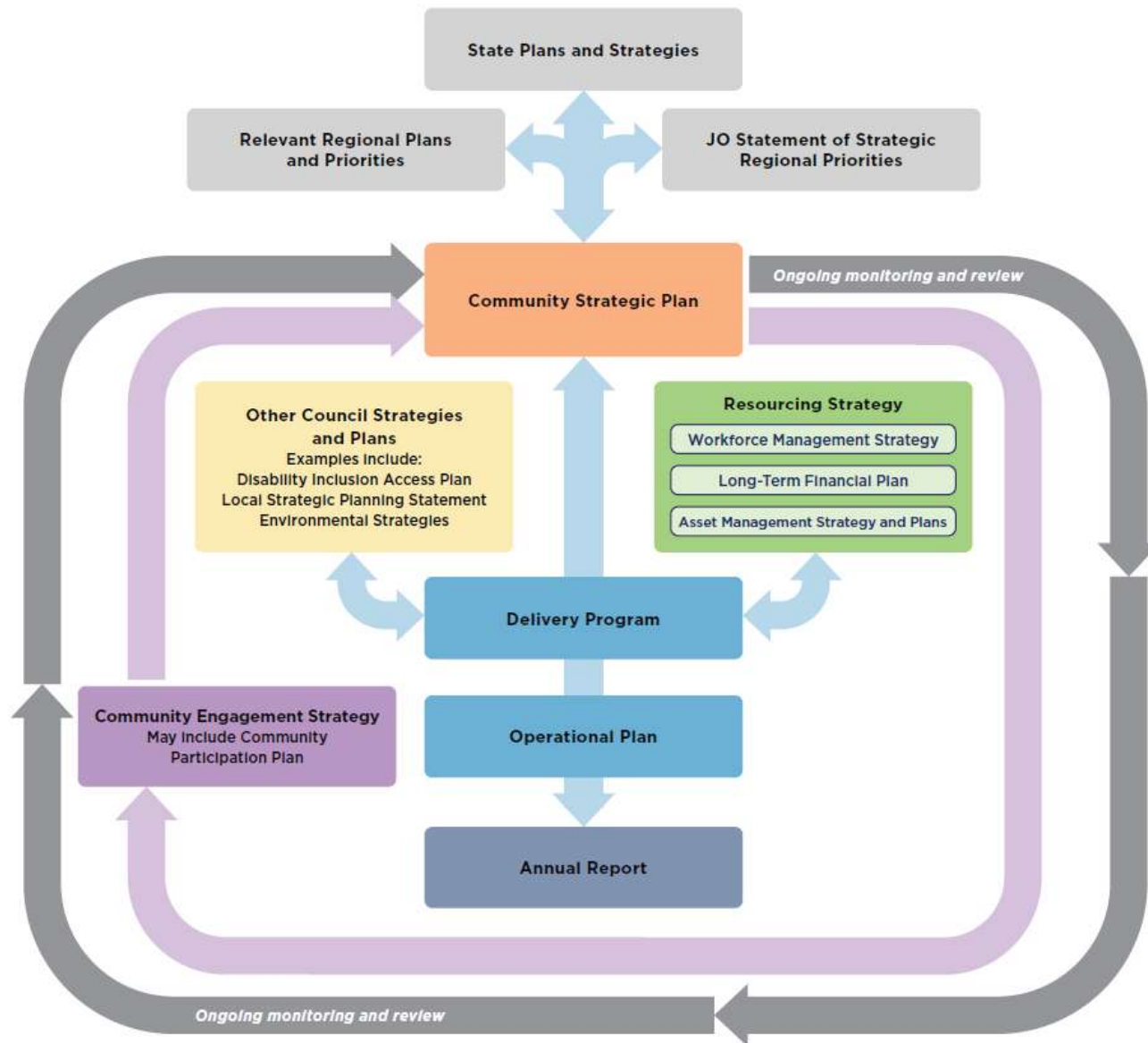
The Delivery Program is a plan that covers the term of an elected Council. To create the program, we look at the Community Strategic Plan and ask what strategies we can achieve over the coming term to bring us closer to the community's vision and values, using the resources identified in the Resourcing Strategy.

Operational Plan

The Operational Plan outlines the actions Council will undertake in the coming year to achieve the Delivery Program strategies under each community value. The Operational Plan also details how Council will fund these actions.

Resourcing Strategy

The Community Strategic Plan can only be achieved with sufficient resources. Council's Resourcing Strategy supports the Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program and Operational Plan by detailing how Council can help achieve the community's goals in terms of time, money, assets and people.



OLG Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

How to read this Plan - update this

The following information explains the headings used in the Plan.

A

What are our Community Values?

- They are the Community's long-term priorities, goals and aspirations for Dungog Shire.
- Where do we want to be in 10 years' time?

B

Delivery Program 2025-2029

- How will council deliver the Strategies outlined in the Community Strategic Plan?
- They are the 4 year program activities that outline what will be delivered during the current term of the elected Council.

C

Operational Plan 2025-2026

- They are the 1 year actions Council will undertake to deliver the 4 year program activities.

D

Program Activities

- These are the council services and programs we need to deliver the strategies.

E

Partners

- These are the local and state organisations, other organisations and community groups that are involved in delivery.

Our Community

Our Goal

1. That we all enjoy a safe, supportive community, characterised by vibrant cultural life and a strong sense of local heritage.

Program Activities include:

- Community groups
- Community events
- Youth based activities
- Provision of local services for all ages
- Emergency management
- Community preparedness
- Council owned facilities
- Cemetery services
- Food safety and hygiene
- Environmental health programs
- Companion Animals
- Community Grants
- Library services

Partners include:

- Hunter Joint Organisation
- Department of Planning and Environment
- Resilience NSW
- NSW State Emergency Service
- NSW Rural and Fire Service

Our Strategy

1.1 Promote, develop and align programs and initiatives to support residents of all ages that encourage community participation and volunteerism.

Delivery Program 2025-2029 (4 Year Program Activity)

1.1.1 Develop and deliver programs to engage residents of all ages including community and civic events.

1.1.2 Review and implement the Disability Inclusion Plan subject available resources

Operational Plan 2025-2026 (1 Year Action)	Activity Measure	Responsibility Area
1.1.1.1 Acknowledge the skills and dedication of volunteers and their contribution to the success and sustainability of our Shire and provide regular activity reports.	At least 6 monthly	Community Services
1.1.1.2 Conduct annual community grant activities including education and information workshops and the Community Grants (Small) Program and provide regular activity reports.	At least 6 monthly	Community Services
1.1.1.3 Support community celebrations for local and nationally celebrated festivals and events and provide regular activity reports.	At least 6 monthly	Community Services
1.1.1.4 Conduct programs to engage residents of all age groups and provide regular activity reports.	At least 6 monthly	Community Services
1.1.2.1 Review the Disability Inclusion Plan and present a draft to Council for adoption.	By 30 June 2026	Community Services

“The Delivery Program is a statement of councils commitment to the community and is the single point of reference for all principal activities undertaken by the elected council during its term of office”

Part 2:

Delivery Program & Operational Plan

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Our Community

Our Goal

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1.1.1.4 Conduct programs to engage residents of all age groups and provide regular activity reports.	At least 6 monthly	Community Services
1.1.2.1 Review the Disability Inclusion Plan and present a draft to Council for adoption.	By 30 June 2026	Community Services

Our Strategy

1.2 Promote and support a range of cultural and heritage activities that provide a foundation for community building and cohesion.

Delivery Program 2025-2029 (4 Year Program Activity)

1.2.1 Develop a Library Strategic Management Plan and implement prioritised actions.

1.2.2 Implement priority actions from the Cultural Plan subject to funding.

Operational Plan 2025-2026 (1 Year Action)

1.2.1.1 Develop a draft Library Strategic Management Plan and present to Council.

Activity Measure

By 30 June 2026

Responsibility Area

Corporate & Customer Service

1.2.2.1 Identify grant funding opportunities to implement key Cultural Plan priorities and provide regular activity reports.

At least 6 monthly

Community Services

Our Strategy

1.3 Work with local residents, community groups and service organisations to build safer and more resilient communities.

Delivery Program 2025-2029 (4 Year Program Activity)

1.3.1 Encouraging local organisations/groups to work collaboratively with Council and/or emergency agencies to connect and build safer and more resilient communities.

Operational Plan 2025-2026 (1 Year Action)

	Activity Measure	Responsibility Area
1.3.1.1 Engage with the community to promote disaster preparedness and resilience, and provide regular activity reports.	At least 6 monthly	Infrastructure & Assets
1.3.1.2 Ongoing liaison with local RFS and SES volunteers regarding resource needs before, during, and after natural disaster events.	Events reported to Council	Infrastructure & Assets
1.3.1.3 Provide major event notification to the local community to ensure awareness of Local Area Commands for potential increased resource demands.	Events reported to Council	Infrastructure & Assets
1.3.1.4 Actively seek grant funding for the beautification of local towns and villages in line with Council strategies and masterplans.	Through the Grants Metrics Report	Infrastructure & Assets

Our Strategy

1.4 Ensure access to council services and facilities that cater for all ages while addressing community needs for all ages.

Delivery Program 2025-2029 (4 Year Program Activity)

1.4.1 Develop a Cemetery Operational Plan to improve services, processes and meet license requirements, subject to available funding.

1.4.2 Finalise Council's Companion Animals Management Plan & Keeping of Animals Policy.

1.4.3 Develop and implement a regular inspections program of Council owned and managed facilities.

Operational Plan 2025-2026 (1 Year Action)

1.4.1.1 Initiate and facilitate the development of a Cemetery Operational Plan in partnership with consultants, contingent on successful grant funding.

By 30 June 2026

Environmental & Regulatory Services

1.4.2.1 Complete a review of Council's Companion Animals Management Plan & Keeping of Animals Policy and present to Council for adoption.

By 30 June 2026

Environmental & Regulatory Services

1.4.3.1 Develop council facilities improvement plans where required and provide regular activity reports.

At least 6 monthly

Infrastructure & Assets

Our Environment and Planning

Our Goal

2. That we balance the needs of the natural and built environment, by ensuring the natural environment is enhanced and that growth is achieved through a balanced mix of development which acknowledges our unique scenic qualities, rural amenity and lifestyle.

Program Activities include:

- Waste and resource recovery
- Waste collection services
- Waste management facility operation
- Pilchers Reserve
- Field days and information sessions
- On-site sewage management
- Sewage facilities in villages
- Weed management
- Environmental management
- Land use planning
- Development assessment
- Compliance
- Local heritage advisory service

Partners include:

- Hunter Joint Organisation
- Office of Local Government
- Department of Planning and Environment
- Hunter Water Corporation
- Local Land Services
- NSW Department of Primary Industries
- Cities Power Partnership

Our Strategy

2.1 Support and manage the responsible use of resources including the minimisation of waste and the promotion of recycling practices.

Delivery Program 2025-2029 (4 Year Program Activity)

2.1.1 Investigate contract and tendering opportunities to achieve economic and service efficiency in waste and recycling collection.

2.1.2 Commence review and implementation of key priority actions from the Waste Strategy, in particular, a Masterplan for the site subject to available funding.

Operational Plan 2025-2026 (1 Year Action)

2.1.1.1 Commence an investigation of contract and tendering opportunities for general waste and recycling collection.

By 31
October
2025

Waste
Management
Services

2.1.2.1 Review the Waste Strategy and identify key priority actions to be implemented, subject to resourcing and funding.

By 31
December
2025

Waste
Management
Services

2.1.2.2 Facilitate the implementation of the identified key action items, specially a Masterplan for Dungog Waste Management Facility in partnership with consultants and external providers, which will be contingent on grant funding and resources.

By 30 June
2026

Waste
Management
Services

Our Strategy

2.2 Work with the community, appropriate regulatory and enforcement agencies in proactively addressing environmental issues including weed management.

Delivery Program 2025-2029 (4 Year Program Activity)

2.2.1 Implement priority actions from the Pilcher's reserve Plan of Management subject to available funding.

2.2.2 Review Pilcher's Reserve Plan of Management.

2.2.3 Review Council's On-site Sewage Management Strategy and Policies.

2.2.4 Implementation of the Flying Fox Management Plan.

Operational Plan 2025-2026 (1 Year Action)

2.2.1.1 Review the current Pilcher's Reserve Plan of Management and identify priority actions that can be implemented in partnership with consultants and stakeholders, which will be contingent on funding and resources.

By 30 June
2026

Environmental
& Regulatory
Services

2.2.2.1 Commence a review of the Pilcher's Reserve Plan of Management.

By 30 June
2026

Infrastructure
and Assets

2.2.3.1 Commence review of Council's On-site Sewage Management Strategy and Policies.

By 30 June
2026

Environmental
& Regulatory
Services

2.2.4.1 Review the current Flying Fox Management Plan and identify initiatives that can be implemented in partnership with consultants, landowners and stakeholders, which will be contingent on funding and resources.

By 30 June
2026

Environmental
& Regulatory
Services

Our Strategy

2.3 Planning documents provide adequate land supply while protecting the natural environment, biodiversity, local heritage, rural character and agricultural activities.

Delivery Program 2025-2029 (4 Year Program Activity)

2.3.1 Deliver the Dungog Shire Housing and Infrastructure Master Plan to plan for housing diversity (rural and village living), tourism, community infrastructure, rural lands and agricultural activities, biodiversity and rural character. This includes the delivery of:

- A Rural Lands Strategy
- A Local Housing Strategy
- An Infrastructure Capacity and Prioritisation Plan
- A Dungog Strategic Centre Structure Plan
- A Growth Management Strategy in the form of an updated Local Strategic Planning Statement
- An Executive Summary and Delivery Plan

2.3.2 Deliver the Clarence Town Structure Plan and Streetscape Master Plan.

2.3.3 Review Flood Plain Management Plans subject to grant funding.

2.3.4 Deliver a Dungog Shire Environmental Lands Study subject to grant funding.

2.3.5 Deliver a new Local Environmental Plan, Development Control Plan and Local Contributions Plan for Dungog Shire with regard to land use planning and sustainable growth subject to grant funding and available resources.

2.3.6 Assess Development Applications in accordance with the Environmental Planning and Assessment legislative requirements and having regard to Council's Planning Framework and the NSW Statement of Expectations Order.

Operational Plan 2025-2026 (1 Year Action)	Activity Measure	Responsibility Area
2.3.1.1 Present the Dungog Shire Housing and Infrastructure Master Plan to Council for adoption.	By 30 June 2026	Strategic Planning
2.3.2.1 Present the Clarence Town Structure Plan and Streetscape Master Plan to Council for adoption. As part of the Structure Plan, include Wharf Reserve, Clarence Town for potential primitive camping and improvements.	By 31 August 2025	Strategic Planning
2.3.3.1 Present the Clarence Town Flood Study to Council for adoption.	By 31 October 2025	Flood Planning & Strategic Planning
2.3.4.1 Initiate the Dungog Shire Environmental Lands Study in partnership with consultants, contingent on successful grant funding.	By 30 June 2026	Strategic Planning
2.3.6.1 Prepare quarterly reports to Council providing planning data and overview of planning activity in relation to development and building applications.	Quarterly Reports	Development Services
2.3.6.2 Work with Hunter Councils to investigate options for developing an Accelerated Development Application program, subject to resourcing and funding.	By 30 June 2026	Development Services
2.3.6.3 Commence review of Council's Engineering Specifications as related to new development, subject to resourcing and funding.	By 30 June 2026	Development Services

Our Strategy

2.4 We participate in climate change collaboration and partnerships to leverage effort and resources, and are keen to learn from others.

Delivery Program 2025-2029 (4 Year Program Activity)

2.4.1 Work with the Hunter Joint Organisation (HJO) and other regional Councils on joint projects within available resourcing.

2.4.2 Seek external funding from State & Federal governments to assist with resident capacity to prepare for and withstand the effects of natural disasters.

Operational Plan 2025-2026 (1 Year Action)

2.4.1.1 Continue to work and collaborate with HJO and regional Council on joint projects, subject to resourcing availability, and provide regular activity reports.

At least 6 monthly

Environmental & Regulatory Services

2.4.2.1 Monitor opportunities to prepare and submit grant funding applications to assist with resident capacity to prepare for and withstand the effects of natural disasters.

Through the Grants Metrics Report

Infrastructure & Assets

Our Economy

Our Goal

3. That we ensure our economy is strong, creative, innovative and sustainable and provides us with jobs, business and creative opportunities and easy access to goods and services.

Program Activities include:

- Land development
- Development of commercial and industrial sites
- Management of Williams River Holiday Park
- Local business
- Economic diversification
- New business attraction and investors
- Destination Management Plan
- Visitor Information Centre
- Barrington Tops promotion
- Economic Development

Partners include:

- Hunter Joint Organisation
- Department of Planning and Environment
- Hunter Water Corporation
- Destination NSW
- Department of Primary Industries
- Neighbouring Councils
- Regional NSW
- Regional Development Australia
- Chamber of Commerce
- Local Land Services
- Dungog Regional Tourism

Our Strategy

3.1 Develop planning documents that ensures economic, commercial, and industrial growth throughout the Shire is supported by improved local public and private infrastructure.

Delivery Program 2025-2029 (4 Year Program Activity)

3.1.1 Support the Strategic Property Advisory Committee in its role to build a strategic property portfolio for investment, development and management.

Operational Plan 2025-2026 (1 Year Action)

3.1.1.1 Facilitate the development, adoption and implementation of a Terms Of Reference, Policy and Strategy to guide the Strategic Property Advisory Committee in its roles and functions.

Activity Measure

By 30 June 2026

Responsibility Area

Economic Development

Our Strategy

3.2 Review and enable the provision of improved camping and caravan facilities throughout the Shire.

Delivery Program 2025-2029 (4 Year Program Activity)		
3.2.1 Investigate Wharf Reserve, Clarence Town for potential primitive camping and improvements. (Notice of Motion)		
3.2.2 Investigate options to establish a holiday/caravan park in Dungog. (Notice of Motion)		
Operational Plan 2025-2026 (1 Year Action)	Activity Measure	Responsibility Area
3.2.1.1 Investigate Wharf Reserve, Clarence Town for potential primitive camping and improvements, and report the outcomes to the Council.	By 30 June 2026	Economic Development
3.2.2.1 Investigate options to establish a holiday/caravan park in Dungog, and report the outcomes to the Council.	By 30 June 2026	Economic Development

Our Strategy

3.3 Work with Dungog Regional Tourism to develop a strategic approach to growing visitor economy opportunities across the Shire.

Delivery Program 2025-2029 (4 Year Program Activity)

3.3.1 Support and collaborate with Dungog Regional Tourism (DRT) in implementing the endorsed Destination Management Plan for the Shire subject to Council's capacity and resourcing and joint grant funding initiatives with DRT.

Operational Plan 2025-2026 (1 Year Action)

3.3.1.1 In consultation with Dungog Regional Tourism, collaborate in the development and review of the DMP and support the development of funding applications and initiatives for its implementation.

Activity Measure

By 30 June 2026

Responsibility Area

Economic Development

3.3.1.2 Investigate opportunities to establish a look-out in Dungog Shire and report the outcomes to Council. (notice of motion)

By 30 June 2026

Economic Development

Our Strategy

3.4 Implement priority actions from the Economic Development Plan.

Delivery Program 2025-2029 (4 Year Program Activity)

3.4.1 Deliver Project 1.2 from the Economic Development Plan to investigate eco, cultural and active tourism opportunities for Dungog Shire.

3.4.2 Deliver Project 2.3 Investigate town centre activation projects to attract people to Dungog Shire.

Operational Plan 2025-2026 (1 Year Action)

3.4.1.1 Commence a review of eco, cultural and active tourism opportunities for Dungog Shire and present to Council for consideration and actions subject to grant funding and resourcing.

Activity Measure

By 30 June 2026

Responsibility Area

Economic Development

3.4.2.1 Commence a review of opportunities for town centre activation and seek grant funding to support initiatives such as tactical urbanism or pop up activation spaces to improve street activation and attract more people into our centres and villages.

By 30 June 2026

Economic Development

Our Infrastructure

Our Goal

4. That we aim to provide safe, functional, accessible, resilient and well maintained infrastructure, services and transport networks and that we all have access to a range of activities and facilities that cater for our sporting and recreational needs.

Program Activities include:

- Building maintenance
- Capital works program delivery
- Plant & fleet management
- Recreation facility mainagement
- Construction and rehabilitation works
- Asset management
- Rail Services
- Water/Sewer
- Public toilets
- Emergency services
- Health and social services
- Aged accommodation
- Fire safety of Council facilities
- Plans of management
- Sporting facility maintenance
- Public Swimming Pools

Partners include:

- Hunter Joint Organisation
- Department of Planning and Environment
- Hunter Water Corporation
- NSW Police
- Resilience NSW
- NSW State Emergency Service
- NSW Rural and Fire Service
- Transport for NSW

Our Strategy

4.1 Improve the safety, condition and maintenance of roads, bridges and infrastructure.

Delivery Program 2025-2029 (4 Year Program Activity)

4.1.1 Work with State and Federal Governments for the appropriate allocation of funding for road network improvements and maintenance.

4.1.2 Review and update Council's Road Asset Management Strategy and Plans.

4.1.3 Develop and deliver prioritised capital works programs and asset maintenance programs.

Operational Plan 2025-2026 (1 Year Action)

4.1.1.1 Work with the State Government on the process of road re-classification and provide regular activity reports.

At least 6 monthly

Infrastructure & Assets

4.1.2.1 Review the Road Asset Management Strategy and present to Council.

By 30 June 2026

Infrastructure & Assets

4.1.3.1 Deliver the 2025-2026 Capital Works within adopted budget and timeframes.

Quarterly Reports

Infrastructure & Assets

4.1.3.2 Deliver prioritised maintenance programs and provide regular activity reports to Council.

Quarterly Reports

Infrastructure & Assets

Our Strategy

4.2 Improve the provision of transport services and connectivity to communities within the Shire.

Delivery Program 2025-2029 (4 Year Program Activity)

4.2.1 Advocate for improved provision of transport services and connectivity to communities within the Shire.

Operational Plan 2025-2026 (1 Year Action)

4.2.1.1 Lobby State Government for improved accessibility at local stations and that local passenger rail services are maintained and improved.

Activity Measure

Through the Advocacy Strategy.

Responsibility Area

Infrastructure & Assets

Our Strategy

4.3 Improve the standard of community assets, facilities and public infrastructure including community halls, sports facilities, parks and playgrounds.

Delivery Program 2025-2029 (4 Year Program Activity)

4.3.1 Develop and review Council's Parks and Recreation Plans of Management to reflect current issues, community needs and Crown Land Management requirements.

4.3.2 Develop and deliver routine, cyclic and programmed maintenance for all assets as per the maintenance schedules and risk management.

Operational Plan 2025-2026 (1 Year Action)

4.3.1.1 Prepare a draft Generic Community Land Plan of Management and report to Council.

Activity Measure

By 30 June 2026

Responsibility Area

Infrastructure & Assets

4.3.2.1 Deliver the 2025-2026 asset maintenance programs and provide regular reports to Council.

Quarterly

Infrastructure & Assets

Our Strategy

4.4 Implement actions from the open space and recreation plan to ensure that sporting and recreational facilities reflect the diverse needs of a growing community.

Delivery Program 2025-2029 (4 Year Program Activity)

4.4.1 Implement priority actions from the Open Space and Recreation Plan subject to available resourcing.

4.4.2 Identify suitable locations within the township of Dungog for the establishment of a community dog park (including off-leash area), to be presented to Council for further consideration. (Notice of Motion)

Operational Plan 2025-2026 (1 Year Action)

	Activity Measure	Responsibility Area
4.4.1.1 Review and commence implementation of Council's Parks and Recreation Asset Management Plan.	By 30 June 2026	Infrastructure & Assets
4.4.1.2 Council and its representatives manage access to its sporting and recreational facilities to ensure equity amongst users, and provide regular activity reports.	At least 6 monthly	Infrastructure & Assets
4.4.2.1 Finalise the investigation to establish a location for a community dog park and advocate for funding.	By 30 June 2026	Infrastructure & Assets

Our Strategy

4.5 Liaise with appropriate agencies to ensure that recreational areas including public land, national parks and waterways are accessible and maintained with adequate clean public amenities.

Delivery Program 2025-2029 (4 Year Program Activity)		
4.5.1 Liaise with appropriate agencies to ensure that recreational areas including public land, national parks and waterways are accessible and maintained with adequate clean public amenities.		
Operational Plan 2025-2026 (1 Year Action)	Activity Measure	Responsibility Area
4.5.1.1 Liaise with appropriate agencies to ensure that recreational areas including public land, national parks and waterways are accessible and maintained with adequate clean public amenities.	Through the Advocacy Strategy.	Infrastructure & Assets

Our Leadership

Our Goal

5. That we aim for strong community leadership, financial sustainability and ethical, accountable and responsive governance.

Program Activities include:

- Governance
- Communications
- People & Culture
- Integrated Planning and Reporting
- Business Improvement
- Finance & Accounts
- Procurement
- Corporate Support
- Advocacy
- Information Systems
- Records Management
- Risk Management
- Workplace Health & Safety

Partners include:

- Hunter Joint Organisation
- Department of Planning and Environment
- Hunter Water Corporation
- Office of Local Government

Our Strategy

5.1 Priorities strong community leadership, financial sustainability, responsive customer service and continuous improvement.

Delivery Program 2025-2029 (4 Year Program Activity)

5.1.1 Implement the Dungog Council ICT Strategy

5.1.2 Implement the Workforce Plan

5.1.3 Implement the Council Business Continuity Plan

5.1.4 Meet the legislative, reporting requirements and timelines in Local Government Compliance Calendar.

5.1.5 Implement actions resulting from the Audit and Risk review

Operational Plan 2025-2026 (1 Year Action)

	Activity Measure	Responsibility Area
5.1.1.1 Determine and implement Council's IT infrastructure environment	By 30 June 2026	Information Systems
5.1.2.1 Review the EEO Management Plan and present to Council.	By 31 March 2026	People and Culture
5.1.2.2 Develop the Business Improvement Plan and present to Council.	By 30 June 2026	Governance & Risk
5.1.3.1 Provide regular progress reports on the implementation of the Business Continuity Plan.	At least 6 monthly	Governance & Risk
5.1.4.1 Provide regular progress reports on compliance with LG legislative reporting requirements.	At least 6 monthly	Governance & Risk
5.1.5.1 Provide regular progress reports on the implementation of Audit and Risk actions.	At least 6 monthly	Governance & Risk

Our Strategy

5.2 The Council engages in effective communication and engagement, ensuring decision-making processes are open, transparent, and inclusive.

Delivery Program 2025-2029 (4 Year Program Activity)

5.2.1 Community Engagement & Participation Strategy Implementation.

5.2.2 Implementation of the Customer Service Review Recommendations

Operational Plan 2025-2026 (1 Year Action)	Activity Measure	Responsibility Area
5.2.1.1 Prepare a draft Community Engagement & Consultation Guideline and present to Council.	By 30 June 2026	Governance & Risk
5.2.1.2 Undertake the biennial independent community survey and present the results to Council.	By 30 April 2026	Governance & Risk
5.2.2.1 Implement the Customer Service Charter.	By 30 June 2026	Customer Service

Our Strategy

5.3 Council undertakes prudent sustainable financial management to ensure its long-term viability.

Delivery Program 2025-2029 (4 Year Program Activity)		
5.3.1 Review Council’s Long Term Financial Plan		
5.3.2 Implement actions resulting from the Audit Report		
Operational Plan 2025-2026 (1 Year Action)	Activity Measure	Responsibility Area
5.3.1.1 Complete an annual review of the Long Term Financial Plan in line with the IP&R cycle.	By 30 June 2026	Finance
5.3.2.1 Provide regular progress reports to Council on the implementation of Audit Report actions.	At least 6 monthly	Finance

Our Strategy

5.4 Council continues to advocate for a Dungog Shire regional outlook and seeks opportunities for strategic alliances with neighbouring Councils and other levels of government and key stakeholders.

Delivery Program 2025-2029 (4 Year Program Activity)

5.4.1 Implement the Dungog Shire Council Advocacy Strategy.

5.4.2 Engagement with relevant State Agencies, Local Members, Ministers of State and Federal Governments and local government sector.

Operational Plan 2025-2026 (1 Year Action)

5.4.1.1 Provide regular progress reports to Council on implementation of the Advocacy Strategy.

Activity Measure

At least 6 monthly

Responsibility Area

Office of GM

5.4.2.1 Report on relevant engagement with State Agencies, Local Members, Ministers of State and Federal Governments and local government sector.

At least 6 monthly

Office of GM

Our Strategy

5.5 Council actively pursues funding and grant funding opportunities that align with and support the vision, priorities and directions outlined in the Community Strategic Plan.

Delivery Program 2025-2029 (4 Year Program Activity)		
5.5.1 Implement the Grant Funding Review Report actions subject to available resourcing.		
Operational Plan 2025-2026 (1 Year Action)	Activity Measure	Responsibility Area
5.5.1.1 Prepare a grants management strategy and present to Council.	30 Sept 2025	Office of the GM
5.5.2.2 Provide regular reports to Council on grant application metrics including outcomes and amount of successful funding.	At least 6 monthly	Office of the GM

Indicators of Success (Measures)

These success indicators, along with the activity metrics outlined in this document, will act as benchmarks for assessing our progress in achieving the objectives of the Delivery Program.

Measure	Context	Base	Target
Library Programs	<p>This measure is from the number of programs offered at Council's Library plus the number of attendees.</p> <p>This is a measure of the libraries engagement with the community for the purpose of recreation activities and education.</p>	Baseline to be established	Maintain or improve
Regulatory Premises Inspections	<p>This measure is the number of regulatory premises inspections carried out divided by the programmed regulatory premises inspections during a year.</p> <p>This is a measure of Council's contribution to the health and safety of the community.</p>	Baseline to be established	100%
Public Swimming Pool and Spa Inspections	<p>This measure is the number of public swimming pools and spas inspected divided by the programmed number of public swimming pools and spa inspections.</p> <p>This is a measure of Council's contribution to the health and safety of the community.</p>	Baseline to be established	100%
Community Engagement in biodiversity, sustainability and natural resource events	<p>This measure is the number of people engaged in biodiversity, sustainability and natural resource workshops, events, presentations and consultation.</p>	Baseline to be established	Maintain or improve

Measure	Context	Base	Target
Environmental health and protection inspections	<p>This measure is the number of on-site sewage management systems inspections carried out divided by the programmed number of inspections during a year.</p> <p>This is a measure of Council's contribution to the health and safety of the community.</p>	Baseline to be established	100%
Waste & Recycling	<p>This is a measure of the number of tonnes recycled and re-processed via a kerbside recycling collection service.</p> <p>This is a measure of Council's contribution to the health and safety of the community.</p>	Baseline to be established	Maintain or improve
Operating Performance Ratio	<p>This measure is the total continuing operating revenue excluding capital grants and contributions less operating expenses (as reported in the Annual Financial Statements).</p> <p>This is a measure of Council's sustainable financial management.</p>	Moving toward meeting the OLG requirement	OLG requirement
Own Source Revenue Ratio	<p>This measure is the total continuing operating revenue excluding all grants and contributions (as reported in the Annual Financial Statements).</p> <p>This is a measure of Council's sustainable financial management.</p>	Moving toward meeting the OLG requirement	OLG requirement

Measure	Context	Base	Target
Debit Service Ratio	<p>This measure is the operating result before capital excluding interest and depreciation / impairment / amortisation (as reported in the Annual Financial Statements).</p> <p>This is a measure of Council's sustainable financial management.</p>	Moving toward meeting the OLG requirement	OLG requirement
Asset Renewal Ratio	<p>This measure is the buildings and infrastructure asset renewals divided by depreciation, amortisation and impairment (as reported in the Annual Financial Statements).</p> <p>This is a measure of Council's sustainable financial management.</p>	Moving toward meeting the OLG requirement	OLG requirement
Infrastructure Backlog Ratio	<p>This measure is the actual asset maintenance divided by the required asset maintenance (as reported in the Annual Financial Statements).</p> <p>This is a measure of Council's sustainable financial management.</p>	Moving toward meeting the OLG requirement	OLG requirement
Asset Maintenance Ratio	<p>This measure is the actual asset maintenance divided by the required asset maintenance (as reported in the Annual Financial Statements).</p> <p>This is a measure of Council's sustainable financial management.</p>	Moving toward meeting the OLG requirement	OLG requirement

Measuring our success

In the Community Strategic Plan, each of the five strategic themes is supported by various strategies and evaluated using success indicators outlined in this Plan.

The IP&R framework requires councils to report in the following ways:

- Quarterly financial budget review statements
- Delivery Program progress reports
- Annual Report
- State of the Shire Report

In line with the IP&R Framework, updates on progress will be provided to Council at least twice a year, along with a detailed Annual Report, to meet the IP&R reporting guidelines.

Every two years, the Council will conduct independent community research to assess community perceptions regarding progress in relation to the Community Strategic Plan.

At the end of each council term, the Council will compile a State of the Shire Report that assesses the implementation of the Community Strategic Plan. Success will be gauged by examining the outcomes of the Measures of Success specified in this plan.

The insights derived from this review and analysis will inform the revision and development of the subsequent Community Strategic Plan.

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Community Buildings Renewal Program

Location	Project	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Funding Source
Alison Court	Pathway replacement to comply with AS1428.1	\$10,000				Restricted Asset
Alison Court	Investigate and carry out conversion options of flood damaged unit			\$20,000		Restricted Asset
Clarence Town Community Centre	Roof Replacement - stage 1	\$25,000				General Funds
Clarence Town Community Centre	Roof Replacement - stage 2		\$25,000			General Funds
Clarence Town Community Centre	Internal Refurbishment (painting, plastering, mould treatment, floor coverings)		\$30,000			General Funds
Clarence Town Museum	External Painting (veranda lining)			\$4,000		General Funds
Clarence Town Museum	Internal Refurbishment (painting, plastering, mould treatment)				\$15,000	General Funds
James Theatre	Kitchen Upgrade to Australian Food Standards - matching Grant Funding \$ for \$ Dependent (\$50,000)					General Funds
James Theatre	Accessibility Upgrades - matching Grant Funding \$ for \$ Dependent (\$125,000)					Grant Funds
James Theatre	Kiosk / Ticket Box Upgrade				\$20,000	General Funds
Paterson Museum	Rising Damp Treatment	\$13,000				General Funds
Paterson Museum	Internal Painting		\$20,000			General Funds
TOTAL		\$48,000	\$75,000	\$24,000	\$35,000	

Recreation Buildings Renewal Program

Location	Project	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Funding Source
Doug Walters Pavilion	Solar Panels & Battery Back-up for LEMC - <i>matching Grant Funding \$ for \$ dependent (\$20,000)</i>					General & Grant Funds
Doug Walters Pavilion	Security Monitoring System		\$8,000			General Funds
Doug Walters Pavilion	External Painting				\$15,000	General Funds
Doug Walters Pavilion	Window refurbishment			\$15,000		General Funds
Dungog Museum	Internal Refurbishments (rising damp, painting, accessibility improvements)		\$40,000			General Funds
Dungog Museum	Toilet Refurbishment			\$8,000		General Funds
Dungog Saleyards	Toilet Refurbishment & water connection	\$13,000				General Funds
Dungog Shire Community Centre (DINS)	Accessible Toilet Refurbishment			\$3,000		General Funds
Dungog Showground - A&H Pavilion	Internal Refurbishment (ramp access to all levels) - <i>matching Grant Funding \$ for \$ Dependent (\$50,000)</i>					General & Grant Funds
Dungog Showground - Announcers Box	Replace Roof Sheets		\$5,000			General Funds
Dungog Showground - Announcers Box	Internal Refurbishments			\$8,000		General Funds
Dungog Showground - Announcers Box	External Painting				\$5,000	General Funds
Dungog Showground - Apex Bar	Paint Fascia Boards, repair & paint ceiling				\$8,000	General Funds
Dungog Showground - Grandstand	Major Refurbishment (brickwork footings, sheeting, painting, timber boards & amenities) - <i>matching Grant Funding \$ for \$ Dependent (\$520,000)</i>					Grant Funds
Lions Park/ Bridge Reserve (Clarence Town)	Public Amenities Refurbishment		\$10,000			General Funds
TOTAL		\$13,000	\$63,000	\$34,000	\$28,000	

Pools Facilities Construction & Renewal Program

Location	Project	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Funding Source
Clarence Town Swimming Pool	Amenities refurbishment (painting, door replacements, tiles, urinal, showers)	\$10,000				General Funds
Clarence Town Swimming Pool	Heat Pump Replacement				\$40,000	General Funds
Clarence Town Swimming Pool	Kiosk and Entry Upgrade		\$50,000			General Funds
Clarence Town Swimming Pool	Accessible Amenities Refurbishment			\$15,000		General Funds
Clarence Town Swimming Pool	Splash Pad (small) - matching Grant Funding \$ for \$ dependent (\$200,000)					Grant Funding
Dungog Swimming Pool	Repair concrete pool surrounds (stage 2)	\$50,000				General Funds
Dungog Swimming Pool	Change Room Refurbishment (painting, fittings & fixtures)	\$10,000				General Funds
Dungog Swimming Pool	Replace recirculation pump				\$10,000	General Funds
Dungog Swimming Pool	Kiosk Refurbishment & Reconfiguration (painting, benches)			\$25,000		General Funds
Dungog Swimming Pool	Replace backwash air scourer compressor			\$10,000		General Funds
Dungog Swimming Pool	Expansion joints (incl. possible equipotential works)			\$20,000		General Funds
Dungog Swimming Pool	Pool Shell Painting				\$40,000	General Funds
TOTAL		\$70,000	\$50,000	\$70,000	\$90,000	

Recreation Facilities Construction Program

Location	Project	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Funding Source
Bennett Park	1/2 basketball court in grassed area between club and courts (as per ROSP recommendations) - matching Grant Funding \$ for \$ Dependent (\$60,000)			Grant Dependent		Grant Funding & matching General Funds
Reg Ford Sporting Complex (Clarence Town)	Playing Surface Improvements (drainage & irrigation) - matching Grant Funding \$ for \$ Dependent (\$150,000)			Grant Dependent		Grant Funding & matching General Funds
Paterson Sportsground	Storage Shed and Camp Kitchen - matching Grant Funding \$ for \$ Dependent (\$50,000)			Grant Dependent		Grant Funding & matching General Funds
Paterson Sportsground	Badminton / Boxing Shed Upgrades - matching Grant Funding \$ for \$ Dependent (\$250,000)				Grant Dependent	Grant Funding & matching General Funds
Paterson Sportsground	Playing Surface Upgrade - stage 2 - matching Grant Funding \$ for \$ Dependent (\$150,000)		Grant Dependent			Grant Funding & matching General Funds
Paterson Sportsground	Accessible Amenities & Gender Options for change room refurbishment - Grant Funding \$ for \$ Dependent (\$170,000)		Grant Dependent			Grant Funding & matching General Funds
Paterson Sportsground	Kiosk Refurbishment & external seating - matching Grant Funding \$ for \$ Dependent (\$170,000)			Grant Dependent		Grant Funding & matching General Funds
Playground - Lions Park / Bridge Reserve (Clarence Town)	Playground Upgrade - matching Grant Funding \$ for \$ Dependent (\$55,000)	Grant Dependent				Grant Funding & matching General Funds
Vacy Sporting Precinct	Playing Surface Improvements (drainage & irrigation) - matching Funding \$ for \$ Dependent (\$150,000)				Grant Dependent	Grant Funding & matching General Funds
TOTAL		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	

Recreation Facilities Renewal Program

Location	Project	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Funding Source
Dungog Showground	Internal (top) road sealing and lighting - <i>matching Grant Funding \$ for \$ Dependent (\$150,000)</i>				Grant Dependent	Grant Funds
Gresford Sporting Complex	Drainage and Landscaping				\$50,000	General Funds
Gresford Sporting Complex	Field Lighting Upgrade - <i>matching Grant Funding \$ for \$ Dependent (\$100,000)</i>				Grant Dependent	Grant Funds
Gresford Sporting Complex	Playing Surface upgrades & drainage - <i>matching Grant Funding \$ for \$ Dependent (\$150,000)</i>					Grant Funds
Orana Park (Gresford)	Septic Tank Replacement	\$30,000				General Funds
Orana Park (Gresford)	Playground, Picnic Shelter, Seating & BBQ Replacement - <i>matching Grant Funding \$ for \$ Dependent (\$150,000)</i>			Grant Dependent		Grant Funds
Playground - Lions Park (Scott St)	Playground Replacement			\$60,000		General Funds
TOTAL		\$30,000	\$0	\$60,000	\$50,000	

Combined Roads Program 2025-2026

Location	Project	2025-26
Clarence Town Road	Segment 9	\$67,000
Cory Street	Rail Crossing to New Rail Bridge	\$1,032,450
Main Street Paterson	Sloane Street to Albert Street	\$432,000
King Street Paterson	Duke Street to Queen Street	\$552,000
Marshall Street Clarence Town	South of Queen Street to King Street	\$756,000
Pinebrush Road	1.8km to 4.7km South of Alison Road (carry over from previous year)	\$424,750
Fosterton Road Dungog	Dowling Street to End of Urban + Extra (carry over from previous year)	\$1,469,250
Hospital Road Dungog	Mackay Street to Scott Avenue (from previous year + extra)	\$1,224,000
Eloiza Street Dungog	Mary Street to Short Street (from previous year + extra)	\$546,000
Melbee Circuit	Rens Street to Dowling Street extension (from previous year)	\$450,000
Martins Creek Road/Keppies Road	Intersection Upgrade (from previous year)	\$357,000
Fishers Hill Road	1.35 to 3.45km from Summerhill Road	\$1,470,000
Lord Street Dungog	Scout Lane to Mackay Street	\$468,000
Lord Street Dungog	Mackay to Brown Street	\$1,173,000
Abelard & Mackay Street	Roundabout	\$810,000
Road Safety Program	Walking & Cycling - Grey & Prince Sts Clarence Town	\$569,000
Road Safety Program	Walking & Cycling - Marshall Street Clarence Town	\$518,000
Bingleburra	RR7764 - Landslip & Road Rehabilitation (Natural Disaster Funding)	\$4,000,000
Clarence Town	New Bridge over the Williams River at Clarence Town	\$9,000,000
Gresford	New Bridge over the Paterson River at Gresford	\$2,735,000
Various	Causeway Approaches	\$3,400,000

Combined Roads Program 2026-2027


Location	Project	2026-27
Gresford Road	RR7778 - 1.30km to 2.80km Nth of Summerhill Road	\$2,160,000
Limeburners Creek Road	CT Bridge to Glen Martin Intersection	\$1,665,000
Myles Street Dungog	Windeyer Street to Verge Street	\$1,188,000
Paterson River Road	7.20km to 9.10km North of Coulston Bridge	\$1,330,000
Clarence Town	New Bridge over the Williams River at Clarence Town	\$1,301,000

Combined Roads Program 2027-2028

Location	Project	2027-28
Gresford Road	RR7778 - 6.80 to 7.35km North of Fishers Hill Road	\$792,000
Baird Street Dungog	Rens Street to End	\$675,000
Verge Street Dungog	Myles Street to Mary Street	\$483,000
Woerdens Road	2.5 to 4.0km from Clarence Town Road	\$1,050,000
Brown Street Dungog	Lord Street to Dowling Street	\$1,242,000

Combined Roads Program 2028-2029

Location	Project	2028-29
Bingleburra Road	RR7764 - 16.7 to 18.2km East of Allyn River Road	\$2,160,000
Paterson River Road	9.10 to 11.10km North of Coulston Bridge	\$1,680,000
Salisbury Road	2.5 to 3.85km North of Salisbury Gap Road	\$850,000

A photograph of a suspension bridge with a wooden deck and metal railings, surrounded by lush green trees. The bridge is made of metal cables and has a wooden walkway. The background is filled with dense green foliage. The bridge is a simple suspension design with a central support structure visible in the distance.

“The Operational Plan must include the council’s detailed annual budget along with the council’s Statement of Revenue Policy, which includes the proposed rates, fees and charges for that financial year.”

Part 3: Revenue Statement

Revenue Statement

Introduction

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Capital Expenditure

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Statement in respect to each ordinary rate and special rate to be imposed

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Statement in respect to each charge proposed to be levied

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Revenue Statement

Introduction

This Budget document has again been prepared to align to Council's Community Strategic Plan using an aging financial system. Funding is approved to upgrade council's financial systems with the view to better aligning council's budget document to the council Operating Plan to assist with readability for the community. These benefits will not be fully visible for approximately 12-24 months however, we anticipate incorporating improvements with each iteration of these documents.

The budget document shows an anticipated balanced budget for financial year 2025-26.

Council's financial budget for the ensuing year is submitted with the inclusion of the rate peg limit of 4.1% (4.1% core rate peg + 0.0% growth factor). The increases for general rates are detailed in Table 1, years 2026 to 2028 have a 4% rate peg amount factored in.

Table 1 – General Rate Summary

	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Notional Yield	11,311,189	11,763,636	12,234,181	12,723,548
Total Rates	11,311,189	11,763,636	12,234,181	12,723,548

Waste management charges have been increased by approximately 9.5% to start to provide reserve funding to assist with future site remediation costs, the individual charges being; Domestic waste \$438.00, domestic & non-domestic recycling \$200.00, commercial waste \$488.00, non-rateable waste \$488.00 and vacant waste \$32.50. Transfer to reserves for works has again been factored into these budget areas and in line with the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021, any surplus or deficit generated from Domestic Waste and Domestic Recycling are transferred to a Domestic Waste restricted asset. Council needs to commission closure plan estimates for all its landfill facilities and assess the impacts of these plans on future charges in the ensuing years.

The Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 Section 88 levy continues to apply in this budget to all waste entering the Short Street, Dungog landfill. This State Government charge commenced in 2009/10 at \$10 per tonne rising each year plus CPI until 2015/16, the estimated charge this year remains at \$95.00. As anticipated when introduced this has continued to generate additional administration costs for the collection and reporting of this levy.

Charges in relation to Onsite Sewage Management have been increased to \$120; this fee applies as the initial inspection fee as well as being the charge for both the initial approval to operate and renewals of approval to operate. Initial inspections do not attract a fee; however, re-inspections will continue to attract a fee.

Council's fees and charges have been modified wherever practicable, although many of the statutory fees have remained unchanged for a number of years. The relevant Government Departments have not considered the financial impact that their decisions are having on the ratepayer as a whole. The concept of user pays with certain regulatory fees is questionable, as the pricing structure has remained unchanged for many years.

Insurance costs have again risen over prior years with increases of 5% applied to general, property, motor vehicle and public liability insurance. Cyber & Crime insurance has been increased 4% upon council's broker advice.

Workers compensation has increased based on current premium estimates. It is stressed that the level of premium is predominantly calculated on claims history and may need to be altered depending on claims history adjustments at year-end. Public liability claims excess has been retained at previous levels and again any savings will be transferred to an insurance equalisation reserve to spread the burden of future claims from past events.

Salaries have been costed with an increase of 3% and a one-off payment for 2025-26, and 3% for the ensuing years. The Local Government State Award will be renegotiated for 2027 - 2029; any difference above the assumptions used within this budget will have a negative impact on the net result. The superannuation guarantee contributions have also been increased to 12% in line with legislative requirements.

Indexation has been applied to recurrent items at the anticipated CPI index rate of 4% with energy costs indexed at 5% in line with anticipated increases. Water and sewerage charges have been increase by 5% for both residential and business holdings. An oncost rate of 41.5% has been applied to jobs utilising day labour.

Major revenue items include unrestricted general rates \$11.3M, interest on investments \$521K, FAG general \$2.1M, FAG roads & bridges component \$1.2M, roads to recovery funding \$919K, regional road capital funding \$5.4M, Special Grant Local Roads \$2.7M, Bridges renewal \$4M, Fixing Country Bridges \$5M and Betterment Funding Bridges \$6.1M. Domestic waste & recycling charges \$2.5M, other waste & recycling charges \$363K, stormwater levy \$42K, OSM special rates \$370K, building inspection fees \$55K and DA fees and complying \$195K. Other funding is sourced from loans, contributions, grants, reserves and user charges.

Recurrent expenditures and some transfers to restricted assets have been retained in this year's budget; these expenditures are important as capital works are funded by these reserve funds.

Table 2 summarises the major capital items included within the budget document, while a commentary on recurrent items is provided after the table.

Table 2 - Capital Expenditure Items

Area	Project	Budget	Funding Source
Corporate	Office Equipment	5,000	Revenue
	Building & Improvements	100,000	Revenue
Governance	LG Elections	35,000	Revenue
	Governance	5,000	Revenue
Engineering	Plant Purchases	2,126,263	Reserve
	Small Plant & Tools	15,000	Reserve
	Office Equipment	2,500	Reserve
	2 Way Radio Installations	5,000	Reserve
	Depot Drainage & Sealing	100,000	Reserve
SES	Building & Grounds	6,000	Revenue
Aged Housing	Upgrade Shared Facilities	15,000	Reserve
Public Toilets	Building & Grounds	20,000	Revenue
Public Cemetery	Cemetery Capital Works	2,500	Reserve
Waste Management	Building & Improvements	35,000	Reserve
	Other Structures	185,000	Reserve
	Roadworks	100,000	Reserve/Revenue
Library	Furniture & Equipment	2,000	Revenue
	Books etc.	37,500	Grant
Museums	Building & Grounds	1,000	Revenue
Community & Cultural	Artworks Reserve	1,000	Revenue
	Building & Grounds	1,000	Revenue
Public Halls	Building & Grounds	2,000	Revenue
Sporting Grounds	Building & Grounds	3,000	Revenue
Parks & Gardens	Building & Grounds	2,500	Revenue
Swimming Pool	Building, Plant & Equip Dungog	4,000	Revenue

Table 2 - Capital Expenditure Items (cont.)

Area	Project	Budget	Funding Source
Urban Roads	Reseals	108,207	Revenue
	Lord St, Dungog	1,173,000	Revenue
	Melbee Ct, Dungog	450,000	S.711
	Abelard St, Dungog	810,000	Grant
	Main St, Paterson	432,000	Grant
	King St, Paterson	552,000	Grant
	Cory St	1,032,450	Grant
	Grey & Prince St, Clarence	569,000	Grant
	Marshall St, Clarence Town	518,000	Grant
	Lord St, Dungog	468,000	Grant
	Marshall St, Clarence Town	756,000	Grant
Rural Roads	Paterson River Road	1,333,000	Grant/Revenue
	Reseals	308,398	Revenue/SRV
	Resheeting	328,430	Revenue/SRV
Bridges	Brig O'Johnston Bridge	9,000,000	Grant
	Gresford Suspension Bridge	2,735,000	Grant
	26 Causeway Approaches	3,400,000	Grant
Regional Roads	Bingleburra Landslip	4,000,000	Disaster Funding
	Reseals	260,100	Reserve
Tourism	Building & Grounds	2,500	Revenue

Corporate & Client Services

Recurrent expenditures and most transfers to restricted assets have remained at similar levels to last year.

Information Technology hardware and licensing has been increased to allow upgrades to council's core systems, this is funded from reserves.

Auditor remuneration has increased to \$120K.

Council's Community Small Grants Program has been retained at \$25K. \$10K has been included for the school based traineeship program.

Plant purchases are in accordance with the plant replacement program. All costs for plant are funded from reserve.

Human resourcing advertising has increased \$40K.

The ELE provision is reviewed annually in accordance with accounting standards and adjusted in accordance with current and anticipated leave trends.

Public Order & Safety

Fire protection services – the budget has been prepared based on a statutory contribution to the NSW Fire Brigades of \$26K.

The NSW Rural Fire Service contribution has been increased by CPI to \$674K. The balance of the budget is prepared based on recurrent funding levels for individual line items.

Animal control – companion animal fines have not been included as they are immaterial and cannot be relied upon.

SES – Council's statutory contribution is estimated at \$37K, anything over this will have a detrimental effect on the budget.

Enforcement LG Regulations – Processing costs have been held at previous levels in line with current trends and compliance services continuing to be undertaken in house.

Health

All income and expenditure has been retained at similar levels to previous years.

Community Services & Education

Community services & education –all items remain static with CPI increases applied. Transfers to reserves retained at 1/3 of Dungog Shire Community Centre rental.

Alison Court – all operating expenditure increased by CPI.

Housing & Community Amenities

Town Planning – All costs are CPI indexed. \$104K has been added to consultancies due to continued difficulties with recruitment of staff into the Planning and Environment department. As a result council continues to utilise contractor resourcing to enable the required service levels to be maintained for customers. Legal costs have been retained at prior year levels, any expenses over these amounts will have a detrimental effect on the bottom line.

Environmental Protection – New expense areas have been maintained for Flying Fox Management project \$10K, Council Reserves Plan of Management Projects \$10K funded from General Revenue and \$5K toward climate change implications and Flood Warning systems.

Public Amenities – All costs are CPI indexed.

Public Cemeteries - Other costs are CPI indexed.

Other Sanitation & Garbage – Pan Collection costs remain static with the cost to Council for the service contractor being passed onto the recipients of this service; however, any decreases in the number of users of the service will result in additional cost to Council due to contract agreements with the service provider. Reduction in numbers is expected to continue over time with the operation of the Clarence Town sewer scheme. On-site Sewerage Management (OSM) fees have increased to \$120 per annum.

Stormwater Drainage

Stormwater Drainage remains static, the stormwater levy will generate revenue of \$42K, which is to be used for asset data collection and planning, construction and maintenance of drainage systems and stormwater treatment measures.

Other Waste Management

The contribution from domestic waste has been retained at 60% of the landfill operational costs, all other costs being CPI or wage indexed. Section 88 levy estimates and income have been included. Commercial and non-rateable waste charges have been set at a higher level than domestic waste services, with recycling charges being the same across all categories of service.

Domestic Waste Management & Recycling

Domestic Waste Management (DWM) & Domestic Recycling (DRM) – these areas are a revenue neutral area with all profits and losses funded by transfers to/from reserves in accordance with legislation. Contractor charges for collection are indexed by CPI in line with the contract.

Recreation & Culture

Library – All costs are CPI indexed.

Museums, Community Centres, Public Halls, Sporting Grounds, Clarence Town Swimming Pool, Dungog Swimming Pool and Parks and Gardens have all remained static other than CPI indexation and increases in maintenance and repair votes.

Mining Manufacturing & Construction

Building Control – expenditure has remained static other than CPI indexation.

Quarries & pits – this budget area has been reported retrospectively in previous years based on the cost of winning material.

Transport & Communication

Maintenance allocations have generally been increased by CPI indexation.

Capital road & bridge projects are fully funded from either grant funding or restricted contributions. The project sources of funds are FAG roads and bridges component \$1.2M. Capital works projects scheduled total \$30M and loan repayments total \$274K.

Regional roads – block grant funding has been anticipated at \$1.3M with 3x4 funding at existing levels.

Economic Affairs

Williams River Holiday Park – CPI has been applied to recurrent expenditure.

Frank Robinson Reserve – CPI has been applied to recurrent expenditure.

Saleyards – the net return on lease income after expenditure has been transferred to restricted assets with no significant change to prior year budget.

Real Estate Development - CPI has been applied to recurrent expenditure.

Tourism/Economic Development –Operational areas remaining relatively static, \$8K toward local area promotion.

General Purpose Revenues

General rates have been budgeted to increase by the rate peg limit of 4.1%. The Independent Pricing & Regulatory Tribunal (IPART)

approved special variation ceased 2023-2024. The FAG equalisation component has been anticipated at \$2.1M. Interest from investments and Council's bank account have increased slightly to \$521 with \$32K applicable to Section 711 developer contributions held and being transferred to restricted assets.

Ratepayers who are concerned about rate payments are encouraged to make contact with council to discuss their circumstances confidentially. There are measures we can put in place to assist members of our community who are in financial difficulty, and we will work closely and respectfully with our community through their current situation.

Summary

The budget is in balance, which is an excellent result for council in the current unpredictable economic environment. However, the budget is only as good as the information provided, any unforeseen expenses will have a detrimental effect on the end result, which shows the delicate nature of the fiscal situation and continues to highlight the need for continued fiscal restraint.

The need to service additional statutory requirements, growing community expectations and the increased costs associated with the maintenance requirements of Council's existing operations leaves no room to move within the existing revenue structures. The ongoing challenge for council remains, collecting sufficient funds each year to adequately cover the increasing cost of normal operations and maintain the community infrastructure.

General rate income, which provides the majority of operating revenue, continues to fall short of meeting the current and future needs of the community, the 4.1% increase under rate capping is not sufficient to cover CPI or award wage increases, let alone increased costs associated with road and bridge maintenance in particular.

Staff numbers and wages continue to be a growing number,

service reviews have highlighted the need for additional staff and the increasing regulatory and compliance requirements on council and staff safety cannot be ignored. Council's own generated income is a finite resource at its very limit, the provision of services and service levels requires consideration as the continued drain on resources is unsustainable.

Council aims to continually make modest productivity gains each year through service reviews and associated improvement programs however, it is still heavily reliant on grant funding to provide current service levels. Sustainable assets and services requires council to move toward a fully funded operating position where council collects sufficient revenue to fund operating expenditure and depreciation. Funds collected for depreciation enable asset renewal expenditure to be funded, thereby ensuring the community's assets do not deteriorate.

Many of the capital works projects within the budget are being funded from restricted assets and without replenishing or topping up these restricted asset accounts to the same degree as funds are being expended reduces Council's capacity to undertake future capital works. Council must maintain sufficient cash reserves to ensure that it can meet its short-term working capital requirements.

During the course of the budget review process a number of projects have been excluded because of lack of available funds. Council needs to be mindful that if any projects are to be added they will have to have funding sources identified and or reduce projects or service levels from another area of the budget to counteract the addition. Conversely, the removal of any individual projects needs to take into account that any wages component of that project will have to be reallocated to other budget areas.

Shaun Chandler
Executive Manager Corporate & Customer Service

Statement in respect to each ordinary rate and special rate to be imposed

Ordinary Rates in respect of the year 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026 will be levied on all rateable land in the area under the following categories and sub-categories and be subject to base amounts as detailed in the table below:

- (a) Farmland.
- (b) Residential, Residential Clarence Town, Residential Dungog, Residential Village.
- (c) Business, Business Clarence Town, Business Dungog, Business Village.

Council is varying General Income by the 4.1% rate pegging limit as announced by the Minister for Local Government to enable the core delivery of services. Council's capacity to improve existing levels of service to the community and ability to address the current and future needs within the shire are hampered by a lack of financial capacity.

CATEGORY SUB-CATEGORY	AD VALOREM AMOUNT CENTS IN \$	BASE \$	AMOUNT % OF TOTAL RATE	ESTIMATED RATE YIELD (\$)
Farmland	0.2285	636.90	14.9	3,922,874
Residential	0.1937	649.30	32	4,580,451
Residential - Clarence Town	0.2270	507.90	37.6	464,823
Residential - Dungog	0.3792	302.60	22	1,334,705
Residential - Village	0.1797	508.60	45	408,106
Business	0.3475	880.70	48	301,217
Business - Clarence Town	0.3343	717.30	48.9	38,172
Business - Dungog	0.4360	731.50	40.4	197,495
Business - Village	0.2328	649.90	46.9	63,811

Overdue Rates and Charges - Interest

In accordance with section 566(3) of the Local Government Act 1993 the Minister for Local Government has not yet specified the maximum rate of interest payable on overdue rates and charges for 2025/26. Council will apply the maximum rate when determined by the Minister.

Statement in respect to each charge proposed to be levied

In accordance with Sec 501 of the Local Government Act 1993 the following charges are proposed to be levied.

Waste Management Charges

For the provision of Waste Management Services to:

		Yield
Business / Commercial Premises	\$488.00 per MGB service	\$173,240
Occupied Non-rateable Properties	\$488.00 per MGB service	\$111,752

Recycling Charge

A Recycling charge will be levied for commercial and non rateable properties utilising this service and for 2025/2026 the charge will be \$200 per bin per annum. The estimated income from these charges is \$62,800.

Stormwater Charge

		Yield
Urban Property	\$25 per property	\$38,875
Commercial Property	\$25 per property	\$3,675

Sanitary Charges

For the provision of sanitary services to:

		Yield
Rateable premises	1 Service - Regular \$1,700	\$3,400

Domestic Waste Management Charge (DWMC)

In accordance with Sec 496 of the Local Government Act 1993, the following Domestic Waste Management Charges are proposed:
Vacant Domestic Waste Management Charge - for vacant land situated where the Domestic Waste Management Service exists.

		Yield
Per parcel of rateable land	\$32.50	\$15,340

A Domestic Waste Management Charge under Section 496 of the Local Government Act 1993 must be made and levied for each parcel of rateable land for which the service is available. The income from this charge must be calculated not to exceed the “reasonable cost” of providing the service.

The Charge is to cover short term, recurrent and operational costs of waste management, longer term capital costs or future replacement costs.

Any surplus or deficit derived as a result of providing the service for a period must be maintained in the Domestic Waste Management activity. If a surplus occurs the cash component must be held as a restricted asset.

It is proposed that the following charges be made for Domestic Waste Management for the year 2025/2026:

Domestic Waste Charge (DWC) for Occupied Land

Waste Service per	bin	\$438.00
Recycling Service	per bin	\$200.00
Total DWC		\$638.00

The estimated yield from Section 496 charges is \$1,741,050. A Domestic Recycling charge under Section 496 of the Local Government Act 1993 will be raised to cover the cost associated with providing a kerbside recycling service.

It is proposed that the Domestic Recycling charge for the year 2025/2026 will be \$200 per service per annum. The estimated yield from this charge is \$789,200.

Sewage Management

In accordance with Section 608 of the Local Government Act 1993, an On-site Sewage Management (OSM) fee of \$120 per OSM facility will be levied and included on Council's annual rate notice. This fee will be levied on all assessments that operate On-site Sewage Management Facilities throughout Dungog Shire. The estimated yield from this special fee is \$370,200.



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