

STATE OF THE SHIRE REPORT

2024





ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

Dungog Shire Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Cultural Custodians of Country in the Dungog Shire, including the Gringai, Geawegal/Geawal, Wanaruah/Wonnarua, and Worimi peoples.

We pay our respects to Elders past and present and emerging.

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A MESSAGE FROM THE FORMER MAYOR

– John Connors

This term of council commenced in December 2021 as we were immersing from Covid restrictions.

The referendum held in conjunction with the 2017 election saw the number of Councillors reduced from nine to six with a popularly elected Mayor.

Successful advocacy led to in excess of 100M in grant funding from the Federal and State Governments. This is an unprecedented amount and it has come notwithstanding a change of government at both Federal and State level during the term.

The relevant ministers and bureaucrats now know where Dungog Shire is and that it has an unsustainable level of own source revenue (33%). We have a budget this financial year of \$69M again an unprecedented amount.

The failure of the former State Government to implement the recommendation of the Inquiry into the Reclassification of Roads was a disappointment and we continue to be the only Council in NSW without a State Road.

Apart from the record capital works programme much has been done to create a foundation for the shire for many years to come. The Economic Development Plan, the Cultural Plan, the Open Space and Recreation Plan, the Hooke Street Master Plan have all been completed and the Clarence Town Structure Plan is underway along with the Clarence Town Flood Study.

The restructure of the Planning and Environment Department has led to a reduction in the processing time of development applications despite the severe staff shortages.

We can look back on significant sporting complexes at Clarence Town and East Gresford and a major upgrade of Bennett Park in Dungog. The upgraded library in Dungog provides enhanced facilities for all users.

Electrical Vehicle chargers are about to be installed at Dungog and Vacy which have come about from the combined effort of the HJO, DRT and Council.

Roads and bridges are however the greatest achievement of this term of council. Once the crossing of the Paterson River at Gresford is built, over the next twelve months, the only timber bridge, maintained by council, within the shire will be Pound Crossing. In excess of 24km of sealed road has been rehabilitated and there will be a new bridge over the Williams River at Clarence Town.

None of these achievements would have come about but for the commitment of the entire Council staff to whom thanks and recognition must be given.

I thank the Deputy Mayor for his support and willingness to always be available when needed, the Councillors for your support over this term of Council and I thank the community for the opportunity of being your Mayor for the past four and a half years and I hope that the success of the recent past can continue into the future.

John Connors
Former Mayor
Dungog Shire Council

The relevant ministers and bureaucrats now know where Dungog Shire is and that it has an unsustainable level of own source revenue (33%). We have a budget this financial year of \$69M again an unprecedented amount.



A MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

– Gareth Curtis

This State of the Shire Report (formerly End of Term Report) covers the period from December 2021 to September 2024, being the term of the elected Council.

The purpose of the State of the Shire Report is to highlight to the community, how the Council has progressed towards achieving the strategic goals of the Dungog Shire Community Strategic Plan 2022-2032 (CSP).

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

In 2019, the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) approved a five-year Special Rate Variation (SRV), to help support critical infrastructure projects across the Shire.

The SRV has been spent over the five year period as follows:

- Roads and Infrastructure - \$4,432,086
- Loan repayments for four ageing timber bridges - \$1,137,745

The unexpended funds collected during the SRV period will continue to be used to fund projects and services to enhance our community's safety and amenity well into the future.

Some of the highlights from the Council term relate to improved delivery of services and capital works, with significant improvement in the Council's financial capacity, primarily due to the Special Rate Variation and record levels of grant funding from all levels of government.

All this while enduring uncertainty over natural disasters bushfires and flooding, climate change impacts and the COVID-19 global pandemic.

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

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

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

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

Gareth Curtis
General Manager
Dungog Shire Council

The unexpended funds collected during the SRV period will continue to be used to fund projects and services to enhance our community's safety and amenity well into the future.

OUR SHIRE

Dungog Shire covers an area of 2,248 square kilometres. The Council is situated in the Barrington tops region and has a population of approximately 9,767.

The Shire consists predominantly of very rugged to hilly country which becomes less rugged from north to south.

The major towns and villages within the Shire include:

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



OUR COUNCILLORS (FORMER COUNCIL)



John Connors
The Mayor



Michael Dowling
Councillor Ward A



Stephen Low
Councillor Ward B



Bradley Bale
Councillor Ward C



Michael Tobin
Councillor Ward A



Jessica Clark
Councillor Ward B



Digby Rayward
Councillor Ward C

PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

About the State of Our Shire Report

The State of Our Shire Report reports on the council's progress in implementing the Community Strategic Plan over the previous term of council. The report looks at outcomes and results for the community and council as a result of the activities undertaken. This includes environmental issues relevant to the objectives established by the Community Strategic Plan.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Office of Local Guidelines and s428(2) of the Local Government Act, 1993. The report must be tabled at the second meeting of the incoming council and included in the annual report due 30 November in the year in which an ordinary election is held.

The State of Our Shire Report is a high-level strategic report, which does not provide a detailed report on the operational activities undertaken in achieving the 4 year Delivery Plan outcomes. The progress against the operational plan actions are reported separately at least every 6 months to Council and align with Council's financial update reports each quarter. Detailed updates are also provided in the Annual Report which is available on Dungog Council website by 30 November each year.

Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

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

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

Community Strategic Plan (CSP)

The CSP is the key document in the framework and is a 10-year plan, reviewed every 4 years. The purpose of the plan is to identify the community's main priorities and aspirations for the future, and outline objectives and strategies to achieve them. These objectives and strategies will take into consideration the issues and pressures that may affect the community and the level of resources that will realistically be available. The CSP is organised under five Community Values (key focus areas) that reflect the community's vision and values. The Delivery Program and Operational Plan use the same five community values and they also provide clear strategic alignment between Council's long-term, mid-term and annual planning and reporting.

Delivery Program

The Delivery Program is a plan that covers the term of an elected Council (usually 4 years). To create the program, we look at the Community Strategic Plan and ask what strategies we can achieve over the coming term to bring us closer to the community's vision and values, using the resources identified in the Resourcing Strategy.

Operational Plan

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

Resourcing Strategy

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

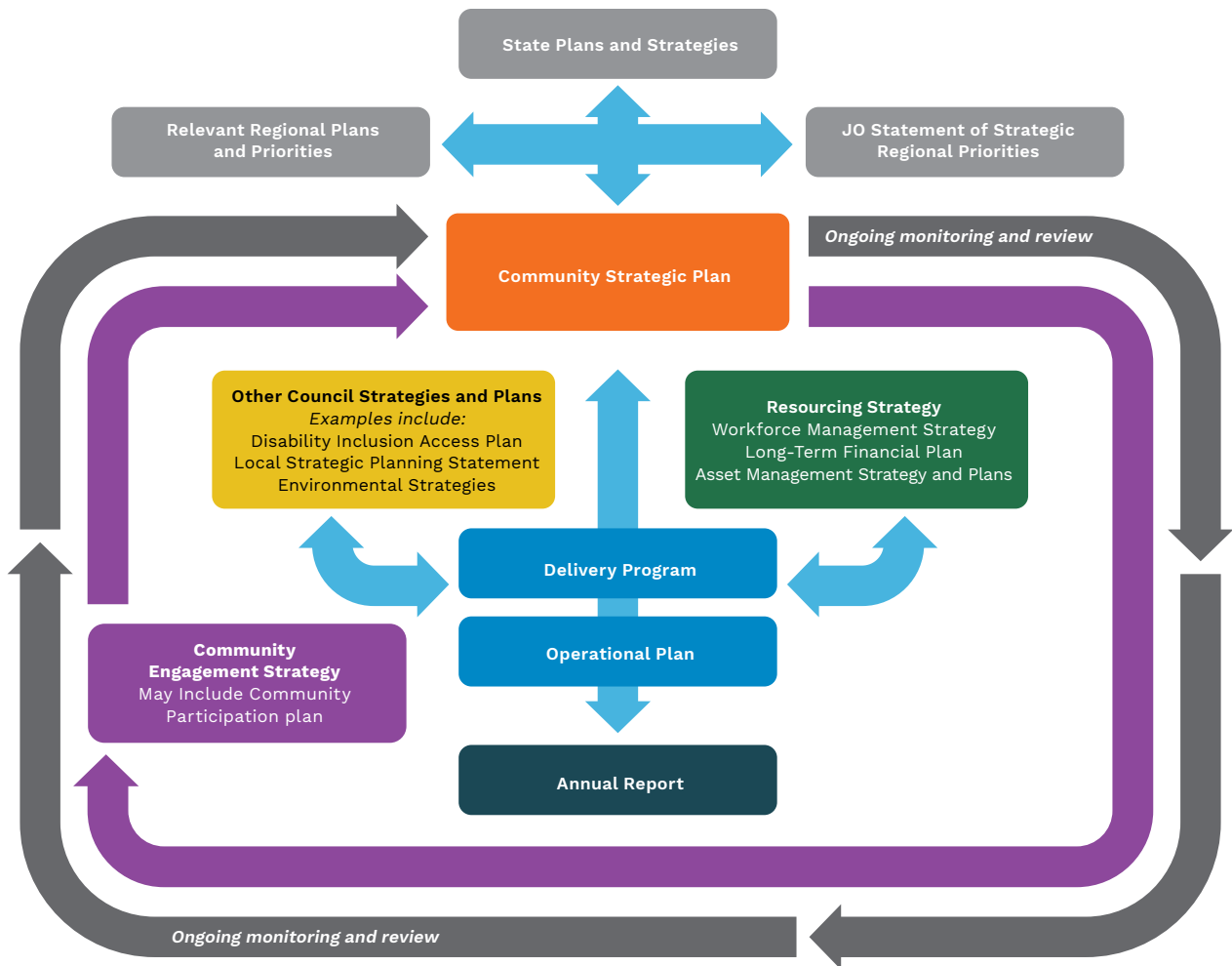


Image: Office of Local Government Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

Strategies and Plans delivering the Community Strategic Plan

- Roads and Transport Asset Management Plan
 - Buildings Asset Management Plan
 - Parks and Recreation Asset Management Plan
 - Stormwater Asset Management Plan
 - Dungog Showground Heritage Conservation Management Strategy
 - Land Use Strategy
 - Local Strategic Planning Statement (Moving Toward 2040)
 - Roads Management Strategy
 - Roadside Environment Management Strategy
 - Council Advocacy Strategy 2022
 - Clarence Town Courthouse & Site Conservation Management Plan
 - Clarence Town War Memorial Conservation Management Plan
 - Cultural Plan 2024-2028
 - Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017-2020 (under review)
 - Economic Development Plan 2022-2026
 - Floodplain Risk Management Study and Plan
 - Hunter Water Development Services Plan
 - Infrastructure Funding Priorities 2021
 - Local Emergency Management Plan (under review)
 - Open Space & Recreation Plan 2022
 - Risk Management Plan
 - Visitor Strategy and Destination Management Plan 2021-2026
 - Waste Strategy 2023-2043
 - Plans of Management (Various)
- Other levels of government strategic documents**
- NSW Government – Premier’s Priorities
 - Hunter Regional Plan 2041
 - NSW Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2042
 - Future Transport Strategy
 - NSW Regional Health Strategic Plan 2022-2032
 - Economic Development Strategy for Regional NSW

TERM HIGHLIGHTS



661

Total number of DA determined from
1 December 2021 – 30 September 2024



196

Total number of residential (dwelling)
DA determined from
1 December 2021 – 30 September 2024



\$135,585,350

Value of development from
1 December 2021 – 30 September 2024



Transport Infrastructure

\$22.26M

Completion of the Timber Bridge Replacement Program under the Fixing Country Bridges Program. In all, 23 timber bridges have been replaced with a total budget of \$22.26M expended on these critical assets

\$25M

\$25M Road Rehabilitation Backlog Program underway with 55% of funding committed with seven (7) projects complete totalling 5.95km of road being rehabilitated with three (3) further projects commenced

80% Complete

Clarence Town Road Special Grant works 80% complete with 8.6km of road being rehabilitated

\$4.9M

Fixing Local Roads funding received for:

Flat Tops Road

3.00km Complete

Queen Street Clarence Town

0.23km Complete

Duke Street Clarence Town

0.30km Complete

Allyn River Road

3.70km Commenced

3.20km Complete

Gresford Road REPAIR and Black Spot Funding for rehabilitation of 3.20km of road complete

>\$6M

Natural Disaster Recovery funding expended on road repairs

4

Responded to four (4) Major Natural Disaster Events



Facility Infrastructure

Completed Works

Clarence Town Sporting Amenities Building and associated car park and pathway construction

Gresford Sporting Complex Amenities Building

Dungog Library Upgrade works

Bennett Park resurfacing, fencing, change room and kiosk upgrades

Doug Walters Car Park construction and solar lighting project

Bruyn Park Oval Fencing, Amenities Building, Seating and Solar light installation

Coronation Park Playground upgrade works

Clarence Town Village Green new amenities building, playground installation and solar lighting project

Dungog Showground Kiosk Disabled Parking and Access, covered viewing area and drainage upgrade works

Dungog Showground to Common access trail

John Tucker Park internal road upgrade works



Economy

Wins for 2024

The completion and adoption of the Dungog Shire Council Economic Development Plan 2022-2026

Securing Funding and collaborate with Dungog Regional Tourism to redevelop the Visitor Information Centre 2024

Securing funding to purchase, install and make operational Electric Vehicle Charging Stations at the Visitor Information Centre and Vacy Rest Stop

Securing funding to design, print and distribute Dungog Shires first stand-alone promotional tourism magazine

Major sponsorship of the UCI Pump Track World Championships Qualifier in Dungog, 24th August 2024

OUR COMMUNITY VALUES

Our Community Strategic Plan themes describe what is important to us and how we would like to live as a community. These are the values our community identified in the 2016 Community Strategic Plan Survey and confirmed in subsequent survey's held in 2022 and 2024.



Our Community

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



Our Environment and Planning

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



Our Economy

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



Our Infrastructure

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



Our Leadership

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

HOW WE MEASURE PROGRESS

In the Community Strategic Plan, each of the five strategic themes are supported by multiple strategies and measured by the indicators of success.

The State of the Shire Report will outline our progress against those indicators over the term of the Council from December 2021 in an effort to show progress against each of the strategic themes.

Progress updates are provided and an indicator of progress towards or away from the community’s desired outcomes is provided. Where there has been a maintaining of existing approaches, a blue icon is provided.

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

Progress against strategic indicator and community desired outcomes



Moving towards achieving outcomes and goals



Maintaining our current position



Moving away from achieving outcomes and goals

OUR COMMUNITY

Our Goal

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

Our Strategies






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

- Continue to develop programs/initiatives to welcome and support new residents into the Shire.
- Create options for community participation through volunteerism.
- Acknowledge and celebrate the contribution volunteers make to the Dungog Shire.
- Raise public awareness of local activities and events that provide a foundation for community building.
- Develop and initiate opportunities for greater participation of young people in local community activities.
- Foster the cohesiveness of local community groups.
- Enhance resident capacity to prepare for and withstand the effects of natural disasters and rapid onset events within the Shire.
- Foster and support the cultural life of the Shire.
- Ensure that there are locally available services and facilities to cater for people of all ages.
- Ensure that community health and safety issues are identified and addressed.
- Assist community organisations to secure funding and other resources.



Indicators of Success

Indicators of our progress towards the strategic goals of the Community Strategic Plan:

Strategies	Status
There is a high level of local public participation in community activities and events.	
<p>Participation is encouraged through activation of community spaces for community based activities and events, collaboratively working together with local businesses/creative artists for safe community connections that are used during both the day and night.</p> <p>Many of Dungog Shire’s existing and planned events are local events, produced by local volunteers, celebrating local produce, local arts, local culture, local music festivals, sporting based events.</p> <p>19.5% of Dungog Shire population volunteer within the community (2021 Census).</p>	<p>Steady</p> 
Communities are well connected through social, sporting and cultural activities and a unifying Shire identity.	
<p>Events provide opportunities for communities to come together and to celebrate their unique local identities.</p> <p>Ongoing improvements through planned maintenance programs to facilities, sports grounds and playgrounds, support and encourage active participations in local communities both passive recreation and structured activities.</p> <p>Local sporting and service organisations continue to partner with council to deliver improvements in playgrounds, shade shelters, public seating, fencing, solar lighting and ground facilities.</p> <p>Dungog Library was newly refurbished during the term, which is a fabulous new space the whole community can utilise and enjoy. The \$1.6 million project saw the doubling of the space, improved Wi-Fi and audio- visual access, a modern community meeting room with full connectivity, and open; light-filled spaces for reading, learning and gathering.</p>	<p>Up/Improving</p> 
There is a strong community awareness of local heritage, history and culture.	
<p>The Cultural Plan was adopted during the term, helping to defining how Dungog Shire Council within its capacity, will work in partnership with the community and government to deliver cultural activities and events. Celebrating the unique identities of Dungog, Vacy, Paterson, Gresford, East Gresford, Martins Creek, and Clarence Town enhances community awareness whilst helping to grow a sustainable creative economy across the Shire.</p>	<p>Steady/Improving</p> 
Young people form an integral part of community life across the Shire.	
<p>Developing youth networks through shire schools to identify priorities and implementation of key projects e.g. Mental health and wellbeing.</p>	<p>Steady/Improving</p> 
Success in securing funding/grants from State and Federal Government.	
<p>Over the period from 2020/21 to 2023/24, Council has secured a total of \$104,824,699 in federal and state funded grants. The trend is increasing over time which has also been reflected in Council audited financial statements for the period.</p>	<p>Up</p> 

OUR ENVIRONMENT & PLANNING

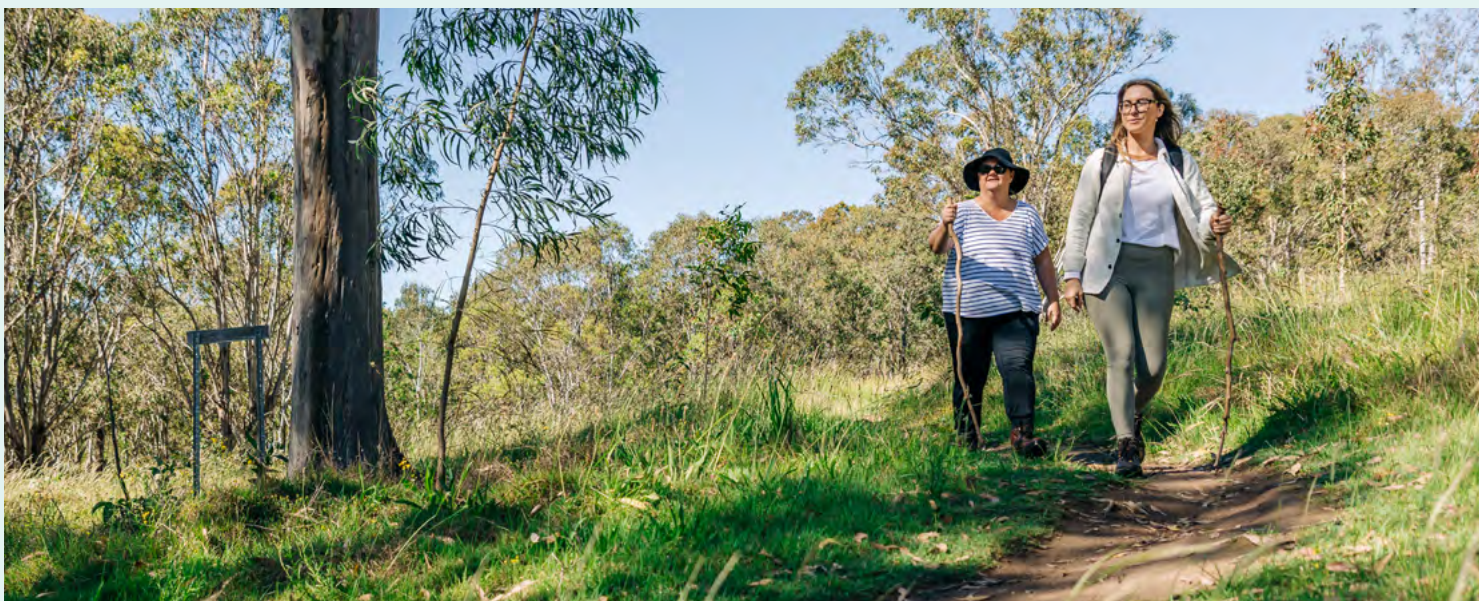
Our Goal

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

Our Strategies



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



- Manage public access and use of natural areas to enhance our environmental experience and to preserve and promote ecological values.
- Support and manage the responsible use of resources including the minimisation of waste and the promotion of recycling practices in homes, work places, development sites and public places.
- Raise public awareness of the responsibilities of landholders regarding management of land.
- Involve the community in maintaining and enhancing environmental health.
- Ensure that Dungog Shire Council's policies and procedures adequately protect and enhance the Shire's natural environment and biodiversity.
- Ensure that local waterways and riparian areas in the Shire are clean and healthy.
- Manage and reduce the impact of weeds on the natural environment.
- Ensure that appropriate regulatory and enforcement agencies are proactive in addressing environmental issues in our Shire.
- Ensure that we plan for adequate land supply to accommodate future expected population growth.
- Maintain a long term planning approach that caters for diversity and choice in rural and village living.
- Ensure that our land use planning for the Shire acknowledges the importance of our rural character and agricultural activities.
- Ensure the heritage and streetscapes of our villages are preserved and enhanced.
- We participate in climate change collaboration and partnerships to leverage effort and resources, and are keen to learn from others.
- We participate in partnerships and seek grant funding to support our aspirations in climate change action.




Indicators of Success

Indicators of our progress towards the strategic goals of the Community Strategic Plan:

CSP Indicator	Status
<p>National Parks, State Forests and public recreation areas in our region are accessible and well managed</p>	
<p>In 2018 17.8% of the Dungog Shire LGA area, was reserved as protected areas- these include national parks, Forestry, Nature Reserves and Conservation areas. (ABS 2021). Between 2016 and 2018 -156 hectares was added as protected areas in Dungog Shire LGA, mainly consisting of 151 hectares added to National Park estates.</p> <p>Barrington Tops National Parks covers an area of 62,448 hectares, which is listed as a World Heritage site. 85% of the Barrington Tops National Park is declared wilderness with approximately one fifth located within the borders of the Dungog Shire, at its northernmost end.</p> <p>The Chichester State Forest is included in the southern end of the Barrington Tops National Park. Two thirds of the Chichester State Forest is located within the boundaries of Dungog Shire. In the Shire’s south portions of the Uffington and Wallaroo State Forests are located within the boundaries of Dungog Shire, close to its southernmost border. The Allyn and Paterson State Forests are located in the north of the Shire in the upper reaches of the Allyn Valley.</p> <p>Forestry Corporation of NSW manages 2,186,893 hectares of land, which is primarily State forests with small areas of freehold and private land managed through joint investment partnerships.</p> <p>NSW State Forests are managed for harvesting, but can contain protected areas such as the Mount Allyn Flora Reserve. In 2022/23 121km2 of land in Dungog Shire LGA was managed as State Forest Area (Forestry Corporation 2023) and provides a form of managed habitat.</p> <p>Council works in partnership with the managers of protected areas in the areas of emergency management, waste disposal and connectivity of the road network, ensuring that these areas are accessible.</p>	<p>Maintaining</p> 
<p>We enjoy our natural environment for its clean air, healthy waterways and large tracts of bushland</p>	
<p>Air quality in NSW is monitored by DPIE through an air quality network. The air quality network includes monitoring stations in the Lower Hunter region (primarily around the Port of Newcastle) and the Upper Hunter Region. Monitoring stations in the Upper Hunter region are mainly located in the neighbouring area of Singleton LGA with a focus on mining operations. There are no current monitoring stations within Dungog Shire LGA with detailed air quality data.</p> <p>Emissions, both human and naturally produced, contribute to air quality within an airshed or region. The National Pollutant Inventory provides information regarding emissions within an airshed and can be utilised to determine the main air emissions within Dungog Shire LGA (DAWE 2024). The highest emissions generated in Dungog Shire LGA in 2022/23 include fluoride compounds, ammonia, chlorine & compounds, volatile organic compounds, nitrogen and phosphorus.</p> <p>Approximately 17.8% of the Dungog Shire LGA area, is reserved as protected areas- these include national parks, Forestry, Nature Reserves and Conservation areas. (ABS 2021).</p> <p>While the Hunter catchment area was provided with a good-fair rating condition in 2008 many of the data assessment points were not located within Dungog Shire LGA making assessment of river health in the LGA difficult. It is therefore difficult to assess ongoing river health.</p> <p>The number of algal red alerts significantly increased in 2017/18 to 2019/20 with Lostock Reservoir and the Williams River at Clarence Town being sites with higher numbers of alerts.</p> <p>Dungog Shire LGA has continued to implement our Onsite Sewage Management Program with the aim at improving river and catchment quality. From January 2022 to June 2024, an average of 190 systems were inspected each year, an increase from the last reporting period.</p> <p>The Hunter Catchment Contributions are collected from a levy on rateable land within the Hunter River catchment. The funds collected are used for projects to improve the catchment. Hunter LLS have undertaken erosion management and waterway rehabilitation within Dungog Shire LGA including projects at Bedding Down Creek at Alison and the Williams River at Glen William.</p>	<p>Maintaining</p> 

Waste is minimised and effectively managed across the Shire	
<p>In Dungog Shire LGA the total amount of waste collected or received at the Waste Facility from Jan 2022 to June 2024 was 21,390 tonnes, with 18,992 tonnes (88% of total waste) landfilled.</p> <p>The total tonnage of waste diverted from the Dungog waste facility is 1574 tonnes or around 23.43% of the total waste stream collected from kerbside collections during the period of January 2022 to June 2024.</p> <p>Council continues to support new waste diversion streams for the community. Currently the waste facility accepts soft plastics, e-waste, cardboard, batteries, oil, mattresses, chemical containers and green waste.</p> <p>The return and earn kiosk continues to be popular, with a second kiosk established during the reporting period. This was established in Dungog to accept eligible drink containers aimed at promoting recycling and reducing litter.</p> <p>Council continues to partner with JR Richards to facilitate waste education programs across schools and the community.</p>	<p>Moving towards</p> 
Local land holders and appropriate agencies co-operate in effectively managing weeds and pest animals across the Shire.	
<p>Over the past 2.5 years Council has undertaken an average of 326 property inspections annually along with the treatment of an average of 174km of roadsides per year.</p> <p>This treatment program is undertaken through a combination of grant funding through the NSW Weeds Action Program, administrated by Department of Primary Industries, and Council operational funds in a cooperative partnership.</p> <p>During the period Council was an active stakeholder and member on the Hunter Weeds Advisory Committee and the Hunter Weeds Technical Team. Council is also an active participant in the NSW Weeds Action Program- Regional Sub-Program 2023/2024 for Local Control Authorities for Weeds.</p> <p>Councils own Local Biosecurity and Weed Management committee, a partnership between Council, agencies and landholders met on 2 occasions and delivered 3 field days in association with community groups.</p> <p>During this period Dungog Shire LGA has been working with LLS, landholders and the community to draft the 2024-2028 Hunter Regional Strategic Pest Animal Management Plan as a guide for activities and programs to reduce the impact of pest animals in the environment, farming and productivity</p>	<p>Maintaining</p> 

There is a reduction in the Shire’s carbon footprint and measured energy and water usage.	
<p>There was an overall reduction in Co2 emissions from 231,000 in 2020-21 to 199,000 in 2021-22.</p> <p>https://snapshotclimate.com.au/locality/municipality/australia/new-south-wales/dungog/2021/fy</p> <p>The Lotstock to Glennies Creek pipeline to ensure water security into the future for users and Dungog will continue to liaise with Hunter Water as to ensure demand for water supply aligns with Dungogs growth aspirations for water security in line with meeting population demand as per the Hunter Regional Plan 2041.</p>	<p>Reduction/ Moving towards</p> 
Our rural amenity and lifestyle is retained.	
<p>As the Shire has experienced incremental growth aligned with upward trend in population growth, Council has maintained a focus on sustainable development to ensure that any changes align with the community’s desire and vision through the Community Strategic Plan to protect our unique rural environment and lifestyle. Through consistent implementation of planning legislation, development controls and compliance and enforcement outcomes, Council has balanced compliance and development with the preservation of open spaces, scenic views, and the agricultural way of life that defines Dungog.</p> <p>Key efforts to retain this amenity and lifestyle for residents include:</p> <p>Planning Controls: The implementation of development guidelines to manage growth without compromising our rural landscape.</p> <p>Environmental Conservation: Ongoing initiatives and collaboration with relevant statutory authorities to protect our natural resources, including waterways, farmland, and natural systems.</p> <p>Community Engagement: Ensuring residents are involved in planning processes, voicing their priorities for preserving the rural lifestyle.</p> <p>Infrastructure Alignment: Investments in infrastructure that meet the needs of the community without detracting from the shires rural amenity and improving lifestyle outcomes.</p>	<p>Steady</p> 
We have sustainable population growth across the Shire	
<p>ABS Data indicates the resident population has increased from 8975 (2016 Census) to 9,541 (2021 Census) or 6.3%.</p> <p>The most comprehensive population count available in Australia is derived from the Census of Population and Housing conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics every five years. However, the Census count is generally an under-estimate of the actual population, due to people missed in the Census and people overseas on Census night. To provide a more accurate population figure more frequently, the ABS also produces Estimated Resident Population (ERP) numbers.</p> <p>The ERP as per the Australian Bureau of Statistics’ official 2023 population figure for Dungog is 9,767.</p> <p>As per the NSW Governments’ Hunter Regional Plan 2041, the forecasted population is projected to be 14,374 equating to a 1.9% growth rate per annum which is the second highest in the Hunter Region and double that of the State.</p>	<p>Up/ Increasing</p> 

Population growth and diversity is consolidated around our towns and villages.	
<p>Since the last term of Council and the development of Council’s Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) Moving Towards 2040, the State Government has adopted the 2041 Hunter Regional Plan which replaces the former 2036 Hunter Regional Plan.</p> <p>The growth projections for the Dungog Shire changed considerably, with NSW Governments’ Hunter Regional Plan 2041 forecasting population in the Dungog Shire to be 14,374, equating to a 1.9% growth rate per annum which is the second highest in the Hunter Region and double that of the State.</p> <p>Council has advocated extensively throughout this term of Council acquiring over \$2.1m in grant funding for strategic led planning projects. One of these projects is a Growth Management Strategy and Infrastructure Capacity Plan to inform future growth for the Shire.</p> <p>The Growth Management Strategy along with the completion of a Rural Lands Strategy and Infrastructure Capacity Plan will inform how we grow and where we grow sustainably.</p>	<p>Up/Steady</p> 
There are a range of housing options available across the Shire.	
<p>Council’s Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) Moving Towards 2040 outlines priorities under the theme ‘A place to Grow’. One of these priorities is housing choice, with actions focused on review of permissible in certain zones as well as review of Local Area Plans and Local Environmental Plan to encourage uptake and supply of housing.</p> <p>One of the fundamental policy directions to inform decision making on housing supply and growth is to undertake a local housing strategy for the Shire to best inform Council’s decision making on meeting the housing needs of the community and the development industry.</p> <p>Council has advocated extensively throughout this term of Council acquiring over \$2.1m in grant funding for strategic led planning projects. One of these projects is a local housing strategy to inform housing options and typologies needed for the shire to support housing choice for a growing and aging community.</p>	<p>Improving</p> 
Our main streets and town entrances are attractive and well maintained	
<p>Dungog Shire’s Strategic Centre of Dungog as well as town and village centres including Clarence Town, Paterson, Vacy and Gresford main streets and entrances continue to serve as welcoming gateways that reflect the pride and heritage of our community.</p> <p>Through concerted efforts, our streetscapes have remained attractive, clean, and well-maintained, enhancing the experience for both residents and visitors.</p> <p>Key initiatives that contribute to this success include:</p> <p>Beautification Projects: Regular improvements and planned maintenance in landscaping, tree planting, and the upkeep of green spaces along main streets and town entrances.</p> <p>Infrastructure Upgrades: Strategic upgrades to footpaths and pavements as per adopted capital works programs, street lighting, signage, and seating have improved both the functionality and appearance of key areas. These upgrades are designed to align with the character of Dungog’s historical and cultural centres.</p> <p>Community Partnerships: Collaborations with local businesses, community groups, and residents have been vital in maintaining clean and vibrant streets. These partnerships ensure that our public spaces remain inviting and contribute to the local economy.</p> <p>Sustainable Maintenance: We have adopted environmentally sustainable practices for the ongoing care of public spaces, utilizing local resources and energy-efficient technologies to maintain cleanliness and infrastructure upkeep.</p> <p>Our commitment to maintaining attractive and welcoming streetscapes enhances Dungog’s appeal as a destination, contributes to community pride, and supports the economic vitality of our Shire and Region.</p>	<p>Improving</p> 

The importance of local agricultural activity is recognised in Council’s strategic planning documents and decision-making

Dungog Shire Council continues to acknowledge the vital role that agriculture plays in shaping the region’s economy, environment, and community identity. Through our strategic vision outlined in the Community Strategic Plan and Local Strategic Planning Statement Council carefully considers a balanced approach to growth, development and employment opportunities and decision-making processes, Council remains committed to supporting and sustaining local agricultural activity as a core pillar of our rural landscape.

As per the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) AgTrack database, the Hunter Region’s total Gross Value of agricultural commodities is \$663.44M. The total Gross Value of agricultural commodities for Dungog is \$49.84M 2020/21. Livestock slaughtered (meat) accounts for \$29.77m. As per DPI’s database, of the 10 Local Government Areas that make up the Hunter Region, Dungog is third behind Mid Coast and Upper Hunter Councils for the most contributor to LG total agricultural production of commodities in the region.

<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/lup/agriculture-data-for-planning/dashboard>

Improving



Local land use planning that is flexible and reflects local needs and supports diverse activities including population growth, industry needs and a range of agricultural activities.

Council’s Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) Moving Towards 2040 under the theme ‘A thriving new economy’ outlines priorities to promote diversification and innovation of agriculture.

During this term, Council has sought to improve flexibility in our rural zones to encourage diversification for rural and agricultural incomes. Council resolved to adopt NSW Governments changes to the Agritourism State Environment Planning Policy (SEPP) and subsequently amendments to Council’s Local Environmental Plan which allows land owners in certain zones to undertake activities that relating to agritourism. This allows for greater flexibility for land owners to undertake certain activities on their land including farm gate premises, farm experience premises or farm stay accommodations pending adherence to the SEPP Code.

Additionally, Council adopted an Upper Hunter Regional Employment Lands Strategy, a collaboration with Muswelbrook, Singleton and Upper Hunter Councils’. This Strategy identifies regional and local actions for Council to implement that recognises emerging industry trends with agriculture industries and argitourism as well as ensuring alignment with Council’s adopted Economic Development Plan 2022-2026.

Improving



OUR ECONOMY

Our Goal

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

Our Strategies




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



- Ensure that economic growth and expansion across the Shire is supported by improvement of local public and private infrastructure.
- Ensure we plan for the availability of land to facilitate commercial and industrial growth.
- Review the provision of improved camping and caravan facilities throughout the Shire
- Ensure that appropriate public and private sector agencies and businesses work co-operatively to strengthen and expand the Shire's economic base.
- Promote the Shire as a good location for the establishment of innovative, small to medium scale, sustainable businesses.
- Work closely with relevant Chambers of Commerce and Progress Associations to promote and share best business practice, offer platforms to lobby government on behalf of business where required, undertake advocacy for education, transport and health, make representation to government on critical Shire issues, and seek out grant and other funding opportunities.
- Work with Dungog Regional Tourism to develop a strategic approach to growing visitor numbers across the Shire.
- Implement the actions stemming from the Dungog Shire Economic Development Plan.
- Develop a unique brand, identity and value proposition for the Dungog Shire to promote local economic growth and tourism development.
- Improve the availability of telecommunications infrastructure to our communities and visitors.



Indicators of Success

Indicators of our progress towards the strategic goals of the Community Strategic Plan:

CSP Indicator	Status
Our local commercial and retail areas are diverse and well patronised	
<p>The 2022-2026 Economic Development Plan (EDP) was adopted during the term. Outlining 40 actions under the five themes of Identity, Infrastructure, Industry, Innovation and Income, it outlines a roadmap for the future prosperity of Dungog Shire. The EDP not only defines our community’s aspirations in the areas of economic development but sets the direction on the next council term.</p> <p>In surveys undertaken in the Villages and towns of Dungog Shire from November 2023 through to January 2024, there were 125 shop fronts recorded and of these 11 were closed [9%].</p> <p>A high proportion businesses [between 25% in Clarence Town through to 70% in Gresford] are related to hospitality and tourism.</p>	<p>Stable</p> 
There is a wide range of goods and services available locally	
<p>The number of local businesses increased by 113, from 1,091 in 2022 to 1,204 in 2023. Increases were observed in 16 of the 19 business sectors. (Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) ©2024.).</p> <p>The 2022-2026 Economic Development Plan (EDP) outlines 40 actions under the five themes of Identity, Infrastructure, Industry, Innovation and Income, it outlines a roadmap for the future prosperity and sets the direction for the next term of council.</p> <p>The Shire has a well-recognised identity and brand that drives economic outcomes.</p>	<p>Increase</p> 
The Shire has a well-recognised identity and brand that drives economic outcomes.	
<p>There is wide recognition that there is a need for a fresh marketing approach for business and tourism. During consultation in developing the new Economic Development Strategy 2022-2026, council asked what the key elements of ‘brand DNA’ of the Shire the top answers (in no order) were ‘clean and green’, great food, adventure/active tourism, rural lifestyle and the arts.</p> <p>The branding and messaging of Dungog Shire LGA also needs to be updated for both tourism and business attraction purposes. As a result the Economic Development Strategy has included a number of objectives to establish an updated brand and effectively market Dungog Shire for investment opportunities and facilitate joint marketing initiatives with relevant industry stakeholders. Implementation of objectives identified in the Economic Development Strategy will be a key focus during the next term of council.</p>	<p>Stable</p> 

CSP Indicator	Status
Our local agricultural sector is innovative, healthy and well supported	
<p>The agricultural sector remains the Shire’s largest employment sector, supporting some 443 jobs.</p> <p>The total value of agricultural output in Dungog Shire increased from 131 million in 2020/21 to \$162 million in 2022/23 (Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) 2024)</p>	<p>Up/Increase</p> 
Tourism is a significant contributor to our local economy	
<p>The total economic output of all economic sectors in the Dungog shire is 665.1 Million in 2022/23. Of this, the contribution of tourism is \$32.5 million or 4.9%. In 2020/21 the contribution of Tourism was \$20 million or 3.4% (up \$12.5 million or 62%). Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) ©2024).</p> <p>The size of Dungog Shire’s tourism industry in terms of employment is estimated at 106 jobs, which is 4.8% of total employment. Whilst the impact of tourism in direct terms is small, it has a profound impact on showcasing the LGA to new visitors, consumers, suppliers and potential investors.</p>	<p>Up/Increase</p> 
There is increased visitor expenditure in Dungog Shire	
<p>The total tourism sales in Dungog Shire increased from \$20.03 million in 2020/21 to \$32.5m in 2022/23 (up \$12.5 million or 62%).</p> <p>(Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) ©2024)</p>	<p>Up/Increase</p> 
There are increased local employment opportunities	
<p>The total FTE’s of all industry employment in Dungog Shire increased by 189 (or 9%) from 2,115 in 2020/21 to 2,304 in 2022/23. Increases in employment were observed in 17 of the 19 industry sectors. (Source: National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR) ©2024.)</p> <p>Employment industry sectors in Dungog Shire include Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing, Mining, Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services, Construction, Wholesale Trade, Retail Trade, Accommodation and Food Services, Transport, Postal and Warehousing, Financial and Insurance Services, Rental, Hiring and Support Services, Public Administration and Safety, Education and Training, Health Care and Social Assistance, Arts and Receptions Services.</p>	<p>Up/Increase</p> 
Communities across the Shire enjoy access to good quality telecommunications infrastructure.	
<p>Telecommunications infrastructure across the Shire has remained largely unchanged since 2017, with the necessity for improved services increasing in line with the growth in population and visitor numbers.</p> <p>The 3G network closure was extended to 31 August 2024 to allow people more time to upgrade their devices. 3G network coverage of Dungog Shire is (essentially the same coverage according to mobile coverage data mapping) comparatively the same coverage area as 4G.</p> <p>https://www.telstra.com.au/coverage-networks/our-coverage</p>	<p>Decreasing</p> 



OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

Our Goal

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

Our Strategies



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




- Improve the safety and functionality of our road network.
- Ensure a local police presence throughout the Shire.
- Ensure that our communities have access to quality educational institutions and health and social services/facilities.
- Ensure our local bridge network is safe and able to accommodate heavy vehicle load requirement.
- Improve the provision of transport services to communities within the Shire.
- Ensure the community assets, facilities and public infrastructure are planned for, maintained and improved to a reasonable standard.
- Ensure that the provision of public infrastructure and services reflect the needs of a growing and changing population.
- Ensure that local recreational and sporting facilities reflect the needs and interests of a growing community.
- Ensure that sporting and recreational spaces are well maintained and provide appropriate facilities and amenities for locals and visitors.
- Encourage and support a diversity of sporting and recreational activities throughout the Shire.
- Ensure that appropriate access to public land is maintained.
- Liaise with appropriate agencies to ensure that recreational areas including national parks, forests and waterways are accessible and well cared for.






Indicators of Success

Indicators of our progress towards the strategic goals of the Community Strategic Plan:

CSP Indicator	Status
<p>The road network across the Shire is safe and well maintained</p>	
<p>Council has secured significant grant funding for the various road networks and bridges over the council term including:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of the \$22.26M Timber Bridge Replacement Program • Clarence Town Road Upgrade Program 80% complete with 8.6km of road being rehabilitated • Road Rehabilitation Backlog Program underway with 5.95km of road rehabilitated • Round 2, 3 and 4 Fixing Local Roads Program funding received for various urban and local roads • Gresford Road REPAIR and Black Spot Funding works complete totaling 3.20km • Hooke Street Rehabilitation works commenced (1.1km) <p>Council was granted a Special Rate Variation (SRV) to help support critical infrastructure projects across the Shire commencing 2019/20 for a period of 5 years until June 2024.</p> <p>SRV funds have been spent as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roads and Infrastructure - \$4,432,086 • Loan repayments for four ageing timber bridges - \$1,137,745 <p>The additional revenue has allowed Council to fund operating and capital expenditure for key assets including the road network, timber bridges and community facilities, enhancing financial sustainability and beginning to reduce Council’s infrastructure backlog.</p>	<p>Improving</p> 
<p>Local public facilities and infrastructure caters for the needs of the Shire and is appropriately maintained and improved.</p>	
<p>During the term, Council has provided a number of new or upgraded facilities including –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Clarence Town Sporting Facility Building • New Gresford Sporting Facility Building • Dungog Library Upgrades • Bennett Park Surface, Fencing, Change Room and Kiosk upgrades • Coronation Park Playground upgrade works • Bruyn Park Oval Fencing, Amenities Building, Seating and Solar light installation • Doug Walters Car Park construction and solar lighting project • Clarence Town Village Green new amenities building, playground installation and solar lighting project • Dungog Showground Kiosk Disabled Parking and Access, covered viewing area and drainage upgrade works • Paterson Sportsground Entrance Upgrade works • Dungog Showground to Common access trail • John Tucker Park internal road upgrade works 	<p>Improving</p> 

CSP Indicator	Status
Local services provided by Governments at all levels are retained and reflect the needs of a growing and changing community.	
<p>Council continues to advocate of behalf of the community to encourage new and retain existing government services across the Shire. Dungog has maintained access to essential services throughout the Shire.</p>	<p>Steady</p> 
Success in securing funding/grants from State and Federal Governments to assist with better planning and provision of public infrastructure and provision of recreational and open spaces.	
<p>Over the period 2020/21 to 2023/24, Council has secured a total of \$104,824,699 federal and state funded grants. The trend is increasing over time which has also been reflected in Council audited financial statements for the period.</p> <p>Grant funding has been secured for the following projects:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$25M grant for Road Rehabilitation Backlog works • \$22.26M received under the Fixing Country Bridges Program for Council's Timber Bridge Replacements • \$8.9M received for Betterment upgrades for road, bridge and river crossing approach upgrades • \$5.18M received under Fixing Local Roads Program • \$4.9M received under Rounds 2, 3 & 4 of the Fixing Local Roads Program • \$4.24M in Blackspot Funding grants • \$3.26M Local Road & Community Infrastructure Grant funds • \$3.16M in Regional Emergency Road Repair Funding (RERRF) • \$3.0M co-funding grant received spread over 10 years for road rehabilitation works • \$2.0M in Office of Local Government Natural Disaster Funding • \$1.325M in Stronger Country Community Grant Funds • \$928K in REPAIR funding received 	<p>Up/Increase</p> 
Community sporting and recreation needs are addressed through provision of appropriate local facilities and services.	
<p>During the term, Council has provided a number of new or upgraded sport or recreation facilities including:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Clarence Town Sporting Facility Building • New Gresford Sporting Facility Building • Clarence Town Village Green new amenities building, playground installation and solar lighting project • Bennett Park Surface, Fencing, Change Room and Kiosk upgrades • Coronation Park Playground upgrade works • Bruyn Park Oval Fencing, Amenities Building, Seating and Solar light installation • Doug Walters Car Park construction and solar lighting project • Clarence Town Village Green new amenities building, playground installation and solar lighting project • Dungog Showground Kiosk Disabled Parking and Access, covered viewing area and drainage upgrade works • Dungog Showground to Common access trail • Paterson Sportsground Entrance Upgrade works • John Tucker Park internal road upgrade works 	<p>Improving</p> 

CSP Indicator	Status
<p>Community health is enhanced through high levels of participation in local sporting and recreational activities.</p>	
<p>Participation in organised sporting activities has generally increased throughout the Shire. In particular, there has been noted female participation in sports such as Ladies League Tag, Rugby League, Cricket and Soccer. Grant applications and new facilities have been designed to incorporate accessibility and gender friendly standards.</p>	<p>Steady</p> 
<p>Local sporting and recreational facilities and areas are safe and widely accessible and have well maintained infrastructure and amenities.</p>	
<p>During the term, Council has provided a number of new or upgraded sport or recreational facilities including:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Clarence Town Sporting Facility Building • New Gresford Sporting Facility Building • Clarence Town Village Green new amenities building, playground installation and solar lighting project • Bennett Park Surface, Fencing, Change Room and Kiosk upgrades complete • Coronation Park Playground upgrade works • Bruyn Park Oval Fencing, Amenities Building, Seating and Solar light installation • Doug Walters Car Park construction and solar lighting project • Clarence Town Village Green new amenities building, playground installation and solar lighting project • Dungog Showground Kiosk Disabled Parking and Access, covered viewing area and drainage upgrade works • Paterson Sportsground Entrance Upgrade works • Dungog Showground to Common access trail • John Tucker Park internal road upgrade works <p>Grant applications and new facilities have been designed to incorporate accessibility and gender friendly standards.</p>	<p>Improving</p> 
<p>Increased visitation in national parks, state forests and private lands.</p>	
<p>There is widespread recognition that tourism is largely dependent on the Shire’s natural assets (its stunning scenery, National Parks including a World Heritage listed area, State Forests and waterways) and lifestyle. Tourism continues to be a significant and growing contributor to our local economy, increasing from \$20.03 million in 2020/21 to \$32.5m in 2022/23 (up \$12.5 million or 62%).</p> <p>Visitation to National Parks in NSW has grown by 49% over the past 10 years, reaching more than 53 million visits in 2022. Furthermore, NSW National Parks surveys of domestic visitors to NSW national parks show a trend of increasing visitation. From 2020 to 2022, visits increased by over 5%, achieving the second highest visitation estimate on record.</p> <p>Council works in partnership with the managers of protected areas in the emergency management, waste disposal and connectivity of the road network, ensuring that these areas are accessible.</p>	<p>Increasing</p> 

OUR LEADERSHIP

Our Goal

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

Our Strategies



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


- That we aim for strong community leadership, financial sustainability and responsive governance.
- Decision-making processes are open, transparent and inclusive.
- Council undertakes broad and effective communication and engagement with the communities across the Shire.
- Council's governance and organisational structure reflects the vision, priorities and directions outlined in the Community Strategic Plan.
- Council undertakes prudent financial management to ensure its long-term viability.
- Council services are planned and delivered with a focus on quality customer service, continuous improvement, governance and risk management.
- Council maintains a regional outlook and seeks opportunities for strategic alliances with neighbouring councils.
- Council will advocate for our communities by actively pursuing constructive relationships with other spheres of government.
- Communities across the Shire have access to a range of communication formats for receipt and exchange of information.
- Other programs supporting Our Leadership.



Indicators of Success

Indicators of our progress towards the strategic goals of the Community Strategic Plan:

CSP Indicator	Status
<p>Council undertakes all its activities and decision-making to ensure equity in provision of community services, facilities and other resources.</p>	
<p>Council’s approach to all community engagement activities are consistent with the social justice principles of equity, access, participation and rights as prescribe by the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i>.</p> <p>Council uses a range of engagement techniques to seek input and feedback and inform the community, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council Happenings E-newsletter - Weekly Mayor’s Message - Meet the Mayor Sessions - Social Media - Surveys - Dungog Shire Council Website - Planning review Client Feedback - Media Releases <p>Council adopted a Community Participation Plan in August 2019, which sets out how and when Council will engage with the community on planning and development issues. A Draft Community Engagement Strategy, which incorporates the reviewed Community Participation Plan, has been prepared, for public exhibition in late 2024.</p> <p>Dungog Shire Council wants everyone in the community to have the opportunity to access a range of services, facilities and resources.</p>	<p>Improving</p> 
<p>Improved level of satisfaction with Council services as expressed by the community.</p>	
<p>The Community Satisfaction Survey is held every 2 years to identify and understand community priorities. It identifies the community’s overall level of satisfaction with Council performance and their level of importance and satisfaction with Council services and facilities.</p> <p>74% of residents were at least somewhat satisfied with Council’s performance in the Community Satisfaction Survey undertaken Jan 2024. Softening from 2022 survey (82%).</p> <p>12 of the 41 services/facilities received a satisfaction rating of 80% or more, while 12 of the 41 services/facilities received a satisfaction rating of 60% or lower.</p> <p>Of the 41 services/facilities measured, 12 received a ‘good performance’ score (with 80% or more residents at least somewhat satisfied with the Council’s performance in those areas), whereas satisfaction significantly decreased for 9 of 41 services and facilities.</p> <p>Further, the condition and maintenance of local roads received the highest importance score but the lowest satisfaction score. Additionally, rural roads, cycleways, and public transport also received relatively lower satisfaction. This suggests that improving transport and connectivity should be the primary focus for council.</p> <p>Satisfaction with condition/maintenance of local roads is the highest driver of overall satisfaction. However, after summarizing drivers into broader themed groups, communication (e.g. provision of information, customer services) is the most important driver category, followed by planning and development and improved facilities (especially community halls, sports facilities and parks and playgrounds).</p> <p>This suggests that improvements in these areas, in addition to transport and connectivity, will also enhance community positivity towards the performance of Dungog Shire Council.</p> <p><i>Source: Community Strategic Plan Survey 2024</i></p>	<p>Decreasing</p> 

CSP Indicator	Status
Council secures adequate funding from external sources to enhance our service provision to the community.	
<p>The last term of Council has seen a significant increase in successful grant funding applications, which has resulted in over \$100M worth of funding for road and facility infrastructure works being undertaken for the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roads – \$97,602,103 • Other infrastructure – \$7,222,596 • TOTAL \$104,824,699 	
<p>Some of the major projects delivered to the community include:</p> <p>Roads (\$97,602,103)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restart NSW – Summer Hill Bridge \$352,774 • Fixing Country Bridges – 23 Bridge Replacements \$22,260,000 • Clarence Town Bridge \$20,581,000 • \$25M Backlog Works \$25,000,000 • \$3M Co-Funding Grant \$3,000,000 • Betterment Fund \$8,923,000 • Fixing Local Roads <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Flat Tops Road \$924,000 – Pothole Repair Round \$247,866 – Queen & Duke Streets Clarence Town \$1,210,275 – Allyn River Road \$2,800,000 • REPAIR (Combined 20/21 to 22/23) \$928,000 • RERRF (Including RLRRP) \$3,161,396 • Blackspot <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 24/25 – Mackay / Abelard Street \$850,000 – 22/23 – Limeburners Creek Road \$597,675 – 21/22 – Clarence Town & Gresford Roads \$1,025,000 – 20/21 – Clarence Town & Bingleburra Roads \$1,770,000 • Natural Disaster Claims (not including those still being processed) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – AGRN 1025 – Sealed Roads Package 1 \$815,110 – AGRN 1025 – Sealed Roads Package \$974,236 – AGRN 1012 – EPAR \$421,596 – AGRN 1025 – EPAR – Bingleburra Landslip \$1,090,844 – AGRN 898 – Regional & Local Roads \$337,761 • LRCI 4 – Roads Component \$331,570 	<p>Up/Increase</p> 
<p>Other Infrastructure (\$7,222,596)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gresford Sporting Complex \$776,000 • Bennett Park Surface Upgrade \$177,505 • Paterson Sportsground Surface Upgrade \$169,000 • Doug Walters Pavilion Amenities \$203,221 • Camping to Common \$264,432 • CAP Funding – Frank Robinson Park \$119,196 • OLG – AGRN 1012 \$1,000,000 • OLG – AGRN 1025 \$1,000,000 • Local Road and Community Infrastructure (LRCI) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – LRCI 4 – Other Assets Component \$574,823 – LRCI 3 \$1,149,646 – LRCI 2 \$630,916 – LRCI 1 \$574,823 • Crown Lands Flood Recovery Program \$206,100 • Clarence Town Village Green Wetlands Amenities \$202,161 • Dungog Showground Viewing Platform and Car Park \$174,773 	



FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Overview

This term of Council has seen the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, how it has changed the focus, and introduced new priorities, for our community. Rather than reduce service levels and public safety, council's focus and resources were directed towards keeping people safe. Council undertook a range of measures to help residents, community organisations and local businesses during this phase of the Covid-19 pandemic. Our community's ability to adapt demonstrates its resilience as does council's success in adjusting to new ways of doing business very quickly.

During this term, Council has been committed to making modest productivity gains each year through service reviews and associated improvement programs. Council has been committed to achieving a fully funded operating position reflecting that Council collects enough revenue to fund operational expenditure and repayment of debt. This Council

has also contributed to an appropriately funded capital program where the source of funding is identified. This has been possible due to successful advocacy and receipt of grant funding and in part to special rate variation funding. This term of council has also seen the final year of the IPART approved special rate variation, funds from the special rate variation can only be used for the purposes noted in council's application i.e. to fund operating and capital expenditure for key assets including the roads and bridges infrastructure network, community facilities, enhancing financial sustainability and beginning to reduce council's infrastructure backlog.

During this three year term Council delivered recurrent services, renewed existing assets and built new capital resulting in an increase in total asset value of \$197M at end of term.



NEXT STEPS

Where are we headed?

The State of the Shire Report is included as a part of Council's Annual Report for the year ended 2023-2024 and published on Council's website www.dungog.nsw.gov.au

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

The Community Satisfaction Survey is held every 2 years to identify and understand community priorities. Priority areas identified by the community include Road maintenance (the community's highest priority area for the next 10 years), more services/facilities, internal operations of Council (e.g. finance, DA, etc), housing, employment, growth and development.

The progress information and trends in our State of the Shire Report, along with the results of the Community Satisfaction Survey, will be considered in the review

of the Community Strategic Plan and associated integrated planning documents to commence with the new Council following the 2024 elections.

The next steps include:

- Public Exhibition and adoption of an updated community engagement strategy for the review of the Community Strategic Plan
- A review of the Community Strategic Plan to ensure it is still relevant.
- Public Exhibition and adoption of an updated Local Strategic Planning Statement.
- A review of the Resourcing Strategy, which includes the Workforce Plan, Asset Management Strategy and Long Term Financial Plan.
- Council will need to prepare a Delivery Program for the next four (4) years, an Operational Plan and Budget for 2025-2026 being the first year of the Delivery Program to deliver the revised Community Strategic Plan.





FUTURE CHALLENGES

Future challenges that will need to be addressed during the review of the Community Strategic Plan and development of the associated integrated planning documents will include strategies for:

- Addressing community priority areas including, Road maintenance (the community's highest priority area for the next 10 years), more services/ facilities, internal operations of Council (e.g. finance, DA, etc), housing, employment, growth and development.
- Housing affordability and homelessness.
- Infrastructure and road funding (including grant funding)



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