

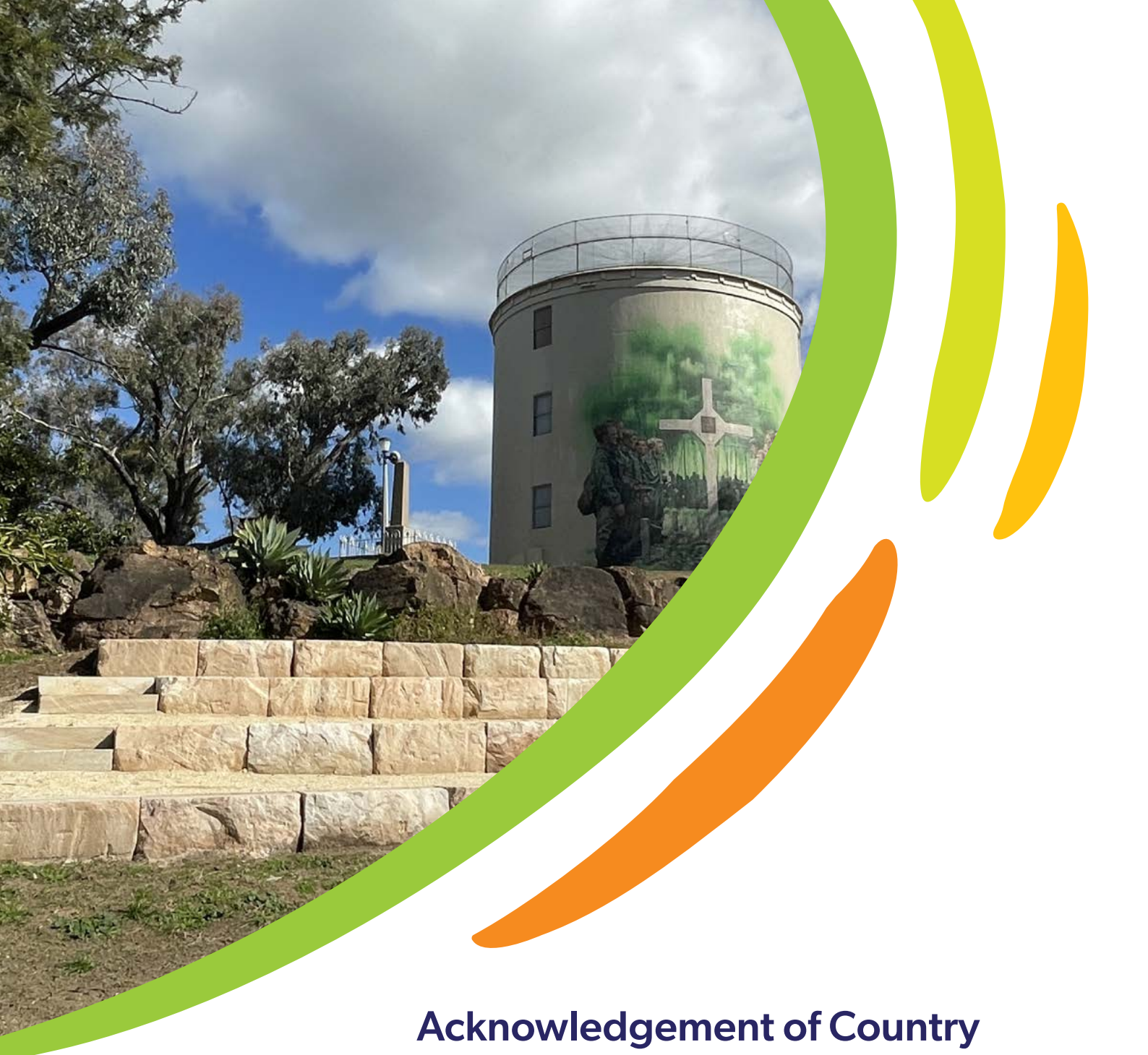


Gunnedah
Shire Council



Gunnedah Shire Council **State of our Shire Report 2021-2024**

ADOPTED: 20 NOVEMBER 2024 | RESOLUTION: 11.11/24



Acknowledgement of Country

In presenting this document to the community, Gunnedah Shire Council acknowledges the Kamilaroi Nation as the traditional Custodians of the Land on which we live and work. In doing so, Council pays its respect to all Elders both past and present as well as to the young Indigenous leaders of tomorrow.

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Introduction and Overview

The State of our Shire Report is a report on Gunnedah Shire Council's progress in implementing the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) during its term. The CSP, through Council's focused Delivery Program and Operational Plans, took effect from 1 July 2021. This report will focus on the period 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2024. The CSP has four themes with a community focused outcome for each:



Theme 1

Engaging and Supporting the Community

- 1.1 Community leadership is strengthened and volunteers are engaged
- 1.2 Council is a sustainable, ethical and efficient organisation
- 1.3 Increased local investment from other sources including the State and Commonwealth Governments, as well as developers
- 1.4 An engaged community that is involved in the decision making process
- 1.5 Strategically managed infrastructure



Theme 2

Building our Shire's Economy

- 2.1 A growing population and diversified economy
- 2.2 Access to our goods, services and markets
- 2.3 Increased tourism and promotion of the Gunnedah Shire
- 2.4 The Gunnedah Shire is an attractive place to invest
- 2.5 Skilled workforce and quality local educational opportunities



Theme 3

Retaining our Quality of Life

- 3.1 Quality lifestyles and support for our older residents
- 3.2 Improved housing affordability
- 3.3 Villages are vibrant and sustainable
- 3.4 Reduced crime and anti social behaviour
- 3.5 Our younger people are attracted, retained and developed
- 3.6 A healthy and active community participating in a diverse range of recreational and cultural activities
- 3.7 Improved access to essential services



Theme 4

Protecting and Enjoying our Beautiful Surrounds

- 4.1 Balance between development and environmental protection
- 4.2 Native fauna is secured, biodiversity protected and native vegetation thrives
- 4.3 A secure and high quality water supply
- 4.4 Our heritage is valued and protected
- 4.5 Manage exposure and reduced contribution to climate change
- 4.6 Our waste is sustainably managed and reduced
- 4.7 Enhanced streetscapes and open spaces in Gunnedah and villages

Introduction From The Mayor and General Manager

We are pleased to present the State of our Shire Report (previously known as the end of term report) for the newly elected body. While the 2021-2024 period of this Council was a shortened tenure resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, Gunnedah Shire Council has continued to work hard for our community to make our great Shire an even better place to live, work and play.

During this term, the elected body and our staff, working collaboratively with the community, have made a significant number of achievements that we are proud of and that are outlined in the report.

This period saw the community impacted by seven significant and separate flood events which has had a major impact on our roads, and we have worked diligently to get our roads back into shape as quickly as time and resources have allowed.

The current Council was elected in September 2021, and Our vision and values underpinned the development of the Delivery Program and associated Operational Plans.

A new Council was elected in September 2024, however, the former Council is pictured below as this report relates to their term.



Our Elected Members

Back (left to right): Councillor Murray O'Keefe, Councillor Robert Hoddle, Mayor Jamie Chaffey, Deputy Mayor Rob Hooke, Councillor Juliana McArthur, and Councillor Kate McGrath. Front (left to right): Councillor Colleen Fuller, Councillor Ann Luke and Councillor David Moses.



Gunnedah Shire Council's vision is to be a prosperous, caring and proud community reflected in the achievements of the people.

Gunnedah Shire Council's Values

Community Spirit

We have welcoming towns, villages and rural areas working in partnership to share the good times and bad, looking out for and supporting one another. We genuinely care.

Environmental Care

We embrace preservation of our heritage, our natural resources and our social fabric to achieve sustainability.

Lifestyle Access

We enjoy access to services and facilities in Gunnedah yet benefit from the peace, tranquillity, safety, security, beauty and friendliness of our rural community.



Our Executive Team

Left to right: Andrew Johns (Director Community and Development), Jeremy Bartlett (Director Infrastructure Services), Kelly Stidworthy (Director Corporate Services), Bruce Mercer (Executive Manager GoCo) and Eric Groth (General Manager).

The current Delivery Program was developed representing the second full term Council with responsibility for delivery of the outcomes in our Community Strategic Plan (CSP).

Significant progress against the CSP outcomes are outlined in this report, under each of the four themes of

Engaging and Supporting the Community,

Building our Shire's Economy,

Retaining our Quality of Life, and

Protecting and Enjoying our Beautiful Surrounds.



A few highlights of achievements detailed in the report include:

- Upgrades to the Gunnedah Saleyards,
- Completion of the new Gunnedah Water Treatment Plant,
- The upgrade to the Gunnedah Airport Tarmac was completed,
- Sealing of Clifton, Grain Valley Way, Kelvin and Rangari roads,
- Amenities upgrades including the Band Hall and the Showground,
- Updated the Gunnedah Shire Local Housing Strategy,
- Delivery of the Gunnedah Shire disABILITY Inclusion Action Plan,
- Village standpipes,
- Completed a full refurbishment of GoCo's Community Care building in Gunnedah,
- More than 50 young people assisted to begin their tertiary education through the Gunnedah Community Scholarship Fund,
- Enhancements to our parks and open space,
- Significant achievements for our community groups,
- The hosting of the Community Safety and Crime Prevention Conference, and
- Significant progress on the Koala Sanctuary.

Continued financial security and sustainability remains a key challenge for Council and Council has commenced the conversation with the community to consider a Special Rate Variation to ensure the financial sustainability for Council to manage its assets into the future.

Our community's economy continues to grow and diversify and Council and the Gunnedah and District Chamber of Commerce and Industry Chamber are committed to ensuring that Gunnedah not only has a strong economy in the immediate future, with diverse opportunities and variety well into the future.

We would like to acknowledge the hard work and collaboration of all Councillors, staff and volunteers in realising the achievements outlined in this report.

Integrated Planning and Reporting

IP&R Framework

Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) is a framework for councils to establish local priorities and link this information to operational functions. It recognises that whilst many communities have similar aspirations, the responses to those aspirations will be local.

Under the IP&R framework, all NSW councils are required to develop and report on a set of plans and strategies in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993 and the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021. This State of our Shire Report is prepared in line with section 428 of the NSW Local Government Act 1993 and section 196A of the NSW Local Government (General) Regulation 2021.

The IP&R framework includes a reporting process to communicate progress to the community. There is also a structured timeline for the review of all documents to ensure they remain relevant to the community, Council, and operations.

Council's plans and reports under the IP&R framework are outlined below:

- **Community Strategic Plan 2017 to 2027 – Together We Achieve Great Things**

A 10-year plan that outlines the goals and aspirations of the community.

- **Delivery Program 2022/23 to 2025/26**

A program of Council-led initiatives, across four years, that achieve the strategies of the Community Plan that are within Council's remit.

- **Operational Plan and Budget 2023/24**

An annual plan of actions that support the Delivery Program and include the budget allocations to support the activities to be undertaken.



Community Strategic Plan 2017 to 2027

The State of our Shire Report is organised around the following four themes of the Community Strategic Plan 'Together We Achieve Great Things' and the associated strategic outcomes.

Theme 1:
Engaging and Supporting the Community

Theme 2:
Building our Shire's Economy

Theme 3:
Retaining our Quality of Life

Theme 4:
**Protecting and Enjoying our
Beautiful Surrounds**

Delivery Program 2022/23 to 2025/26

The Delivery Program outlines the initiatives that Gunnedah Shire Council will undertake to help achieve the goals of the Community Strategic Plan.

The Delivery Program is Gunnedah Shire Council's commitment to the community for the duration of the councillor-elected term.

Year 1
Operational Plan
2022/23

Year 2
Operational Plan
2023/24

Year 3
Operational Plan
2024/25

Year 4
Operational Plan
2025/26

How we measure our progress

The aim of the State of our Shire Report is to provide an update to the Gunnedah Shire community on how effective the City Plan has been in delivering the desired outcomes. We do this by considering:

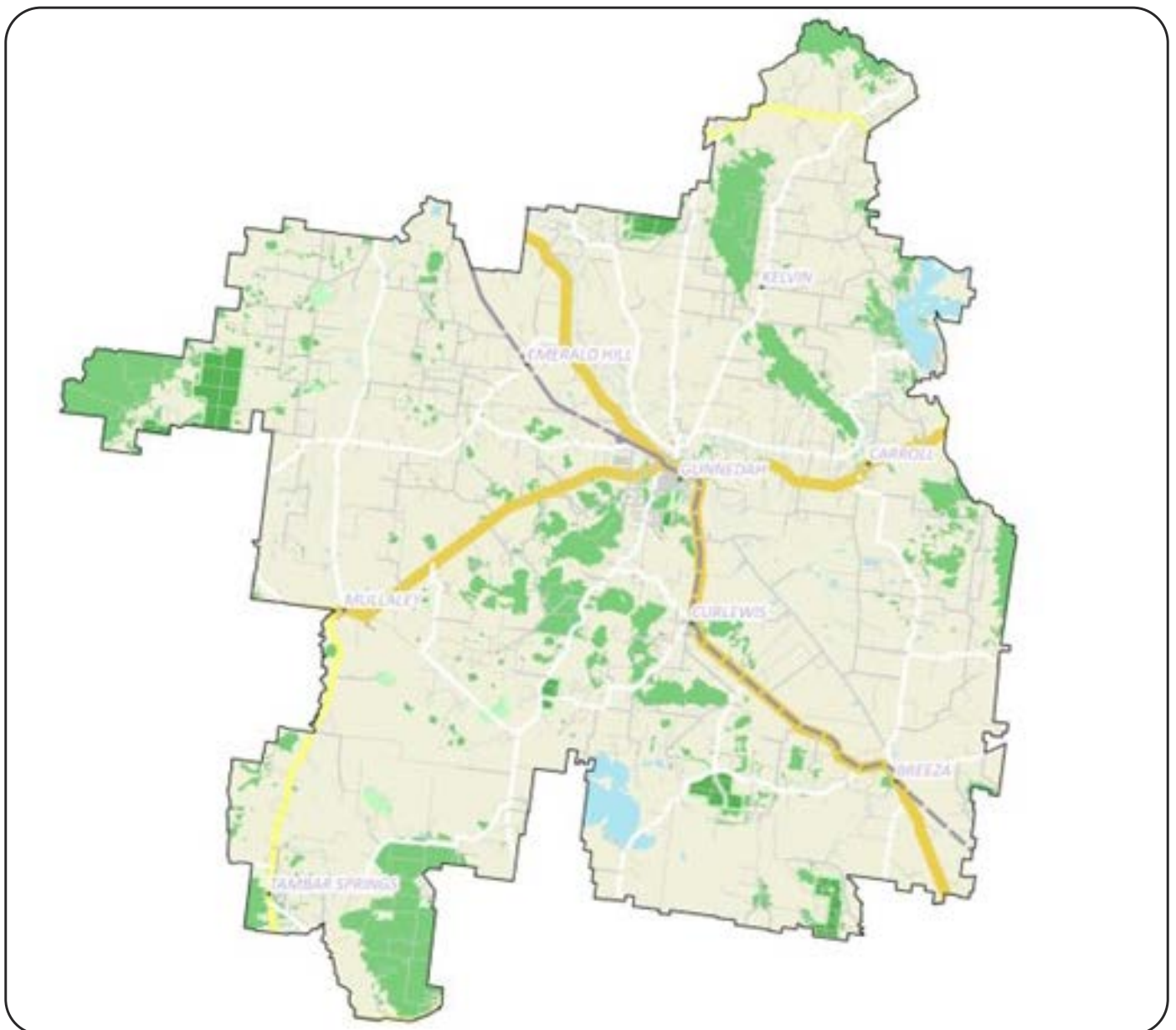
- a. Key achievements and progress in implementing our delivery program,
- b. Performance against the Indicators of Progress, and
- c. Results from the Community Satisfaction survey.

Our Region and Community

Gunnedah Shire is located in North Western NSW approximately 425 kilometres northwest of Sydney and 77 kilometres west of Tamworth. The Shire sits on the cross roads of the Oxley and Kamilaroi highways and covers an area of 4,992 square kilometres.

Today, Gunnedah Shire has a population of about 13,280 people. The township of Gunnedah is the commercial and administrative centre of the Shire. There are five small villages – Breeza, Carroll, Curlewis, Mullaley, and Tambar Springs and 26 rural localities.

Map of Gunnedah Shire Council Region



© Gunnedah Shire Council 2023, © Spatial Services 2023, Map Data © OpenStreetMap

Theme 1

Engaging and Supporting the Community

Outcomes	Strategies
1.1 Seek out opportunities to engage with people with disability and their carers, to support a continuous improvement and best practice approach to access	<p>1.1.1 Increase volunteer opportunities especially for young people and people with disability.</p> <p>1.1.2 Support and celebrate volunteers as positive role models.</p> <p>1.1.3 Build the capacity of community organisations and sporting groups to remain sustainable in the long term.</p> <p>1.1.4 Encourage and support village hall committees and progress associations, service groups, action groups and other community organisations involved in delivering activities and programs that benefit the local community.</p> <p>1.1.5 Work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities on activities and programs.</p> <p>1.1.6 Work with multicultural communities on activities and programs.</p>
1.2 Council is a sustainable, ethical and efficient organisation	<p>1.2.1 Foster a strong organisational culture which strives for best practice and continued improvement in all operations.</p> <p>1.2.2 Position Council as an employer of choice, promoting a safe, healthy, inclusive, and innovative working environment.</p> <p>1.2.3 Share resources and undertake collaborative projects with others where there is a net community benefit to do so.</p> <p>1.2.4 Improve Council's financially sustainable position, delivering value for money services to the community.</p> <p>1.2.5 Continue to work so that Council has good governance and transparent decision-making.</p>
1.3 Increased local investment from other sources including the State and Commonwealth governments as well as developers	<p>1.3.1 Identify and secure grant funding and explore opportunities for partnerships to provide new and upgraded assets, infrastructure, and services.</p> <p>1.3.2 Build relationships with all levels of government, seek to contribute to decision-making and strongly advocate our local interests.</p> <p>1.3.3 Advocate for local facilities and services to receive funding from mining and other major developments.</p>
1.4 An engaged community that is involved in the decision-making process	<p>1.4.1 Build relationships with all levels of government and strongly advocate our local interests.</p> <p>1.4.2 Provide meaningful opportunities for the community to have a say in decision-making.</p> <p>1.4.3 Communicate information proactively through a range of mediums to reach target audiences.</p>
1.5 Strategically managed infrastructure	<p>1.5.1 Provide and maintain safe, serviceable, and accessible public facilities, parks and infrastructure including roads, footpaths, and stormwater drains.</p> <p>1.5.2 Provide and maintain efficient water and sewerage systems that support a growing community.</p> <p>1.5.3 Develop best practice asset management practices for sustainable development.</p> <p>1.5.4 Implement and maintain strategies and developer contribution plans which require appropriate contributions to not unfairly burden ratepayers or future developers.</p>

Indicators of Progress

- ABS statistics on volunteering
- Community participation in events and activities
- Council's Annual Report
- Council financial results
- Council capital works completion
- Council staff retention rates
- Council Code of Conduct complaints
- Grant funding secured
- Community participation in engagement activities
- Council website usage statistics

Major Projects - Engaging and Supporting our Community

Upgrade of The Gunnedah Saleyards

The NSW Government has contributed \$24 million in funding towards the project. Works undertaken to date have included demolition of the existing sheep yards, new workshop sheds, upgraded parking, lighting, security and fencing and construction of a new building which will house a café, administration office for the saleyards, shower and bathroom facilities for truck drivers and an emergency operations centre for use by Council. The completed project will also include roofing over the saleyards and upgraded intersection access from the Kamilaroi Highway.

A new truck wash was constructed with funding contributed by the Federal Government and officially opened in November 2022. The drive-through facility on the Kamilaroi Highway is capable of accommodating vehicles as large as road trains and B-triples.

Works are expected to continue to the end of 2024. This project will result in a state of the art facility for the region for marketing livestock both domestically and internationally.





Upgrade of The Gunnedah Airport Tarmac

Work to upgrade the Gunnedah Airport tarmac was completed in December 2023. The \$7.88 million project included complete refurbishment of the tarmac, taxiway and apron to bring it into line with Australian Civil Aviation Regulation requirements for certified facilities.

The project was undertaken with the assistance of funding from the NSW Government through the Resources for Regions program and the

Federal Government through the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program, in partnership with Council.

The upgraded facility will ensure emergency services and visitor aircraft use the facility as well as providing capacity for passenger aircraft widely used throughout regional Australia.

Upgrade of the Gunnedah and Curlewis Water Treatment Plant



The new Gunnedah water treatment and centralised dosing system, funded by NSW Health, has been completed and provides improved hygiene and water quality to the community.

The new plant is located on the Kelvin Road and provides an advanced water disinfection station with chlorination and fluoride, telemetry control of water demands and interconnection to the existing system.

The new centralised system replaced the previous decentralised system, which was at the end of its useful life and will ensure the efficient and reliable supply of water for many years to come to the region's growing population.



Major Roadworks 2021-2024

Several major projects have been undertaken by Gunnedah Shire Council's Infrastructure Services, Works Area during the past three years. Including:

Clifton Road Upgrade and Maitland Street Bridge Construction

Location: Clifton Road, Hogarth Street, Maitland Street and Bulunbulun Road Between Oakey Creek Road and the Kamilaroi Highway (19.3km), from Breeza to Carroll.

Scope of works: Construction of a sealed pavement over, and wider than, the existing gravel road. A concrete bridge, replacing the existing dilapidated structure, was constructed on Maitland Street, Breeza at the Mooki River.

Project outcome: Includes the gazettal of a road train route between Breeza and Carroll servicing local industry and the broader regional supply chain.

Project funding: Restart NSW (Fixing Country Roads) \$8,563,986; Local Roads and Community Infrastructure (LRCI) \$1,007,220.00 and Council funds \$748,670. Total Project cost \$10,319,876.

Works completed by: April 2023 (except the final road surface seal and outstanding Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) works.



Kelvin Road Upgrade

Location: Kelvin Road between Rangari Road and Hawkers Bridge (11.6km), Rangari.

Scope of works: Construction of a sealed pavement over, and wider than, the existing gravel road.

Project outcome: A smoother and safer road for utilisation by residents and inter LGA traffic servicing local industry.

Project funding: Fixing Local Roads (FLR) \$2,980,077; Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program (HVSP) \$1,470,405; Total Project Cost \$4,450,482.

Works completed by: October 2023.



Rangari Road Upgrade

Location: Rangari Road being nearly the entire length of road within the Gunnedah Shire LGA between Narrabri LGA and Tamworth LGA.

A further section of works was also undertaken within the Tamworth LGA being an inter-LGA project.

Scope of works: Construction of a sealed pavement over, and wider than, the existing gravel road.

Project outcome: A smoother and safer road for utilisation by residents and inter LGA traffic servicing local industry.

Rangari Road is a Regional (classified) Road.

Project funding:

Election Commitments Fund (ECF) \$1,600,000

Resource for Regions (R4R) \$1,430,305

Transport for NSW (TfNSW) \$16,871,163

Gunnedah Shire Council (GSC) \$324,058

Tamworth Regional Council (TRC) \$450,120

Total Project Cost \$20,675,646

Works completed by: November 2023.

Orange Grove Bridge Renewal

Location: The project is located on Orange Grove Road at the Namoi River

Scope of works: The scope of works included the removal of the existing timber bridge and replacement with a concrete bridge structure.

Project outcome: The project outcome includes the restoration of the bridge service that was removed due to the timber bridge structure being fire damaged and unusable.

Project funding: The project was funded by the Bridge Renewal Program \$620,845; Fixing Country Bridges (FCB) \$449,846; Gunnedah Shire Council (GSC) \$170,999; Total Project Cost \$1,241,690

Works completed by: September 2022

Gunnedah Shire Council also engaged in significant disaster recovery works resulting from nine rain and flood events between November 2021 and November 2022 (AGRN 987, AGRN 1030 and AGRN 1034).

Disaster Recovery Works (Emergency Works and Immediate Reconstruction Works approved for reimbursement) totalled \$907,099 for AGRN 987, \$49,173 for AGRN 1030 and \$2,436,653 for AGRN 1034.

Separately, Council has spent \$2,531,922 on Essential Public Asset Restoration recovering from these events including:

Mullaley Black Stump Way Broken Dam Creek Culvert and Causeway Remedial Works

Location: The project is located on Black Stump Way at the Broken Dam Creek south of Mullaley.

Scope of works: The scope of works included, reconstruction of the causeway embankment, causeway road pavement reconstruction and guardrail reinstatement.

Project outcome: Restoration of the roading asset to its pre disaster (AGRN 987) functionality utilising current design and construction standards.

Black Stump Way is a Regional (classified) Road.

Project funding: Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) \$557,686

Works completed by: September 2024 (excepting the final road surface chip seal). (Reimbursement Incomplete).

Breeza Maitland Street Bridge Remedial Works

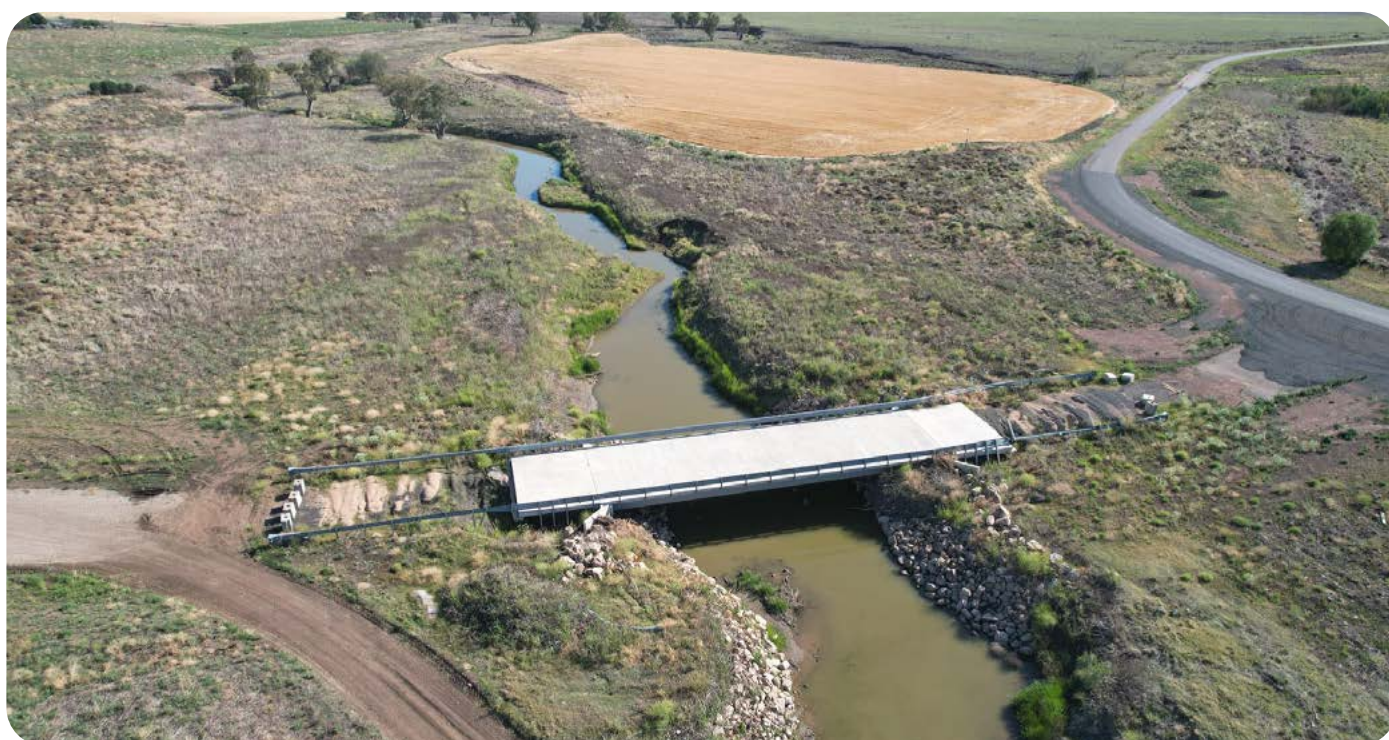
Location: Maitland Street, Breeza at the Mooki River.

Scope of works: Reconstruction of the bridge approaches, damaged guardrail, and eroded embankments.

Project outcome: Restoration of the roading asset to its pre disaster (AGRN 1034) functionality utilising current design and construction standards. The restoration of a roading asset for utilisation by residents and inter LGA traffic servicing local industry and the broader regional supply chain. Maitland Street is a NHVR Road Train Route.

Project funding: Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) \$212,285 (Reimbursement Incomplete).

Works completed by: December 2023.



Breeza Clifton Road Simson Bridge Remedial Works

Location: Clifton Road, Breeza at the Mooki River.

Scope of work: Reconstruction of the northern bridge approach, damaged guardrail, and eroded embankments.

Project outcome: Restoration of the roading asset to its pre disaster (AGRN 1034) functionality utilising current design and construction standards plus the restoration of a roading asset for utilisation by residents and inter LGA traffic servicing local industry and the broader regional supply chain. Clifton Road is a NHVR Road Train Route.

Project funding: Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) \$466,107. (Reimbursement Incomplete).

Works completed by: December 2023.

Breeza Bulunbulun Road Causeway (No 3) Reconstruction

Location: Bulunbulun Road east of Barnbrook Road, Breeza.

Scope of works: Removal of the existing unrepairable concrete causeway and construction of new concrete causeway at the same location.

Project outcome: includes the restoration of the roading asset to its pre disaster (AGRN 1034) functionality utilising current design and construction standards. The restoration of a roading asset for utilisation by residents and inter LGA traffic servicing local industry.

Project funding: Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) \$131,610. (Reimbursement Incomplete).

Works completed by: March 2024.



Bulunbulun Road Causeway works



Orange Grove Road Bridge

Other Essential Public Asset Restoration projects completed:

- Gunnedah Hunts Road Reconstruction (DRFA) \$182,552
- Breeza Bulunbulun Road Causeway (No 2) Reconstruction (Reimbursement Incomplete) \$180,833
- Gunnedah Marys Mount Road Causeway (No 1 to 6) Reconstructions (Reimbursement Incomplete) \$382,972
- Blue Vale Hoads Lane Causeway Reconstruction (Reimbursement Incomplete) \$183,810
- Gunnedah Blue Vale Road Causeway Reconstruction (Reimbursement Incomplete) \$140,915
- Ghoolendaadi Goolhi Road Ted Griffiths Bridge Guardrail Reinstatement and Abutment Reinstatement (Reimbursement Incomplete) \$16,459

- Marys Mount Quia Road Culvert Surface near Goolhi Road surface and Culvert Remedial Works (Reimbursement Incomplete) \$11,117
- Keepit Orange Grove Road Keepit Dam Road Bridge Reinstatement (Reimbursement Incomplete) \$43,642
- Gunnedah Warrabungle Street Road Remedial Works (Reimbursement Incomplete) \$21,934

It is important to note that during this time Council has also submitted to TfNSW Essential Public Asset Restoration submissions for an additional twenty-eight (28) projects to the value of \$6,168,727.

These are at various stages and assessment and cannot be commenced until approval and funding for the works is obtained; otherwise, Council will need to fund these projects out of other revenue sources.

Term in Review - Engaging and Supporting our Community

2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$24,506 was awarded under the Section 356 Community Small Grants Program to nine community organisations. • \$19,735 was awarded under the Section 356 Sports Small Grants Program to seven groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$6,911 was awarded under the Section 356 Community Small Grants Program. • \$18,586 was awarded under the Section 356 Sports Small Grants Program. • \$18,354 was awarded under the Section 356 Arts & Cultural Small Grants Program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$17,220 was awarded under the Section 356 Community Small Grants Program. • \$26,894 was awarded under the Section 356 Sports Small Grants Program. • \$5,000 was awarded under the Section 356 Arts & Cultural Small Grants Program.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council engaged the Rural Doctors Network (RDN) to collaborate with Council, Hunter New England Health, and other key stakeholders to identify short, medium and long-term approach to address General Practitioner shortages within Gunnedah Shire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Community Engagement Policy has been developed and adopted for use within Council. A wide range of mediums are used for dissemination of information including website, social media, email, newspaper advertising and radio. • Followers have grown to 8,635 on Council's Facebook page and followers on all social media platforms have increased. Visit Gunnedah has 1,051 followers and Instagram followers are made up of 1,475 Gunnedah Shire and 819 Gunnedah NSW followers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council conducted numerous community engagement activities in 2023/24 including consultation undertaken to inform the Drought Resilience Plan, which is a project funded by the Regional Drought Resilience Planning program. • Followers have increased over the past year to 9,091 on Council's Facebook page and followers on all social media platforms have increased. Visit Gunnedah has 1,226 followers and Instagram followers are made up of 1,551 Gunnedah Shire and 888 Gunnedah NSW followers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External funding was received for Bloomfield Street, Grain Valley Road, Mystery Road, Clifton Road, Maitland Street Bridge (Breeza), Kelvin Road, Orange Grove Bridge, Rangari Road, Stock Road and Hunts Road. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clifton and Kelvin Road upgrade and seal projects achieved practical completion with the final seals expected to be applied in the first half of 2023/24. • Significant Disaster Recovery funding arrangement works were undertaken in the form of emergency works up until 30 June 2023. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clifton and Kelvin Road upgrade projects including the final seals were completed. • Significant restoration works were undertaken funded from the Disaster Recovery Assistance Funding (DRFA), including emergency works, and Essential Public Assets Reconstruction (EPAR) works have been completed on Simsons Bridge, Breeza Bridge, and Orange Grove Bridge Road approaches, along with Bulunbulun Road Causeway, Hunts Road and Black Stump Way at Broken Dam.

2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction of the new water treatment plant on Kelvin Road commenced, providing a centralised chlorination and fluoridation facility to treat the water supply of Gunnedah and Curlewis. • Water main replacements were completed in Stock Road, Ashfords Watercourse, Pearson Street to Porcupine Street, Martin Road to the first driveway in Borthistle Road and Borthistle Road from Oxley Highway to Lloyd Road. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council's new water treatment plant was given approval by NSW Department of Planning and Environment to operate. • Council commenced consultation with NSW Department of Planning and Environment on a holistic strategic business plan that will give a clear strategic business model and direction for Council's water and sewer infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council consolidated the operations of the new Gunnedah water treatment and centralised dosing system, funded by NSW Health, that went online during the previous year. • Fluoride was introduced into Gunnedah Shire's town water supply in March 2024. The addition of fluoride is recommended by NSW Health as a safe and effective way to help prevent tooth decay in the community.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2022/23, former Gunnedah Shire Council Mayor, Jamie Chaffey, became the Chair of the Country Mayor's Association of NSW. The Association has advocated to the NSW and Federal governments on behalf of member councils on the current significant challenges facing regional and rural councils, such as flooding and related road damage, and recent cost shifting relating to the Emergency Services Levy and Rural Fire Service. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Former Gunnedah Shire Council Mayor, Jamie Chaffey, as Chair of the Country Mayor's Association of NSW, continued to advocate to the NSW and Federal governments on behalf of member councils on the current significant challenges facing regional and rural councils, such as appropriate funding for local government, impact of flooding, and recent cost shifting impacting local government sustainability.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In October 2022, 18 Gunnedah Shire representatives from the community, business and Council visited the Sister City of Kolomotu'a in Tonga. The five day visit included an audience with the Acting Prime Minister, a function at the Australian High Commissioner's residence and meetings with Kolomotu'a Council, the Ministry for Internal Affairs, Rotary Tonga, the Tonga Institute of Science and Technology, the Australian Pacific Training Coalition, along with many other organisations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The already strong Sister City relationship between Gunnedah Shire and Kolomotu'a in the Kingdom of Tonga became even closer with the delegation's visit to Gunnedah in July 2023. The four-day visit marked the first anniversary of the Sister City Relationship and included a welcome event at Wolseley Park, the Gunnedah Chamber of Commerce Gala Ball, a combined church service and a farewell picnic lunch at Pensioners Hill Lookout. Events raised funds for a new library for the Government Middle School of Kolomotu'a after the previous library was destroyed in the January 2022 tsunami. • In October 2023, Gunnedah Shire business and community representatives visited Tonga to hold an Employment Expo. The Expo attracted representatives from industries such as early childhood learning, nursing teaching and trades. Close to 200 people registered their formal interest in pursuing employment opportunities. During the visit representatives from Tonga surprised the Gunnedah Shire delegation with the unveiling of a street named "Gunnedah Avenue".

Theme 2

Building our Shire's Economy

Outcomes	Strategies
2.1 A growing population and diversified economy	2.1.1 Develop a diversified and resilient economy. 2.1.2 Support local business including small businesses across the Gunnedah Shire. 2.1.3 Actively encourage new industry to set up in the area. 2.1.4 Support an affordable and available stock of industrial and commercial property.
2.2 Access to our goods, services, and markets	2.2.1 Maintain adequate parking availability in business and industrial areas. 2.2.2 Secure supply chains. 2.2.3 Assess opportunities to sustainably maximise use of the airport to improve economic outcomes.
2.3 Increased tourism and promotion of the Gunnedah Shire	2.3.1 Actively seek to bring business, sporting and cultural events to the Gunnedah Shire. 2.3.2 Market Gunnedah Shire as a tourist destination. 2.3.3 Develop and support local tourist attractions.
2.4 The Gunnedah Shire is an attractive place to invest	2.4.1 Improve access to telecommunication, broadband and electrical services. 2.4.2 Work together so that businesses, shops, the CBD, and industrial areas are well presented.
2.5 Skilled workforce and quality local educational opportunities	2.5.1 Encourage new residents with skills to the area to supplement our skilled workforce. 2.5.2 Advocate for quality educational services and seek opportunities in the tertiary sectors for facilities and courses that meet our regional training needs.



Indicators of Progress

- ABS population statistics
- Gross Regional Product
- Local business closures
- New business start-ups
- ABS Industry sector statistics
- Stock of zoned commercial land
- Number of sporting and cultural events and attendance data
- Number and value of development approvals
- Number and value of building approvals
- ABS employment data
- ABS qualifications data
- Enrolment in tertiary courses
- Visitor statistics

Term in Review - Building our Shire's Economy

2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10,400 walk-in visitors to the Visitor Information Centre • A new visitor guide was distributed throughout the NSW AVIC network with some requests from Queensland Visitor Information Centres. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12,799 walk-in visitors to the Visitor Information Centre • Councillor Ann Luke and Council's Tourism Team Leader attended the Australian Regional Tourism Convention in Ballarat in October 2022. The Theme for the Convention, 'Regional Australia – Paving the way for a stronger Visitor Economy' provided a platform for local councils, regional tourism operators, tourism professionals, businesses, and government personnel to contribute to the future of regional tourism in Australia. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12,170 walk-in visitors to the Visitor Information Centre • AgQuip was supported with a Gold Sponsorship by Gunnedah Shire Council and was a strong event in 2023. • Work commenced on new Village Entrance signs and on updating the Destination Management Plan. • The Visitor Information Centre continues to be open 7 days a week and services visitors to a high standard, retaining accreditation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2022 Gunnedah Weeks of Speed was held in March and the collaborative festival included drag racing, motorcycle racing and the Mount Porcupine Hill Climb. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During 2022/23, a range of community events were coordinated or supported by Council's events team, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NightQuip* • Christmas Fair* (in association with the Gunnedah and District Chamber of Commerce and Industry Inc.) • Australia Day* (15 events) • Weeks of Speed* • Harvest Festival* • Remembrance Day • Anzac Day • Youth Week • NAIDOC Week *Funded with support from NSW Reconnecting Regional Communities Fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During 2023/24, a range of community events were coordinated or supported by Council's events team, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crime Prevention and Community Safety Conference • Christmas Fair (in association with the Gunnedah and District Chamber of Commerce and Industry Inc.) • Australia Day* • Weeks of Speed • Multicultural Festival • Remembrance Day • Anzac Day • Youth Week • NAIDOC Week • Small Business Month *Funded with support from the National Australia Day Grant
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Multicultural Markets drew more than 900 people to Wolseley Park throughout the day to experience international cuisine, visit 50 stalls, participate in workshops, and watch more than 30 performers. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council was successful in obtaining funding under the Building Better Regions Fund to support the delivery of the Harvest Festival in October 2021. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$42,000 provided across 12 local businesses via the Business Partner Program funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$34,556 provided across 11 local businesses via the Business Partner Program funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$54,918 provided across 19 local businesses via the Business Partner Program funding

2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council adopted the Economic Development Strategy 2022-2026 which was developed as a foundation for stimulating and driving economic growth within the Gunnedah Shire. The process included research and analysis to inform, prepare and deliver a new evidence-based and delivery oriented economic development strategy for Gunnedah Shire; and engagement with a diversity of internal and external stakeholders to inform an aspirational, yet pragmatic and implementable, economic development strategy. • The draft document was publicly exhibited and several submissions from the community were incorporated into the final strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locals and visitors came together to enjoy a day in the sunshine at the 2023 Harvest Festival in May. The autumn-themed event featured live music, free children's activities, and stalls of food and handmade and handcrafted wares from around the region. The free community event at the Gunnedah and District Kennel Club grounds was supported by the NSW Reconnecting Regional Communities Fund and coordinated by a group of dedicated volunteers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About 180 attendees took advantage of a large variety of workshops hosted or organised by Council during Small Business Month in October 2023. Approximately 98.5% of Gunnedah's 1,530 businesses are classified as small, with less than 20 employees. The program of events was funded with support from the NSW Department of Small Business.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-kind and financial assistance was provided to the Royal Flying Doctor Service to conduct vaccination clinics for Gunnedah residents 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 81 Construction certificates lodged <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 52 - GSC • 31 - Private Certifier 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 67 Construction certificates lodged <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 - GSC • 27 - Private Certifier 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 61 Construction certificates lodged <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 35 - GSC • 26 - Private Certifier
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 78 Occupancy certificates issued <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 - GSC • 48 - Private Certifier 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100 Occupancy certificates issued <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 - GSC • 70 - Private Certifier 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 87 Occupancy certificates issued <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19 - GSC • 68 - Private Certifier
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$39,197,320 Total value of applications lodged in 2021/22 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$22,669,669 Total value of applications lodged in 2022/23 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$83,854,953 Total value of applications lodged in 2023/24
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 70.28 Average number of days taken to determine DAs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 108.52 Average number of days taken to determine DAs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 134.5 Average number of days taken to determine DAs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 143 Development applications lodged with Council for assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 126 DAs determined 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 131 Development applications lodged with Council for assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 114 DAs determined 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 115 Development applications lodged with Council for assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 105 DAs determined

Theme 3

Retaining our Quality of Life

Outcomes	Strategies
3.1 Quality lifestyles and support for our older residents	<p>3.2.1 Encourage a mix of housing types that is affordable, adaptable, accessible, and suited to community needs.</p> <p>3.2.2 Lobby State and Federal governments for measures to improve housing affordability and access to public housing stock.</p>
3.2 Improved housing affordability	<p>3.2.1 Encourage a mix of housing types that is affordable, adaptable, accessible, and suited to community needs.</p> <p>3.2.2 Lobby State and Federal government for measures to improve housing affordability and access to public housing stock.</p>
3.3 Villages are vibrant and sustainable	<p>3.3.1 Support village hall committees and progress associations; build their capacity to deliver village improvement programs.</p> <p>3.3.2 Advocate for quality transport links between Gunnedah and Villages.</p> <p>3.3.3 Implement initiatives that deliver attractive, well-serviced villages whilst retaining the unique identity of each location.</p>
3.4 Reduced crime and anti-social behaviour	<p>3.4.1 Foster crime prevention and community safety through partnership with police and other community organisations.</p> <p>3.4.2 Lobby for continued increase in local police presence so that our town remains a safe and pleasant place to live.</p> <p>3.4.3 Encourage community safety by incorporating crime prevention through environmental design principles in new development.</p> <p>3.4.4 Strengthen partnership between Government and community organisations to identify and develop solutions to address anti-social and at-risk behaviour, including substance abuse and domestic violence.</p> <p>3.4.5 Compliance and enforcement of compliance with acts, regulations, building codes and standards such as those related to planning, building, health, parking, animal control, illegal dumping and vegetation.</p>
3.5 Our younger people are attracted, retained and developed	<p>3.5.1 Work together to provide creative activities for young people after school and during school holidays.</p> <p>3.5.2 Attract and retain young people and families to our area.</p> <p>3.5.3 Council and local business provide traineeships and apprenticeship opportunities for young people across a variety of industry sectors.</p>
3.6 A healthy and active community participating in a diverse range of recreational and cultural activities	<p>3.6.1 Provide the right places, spaces and services to encourage healthy activity.</p> <p>3.6.2 Educate the community about healthy lifestyles and disease prevention.</p> <p>3.6.3 Council supports and facilitates arts and cultural programs in partnership with the community.</p> <p>3.6.4 Maximise opportunities for better use, functionality and accessibility of cultural facilities and spaces.</p> <p>3.6.5 Encourage use of open spaces, villages, and facilities with a broad range of arts and cultural, sporting and recreational activities.</p> <p>3.6.6 Encourage safe cycling and walking through development of tracks, parks and cycleways.</p> <p>3.6.7 Warmly welcome new residents and families, offering assistance to help them integrate into the community.</p>

Outcomes	Strategies
3.7 Improved access to essential services	<p>3.7.1 Advocate for access to quality medical and mental health services and facilities.</p> <p>3.7.2 Regularly review medical facilities and services so that they are adequate to meet the changing needs of a growing community, and gaps are identified and addressed.</p> <p>3.7.3 Maintain services that support people with a disability, the socially disadvantaged and persons at risk.</p> <p>3.7.4 Work to continuously improve accessibility, inclusivity and liveability within Gunnedah Shire.</p> <p>3.7.5 Support initiatives which foster connectedness, resilience and opportunity within the early childhood community.</p>

Indicators of Progress

- Aged care vacancy rates
- Number of home care packages
- SEIFA index of disadvantage
- Median house prices
- New dwellings
- Real estate sales
- ABS housing and home-ownership statistics
- BOSCAR Crime Statistics NSW Police
- Availability of rental properties
- ABS sport and recreation statistics
- Civic Precinct usage data
- Community Satisfaction survey results
- GP workforce statistics NSW Department of Health
- NSW Rural Doctors Network data
- ABS Early Development census data
- ABS age population age profiles
- Number of traineeships and apprentices enrolled



Major Projects - Retaining our Quality of Life

Crime Prevention and Community Safety Conference

More than 100 delegates and 24 speakers from across Australia took part in the Crime Prevention and Community Safety Conference in Gunnedah in November 2023.

Hosted by Gunnedah Shire Council, the conference brought together crime prevention and community safety experts, law enforcement representatives, several presenters with inspiring stories, and agency representatives with success stories to share their knowledge and experiences over two days at the Gunnedah Town Hall.

The conference was an overwhelming success, with delegates from across the country reporting they had gained important insights.

Keynote speakers for the conference were 2021 Australian of the Year and advocate for survivors of sexual assault Grace Tame, NSW Minister for Police and Counterterrorism the Hon. Yasmin Catley, founder of national mental health charity The Man Cave Hunter Johnson and social researcher and futurist Mark McCrindle.

Other speakers included representatives from the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR), the NSW Police Force's Rural Crime Prevention Unit, the NSW Police Force's Engagement & Hate Crime Unit, the Advocate for Children and Young People, the Centre for Multicultural Youth Victoria, Just Reinvest NSW, Kinchela Aboriginal Boys Home Corporation, Queensland Police and Logan City Council, the Violence Abuse and Neglect Services, cyber security experts and more.

The Crime Prevention and Community Safety Conference is estimated to have brought in almost \$300,000 in direct and indirect economic benefits to Gunnedah Shire, with accommodation providers,



caterers, clubs and hotels, and local businesses reaping the benefits over two-three days. Some delegates also extended their stay to include the weekend to enjoy Gunnedah and the neighbouring shires.

The conference was a few years in the making and was organised by Gunnedah Shire Council and the Gunnedah Crime Prevention and Community Safety Conference Working Group and sponsored and supported by organisations including Whitehaven Coal, Tamworth Family Support, Gunnedah Workshop Enterprises Ltd, Gunnedah Family Support, Gunnedah & Districts Liquor Accord, Care4U Services, Gunnedah Miners' Support Group, Gunnedah Conservatorium and Gunnedah Meals on Wheels.

Term in Review - Retaining our Quality of Life

2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,744 Social Support hours delivered for GoCo clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22,717 Social Support hours delivered for GoCo clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19,894 Social Support hours delivered for GoCo clients
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 144,048km travelled for GoCo Community Transport clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 207,854km travelled for GoCo Community Transport clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 377,683km travelled for GoCo Community Transport clients
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4,248 GoCo Community Transport trips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9,520 GoCo Community Transport trips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11,001 GoCo Community Transport trips
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,221 Lawn mowing hours delivered for GoCo clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 505 Lawn mowing hours delivered for GoCo clients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 956 Lawn mowing hours delivered for GoCo clients
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21,508 hours delivered by GoCo volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22,220 hours delivered by GoCo volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24,500 hours delivered by GoCo volunteers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 requests for CCTV footage from NSW Police Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 33 requests for CCTV footage from NSW Police Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 26 requests for CCTV footage from NSW Police Service
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An ongoing capital works programs was completed for Village Halls including flooring work at Emerald Hill Hall and ramp access to Tambar Springs Hall. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Reconnecting Regional Communities NSW government grant was used to deliver free community events, including offering transport to and from villages to enable as many people as possible to attend. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Cultural Precinct was booked for 1,332 activities and events and staff assisted with organising a variety of events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Cultural Precinct was booked for 1,196 activities and events and staff assisted with organising a variety of events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Cultural Precinct was booked for 1,478 activities and events and staff assisted with organising a variety of events.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great usage of the Gunnedah Library <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 25,683 visitors o 1,349 events held o 4,037 new materials acquired o 3,705 library members o 25,683 books borrowed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great usage of the Gunnedah Library <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 57,762 visitors o 596 events held o 1,749 new materials acquired o 3,957 library members o 17,240 books borrowed • The library underwent a refurbishment in 2023. • Innovation in outreach services award or a book paper folding activity. • RH Dougherty Innovation in Special Events Award (Division A): Highly Commended for Multicultural March event. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great usage of the Gunnedah Library <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o 64,738 visitors o 431 events held o 2,065 new materials acquired o 4,063 library members o 17,306 books borrowed • A new program initiated 2023/24 is SETs - Senior Engagement Talks - held once a month using guest speakers speaking about topics of interest. These are extremely popular, attracting 15 to 20 participants each session.



2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2021/22, the Gunnedah Community Scholarship Fund presented \$22,250 between 16 worthy recipients to support their studies in areas including law, paramedics, and teaching. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2022/23, the Gunnedah Community Scholarship Fund presented \$21,850 between 18 worthy recipients to support their studies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2023/24, the Gunnedah Community Scholarship Fund presented \$25,500 between 28 worthy recipients to support their studies.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Access Working Group met bi-monthly and reviewed the Disability Inclusion Plan. Actions were undertaken to ensure inclusion across tourism, infrastructure, communications, customer service, events and planning. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Gunnedah Shire DisABILITY Inclusion Action Plan 2024-2028 Enhancing Access: Cultivating Inclusion outlines the measures put in place to ensure people with disability can access general supports and services available in the community and can participate fully in the community. This plan was put on public exhibition on 19 June 2024.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work commenced on the shared pathway extension connecting the Namoi River to Mullibah Lagoon. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Riverine Stormwater Precinct Share Pathway Project was completed in September 2023. The project, which was funded by the NSW Public Spaces Legacy Program, complements the existing pathways and runs from Cohen’s Bridge along Maitland Street to the Carroll Street end of Mullibah Lagoon, connecting to the existing pathway at the Namoi River. The Geoff Morgan Playing Fields are linked through Mullibah Lagoon. The pathway includes a stormwater bridge at the Osric Street stormwater head and is lined with solar lighting.

Theme 4

Protecting and Enjoying our Beautiful Surrounds

Outcomes	Strategies
4.1 Balance between development and environmental protection	4.1.1 Lobby for planning controls that balance the need for mining, agriculture, and the long-term future of the environment. 4.1.2 Ensure development does not negatively impact on flooding.
4.2 Native fauna is secured, biodiversity protected, and native vegetation thrives	4.2.1 Control of noxious weeds and invasive species. 4.2.2 Protect wildlife habitat, corridors, stands of remnant vegetation and significant natural landscape and soil types. 4.2.3 Maintain systems for effective management of bushfires and the potential threats to residential areas. 4.2.4 Identify, protect and nurture local populations of threatened species, especially the koala population.
4.3 A secure and high-quality water supply	4.3.1 Support the protection of waterways. 4.3.2 Investigate opportunities to reduce water consumption. 4.3.3 Secure water supplies to a level that will enable our community to remain sustainable and allows for future growth.
4.4 Our heritage is valued and protected	4.4.1 Protect and maintain the appeal of our older buildings, recognising their value to our community. 4.4.2 Promote our heritage in partnership with the community, in particular Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Communities in the Shire.
4.5 Manage exposure and reduced contribution to climate change	4.5.1 Develop strategies to assess risk and address the local impacts of climate change. 4.5.2 Encourage investment in efficient energy consumption. 4.5.3 Develop and implement a comprehensive community education program to promote sustainable environmental practices for homes, workplaces and public open spaces.
4.6 Our waste is sustainably managed and reduced	4.6.1 Review and implement a waste management strategy. 4.6.2 Identify opportunities for increasing community recycling, both volume and type of waste. 4.6.3 Pursue opportunities to reduce the amount of waste produced by households and industry.
4.7 Enhanced streetscapes and open spaces in Gunnedah and villages	4.7.1 Beautify the main street and improve the attractiveness of our urban streetscapes. 4.7.2 Beautify and improve the facilities available in our parks and gardens, open space, sporting and recreational areas. 4.7.3 Provide attractive town entrances to Gunnedah and villages.



Indicators of Progress

- Koala and native animal population surveys
- Water quality and usage data
- Community satisfaction survey data
- Noxious weed data
- Waste to landfill data
- Recycling volumes

Major Projects - Protecting and Enjoying our Beautiful Surrounds

Gunnedah Koala Sanctuary

In 2022/23, Construction commenced on the Gunnedah Koala Sanctuary. The Sanctuary is located on a 50-acre bush site on the Oxley Highway.

Council secured \$12.1 million in funding from the NSW Government to build a large wildlife centre and hospital.

Council secured an additional \$8 million from the NSW Government's Regional Tourism Activation Fund and \$2 million from Whitehaven Coal Mining to complete the next stage of the Sanctuary, which will include tourist accommodation and animal attractions.

The Sanctuary will include attractions such as animal enclosures, wildlife sanctuary walking trails, accommodation, a caretaker's residence, and picnic areas.

At the end of June 2024, substantial progress had been made on construction of the main building, which will house the koala hospital and café along with associated works.

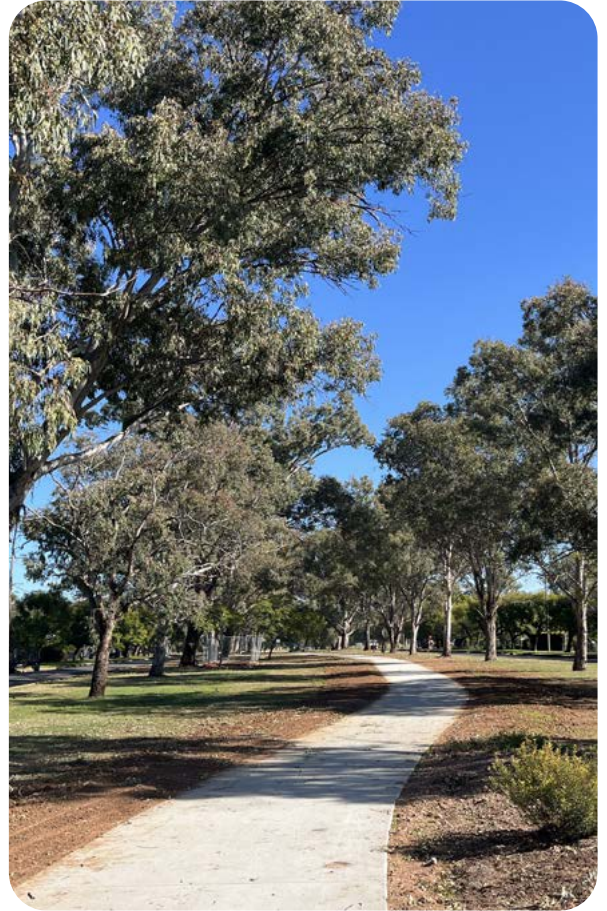
Once completed the Sanctuary will provide both tourism and conservation benefits to the Koalas and the Shire.



Parks, Gardens and Open Space Capital Works

Significant progress was made to enhancements across the Shire's Parks, gardens, recreational and active open spaces. These included:

- Shade tree planting program in Breeza Park, Curlewis Park, Tambar Springs Park, and Carroll Park.
- Shade was installed over Breeza Park playground.
- The BBQ was replaced at Mullaley Park.
- Kitchener Park carpark reseal was completed.
- A Street Tree Strategy is under development.
- Kitchener Park Inclusive Playground was completed.
- Tree avenue watering and maintenance continued at Mullaley, Carroll, and Breeza.
- Completed the community consultation of the Street Tree Strategy.
- Gunnedah Showground Rodeo Arena Lights is completed.
- Consultation is underway for the Gunnedah Skate Park Design.
- Substantial progress was made on the construction of the Gunnedah off-leash dog park
- Commenced development of Open Space Masterplans.



Term in Review - Protecting and Enjoying our Beautiful Surrounds

2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Street Tree Strategy was renewed and now incorporates tree requirements for highways, main arteries and supporting streets as required. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed/underway projects under the parks capital works program include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Park shade sails Park furniture repair Town entrance tree planting Playground maintenance programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed/underway projects under the parks capital works program include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shade tree planting program in Breeza Park, Curlewis Park, Tambar Springs Park and Carroll Park Shade was installed over Breeza Park playground The BBQ was replaced at Mullaley Park Kitchener Park carpark reseal was completed Commenced lights installation in the rodeo arena at the Gunnedah Showground A Street Tree Strategy is under development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The following projects were completed or were underway at 30 June 2024: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kitchener Park Inclusive Playground was completed Additional tree planting across the Shire Tree avenue watering and maintenance continued at Mullaley, Carroll, and Breeza Completed the community consultation of the Street Tree Strategy Gunnedah Showground Rodeo Arena Lights is completed Consultation is underway for the Gunnedah Skate Park Design Development of Open Space Masterplans commenced
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Open Space Strategy community consultation finished in December 2021 and a final draft was presented to Council for assessment and implementation in June 2022. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding was received from the Department of Primary Industry for the ongoing eradication program of parthenium weed and alligator weed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Control of parthenium weed identified in the Shire is in place. Regular inspections were undertaken as required and an inspection of the Namoi River has been undertaken. A stand was held at AgQuip educating customers on the various noxious weeds identified in the Shire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inspections and maintenance spraying for weeds is occurring, as well as programs for specific identified species, i.e. Parthenium. Grant funding was received for Koala Strategy and Parthenium, as well as Invasive Species.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council resolved to replace all streetlights in the Shire with LEDs as part of an Essential Energy initiative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During 2022/23, Council progressed investigations into energy efficiency opportunities and renewable energy options. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During 2023/24, a final draft was received of the Renewable Energy Options Paper. Subsequently, an application was made to the Federal Government's Community Energy Upgrades Fund for solar projects at a range of locations. If successful, this will not only result in improved environmental outcomes but will also assist with reducing the operating costs of these facilities.

2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Gunnedah Shire Local Housing Strategy was adopted by Council. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Gunnedah Shire Local Housing Strategy was reviewed for currency and an updated version adopted by Council in June 2023. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The updated Gunnedah Shire Local Housing Strategy took effect.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new 10-year Waste Collections and Recycling Contracts commenced on 1 July 2021 following extensive community consultation and preparation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The weighbridge load cell upgrade was completed. The deposition area design and the new cell design development commenced. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commenced the tender for the cell development and management of leachate/storm water that will facilitate the processing of waste of Council's largest facility into the future. Deposition area has been constructed and operation date is aimed for August 2024.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10,110 Tonnes of domestic waste received at the Gunnedah Waste Facility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9,382 Tonnes of domestic waste received at the Gunnedah Waste Facility 7,061 tonnes of commercial waste 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 9,823 Tonnes of domestic waste received at the Gunnedah Waste Facility 7,266 tonnes of commercial waste
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2,814 Tonnes of waste diverted to recycling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6,000 Tonnes of waste diverted to recycling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5,800 Tonnes of waste diverted to recycling
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1,301 Customers visited the Bowerbird shop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1,275 Customers visited the Bowerbird shop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 756 Customers visited the Bowerbird shop
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 38,072 Customers delivered waste to the Waste Management Facility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 28,078 Customers delivered waste to the Waste Management Facility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30,594 Customers delivered waste to the Waste Management Facility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council provided financial sponsorship to the Sustainable North-West Amazing Race, which targets students aged 13-19 years old, and provides education and inspiration to change their behaviour to reduce their carbon, water and waste footprint. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Four 60 litre general waste and recycling bins were provided to Gunnedah Family Day Care to support their education programs on sustainability and recycling at their centre. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A new waste education campaign was also developed for implementation in 2024/25.



Financial Performance

Council is working hard to ensure we have a financially sustainable Council into the future. The below financial indicators show Council's trend during the past three years and in preparation for addressing one of Council's key challenges into the future. The financial indicators below are the consolidated position comprised of the general fund including domestic waste, water fund and sewer fund.

INDICATOR	BENCHMARK	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Operating performance ratio. This ratio measures Council's achievement of containing operating expenditure within operating revenue.	Greater than or equal to break even	9.10%	9.56%	9.63%
Own source revenue This ratio measures the degree of reliance on external funding sources.	Greater than 60%	48.4%	46.72%	43.70%
Unrestricted current ratio To assess the adequacy of working capital and its ability to satisfy obligations in the short term for the unrestricted activities of Council.	Greater than or equal to 1.5:1	3.62x	3.59x	4.03x
Debt service ratio This ratio measures the availability of operating cash to service debt including interest, principal and lease payments.	Greater than 2x	11.89x	12.34x	13.05x
Rates, annual charges, interest & extra charges outstanding percentage To assess the impact of uncollected rates and annual charges on Council's liquidity and the adequacy of recovery efforts.	Less than 5% Less than 10% Regional	3.99%	3.52%	3.86%
Cash expense cover ratio Indicates the number of months Council can continue paying for its immediate expenses without additional cash inflows.	Greater than or equal to 3 months	27.17 months	23.67 months	21.80 months
Building, infrastructure & other structures renewal ratio This ratio is used to assess the rate at which assets are being renewed against the rate at which they are depreciating. Includes Buildings, Roads, Drainage and Open Space assets.	Greater than or equal to 100%	87.25%	154.70%	104.45%
Infrastructure backlog ratio This ratio shows what proportion the backlog is against the total value of Council's infrastructure.	Less than 2%	1.35%	3.50%	3.05%
Asset maintenance ratio This ratio compares the actual versus required annual asset maintenance.	Greater than 100%	94.71%	112.51%	96.35%

Future Challenges

Gunnedah Shire Council, like many councils across NSW, is facing challenges in managing the balancing act between maintaining its assets, providing services, and promoting growth within the current resources available. An additional challenge is managing expectations regarding communications with the community.

Maintaining Our Assets

With steep cost increases and decreasing funding combined with a very competitive labour market and addressing the impacts of natural disasters, maintaining the community assets Council is responsible for to our targeting service level is an increasingly difficult task. The key assets impacted by these challenges are Council’s transport assets including unsealed roads, sealed roads, and urban streets.

Drainage and flood management has also become more difficult due to increased costs and the environmental impact requirements.

These areas also align with some of the areas identified as needing improvement in the community satisfaction survey undertaken in August 2024.

With the impacts of the seven natural disasters and the funding limitations currently impacting Council, the maintenance of our assets to a level the community is satisfied with will be one of the greatest challenges over the next term of Council and into the future.

Satisfaction Scorecard

14/32 services and facilities received a good performance score (at least somewhat satisfied of 80% or more).

There were 9 areas identified as areas for improvement with a satisfaction score of less than 60% (see red shaded cells).

-  **Good performance**
(T3B sat score ≥80%)
-  **Monitor**
(T3B sat score 60%-79%)
-  **Needs improvement**
(T3B sat score <60%)

Community Facilities	Infrastructure
Public parks	Unsealed roads
Swimming pools	Rural sealed roads
Sporting grounds	Urban streets
Libraries	Footpaths and cycleways
Public buildings and village halls	Street cleaning
The Civic Precinct (i.e. Town Hall/Movie Theatre/Art Gallery)	Gunnedah airport
Gunnedah showground	Drainage/flood management
Quality of town centres and public spaces	Water supply
	Sewerage management
	General garbage collection
	Landfills and waste transfer stations
	Recycling
Human Services	Corporate Services and Management
Youth services	Opportunities to participate in Council decision making
Aged care services (i.e. Go Co)	Management of development
Relationship with Indigenous residents	Tourism, importance
Support for volunteers	Economic development
Disability access	Environmental and sustainability initiatives
Emergency services (i.e. SES, RFS)	Heritage conservation/promotion



Long-Term Financial Sustainability

Following on from the above challenge regarding managing our assets is the challenge of ensuring we are financially sustainable into the future.

Like many councils across NSW, Gunnedah Shire Council is facing the difficulty of maintaining its infrastructure and services within the operating environment of the compounded issues of cost-shifting, rate-pegging, rising costs and a backlog of natural disaster projects still awaiting funding approval.

Council is facing steep cost increases and reduced funding in real terms combined with a very competitive labour market and the impacts of recent natural disasters.

This has resulted in Council's financial position needing to be addressed. Council's long-term financial plan shows that we are currently operating with an approximate \$3.1m operating deficit in the General Fund (excluding domestic waste services) which essentially means that we are spending \$3.1m less than we should be to maintain our assets and services to our current targeted service levels.

Without addressing this gap, the residents and visitors of the Shire will see a deterioration in service levels. Each year we fall behind, the cost of renewing infrastructure will rise, and we will eventually have to catch up.

While Council continues to review operational efficiencies, and will continue to do so, because of limited ability to increase revenue in other areas, we are forced to consider an increase in rates via an SRV. This SRV would secure the level of funding necessary to ensure that we can continue to maintain and renew our asset base.

Council has commenced discussions with the community regarding a potential Special Rate Variation (SRV) and one of the new Council's first key decisions has been whether to proceed with the proposed SRV or a variation of it.

Next Steps - Where Are We Headed

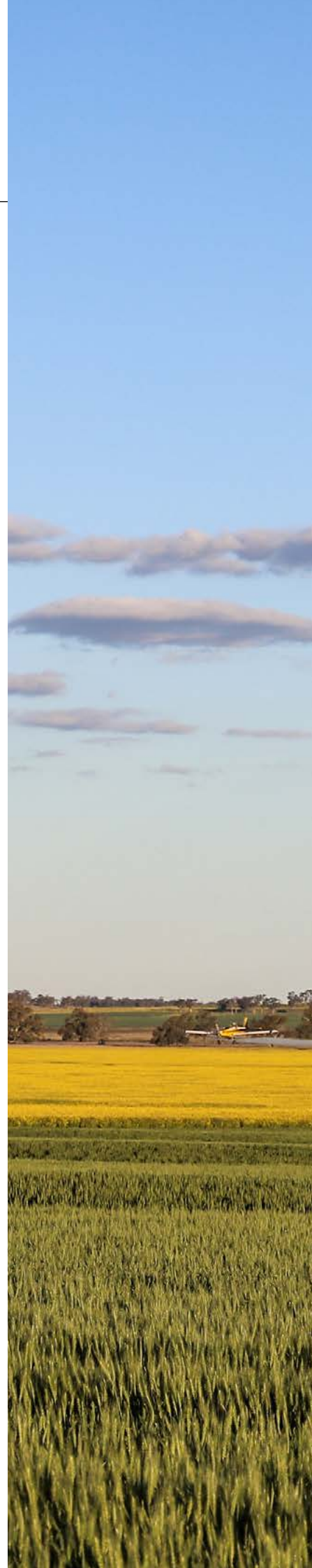
Gunnedah Shire Council is in the enviable position of being a growing Council.

This is a good situation to be in and creates opportunities for the years ahead. It also creates challenges that are raised within the report.

All NSW councils are required to review and update their Community Strategic Plan within nine months of electing a new governing body.

The State of our Shire Report 2024 is a key input into the review and update of Gunnedah Shire Council's Community Strategic Plan through its assessment of current and emerging issues for the Shire, and summary of community priorities to inform further discussion.

This document will be published on Council's website and promoted to the community following the Council elections in September 2024. Further conversations between Council and the Community will lead to a reviewed and updated draft Community Strategic Plan being prepared and placed on public exhibition during March-May 2025, prior to its adoption by the Council prior to 30 June 2025.







Gunnedah Shire Council **State of our Shire Report 2021-2024**

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