

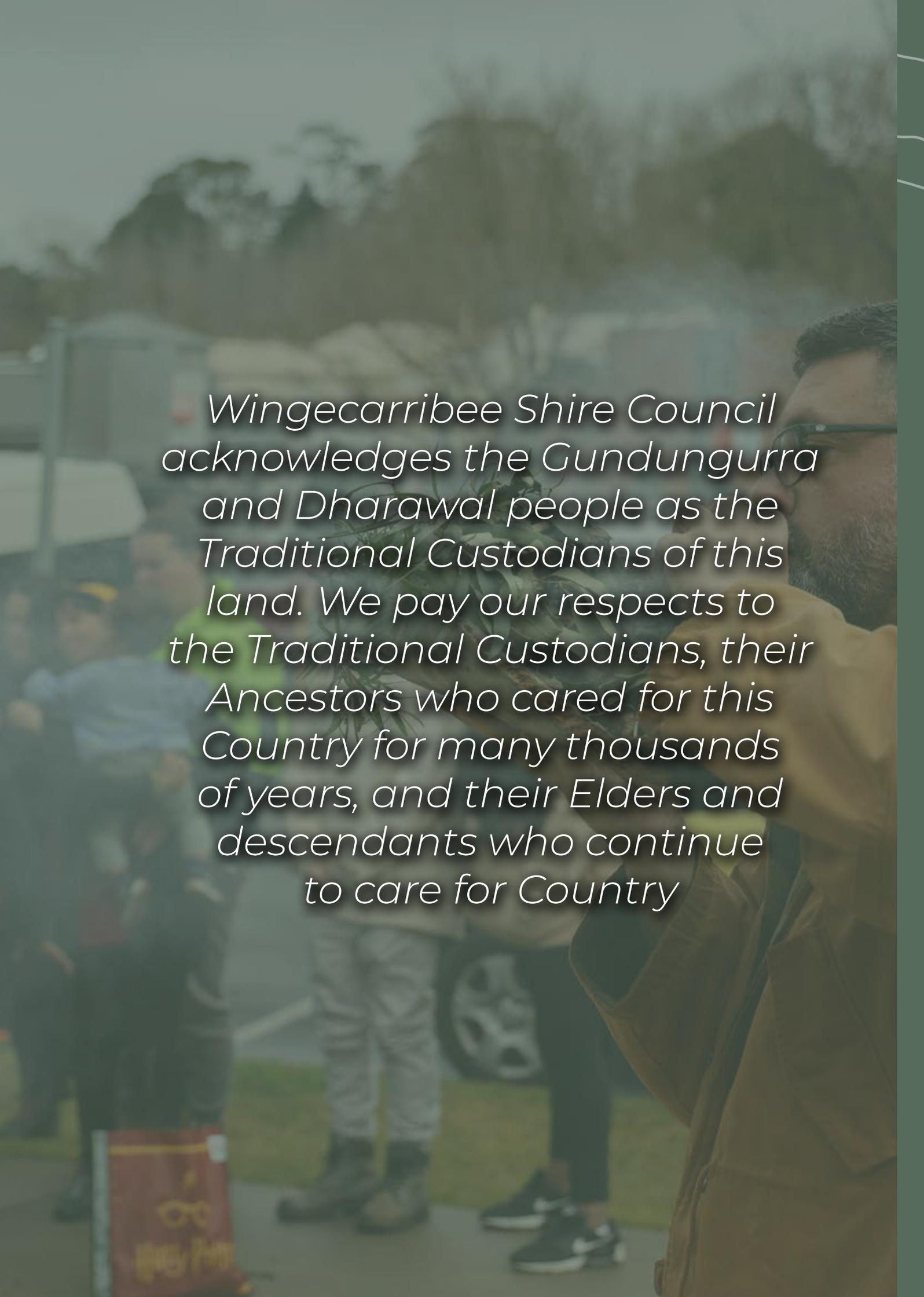
State of Our Shire Report

2024



Wingecarribee
SHIRE COUNCIL

We're with you.

A man with a beard and glasses, wearing a brown jacket, is shown in profile on the right side of the image, holding a large bundle of greenery. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with a crowd of people, some wearing blue uniforms, and a white van. The text is overlaid on the image in a white, serif font.

*Wingecarribee Shire Council
acknowledges the Gundungurra
and Dharawal people as the
Traditional Custodians of this
land. We pay our respects to
the Traditional Custodians, their
Ancestors who cared for this
Country for many thousands
of years, and their Elders and
descendants who continue
to care for Country*

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About this Report

The State of Our Shire report is a companion document to the Administrator’s End of Term Report and the Annual Report 2024/25.

The report covers the period July 2021 to June 2024 and considers progress made against the Community Strategic Plan (CSP).

It includes information about achievements to date and recommendations for future work to be undertaken.

Its purpose is to assist in the review and update of the CSP as well as to inform the development of the incoming Council's Delivery Program.

It references how Council has delivered against the social, environmental, economic and civic leadership outcomes, and reports this progress against the high-level strategies and priorities of the CSP.

Wingecarribee Shire Council is unique in that it has been under Administration for three and half years, following the outcome of the Public Inquiry undertaken in 2022 by the NSW Government.

This context is critical to understanding the Council’s priorities and performance since the elected body was suspended in March 2021 and ultimately dismissed in July 2022 following recommendations from the Commissioner presiding over the Public Inquiry to the NSW State Government.

To better explain this context, Council has prepared an Administrator’s End of Term Report which focuses largely on the internal mechanisms of the Council over the past few years and the key achievements under the period of Administration.

How the reports fit together:

Annual Report 2023/24	State of Our Shire 2021/24	Administrator’s End of Term 2021/24
<p>Focus</p> <p>Progress against the Delivery Program and Operational Plan with a focus on the past 12 months (financial year 2023/24).</p> <p>Covers the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024.</p> <p>Includes statutory reporting including comprehensive financial reporting.</p>	<p>Focus</p> <p>Council’s role in progressing the Community Strategic Plan (CSP).</p> <p>Covers the period 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2024.</p> <p>Published as an addendum to the Annual Report in November 2024.</p> <p>Includes reporting against the key performance indicators under each theme in the CSP.</p>	<p>Focus</p> <p>Council’s current position and achievements since the Administration period.</p> <p>Covers the period March 2021 to June 2024.</p> <p>Includes progress by key result areas i.e. those priorities identified for action during Administration.</p> <p>Published as a separate document, to be read in conjunction with the Annual Report and State of Our Shire Report. Provides additional information about the period March 2021 to June 2024.</p>

About the Community Strategic Plan

The Community Strategic Plan (CSP), Wingecarribee 2041 was developed by Wingecarribee Shire Council on behalf of the local community. It is a long-term plan that identifies where the Wingecarribee community wants to be in the future (the vision) and how we aim to get there (strategies).

All local governments in NSW have a CSP that considers their community's current and future needs and aspirations over the long term horizon. It is the highest-level plan developed by Council on behalf of its community.

While Council developed the Plan, it does so on behalf of the community, and is not wholly responsible for its achievement. It requires a collaborative effort involving Council, government and non-government agencies, business and industry and of course the community itself.

Wingecarribee 2041 has five broad themes, each of which has its own aspirations, goals and strategies to help us achieve those goals.

Our themes are:

1. Leadership



2. People



3. Places



4. Environment



5. Economy







Our Community Vision

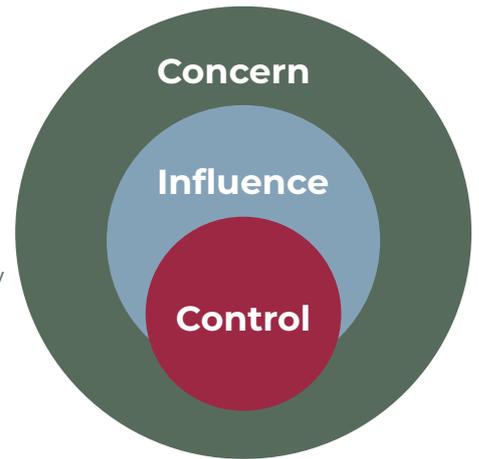
In 2041 we will be...

*... a healthy, respectful and productive community,
learning and living in harmony, proud of our
heritage and nurturing our environment.*

What the Community told us

The CSP outcomes continue to be progressed by Council, community and government and non-government agencies.

Responsibility for delivering on the CSP requires a whole of community approach and commitment. While Council has control over certain aspects of its delivery, in many areas it can only influence (e.g. State Government policy) or monitor an issue (e.g. cost of living) it is concerned about before making a decision on how best to respond.



Leadership

35% of those surveyed believe we are either partly or fully on track.

What did people talk about?

- ✓ Restoring local democracy after a prolonged period of Administration
- ✓ Having an elected Council that represents a board range of community matters
- ✓ Increasing transparency in decision-making and improving accountability
- ✓ Responsible financial management and long-term sustainability
- ✓ Attracting and retaining suitably experienced and skilled staff
- ✓ Improving communications and community engagement

STATUS: Needs Attention

People

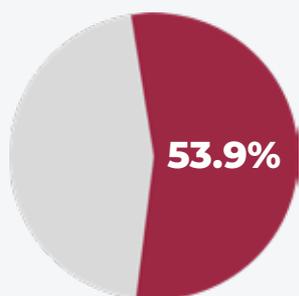
54.5% of those surveyed believe we are either partly or fully on track.

What did people talk about?

- ✓ Supporting vulnerable communities, including our ageing population
- ✓ Providing better services for young families
- ✓ More inclusive communities that bridge the gap between young and old, and new and longer-term residents
- ✓ Providing sport and recreation opportunities and facilities across the Shire
- ✓ Supporting young people to stay in the area
- ✓ Importance of arts, events and entertainment to community wellbeing
- ✓ General access to community services and infrastructure such as health, sport and recreation (including aquatic), parks and playgrounds

STATUS: Progressing - On track to achieve our CSP Goals

Places



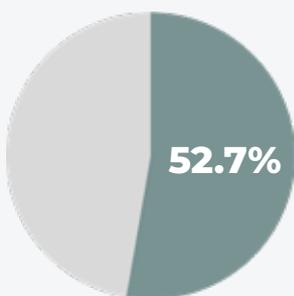
53.9% of those surveyed believe we are either partly or fully on track.

What did people talk about?

- ✓ Local infrastructure that meets the needs of current and future communities
- ✓ Managing development without compromising the integrity of the Shire's unique characteristics
- ✓ Providing affordable and accessible housing e.g. to support young people living in the Shire, older people, key workers
- ✓ Coordinated planning between all levels of government
- ✓ Improving transport infrastructure and networks e.g. local roads, footpaths, walking and cycling trails
- ✓ Maintaining access to green spaces

STATUS: Progressing - On track to achieve our CSP Goals

Environment



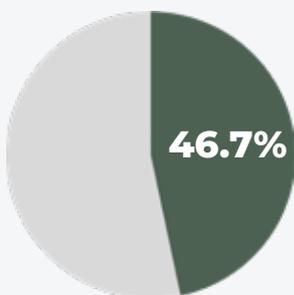
52.7% of those surveyed believe we are either partly or fully on track.

What did people talk about?

- ✓ Increasing or maintaining tree canopies
- ✓ Bushfire and disaster planning and preparedness
- ✓ Maintaining the beautiful natural environment
- ✓ Caring for and protecting the local flora and fauna
- ✓ Climate change and adaptation

STATUS: Progressing - On track to achieve our CSP Goals

Economy



46.7% of those surveyed believe we are either partly or fully on track.

What did people talk about?

- ✓ Increasing or maintaining tree canopies
- ✓ Bushfire and disaster planning and preparedness
- ✓ Maintaining the beautiful natural environment
- ✓ Caring for and protecting the local flora and fauna
- ✓ Climate change and adaptation

STATUS: Progressing - On track to achieve our CSP Goals

Leadership

WHERE WE WANT TO BE...

We trust the governments that represent us. They work together in the best interests of the community.

They are open, accountable and allocate resources wisely.

We are confident that they are making decisions that support our goals.

Governments listen to the community and involve us in decision-making.

They are knowledgeable but also seek out new ideas and points of view.

They regularly communicate and keep us informed, ensuring we all have opportunities to have a say on what matters to us.

Most of all, our governments show strong leadership and are connected to the communities they serve.

How we are tracking against Key Performance Indicators

 Increasing
  Decreasing
  Stable

Indicator	Target or trend	Source	Outcome
Overall satisfaction with Council performance	Increasing	Community Research Survey	
Overall satisfaction with Council provision of information to residents	Increasing	Community Research Survey	
Council's image within the community	Improving	Community Research Survey	
Satisfaction with opportunities to participate in decision making.	Increasing	Community Research Survey	
Number of Hours Lost to Workplace Injury	Decreasing	Internal HR systems	
Subscribers to Weekly eNews	Increasing	Website	
Average call wait time (Customer Service Centre)	Maintain or Decreasing	Internal customer service systems	



Goal 1.1

Ethical and trusted levels of government that work together in the best interest of the Shire

Strategy 1.1.1 Achieve ethical governance and improve decision making, through open, accountable and positive leadership.

Council's role: Leader

Partners: State and Federal Government

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Increased focus was on restoring trust between the community and Council, by improving levels of transparency in decision-making and how the Council engages.
- ✓ Improved the way in which information was provided, being more in-depth and relevant that was also easy to understand
- ✓ Restructured Council's key planning and reporting documents such as the annual Operational Plan and Budget to provide detailed budgets for each Principal Activity (Coordinator Level) carried out by Council, i.e. showing the true cost of each service, how that service is funded and to what extent the service is delivered
- ✓ Created of an internal ombudsman role (Professional Conduct Coordinator) in 2021 to ensure probity, accountability and ethical conduct. The Professional Conduct Coordinator investigated complaints relating to Council staff, contractors, consultants and volunteers
- ✓ Appointed four (4) independent members to the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee for a three (3) year period from 1 September 2021, to provide independent advice and assurance to the General Manager and Council on aspects of Council operations. At the June 2024 Council meeting, the four independent ARIC members were reappointed commencing 1 September 2024 with a staggered term end date. The reappointment of the current Committee members provides stability while the newly elected Council are onboarded and inducted
- ✓ Reviewed and adopted more than 50 policies seeking community feedback as part of the process. Policies included the Councillor and Staff Interaction Policy, Complaints and Complainants Policy, Code of Meeting Practice and Fraud and Corruption Policy
- ✓ Commissioned of 12 independent reviews covering areas such as Council finances, planning and development, regulatory services and Council's response to the 2019/20 bushfires to provide independent analysis of a series of complex issues with recommendations for improvement. Substantial progress has been made in implementing 227 recommendations arising from the reviews, of which there are 44 with ongoing actions

Future Focus Areas:

- ✓ Inducting the incoming councillors and providing ongoing information and professional development (Lead)
- ✓ Preparing a four-year Delivery Program guiding the new Council's term of office (Lead)
- ✓ Reporting progress to the community, particularly progress of key strategies and plans including those external to the Council (Lead and Advocate)

Strategy 1.1.2 Ensure the long-term sustainability of the Council through effective planning and management of finances, assets, people and systems.

Council's role: Leader

Partners: State and Federal Government

Status: On Track

Progress

The General Manager developed “Our Road Map: Moving Forward as an Organisation”, in 2021/22 to reset and refocus Council following COVID-19, a series of natural disaster declarations and issues relating to the suspension of the previous Council and conduct of the Public Inquiry.

- ✓ Developed an integrated Resourcing Strategy in 2023 which included adjustments to the Council's Long term Financial Plan and Asset Management Strategy
- ✓ Updated of Asset Management Plans ensuing broader strategy was being informed by more reliable asset data
- ✓ Developed a ‘workplace of choice’ approach to address workforce shortages through a focus on continued improvements in workplace culture, learning and development, work-life balance and a competitive salary system
- ✓ Revised Council's Workforce Management Strategy in 2023 to address key challenges and take advantage of opportunities to build capacity and resilience
- ✓ Revised Council's Digital Strategy in 2022 and again in 2023 to integrate with the Long Term Financial Plan

Council continued its business transformation program through the delivery of several key projects including:

- ✓ Upgrades to Council's core technology system, Technology One, to provide a smoother, integrated platform for the community to conduct transactions and engage with Council staff
- ✓ Investment in Council's Cyber Security infrastructure and reporting systems to ensure information is secure
- ✓ Investment in Asset Management systems to ensure financial information aligns to asset condition data
- ✓ Digitising several paper-based processes to modernise and streamline business processes

Future Focus Areas:

- ✓ Implementing Horizon 2 “Adapting to Agility” in the Organisational Road Map.
- ✓ Key features include:
 - Organisation-wide accountability
 - Organisational pride and performance
 - Mobile digital options
 - Improved customer experience
 - Delivering outcomes
 - Human Centred Innovation
 - Diversity across the organisation
 - Continuous improvement
 - Problem solving and agile, cross functional teams
- ✓ Undertaking continuous improvement of Asset Management practices including data collection and analysis to inform the Long-term Financial Plan
- ✓ Implementing actions in the Workforce Management Strategy to position Council as an employer of choice and address serious skills shortages impacting the organisation and the broader local government sector

Strategy 1.1.3 Improve customer service and achieve value for money services through informed, responsive and efficient service delivery.

Council's role: Leader

Partners: State Government

Status: On Track

Progress

Improved customer experience

- √ Developed the Customer Experience Charter and Customer Service Standards in 2023 which involved the introduction of new metrics to monitor performance against expectations e.g. resolving issues at first contact
- √ Introduced post contact surveys to better understand what is working well, and where improvements need to be made
- √ Enhanced online services to improve the customer experience and introduced new services including online payments and self-service kiosks
- √ Carried out extensive work to transition the organisation away from paper-based forms to better integrate information and processes
- √ Launched the rejuvenated Wingecarribee Shire Council website in November 2023, with a refreshed look and simplified navigation pathways
- √ Upgraded the Customer Request Management system to better monitor and track customer requests and produce instant reports. The system allows people to track the progress of their requests in real time
- √ Adopted the Delivering Better Services Framework in December 2023 to provide Council with a consistent, best-practice modelled approach to planning and reviewing services to the community to ensure they provide best-value
- √ Completed seven (7) Service Reviews:
 - Children's Services
 - Corporate Relations
 - Plant and Fleet
 - Southern Regional Livestock Exchange
 - Tourism and Events
 - Financial Services – under new Framework
 - Water Services – under new Framework
- √ Facilitated two (2) Community Research Surveys in late 2022, and again in 2024, to help inform the incoming Council (September 2024) and establish a baseline for improvement

Future Focus Areas

- √ Determining affordable and acceptable levels of service in discussion with the community
- √ Implementing prioritised Service Reviews in line with the Delivering Better Services Framework and the adopted 4 year service review program
- √ Moving to the next phase of the Customer Experience system improvements in accordance with the Digital Strategy
- √ Utilising the priorities identified in the Community Research Survey through Council's planning and resourcing documents to inform the next iteration Resourcing Strategy, Delivery Program and Operational Plan and Budget

Strategy 1.1.4 Deliver and implement strategy and planning that supports the community's vision and priorities.

Council's role: Leader

Partners: State Government

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Commissioned a review of the Wingecarribee Community Strategic Plan in late 2022 to ensure the existing strategy was reflective of new and emerging issues
- ✓ Continued key policy and planning to support implementation of the Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) which outlines the community's aspirations for the Shire's environmental, agricultural, economic, housing, infrastructure, and character qualities
- ✓ Progressed several significant projects including the Robertson Place Plan and the review and development of new Medium and Low Density Residential Development Controls
- ✓ Undertook community consultation for the Bowral Town Centre Master Plan
- ✓ Adopted the Community Heritage Study which is the culmination of a significant body of work undertaken by community volunteers and Council staff dating back to 2012 when Council deferred for further consultation over 200 potential heritage items recommended by the Wingecarribee Heritage Survey 2009
- ✓ Progressed work on the draft Master Plan and Governance Strategy for the Southern Highlands Innovation Park which was placed on public exhibition in July 2024
- ✓ Continued implementation of the Wingecarribee Local Housing Strategy, to deliver housing supply and diversity in conjunction with essential infrastructure
- ✓ Prepared the draft Master Plan and Servicing Strategy for the Bowral South New Living Area, a key action stemming from the Local Housing Strategy, ready for public exhibition in August and September 2024. These new strategies and plans will assist the incoming Council to review its existing land-use planning framework and contributions plans as well as the resourcing strategies required to fund necessary infrastructure
- ✓ Developed a program of Strategic Outcomes projects in August 2023, which seeks to address several critical issues for the Southern Highlands and broader region including:
 - Unlocking regionally significant employment lands
 - Supporting economic development
 - Increasing housing supply and diversity to meet the needs of the community
 - Ensuring that growing and changing communities are supported by essential infrastructure, delivered in a staged and strategic manner

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Completing a review of the Community Strategic Plan by 1 July 2025
- ✓ Completing key strategic documents to inform a review of the Local Environmental Plan and Developer Contributions Plans
- ✓ Identifying and costing infrastructure requirements as part of servicing strategies
- ✓ Advocacy by, and lobbying for, critical infrastructure to support new living areas and ageing communities
- ✓ Integrating existing strategy and retiring redundant strategies and plans

Goal 1.2

A well-informed, engaged community

Strategy 1.2.1 Provide clear, open and timely information through a mix of accessible communication methods and channels.

Council's role: Leader

Partners: State Government

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Undertook a Council rebranding exercise and changed the way language is used to make documents and other communications easier to understand.
 - ✓ Trained staff to improve communications both internally and externally and to ensure WSC upholds consistent brand, voice, language, and messaging across all content
 - ✓ Refreshed the Council website in 2023 to make it more user friendly.
 - ✓ Established an interactive Projects Page to assist community members in locating and checking on the progress of capital works projects in their area. The interactive map includes details about specific projects including their location, cost and timeframe for completion
 <https://www.wsc.nsw.gov.au/Council/Projects-and-Capital-Works>
 - ✓ Continued to share information through many channels to reach a broad audience including media releases, posts on digital (social) media, through the new Place Liaison role, eNewsletter, in person at Village Visits and Local Matters events and other in-person information forums like Careers Day
 - ✓ Continued to grow media coverage and the number of positive news stories.
 - ✓ Commenced podcasting to highlight key activities, projects and provide Council updates to a wider audience
- Highland FM have advised
"According to Google Analytics, 486,347 people have engaged with one or more podcasts on the Check in with Council podcast page on the Highland FM website, spanning 52 episodes since September 2023".
- ✓ Trained key members of staff in Community Engagement to build in-house capacity and skills around not only how Council communicates but how Council facilitates meaningful dialogue between different people with sometimes competing needs and points of view

Future Focus Areas:

- ✓ Growing Council's audiences through targeted campaigns and information
- ✓ Developing a Place Portal to provide people with localised information specific to their village or town

Strategy 1.2.2 Enhance opportunities for people to ‘have their say’ through more genuine, inclusive and accessible community engagement.

Council’s role: Leader

Partners: State Government

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Adopted a Community Engagement Strategy (CES) in April 2023 that defined how, when and who the Council engages with and why. It also includes information about how the community is engaged on planning and development matters
- ✓ Increased face to face engagement, in an environment where local government relies heavily on the use of digital media to communicate. This enabled personable and in-depth discussions and helps to remove barriers for those people who are unfamiliar or hesitant to engage online
- ✓ Introduced initiatives including Village Visits, Listening Tours and Local Matters Forums; all of which were designed for the Administrator and senior staff to hear first-hand from the community
- ✓ Changed the format for Council Meetings to introduce Community Question Time and ensuring briefings to Council were open to the public
- ✓ Created a new Place Liaison role to act as a conduit between local community groups and Council. Over the past two years, the Place Liaison Officer has built positive relationships within the community and provided support to initiate and progress local projects
- ✓ Introduced a place-based approach to planning and service delivery, with a focus on providing Village residents with easy access to support and information
- ✓ Revamped the online community engagement platform, transitioning the former ‘Your Say Wingecarribee’ pages to a new and improved platform called ‘Participate Wingecarribee.’ The new consultation platform allows people to provide input towards projects and plans by completing online surveys, providing feedback and making formal submissions
- ✓ Delivered a successful community engagement program to inform the new Robertson Place Plan as an example of an inclusive and successful community engagement program which was also the recipient of the 2023 NSW Planning Institute of Australia, NSW Awards for Planning Excellence, Stakeholder Engagement Award

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Reviewing the Community Engagement Strategy by December 2024
- ✓ Continuing to build in-house community engagement skills to support better practice

Strategy 1.2.3 Improve community participation in decision-making by reducing barriers for older, younger and disadvantaged people.

Council's role: Leader

Partners: State Government, Community, Education providers

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Utilising the Place Liaison Officer role to connect residents with Council and help them to take action on behalf of their community. This increased access for members of the community, some of whom are less mobile, to liaise with the Council on local issues. Utilising digital technology to reach families and the median age of the Shire, who use social media as their engagement tool of choice
- ✓ Increasing in subscribers to Council's eNews over the past 18 months, however with close to 50% of the audience aged, 65 and above, more social media campaigns have been delivered to drive subscriptions from younger people

	Dec 2021*	Jun 2024
Facebook Followers	7,025	10,700

*Meta Statistics only available from late 2021

	Apr 2023*	Jun 2024
Instagram Followers	0	711

*Wingecarribee Shire Council Instagram Page established in April 2023

- ✓ Hosting the 2024 Wingecarribee Youth Forum, bringing together young minds from across the region to shape our community's future. The Wingecarribee Youth Forum was a unique event that provided secondary students with a platform to express their ideas and experiences, contributing to the development of the next Youth Action Plan
- ✓ Conducting targeted campaigns for key demographics from recycling campaigns and educational workshops for senior, to Careers events for young people
- ✓ Providing live streamed and recorded Council, Traffic and Local Planning Panel meetings to enable easy access from anywhere at any time
- ✓ Engaging with Wingecarribee's Aboriginal Elders, community groups and residents to develop the design by sharing stories that will be integrated into the design of the new David Woods Play Space in East Bowral

Future Focus Areas:

- ✓ Continuing community led planning activities such as project co-design
- ✓ Working with the local arts community to design creative and inclusive community engagement activities

Goal 1.3 A leading community

Strategy 1.3.1 Build community capacity through networking, mentoring and skills development.

Council's role: Partner

Partners: Education providers, Non-government Organisations, Business and Industry and Community Groups

Status: On Track

Progress

- √ Introduced a new role of Place Liaison Officer which focussed on the needs of village residents and building relationships between council and village residents, and connecting individuals, local community groups and networks
- √ Built relationships with Yerrinbool residents who wanted to create an incorporated community association and work on community-led plans for their village. Council also connected them with the Hill Top Association and Bundanoon Community Association to mentor them through these processes
- √ Connected Yerrinbool residents with the Exeter Playgroup to assist them in establishing their own playgroup
- √ Delivered the Youth Opportunities Grant Program 2023 – 'Fundamental'. Skills developed as part of this project supported young people to participate in their local community through learning how to interact respectfully and inclusively, including with people with disability, and how to negotiate differences in artistic expression and reach compromises on shared projects
- √ Delivered free skills-based workshops for Youth including:
 - Barista Skills workshop in partnership with Moss Vale TAFE
 - Circus skills workshop
 - Learn to Skate workshops
 - Art based workshops e.g. pottery skills, puppeteering, book binding, Indigenous art workshops, vocal, theatre, photography and videography workshops
- √ Participated in networks to strengthen local capacity and deliver on projects within the CSP including but not limited to:
 - Southern Highlands Child Youth & Family
 - Southern Highlands Domestic Violence Forum
 - Southern Highlands Suicide Prevention Network
 - Community Services Forum (Interagency)
 - South Western Sydney Dementia Network
 - Wingecarribee Aging Forum
 - Social Recovery Sub-committee
 - Disaster Recovery Response Steering Committee
 - South Western Sydney Primary Health Network
 - Wingecarribee Aboriginal Network

Future Focus Areas

- √ Continuing and expanding village-based projects and place planning (also see Places)
- √ Maintaining the Place Liaison role into the future
- √ Reviewing the Community Strategic Plan and further engaging the community on their vision for the Shire

Strategy 1.3.2 Develop collaborative and creative forums that empower the community to advance agreed objectives and actively participate in decision-making.

Council's role: Partner

Partners: Education providers, Non-government Organisations, Business and Industry and Community Groups

Status: On Track

Progress

- √ Collaborated on community events and place-based initiatives with a strong emphasis on bringing opportunities to the local villages
- √ Participated in the 'Resilient Towns Initiative' collaborative forum. The project involved Council, the communities of Balmoral and Wingello, the University of NSW, NSW Reconstruction Authority, and the Australian Red Cross. The first series of workshops focused on conversations about how residents can make their communities safer, while stage two placed those conversations into action through development of a preparedness plan for the two villages. The community input was invaluable to designing actions unique to the needs of the villages. The result was a localised preparedness plan that supports the community's effort to be more resilient and self-reliant
- √ Established Community Reference Panels in 2022 to support Council in reviewing the vision, objectives and goals of the Community Strategic Plan and their translation to the Delivery Program through an active and ongoing community engagement program. Four panels were established reflecting the themes in the Community Strategic Plan:
 1. Climate Change and Environment
 2. Community
 3. Sport, Recreation and Leisure
 4. Economy
- √ Hosted the first InConversation event in June 2024 as the first step in engaging the community around the new Arts and Culture Plan. This event focussed on themes like sustainability in art, the intersection of art and artificial intelligence, resilience through artistic expression, and support for emerging artists, the event aimed to foster a collaborative environment for future creative initiatives

Future Focus Areas:

- √ Continuing focus on community led planning activities such as co-design processes
- √ Working with the local arts community to design creative and inclusive community engagement opportunities through the new Arts and Culture Plan
- √ Reviewing Community Reference Panels

Leadership



People

WHERE WE WANT TO BE...

Everyone is welcome in the Shire.

We celebrate our differences and are open to new ideas. People feel valued, connected and safe and have plenty of opportunities to get involved in the community.

We are a happy, resilient and healthy community. No matter your age or personal circumstances, you can easily access the services that you need.

We have removed the barriers that stop vulnerable or disadvantaged people from leading full and healthy lives.

We are a creative, educated and vibrant community that values the arts. We celebrate our culture, learning from the past to create a better future.

How we are tracking against Key Performance Indicators

 Increasing
  Decreasing
  Stable

Indicator	Target or trend	Source	Outcome
Satisfaction with local arts and culture	Increasing	WSC Community Survey	
Support for the Aboriginal community	Increasing	WSC Community Survey	
Satisfaction with festivals and events	Increasing	WSC Community Survey	
Provision and operation of libraries	Increasing	WSC Community Survey	
Support for aged persons	Increasing	WSC Community Survey	
Support for youth	Increasing	WSC Community Survey	
Support for people with a disability	Increasing	WSC Community Survey	
Participation in volunteering activities	Increasing	WSC data	
Support for arts and culture	Increasing	WSC Community Survey	
Provision and maintenance of sporting facilities	Increasing	WSC Community Survey	
Support for child and family	Increasing	WSC Community Survey	
Residents feel safe during the day, at night and using public facilities	Increasing	WSC Community Survey	
Life expectancy	Maintain or improve	NSW Health	
Obesity	Stable	NSW Health	
Crime recorded incidents e.g., assaults, robbery	Stable	NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research	
Family and Domestic Violence	Stable	NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research	



Goal 2.1

A happy, healthy, active and resilient community

Strategy 2.1.1 Increase the availability and affordability of local health services

Council's role: Advocate, Partner

Partners: State Government, Non-Government Organisations, Health Care Providers

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Partnered with local clubs and the NSW Government to facilitate the Wingecarribee ClubGRANTS program which provides funding for specific community welfare and social services, community development, health services and other projects aimed at improving the living standards of low income and disadvantaged people within the Shire
- ✓ Secured grants to deliver health and wellbeing programs through Stewart House and the PCYC 'Fit 4 Life' program, as well as funding the purchase of some new Full Rescue Defibrillators for South West Community Transport
- ✓ Continued to participate in the local Community Services forum where advocacy is a key component of discussion
- ✓ Advocated for health needs through the South Western Sydney Local Health District

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Supporting the implementation of priority activities from the South Western Sydney Primary Health Network 'Deep Dive' Report to improve outcomes for seniors.
- ✓ Continuing to partner with local health providers to advocate for local health services and facilities

Strategy 2.1.2 Address social disadvantage through a collaborative, all of government and community approach to improving social outcomes

Council's role: Leader, Provider, Advocate, Partner

Partners: State and Federal Government, Non-Government Organisations, Community Groups

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Partnered with Red Cross to deliver a weekly food share program through the Wingecarribee Aboriginal Cultural Centre
- ✓ Continued to commit to provide social and upskilling opportunities to community through no or low cost activities across Senior, Youth and Arts & Culture opportunities and events
- ✓ Partnered with organisations in a collaborative effort to improve health and social outcomes for disadvantaged people within the Shire and facilitated the application and assessment process for the ClubGRANTS scheme in NSW. Examples of specific community welfare and social services initiatives that have been funded through the scheme include The Salvation Army's Low Cost Food Market, Wingecarribee Food Services Co-op and Dignity Food Relief program
- ✓ Developed the Shire Priorities 2023 document to set out key priorities for the 2023 State Election to assist in positioning Wingecarribee for the future and ensure adequate infrastructure and services are available for the community through Government partnerships and advocacy

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Continuing to partner with ClubGRANTS to deliver community welfare and social services initiatives in the Shire
- ✓ Collaborating with local organisations and community groups through the Community Assistance Scheme in future years to deliver positive social outcomes to the community

Strategy 2.1.3 Promote healthy lifestyle choices

Council's role: Leader, Partner

Partners: State Government, Non-Government Organisations, Health Care Providers

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Delivered the annual Community Assistance Scheme that supports numerous local groups and organisations such as sporting associations, local Men's Sheds, Rotary, community associations and aged care facilities to deliver much needed support to the community, including some of Wingecarribee's most vulnerable people.
- ✓ Adopted the Playspace Strategy in 2020 and progressed a number of projects to upgrade and reopen a number of playgrounds within the Shire to provide a fun and safe place for children to play and encourage active lifestyles for families and children

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Progressing initiatives in the Playspace Renewal Program which includes additional works to be undertaken at various parks and ovals in the Shire over the next 4 years
- ✓ Developing and maintaining relationships with strategic partners to deliver education programs and infrastructure to support healthy lifestyles for community members

Strategy 2.1.4 Provide a range of sport, recreation and leisure services and facilities across the Shire

Council's role: Leader, Provider, Partner, Advocate

Partners: State Government, Non-Government Organisations, Health Care Providers

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Adopted the Community and Recreational Facilities Strategy in 2023 which outlines key facilities that require upgrading or areas that require facilities
- ✓ Developed Masterplans for Lackey Park, Jurd Park and Centennial Park in readiness for grant funding opportunities
- ✓ Completed upgrade works to Bong Bong Common, a historic local site that features an accessible pathway, cycleway, seating, walking tracks and riverside scenery for the community to spend time being active outdoors, enjoying recreational activities
- ✓ Engaged with various sporting groups including AFL NSW to bring more formalised sport back to the Shire. This will support young people and families who are seeking more opportunities to participate in sport

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Completing planned upgrades to various sport, recreation and leisure facilities throughout the Shire in alignment with the Capital Works Program
- ✓ Working with strategic partners to deliver activities that support and promote diversity of inclusion in sport and recreation

Strategy 2.1.5 Keep the community safe through effective partnerships, planning and risk management

Council's role: Leader

Partners: NSW Police, State Government

Status: On Track

Progress

- √ Partnered with SafeWork NSW to deliver a range of educational safety presentations and other related activities in the community to promote the importance of safety in the workplace during 2022, 2023 and 2024. The topics of presentations and activities reflected on the safety initiatives identified by SafeWork NSW as part of National Safe Work Month which happens every October
- √ Commenced a review of the Community Safety Plan to reduce opportunities for crime. This includes:
 - A coordinated approach to local issues
 - Encouraging partnerships in addressing issues
 - Involving all sectors of the community
 - Developing strategies to address crime prevention and early intervention
 - Analysis of local data
 - Providing opportunities for local input and ownership

Future Focus Areas

- √ Implementing the adopted Community Safety Plan actions

Strategy 2.1.6 Plan, deliver and advocate for accessible local services that support the needs of a changing and growing community.

Council's role: Leader, Provider, Partner, Advocate

Partners: State Government, Non-Government Organisations, Community Groups

Status: On Track

Progress

- √ Provided affordable and accessible swimming pools in Bowral and Moss Vale. These facilities ensure inclusivity for all community members, including people with disabilities, older adults, and families with young children. Bowral Pool, in particular, serves as a community hub where individuals of all ages and backgrounds can come together, fostering social connections, promoting inclusivity, and enhancing the overall well-being of the community
- √ Completed upgrades to Mittagong's Cook Street and Moss Vale's Church Road Oval playgrounds in 2023. Wheelchair-accessible ramps and sensory play stations are among the new features, along with safe and modern net swings and slides, see-saws, and nature play
- √ Reopened the Bowral Memorial Hall following extensive renovations to provide a state of the art facility
- √ Delivered accessible community projects in partnership with the Department of Regional NSW through its Stronger Country Community Fund Grants Program in 2022/23. These included \$232,031 towards the installation of modern accessible toilets in the Southern Highlands Botanic Gardens, \$288,120 for the upgrade of the Penrose Tennis Facility including disability access and \$118,475 towards the Harbison Memorial Retirement Village outdoor project. The Stronger Country Community Fund Grants also supported inclusive playspace projects at David Wood playground and Bong Bong Common

Future Focus Areas

- √ Upgrading parks and recreation facilities to be more inclusive and accessible

Strategy 2.1.7 Provide lifelong learning and skills development for people of all ages and abilities

Council's role: Leader, Provider, Partner

Partners: Education providers, State and Federal Government, Non-Government Organisations, Community Groups

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Coordinated activities to achieve skills development and lifelong learning including investing in training and development to support a culture of learning within the organisation; developing Council's work experience, trainee and cadet programs along with the Careers at Council open day to attract young people from the region into local government jobs
- ✓ Implemented Library Programs targeting literacy and lifelong learning, informed and connected citizens, digital inclusion, and education around personal wellbeing
- ✓ Delivered 'FUN 'Da' MENTAL', an arts and vocational skills project for young people including those with disability. This program saw young people with and without disability working together on artistic creations and participating in workshops, learning how to communicate respectfully with each other and accommodating various accessibility requirements
- ✓ Provided learning opportunities during Seniors Festival such as workshops around eco-friendly living, archiving, cybersecurity and scams awareness, dementia, and available community services
- ✓ Partnered with CTC Robertson to deliver digital skills workshops to the community
- ✓ Successfully ran school holiday activities and programs with workshops in cooking, arts, music, skateboarding, robotics, resume writing and interview skills in collaboration with a range of local organisations

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Implementing the Youth Strategy and Action Plan
- ✓ Delivering outreach activities to encourage broader participation in Library programs
- ✓ Continuing to partner with schools and community groups to deliver skills development programs and workshops
- ✓ Delivering learning and skills development opportunities for all ages and abilities
- ✓ Supporting a dementia-friendly support group to make Wingecarribee Shire a more inclusive place

Strategy 2.1.8 Work with education providers to improve access to tertiary education, particularly for young people

Council's role: Partner, Advocate

Partners: Education providers, State and Federal Government

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Partnered with CASH (Careers Advisers Southern Highlands), to build relationships with advisers from local High Schools as well as TAFE, University of Wollongong (UOW) and Education NSW. The purpose of the group is to network and discuss upcoming employment opportunities and possible career paths for students, providing them with access to local tertiary education providers and information about opportunities to study and upskill locally
- ✓ Partnered with the University of Wollongong (UoW) in 2023 as part of their iAccelerate RISE program which supports new and existing regional businesses with practical workshops, online learning and a network of experts to assist regional businesses with knowledge and skills development to grow and scale

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Partnering with tertiary education providers to increase local program offerings
- ✓ Launching "Empower-ED" initiative for Youth Upskilling & Skills Development Workshops

Goal 2.2

An inclusive community where everyone can participate in community life.

Strategy 2.2.1 **Improve community participation by reducing barriers, particularly for older, younger, culturally diverse and disadvantaged people**

Council's role: Leader, Provider, Advocate

Partners: State Government, Non-Government Organisations, Community Groups

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Delivered highly participatory events and forums including Youth Week and the Local Careers Information Evening. Around 80 attendees attended the inaugural careers event, which provided a unique opportunity for local youth and their caregivers to gain valuable insights into various career paths directly from industry experts and local employers
- ✓ Continued to implement the Positive Aging strategy to support the older demographic of the Shire to remain connected to the community as they age, predominantly through initiatives such as the Seniors Festival, Wingecarribee Ageing Forum and seniors-specific Community Circles events
- ✓ Continued to support its local volunteers, partnering with many volunteer programs that are available for people to actively participate in community groups and initiatives around the Shire. Local organisation River Road Creative Academy and village associations developed a series of creative drop-in sessions to help stimulate young minds. This was a community-led initiative aimed to connect young members of the community in a way that inspired them to discover new talents through music and art and find a supportive network of friends within some of the more remote villages within the Shire
- ✓ Collaborated with River Road Creative Academy to facilitate a program to all villages throughout the summer school holidays through their mobile creative arts studio bus. The program improved community participation by reducing barriers particularly for younger, culturally diverse, disadvantaged, and isolated people

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Continuing to implement actions from the Positive Aging Strategy to break down barriers to engagement for Wingecarribee's aging population including programs such as the annual Seniors Festival in March which encourages participation and inclusion through a range of events and workshops
- ✓ Collaborating with organisations such as River Road Creative Academy, Community Circles and Highlands Community Centre to reduce participation barriers for the community

Strategy 2.2.2 Encourage new ideas and nurture understanding through intergenerational and cultural programs and activities

Council's role: Leader, Partner

Partners: Non-Government Organisations, Community Groups, Education providers

Status: On Track

Progress

- √ Developed a place plan for Robertson Village alongside the local community with an intention to address the housing, economic, environmental, social and cultural needs of the Robertson community. Engagement was open to all members of the community and considered the needs of both current and future residents
- √ Encouraging young people to engage in the arts, the Ngununggula Youth Committee is an example of a creative forum designed to develop and host a range of events at Ngununggula (regional gallery). It encourages participation from school students who in turn experience the gallery while also helping to inform future events. The Committee creates opportunities for local teens to mix with their peers from other schools; engaging with the gallery in new ways and learning from one another
- √ Partnered with 'Community Circles' in 2022 to pilot a Wingecarribee based community connector program. Wingecarribee Shire Council was the first council to have backed the Community Circles program and saw the benefit in assisting individuals to find or form groups of like-minded people. The program has enhanced communal bonds and support networks within the local area including cultural community circles and other groups centred around similar interests and values

Future Focus Areas

- √ Delivering an event with the local Nepalese community that supports and celebrates social cohesion
- √ Implementing First Nations programs such as the 'Mob Makers Circle' and women focused 'Yarn Circles' as a way to foster collaboration, connection and new ideas within local indigenous communities.

Strategy 2.2.3 Foster community spirit through volunteering

Council's role: Leader

Partners: Non-Government Organisations, Community Groups

Status: On Track

Progress

- √ Highlighted local Change Makers and their commitment to our community during National Volunteers Week which provided inspiration to the community and promoted volunteering opportunities through both Council and non-Council run services
- √ Partnered with 'Angels in Our Town' since 2022 to bring the community together to celebrate the first responders, emergency volunteers and service personnel in the Shire with an annual family concert and parade in Bowral which has seen great success and community spirit in recent years
- √ Facilitated a number of community volunteering opportunities from bush and river care volunteering, to managing local community facilities through its Section 355 Committees and supporting its animal shelter programs

Future Focus Areas

- √ Supporting and engaging with Section 355 Committee volunteer members within the Shire to ensure positive outcomes for the community and accessible community facilities
- √ Continuing the Bushcare Working Bee program which fosters community spirit for the bushcare volunteers and also has a beneficial impact on the local environment
- √ Partnering with 'Angels in Our Town' for their event in December 2024

Goal 2.3

A creative, diverse and vibrant community

Strategy 2.3.1 Bring people together through local events, festivals and celebrations

Council's role: Leader, Provider, Partner

Partners: Community Groups, Non-Government Organisations, Event Organisers, State Government

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Supported and delivered a range of festivals and events that promoted the Shire, supported local economy and celebrated the creative community and beautiful natural environment including the Midwinter Festival which celebrated the cultural and social voice of the Southern Highlands and Gundungurra region
- ✓ Delivered promotional campaigns including the Winter's Wonderful campaign which promotes '100 ways to enjoy 92 days of Winter in the Southern Highlands'. The campaign is aimed at inspiring visitors to stay longer and enjoy more of Wingecarribee's local retail, accommodation and food and wine culture
- ✓ Delivered Wingecarribee's signature event - Tulip Time - a Festival held every year in Spring to pay homage to the enigmatic tulip. The focus of TulipTime is the spectacular floral display of 75,000 mass planted tulips and food trucks, market stalls and local music
- ✓ Partnered with 'Community Circles Wingecarribee' which fostered over 500 groups and/or connections into existing groups made during the pilot period. The program has implemented a number of community initiatives such as an Italian family long lunch, a Landcare Gardening Circle, a Nepalese Coffee Group, pub choir and Nannas Who Knit with a focus on social justice to break down barriers to connection and bring people together over mutual interests and values
- ✓ Advocated to the Department of Regional NSW to supported a number of local events through its Regional Events Acceleration Fund including Midwinter Festival, Borealis Lights Festival and Robertson Potato Festival in 2023

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Implementing new and exciting community events within the Shire i.e. the upcoming Kaleidoscope Festival which celebrates local arts and culture in the Highlands
- ✓ Partnering with the Highlands Community Centre to deliver monthly community cooking events to bring people together over food and culture

Strategy 2.3.2 Acknowledge and respect, listen to and learn, from our First Nations and Torres Strait communities, culture and cultural heritage, and work together to improve outcomes for First Nations Peoples

Council's role: Leader, Partner, Advocate

Partners: First Nations peoples, State and Federal Government, Non-Government Organisations, Community Groups

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Developed a Reconciliation Action Plan in partnership with First Nations peoples to prioritise and progress reconciliation in the local region to provide tangible and substantive benefits for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, increasing economic equity and supporting First Nations self-determination
- ✓ Facilitated, planned and delivered cultural burns within Council-managed bushland reserves in collaboration with Gundungurra elders, Illawarra Local Aboriginal Land Council and the local Aboriginal community
- ✓ Supported the ground-breaking Indigenous Garden project, undertaken by the Aboriginal Corporation, Koori Kulcha, which promoted a return to using indigenous plants for their health and wellbeing benefits
- ✓ Celebrated NAIDOC Week in July 2023 which holds immense significance in acknowledging and celebrating the contributions and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Celebrating National Reconciliation Week with a series of programs, events and workshops
- ✓ Implementing Council's First Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan priority actions

Strategy 2.3.3 Support and promote our growing creative and cultural sector and community

Council's role: Leader, Partner, Advocate

Partners: State and Federal Government, Creative Industries, Local business, Community Groups

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Supported Ngununggula Regional Art Gallery since its opening in 2021 and provides an annual contribution of \$500,000 per annum to Ngununggula to in turn, provide arts and cultural services to the Shire and support the local creative sector
- ✓ Promoted various exhibitions, artist-led projects, events, workshops, artist talks and educational activities for local schools each year, many of which involve collaborating with the local community and artists
- ✓ Partners with The Southern Highlands Arts Trail to support local artists and foster a deep appreciation for the art sector in the local region. The Arts Trail encourages local makers to open their studio doors to the public to showcase their creative process and connect with local residents and visitors to the Shire through creative workshops and events
- ✓ Participated in gallery events which continues to grow with over 53,000 visitors in the 2022/23 year, including 42,200 local visitors and over 15,000 school students over more than 400 public programs and events

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Supporting the 'Southern Highlands Arts Trail' event in November 2024 to showcase the growing local creative sector
- ✓ Continuing partnership with Ngununggula Regional Art Gallery to deliver arts and cultural services to the Shire
- ✓ Developing the new Arts and Culture Strategy

Strategy 2.3.4 Embed culture and creativity across all aspects of community life through placemaking, performances, public art, and storytelling.

Council's role: Leader, Provider, Partner

Partners: First Nations peoples, Community Groups, Creative Industries

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Delivered the re-opening of the much-loved Bowral Memorial Hall following extensive renovations. This was a collaborative effort between community and government and was largely funded by a Federal Government grant. The 135-year-old heritage building has experienced a complete transformation and is now the only venue of its kind in the Shire, suited to musical concerts, theatrical performances, community events, exhibitions and expo's, weddings and private functions
- ✓ Revitalised the Camellia Beds nestled next to the heritage-listed railway station in Bowral as the community gave extensive feedback that they'd like them preserved.
- ✓ Showcased local artists and creatives work in The Atrium Gallery in the Civic Centre through rotating exhibitions aimed to reach to a wider local audience
- ✓ Examples include:
 - The Creating and Thriving Art Exhibition on display in December 2022 to celebrate the creativity and diversity of local makers and artists with disability
 - The 'Wingecarribee Remembers' exhibition which featured a documentary video, a collection of art and memorabilia paying tribute to the experiences of local Vietnam Veterans and the enduring impact of their service.
- ✓ Completed extensive upgrades to Mittagong's Cook Street and Moss Vale's Church Road Oval playgrounds to provide more inclusive and welcoming play spaces for children

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Implementing the actions within the new Arts and Culture Plan
- ✓ Developing and implementing the newly developed Library Services Plan and expand programming in Libraries
- ✓ Implementing community led Place Action plans throughout the Shire



Places

WHERE WE WANT TO BE...

We feel deeply connected to the places we live, work and play in.

Our towns and villages are vibrant, safe and tranquil, offering a special mix of urban and rural lifestyles.

Our heritage is important to us and that is why our rich history is clearly visible in our public places, art and buildings.

Our towns and villages exist in harmony with our natural environment, and we welcome new places and development that continue this tradition.

It is easy to move around and stay connected to our family and friends. We have plenty of transport options and safe, accessible and linked roads and footpaths. We also have interconnected pathways that encourage us to ride and walk.

It is easy to live here because we have a choice of affordable and accessible housing suitable for all ages - from young people to families and older residents. Our neighbourhoods are close to the facilities and services we need.

How we are tracking against Key Performance Indicators

 Increasing
  Decreasing
  Stable

Indicator	Target or trend	Source	Outcome
Housing stress (mortgage or rental)	Improve	Roy Morgan	
Asset maintenance ratio	>100%	WSC	
Infrastructure backlog ratio	<2	WSC	
Building and infrastructure renewal ratios	>100%	WSC	
Condition of assets e.g., roads	Improve	WSC	
Availability of and access to public transport	Improve	Community Survey	
Revitalisation/beautification of town and village centres and surrounding areas	Improve	Community Survey	
Protecting heritage values and buildings	Improve	Community Survey	
Local traffic management	Improve	Community Survey	
Provision and maintenance of local parks and gardens	Improve	Community Survey	
Provision and maintenance of community facilities	Improve	Community Survey	
Enforcement of development and building regulation	Improve	Community Survey	



Goal 3.1 A physically and digitally connected Shire

Strategy 3.1.1 Provide accessible, efficient and interconnected public transport systems and infrastructure within and out of the Shire

Council's role: Advocate

Partners: State Government, Transport providers

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Developed The Wingecarribee Integrated Transport Strategy in partnership with the Institute for Sensible Transport to guide transportation improvements over the next 20 years in the Wingecarribee region
- ✓ Advocated to the State Government and relevant agencies for public transport outcomes and inclusion within the potential future High Speed Rail Project through submissions made during the Draft Regional Transport Plan

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Implementation of the new Integrated Transport Strategy
- ✓ Ongoing advocacy aimed at improving local infrastructure and connectivity

Strategy 3.1.2 Plan and deliver an interconnected and accessible network of cycleways footpaths and walking trails between towns and villages

Council's role: Leader, Provider, Partner

Partners: State Government, Developers

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Prioritised Pedestrian Access and Footpaths within the new Wingecarribee Integrated Transport Strategy

Since July 2021, Council has delivered 16 new footpath and shared path projects:

✓ Wilson Drive, Balmoral	✓ Church St, Colo Vale	✓ Eridge Park Road Shared Path	✓ Queen St, Mittagong
✓ Ellsmore Road, Bundanoon	✓ Mittagong Road, Bowral	✓ Madeline St, Hill Top	✓ Regent St, Mittagong
✓ Erith Street, Bundanoon	✓ Emily Cct, Bowral	✓ Illawarra Highway, Moss Vale	✓ Penrose Rd, Penrose
✓ Railway Ave, Colo Vale	✓ Ascot St, Bowral	✓ Bessemer St & Lee St, Mittagong	✓ Caalong St, Robertson

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Managing and attracting investment in new and shared footpaths
- ✓ Managing and attracting investment in asset maintenance to support transport improvements
- ✓ Review and implementation of a four-year Capital Works program as part of the development of a new Delivery Program 2025-2029
- ✓ Continue to invest in the provision of new footpaths and shared paths across the Shire, with the 2024/25 to 2027/28 Capital Program featuring an investment of \$2.4M across the four years

Strategy 3.1.3 Investigate and implement opportunities to reduce travel time between the Shire and strategic population centres (e.g., Sydney, Canberra and Wollongong)

Council's role: Advocate

Partners: State and Federal Government

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Developed the Wingecarribee Integrated Transport Strategy with a focus on reducing travel time between the Shire and the Strategic Centres of Sydney
- ✓ Advocated to the State Government for:
 - More frequent and reliable train services that integrated with the local bus service timetable
 - Inclusion of Southern Highlands Innovation Park within the planning for the Southern Inland Fast Rail
 - Provision of northbound on-ramp and southbound off-ramp at Hume Highway interchange at Welby
 - Support for Moss Vale Bypass
- ✓ Continued investment in the safety and resilience of the Illawarra Highway
- ✓ Progressed planning for the Moss Vale Bypass project

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Moss Vale Bypass
- ✓ Ongoing advocacy to improve movement and travel times between strategic centres

Strategy 3.1.4 Work in partnership to ensure a safe and reliable road and infrastructure network

Council's role: Partner

Partners: State and Federal Government

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Partnered with the State and Federal Government to deliver road safety outcomes across the Wingecarribee road network
- ✓ Participated in the Local Traffic Committee (LTC) with Transport for NSW (TfNSW) who supports Council in the traffic management of the local road network
- ✓ Supported the Local Government Road Safety Program – with the financial support of TfNSW, to have a dedicated Road Safety Officer who delivers road safety education and promotion outcomes across the community
- ✓ Awarded grant funding to deliver road safety infrastructure improvements across the local road network including School Zone Crossing Upgrades where pedestrian crossings were installed at five schools; Moss Vale Public School, St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Primary School, Bowral High School, Mittagong Public School and Colo Vale Public School

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Partnering with Transport for NSW in the proactive implementation of road safety upgrades across both the State and Local road network
- ✓ Growing the Local Government Road Safety Program to include additional advocacy and awareness building actions
- ✓ Continuing to seek grant funding opportunities for renewal and upgrade of road network

Strategy 3.1.5 Improve local roads through prioritised and timely upgrade, renewal and maintenance programs

Council's role: Leader

Partners: State and Federal Government

Status: On Track

Progress

Manages a network of 1,200km of roads – comprising 800km sealed, 120km asphalt and 270km unsealed roads. These roads carry a total value of \$940M, which is approximately 1/3 of the value of the entire asset base.

- √ Since July 2021, Council has sought to address this by investing well above annual depreciation with an average renewal investment of \$22M per year.
- √ Major projects delivered across this period include:
 - Station Street Renewal
 - New Station Street Carpark
 - Old South Road Renewal and Upgrade
 - Range Road Renewal and Upgrade
 - Wombeyan Caves Road Upgrade
 - Wilson Drive Colo Vale
 - Berrima Road Moss Vale
 - Taylor Avenue New Berrima
 - Eridge Park Road Renewal and Upgrade
 - Kirkham Street Road Renewal and Upgrade
 - Sallys Corner Road

Future Focus Areas

- √ Implementation of the Four-Year Capital Works Program to ensure adequate investment in road renewal
- √ Continuing to seek grant funding opportunities for renewal and upgrade of road network
- √ Implementation of Technology One Assets and Works Management System to achieve further system maturity

Strategy 3.1.6 Investigate and support initiatives that consider future transport modes and technologies

Council's role: Partner, Advocate

Partners: State and Federal Government, Education providers

Status: On Track

Progress

- √ Partnered with the Institute for Sensible Transport to develop the Wingecarribee Integrated Transport Strategy which provided a roadmap for the next 20 years, guiding how Council invests and improves the transportation network within the Shire

Future Focus Areas

- √ Adoption and implementation of the new Wingecarribee Integrated Transport Strategy
- √ Ongoing advocacy aimed at improving local infrastructure and connectivity

Strategy 3.1.7 Work with service providers to improve digital and telecommunications infrastructure and service delivery

Council's role: Advocate

Partners: Telecommunications service providers

Status: Needs Attention - strategy recommended for review.

Progress

- √ Supported telecommunication service providers in their provision of mobile phone coverage across the Shire through the leasing of Council land and structures for mobile phone transmission towers where required

Future Focus Areas

- √ Review the Community Strategic Plan to confirm Council's role as advocate

Goal 3.2 Unique towns, villages and rural landscapes

Strategy 3.2.1 Maintain and create the green spaces, gardens and rural landscapes between and across towns and villages

Council's role: Leader, Regulator

Partners: State Government

Status: On Track

Progress

Managed a network of over 3,000 hectares of parks and bushland and \$38.2M of open spaces infrastructure.

- √ Invested over \$5M each year on the maintenance and operations of Council's parks and bushland assets which covers a wide range of activities including mowing, gardening, bushcare and tree management
- √ Invested in the provision of new and upgraded parks and reserves with examples including:
 - Bong Bong Common Upgrade
 - Casburn Park Upgrade
 - Local Playspace Renewals and Upgrades
 - Seymour Park Moss Vale
 - Cook St Mittagong
 - Church Rd Oval Moss Vale
 - Ritchie Park Moss Vale
 - Balmoral Reserve Upgrade
 - Jordans Crossing Dog Park
 - Station Street Camelia Gardens
 - Loseby Park Tennis Court and Lighting Renewal
 - Eridge Park Netball Courts Lighting Renewal

Future Focus Areas

- √ Implementing the outcomes of the Community and Recreation Facilities Strategy
- √ Exploring grant funding opportunities for renewal and upgrade of open space assets
- √ Reviewing the Developer Contributions Plan to ensure benefit of contributions to the community is maximised

Strategy 3.2.2 Identify and protect the unique characteristics of towns and villages to retain a sense of place

Council's role: Leader, Regulator

Partners: State Government, Community Groups

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Adopted a Village Place Plan Program 2024-2026 to guide the delivery of community-led strategic plans that address the housing, economic, sustainability, social and cultural needs of selected village centres
- ✓ Developed The Robertson Village Place Plan which was the first Place Plan to be developed using internal resourcing and in partnership with the Robertson community and key stakeholders
- ✓ Prepared Place Profiles have been prepared for each village centre in the Shire to provide an overview of the demographics, culture and economic drivers that are unique to a particular village centre. The Place profiles are designed to inform the community about the range of local facilities available and highlight assets that exist in each village or town
- ✓ Committed to the preparation of Masterplans for the three town centres of Moss Vale, Bowral and Mittagong. The Masterplans aim to provide a clear vision and strategic direction for each town centre that celebrates local character. Bowral was the first Masterplan developed with a focus on Mittagong and Moss Vale in FY2024/25

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Implementation of Place Profiles on Participate Wingecarribee to foster a sense of place and provide information relevant to each unique village
- ✓ Developing Master Plans for the Mittagong and Moss Vale town centres
- ✓ Advocacy to secure funding to implement Town Centre Master Plans

Strategy 3.2.3 Identify, protect and promote places of significant cultural heritage, including First Nations heritage

Council's role: Leader, Regulator

Partners: State Government

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Committed to protecting and celebrating places of significant cultural heritage across the Shire, including First Nations cultural heritage including:
 - Bong Bong Common – significant upgrade of this heritage listed site to ensure continued protection and celebration of its historical significances
 - David Woods Playing Fields Playspace – detailed design takes inspiration from the story of Curangatch and Mirrangan and the creation of the Jenolan Caves, Wingecarribee River and Wollondilly River
 - Completion of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Due Diligence in the scoping and Part 5 assessment when planning and executing all of Council's capital works projects
 - Wingecarribee Community Heritage Study – across the past three years, the Study has investigated 609 individual items and 16 larger areas of potential heritage significance, with the subsequent recommendations then subject to a rigorous community consultation and peer review process

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Continuing to realise opportunities to protect and celebrate places of significant cultural heritage

Goal 3.3 Liveable and sustainable communities

Strategy 3.3.1 Work collaboratively to improve and revitalise town and village centres throughout the Shire

Council's role: Leader, Partner, Provider

Partners: State Government, Business and Industry, Community Groups

Status: On Track

Progress

- √ Targeted improvements completed across the Shire through the Capital Works Program, to revitalise the town and village centres Including:
 - Station Street Upgrade and Car Parking – renewal of the deteriorated road network enabled this route to better remove traffic from Bong Bong St. The new carpark also provided a 100 new parking spots within the town centre of Bowral, creating greater amenity for both local residents and tourists
 - Casburn Park Upgrade – with the support of a Bushfire Recovery grant, Council delivered a significant park and playspace upgrade within the Wingello Village centre
 - Balmoral Reserve Upgrade – creation of 3,870m² of shared green space for Balmoral Village
- √ Funded further village centre revitalisation projects which are on track for delivery within 2024 including:
 - Railway Park Hill Top – with the support of the Hill Top Community Association, and the approval of Transport Asset Holding Entity (TAHE), Council will be delivering a new playspace and supporting park furniture within the green space adjacent to the railway line soon to be reactivated through the Loop Line Upgrade Project
 - Railway Park Colo Vale – Council will be upgrading the existing playspace in the green space adjacent to the railway line, again as part of the Loop Line Upgrade Project. The upgraded play space will provide more active play opportunities through a pump track and other enhancements
 - Yerrinbool Public Toilets – Council completed the design phase of a public amenities for Yerrinbool in 2023/24 and construction is on track for delivery early 2024

Please also refer to 3.2.2 and 3.3.1 for comments re Village Place Plans and Town Centre Masterplans.

Future Focus Areas

- √ Implementing actions from Town Centre Master Plans and Village Place Plans
- √ Exploring grant funding opportunities for implementation of place making projects

Strategy 3.3.2 Create welcoming and accessible community facilities that support opportunities for people to meet and connect with one another

Council's role: Leader, Partner, Provider

Partners: State Government, Business and Industry, Community Groups

Status: On Track

Progress

Managed an extensive buildings portfolio which encompasses a variety of community facilities; including libraries, halls and function spaces.

- √ Progressed and/or completed several major initiatives to achieve improved community outcomes including:
 - Implementation of 'Bookable' – an online booking system that enables community to quickly and easily book a Council hall or sports field
 - Adoption of a revised Section 355 Management Committee Procedures Manual – which brings clarity to the roles, responsibilities and processes associated with the management committees, which will in turn generate community outcomes
 - Bowral Memorial Hall Refurbishment and Upgrade – Community groups can now enjoy a greatly enhanced rehearsal and performance space. The works were designed to broaden the venue's use and appeal for touring ensemble and music festivals, inviting a wide range of cultural experiences to the Shire
 - Mittagong Memorial Hall and Playhouse – The design and Development Application (DA), at a cost of almost \$600k, have been completed for the refurbishment and upgrade of the heritage listed facility. The project will address structural integrity, accessibility, fire safety, and asbestos removal well as incorporate modern audio-visual technology to create a unique cultural experience and foster artistic expression, community engagement, and economic growth

Future Focus Areas

- √ Pursue grant funding opportunities for delivery of the Mittagong Memorial Hall and Playhouse Refurbishment Project
- √ Implementing the strategies in the Community and Recreation Facilities Strategy

Strategy 3.3.3 Provide effective, safe and well-maintained local infrastructure and assets that service the needs of current and future generations

Council's role: Leader, Partner, Provider

Partners: State Government, Developers

Status: On Track

Progress

Managed an asset register of six (6) asset classes, consisting of over 157,000 assets with a combined cost of approximately \$2.5 billion.

- √ Adopted an Asset Management Framework to ensure the long-term sustainability of the infrastructure network
- √ Adopted a new suite of documents for the Asset Management Framework including:
 - Asset Management Policy - defining Council's overall asset management objectives
 - Asset Management Strategy (AMS) - provides an overall analysis of provision and sustainability of the asset base
 - Asset Management Plans - explores the high-level summary contained in the AMS with detailed analysis of inventory, risk, levels of service and sustainability undertaken
- √ Invested heavily in Network Planning and Project Delivery to deliver some excellent outcomes including:

Network Planning

- Community and Recreation Facilities Strategy
- Integrated Transport Strategy
- Robertson Place Plan
- Road and Footpath Network Condition Audit
- Bridge Network Condition Inspection
- Moss Vale Sewer Reticulation Masterplan
- Bowral Sewer Reticulation Masterplan

Project Delivery

- Bowral Memorial Hall Upgrade
- Bundanoon Soldiers Memorial Hall Roof Renewal
- Road Renewals and Upgrades
- Bridge Renewals
- Bowral Sewage Treatment Plant Upgrade
- Moss Vale Sewage Treatment Plant Upgrade
- Future Focus Areas
- Providing a commitment to annual updates of Asset Management Plans
- Revision of Water and Sewer Fund Models
- Revision of Developer Contribution Plans

Strategy 3.3.4 Enhance the liveability and sustainability of local neighbourhoods through well considered place and precinct planning

Council's role: Leader

Partners: State Government, Community Groups

Status: On Track

Please refer to comments under 3.2.2 and 3.3.1 re Village Place Plans and Town Centre Masterplans.

Goal 3.4

Housing that meets the needs of current and future generations

Strategy 3.4.1 Provide a mixture of housing types that allow residents to meet their housing needs at different stages of their lives

Council's role: Leader, Advocate, Regulator

Partners: State and Federal Government, Housing providers

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Developed The Wingecarribee Local Housing Strategy which provides a long-term planning framework to meet the housing needs of the community. The Strategy identified six (6) new residential living areas across the Shire – two of which are currently subject to active planning/development activities
 - **Ashbourne Estate, Moss Vale:** described as Chelsea Gardens Coomungie and Surrounds in the Local Housing Strategy, this new living area will provide over 1,000 residential lots with supporting parks, reserves and transport upgrades. Stage 1 of the development, delivering over 170 lots, is complete and subsequent stages are now in progress
 - **Bowral South New Living Area:** Council is preparing a Masterplan and Servicing Strategy for the future residential area with the financial support of the NSW Government. The Master Plan will form the basis of site-specific Development Control Plan (DCP), to ensure that new development is in keeping with community's expectations and respects local character. The Servicing Strategy will identify the necessary infrastructure upgrades as the area develops and a funding mechanism to coordinate the delivery of all infrastructure equitably

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Continuing commitment and implementation of the Wingecarribee Local Housing Strategy

Strategy 3.4.2 Support incentives and other initiatives that increase affordable housing options

Council's role: Leader, Advocate, Regulator

Partners: State and Federal Government

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Received endorsement from the NSW Government on the Wingecarribee Local Housing Strategy in August 2024 aimed to guide decisions made by Council, the private sector and the community to deliver new living areas and diverse housing options in the region into the future
- ✓ Advocated for funding for critical enabling infrastructure like Moss Vale Bypass and Sewage Treatment Plant Upgrades and innovative planning projects including the Bowral South New Living Area draft Master Plan and extensive strategic work on the Southern Highlands Innovation Park
- ✓ Championed efforts to encourage housing providers to increase social and affordable housing offerings across the Shire. This includes a mapping exercise to identify social housing stock managed by Community Housing Providers (CHP) across Moss Vale, Bowral and Mittagong that is due for substantial renewal and investment
- ✓ Contributed an annual \$20,000 donation to St Vincent De Paul Local Youth Transitional Housing
- ✓ Liaised with local affordable housing providers such as Argyle Housing to see opportunities realised within the Shire

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Facilitating an Affordable Housing Forum with key agencies and stakeholders

Strategy 3.4.3 Work with housing providers to increase social and community housing, accessible housing for younger people, aged care places, seniors living and adaptable forms of housing

Council's role: Leader, Advocate, Partner

Partners: State and Federal Government, Regional Councils

Status: On Track

Progress

Please refer to 3.4.2 and comments re advocacy and donations

Future Focus Areas

Please refer to 3.4.2 and comments re advocacy and donations

Strategy 3.4.4 Work across all levels of government to ensure planned housing growth protects the natural environment and is supported by local services

Council's role: Leader, Advocate, Regulator

Partners: State and Federal Government, Housing and aged care service providers

Status: On Track

Progress

- √ Delivered The Wingecarribee Local Housing Strategy which commits Council to better planning for infrastructure as part of the strategic planning process, prior to land being rezoned, to ensure that infrastructure is planned for, delivered and funded in the most efficient way possible. This means that as our communities continue to grow, so too does the capacity of its infrastructure networks
- √ Adopted a new infrastructure planning and rezoning process for the Bowral South New Living Area including design, technical due diligence investigations and a commercial analysis to inform where a small village centre, open spaces and new homes can be best sited together, to serve the local and growing community

Future Focus Areas

- √ Continuing commitment and implementation of the Wingecarribee Local Housing Strategy
- √ Implementing actions of the Strategic Outcomes Roadmap

Environment

WHERE WE WANT TO BE...

Our natural world is healthy and flourishing.

Our unique native species, biodiversity and natural environment continues to be protected, enriched and enhanced.

The community is educated about, and actively involved in caring for and protecting our native flora, fauna, and eco systems. We also actively manage and support important wildlife areas, corridors and flyways.

Our air, and waterways, and land are clean and uncontaminated, supporting a healthier community and natural environment. We are a low waste community that reduces, reuses and recycles where we can. We also use renewable energies - like solar energy and wind power - that are kinder to the planet.

We are leaders in sustainable living, acting on climate change and building resilience in the face of natural disasters.

How we are tracking against Key Performance Indicators

 Increasing
  Decreasing
  Stable

Indicator	Target or trend	Source	Outcome
Greenhouse gas emissions	Decrease	Wingecarribee Shire Council	
Electricity and gas consumption	Decrease	Wingecarribee Shire Council	
Percentage of domestic waste diverted from landfill	Increase	Wingecarribee Shire Council	
Commercial and household water usage	Improve	Wingecarribee Shire Council	
Commercial and household waste	Improve	Wingecarribee Shire Council	
Illegal dumping (volume)	Decrease	Wingecarribee Shire Council	
Number of conservation efforts to protect threatened species	Increase	Wingecarribee Shire Council	
Bushland actively managed by Council	Increase	Wingecarribee Shire Council	
Bushcare Volunteer Working bee's held	Maintain	Wingecarribee Shire Council	
Biosecurity inspections (weeds and pest species)	Increase	Wingecarribee Shire Council	
Priority Weeds identified	Increase	Wingecarribee Shire Council	
Healthy, natural urban streams and creeks	Improve	Wingecarribee Shire Council	
Litter control and rubbish dumping	Improve	Wingecarribee Shire Council	
Restoration of natural bushland	Improve	Wingecarribee Shire Council	
Encouraging recycling and waste reduction	Improve	Wingecarribee Shire Council	
Number of threatened species	Monitor	NSW Government	



Goal 4.1 A protected, healthy and diverse natural environment

Strategy 4.1.1 Protect and enhance our native species, biodiversity, habitats and natural areas through a coordinated community, and all of government and approach

Council's role: Leader, Partner, Provider, Advocate, Protector

Partners: State and Federal Government, Business and Industry, Community Groups and Volunteers

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Implemented koala monitoring, roadkill mitigation actions, habitat restoration projects and extensive community engagement and education through The Southern Highlands Koala Conservation Project
- ✓ Delivered Koala-specific engagement activities such as guest presentations, podcasts, drone surveys, information kiosks in reserves and parks, Koala Karaoke event at the Empire Cinema and the Wild West Koala Quest in Canyonleigh
- ✓ Facilitated bush care working bees every month to protect habitat of threatened species including multiple Koala habitat restoration projects on privately owned property; koala and platypus monitoring, Eastern Long-necked Turtle tours and education and restoration of the Robertson Rainforest
- ✓ Partnered with The Southern Highlands Platypus Conservation Project to support bi-annual community citizen science surveys and eDNA sampling
- ✓ Prepared The Plans of Management for Mount Gibraltar Heritage Reserve and Natural Areas (Bushland and Watercourse) to guide management actions in Council owned or managed bushland reserves for the next ten years
- ✓ Delivered programs to ensure Vertebrate pests have been monitored and controlled in bushland reserves containing Threatened Ecological Communities (TECs)
- ✓ Partnered with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) to enable aerial monitoring of vertebrate pests including deer, pigs and goats, in Greater Mount Alexandra Reserve
- ✓ Supported volunteer programs for Bushcare volunteers continue to support the Bushland Services team to restore natural areas in bushland reserves
- ✓ Grew Land for Wildlife membership and participation in the bi-annual tree giveaway with support from Southern Highlands Landcare Network Helping Hands Program
- ✓ Successfully implemented three cultural burns in Gibbergunyah Reserve near Mittagong through the Aboriginal Cultural Burning Project. This community-led approach is improving biodiversity and hazard reduction objectives while re-introducing cultural practices in local bushland
- ✓ Conducted the first micro-bat survey in Gibbergunyah Reserve measuring 13 bat species across 10 sites including four threatened species

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Implementing key actions from the NSW Koala Strategy Regional Partnership and Koala Habitat Mapping Project
- ✓ Investigating a model for expanding the bush care program including increasing volunteer numbers and upskilling volunteers to increase capacity
- ✓ Partnering with State agencies and community organisations on various environmental initiatives to support the preservation of natural species and biodiversity in the region

Strategy 4.1.2 Work collaboratively to reduce pollution, manage biosecurity risks, and the impact on our environment

Council's role: Leader, Partner, Provider, Regulator, Protector

Partners: State and Federal Government, Business and Industry, Community Groups and Volunteers

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Commenced substantial upgrades to existing sewage treatment plants, prioritising Bowral and Moss Vale Sewerage treatment Plants (STPs). This will significantly improve the environmental impact on the Wingecarribee River and Whytes Creek
- ✓ Develop a Backyard Burning Mapping application to support landholders through an easy-to-use online tool to help them determine if they are allowed to burn piles of dead or dry vegetation on their properties
- ✓ Progressed an initiative on the importance of managing wood heaters appropriately, using dry wood only to reduce smoke pollution
- ✓ Undertook thousands of inspections on private property, in bushland reserves, along roadsides and other high-risk pathways and at high-risk sites including nurseries and stockpiles to prevent new invasive weeds from becoming established in Wingecarribee Shire
- ✓ Prepared The Local Weed Management Program for public exhibition in 2024

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Delivering biodiversity education and support to the community through school-based programs and local events
- ✓ Undertaking biosecurity weed inspections along high risk pathways and sites
- ✓ Continuing focus on weed control programs in high environmental value bushland reserves

Strategy 4.1.3 Conserve the key natural resources of the Shire and minimise the impact from development

Council's role: Leader, Partner, Provider, Regulator, Protector

Partners: State and Federal Government, Developers

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Progressed substantial upgrades to existing sewage treatment plants as part of the Local Housing Strategy with input from the NSW Government
- ✓ Collaborated with the State government to reduce impacts of stormwater runoff and flooding from new housing estates (Retford Park Stormwater Detention Basin), and through capital works projects to minimise erosion and sedimentation in local waterways (Mittagong Creek, Bowral)
- ✓ Provided comprehensive environmental assessment advice on several State Significant Development applications, including a proposed new coal mine near Medway and a proposed sand quarry near Sutton Forest. There is increasing pressure on the Southern Highlands for natural resources, including water and sand resources. Development must be balanced with the priority of maintaining supply and quality drinking water and protecting high environmental value land. The Southern Highlands is a biodiversity hotspot, with the Shire supporting the largest koala population in southern NSW
- ✓ Undertook a comprehensive stormwater asset audit and maintenance schedule process with support from WaterNSW
- ✓ Monitored drinking water quality using NSW Health guidelines and undertakes Waterwatch testing in several of its urban waterways in addition to the water monitoring program undertaken by WaterNSW
- ✓ Managed and minimised impacts to flora and fauna conservation from recreational users in bushland reserves including recently funding and implementing a program to decommission unauthorised mountain bike tracks in sensitive environments and is working with the community to find alternative sites for this recreation activity

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Implementing conservation actions for the Southern Highlands Shale Woodland (SHSW) including rehabilitation and new plantings
- ✓ Partnering with key agencies to conserve the natural resources of the Shire

Strategy 4.1.4 Sustainably manage natural resources, such as water, for the benefit of all life

Council's role: Leader, Partner, Provider, Regulator, Protector

Partners: State and Federal Government, Business and Industry, Community Groups

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Actively engaged with the community through its sustainable living initiatives Sustainable Us and Earth Flix: Cinema 4 Change program - a free monthly movie and panel discussion. Since the program began, 1,156 bookings have been received to attend these sessions
- ✓ Collaborated with local schools to provide education and practical activities for students including seed collection, propagation, weeding and tree planting in addition to waterbug surveys, and education about koalas
- ✓ Partnered with WaterNSW to share information and look at the potential to gain efficiencies in sharing resourcing opportunities.
- ✓ Provided WaterWise information resources to the community to reduce demands on water supply
- ✓ Responded to reports of burst water mains to minimise water losses as the re. Council has taken up the offer of an initiative from Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) in an Active Leak Detection Program across 719km of water mains network, to reduce hidden losses of this precious resource

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Partnering with state agencies to educate the community about water conservation

Strategy 4.1.5 Work together to reduce bushfire risk and better protect the Shire from natural disasters.

Council's role: Leader, Partner, Advocate

Partners: State Government, Community

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Undertook hazard reduction and three Aboriginal Cultural burns were conducted during this period – at Greylaydes Lane on Mount Gibraltar, Medway Dam Reserve, Medway and Gibbergunyah Reserve (3) near Mittagong
- ✓ Maintained and upgraded fire trails
- ✓ Worked with the NSW RFS to prepare the next generation Bush Fire Risk Management Plan which will be used and referred to in the preparation of reserve fire management plans
- ✓ Supported our community through multiple natural disasters including the 2019-2020 Black Summer Bushfires, flooding and storm events
- ✓ Worked closely with the community to improve resilience following natural disasters
- ✓ Commissioned an Independent Review of the Council's response to the Black Summer Bushfires. The review can be found on Council's website
 https://www.wsc.nsw.gov.au/files/assets/public/v/1/council/candidate-information/bushfire-response-and-recovery-review-2021_redacted.pdf
- ✓ Implemented recommendations from the Review of Council's response to the 2019/20 Black Summer Fires
- ✓ Secured funding to match Council's contribution to create a state of the art Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) at the Council Civic Centre in Moss Vale in May 2024 to support a coordinated response to emergencies across agencies

Natural Disaster Declaration Summary

For Natural Disaster Declarations (NDDs) between 01/09/19 and 04/10/24 - Current as at 03/10/2024

 **30**

NDDs between selected dates

 **14**

LGAs declared between selected dates

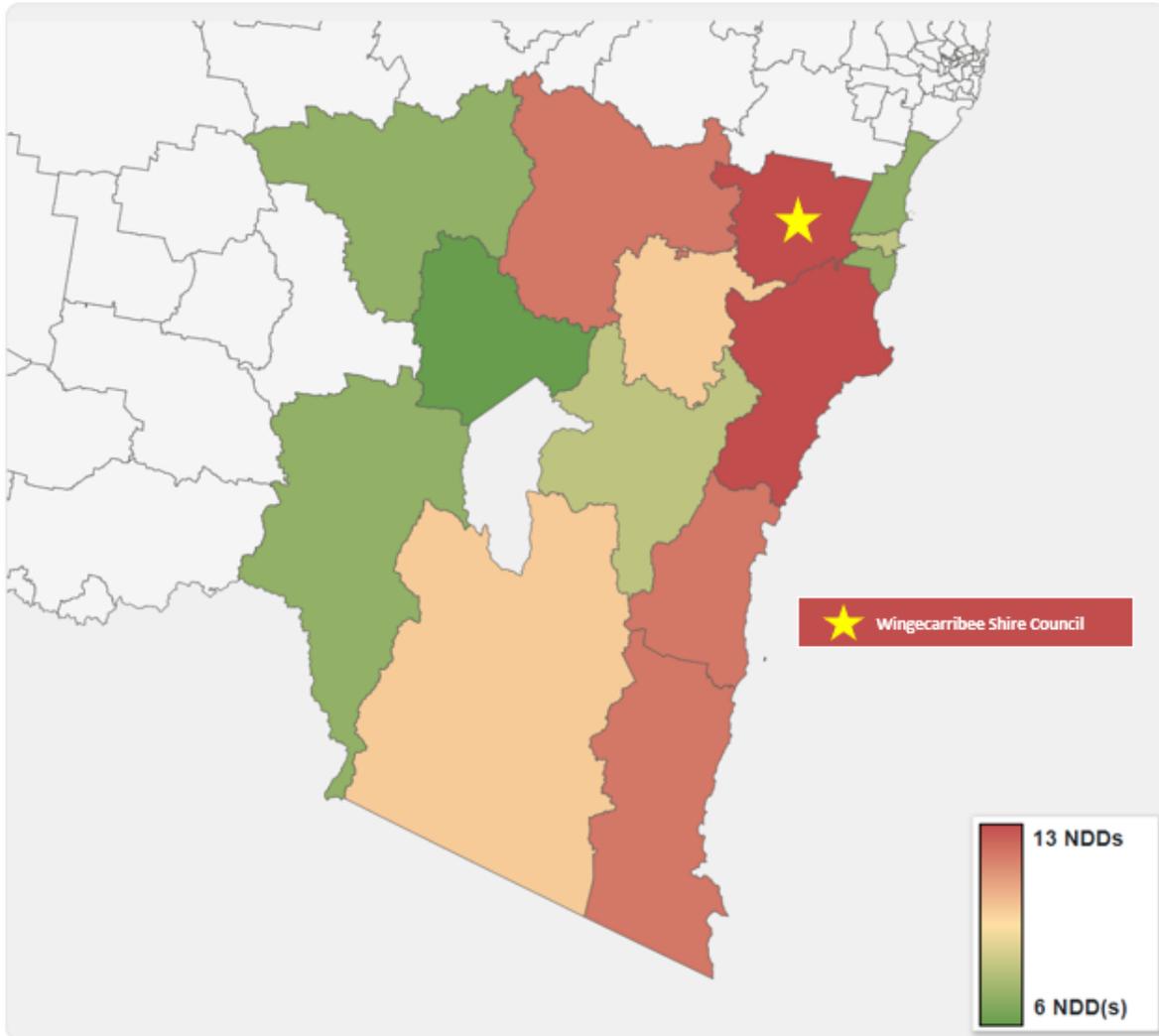


Figure 1: Natural Disaster Declarations by LGA (Source: NSW Reconstruction Authority)

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Implementing priority actions from the Bushfire Risk Management Plan to keep the Shire safe and preserve the natural environment
- ✓ Developing a Regional Drought Resilience Plan in collaboration with other key stakeholders in the local region including Goulburn Mulwaree Council

Goal 4.2

A community that lives sustainably for the betterment of the planet

Strategy 4.2.1 **Develop partnerships and implement community awareness education programs that enable people to live alongside wildlife and environmentally sensitive areas without contributing to degradation of these areas, loss of species or destruction of habitat**

Council's role: Leader, Partner

Partners: State and Federal Government, Non-Government Organisations, Community Groups

Status: On Track

Progress

Council has participated in and led several awareness initiatives including:

- ✓ Three (3) School Environment Day events were successfully held at High Range, providing enriching learning experiences for stage three primary students on sustainability, healthy waterways and biodiversity
- ✓ Incursions at several local schools have provided learning opportunities on the environment, biodiversity and koalas
- ✓ Young REPS at Robertson Public School were supported with excursions to Robertson Rainforest at the Robertson Nature Park and Robertson Cemetery, to undertake seed collection and propagation activities
- ✓ Two (2) podcasts were produced for the Check in with Council weekly podcasts on the Environment and Climate Change Strategy, sustainability plans and actions in addition to bushcare, biosecurity and private land conservation
- ✓ A National Eucalyptus Day was celebrated in March 2024 through a local photo competition, talk and book launch by esteemed researcher, Professor David Lindenmayer, timed to coincide with the screening of The Giants at the Earthflix Cinema 4 Change event at Empire Cinema in Bowral.
- ✓ Biodiversity month has been celebrated each September through engaging installations and displays in the Civic Centre
- ✓ The Southern Highlands Koala Conservation Project has held many community events over this period including information kiosks, spotlighting evenings, workshops, Kitty with Claws podcasts, The Bell podcast at Exeter Public School, and information sessions at workshops
- ✓ The Land for Wildlife biannual tree giveaway, saw nearly 6,000 trees planted and supported by the Southern Highlands Landcare Helping Hands, building capacity in private land and koala conservation

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Partner with Habitat for Wildlife landholders and leverage off this network to increase community awareness and conservation of habitat
- ✓ Implement biodiversity actions from Plans of Management to protect natural habitats

Strategy 4.2.2 Promote building practices and the types of developments that improve resource efficiency

Council's role: Leader, Provider, Regulator

Partners: State and Federal Government, Developers, Building Industry

Status: On Track

Progress

- √ Facilitated three (3) energy efficiency workshops for the community and screened one free film about sustainable building practices (April 2024) as part of the Earth Flix: Cinema 4 Change film series
- √ Participated in and promoted the 'Sustainable House Day' event and the webinar series that followed through April and May 2024
- √ Collaborated with WinZero and hosted the inaugural Southern Highlands Future Forum which focused on the energy industry with energy industry experts that spoke about energy efficiency, renewable energy, electrification of the home and our local and state grid future to 125 people in attendance
- √ Worked with the NSW Water Night Council who runs a tour of the Water Treatment Plant (WTP) each year and when possible, a tour of a Sewage Treatment Plant. Four tours occurred during 2021-2024 period with 67 people registered to attend. In addition, there has been 5 groups through including schools and community groups. Facilities like the WTP are a great resource to help educate our community on the processes, cost and energy use needed to supply clean water to our community
- √ Developed and adopted a Community Emissions Action Plan (CEAP) which includes Council actions to:
 - Advocate and engage with local builders and property developers to maximise energy efficiency of new homes
 - Advocate to State government to increase the Building Sustainability Index (BASIX) and State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) requirements and to introduce voluntary Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) principles
 - Explore a mechanism to prohibit new gas installations

Future Focus Areas

- √ Implementing key priorities of the Community Emissions Action Plan (CEAP)
- √ Advocating with local industry on sustainable building practices that promote energy efficiency and eco-friendly development

Strategy 4.2.3 Encourage residents and businesses to source and produce goods locally

Council's role: Advocate

Partners: State and Federal Government, Business and Industry, Community Groups

Status: On Track

Progress

- √ Partnered with Empire Cinema Bowral to screen an episode of War on Waste from ABC about food waste and fashion in December 2023, with 159 people in attendance. The event's special guest was ABC radio host, environment advocate, comedian and Southern Highlands local Craig Reucassel who motivated and inspired participants to take action reducing their food waste and fashion consumption
- √ Developed and adopted a Community Emissions Action Plan (CEAP) which includes actions to:
 - Revise planning controls to require an active transport focus where people can walk to shops and work as well as investigate feasibility of a car sharing system in the LGA
 - Encourage food and grocery outlets to increase their proportion of locally and sustainably grown produce
 - Encourage rural producers to explore agrivoltaics to increase the productivity of acreage

Future Focus Areas

- √ Continuing the 'Sustainable Us' initiative which includes the Cinema 4 Change program and community workshops
- √ Engaging with the Southern Highlands Local Business Awards in a sponsorship capacity to promote small business and local goods and services
- √ Implementing the Small Business Commissioners recommendations from the Small Business Consultation Report

Goal 4.3 A low-waste community

Strategy 4.3.1 Minimise waste through education, promotion of alternatives and prosecution of illegal dumpers

Council's role: Leader, Provider, Partner, Regulator

Partners: State and Federal Government, Community Groups

Status: On Track

Progress

- √ Continued to educate the community and local businesses through ongoing and regular communications and events

Community based examples include:

- Workshops were held for the community to make their own Christmas gifts using recycled materials. Materials were sourced from the Moss Vale Reviva Centre; a reuse shop which sells quality second hand goods. Children and adults were given the opportunity to make Christmas gifts and bags with the resources available to them. Attendees were encouraged to look around the shop and get creative; with a clear message that all resources have a use.
- Christmas tree campaign was promoted in e-news and social media posts were created to show the alternatives to plastic or freshly cut Christmas trees. The campaign showcased a unique and beautiful Christmas tree made of sticks found in the local reserve. People looking to create their own tree were then asked to return the sticks to the same reserve in which they were found.

Future Focus Areas

- √ Implement actions from the Waste Educational Plan at key community events to encourage waste minimisation

Strategy 4.3.2 Maximise the recovery of resources from the waste stream

Council's role: Leader, Provider, Partner, Regulator

Partners: State and Federal Government

Status: On Track

Progress

- √ Maximised resource recovery from the waste stream through collaborative efforts and strategic initiatives such as:
 - New Disposal Contract: bulky waste is direct delivered to the Resource Recovery Centre (RRC). Mattresses are sorted for recycling; metal is also recycled as scrap and other bulky household items are responsibly processed. Approximately 50% of these items are successfully recovered, mitigating the burden on landfills
 - Upcycle Centre: Transitioning from Reviva, the Upcycle Centre has become a cornerstone in diverting waste from landfills. Through innovative approaches, Council continuously repurposes materials, contributing to a circular economy and minimising environmental impact
 - Expansion of Recycling Streams: Council introduced multiple free recycling streams, both at RRC and through Mobile Community Recycling Centre units. Residents now have access to recycling options for a wide array of items, including X-ray films, mobile phones, e-waste, gas bottles, paint, aerosols, agricultural and veterinary products (DRUM Muster), soft plastics, cardboard and paper, fluorescent globes, tubes, and polystyrene.
 - Continued to collect soft plastics with approximately 3 tonnes collected since April 2024 alone

Future Focus Areas

- √ Continuing focus on resource recovery initiatives through the Resource Recovery Centre (RRC) such as partnering with the NSW Government to trial a new program to collect and recycle embedded batteries
- √ Identifying opportunities to increase the % of waste diverted from landfill
- √ Exploring resale opportunities and processing partners for recovered material to increase profitability and maximise recovery

Strategy 4.3.3 Support circular economy initiatives that minimise both resource production and consumption

Council's role: Advocate, Partner

Partners: State and Federal Government, Business and Industry, Community Groups

Status: On Track

Progress

- √ Collaborated with Revolutionary Apps Pty Ltd to deliver Compost Revolution, a long-term project offering financial assistance through discounted rates on composting products and food waste management solutions, as well as providing educational resources, ongoing on-call support, and webinars. This project has garnered significant support amongst residents and empowered residents to take charge of their organic waste
- √ Offered a range of secondary products for sale through the Resource Recovery Centre (RRC), including soil conditioner and bagged manure sourced from the saleyards and blended with premium soil conditioner. These products provide valuable resources for residents and gardeners seeking sustainable solutions for soil enrichment. The soil conditioner, enriched with organic matter and essential nutrients, is derived from the organic matter dropped off at the RRC and the green bin kerbside collection service

Future Focus Areas

- √ Continuing focus on the Compost Revolution project
- √ Identify and review potential additional waste facility locations within the Shire for both collections and community drop-offs

Goal 4.4 A resilient Shire that takes action on climate change

Strategy 4.4.1 Manage resource consumption, with significant increases in efficiency and adoption of renewable energy

Council's role: Leader

Partners: State and Federal Government, Regional councils

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Implemented a Power Purchasing Agreement (PPA) in 2023 which means all electricity used at Council's large sites and most of its small sites are using renewable energy
- ✓ Progressed the creation a Fleet Transition Plan. This plan will outline the most cost effective and efficient way for Council's fleet to transition to Electric Vehicles (EVs)
- ✓ Applied for grant funding to fund 50% of the cost to install heat pumps at the Moss Vale Aquatic Centre (MVAC) reducing Council's Green House Gas emissions from gas consumption by 80% - the outcome of this application is still pending

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Planning is also underway to implement an internal Net Zero Steering Group to investigate Council's procurement and use of materials and resources with a view to making Council's day to day operations more sustainable
- ✓ Implementing the Net Zero Steering Group
- ✓ Ongoing focus on the implementation of the Community Emissions Action Plan (CEAP) initiatives

Strategy 4.4.2 Build community capacity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and minimise the impacts of climate change

Council's role: Partner, Advocate

Partners: State and Federal Government, Community Groups

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Increased the number of energy efficiency community workshops designed to help people better understand energy bills and reduce energy consumption
- ✓ Provided community events including the successful April 2024 Earth Flix film screening which was followed by a panel discussion on sustainable building practices with local architects, builders and homeowners participating. The discussion raised important facts about climate change, building regulations (including how Council might make improvements to its own policies and planning) as well as ways in which individuals can take their own steps to make homes more resilient
- ✓ Proactively promoted resources including use of the SunSpot tool which helps people plan and size solar power for their homes

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Implementing the recommended interventions within the Community Emissions Action Plan (CEAP) to build community capability to reduce emissions
- ✓ Continuing to promote the 'Sustainable Us' program which includes a number of events, initiatives and programs designed to increase awareness and education throughout the community

Strategy 4.4.3 Plan for predicted impacts of climate change

Council's role: Leader, Partner, Advocate

Partners: State and Federal Government, Regional councils, Business and Industry, Community Groups

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Developed the Sustainable Us page on Councils website which includes information available to the community on how to increase the resilience of resident's gardens. The website also includes important information about how people can grow food or choose to buy produce locally
- ✓ Participated in the development of a drought resilience plan for Goulburn Mulwaree and Wingecarribee regions in partnership with Goulburn Mulwaree Council
- ✓ Partnered with the local indigenous community and the Rural Fire Service to carry out cultural burns and hazard reduction burns in some of the local nature reserves
- ✓ Cooperated with the Canberra Region Joint Organisation (CRJO) to create the blueprint for a resilient southeast region named "The Resilience Blueprint Project" which will embed resilience into decision making regarding natural disaster prevention, response and recovery

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Development of a Regional Drought Resilience Plan in collaboration with other key stakeholders in the local region such as Goulburn Mulwaree Council
- ✓ Partner with the NSW Government and other state agencies on strategic and resilience planning initiatives
- ✓ Increased focus on sustainable development practises and future-fit infrastructure to withstand changing weather and climate conditions within Council's available resources

Strategy 4.4.4 Monitor and report on community and government progress to achieving net zero emissions.

Council's role: Leader, Advocate

Partners: State and Federal Government, Business and Industry, Universities

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Undertook energy efficiency projects
- ✓ Produced and published an annual report on Council's greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) The results of the report are used to assess the pathway to net zero and demonstrate how the projects and actions that are implemented affect Council's net emissions.
- ✓ Decreased emissions by 50% from 2021/2022 Council levels
- ✓ Improved monitoring of wastewater quality has provided more accurate emission data for the fugitive emissions from sewerage treatment plants
- ✓ Commenced a contract with Red Energy to supply 100% renewable electricity to the majority of Council sites. This means that for half of the year Council sites under this supply arrangement created zero emissions from its electricity consumption

Future focus areas

- ✓ Continuing emphasis on Annual Reporting on Council's emissions in the Greenhouse Gas Report
- ✓ Prioritising the emissions reduction actions outlined within the Community Emissions Action Plan (CEAP)

Strategy 4.4.5 Work collaboratively across all levels of government, business and industry to reduce carbon emissions and address climate change

Council's role: Partner, Advocate

Partners: State and Federal Government, Business and Industry, Community Groups, Universities

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Continued to work collaboratively with the CRJO and Sustainability Advantage to reduce emissions through multiple projects
- ✓ Conducted an energy audit on a sample of Council's assets, including the Moss Vale Aquatic Centre (MVAC)
- ✓ Partnered with Sustainable Councils, to progress moving Council's final small sites over onto the Power Purchase agreement (PPA) to ensure 100% of Council electricity is renewable

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Partnering with NSW Government and State Agencies to implement emissions reduction programs and seek funding opportunities
- ✓ Collaborating with local emergency response agencies on resilience projects

Strategy 4.4.6 Support the community to survive, adapt and thrive in the face of extreme weather events and other crises

Council's role: Leader, Partner

Partners: State and Federal Government, Community Organisations, Universities

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Delivered the 'Resilient Towns Initiative' in both Balmoral Village and Wingello in partnership with University of NSW, NSW Reconstruction Authority and the Australian Red Cross

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Continued collaboration with local emergency response organisations to ensure a coordinated response to extreme weather events and other crises and utilisation of the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC)

Strategy 4.4.7 Actively promote energy efficiency measures and the uptake of renewable energy usage throughout the Shire

Council's role: Advocate

Partners: Community Organisations, Education providers

Status: On Track

Progress

- √ Continued to drive the uptake of renewable energies and lead by example.
- √ Community education on renewable energy and energy efficiency through promotion of the SunSpot tool
- √ Developed a Community Emissions Action Plan (currently under development) that identifies strategies and actions the community can undertake to increase energy efficiency in their homes and understand the options available to integrate renewable energy into households through upgrades to heating and cooling equipment, cooking appliances and hot water provision
- √ Developed the Sustainable Us series of videos, available to view on Council's website. These videos contain cover a variety of efficiency and renewable energy themes that promote household uptake
- √ Delivered the Greener Footprint Fair. Held for the first time in 2022, the event showcases sustainable businesses, foods and products
- √ Assisted Moss Vale High School to apply for grants in 2022 to install a solar system at the school
- √ Held Schools Environment Day each year whereby students participate in various activities including water conservation activities, using and creating homemade sustainable products, and understanding the importance of water sharing with the environment
- √ Partnered with Local Land Services at two Rivers of Carbon field workshops for rural landholders
- √ Collaborated with WinZero to identify opportunities to create trial Net Zero Homes, providing assistance for residents to retrofit their homes for energy efficiency
- √ Delivered energy efficiency workshops and information sessions for the community and business owners

Future Focus Areas

- √ Continued work on climate change and renewable energy initiatives and education through the Sustainable Us program which includes workshops, events, videos and awareness programs throughout the Shire

Economy

WHERE WE WANT TO BE...

Our local economy is thriving, and people want to live and work here.

We have built on the unique strengths of the Shire, such as our close proximity to major centres like Sydney and Canberra and our rich agricultural lands.

We are home to leading primary industries that work in harmony with the local environment.

There are local jobs available, allowing people to work within a variety of fields and sectors.

We have plenty of education, training and development opportunities. This helps us to build our local skills and knowledge and create workforces suitable for both current and future employers.

Local business, industry and other organisations have embraced new technologies allowing them to grow and prosper while also supporting the health of the planet.

We have become known for our variety of creative industries and are home to many artists, , writers, performers, filmmakers, designers, musicians and makers.

How we are tracking against Key Performance Indicators

 Increasing
  Decreasing
  Stable

Indicator	Target or trend	Source	Outcome
Gross value of agricultural production	Maintain	ABS	
Gross regional product	Increase	NIEIR	
Level of unemployment	Maintain	NIEIR	
Local Employment / Jobs	Monitor	NIEIR	
Level of education of residents (Year 12 and beyond)	Maintain	ABS	
Percentage residents that travel outside the Shire for work	Decrease	ABS	
Support for tourism	Maintain	Community Survey	
Support for local business and employment	Improve	Community Survey	
Number of tourism related jobs	Increase	NIEIR	
Visitation numbers to the Shire	Increase	TRA	
Spend by service or business category e.g., food services, accommodation	Not applicable - Monitor	NIEIR	



Goal 5.1

People want to visit, work and invest in the Shire

Strategy 5.1.1 Broaden and promote the diversity of business and industry sectors and investment opportunities

Council's role: Promoter, Advocate, Regulator

Partners: State Government, Business and Industry, Regional councils

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Since 2021, Wingecarribee has experienced a net increase of 441 local businesses, with notable growth in Construction (18.4%), Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services (15%), Rental, Hiring, and Real Estate (11.3%), and Agriculture (9.0%) sectors. This rise signifies a broadening of industry diversity and investment prospects
- ✓ Facilitated diversification through ongoing engagement with Business Forums and Chambers, the finalisation of a Visitor Servicing Report, the establishment of an Economy Community Reference Panel, and sustained collaboration with industries beyond the region

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Promote the Southern Highlands Innovation Park (SHIP) to ensure the creation of future employment opportunities in industries such as education, construction, technology and equine and agribusiness
- ✓ Continue to liaise with local business chambers to promote diversity of local businesses
- ✓ Continue to collaborate with state agencies to attract international investment in strategically identified precincts such as the Southern Highlands Innovation Park (SHIP) and key Town Centres

Strategy 5.1.2 Work across all sectors to improve access to local employment for people of all abilities, cultural backgrounds and ages

Council's role: Advocate

Partners: State Government, Business and Industry, Regional councils

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Continued to advertise as an Equal Opportunity Employer that provides an inclusive workplace and embraces diversity of talent
- ✓ The Wingecarribee unemployment rate decreased significantly from 3.4% in June Quarter 2021 to 1.1% in September Quarter 2023, surpassing the regional average of 2.9%. While market dynamics primarily drove this decline, local initiatives like the Wingecarribee Local Jobs Programs and engagement with the Aboriginal Yarn Forum have played a part in enhancing employment opportunities
- ✓ Collaborated with educational institutions to enhance workforce development and promote access and opportunities for people of all ages. Particular focus has been given in recent years to promoting local government jobs at events such as Careers Day; delivered in partnership with TAFE NSW the event aims to inspire young people to pursue careers that contribute to the local community while learning key skills. In addition, Council actively recruits and employs cadets and early career professionals
- ✓ Commenced the development of a Diversity Inclusion Action Plan and disability awareness training will continue to be rolled out both internally to all front line staff as well as externally, to local businesses

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Collaborate with local high schools, TAFE and universities to attract cadets and trainees for succession planning and workforce pipeline
- ✓ Continue to promote disability awareness training for local business owners and employers
- ✓ Implementing the Small Business Commissioners recommendations from the Small business consultation report

Strategy 5.1.4 Promote slow and sustainable tourism that balances economic benefits with impacts on our environment and community

Council's role: Promoter, Advocate

Partners: State Government, Business and Industry, Regional councils

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Continued working with Destination Southern Sydney and Surrounds (DSSS) and Destination NSW to host tourism focused forums and secure grant funding including a triennial grant for Tulip Time
- ✓ Continued to collaborate with groups and organisations such as Grow Southern Highlands, Business Southern Highlands and Robertson Business Chamber to promote events, wine, and produce to a broader audience. This has included trade shows, the Gourmet Village Trail, and media campaigns

Future Focus areas

- ✓ Engaging the Visitor Economic Advisory Panel (VEAP) for expert advice on tourism and events within the Shire
- ✓ Developing and implementing of the Visitor Economy Action Plan that aligns with the goals of the Destination Strategy 2020-2030

Strategy 5.1.5 Develop and promote the Southern Highland's unique brand identity

Council's role: Promoter, Advocate

Partners: State Government, Business and Industry

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Increased visitation to the Southern Highlands Visitor Information Centre post-COVID and bushfires. The Visitor Information Centre also showcases local Southern Highlands produce and handcrafted products within its in-house store to promote brands and products that are unique to the region
- ✓ Increased Destination Southern Highlands website visitation which has surpassed pre-COVID numbers by 12% and Destination Southern Highlands social media channels
- ✓ Released the new edition of the Southern Highlands Escape tourism brochure with distribution to local businesses, operators, and visitors at no cost to ratepayers
- ✓ Delivered the Tulip Time annual event which is inherent to the unique brand identity of the Southern Highlands. The event showcased the vibrancy of the Shire to locals and visitors alike through floral displays and festivities.
- ✓ Worked with Netflix to bring Bridgerton in Bowral which delivered an economic benefit of \$2.4m to the region and promoted Wingecarribee's unique and charming landscape. Council helped to attract the event to the region and worked as conduit between the Bridgerton team and local businesses to ensure the event was a success.

The 2023 Tulip Time Event delivered an economic benefit of \$2.63 million to the local region

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Collaborating with local businesses and corporate partners through the Destination Southern Highlands Industry Hub to highlight local tourism opportunities
- ✓ Promoting local agribusiness products and experiences to the visitor economy to strengthen the Shire's unique local brand identity and offerings to visitors
- ✓ Developing an Implementation Report to compliment the Southern Highlands Destination Strategy 2020-2030

Strategy 5.1.6 Capitalise on our proximity to Sydney, Canberra and the Western Sydney Aerotropolis to attract economic opportunities and investment

Council's role: Promoter, Advocate

Partners: State Government, Business and Industry

Status: On Track

Progress

- √ Progressed the Southern Highlands Innovation Park Master Plan and Governance Strategy. Upon completion, these assets will be utilised to attract economic opportunities and investment, taking advantage of the region's proximity to Sydney, Canberra, and the Western Sydney Aerotropolis, which is due for completion in 2026
- √ Implemented marketing campaigns to increase domestic overnight visitation in the Southern Highlands to a new record of 676,000, being 45% above the average pre-COVID figure for the period 2014 – 2019

Future Focus Areas

- √ Continuing to advocate for State Government infrastructure funding
- √ Leveraging off Sydney Aerotropolis investments to attract appropriate industries to the Southern Highlands Innovation Park (SHIP) due to proximity of neighbouring growth areas

Goal 5.2 Sustainable business and industry work in harmony with local community and environment

Strategy 5.2.1 Promote business and industry development opportunities suited to our distinct region

Council's role: Promoter

Partners: State Government, Business and Industry

Status: On Track

Progress

- √ Continued infrastructure and compliance enhancements for the Southern Regional Livestock Exchange (SRLX) located in Moss Vale, which is one of the top ten cattle saleyards in the state of New South Wales
- √ Progressed the Southern Highlands Innovation Park Master Plan and Governance Strategy. Upon completion, these assets will be utilised to attract economic opportunities and investment

Future Focus Areas

- √ Attracting investment into the Town Centres to enhance the visitor economy and small businesses whilst retaining the unique charm of the Shire
- √ Advocacy for the Southern Highlands Innovation Park (SHIP) which will in turn, grow local industry

Strategy 5.2.2 Encourage and showcase leading edge, clean, green industries

Council's role: Promoter, Partner Advocate

Partners: State and Federal Government, Business and Industry

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Adopted the Environment and Climate Change Strategy which built on the previous Environment Strategy 2012-2017 and the ongoing work of Council and the community to protect, restore, and enhance the local environment and adapt to the challenges of a changing climate
- ✓ Progressed the transition of Council fleet to electric vehicles
- ✓ Adopted the Resource & Waste Management Strategy 2023-2032 which positions Wingecarribee Shire Council as a leader in local government waste management

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Implementation of high priority Council-led actions from the Community Emissions Action Plan (CEAP) that have a focus on green energy and renewables
- ✓ Developing Town Centre Masterplans to incorporate EV charging stations and wayfinding signage to better manage congestion and parking

Strategy 5.2.3 Encourage research and innovation that enhances the local and regional economy

Council's role: Promoter, Partner, Advocate

Partners: State and Federal Government, Business and Industry

Status: Needs Attention

Progress

- ✓ Commissioned two studies concurrently in 2022 – an Agribusiness & Equine Industry and Facilities Study; and the Southern Highlands Produce Hub Feasibility Study – which facilitated collaboration on key common elements
- ✓ Partnered with the University of Wollongong (UoW) in 2023 as part of their iAccelerate RISE program which supports new and existing regional businesses with practical workshops, online learning and a network of experts to assist regional businesses with knowledge and skills development to grow and scale

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Advocate for the Southern Highlands Innovation Park (SHIP) which will encourage innovation and industry to the region
- ✓ Implementing the Small Business Commissioners recommendations from the Small business consultation report

Strategy 5.2.4 Promote and enhance our creative industries

Council's role: Promoter, Partner, Advocate

Partners: State and Federal Government, Regional Councils, Creative Industries

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Promoted and enhanced creative industries through ongoing support to the Ngununggula Regional Art Gallery as well as through annual promotion of the Southern Highlands Art Trail. The Arts Trail is well known for offering visitors the opportunity to step into the studios and workspaces of local artists and artisans skilled in a range of crafts from printmaking to pottery, painting to textiles and watercolour to woodwork
- ✓ Implemented marketing campaigns to increase domestic overnight visitation in the Southern Highlands to a record levels. (Also see Strategy 5.1.6)
- ✓ Partnered with State and Federal Government to renovate the Bowral Memorial Hall. The complete re-design of Bowral Memorial Hall, along with its heritage value made this a very involved and complicated build but with outstanding outcomes for the local arts and cultural scene

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Continue ongoing support of creative arts programs within the Shire including Ngununggula Regional Art Gallery and the Southern Highlands Art Trail which gives local creatives a forum to showcase their businesses
- ✓ Implementation of actions from the Wingecarribee Regional Economic Development Strategy

Goal 5.3 A thriving and diverse agricultural industry

Strategy 5.3.1 Develop and implement initiatives which allow rural industries to innovate, adapt and prosper

Council's role: Promoter, Partner, Advocate

Partners: State and Federal Government, Agricultural Industries

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Progressed the Southern Highlands Innovation Park (SHIP) as a regionally significant employment precinct comprising some 1,053 hectares of industrial zoned land between Moss Vale and Berrima. This precinct provides a unique opportunity to attract sustainable and innovative industries and become a major employer and economic driver for the Shire and the broader region
- ✓ Engaged consultants - Architectus, Astrolabe and SGS Economics and Planning - to prepare a Master Plan and Governance Strategy for the SHIP to guide land uses and built form within the precinct, and to plan for new employment opportunities with a focus on innovation

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Promote the Southern Highlands Innovation Park (SHIP) to ensure the creation of future employment opportunities in rural industries

Strategy 5.3.2 Manage development to ensure it does not impact on viable primary production and food security

Council's role: Leader, Regulator

Partners: State Government, Agricultural Industries

Status: On Track

Progress

- √ Amended the Local Housing Strategy in 2021. The Strategy, 'Housing our Community', provides a long-term planning framework to meet the housing needs of the local community. The Strategy guides the decisions that Council, the private sector and the community will make to deliver new living areas and a greater diversity of housing types to accommodate a growing population and changing demographics in balance with primary production and food security
- √ In August 2024, the NSW Government Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure formally endorsed the Wingecarribee Local Housing Strategy 2021 which recognises the collaborative effort in fostering sustainable growth and development in the region by key stakeholders. The Strategy takes into account the State and regional planning framework, as well as the communities needs and expectations to provide a long-term plan for housing in the Wingecarribee and minimise impact on primary production land

Future Focus Areas

- √ Preparation of a comprehensive Development Control Plan to guide development across the Shire
- √ Continued collaboration with key State Agencies on development planning proposals

Strategy 5.3.3 Promote rural tourism and opportunities that showcase local produce and agricultural industries

Council's role: Partner, Promoter

Partners: State Government, Business and Industry, Regional councils

Status: On Track

Progress

- √ Conducted two studies by Destination Sydney Surrounds South (DSSS) in consultation with Council and the Southern Highlands Key Stakeholder Group for the Agribusiness Equine Facilities Summary Plan for the Future and the Agribusiness Equine Industries Summary Plan for the Future. These reports, serve as informing studies for strategies aimed at growing the agribusiness sector
- √ Secured funding for the Southern Highlands Produce Hub Feasibility Study, which explored the potential for a centralised marketplace for local agricultural products. While the hub was deemed unfeasible, the study revealed an emerging opportunity to establish a Southern Highlands Produce brand
- √ Progressed amendments to the Local Environmental Plan (LEP) to reduce regulatory requirements for hosting events on Council land and to enable agri-tourism, helping diversify income streams for the agricultural sector. Hosted the Agri-Tourism Summit alongside the Agrishow Field Day in Moss Vale, supporting the growth of this vital industry.

Future Focus Areas

- √ Investigate development of a local produce brand to promote Southern highlands producers
- √ Continue implementation of findings from the Destination Southern Highlands Servicing Review

Strategy 5.4.1 Implement programs that support and strengthen business development

Council's role: Partner, Promoter

Partners: State Government, Business and Industry, Regional councils

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Partnered with the local community, university, and State and Federal governments to deliver programs that support and strengthen businesses. Key initiatives include collaborating on the University of Wollongong's RiSE program, which provides practical workshops to assist new and existing regional businesses
- ✓ Implemented actions from the Small Business Consultation, such as improving the procurement process and feedback mechanisms to better support local businesses, increasing transparency around tender opportunities, and working with community groups and businesses to advocate for State and Federal funding in our Shire
- ✓ Strengthened the business environment by collaborating with community groups and State and Federal partners to mitigate the growing risk of natural disasters through community programs and infrastructure upgrades
- ✓ Commenced preparations to promote and secure funding for the development of the Southern Highlands Innovation Park. This project is key to attracting and supporting innovative businesses and helping them scale while retaining their presence in the region.

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Revitalising the Economic Development Strategy
- ✓ Continued work progressing the Southern Highlands Innovation Park (SHIP)

Strategy 5.4.2 Promote mentoring and development opportunities to build a connected business community

Council's role: Promoter, Partner, Advocate

Partners: State Government, Business and Industry, Regional councils

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Consulted with local Business Chambers to gather input for decision-making on projects like Christmas 2022
- ✓ Presented business support information at events hosted by Chambers such as Robertson Chamber and Business Southern Highlands
- ✓ Attended networking events to inform business owners about available support and resources
- ✓ Collaborated with State and Federal Governments and regional councils to coordinate input into regional economic development strategies
- ✓ Participated in Business Chamber meetings to contribute to relationship-building and collaboration with industry stakeholders
- ✓ Engaged in targeted consultation with Business Chambers on key projects to ensure industry perspectives were considered in strategic plans like the Bowral Town Centre Master Plan and Robertson Place Plan
- ✓ Delivered smaller events and localised activities including Small Business Month activities

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Implementing the Small Business Commissioners recommendations from the Small Business Consultation report
- ✓ Liaising with local business chambers to promote a connected local business community and opportunities for collaboration

Strategy 5.4.3 Develop partnerships within and outside of the Shire to strengthen the economy

Council's role: Leader, Partner, Advocate

Partners: State Government, Business and Industry, Regional councils

Status: On Track

Progress

- ✓ Continued to develop and strengthen partnerships within and outside the Shire
- ✓ Maintained membership of the Canberra Region Joint Organisation (CRJO), along with other regional Councils. The CRJO is a government body that provides regional leadership to connect communities within the Southeast region, collaborating with all levels of government, industry and community to provide a vibrant regional vision and deliver important, key outcomes
- ✓ Implemented local community reference panels and a visitor economy advisory panel. These panels facilitate active community involvement in high level strategic policy development and facilitates discussion and the exchange of ideas between Council and the community

Future Focus Areas

- ✓ Advocacy for the Southern Highlands Innovation Park (SHIP) which will encourage innovation and industry to the region
- ✓ Continuing participation in Canberra Region Joint Organisation (CRJO) initiatives to strength regional partnerships and the local economy

Disclaimer

This State of our Shire Report has been prepared in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the data; however, Council makes no representation or warranties that the information is without error.



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