1. HUNTER REGIONAL PLAN
EF08/172

Precis:

The NSW Department of Planning and Environment has released the draft Hunter Regional Plan for public comment.

Introduction

The draft Plan outlines how growth and change will be managed in the Hunter region to the year 2036. It prioritises growing and diversifying the Hunter economy so that it remains the biggest and most productive regional economy in Australia; protecting the environment; and supporting robust regional communities.

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the draft Hunter Regional Plan and to seek Council’s endorsement of the submission to the NSW Department of Planning and Environment.

Background

The draft Hunter Regional Plan provides an overarching framework to guide development and investment in the Hunter region to 2036. For the first time, both the Upper and Lower Hunter are included in a single document. It consolidates strategic planning considerations for land use and infrastructure for the 11 local government areas of:

- Cessnock
- Dungog
- Gloucester
- Great Lakes
- Lake Macquarie
- Maitland
- Muswellbrook
- Newcastle
- Port Stephens
- Singleton
- Upper Hunter

Once the Plan is finalised, it will replace the Upper Hunter Strategic Regional Land Use Plan which currently applies to the Dungog, Gloucester, Muswellbrook, Singleton and Upper Hunter Local Government Areas; the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy for Cessnock, Lake Macquarie, Maitland, Newcastle and Port Stephens Local Government Areas; and the Mid North Coast Regional Strategy for Great Lakes Local Government Area.

Subregional Landscapes

The draft Plan recognises that growth and change will occur differently across the region and identifies four distinct landscape subregions - Western Hunter, Northern Tops, North East Coast and Hunter City (including Inner Newcastle). Dungog LGA falls within the Northern Tops subregional landscape.

The draft Plan applies to the areas and subregional landscapes shown in Figure 1.
The Goals

The NSW Government’s vision is:

“The Hunter region will capitalise on its diversity and connectivity to capture growth, using its natural resources and amenity, economic strengths, and its communities, to actively manage change and attract investment. It will offer an array of quality lifestyles within sustainable and healthy environments.”

To achieve this vision, the NSW Government has set four goals:

- **GOAL 1**: Grow Australia’s next major city
- **GOAL 2**: Grow the largest regional economy in Australia
- **GOAL 3**: Protect and connect natural environments
- **GOAL 4**: Support robust regional communities

The draft Plan sets out a series of directions that will be implemented to deliver the goals identified for the Hunter Region, which are summarised in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL 1: Grow Australia’s next major city</th>
<th>Direction 1.1 Grow and sustainably manage Hunter City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GOAL 2: Grow the largest regional economy in Australia</td>
<td>Direction 2.1 Promote investment to grow regional rural and resource industries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Direction 2.2 Grow and connect service-based industries to support regional communities and provide a competitive edge for businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Direction 2.3 Enhance inter-regional transport connections</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ordinary Meeting of the Council of the Shire of Dungog, to be held Tuesday 16 February 2016 commencing 6.00pm.
Key priorities, which have been derived from the goals and directions listed above are identified for each of the four subregions. For the Northern Tops, the key priorities are as follows:

**GOAL 2: Grow Hunter’s regional economy:**

- Develop and strengthen connections with tourist markets from within the Hunter, Sydney and overseas;
- Enhance tourism infrastructure and connectivity, reinforcing the importance of Bucketts Way/Thunderbolts Way;
- Enhance links to regional services in Hunter City and Taree; and
- Prioritise the provision of high quality and reliable telecommunication links to and within rural communities.

**GOAL 3: Protect and connect natural areas:**

- Protect water quality, rural amenity and the natural assets that characterise the region;
- Monitor and manage natural hazard risks including flooding and bushfire;
- Monitor and support the impacts of ageing populations on the accessibility and servicing of rural communities; and
- Enhance regional-level habitat connectivity, while recognising the need to continue to accommodate rural and resource industries.

**GOAL 4: Support robust regional communities:**

- Locate growth within existing towns and villages using existing and committed urban infrastructure and services;
- Provide alternative methods of service provision to cater for remote access;
- Strengthen the roles of existing communities and the regeneration of towns and villages that build on their rural identity and form; and
- Monitor and respond to the potential influence of future energy sector activity on local employment, housing and service demands.
Delivering the Plan

The delivery of the final Plan will be overseen by a Coordinating and Monitoring Committee, comprising representatives from the NSW Government and councils across the Hunter region. The committee will review and recommend plans, projects and actions to advance the delivery of the final Plan, which will inform the timing of new investments. The intent is that the actions identified in the final Plan will be progressively implemented through a mix of mechanisms and initiatives that will be the responsibility of the NSW Government, the 11 local councils and the associated Hunter Pilot Joint Organisation.

Regular reporting will occur on the delivery of the Plan, which will include the ongoing monitoring of housing and employment land supply and delivery through the establishment of a Hunter Urban Development Program. It is also expected that the Minister for Planning will issue a local planning direction under section 117 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 to require that future planning proposals and reviews of local environmental plans are consistent with this draft Plan, once it is finalised.

Council's Submission

The public exhibition and submissions period runs until 28 February 2016, although submissions from Councils will be accepted up until the end of March 2016. In summary, Council's draft submission focusses on:

1. The promotion of tourism

The draft Plan identifies that Scone, Gloucester and Dungog provide entry points to the World Heritage Area of Barrington Tops National Park. Action 2.2.2. seeks to develop strategies for enhancing tourism infrastructure to increase national competitiveness through prioritising infrastructure that will support the tourism industry. One of the key priorities listed for the Northern Tops is reinforcing the importance of Bucketts Way/Thunderbolts Way for tourism. In Council’s submission, it is recommended that Main Road 101, from Maitland to Stroud, via Dungog should also be included as key infrastructure for the Northern Tops as this route provides the primary link between Gloucester, Stroud, Dungog and Maitland.

Additionally, Council’s recently exhibited draft Dungog Visitor Economy Plan has identified that the State and National Parks within Dungog Shire are the most common primary motivator for visitors to the LGA, although further discussion between stakeholders, including National Parks and Forestry Corporation is required to improve access to the Barringtons. The submission therefore requests that access to these State owned lands is given a high priority in order to support tourism in the Dungog LGA.

2. The protection of agricultural land

Dungog Council is currently preparing to undertake a Rural Lands Study, which aims to develop a long term strategy to maintain and/or improve agricultural productivity within Dungog LGA. However, Dungog Shire does not appear to be mentioned in any of the actions within the draft Plan, which seek to protect and promote agriculture.

Action 2.4.2 of the draft Plan seeks to manage competing and conflicting interests in rural and resources areas to provide greater certainty for investment. As Dungog LGA is not currently impacted by coal mining or gas extraction, there may be opportunities to investigate new agricultural and/or housing pursuits within Dungog Shire. It is envisaged that Council’s upcoming Rural Lands Strategy will investigate opportunities, constraints, challenges and options for diversifying land uses in rural areas to support high value rural industries, intensive agricultural production, tourism demands and other appropriate uses for rural areas.
3. **Protecting the Hunter’s drinking water**

Action 3.2.1 of the draft Plan, seeks to protect the Hunter’s water supplies. To achieve this action, the NSW Government proposes to work with Council’s to manage growth in identified water supply districts through the application of appropriate planning controls and to require that proposals for new or intensified uses or activities in identified water supply catchments demonstrate a neutral or beneficial impact on water quality. While Council is committed to protecting its water resources, given that the majority of Dungog LGA is located within identified Drinking Water catchments, it is important that the application of any new planning controls does not unreasonably restrict future development or investment within Dungog Shire or if it does that the Dungog LGA community is adequately compensated. It is further requested that Council be involved in the development of any new planning controls relating to development within drinking water catchments.

4. **Improving resilience to natural disasters**

- The actions within Direction 4.3 of the draft Plan are supported, in which the NSW Government intends on working with Council’s to:
  - Support existing and planned communities by investing in infrastructure to reduce the threat of harm to people and property and provide safe evacuation and appropriate response during a hazard event.
  - Take a more consistent and coordinated approach to plan and manage hazards by:
    - consolidating information and making this publicly available through the Department of Planning and Environment’s Planning Portal and the Office of Environment and Heritage’s website, Adapt NSW;
    - supporting joint council investigations into managing the threat of natural hazards in the region; and
    - working with councils to develop local strategies and planning controls for urban and rural lands and related infrastructure.
  - Review and update local floodplain management plans
  - Prioritise investigations into how hazard mitigation infrastructure may be improved.
  - Develop strategic, incident-based and emergency management actions such as bushfire and flood response plans; and
  - Integrate planning for emergency response infrastructure to support the above.

5. **Health Facilities and Aging Population**

- Action 4.2.1 of the draft Plan recognises that localities including Dungog Shire are popular destinations for retirees and are expected to age more rapidly. Consequently, there will be additional demand for health services, community transport services and seniors housing. Action 4.2.1, together with Action 4.2.7 are focused on improving transport to health services. While access to these facilities is important, the ongoing provision of health services within the Dungog community is also necessary and should be reinforced in the draft Plan.

A copy of Council’s draft submission is included as **Annexure ‘A’ (B:7)**.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council endorse the attached submission to NSW Planning and Environment in relation to the draft Hunter Regional Plan.
INFRASTRUCTURE & ASSETS DEPARTMENT
EXECUTIVE MANAGERS REPORT

1. ALISON COURT
    EF07/68

Precis:

This report provides further information as regards the tenancy arrangements for the Alison Court units.

**********

Background

At the Ordinary Meeting of Council held on 15 December 2015, Council resolved:

RESOLVED on the motion of Cr McKenzie and seconded by Cr Booth that Council:

1. Advise the former occupiers of Alison Court units that they will be able to occupy their former unit upon completion of repairs to 12 units, subject to:
   a. The execution of a new lease agreement between Council and the occupier.
   b. The residents are to comply with Council's policy
   c. Council will not be responsible for the placement of whitegoods within the units

2. Advise the former occupiers of the lower units that where there is a vacancy or a vacancy arises within the 12 units being refurbished the former occupiers of the units in the lower section will draw by lot as regards their order of priority for re-housing such individuals within Alison Court (A ranking order with 1 being the highest priority).

3. Refund the residual monies held for the last resident funded unit.

4. Staff submit a further report to Council once assessment of other options for the bottom six units is finalised.

5. Suspend the Alison Court Committee in the interim period.

6. Adopt the Alison Court Units occupation policy.

Subsequent to this Council meeting, all of the Alison Court residents that occupied the units on the 21st April 2015 were invited to attend a morning tea at the Council Chambers on the 16th December to discuss the outcome of the previous Council meeting.

At this meeting, the previous residents were informed of the resolution that was made by Council. In particular, it was advised that Unit 20 at Alison Court is now available for another tenant due to the previous tenant's decision to be reimbursed for the contribution of the self funded agreement and not return to the units.

Council asked all previous tenants of the units currently being refurbished to express their interest in the reoccupation of these units. All of the previous tenants of units 2, 3, 8, 9, 11, 12, 12A, 14, 15, 16 & 19 which are being refurbished have all expressed their interest to reoccupy the unit that they previously occupied.

The tenants of units 4, 5, 6, 7 & 17 which are not part of the current refurbishment works were asked to express their interest in occupation of Unit 20. With the exception of the previous tenant of Unit 5, all expressed interest to occupy that unit.
Current Status

In January, the previous resident of unit 20 wrote to Council asking to be able to re-occupy that unit as their housing arrangements had not gone to plan.

Council has responded to that correspondence advising that the tenancy contract had been severed and that Council had made a commitment to the dislodged tenants of the lower units that one of them would get the opportunity to occupy unit 20. The application of the previous tenant of unit 20 to re-occupy that unit was therefore rejected.

Staff Recommendation

It is recommended that Council take the opportunity to resolve the priority order for the tenants of 4, 6, 7 & 17 at the February meeting such that those residents can make necessary longer term arrangements for their housing.

As per the resolution of December 2015, Council is to draw by lot the individuals by order of priority for the reoccupation of unit 20 at Alison Court. The individual’s names to be placed in the ballot are the previous occupants of units 4, 6, 7 & 17. The order of the highest priority should be drawn in order of 1, 2, 3 & 4 and that order of priority is maintained for any future vacancies until all of the individuals have been exhausted from that priority list.

IMPLICATIONS

Community

The community will benefit by the rehousing of another individual who will regain their independent living status.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Council draw by lot the individuals by order of priority for the reoccupation of unit 20 at Alison Court. The individual’s names to be placed in the ballot are the previous occupants of units 4, 6, 7 & 17. The order of the highest priority should be drawn in order of 1, 2, 3 & 4 and that order of priority is maintained for any future vacancies until all of the individuals have been exhausted from that priority list;

2. The names and their priority be recorded in the minutes of this meeting; and

3. The previous occupants of units 4, 6, 7 & 17 be notified of the outcome.
2. PROPOSED ACQUISITION OF CROWN LAND BY HUNTER WATER
EF08/25

Precis:
Hunter Water has written to Council seeking the consent of Council to acquire Crown Land in Clarence Town where waste water pump stations and pipelines have been constructed for the Clarence Town sewerage scheme. Council is the Reserve Trust Manager (RTM) of the subject land.

Introduction
Hunter Water is currently working through the requirements of Crown Lands to finalise the acquisition of land that contains Hunter Water infrastructure as part of the Clarence Town sewer reticulation.

The interests include land within Lot 7008 & 7009 DP 1056819 (Reserve 81436) which are located within the Williams River Caravan Park area. The other lot is Lot 7013 DP 1057675 (Reserve 610010) which is within the Wharf Reserve area. Council is the RTM for all of the above mentioned lots.

Background
The Clarence Town sewerage scheme was completed by Hunter Water in March 2012. As part of the design process, Council provided verbal approval for the location of waste water pump station and associated pipework within land known as the Williams River Caravan Park and another within land known as Wharf Reserve.

Hunter Water is now seeking to formalise the ownership of the land by way of acquisition from the Crown Lands Department.

As part of this process, Hunter Water is seeking the concurrence of Council to proceed with the acquisition of freehold land for the 2 pump stations and associated easements for pipelines.

Staff Recommendation
Council provide written concurrence to Hunter Water for the acquisition of the subject land.

IMPLICATIONS

Community
Infrastructure is already in place and the community has been receiving the benefit of the Clarence Town Sewerage Scheme for the past four years.

RECOMMENDATION
That Council provide written concurrence to Hunter Water for the acquisition of the subject land.
3. PATERSON SPORTSGROUND LEASES - GOLF AND TENNIS CLUBS
   EF15/108

Precis:
This report provides information regarding the renewal of the existing leases at the Paterson Sportsground for the Golf and Tennis Clubs.

Introduction
The Paterson Sportsground is located on Crown Land (Reserve No 700034) under the control of Council. The Paterson Golf Club and Paterson Tennis Club have had leases for two sections of the Sportsground land which expired in December 2014. The previous leases were for a period of ten years and are due for renewal.

Background
The leases for both Paterson Golf and Tennis Clubs have expired and are due for renewal. All leases on Crown Land are required to be prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Crown Land lease template.

The leases for both sections of land for the two clubs have therefore been prepared using the required template by Council’s solicitor and require the approval of Council prior to renewal.

Golf Club - The Golf Club is situated on Part Lots 80 & 81 in DP 823698 and comprises of 32.5494 ha with an annual rent set at $2090.00 including GST.

Tennis Club - The Tennis Club is situated on Part Lots 80 & 81 DP 823698 within the showground and comprises of 0.4909 ha with an annual rental set at $220.00 including GST.

The previous leases were subject to an annual CPI increase and were billed to the respective clubs on the 21st December annually. The proposed leases has a similar increase clause within the lease document.

The new leases that have been prepared have a terminating date of 21st December 2024. The leases must be approved and signed by a representative of the Crown.

Staff Recommendation
Council proceed with the renewal of the leases subject to the approval of the Crown.

IMPLICATIONS

Financial
The lease amounts are relatively minor but do assist in providing funding for the Sportsground complex. Having these areas leased and managed by local clubs removes the burden for such maintenance from Council.

Community
The Paterson community will continue to receive the benefit of community sporting facilities.

RECOMMENDATION
1. That Council approve the renewal of the leases for both the Paterson Golf Club and Paterson Tennis Club within the Paterson Sportsground complex; and
2. That the prepared lease documents be signed under Council Seal and forwarded to the Crown for approval.
4. PROPOSED ROAD CLOSURE AND VESTING OF LAND TO CROWN

Precis:
This report identifies a request from NSW Department of Primary Industries - Land and Natural Resources seeking consent from Council for the vesting of unconstructed Council Road to the Crown for road closure.

**********

Background
In November 2014, NSW Trade & Investment - Crown Lands wrote to Council regarding a proposed road closure including an unformed section of Council Public Road south of Lennoxton Road (Annexure ‘A’ (B:17)) identified as Cluster 541696. No objection to the closure was made by Council.

Current Status
On 2 February 2016, Council received correspondence from NSW Department of Primary Industries - Land and Natural Resources seeking consent from Council for the vesting of unconstructed Council Road to the Crown for road closure. Consent from Council is required under Section 38 (2)(b) of the Roads Act 1993 which specifically states:-

38 Effect of notice of closure

(1) On publication of the notice closing the public road concerned:
(a) the road ceases to be a public road, and
(b) the rights of passage and access that previously existed in relation to the road are extinguished.

(2) The land comprising a former road:
(a) in the case of a freeway, remains vested in RMS, and
(b) in the case of a public road that was previously vested in a council (other than a public road in respect of which no construction has ever taken place), remains vested in the council, and
(c) in any other case, becomes (or, if previously vested in the Crown, remains) vested in the Crown as Crown land.

NSW Department of Primary Industries - Land and Natural Resources have therefore requested consent for the vesting of the land to the Crown by 23 February 2016.

Staff Recommendation
Council provide written concurrence to the vesting of the unformed land identified in Cluster 541696 to the Crown as per Section 38 (2)(b) of the Roads Act 1993.

IMPLICATIONS

Statutory
Council has statutory obligations under Section 38 (2)(b) of the Roads Act 1993 to provide written consent for the vesting of this land back to Crown.

Community
Closure and selling of Road Reserves can reduce access for the community but this is governed by the Crown through the appropriate State Departments.
RECOMMENDATION

That Council provide written concurrence to the vesting of the unformed land identified in Cluster 541696 to the Crown as per Section 38 (2)(b) of the Roads Act 1993.
Precis:

This report provides information with regards to the current roadworks programme and schedule of Capital Works to be undertaken for the duration of 2015/2016.

**********

Roads to Recovery

At Council’s July 2015 Ordinary Meeting, Council were informed of advice received from the Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development, outlining increases to the Roads to Recovery Programme for the next 2 years as a result of the reintroduction of indexation of fuel excise. The increase of $300 million in 2015-2016 and $805 million in 2016-2017 equate to the following increases for Dungog Shire Council:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015/2016</td>
<td>$343,992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016/2017</td>
<td>$923,045</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

East Gresford - Park & Durham Roads

Council currently has an allocation of $802,941 for works in Park Street / Durham Road at East Gresford.

Survey and Design works are nearing completion but have proved to be problematic due to existing infrastructure especially the asbestos water reticulation pipework. Whilst Hunter Water have advised that they are able to contribute to the replacement of this water main, the design, tender and timing of such will dictate that this project will not be able to be completed prior to the 30 June 2016 deadline.

It is therefore recommended that the existing $802,941 be reallocated as follows:-

- $700,000 - Limeburners Creek Road - Project brought forward from 2016/2017
- $102,941 - Brown & Dowling Street - Completion of existing drainage, blisters and roadworks

It is further recommended that the $923,045 be allocated to the Park Street / Durham Road project for 2016/2017. Although plans are not complete at this time, it should be noted that due to lack of drainage and inadequate pavement at this site, considerable expense will be required for ‘unseen’ assets.

Whilst it is disappointing that a further delay to the project is required, the delay will allow for water and drainage issues to be resolved and further consultation with the Gresford Community with regards to the construction.

Prince Street Clarence Town

Council currently has allocated approximately $198,000 from Financial Assistance Grants (FAG) and old Town Funds for the rehabilitation of Prince Street Clarence Town from Rifle to Grey Street. These works will also include the ‘V’-drain at Grey Street and other required drainage improvements.

The funding for this project is thought to be inadequate given the scope of works required especially with regards to the drainage works required. It is therefore recommended that the $343,992 from the increase in Roads to Recovery funding for 2015/2016 be allocated to this
project. It is further recommended that the $198,000 currently allocated to the project be re-allocated to the Queen/Rifle Street project to assist with over-expenditures at that location.

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

The review of these projects will provide the opportunity for Council to complete the projects within the allocated timeframes and budgetary parameters.

Statutory

Council is required to expend the annually allocated Roads to Recovery funding within the financial year or it will be withheld until the last year of the programme.

Community

The increase in funding will enable Council to undertake further works on the road network which will benefit the community as a whole.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:-

1. Allocate $700,000 from 2015/2016 Roads to Recovery Funding to the Limeburners Creek Road rehabilitation project;

2. Allocate $102,941 from 2015/2016 Roads to Recovery Funding to the Brown/Dowling Street drainage, roadworks and kerb blisters project;

3. Allocate $343,992 from 2015/2016 Roads to Recovery Funding to the Prince Street (Clarence Town) road and drainage works project;

4. Re-allocate the $198,000 previously allocated to Prince Street Clarence Town to the Rifle and Queen Street project; and

5. Allocate $923,045 from 2016/2017 Roads to Recovery Funding to the Park Street / Durham Road rehabilitation project at East Gresford.
1. DUNGOG - GRESFORD LAND & BEEF INC HOOF & HOOK COMPETITION 2016

EF07/74

Precis:
Request for financial assistance under Sec 356 of the Local Government Act 1993.

Council has received the following correspondence from Narelle Hand, secretary of the Dungog-Gresford Land & Beef Inc. requesting a donation toward the annual Hoof & Hook competition to be held 9 – 10 April 2016:

**Hoof & Hook Competition 10th April 2016**

General Manager
Dungog Shire Council

Dungog -Gresford Land & Beef group will be holding our annual hoof & hook competition on the weekend of 9th-10th April 2016. Thanks to the support of loyal sponsors and the local beef producers in the Dungog – Gresford district the competition has been running for more than 20 years.

The group thanks you kindly for your sponsorship in previous years. We are seeking your renewed support for this year’s event. As in the past sponsors names will be displayed on a banner at the judging venue and sponsors names also announced during the morning. Your business banner can be displayed at the Sale yards if supplied. Sponsors are encouraged and most welcome to attend our presentation dinner and will have the opportunity to make a presentation during the awards.

Judging on the hoof will be held at the Dungog Sale yards on Sunday 10th April 2016 commencing at 9.00 am and we welcome sponsors, competitors and the public along to this morning. The carcass judging will be held at Wingham Beef Exports and the presentation dinner on Friday night April 15th at the Dungog RSL Club (commencing 6.30 pm). All championship ribbons, trophies & prizes will be presented at the dinner by sponsors.

Council last year donated $100 towards the Dungog-Gresford Hoof & Hook Inc Carcass Competition.

**IMPLICATIONS**

**Financial**

As Council’s Operational Plan 2015–2016 shows a deficit budget situation the donation is maintained at last years level.

Funding for the donation will be sourced from Council’s budget allocation for Sec 356 contributions and donations. Committed expenditure at 19 January 2016 is $3,422.

There are no other statutory, environmental, community or consultative implications.
RECOMMENDATION

That Council donate $100 to the Dungog-Gresford Land & Beef Inc. Hoof & Hook Competition 2016.
2. QUARTERLY FINANCE REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2015

EF 08/224

Précis:

Review of expenditure and revenues as per Section 203 of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 for the quarter ending 31 December 2015.

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Responsible Accounting Officers Certificate:

Section 203 (2) of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 requires that the budget review statement include or be accompanied by a report from the responsible accounting officer. This report is required to indicate whether the Responsible Accounting Officer believes that the statement indicates that the financial position of the Council is satisfactory, having regard to the original estimate of income and expenditure, and if that position is unsatisfactory, recommendations for remedial action.

Upon inspection of the budget review statements I Shaun Chandler, as Responsible Accounting Officer hereby certify that having regard to the original estimate of income and expenditure of Council, the level of available working capital projected to year end is satisfactory.

The quarterly finance report for the period ending 31 December 2015 is provided as Annexure ‘A’ (B:23) for Council’s consideration.

Adjustments have been made to reflect current income and expenditure, and where appropriate a commentary is included for Council’s consideration. As Council’s 2014/15 financial statements have now been audited, carry over projects not completed at 30 June 2015 are included in this review. These carried forward projects have been funded from restricted assets or are grant funded and will have no effect on the net result to Council.

As the six monthly review process provides staff more opportunity to evaluate fluctuations and movements within budget items, areas of potential savings will be more visible and will enable timely analysis of trends.

General Fund

Income & Expenses

The proposed variation for the quarter shows an improvement of $15,121 with the projected result after variations being a deficit situation of $217,091 (deficit of $242,759 on original estimate for 2015/16).

The major components of this projected improvement to the estimated result are:

Improvements

- Development Inspections Roads - $9,342 higher than budgeted income.
- Rates – Pension Concession - $6,158 lower than budgeted pension concessions.
- Parks & Reserves - $2,100 unbudgeted rental income.

Deteriorations

- Corporate Services – Insurances - $1,625 higher than budgeted insurance costs.
Capital Projects

Capital expenditure on roads and bridges infrastructure and other assets is reported to Council on a monthly basis by the Executive Manager – Infrastructure and Assets.

Projects with a zero net effect on the operating result for Council have generally been funded from restricted assets (RA) or grant/contributions and are summarised below for Council information.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function Area</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Funding Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Housing &amp; Community Amenities</td>
<td>Environmental Protection Dungog Flood Study</td>
<td>$28,500</td>
<td>Grant Funding and Restricted Assets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dungog Landfill Weighbridge &amp; Civilworks</td>
<td>$210,000</td>
<td>Grant Funding and Restricted Assets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport &amp; Communication</td>
<td>Local Roads &amp; Bridges Storm Damage</td>
<td>$2,076,931</td>
<td>Grant Funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local Roads &amp; Bridges Storm Damage Bridges</td>
<td>$1,203,154</td>
<td>Grant Funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Regional Roads Storm Damage</td>
<td>$1,506,000</td>
<td>Grant Funding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cash & Investments Position

Year to date cash and investments position has remained largely unchanged from Councils original Operational Plan. Carry forward projects and additional works are all funded from either restricted cash assets or grant funding and have no impact on the cash position of council.

**Statements:**

Investments

Council’s restricted funds are invested in accordance with council’s investment policies – refer Executive Manager Corporate Service Report - Monthly Statement of Investments.

Cash

Council has reconciled its cash accounts and investments with the bank statements as at 31 December 2015.

Contracts and Other Expenses

Council has not entered into any material contracts during the quarter with suppliers outside Council’s preferred contracts list and greater than $50,000.

Consultancy and Legal Expenses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Expenditure YTD</th>
<th>Budgeted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consultancies</td>
<td>52,852</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Fees</td>
<td>67,486</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**IMPLICATIONS**

Financial

The report highlights budget variations and restricted asset transfers for Council’s consideration, and the adjustments if adopted will form part of the Operational Plan 2015/16.
Statutory

The budget review satisfies requirements under Section 203 of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the variations to budgeted expenditures and revenues for the December quarter be approved and form part of the Operational Plan 2015/16.

2. That Council note the restricted cash transfers as highlighted within the review.
1. NSW GOVERNMENT MERGER PROPOSAL EF15/124

Precis:

Reporting on the NSW Governments merger proposal for Dungog & Gloucester Councils.

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Background

Council was previously involved in merger considerations with Maitland City Council, following the final report by the NSW Independent Local Government Review Panel. The Council determined to reject the previous recommendations on the outcome of the business case that was prepared by consultants MorrisonLow.

The Council then had the second opportunity to comment based upon the findings of IPART’s assessment of the Councils merger proposal and fit for the future improvement plan.

The NSW Government at the time had forwarded a strongly worded letter to all Councils as regards the findings. The Council disputed IPART’s findings and voted to stand alone and responded to the Department of Premier & Cabinet accordingly, whereas Maitland determined that they would submit their response including that they were prepared to merge with Dungog Shire Council.

Report

On 18 December 2015, the NSW Government announced 35 merger proposals in NSW, with Dungog Shire Council and Gloucester Shire Councils’ the subject of one such proposal.

The release of the initial merger proposal report highlighted a total financial benefit of $19Mil over 20 years, with the NSW Government funding of $15Mil being $5Mil for the cost of merger and $10Mil for the new Council entity to invest into public infrastructure.

As a consequence of the merger proposal on 7 January 2016 the Minister announced that he had referred all 35 proposals to the Acting CEO of the Office of Local Government. The Office of Local Government has subsequently appointed 18 delegates to undertake a review and report on the merger proposals.

Council was advised that Dr Ian Tiley was appointed as the delegate to undertake the review and report on the Dungog/Gloucester merger proposal. Dr Tiley met with Councillors on 27 January 2016, he will hold a public inquiry into the merger proposal on 9 February 2016. Public submissions are invited on the merger proposal up until 28 February 2016.

The merger proposals as issued have been the subject of criticism which has been compounded by the manner in which they have been poorly developed, as it is clear the author has developed the report from a generic template as a lot of the “sale & pitch” is similar in a number of the documents which I have viewed.

The Government has stated that the proposed merger has the potential to provide a $19Mil benefit to communities over 20 years. The financial analysis was undertaken by KPMG in 2015, utilising the 2013/2014 financial data which would indicate that work was progressing...
Dungog Shire Council had submitted a copy of our audited 2014/2015 financial reports to the Office of Local Government on 27 October 2015.

It is important to note the financial information that was utilised in the report by the NSW Government & KPMG did not provide an accurate position of both Councils as the financial circumstances of both Councils had changed during the 2014/2015 financial year. In particular Gloucester, Gloucester Shire Council as part of the MIDROC (Mid Coast Councils Roc) group undertaken a review of their asset valuations and infrastructure condition reports in the 2014/2015 financial year that resulted in a significant write-down of asset values and a similar write-down in terms of their infrastructure backlog.

The merger proposal document that was initially published was subsequently altered on 21 January 2016 in relation to pages 7 & 8 of the report. Notably the variance on Page 8 of the report, the gross savings as identified in the merger proposal were identified as;

- Streamlining senior management roles ($4mil)
- The redeployment of back office and administrative functions ($7Mil); and
- Efficiencies generated through increased purchasing power of materials & contracts ($1Mil)

The modified version reads as follows:

- Streamlining senior management roles ($4mil)
- The redeployment of back office and administrative functions ($3Mil); and
- Efficiencies generated through increased purchasing power of materials & contracts ($1Mil)

The KPMG analysis apparently shows that the proposed merger has the potential to generate a net financial saving of $4Mil to the new Council over 20 years. The proposal is also expected to generate, on average, around $500,000, in net savings every year from 2020 onwards.

At a meeting in Sydney on 7 January 2016 representations were made by the General Managers in attendance for a release of the KPMG report in full, at this point in time the only document that has been released is an outline of the financial modelling assumptions that has been forwarded on to Councillors for review.

The KPMG report on the modelling of the merger benefits include savings from materials & contract expenditure based upon the Councils long term financial plans with the efficiency saving capped at 2% for regional Councils with only 80% of items reported under materials and contracts that would be subject to scale efficiencies based over 4 years. I would contend that in the case of Dungog & Gloucester this is a rather ambitious figure, both Councils are involved in a number of group tenders for procurement, some of which are based upon regional pricing by the supplier panel.

Savings from Councillor expenditure, with the current total of 16 Councillors being reduced to say 9 Councillors coupled with the distinct likelihood of increased travel costs offset by a fee of $30,000 which is greater than the top remuneration level currently received by Councillors with the exception of City of Sydney. The outcome would be in deficit compared to current outlays.

Savings from reduced salary & wage expenditure with no net staffing reductions assumed for regional Councils. However KPMG claim that efficiencies are generated by a merger that allows a regional Council to re-allocate duplicated back office administration and corporate support roles to front line service positions. With the efficiencies assumed to be equivalent to between 3.7 to 5% of a Councils employee salary and wage costs.
Whilst difficult to predict how the new Council General Manager approaches this task there is one thing that will be needed that is not within either Council now and that is the employment of an experienced human resources manager. The potential impact of the current legislation with both the townships of Gloucester and Dungog having populations under 5,000 the maintenance of staffing numbers in both townships going forward could be an impediment as regards delivering of front-line services.

In the context of the merger cost assumptions KPMG has identified that the new Council would introduce an ICT “veneer” solution with expected costs of $2.26Mil, their assumption on “one-off” costs are calculated as a percentage of operating expenditure, also costs from redundancies. The LG Act identifies senior staff as being individuals that are on a contract of employment and are being remunerated at SES Level 1, in the case of both Councils the only senior staff are the general managers.

The Government is providing $5Mil to the new Council to meet the costs of the merger, which is the same amount that was on offer for the Dungog/Maitland merger.

**IMPLICATIONS BASED ON BOUNDARY REVIEW LINES**

**Financial**

Council has maintained tight fiscal control to ensure that the Councils liquidity position is not compromised and has been allocating funds annually to enable a smoothing of cash flows when peak capital expense outlays arise.

Gloucester’s solvency has very much been tested in recent years their financial reserves are very low. The special rate variation that was approved for the 2015/16 - 2017/2018 years should result in assisting them in meeting their future obligations and reducing their infrastructure backlog.

Analysis of rating structures clearly shows the cumulative effect of not taking up the full rate peg limit in years past. This is reflected in the following figures that highlight even if the Dungog/Gloucester merger proceeds that the residents of Dungog Shire will be paying more to meet the infrastructure backlog and to harmonise the rating structure between the two areas. It is projected that general rates across the Shire would need to increase by approximately 42% to harmonise the rate structure now by 2019/2020 it will be approx. 74%.

Gloucester Councils improvement proposal flagged a further 36.2% rate increase to address infrastructure backlog, following on from their current 44% increase. The four year rates freeze will only defer more capital renewal works in both Shires that will escalate the infrastructure backlog and delay projects in forward works programs if revenue cannot be sourced from other spheres of Government.

**COMMUNITIES OF INTEREST & GEOGRAPHIC COHESION**

The merger proposal document endeavours to link the communities by the Councils of Dungog & Gloucester membership to Arts Upper Hunter.

In terms of geographic cohesion Gloucester Shire Council in recent years has been more aligning itself to the Mid North Coast, this was evident when the NSW Planning placed them into that area. However due to Great Lakes Councils insistence that they want to be aligned to the Hunter Region at the time of initial merger considerations it was the only reason why Gloucester reverted from their previous decisions. It should be noted that in terms of the Pilot Hunter Joint Organisation Gloucester Shire is not a member.

With no road joining the two LGA’s this only amplifies the lack of geographic cohesion between the two LGA’s.
HISTORICAL & TRADITIONAL VALUES

The Dungog LGA is the traditional lands of the Worimi & Wonnarua peoples. Agriculture has and continues to play a significant role in terms of the Shires economy.

Both LGA’s are traditional rural communities however the urban profiles of the two LGA’s differ. With Gloucester township having a stronger retail sector than Dungog mainly due to the distance from regional markets resulting in less economic leakage, whereas the other urban centres of Dungog Shire are close to the major retail outlets of the lower Hunter.

Gloucester Council has previously stated that their ties are with the Manning Valley.

The communities of both Gloucester & Dungog Shire value their heritage, the rural & scenic qualities of the Shire, the protection of the waterways and the rural lifestyle.

Service Delivery

As stated in the Councils submission report until there can be equity in the rating structure there will be different service levels across the communities. Also there are at risk elements if the merger does proceed as some services are delivered differently in our communities now. e.g. Youth services with GSC providing such, whereas Dungog Shire Community Centre is the funding recipient for youth services in Dungog LGA.

A lot of Councils relationships are tied to the lower Hunter, the Lower Hunter Rural Fire Service Zone comprises the Councils of Port Stephens, Maitland, Cessnock & Dungog. A similar relationship exists between the same Councils for the lower Hunter emergency service committee. Community precinct meetings with Port Stephens LAC and Central Hunter Police, by adding Gloucester the new entity would have to meet with the three different commands on a quarterly basis.

One of the issues will relate to how the State Government will deal with the 2 different water/sewer authorities that would be involved in this merger, namely Hunter Water & MidCoast Water. Both authorities have different pricing and development standards.

Staff

Currently 14 of the 17 professional staff of Council commute into Dungog Shire on a daily basis, all within a 1 hours drive of Dungog. If there is an expectation that they may be required to attend Gloucester on a regular basis the new entity can expect to experience recruitment difficulties as some of these staff have no desire to travel further.

Communities

The community profile of Dungog Shire would reveal that the Shire is a net exporter of jobs, with 56% of the working population commuting outside the Dungog LGA on a daily basis to attend work of which 67% are employed in the lower Hunter employment markets.

The age profile of the Shire reflects a median age of 44. The population is growing despite what the NSW Planning population projections are forecasting by 2031. (@30 June 2013 9800 residents, @30 June 2014 8800 residents)

The rural residential/lifestyle assessments of the Shire have grown by 24% in the past 10 years, it is fair to say that these properties will recycle more to the younger families into the future. The Council anticipates infill development within Clarence Town, since the sewerage has been connected we have witnessed 6% growth in Clarence Town residential assessments in the past 5 years.
Consultative

The State Government is endeavouring to utilise the past 4 years of involvement with Councils as the stimulus to bring forward merger proposals, in some instances that may be the case but in the Dungog/Gloucester case the first time it was placed on the table was 18 December 2015.

No business case has been prepared and the Council has no basis upon which to reliably inform the community in relation to this proposal.

The public inquiry & submission period is the only opportunity the community will have to express their views.

Conclusion

The Council resolution of 16 November 2015 should inform the basis of how the Council responds to Government.

As the merger business case of Dungog & Maitland did not result in a positive financial outcome the likelihood of a Dungog/Gloucester merger despite an additional $5Mil on offer, it is highly likely to fall short and would require the community to pay more for the experience.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Councils written submission to Government highlight the inadequacy of the merger proposal report

2. That Council again call upon the NSW Government to undertake a merger business case of the proposed Dungog/Gloucester merger

3. That Council not support the NSW Government merger proposal on the basis that:
   i) It is factually incorrect  
   ii) That the proposed financial benefits are not reliably substantiated  
   iii) That the communities have not been adequately engaged by Government  
   iv) That the communities of Dungog & Gloucester Shires will be at risk of a greater financial impost as a consequence of the merger  
   v) That the four year rate freeze will not address the infrastructure renewal backlog  
   vi) That there is no clarity as regards what happens to the proposed merged entity if it does not meet the benchmarks as determined by Government in 2020.  
   vii) That the freeze in rating structure pricing paths in place for the four year period is inequitable to the communities of Gloucester Shire.
2. **NATURAL DISASTER EVENT**

EF15/59

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**Precis:**

Reporting on the recommendations of the Regional Disaster Recovery Coordinators report.

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Brigadier Darren Naumann AM (Ret’d) report was released by the NSW Government on January 2016. The report is provided as a separate attachment for Councillors information.

The report contains a number of recommendations to Government as regards disaster response, disaster coordination, community resilience and a range of other matters. At this point in time Councils Local Emergency Management Committee nor the senior members of staff have discussed the contents more fully however there are potential implications for this Council and many others as regards the recommendations. Particularly, in relation to the response on community isolation elements.

The Torryburn bridge issue is one element from where the Brigadier has focussed the recommendation. The inability for the people from the locality of Torryburn to access services, attend work, get to school, transport produce in or out as a consequence of the storm event destroying the bridge structure. There was no alternate access route out of this area.

In Dungog Shires case there are many areas of the Shire that can be cut off as a consequence of rising water, generally speaking the structures generally stay in-situ unless it is a significant event and trees and logs are disturbed then there is the chance that a structure may get taken out.

The recommendations include:

1. Planning for Recovery Centres – more comprehensive recovery planning is needed at local levels.
2. PES external surge program – the need for Government to support ongoing training of staff and their readiness to deploy.
3. Media Engagement – adopting a more structured approach to media engagement as MPES did not have a dedicated media officer to support the Recovery Co-ordinator.
4. Government Communications Coordination – a more coordinated communications structure across Government where planned Government announcements are developed in conjunction with the recovery team.
5. Impact Assessment Data Sharing project – the need to train and raise awareness amongst Local & Regional Emergency Management Committees in regards to the importance of impact assessment data is to recovery planning.
6. Planning for Access to Potentially Isolated Communities. – The Torryburn issue and access is only by a single access route.
7. Coordination of Volunteer Support – a challenge for recovery staff is coordination across community volunteer groups and individuals. A element of recovery planning that needs a stronger emphasis.
8. MP Recovery Reference Group – Recommends this as a model of engagement for future recovery operations.
10. Improvements to the targeting of Government support to build primary industry resilience – recommends exploring available options to ensure those enterprises that exhibit industry improvement behaviours are not excluded from disaster support.

11. Farm Management Deposits – more work is needed to promote the use of the scheme to build enterprise resilience

12. Improving Community Preparedness and Resilience – communities would be encouraged and assisted where possible to make simple assessments of their risks and take simple measures to support themselves.

13. Transition from Response to Recovery – recommends amendment to the NSW Recovery Plan to provide more specific requirements for handover and (ongoing if necessary) intelligence sharing between lead combat agencies.

14. VIP Visits – recommends that they continued but organised in consultation with affected communities to ensure they are not over-visited.

15. Telecommunications and Power Infrastructure – recommending that State and Federal Governments work with power providers and telecommunications companies to better define disaster response and recovery responsibilities.

16. Corrections Volunteer Labour Teams – recommends the utilisation of these services in assisting with future recovery operations.

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

There are potential implications in the future as regards addressing elements of the recovery coordinators report, but they will not be looked at in isolation.

Statutory

The NSW Government has the power to declare natural disaster events in consultation with the federal government. The NSW Government has in place a series of emergency hierarchies dependent upon the type of event as to who is the lead agency in such matters.

Flood events are the responsibility of the NSW SES.

Risk

Matter needs to be considered in the context of enterprise wide risk. The report and recommendations have yet to be discussed at the Local Emergency Management Committee.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council receive and note the report.

2. That Council staff look at the situations of single road access points in the context of natural disaster events and consider such in the review of the Councils roads policy in consultation with the Local Emergency management Committee.
Précis:

Report referring matters to Closed Council.

*********

In accordance with the Local Government Act 1993 and the Local Government General Regulation 2005, in the opinion of the General Manager, the following business is of a kind as referred to in Sec 10A(2) of the Act, and should be dealt with in a part of the meeting closed to the media and public.

Set out below is Section 10A(2) of the Local Government Act 1993 in relation to matters which can be dealt with in the closed part of a meeting.

The matters and information are the following:

(a) personnel matters concerning particular individuals (other than Councillors)
(b) the personal hardship of any resident or ratepayer
(c) information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business
(d) commercial information of a confidential nature that would if disclosed:
   (i) prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied it, or
   (ii) confer a commercial advantage on a competitor of the Council, or
   (iii) reveal a trade secret
(e) information that would, if disclosed, prejudice the maintenance of law
(f) matters affecting the security of the Council, Councillors, Council staff or Council property
(g) advice concerning litigation, or advice that would otherwise be privileged from production in legal proceedings on the grounds of legal professional privilege
(h) information concerning the nature and location of a place or an item of Aboriginal significance on community land.

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

1. FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT- ADVICE REGARDING SUCCESSFUL GRANT APPLICATIONS

This item is classified CONFIDENTIAL under Sec 10A (2)(a) of the Local Government Act 1993, which permits the meeting to be closed to the public for business relating to the following:

(c) information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business

This matter is classified confidential because it contains information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business
INFRASTRUCTURE & ASSETS DEPARTMENT

2. ROAD ACCESS

This item is classified CONFIDENTIAL under Sec 10A (2)(a) of the Local Government Act 1993, which permits the meeting to be closed to the public for business relating to the following:

(c) information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business

This matter is classified confidential because it contains information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business

IMPLICATIONS

Legislative

The matters are referred to in the context of Sec 10A(2) of the Local Government Act 1993.

Consultative

Members of the public are invited to make representations to the Council meeting before any part of the meeting is closed, as to whether that part of the meeting should be closed.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council resolve into Closed Council to consider business identified, together with any late reports tabled at the meeting.

2. That pursuant to section 10A (1)-(3) of the Local Government Act 1993, the media and public be excluded from the meeting on the basis that the business to be considered is classified as confidential under the provisions of Sec 10A(2) as outlined above.

3. That correspondence and reports relevant to the subject business be withheld from access to the media and public as required by Sec 11(2) of the Local Government Act 1993.
4. PUBLIC EXHIBITION OF THE DUNGOG SHIRE VISITOR STRATEGY AND DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN
EF EF08/116

Precis:

Reporting on the results of the feedback received via the public exhibition of the Dungog Shire Visitor Strategy and Destination Management Plan.

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Introduction

In April 2015 The Tourism Advisory Committee of Dungog Shire Council formed a working group to examine the role of tourism in the Shire, and investigate how the promotion of the Shire could be improved. The working group enlisted the services of Ian Mackey of cre8inggrowth.com, professionals in the field of branding and identity, strategic planning and marketing, to undertake a study and produce a new Tourism Strategic Business Plan incorporating a standard Destination Management Plan, without financial implications or changing the budget currently being spent by the Council on tourism.

The resulting draft Dungog Shire Tourism Strategy including a Destination Management Plan went on public exhibition from Council’s December 2015 meeting until 29 January 2016 with the report available on Council’s website.

The purpose of this BP is to provide Councillors with a summary of the feedback received.

Background

The feedback received during the exhibition period was generally positive, while following table summarises the general concerns about the draft strategy. A more detailed record of the feedback received is included in Attachment 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identifier</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response #1</td>
<td>I was disappointed there was no attempt to utilize the visitors coming to watch and play sport. There was no attempt to turn these people into day trippers, or even to get them come back and enjoy the area. There was no attempt to get them to spend money in the area. Unfortunately most of these people will come to the shire with their money and take it back home again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response #2</td>
<td>I have been a Volunteer at the VIC since it opened in Dec 1996, it is a very important tool for all the Shire - both for residents and businesses. We have received many new residents over those years because of the info we have all given out to the thousands of visitors over that time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response #3</td>
<td>My first and main concern is - whilst the recommendations in the new strategy encompass many worthwhile plans the strategy has totally ignored the subject of accommodation. It did not mention any research into the availability of accommodation in our hotels, motel, farm stays etc, Day visitors may stay longer if accommodation is available and affordable, and it goes without saying, and commonsense tells us that the most important deficit for Dungog is the lack of provision for camping thus losing not only those who love to camp, the lower income young travellers, but more importantly the Over 55s travel market which is a major source of tourism for regional towns. The section “Why the Over 55’s travel Market for Dungog Shire?” does acknowledge this market and states that they do not require “package arrangements” but omits the fact that these “Grey Nomads” travel with caravans or motor homes, and without accommodating areas for overnight stays close to town.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ordinary Meeting of the Council of the Shire of Dungog, to be held Tuesday 16 February 2016 commencing 6.00pm.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identifier</th>
<th>Comment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or town parking this market is lost. Whilst I realise the cost of a commercial caravan park is out of our present Council’s reach, we must investigate “free camping”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response #4</td>
<td>Many locals would agree that Abbott’s flat is the ideal area for a primitive campsite as well as the council’s planned playing field for this area. All that is required is enough room between the playing field &amp; the river for caravans &amp; RVs to park, adjacent to the river. Some bush could be cleared to allow access to the river &amp; a few fire places put in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response #5</td>
<td>Where is an example of a Shire a little like ours that has adapted, has developed new attractions, has displayed effective industry cooperation and marketing? We don't have to lead. We can follow if the Strategic Plan is able to guide us towards examples of success. I was hoping for inspiration from this Strategic Plan. I'm not getting it. I do have confidence that some sort of Shire-wide tourism body will be formed, and yes I will join it and contribute. It will then be up to us to feed in statistics we hunt down for and contribute our own home-grown feelings about how things have changed and what are the ways we can, with little money of our own, revive an industry that has fallen on hard times.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**General Managers Comments**

The ability to implement elements of the Dungog Shire Tourism Strategy will be delayed pending the outcome of the Dungog/Gloucester merger proposal.

As Councils have been directed by the Office of Local Government Circular 15/43 and Guidelines issued as regards Councils decision making during the merger proposal periods. Page 5 provides some relevant points that at this point in time limit how far Council can proceed to implement the Strategy.

**IMPLICATIONS**

**Financial**

There are no financial implications of this report.

**Consultative**

These recommendations are made based on the feedback received during the public exhibition of the draft Dungog Shire Visitor Strategy and Destination Management Plan:

**RECOMMENDATION**

1. That Council accept the Dungog Shire Strategic Tourism Plan (and Destination Management Plan)

2. That Council take into consideration all of the recommendations which were brought forward by members of the community.

3. That Council, when passing on the Dungog Shire Strategic Tourism Plan to any future Dungog Shire tourism body, also pass on, and recommend, that the body take the community comments into account.
1. COUNCIL’S MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Précis:

Reporting on Minutes of Council Management Committee Meetings provided to Council.

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The minutes of the following Management Committee Meetings are attached as Annexure ‘A’ to this report:

- Martins Creek School of Arts Hall meeting held 5 August 2015
- James Theatre Community Centre meeting held 12 October 2015
- Paterson Sportsground Committee meeting held 26 October 2015
- Clarence Town School of Arts Hall meeting held 30 October 2015
- Australia Day Committee meeting held 6 November 2015
- Australia Day Committee meeting held 9 December 2015

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

There are no financial implications the report is for information purposes only.

OFFICERS RECOMMENDATION

That the minutes of the Management Committee Meeting be received and noted.
INFORMATION ONLY REPORTS

1. DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS - DELEGATED AUTHORITY
   EF08/228

Jacqui Tupper

Precis:

Development Consent has been granted to the following development applications under delegated authority for the months of December 2015 and January 2016.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application No.</th>
<th>Lot</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Approval Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DA 75/2013</td>
<td>Lot 3 DP 1177868</td>
<td>29 Woodglen Close, Paterson</td>
<td>Modification to Dwelling to allow for a new floor plan. Approved subject to conditions 8 January 2016.</td>
<td>8 January 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA 123/2013</td>
<td>Lot 2 DP 1176703</td>
<td>20 Royseton Avenue, Clarence Town</td>
<td>Modification Dwelling-House and Garage to allow for removal of condition number seven (7) from consent. Approved subject to conditions 5 January 2016.</td>
<td>5 January 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA 18/2015</td>
<td>Lot 52 DP 1071505</td>
<td>168 Martins Creek Road, Paterson</td>
<td>Dwelling and Shed. Approved subject to conditions 14 January 2016.</td>
<td>14 January 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA 43/2015</td>
<td>Lot 19 DP 770463</td>
<td>131 King Street, Clarence Town</td>
<td>Two (2) Lot Subdivision. Approved subject to conditions 14 January 2016.</td>
<td>14 January 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA 96/2015</td>
<td>Lot 112 DP 1002308</td>
<td>208 Fotheringay Road, Clarence Town</td>
<td>Four (4) Lot Subdivision. Approved subject to conditions 22 December 2015.</td>
<td>22 December 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA 104/2015</td>
<td>Lot 15 DP 1177675</td>
<td>87 Lomandra Circuit, Paterson</td>
<td>Modification to Dwelling to allow for an amendment to condition 20 and deletion of condition 33 of consent. Approved subject to conditions 7 January 2016.</td>
<td>7 January 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>DA 105/2015</td>
<td>Lot 1 DP 1193490</td>
<td>25 Hart Street, Clarence Town</td>
<td>Dwelling. Approved subject to conditions 8 December 2015.</td>
<td>8 December 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>DA 113/2015</td>
<td>Lot 7 DP 244504</td>
<td>955 Dungog Road, Hilldale</td>
<td>Dwelling. Approved subject to conditions 15 January 2016.</td>
<td>15 January 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>DA 134/2015</td>
<td>Lot 78 DP 1183633</td>
<td>25 Rens Street, Dungog</td>
<td>Dwelling and Garage. Approved subject to conditions 3 December 2015.</td>
<td>3 December 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA 137/2015</td>
<td>Lot 92 DP 1180855</td>
<td>92 Prince Street, Clarence Town</td>
<td>Dwelling. Approved subject to conditions 3 December 2015.</td>
<td>3 December 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>DA 139/2015</td>
<td>Lot 412 DP 1206330</td>
<td>18 Jinker Circuit, Clarence Town</td>
<td>Prefabricated Home and Garage. Approved subject to conditions 4 December 2015.</td>
<td>4 December 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>DA 141/2015</td>
<td>Lot 10 DP 1212679</td>
<td>1273 Chichester Dam Road, Bandon Grove</td>
<td>Alterations and Additions to Existing Dwelling. Approved subject to conditions 3 December 2015.</td>
<td>3 December 2015</td>
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<td>DA 145/2015</td>
<td>Lot 27 DP 775344</td>
<td>1225 Gresford Road, Vacy</td>
<td>Additions to Existing Dwelling. Approved subject to conditions 4 December 2015.</td>
<td>4 December 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>DA 150/2015</td>
<td>Lot 5 DP 1210583</td>
<td>71 Redgum Drive, Clarence Town</td>
<td>Shed. Approved subject to conditions 2 December 2015.</td>
<td>2 December 2015</td>
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<td>DA 151/2015</td>
<td>Lot 5 DP 1210583</td>
<td>71 Redgum Drive, Clarence Town</td>
<td>Dwelling. Approved subject to conditions 2 December 2015.</td>
<td>2 December 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA No.</td>
<td>Approval Date</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Approval Conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
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<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA 153/2015  (TPA 1622/1)</td>
<td>11 December 2015</td>
<td>Lot 2 DP 1057313, Martins Creek Road, Paterson.</td>
<td>Natural Swimming Pool.</td>
<td>Approved subject to conditions 11 December 2015.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA 161/2015  (TPA 2346/22)</td>
<td>14 January 2016</td>
<td>Lot 22 DP 270818, 36 Waterview Road, Clarence Town.</td>
<td>Manufactured Dwelling, Garage and Deck.</td>
<td>Approved subject to conditions 14 January 2016.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA 164/2015  (TPA 2053)</td>
<td>24 December 2015</td>
<td>Lot 263 DP 702047, 1525 Fosterton Road, Fosterton.</td>
<td>Additions to Existing Dwelling.</td>
<td>Approved subject to conditions 24 December 2015.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA 165/2015  (TPA 2092/022)</td>
<td>6 January 2016</td>
<td>Lot 1 DP 121554, 867 Pinebrush Road, Alison.</td>
<td>Additions to Existing Dwelling.</td>
<td>Approved subject to conditions 6 January 2016.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the report be received and the information noted.
Précis:

This report is to provide Councilors with a summary of the Waste Operations and programs for the first two quarters of 2015-16.

**********

KERBSIDE RECYCLING

Council provides a fortnightly kerbside commingled recycling service to all properties receiving a domestic waste service and to some commercial and non rateable properties.

As part of the contract, the service provider JR Richards, must advise Council on the tonnage of material collected. These figures are tabled below for the last 5 years:

The table shows that the quantities of recyclables collected in the last two years appears to have reduced from the previous years however generally the recyclables collected remains similar from year to year. It would be expected that the tonnages of recyclables would increase into the future as regional educational campaigns launches by the Hunter Waste Management strategy take hold.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
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<td>January</td>
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<td>91.54</td>
<td>85.31</td>
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<td>54.78</td>
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<td>April</td>
<td>60.92</td>
<td>65.66</td>
<td>72.28</td>
<td>57.9</td>
<td>71.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>60.46</td>
<td>59.9</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>64.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>69.7</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>56.66</td>
<td>57.72</td>
<td>60.60</td>
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<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>57.4</td>
<td>108.42</td>
<td>68.78</td>
<td>70.1</td>
<td>58.16</td>
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<tr>
<td>August</td>
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<td>64.52</td>
<td>57.54</td>
<td>62.74</td>
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<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>65.2</td>
<td>67.72</td>
<td>83.33</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>67.06</td>
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<td>October</td>
<td>58.54</td>
<td>80.38</td>
<td>76.87</td>
<td>69.58</td>
<td>70.14</td>
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<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>62.46</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>68.83</td>
<td>67.98</td>
<td>59.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>83.56</td>
<td>72.3</td>
<td>60.67</td>
<td>75.16</td>
<td>88.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>796.62</td>
<td>880.52</td>
<td>818.94</td>
<td>805.9</td>
<td>795.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cardboard and Paper

Council provides a free drop off facility at the landfill for cardboard and paper. During the first 2 quarters of 2015/16, 57.8 tonnes of paper products have been diverted from landfill for reprocessing and reuse. (this figure does not include the volume of paper products collected in the kerbside recyclables collection) The amount of paper product collected appears to remain similar from year to year.

In November, Visy Recycling was replaced with Cleanaway for the collection of paper products. Cleanaway supply skip bins and remove paper from the landfill for free whereas a
service fee of $250 per skip bin was charged by Visy. This change represents a saving to Council of around $5000 per year whilst the same level of service is provided.

**Waste Oil Diversion**

A waste mineral oil service is provided free of charge at the landfill.

During the period, 2100 litres of oil was collected from the free drop off tank located at the landfill. Transpacific provides this free service.

**Ferrous and Non Ferrous Metals**

A free Ferrous and non ferrous metal collection has been provided at the landfill for many years and provides an income stream to Council’s waste operations.

The ferrous and non ferrous metals, including vehicle batteries are separated and removed under contract on a regular basis. The value of this metal fluctuates with the scrap metal open market.

During the period approximately 266 tonnes of scrap metal was deposited at the facility.

Of this, only non ferrous metals were removed (including car batteries) by One Steel with a value of approximately $5000.

The scrap metal stockpile is expected to be removed by a contractor in March after the bulky waste cleanup is completed. The value of scrap metal fluctuates depending on the commodities market and currently metal prices are at their lowest in more than a decade so it is unlikely that significant income will be made from this stockpile.

**A note on stockpiles**

Recent changes to the Waste Regulation have imposed a waste levy liability for recyclable materials that are stockpiled in excess of 24 months. In effect, this means that all stockpiles of recyclable materials at Council’s facility (Metal, paper, green waste) must be reconciled to ensure that materials do not remain on-site for more than 24 months otherwise the waste levy is payable. The levy is not paid up front (on a monthly basis) as applies to waste that is landfilled.

Staff have been liaising with the EPA in regard to reporting and the procedure is expected to be made easier once a weighbridge is installed.

Historically, recyclables have been removed well within the 24 month period so it is not expected that a waste levy liability would apply. The Government has introduced this Regulation to target the issue of private waste operators stockpiling large quantities of recyclables for long periods with Local Government operators not expected to be affected.

The potential for incurring a waste levy liability however reduces any incentive to store stockpiles of scrap metal, for example, during times when commodity prices are low.

**Gas Bottles**

During the reporting period 25 gas bottles were accepted at the landfill upon payment of Councils adopted fee. During the period, no gas bottles were removed from site. The current fee structure will enable the disposal cost to be met without being required to be absorbed into general landfill operating costs.
Greenwaste

Greenwaste is separated at the landfill and reprocessed as raw mulch for reuse by Council or sale back to the general public at cost. Tip fees for clean green waste are kept to a minimum to encourage separation of reusable material from general waste.

During the reporting period around 85 tonnes of material brought to the facility.

In the past few years, green waste has been processed into chip and mulch by casual staff, however during 2015 this ceased as the EPA amended its Raw Mulch exemption guidelines which in effect prohibited the sale of mulch that hadn’t been processed utilizing a composting/pasteurization procedure.

After the April 2015 flood and storm event, the EPA relaxed its raw Mulch exemption which has enabled some chipping of non potentially contaminated green waste to recommence.

Other material that contains potential contaminating propagules requires composting and this will be carried out in windrows after the stockpile has been shredded by a commercial operator.

It is expected that the existing stockpile will be shredded in March and windrows established enabling a quality mulch product to be available for sale in mid 2016.

Casual staff will chip non contaminated material at a reduced frequency (9 once per month) for the remainder of 2016.

It is important that green waste be diverted from the landfill due to its propensity to generate greenhouse gases such as methane.

“E” Waste Collection

The E-waste collection service was suspended at the commencement of the period due to high costs of removal. The previous free product stewardship arrangements set in place by the Federal Government expired at the end of 2014 and Council was forced to pay contractor EC3 to remove the material for the first 6 months of 2015.

Unfortunately EC3 advised in July that they would no longer collect e-waste due to increasing costs and the falling prices of commodities. We are currently in negotiations with SIMS METAL so that e-waste collection can continue. It is unclear at this time whether SIMS METAL will pass on any savings to Council which they may obtain under the E-waste Product Stewardship program, which was renewed on 1st July 2015.

Council has continued its free e-waste drop off service but e-waste is being landfilled with the cost borne by the landfill operating costs in the short term. This is not a satisfactory situation however it is considered that it is more beneficial for Council to bear a small cost until the full extent of future ewaste subsidisation through the Product Stewardship legislation is known, rather than to pass the cost of e-waste disposal onto the community at this time.

However, if a satisfactory and cost effective solution cannot be found then it will be necessary to make a decision whether to charge an appropriate disposal fee which covers the cost of e-waste recycling collection or alternatively a standard landfill charge.

DrumMuster

Council provides a DrumMuster service at the landfill for clean veterinary and agricultural chemical containers. During the period 60 containers were deposited in the storage compound however there was none removed for reprocessing. This service is free to the public and containers are removed at no cost to Council.
Second Hand & Reuse Shop

During the reporting period, the shop registered an income of around $18,000 which already achieved the budget projection. The 2nd hand shop is popular within the community and is an innovative way of diverting many tonnes of waste material from the landfill.

Bulky Waste Cleanups

Green Waste

The annual green waste collection was carried out in November, servicing the town and village areas only.

Approximately 25 tonnes of Green waste was collected over one week. These volumes were smaller than in previous years and it is considered that many households had already taken advantage of free or waste levy exempt tip fees which had applied throughout the year after the April 2015 storm.

This bulky cleanup was the first carried out under the new Waste Collection contract which saw a significant increase in charges applicable to Bulky Waste Cleanups. A rate of $14.75 per eligible premises is charged for the annual green waste cleanup by the Contractor.

The General Bulky Waste and Scrap metal Cleanup will be conducted between 15-26 February.

Mattresses

During the period, 95 mattresses were collected from the landfill by contractor Landsavers.

In 2015/16, a disposal fee of $20 for mattresses is charged which covers around 90% of the cost of collection and recycling ($22.50). The balance is funded through Council’s Better Waste and recycling funding.

New Waste Collection Contract

Council’s general waste and recycling contracts commenced during the period on 5th October 2015. The contracts were offered for a new 10 year period to JR Richards and Sons.

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

The following matters have impacted waste operations in the first half of 2015-16 -
- An increase in the costs of the Waste collection contract of around 20% as a result of the awarding of a new 10 year contract. These increases took effect from October 2015.
- The requirement to install a weighbridge at the waste facility. Whilst a grant for approx. $70,000 has been received the remainder of the cost of installation will be required to be met from waste reserves.

Statutory

The provision of waste diversion and recycling services is in accordance with NSW and Commonwealth waste minimisation legislation. The NSW Government’s Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2013-21 requires that all regulated Councils put in place programs that will achieve a 75% diversion of waste from Landfill by 2021-22. Council’s new Waste Strategy provides actions to address this target and Council is always adding new waste diversion streams to its waste management program.
**Environmental**

There are obvious local and global implications to the operation of effective resource recovery programs. Environmental benefit calculators are available to indicate the energy, water and greenhouse gas savings from kerbside recycling programs.

**Consultative**

A community consultation process was followed during the preparation of the Waste Strategy that included public information sessions, a community survey and opportunity for comment and feedback.

**Community**

The community benefits from reduced costs and environmentally from effective waste management and diversion programs.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That the report be received and the information noted.
Précis:

This report provides an update on Environmental Health programs for the 1st & 2nd Quarters of 2015/16.

**********

ON-SITE SEWAGE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

There were 81 inspections completed from the 1st July 2015 to the 31st December 2015. Inspections were carried out focussing on high medium and low risk systems.

Of these 81 inspections 5 systems were classified as high risk and require rectification work.

Two Order’s under the Local Government Act were issued requiring upgrading and maintenance works.

Inspections have focused on systems located in the Hunter Water drinking water catchment areas of the Upper Allyn region, Cross Keys Road, Eccleston, Lostock and Mt Rivers. Thirty Seven (37) of the inspections completed were on properties within the area of the Septic Tank Inspection and Rectification Program and participation in this program will continue.

During this period 5 onsite systems that had been previously failing, have been upgraded to current standards and are now working satisfactorily.

The program will also focus on septic systems that have been installed but have not yet had a final inspection.

During the reporting period 34 applications for the installation of an On-site Sewage Management System were assessed.

Clarence Town Sewer

150 properties were issued with Orders to connect to sewer in late 2014 and of these there are 25 properties that have still not connected to sewer. Inspections of the onsite sewage management systems on these properties revealed four (4) systems to be failing. Of these four (4) systems, 3 have now connected to sewer.

Council is now working with the owners of the still outstanding properties to have the sewer connected as soon as possible.

There are still two (2) properties utilising chemical toilets in Clarence town and sewer connection for these properties is being made a priority. NOTE- There are still 7 properties in the Shire that utilise chemical toilets- these are in Clarence Town(2), Paterson (2), East Gresford (3).

The majority of extensions Council granted to connect to sewer have now expired. Over the next quarter another audit of these properties will be carried out and a decision will be made regarding appropriate enforcement action to secure sewer connection.
FOOD SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM

Registered Food Premises

Sixty-two (62) food businesses are currently registered in the Dungog LGA.

During the period between the 1st July 2015 and the 31st December 2015, 34 scheduled food inspections were undertaken.

From these inspections one (1) premise (3% of inspections) were found to be unsatisfactory with a warning letter issued and a follow up inspection undertaken. At this inspection the premise was found to be satisfactory. A new round of food inspections is currently under way which will focus on School Canteens, medium and high risk premises (high risk premises are inspected twice yearly).

No development applications for any new food premises were received during this period.

Food Surveillance Activity Report

In December 2015 the NSW food Authority released the Food surveillance activity report for the period of 1st July 2014 to the 30th June 2015.

The Food Regulation Partnership is a joint initiative of the NSW Food Authority and 152 local councils to work together to ensure all retail food service businesses in NSW are inspected and comply with food safety regulations. In order to ensure councils have met their duties under the NSW Food Act 2003, they are required to report their enforcement activities to the NSW Food Authority. The data collected forms the basis of the report.

Surveillance activity in the retail food services sector involved a total of 64,230 inspections by 474 authorised officers in 2014-15. 97% of all high and medium risk food premises were inspected.

Compliance with food safety requirements across the retail food sector for the 2014-15 financial period was 96%, rising slightly over the last 3 years. Only 1581 (4%) of premises inspected required ongoing intervention that involved two or more re-inspections by council. This correlates with Council’s own inspection results for the period where it was found that 3% of inspections were unsatisfactory.

A total of 1504 penalty notices for 866 retail food businesses were published on the Name and Shame register in 2014-15 for failing to meet food safety standards. This represents 2% of retail food businesses.

The most common food safety breaches in the retail sector during this period were:

• cleanliness of food premises (18.7%)
• pest control (18.6%)
• storage and temperature control (21.7%)
• cleanliness of food fixtures and equipment (16.7%)
• hygiene of food handlers (6.1%)

NSW HEALTH LYSSAVIRUS WARNING

Bat breeding season has commenced and NSW Health is urging people not to approach or handle injured bats and flying foxes to avoid the risk of exposure to Lyssaviruses.

So far this year, more than 300 NSW residents have been given rabies post exposure prophylaxis (PEP) following high-risk exposures to potentially infected animals. About one-third had been bitten or scratched by a bat in Australia, while the others had come into...
contact with potentially rabies-infected animals overseas. There have been three bats confirmed with the potentially fatal Lyssavirus in NSW this year.

If bitten or scratched by any type of bat, the wound should be thoroughly cleaned for at least five minutes with soap and water as soon as possible, an antiseptic, such as Betadine, applied and urgent medical advice should be sought.

This information is relevant to Dungog Shire where several established flying Fox camps exist. A small number of enquiries have been received regarding the human health impact of the flying foxes and persons are directed to the NSW Health website for further information. www.health.nsw.gov.au/Infectious/factsheets/Pages/default.aspx

DA Referral’s

Development applications are referred to Environmental services for comments and conditions relating to on-site sewage management, vegetation management, contaminated land, acoustic assessments, Environmental management plans and flora/fauna (endangered species). For the period from the 1st July 2015 to the 31st December 2015, 37 DA referrals have been assessed by Council’s EHO in regard to the above issues.

TRAINING AND SEMINARS

Councils Environmental Health Officer (EHO) attended the following meetings in the last six months:

1. Regional quarterly meeting of the Septic Tank Action Group
2. Regional Food Surveillance Group
3. Hunter Regional Health Education Committee (HRHEC)

Hunter New England Health

Council receives a quarterly news letter from Hunter New England Health, which can be found at: http://www.hnehealth.nsw.gov.au/hneph/environmental_health

The topics in this quarter’s edition include:


IMPLICATIONS

Financial

The On-site Sewage Management, Health and Food Surveillance Programs are all income producing programs.

Statutory

Council’s Food Surveillance, On-site Sewage Management and Health Programs are conducted in accordance with it’s responsibilities under the Food Act 2003, Public Health Act 1991 and Local Government Act 1993. Most environmental Services functions and responses are based either upon a legislative requirement or a duty of care for council to act.
Environmental

The Environmental Health programs are delivered to address legislative requirements and also community demand for Council to address public health and environmental issues of concern. These programs are carried out having regard to available resources.

Community

On-going information and advice is provided to owners of onsite sewage management systems, food businesses and other commercial premises during the course of the inspection process and through enquiries by the general public.

Consultative

Council’s Environmental Health Officer is a member of a number of regional groups of professionals that meet regularly to discuss issues such as the management of on-site sewage systems, food surveillance, skin penetration and emergency management.

RECOMMENDATION

That the report be received and information noted.
Précis:

This report provides an update on the work programs of the Environmental Compliance Officer for the period of July 2015 – December 2015.

*************

BACKGROUND

The Environmental Compliance Officer Maternity relief position held by Steve Larsen ended in October 2015 and Holley Patterson resumed her position on a three (3) days a week basis. This arrangement represents a reduction in staff resources and will be reviewed in October 2016.

The following programs and activities were implemented by the Environmental Compliance position in the 2nd half of 2014-15 (June – December).

COMPANION ANIMAL MANAGEMENT

On the 1 July 2015, The NSW Department of Local Government increased the Companion Animal Registration Fees. Current Companion Animal Registration fees are as follows:

**FEE SCHEDULE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not desexed</td>
<td>$192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desexed</td>
<td>$52 (See Notes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognised Breeder</td>
<td>$52 (See Notes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pensioner (animal desexed)</td>
<td>$21 (See Notes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistance Animal – Nil (See Notes)</td>
<td>$Nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Desexed animal sold by eligible pound or shelter $26

If you are claiming a reduced registration fee, you must produce the following evidence

- **Desexed** – a letter, certificate or clear receipt from a vet or a statutory declaration by the owner.
- **Recognised Breeder** – proof of current membership of Dogs NSW (formerly Royal NSW Canine Council), NSW Cat Fanciers Association or Waratah State Cat Alliance, pedigree papers and a signed statutory declaration from the owner that the animal is to be kept for breeding purposes.
- **Pensioner** – current pensioner concession card or other proof of status as an eligible pensioner
- **Assistance Animal** – a statement from a recognised assistance animal training organisation (e.g. NSW Guide Dog Association) that the animal is trained, or is being trained, as an assistance animal and is used as an assistance animal.
- **Desexed Animal** – an animal that is sold by eligible pound or shelter

There has been a steep decline in the number of Companion Animal Registrations received compared to 2014-15 which indicates the importance for reminders to be sent on a regular basis to owners of identified Companion Animals.

It is planned to send follow up letters/notices to the owners of unregistered companion animals during February 2016 in order to prompt an increase in the number of registrations.
The following table provides a summary of Companion Animal Registrations received in the last two quarters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Companion Animal Registration (period of)</th>
<th>Working Dogs $0.00 (Nil Fee)</th>
<th>Desexed Purchase Pound Shelter $26.00</th>
<th>Pensions $21.00</th>
<th>Breeders $52.00</th>
<th>Desexed $52.00</th>
<th>Entire (Non Desexed) Animals $192.00</th>
<th>TOTALS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>43</td>
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<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>28</td>
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<td>November</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<td>December</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>128</td>
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<td>TOTAL DOLLAR AMOUNT</td>
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<td>$52.00</td>
<td>$294.00</td>
<td>$572.00</td>
<td>$3068.00</td>
<td>$215.00</td>
<td>$4201.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ANIMALS IMPOUNDED / RELEASED/ RESCUED AND SURRENDERED OR SOLD**

During the period, a total of 14 companion animals (13 dogs and 1 Cat) were seized with 10 dogs returned to their owners, and 3 dogs and 1 cat rehomed with new owners.

**Review of Pound Procedures**

Continual review of the Council pound processes and procedures were conducted and improvements were made in accordance with the Companion Animals Act 1998 and regulations.

**Review of Website**

The Companion Animal Section of Council’s website is under review and will provide information on changes to legislation and registration fees.

**Review of the Companion Animal Management Plan**

The review of Council’s Companion Animal Management Plan 2007 is listed as an action under the Delivery Program to be completed by the end of 2015-16. Minimal progress has been made on this review due to competing priorities. The review will include assessing the adequacy and demand for leash free areas, signage within parks and reserves, Community education and continual education on responsible pet ownership, identification and registration.
CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS (CRM's)

A total of sixty (60) customer service requests (CRM's) were addressed by the Environmental Compliance position during the quarter (July – December 2015). The following table provides a breakdown of these complaints.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>JULY</th>
<th>AUGUST</th>
<th>SEPTEMBER</th>
<th>OCTOBER</th>
<th>NOVEMBER</th>
<th>DECEMBER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abandoned Vehicles</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Birds and other animals</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dog attack</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Complaint</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegal back yard burning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegal Caravans / Camping</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegal Pool Structure - Compliance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegal Structures</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegal Waste/ dumping</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noise - Motorbikes</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noise - Roosters</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pollution</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stock</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Straying Dog/cats</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUBTOTAL:</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PARKING SURVEILLANCE

General parking

Parking surveillance has been incorporated into general patrols and action taken where offences are identified. Parking surveillance has revealed that many locations require the marked parking bays to be re-lined/marked and signage updated and reposted to allow for enforcement of these areas. General parking patrols have not been carried out to full potential whilst upgrading of parking restriction signs and markings is being carried out. Scheduled on street parking patrols were not carried out during the period with the exception of the Disabled, No Stopping and ¼ Hour Parking and other illegal parking in areas where signage is not required. Three (3) infringements for parking were issued during the period.

PENALTY INFRINGEMENTS ISSUED

A total of fourteen (14) infringement notices were issued in this quarter. The infringements issued relate to Companion Animals, Swimming Pool Act offences, Parking and Abandoned Vehicles.

FOOD AND OTHER COMMERCIAL PREMISES

Nil Food and Commercial Premises were inspected during this quarter by the Environmental Compliance Officer- who provides a supporting role to the Environmental health officer in this program.
ILLEGAL WASTE DUMPING PROGRAM

There were Thirteen (13) complaints reported of illegal waste dumping in Councils area during the period. Council’s Environmental Compliance Officer was not able to take any formal actions as these investigations were not able to prove who was responsible for the dumping of the waste at these locations. The waste was either removed by Council or the nominated owner of the waste material, and taken to Council’s waste facility and disposed of in accordance with the Act.

SWIMMING POOL SAFETY BARRIER INSPECTION PROGRAM

A recent report from NSW Department of Local Government Swimming Pool Register outlined a significant increase in the number of swimming pool registrations within our local government area.

In August 2013 records indicated that three hundred and seventy one (371) Swimming Pools existed within the Shire. (Source: building approvals, development consents). The NSW Swimming Pools Register now shows that four hundred and ninety nine (499) Swimming Pools are registered in Dungog Shire, an increase of 35%.

The Environmental Compliance Officer position has inspected one hundred and one (101) Swimming Pools (approx. 20%) since the commencement of the Swimming Pool Barrier Inspection Program in February 2014.

A total of fifty-one (51) swimming Pool inspections were completed during the period of July - December 2015. Council also re-inspected twenty seven (27) Pools for compliance.

Thirty (30) Swimming Pool Compliance Certificates were issued for the period. A break down in the table below indicates each month’s results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Number of Swimming Pools Inspected</th>
<th>Number of Pools Re-inspected</th>
<th>Compliance Certificates Issued</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 2015</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2015</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2015</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2015</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2015</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2015</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td><strong>51</strong></td>
<td><strong>27</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

RECOMMENDATION

That the report is received and information noted.
5. WORKS PROGRESS REPORT
EF08/208

Précis:

Reporting on construction and maintenance works undertaken in December 2015 and January 2016

*********

Works carried out during December 2015:-

Road and Bridge Construction
SR233 Limeburners Ck Rd - Pavement, earthworks and initial seal.
RR7778 Gresford Road Nth - Final seal, line marking and guardrail.
of Flying Fox Lane
MR101 Stroud Hill Road at - Final seal and line marking
Majors Creek
MR101 Dungog Road at - Final seal, line marking and guardrail
Maxwells Creek Bridge
Brown Street, Dungog - Drainage works
Torryburn Bridge - Civil Bridge and Wharf undertaking works.
Torryburn Side Track - Removal of silt fencing.

Sealed Road Maintenance
Tar Patching - MR101, MR301, RR7778, Rifle Street, Sloane Street,
Paterson River Road, Drovers Way, Monkerai Road,
Main Creek Road, Allyn River Road, Salisbury Road,
Urban Dungog, Limeburners Creek Road, RR7764.
Shoulder Grading - Grey Street, Clarence Town
Drainage Maintenance - Martins Creek Road, Alison Road (Gabion Works)
Resealing - Rifle Street, East Seaham Road, MR301, MR101
Vegetation M & R - MR101

Unsealed Road Maintenance
Gravel Sheet - Sugarloaf Road, Osmonds Road, Wildwoods Road,
Masseys Creek, James Road.
Maintenance Grade - Sugarloaf Road, Osmonds Road, Wildwoods Road,
Monkerai, Main Creek Road
Drainage Maintenance - Black Camp Road

Bridge, Concrete and Other Maintenance Works
Hoffmans Extraction Site - Entrance Works, Drill and Blasting Works.
Jubilee Park - Drainage M & R
GPT - Cleaned
Coronation Park - BBQ installed
Mates Bridge - Gravel boards
Banfield Bridge - Reinforcing, kerbs and transdeck
Saxby’s Bridge - Long deck and depth markers
Dungog Pool - Laying of Turf.
Traffic Facilities - Various signs shire wide

Roadsides
Roadside Slashing was undertaken on Main Creek Road, Alison Road, Urban Dungog,
Marshdale Road, Alison Road, Flat Tops Road, Church Road, Pinebrush Road.

Ordinary Meeting of the Council of the Shire of Dungog, to be held Tuesday 16 February
2016 commencing 6.00pm.
Sporting Grounds:-
The following Sporting Grounds were mown (the number of mowings is shown in brackets):- Bennett Park Oval (3), Bennett Park Surrounds (1), Clarence Town Football Oval (2), Vacy Sportsground (3).

Parks/Reserves/Cemeteries:-
The following Parks/Reserves/Cemeteries were mown (the number of mowings is shown in brackets):- Jubilee Park (1), Frank Robison Memorial Park (1), Apex Park (1), Bruyn Park (1), Skipline Park (1), John Tucker Park (2), Allan Fairhall Reserve (1), Paterson War Memorial (1), Orana Park (1), Vacy Park (2), Dungog Cemetery (1), Paterson Cemetery (1), Clarence Town Cemetery (1).

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Works carried out during January 2016:-

Road and Bridge Construction
Brown Street, Dungog - Pavement and drainage works
Torryburn Bridge - Civil Bridge and Wharf undertaking works.

Sealed Road Maintenance
Tar Patching - MR101, MR128, Limeburners Creek Road, Summer Hill Road, MR301, Dungog Urban Streets, Alison Road, Martins Creek Road, RR7778, Gresford Streets, Webbers Creek Road, Douglas Street, RR7778, RR7764.
Shoulder Grading - MR101, Marshdale Road, Summer Hill Road, Flat Tops.
Drainage Maintenance - Summer Hill Road.
Resealing - Alison Road, MR101, MR301, RR7778, Martins Creek Road, Marshdale Road
Guideposting - MR301

Unsealed Road Maintenance
Gravel Sheet - Black Camp Road, Webbers Creek Road, Dog Trap Creek Road, Parks Creek Road, Flat Tops Road, Black Camp Road, Torryburn Road, Torryburn Road Side Track, Clements Road, Cross Keys Road, Lyons Road, Chads Creek Road, Gabulah Road, Cross Keys Road, Summer Hill Road, Sugarloaf Road, Keppies Road, Osmonds Road, Allyn River Road, Eybs Road, Parishes Road, Fosterton Road, Orange Grove, Moylans Road.
Maintenance Grade - Summer Hil Road
Drainage Maintenance - Vogeles Road

Bridge, Concrete and Other Maintenance Works
Black Camp Road Bridge - Removal and replaced with temporary culvert.
Flat Tops Road Landslip - Road Closed and sign posted.
Clarence Town Caravan Park- Repairs
Gams Bridge - Flood Rack Removal
Williams River Flood Channel- Batter Repairs
Bridge Inspections - Shire Wide
Hoffmans Quarry - Crushing and Screening Works, Site Shed, Ramp installation
Shire Depot - Fuel Bowser Installation
Roadsides
Roadside Slashing was undertaken on MR101, MR301, Gaggin Street, Erringhi Street, O’loughlin Street, Woerdens Road, Brentwood Drive, Fotheringay Road.

Sporting Grounds:-
The following Sporting Grounds were mown (the number of mowings is shown in brackets):- Bennett Park Oval (3), Bennett Park Surrounds (1), Reg Ford Oval (2), Clarence Town Football Oval (2), Vacy Sportsground (3), Gresford Sporting Complex (1).

Parks/Reserves/Cemeteries:-
The following Parks/Reserves/Cemeteries were mown (the number of mowings is shown in brackets):- Jubilee Park (1), Lions Park (Scott Avenue) (1), Lioness Park (2), Apex Park (1), Bruyn Park (1), Coronation Park (1), John Tucker Park (1), Orana Park (1), Vacy Park (1), Dungog Cemetery (1).

Major Works scheduled to be continued or commenced in the next 3 months:-

Attached as Annexure ‘A’ is a list of the major works scheduled for the forthcoming 3 months.

IMPLICATIONS
There are no financial, statutory, environmental, community or consultative implications of this report.

RECOMMENDATION
That the report be received and the information noted.
6. STATEMENT OF INVESTMENTS
EF08/220

Précis:

Clause 212 of Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 requires a monthly report to Council outlining all money’s Council has invested under Section 625 of the Local Government Act.

**********

The Statement of Investments as at 31 December 2015 and 31 January 2016 incorporating the Responsible Accounting Officer's Certificate are attached as Annexure ‘B’.

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

There are no financial, statutory, environmental, community or consultative implications associated with this report.

RECOMMENDATION

The report be received and information noted.
7. WORKS COST STATEMENT
EF08/221

Précis:

A selective summary of expenditures on capital works and maintenance expense areas within Council's roads, bridges, cemeteries, toilets, parks and sports ground cost centres.

***********

The Works Cost Statement for the period ending 31 January 2016 is attached for Councillors information as Annexure ‘C’.

With 7 months of the year gone notional expenditure levels would be expected to be at 58% of budget allocation. As previously reported the Rural Unsealed Roads maintenance vote is recording significantly higher than notional expenditure due to timing of works on the unsealed roads network, however with the majority of scheduled works now completed on this network, this vote is expected overall to remain within budget. Expenditure in Urban Roads Maintenance, Regional Roads Reseals, Tree Planting & Maintenance, Sporting Grounds Maintenance and Parks & Reserves Maintenance are all recording higher than expected levels of expenditure due to timing of works and seasonal conditions however are all within budget allocations. All other maintenance items are currently within budget allocations and are in line with expected levels of expenditure.

Capital works are at varying levels of completion and expenditure reflects such activity and are mostly within budget allocations. Engineering overheads have been applied to individual projects in line with the original budget and in accordance with Councils normal operating practice. The works progress report within the Infrastructure & Assets area provides further information on some items in this report including scheduled dates for commencement for individual projects and works undertaken in the prior month.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Works Cost Statement for the period ending 31 January 2016 be received and noted.
8. COUNCILLORS TRAVELLING & OTHER EXPENSES  
EF08/222

Précis:

Report on Councillors travelling for Councillors information.

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Hereunder is a list of meetings/inspections or business of Council held/to be held since the December Meeting of Council.

Australia Day Committee 16/12/15
Gloucester Coal Seam Gas CCC 17/12/16
Lower Hunter BFRMP Review & Sec 52 OP Completion 21/12/15
Councillor Workshop 18/01/16
Councillor Workshop 27/01/16
LG Merger Delegate Meeting 27/01/16
Michael Johnsen Meeting 03/02/16
Dungog Showground Committee 04/02/16
HC Board Meeting 4-5/02/16
Dungog/Gloucester Merger Inquiry 09/02/16
Ordinary Council Meeting 16/02/16

IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial, statutory, environmental, community or consultative implications associated with this report. Council’s travelling costs are currently within budget.

RECOMMENDATION

That the report be received and information noted.
Précis:
Providing a summary of circulars that have been released by the Office of Local Government.

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The following circulars have been released by the Office of Local Government and the intent of this report is to keep Councillors informed of changes and/or requirements that Council officers may be required to implement. The circulars themselves may be found on the Office of Local Government’s website (www.dlg.nsw.gov.au). It is not the intent to reproduce such circulars but more so provide them as a point of reference to Councillors should they wish to undertake further research.

When there is a requirement to inform Councillors or designated officers of a matter correspondence and attachments will still be submitted to all Councillors in accordance with the requirements of the Director General of the Office of Local Government. Such circulars will be highlighted in bold text. The following Circulars have been released since 1 December 2015.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Circular No.</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16/12/15</td>
<td>15-40</td>
<td>Recovery of outstanding Water Charges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17/12/15</td>
<td>15-41</td>
<td>Commencement of the Local Government Amendment (Councillor Misconduct and Poor Performance Act) 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/01/16</td>
<td>16-01</td>
<td>New Local Government Act Development Consultation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/01/16</td>
<td>16-02</td>
<td>Special Variation and Minimum Rate Variation Guidelines and Process for 2016/17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Aside from Circulars there are numerous publications which are released upon the Departments website. These include: Office of Local Government Christmas Holiday Closure 2015; Guidelines for council decision making during merger proposal periods.

IMPLICATIONS
There are no implications associated with this report, information only.

RECOMMENDATION
That the report be received and the information noted.