

Extraordinary Meeting of Council - 26 June 2024 Attachments

9.1 DRAFT OPERATIONAL PLAN AND BUDGET 2024/25 AND RESOURCING

STRATEGY 2024-2034 FOR ADOPTION.....2

9.1.1 Under Separate Cover - Public Submissions And Responses Table 2024 -

2025 For Adoption.....2



Public Submissions and Responses

Regarding the Draft Resourcing Strategy 2024 – 2034, Draft Operational Plan and Budget 2024/25



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#No	Name	Submission	Staff Response
01	I. Scandrett Moss Vale	<p>Deletion of Unfunded Works - Outdoor Fitness Centres A resolution of Council last term was to build some 10 Outdoor Fitness Centres aka Healthy Aging Equip. (as detailed by staffer Kathryn Baget-Juleff at Draft Budget session 27/3/24.)</p> <p>Q1: Could you advise when and how it was decided to delete these? I'd appreciate this response on Monday 29th April. One was built at Bowral Pool and another I believe - please advise.</p>	<p>A1: Outdoor Fitness Centres did not feature on previous versions of the Capital Works Program, nor were they included in the unfunded capital works list.</p> <p>The 2024/25 Capital Program has been prepared through allocation of recurrent annual capital funding in accordance with the SRV application and with consideration to the annual depreciation per asset class. Projects have then been primarily identified on a condition assessment basis, with asset renewal projects being prioritised.</p>
02	G. Birdsall Balaclava	<p>Q2.1 Rates: I am not happy that the council is considering increasing rates and charges significantly and oppose these increases.</p> <p>Q2.2 Art Gallery: I think money proposed for the regional art gallery at Retford Park is unjustifiable and elitist and does not provide value for money in drawing people to the area compared to other ways tourists could be attracted to the area. Council has already propped up the gallery for the first 5 years and I cannot see the justification in continuing to fund an art gallery that has exhibitions which are of no interest to the majority of residents.</p>	<p>A2.1 Rates: Thank you for your submission on the proposed increase in rates and charges.</p> <p>Each year Council is committed to striking a balance between the financial and infrastructure sustainability of Council and the well-being of our community members.</p> <p>Council has increased its rates by the rate pegging limit of 4.6% announced by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) recommendation. The rate peg increase of 4.6% is to provide essential services, maintain infrastructure, and support the needs of our residents. The increase of 7% to Water and Sewer charges ensures that intergenerational equity is maintained in funding large scale capital works over the coming financial years to ensure essential services can be maintained. The increase of 7% to domestic waste fees is required to cater for the increased costs of waste processing and disposal, bulky waste collection services and predicted future increases in the costs of a new collection contract and the introduction of Food Organics & Garden Organics (FOGO).</p> <p>A2.2 The submission is noted. The regional art gallery is the centre for visual arts and culture in the Southern Highlands and is a place where the community comes together to participate and experience the arts. Since opening in October 2021, Ngununggula has had:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 124,000+ visitors since opening and 42,200 local visitors in the 2022/23 financial year. • 650 individual pieces of art displayed including 293 original commissions. • 850+ public programs and events offered to the community. • 5,677 direct engagements with school students. • 52,000+ tourists since opening.



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			There are economic benefits of the regional art gallery in attracting tourists to the area. The extension of the agreement provides the incoming Council time to consider the future funding of Ngununggula whilst providing short term certainty to Ngununggula and opportunity to review its funding model and revenue options.
03	A. Duthie Penrose Community Hall Penrose	Current Hire Fees for the New Penrose Hall With the opening of the new Penrose Hall less than two weeks away you would be aware the new Hall will be available for hire from next month. The focus is now on activation of the new hall and as part of that we would ask that the current fees associated with the old hall 'transfer over' to the new Hall for at least a twelve-month period while we continue to work on the activation. Q3: We believe the new hall will be seen as an attractive venue to hire a variety of users in the Southern Highlands and beyond and keeping the fees at the same level would allow us time to encourage these people to Penrose to hire the hall. We appreciate you working with us on this matter which we feel sure will benefit everyone in the long run.	A3: Thank you for providing your feedback regarding the current hire fees for the new Penrose Hall. Council appreciates your input and understand the importance of considering an activation period for the new facility. Council also recognises the considerable effort that has gone into the development and management of the new hall. After thorough consideration and collaboration with the Committee, a new fee class has been established (a Penrose-recommended fee structure) that considers the increased costs associated with servicing a modern building with expanded facilities. Council has engaged in further discussions with the Penrose 355 Committee members to develop an introductory fee structure, along with the introduction of a new charge for weddings and functions. The proposed fees strike a reasonable balance, acknowledging the need to encourage usage of the new hall while ensuring sustainability and equitable access for all users. The proposed changes will be tabled to Council for consideration to be endorsed.
04	J. Freeman Penrose Village Hall Penrose	Current Hire Fees for the New Penrose Hall Q4: As you are aware the new Penrose Hall will be available for hire from next month. As Chairperson, my concern is that the hall will need to be positioned to both maintain existing users and activities and make its new capabilities available to a wider audience. The dilemma for our community (and our main hirer, the PCA), is that wide attendance at subsidised activities like morning teas, helps fulfil our aims to maximise community 'reach' and social connection. This is particularly important for our older (and often less financially able) community members. increased fees will require a shift in focus to cost recovery and our efforts directed towards more fund-raising events.	A4: Thank you for providing your feedback regarding the current hire fees for the new Penrose Hall. Council appreciates your input and understand the importance of considering an activation period for the new facility. Council also recognises the considerable effort that has gone into the development and management of the new hall. After thorough consideration and collaboration with the Committee, a new fee class has been established (a Penrose-recommended fee structure) that considers the increased costs associated with servicing a modern building with expanded facilities. Council has engaged in further discussions with the Penrose 355 Committee members to develop an introductory fee structure, along with the introduction of a new charge for weddings and functions.



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		<p>As a 355 Committee, we are well-aware we need to cover our operating costs (which will likely be higher), but we feel that the right balance should not involve a 'shock' increase of the scale proposed and likely deter both new and existing users. Furthermore, we request that the new fee structure be phased in over a two-year period while will concurrently work to promote the new hall. Our considered judgement is that this will be a much better approach in the long-term.</p> <p>We trust that you will consider our concerns and we look forward to a favourable response to our request.</p>	<p>The proposed fees strike a reasonable balance, acknowledging the need to encourage usage of the new hall while ensuring sustainability and equitable access for all users. The proposed changes will be tabled to Council for consideration to be endorsed.</p>
05	J. Goodwin Bowral	<p>Street kerbing and channelling Bowral Q5: After a meeting with a member of staff at my property, I was encouraged to comment regarding the condition of Clearview Street in Bowral. Owing to the underlying drainage problem on the north side of Clearview Street, patching and fitting was agreed to be a waste of resources and assets needed to be allocated to proper kerbing and channelling. This was agreed by the staff member as the logical course of action. The damage caused by the bus route was commented on. Since the buses started, the street condition has worsened markedly. While there might be no solution to this situation, the street cannot cope with the bus traffic in its present condition and is falling apart dramatically, further giving cause to serious consideration of the street improvement submission.</p> <p>I wish to submit that assets be allocated to improve the condition of Clearview Street, Bowral with kerbing and channelling on the north side.</p>	<p>A5: The 2024/25 to 2027/28 Capital Works Program features, in 2027/28, a \$470k project for pavement rehabilitation of Clearview Street Bowral from Carlisle Street to Isabel Street. Through this project the road pavement and surface will be renewed, and the swale refined, however kerb and gutter will not be installed along the northern edge of the road.</p> <p>In 2023 Infrastructure Management Group (IMG) completed a condition audit of the full 1,200km road network of the Shire, inclusive of identifying and prioritising road renewal works with consideration to condition, traffic and category. The road renewal projects of the 2024/25 to 2027/28 Capital Works Program have been directly identified as result of this audit. Further detail on this audit is provided in Item 9.6 of Ordinary Council Meeting 17 April 2024.</p>
06	D. Jonas Exeter Village Association Exeter	<p>Re WSC Draft Operational Plan and Budget 24/25 On behalf of the Exeter Village Association (EVA) I am writing in response to the WSC draft 2024-2025 Operational Plan and Budget. Q6: EVA is concerned that there is a disproportionately low level of funding allocated to Exeter & Sutton Forest in the above budget. It is also very disappointed that no funds have been allocated in the short and longer term for the provision of off-road footpaths and for improvements</p>	<p>A6: Footpaths and Pedestrian Accessibility: The 2024/25 to 2027/28 Capital Works Program features, in 2024/25, a \$50,000 project for the detailed design for improved access to Exeter Train Station through construction of a raised pedestrian crossing across Exeter Road and a footpath connecting the crossing to the train station. The Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan (PAMP) gives this update a priority of 'Very High'. Upon review of the PAMP objectives, the design scope will be increased to include improved pedestrian access across Ringwood Road also.</p>



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		<p>to the village intersection, despite these being significant safety issues. They are a high priority for Exeter residents who have been lobbying for them consistently for at least 17 years.</p> <p>In 2008, after consultation with residents, Council approved Exeter's Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan (PAMP) which strongly recommended the provision of footpaths along Middle Road, from Exeter Road to Yarwood Road, and a footpath linking Exeter School with the railway line and shops. Also, a recreational footpath linking Ellsmore Road, Yarwood Drive, Middle Road and Buskers Avenue. Minimal action was taken.</p> <p>In 2020 EVA conducted a survey of Exeter residents to ascertain whether lack of footpaths in the village was still an issue, and the response was a resounding yes! Of the 116 respondents 78.5% said that the creation of safe off-road walking paths was extremely important to them and 12.9% reported that it was very important. The results of the survey were provided to Council at its completion and are available as a link here: EVA Walking Survey Responses Summary.pdf</p> <p>Traffic volume has greatly increased since the PAMP was approved due to the rapid growth of Bundanoon and its through traffic along Exeter, Bundanoon, Ellsmore, Werai and Ringwood Roads. This has exacerbated the safety issues at the intersection and with walking around Exeter. During busy periods of SUV & bus traffic at the start & finish of school days the few children who walk to school along School Lane have to walk on the road itself as there is no consistent all-weather footpaths. In this rural village sadly, most children are unable to walk to school and must be driven because the Intersection and Ringwood Road crossings are too dangerous. This does not sit well with Council's statement that 'Wingecarribee has a responsibility to provide safe, convenient and connected pedestrian routes that will encourage people to walk rather than use their cars'. In the last five years EVA members have toured the village with a number of WSC traffic and roads engineers and</p>	<p>Review of the 25/26 to 27/28 New Footpath projects identified that several projects were to be providing a footpath on a road with an existing pathway on the opposite side. Although this still achieves an improved accessibility outcome, it is acknowledged that priority should be given to providing connections where no footpath, on either side of road, is present.</p> <p>The program has therefore been revised and therefore the footpath and accessibility projects relevant to Exeter are now:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2024/26: New Footpath – Exeter Train Station, incl safer crossings of Bundanoon Rd and Ringwood Rd (design) - \$50k - 2025/26: New Footpath - School Lane Exeter (design) - \$50k - 2026/27: New Footpath – Middle Rd Exeter: Bundanoon Rd to Ellsmore Rd (design) - \$50k <p>Given the significant construction costs of these linkages, construction will be subject to grant funding. However, completion of these design phases will enable strong grant submissions to be made.</p> <p>The PAMP does not feature pathways along Ellsmore Road, Yarwood Drive nor Werai Road and therefore these requested links do not form part of the footpath strategy for Exeter.</p> <p>Other Capital Projects 2024/25 Road Asphaltting Jensons Lane is from Invergowrie Lane to Wilsons Lane</p> <p>2027/28 Playspace Renewal Exeter Oval is a \$500,000 project for renewal of the existing playspace. Community consultation will be undertaken as part of the scoping and delivery of the project.</p>



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		<p>re-submitted proposals and plans for footpaths. There has been no follow up or action from Council.</p> <p>We have received updates re the intersection from the Traffic Engineer and understand that draft concept plans for the intersection are currently being discussed with The NSW Department of Roads and Transport but there is still no timeline for when they will go on public exhibition. We note that \$50,000 has been set aside for the design of a footpath from the Village Pump to the station through the station car park. Does this fit with the new draft concept plans for the intersection currently being discussed by NSW Roads and Transport and Council?</p> <p>The draft budget contains only the following funding items for Exeter/Sutton Forest:</p> <p>2024-25 Allocations Gravel re-sheeting 23160020 - School Lane, Exeter \$20,000 Road asphaltting 23060020 - Jensen's Lane, Exeter* \$70,000 Road resealing 2308003 - Middle Rd, Exeter \$190,000 New footpath Exeter Train Station (design)** \$50,000 Pavement rehab 5690040 Mr 569 Exeter Rd, Exeter \$40,000 Water mains Exeter Road water main renewal (SF to Exeter) \$4,967,393</p> <p>2026-27 Allocations Pavement rehab 5690040 - Mr 569 Exeter Rd, Exeter \$40,000 Road asphaltting 23230010 - Invergowrie Lane, Exeter \$90,000 Road resealing 5690020 - Mr 569 Exeter Rd, Sutton Forest \$250,000</p> <p>2027-28 Allocations Exeter Oval *** 00,000 Gravel resheeting 23100040 - Old Argyle Road, Exeter 390,000 Road Asphaltting 23250010 - Parsland Close, Exeter 110,000 Road Resealing 23150070 - Sallys Corner Road, Exeter 60,000 Road Resealing 23190030 - Werai Road, Exeter 40,000</p>	



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		<p>*Asphalting between Wilson’s Lane & Invergowrie Lane only. ** No prior indication or demand for this path in isolation. *** No Budget ID or description of works.</p> <p>Items excluded but of high significance & urgency for the Exeter community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crushed granite footpaths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Short sections of Middle Rd & Exeter Rd to complete already part-built paths. • Other non-concrete footpaths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Off road pedestrian paths in School Lane, Middle Rd & Ellsmore Rd. (Yarwood-Middle Road) ○ And from Rockleigh Road to the General Store Post Office and station, and sections of Exeter Road and Bundanoon Roads. • Main intersection treatment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Redesign of the intersection at the junction of Exeter Rd, Bundanoon Rd, Middle Rd & Badgerys Way so that it is safer for vehicular traffic and pedestrians. ○ • Playspace renewal Exeter Oval <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The current equipment is substandard and does not meet the needs of an increasing number of children and families residing in Exeter. Funding needs to be included in the 2027-28 Exeter Oval Allocation Item. *Previously approved in early 2008 but still not implemented. <p>The Exeter community has a significant number of elderly people, people with temporary or permanent mobility issues and parents with young children and prams who struggle through muddy and uneven roadway verges or are forced to walk on the road itself - a real and present danger to life and limb. EVA believes that Council should act to provide</p>	



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		accessible off road walking paths before a pedestrian fatality occurs Currently Exeter is particularly inaccessible to people who use wheelchairs or mobility scooters and while this is inconsistent with Council's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan it is also unfair that without accessible footpaths, they are unable to fully enjoy the streetscapes of this lovely village. Council's reputation and positive interaction with ratepayers relies on it responding to residents' reasonable requests, particularly where safety and accessibility are issues, and ensuring that limited council funds are distributed equitably throughout Wingecarribee Shire.	
07	L. Bettridge Bundanoon	Rate increases because of Projected Capital Works. Q7: I would like to lodge an objection to the proposed new rate increases because of Projected Capital Works. An increase of 7% is too large an increase considering the high cost of living we are now experiencing, and I am sure I am not the only one in the Shire who is 'feeling the pinch' across all areas of the household budget. It seems to me that it currently needs two incomes to just survive! Please reconsider the time frame for these increases. I understand all the housing development in the area is necessary, but ratepayers shouldn't be asked to heavily increase their rates because of this in the current cost-of-living crisis.	A7: Thank you for your submission on the proposed increase in rates and charges. Each year Council is committed to striking a balance between the financial and infrastructure sustainability of Council and the well-being of our community members. Council has increased its rates by the rate pegging limit of 4.6% announced by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) recommendation. The rate peg increase of 4.6% is to provide essential services, maintain infrastructure, and support the needs of our residents. The increase of 7% to Water and Sewer charges ensures that intergenerational equity is maintained in funding large scale capital works over the coming financial years to ensure essential services can be maintained. The increase of 7% to domestic waste fees is required to cater for the increased costs of waste processing and disposal, bulky waste collection services and predicted future increases in the costs of a new collection contract and the introduction of Food Organics & Garden Organics (FOGO).
08	T. Wadling Braemar	Stormwater drainage issue, Railway Parade Braemar. Q8: We have a stormwater drainage issue on our street at Railway Parade. The existing table does not have capacity for intense rainfall. The street requires kerb and gutter and pits and pipes on the eastern side of the street to provide adequate stormwater capacity.	A8: Council will investigate potential drainage upgrade works for this catchment, inclusive of the railway culvert and street drainage works.



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09	D. Bollen Canyonleigh	Canyonleigh Hall 355 Management Committee Q9: I am the Booking Officer and Treasurer of the Canyonleigh Hall 355 Management Committee. I would like to submit that all Hall event, wedding and function bookings should have an automatic deposit of \$450.00 rather than the hirer select a \$250 if no alcohol is served. I do believe the fees for weddings are also low, and could be raised to \$1,500 - \$2000 for a function, wedding, event only. I would also suggest considering a surcharge for those who wish to book the Council's facilities for a wedding, function or event over a weekend who live outside of a WSC postcode. This could easily be incorporated with a non-WSC postcode on Bookable.	A9: Thank you for your feedback provided during the exhibition of the fees and charges. In response to your feedback, it will be proposed that the fee will be updated for weddings, regardless of alcohol service, will have a refundable deposit of \$450 for all halls that accommodate a wedding. Additionally, the proposal to increase the wedding hire fees to \$1500, and this adjustment will be updated for tabled for recommendation. In relation to the suggestion of a surcharge for hirers from outside of the Wingecarribee area, Council acknowledges this proposal and will require to investigate the legalities of such proposal. The suggestions of the surcharge will not be tabled for consideration as part of the 2024/25 Fees and Charges. Your feedback is appreciated, and we thank you for your contributions.
10	K. Ockenden Bowral	Street kerb and guttering Bowral I am writing to request that funds from the Roads to Recovery Protect be allocated to provide kerb and guttering for the northern side of Clearview Street, Bowral. Since I became a resident of Clearview Street in 2020 numerous heavy rain events have exacerbated an already inadequate stormwater drainage system on the northern side of the street resulting in serious road erosion and perpetually boggy verges. The lack of proper kerb and guttering, unlike the southern side of Clearview Street, has allowed water run-off to pool at the top of the street degrading the road (despite patching and filling) and saturating verges. Local traffic, especially trades, deliveries and school buses, parking on verges have created ugly mud trails (that) individual residents have attempted to prevent by restricting access to off-street parking (a situation not affecting our southern side neighbours). Needless to say, the verges are so wet and uneven they are impassable for pedestrians. Q10: Recent Road upgrades around Bowral. Old South Road and Eridge Park Road for example are highly commendable for large scale traffic flow but surely, it's time for smaller scale resident amenity to be on the agenda. Quick fixes have proved futile, now is the time for viable solutions. Clearview Street is a short street. One side is already kerbed and guttered. The contrast between the two side is shocking. Can we please unify the street aesthetically and solve our drainage problem in the process?	A10: The 2024/25 to 2027/28 Capital Works Program features, in 2027/28, a \$470k project for pavement rehabilitation of Clearview Street Bowral from Carlisle Street to Isabel Street. Through this project the road pavement and surface will be renewed and the swale refined, however kerb and gutter will not be installed along the northern edge of the road. In 2023 Infrastructure Management Group (IMG) completed a condition audit of the full 1,200km road network of the Shire, inclusive of identifying and prioritising road renewal works with consideration to condition, traffic and category. The road renewal projects of the 2024/25 to 2027/28 Capital Works Program have been directly identified as result of this audit. Further detail on this audit is provided in Item 9.6 of Ordinary Council Meeting 17 April 2024.



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11	L. Dewey Bowral	<p>Kerb and guttering Bowral</p> <p>I am writing to request funds from the Roads to Recovery Project be allocated to kerb and guttering for the cul-de-sac end of Clearview Street, and for the northern side of Clearview Street, Bowral.</p> <p>For your information, the southern side of Clearview Street, and the road outside properties 1,2,3,4 & 5 in the cul-de-sac of Clearview Street, Bowral have kerbing and guttering. The properties 6,8,10,12 and the remainder of the northern side; plus, properties 7,9 and the western side of Isabel Street do NOT have kerbing and guttering.</p> <p>The lack of kerbing, guttering and appropriate drainage on the northern side of Clearview Street has resulted in a continual cascade of water from the Gib pouring into Clearview Street every time it rains. This cascade has torn up the road, driveways, nature strips and gardens of almost every house on that side of the road. The lack of guttering means trades people in their big vehicles, the school buses, and anyone parking on the northern side of the street must use the nature strip. It also means that many larger vehicles, including school buses, drive on the nature strip as the road is so narrow and so ill defined. As the nature strip has become a bog due to the lack of adequate drainage, every vehicle that rests a wheel or parks on the nature strip rips up the nature strip and is causing irreparable damage. The damage to driveways and entry to the road is causing damage to private vehicles as new potholes appear at the end of the driveway every time it rains. The verges are unusable by pedestrians, and unsafe for Australia Post as their delivery vehicle gouges its way from one letterbox to another.</p> <p>In the cul-de-sac the problem is even worse. The most recent heavy rain saw the run-off from 10 & 12 Clearview Street so significant that it tore through the driveway of 9 Clearview Street to the extent that the residents in this property could not leave their property without the assistance of neighbours scraping the gravel of their driveway back into the driveway. The run-off from properties on the Gib continued through the 2,4, and 6 Clearview for weeks – in fact the run-off from the Gib</p>	



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12	R. Russell Penrose	<p>General Fund and Employment Fees Q12.1: I am deeply concerned by the discrepancies in the estimations within this presentation of this Operational Plan & Budget for 2024/25. The calculations of \$304K in the General Fund and presenting the water and sewerage funds as balanced is frankly misleading. The notes in the business paper state the cause of the last-minute notation is unforeseen Employment fees. However, these came through in NSW government legislation in 2023.</p> <p>Unfunded Project List Q12.2: The unfunded project list has been heavily reduced without community consultation, with only a note that these were no longer perceived as relevant. I note previous advice in 2021 from the Minutes of the Audit, Risk, and Improvement Advisory Committee meeting THAT any item with budgetary implications and which is unfunded be referred to the Ordinary Council meeting for consideration. This would seem clear, ongoing guidance. I have not seen any list of unfunded projects brought to Council's attention for consideration in the last year, please correct me if I am wrong.</p> <p>The critical issues I perceive with the unfunded list are as follows: Projects in the unfunded list that are no longer present had sound business cases to support their implementation. Many staff members who had championed those projects, were aware of their value to the community, and sometimes considerable cost-savings to Council after implementation, have since left Council. Council's (and therefore ratepayers') considerable investment in their employment is effectively wasted if these are not returned for further consideration by an incoming Council. Otherwise, we are doomed to repeat the inefficient cycle of contracting more reports and not implementing progress for our community.</p>	<p>A12.1: Council notes your deep concerns. The unrestricted working capital figure of \$304K was the figure presented to Council at the Extraordinary Council meeting on 27 March 2024. The information provided in the public presentation on the 30 April 2024 was the same financial position communicated to Council in March 2024. The financial position remains as such until a revised financial position is presented and endorsed by Council. The timing of the changes made to Council's budget were confirmed in April 2024. The revised unrestricted working capital position of \$54K was subsequently endorsed by Council for public exhibition at the Extraordinary Council meeting on 1 May 2024 and communicated to the public on remaining Wingecarribee Shire Listening Tours from 2 May onwards. The \$250K change was a result from advice received from LG NSW in early April 2024 advising of the additional payment that was not previously factored into the draft 2024/25 budget (acknowledging it formed a part of the LG 2023 Award when activated). Taking on board your feedback, community information sessions will not be scheduled until after Council has endorsed the draft budget.</p> <p>A12.2: The unfunded project list was placed on public exhibition for commentary and is updated on an annual basis after Council officers conducted review and updated the list to remove any projects that have been included in the Operating Budget, four-year capital works program or realignment to strategies and plans. This includes removing a number of unfunded infrastructure projects which have now been superseded by the updated Asset Management Strategy.</p>



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		<p>Energy-Efficient Lighting in all Council Buildings Q12.3: For example, one unfunded project put forward for many years by the Sustainability team was a transition to energy-efficient lighting in all Council buildings. This would have been a modest outlay that would have improved efficiency and ongoing costs. It has disappeared from the unfunded list, along with many others put forward by this team.</p> <p>Costs Associated with Funding Unfunded Project List The costs associated with funding the unfunded projects do not even remotely reflect even a rough estimate of their cost.</p> <p>Q12.4: Ref 5 provides an example of this: An estimation of 100K to cover the maintenance on 49 playgrounds in the Wingecarribee is a case in point. If 95% of our playgrounds are not complaint with government standards due to ageing infrastructure or need for replacement soft-fall, and one playground Wollondilly requires \$40K to bring it up to standard, then the budgeting for that item alone needs to be closer to \$2M.</p> <p>Q12.5: Ref 9: There have been business cases put forward to purchase a new truck with associated setup for 450K to support traffic management (currently annually contracted cost 2.4K). Even with the wages associated with this outlay there is still a considerable saving. This additional truck is essential to minimising costs associated with traffic management for pothole crews.</p>	<p>A12.3: Council does have a Revolving Energy Rund (REFund) that is resourced to fund energy efficiency and solarPV installations. Electricity savings from completed projects are paid back into the REFund to replenish the fund to be used on future projects. Current focus for this year has been the upgrade of approximately 1300 streetlights.</p> <p>A12.4: Thank you for your question and for highlighting the critical issue of playground compliance and safety. The figure referenced in the proposed operational plan specifically addresses the routine maintenance of our existing playgrounds. We acknowledge that many of our playgrounds require significant upgrades to meet current government standards, particularly in terms of ageing infrastructure and the replacement of soft-fall surfaces. It's important to note that while the operational budget covers ongoing maintenance, the necessary asset renewal and major upgrades are included in our capital works plans. These plans are designed to address substantial improvements and compliance requirements across our playgrounds, including the significant investment needed for specific projects. We are committed to ensuring that all our playgrounds are safe, compliant, and enjoyable for the community, and we appreciate your input as we work towards these goals.</p> <p>A12.5: Thank you for your question regarding the proposed acquisition of a new truck to support traffic management. The additional plant and staffing requirements are indeed managed at an operational level. We recognise the potential for significant cost savings by reducing our reliance on external traffic control contracting agreements. To this end, Council is actively investigating opportunities to enhance our internal capabilities through targeted training and the creation of employment opportunities. This approach not only aims to achieve cost efficiencies but also to build more robust and self-sufficient teams capable of managing our traffic control needs effectively. We are committed to making strategic investments that will deliver long-term benefits and improve the operational efficiency of our services.</p>



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		<p>Q12.6: Ref 11: A second street sweeper for Wingecarribee Shire is not something that we can afford to let go unfunded. Without adequately dealing with the autumn leaves, this compounds issues and costs associated with our stormwater and drainage systems. It is cost-efficient plant when it comes to prevention of issues relating to stormwater and drainage systems and the associated costs of labour and maintenance if such preventative strategies are not implemented.</p> <p>Q12.7: Ref 13: the amount of material budgeted for unsealed road materials is unrealistic and severely underfunded.</p> <p>Q12.8: Ref 14: How can a Shire the size of Wingecarribee, with bushfire risk, already dysfunctional roads that depend on verge clearing from crumbling altogether, and a need for safety for motorists and wildlife, list this item as unfunded? An accurate estimation on the costs of routine maintenance for vegetation/roadside verge maintenance would support responsible budgeting for this in future budgets. Although this is estimated at \$750K in the unfunded project list, if the actual figure required is at least 300K per time and a safe level of routine maintenance is 3 times/annum, then we need at least 900K to meet our obligations to our ratepayers, residents, and visitors.</p>	<p>A12.6: Thank you for highlighting the importance of our street sweeping services in maintaining effective stormwater and drainage systems. Street sweepers are indeed high-value, high-maintenance assets. Council is currently monitoring the delivery of our street sweeping services through our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, alongside ongoing inspections throughout the Autumn and Winter periods. The data collected from these efforts will inform the development of a comprehensive business case for any additional equipment required. Our goal is to ensure that we make informed, strategic investments that enhance our preventative maintenance capabilities, ultimately reducing long term costs associated with stormwater and drainage system issues. We appreciate your input and assure you that the Council is committed to maintaining and improving our essential services.</p> <p>A12.7: Thank you for your concern regarding the budget for unsealed road materials. Council recognises the challenges associated with maintaining our unsealed roads and is actively exploring opportunities to utilise reclaimed materials as a cost-effective solution. Additionally, we are continually identifying operational savings that can be redirected towards procuring additional materials to ensure our roads remain safe and functional. Our commitment is to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of our resources while maintaining the high standards expected by our community. We appreciate your feedback and are dedicated to finding innovative solutions to address budgetary constraints and infrastructure needs.</p> <p>A12.8: Thank you for highlighting the various aspects of roadside vegetation control. Indeed, Council allocates multiple budgets for different types of roadside vegetation management, including roadside mowing and tree maintenance & spraying. It's important to note that these efforts are supplemented by Transport for NSW (TfNSW), which also manages roadside vegetation on their roads within our jurisdiction.</p> <p>While the current allocation might not fully cover all aspects of maintenance, we are committed to ensuring that our budgets are utilised efficiently and effectively to address the critical needs of our community. We will continue to work closely with TfNSW and other relevant stakeholders to explore opportunities for collaboration and resource optimisation in managing roadside vegetation.</p>



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#No	Name	Submission	Staff Response
		<p>Funding Ngununggula Regional Art Gallery</p> <p>Q12.9: A key concern is if there is such a profound lack of accuracy in so many of the figures presented to our community from such a brief overview, then forensic investigation may well provide a far more alarming picture. And this is a deep shame because there are many quality staff working in Council. But in light of the discrepancies in the figures presented here, it is astonishing and highly questionable that the Administrator and General Manager felt it suitable to bring forward a funding decision for the Ngununggula Regional Art Gallery to continue at \$500K/annum for a further 3 years when we are unable to provide certainty for basic services such as verge clearing and road material to ensure community safety.</p> <p>Council’s greatest challenge at present is the need to build confidence, and trust. A considerable number of people I have spoken with who have had professional dealings with Council have communicated that their experience indicated a management focus on Council’s image in the community, rather than focussing on the quality of the work being undertaken. A brief review of the Operational Plan & Budget confirms that concern. So it is of utmost importance, moving forward, that we have transparency in the figures being provided by management in Administration to enable us to prudently rebuild from such unstable and uncertain footings as are currently being presented, and establish a reputation based on responsible, quality service provision.</p>	<p>Your feedback is invaluable as we strive to enhance the safety and functionality of our road networks while preserving the natural landscape of our Shire. Rest assured, we will take your concerns into consideration as we plan and allocate resources for future maintenance projects.</p> <p>A12.9: The submission is noted. The regional art gallery is the centre for visual arts and culture in the Southern Highlands and is a place where the community comes together to participate and experience the arts. Since opening in October 2021, Ngununggula has had:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 124,000+ visitors since opening and 42,200 local visitors in the 2022/23 financial year. • 650 individual pieces of art displayed including 293 original commissions. • 850+ public programs and events offered to the community. • 5,677 direct engagements with school students. • 52,000+ tourists since opening. <p>There are economic benefits of the regional art gallery in attracting tourists to the area. The extension of the agreement provides the incoming Council time to consider the future funding of Ngununggula whilst providing short term certainty to art and opportunity to review its funding model and revenue options.</p> <p>There has been significant work undertaken over the past 3 years to increase awareness of Council’s budget and transparency. This has included sessions in the Villages as well as Towns about the forward program and providing simplified and greater detail about the Operational Plan and Budget to Level 4. At this level providing details of Expenditure, income and resourcing. In the draft 24/25 works program for the first-time works are itemised as part of a 4 year program. All contributing to greater transparency and building understanding of where funds are directed. This is now supplemented by an online interactive map providing details of projects across the Shire, which will be further refined as part of the commitment to continuous improvement.</p>



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#No	Name	Submission	Staff Response
13	S. Jones Moss Vale	<p>Commend Council communicating challenges & opportunities. I commend Council for the clarify in which it communicates challenges and opportunities that the Shire and Council face, moving forward. In no particular order of importance:</p> <p>Q13.1: I personally may not be in favour of rate revenue increases, especially water and sewerage access charges however I realise, as per the Draft document that a failure to increase charges will mean a reduction of service levels, much needed capital work projects and similar across the Shire.</p> <p>Q13.2: The Draft document indicates that Council secured a grant to build the new Animal Shelter: I understood that there were funds from the sale of Council land in Mittagong (as per the former Council) for this capital work project. Perhaps this aspect of the project could be (better) communicated to the community in the lead up to the completion and opening of the new Shelter.</p> <p>Q13.3: It is pleasing to see Council's Strategic Context (1.2); all the priorities are vital to the Shire's wellbeing given the mismanagement across all areas by the former administration.</p> <p>Q13.4: Likewise, the Overview of the Resourcing Strategy (page 6) plus Goals and Reporting on Progress are all positive statements and reflect the determination of this Council to be sustainable into the future.</p> <p>Q13.5: It is interesting to read of Council strategies and actions in terms of its proposed Digital and Workforce Management strategies. The proposed work experience and trainee, apprenticeship and cadet programs are all positive, aiming to engage the Shire's young people and encourage them to stay in the area where they can gain skills and future employment.</p>	<p>13 – All - The positive feedback, along with constructive feedback is always welcome. Council has enhanced its reporting transparency to ensure the community is able to understand the complexities for Local Government. Council officers will continue to develop our strategic documents to ensure they provide meaningful information and ensure they align to Community Strategic Plan.</p> <p>13.1 - The increase of 7% to Water and Sewer charges ensures that intergenerational equity is maintained in funding large scale capital works over the coming financial years to ensure essential services can be maintained as articulated in your response.</p> <p>13.2 – The new Animal Shelter and SES building are a combined project and are funded by loan funds, grants and contributions (through a bequest).</p> <p>13.3 Council notes your feedback on this matter and will continue to work on the Shire's wellbeing to ensure a sustainable future.</p> <p>13.4 Council notes your feedback on this matter and the increased accountability in reporting progress to the community on key priorities.</p> <p>13.5 Council notes your feedback on this matter and concurs that additional cadets and trainees added the 2024/25 budget to mitigate the risk of an aging workforce.</p>



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		<p>Q13.6: Similarly, Council's plans for workforce Learning and Development and the Building of Leadership Capability are all positive for the future of Council and the community.</p> <p>Q13.7: The focus on Ethical Governance (and the need to improve decision making through open, accountable, and positive leadership) is positive. This is the very foundation of how Council should operate and underpins all Council strategic, financial, and operational plans, decision making and actions It is pleasing to see this at a key point in the Draft document.</p>	<p>13.6 Council notes your feedback on this matter and Council will continue to invest in the development of its staff and leaders to ensure they are adequately equipped to perform their roles in a safe and effective manner and provide opportunities to staff who want to become leaders in their profession or within the community.</p> <p>13.7 Council notes your feedback and concurs that the investment in providing timely information has been a priority of the Council. This enables the community to have oversight of the information that inform Council decisions and the services that are provided.</p>
14	J. Williams Willow Vale	<p>Access charges - Water and Sewerage (I object to your revenue policy) water and sewerage access are more expensive. For example: Patonga - house with 2x kitchens, 4x showers, 3x toilets combined per year \$865.28. Muswellbrook - combined water and sewerage \$700 Willow Vale - 10 - \$1230, 10a - \$2460, 10b - \$2460, 10d - \$2460 (being a) Total - \$8610. Central Coast - most houses have granny flats and/or accommodation in garages etc, no extra cost. Wingecarribee - have a lot of houses with sheds, containers, garages, granny flats etc with no charges.</p> <p>Also, my wife and I paid for approximately 250m of sewer which I know the council owns and I have no problems with that. Two contributions for each block, by the time we pay your fees, lands tax, ATO tax, landlord insurance, commissions, maintenance, I have not much left.</p> <p>Q14: Why do we pay double sewer and water access charges per block when there is only one water connection, one sewer connection and one water metre per block? We feel we are Mum and Dad investors doing what the government wants and supplying accommodation for people when your council are taking most of it. I object to your revenue policy.</p>	<p>A14: Thank you for your submission on the fee structure for our sewerage & water access charges. I confirm that these access charges are levied on a per dwelling basis irrespective of whether the property only has a single connection to our network. These fixed charges cover the cost of maintaining and improving Council's network resulting from the additional demand placed on Council's system by multi-dwelling properties, both large and small. Council's charging structure complies with the Best-Practice Management of Water Supply and Sewerage Guidelines issued by the Department of Water which recommends that access charges be reflective of customer's demands on the system.</p>



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#No	Name	Submission	Staff Response
15	J. Lemann Bowral	<p>Environment Levy</p> <p>Q15.1: I wish to express my great concern about the management of the Environment Levy. It is time to remind staff that the community requested this Levy and agreed to pay this Levy for environmental management of natural areas by qualified bush regenerators for work over and above the council’s core strategic responsibilities. This was especially to ensure the hard labour of volunteers in restoration of the natural areas is maintained in perpetuity.</p> <p>The ultimate goal is to protect and try to enhance the biodiversity of the Shire. However, in the 24 years of the Levy with Council changes of staff it has come to be regarded as a bucket of money for any projects related to the environment. There are now more Endangered native creatures and plants and very little effort for Recovery Plans. Volunteers are doing their best to stem the decline but need the real support for which the Levy was proposed. This support has become more necessary due to increased Occupation, Health and Safety issues being imposed on the volunteers.</p> <p>The Levy was to be spent 80% on the ground and not to be used for planning and strategies. It was to be accounted for separately from the budget items. As it pays \$168,597 administration fee it does not cost WSC to have it. However, it is not a bucket of money for topping up other things.</p> <p><i>“The Environmental levy is and will only be used for environmental works which are additional WSC’s statutory environmental obligations”.</i></p> <p>This statement was again published in June 2011 Wingecarribee Today Page 2.</p> <p>Q15.2: I think it would be helpful to have a site on the council web page that states the history, purpose, and outcomes of the Levy especially as there are so many newcomers to the Shire who do not understand this. It could also include a suggestion to volunteer help with the Reserves.</p>	<p>A15.1: The current Environment Levy program was part of the special rate variation approved by IPART in 2016. Council went to the community with a program that covered the areas of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Biodiversity Conservation 2. Rivers and Streams Projects 3. Sustainable Living Program 4. Community Support 5. Program Coordination. <p>This was the program that was ultimately approved by the IPART and the program is still being delivered in line with this.</p> <p>Biodiversity conservation, rivers and streams, and the bushcare/landcare program still receives the majority of the Environment Levy with an allocation of approximately 70%. Sustainable living elements receive approximately 14% of the Environment Levy.</p> <p>A15.2: Council will consider developing appropriate resources on its webpages to inform our community on the Environment Levy and the programs it supports.</p>



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		<p>Q15.3: I feel the Council took advantage when making the application in 2014 to independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for The Levy to continue in perpetuity by proposing the inclusion of core business items such as Plans of Management and the inclusion of Sustainable Living. Although approved from above, it is a betrayal of the grass roots community's willingness to pay this Levy to nurture the natural environment.</p> <p>I am concerned because: Levy = \$1,613,041 (2024) made up of base: \$30.48 +0 .003452323% of rate (once 0.00006520%) After 24 years, the amount received should have increased to a stage where two qualified bush regeneration teams could be employed, thereby maintaining the work of volunteers and contractors recovering increasing areas from the neglect suffered for so many years.</p> <p>Q15.4: Willingness to pay this Levy shows how much the community values the natural areas and habitat of the Shire and its willingness to conserve and restore this asset, or at least try to stop the steady decline and fragmentation that continues. I fear that the council as a whole does not comprehend the importance of this aspect of its responsibilities in every division and ignores the community's desire to achieve what the weak biodiversity laws do not for this Shire. Our elected representatives and public servants don't seem to be aware of the enormous credibility and votes they would get from actually 'protecting' our biodiversity-firmly.</p> <p>There is a responsibility as part of basic core business to protect what is left of our native bushland, to support the Great Eastern Ranges Initiative and to build a network of connecting biodiversity corridors with safe road crossings. (Item 2 in the SE Regional Plan) Wingecarribee Council has this opportunity and community interest but ignores every opportunity – for example there are no crossings on Old South Road even though it was recently reconstructed.</p>	<p>A15.3: The Environment Levy currently supports a team of 5 field staff in the bushland team, which consists of 2 teams of 2 and a team leader. On top of this the levy supports a position to coordinate Bushcare volunteers program, and provides resources for contractors, materials and plant items for this program. The funding allocation remains in line with the Levy program approved by IPART.</p> <p>Sustainable Living was part of the proposed Environment Levy program was put to the public in 2016 and ultimately approved by IPART. It is important to note that Council's Sustainability Services program in the Operational Plan is 70% funded by Council's general fund, with the Environment Levy funding the remainder.</p> <p>A15.4: Noted – environmental management does cover across a number of Council functions, including regulation and delivery of projects and services. Assessment of environmental impacts from Council projects are undertaken to avoid and minimise the impact on the environment. Unfortunately, the scope for wildlife crossings is not reasonably practicable within the scope of most Council projects.</p>



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		<p>Q15.5: The Green Web has appeared on the budget for years and was supposed to be funded by the \$100,000 donation from Goulburn Council for the pipeline. Where have those funds gone?</p> <p>Q15.6: Land Acquisition for key connecting corridors is UNFUNDED. From time-to-time across bare paddocks and not connecting to anything and without landowner knowledge. Where did these maps come from?</p> <p>Q15.7: The Biodiversity Corridor Map for the Shire needs to be made public, landowners informed, and the corridors must be Zoned in the Local Environment Plan (LEP) to protect any connectivity achieved from developers' clearance and constructions. A great deal could be achieved by enforcing the existing protection zones beside waterways.</p> <p>Q15.8: As a contribution to the South Bowral planning, I will point out that it is essential that the waterways are connected to the river reserve and to the Botanic Gardens and Hammock Hill leading to Mansfield Reserve. That these are in the fundamental constraints, the Local Environment Plan (LEP) and are restored to native habitat as soon as possible.</p> <p>Q15.9: I would also suggest that the Environment and Sustainability consultative meetings are too far between and too short to give our representatives an opportunity to contribute to the proposed expenditure or suggest vital projects to our public servants.</p>	<p>A15.5: Green Web actions has been part of the Environment Levy program for a number of years and is not linked to the Goulburn pipeline project. In most recent years, the Green Web actions has included projects such as repairs and regenerations to key riparian corridors, reserve protection, and health and connection of threatened ecological communities.</p> <p>A15.6: Council refers to primary and secondary corridors within the Biodiversity Strategy (2003) and the regional biodiversity corridors in WLEP2010. The fine-scale plant community type map, koala habitat and corridor maps are planned to be completed by June 2025. Council is unsure which maps you are referring to. Other groups or agencies may have produced these maps to plan for biodiversity projects.</p> <p>A15.7: Environmental protection layers included with the LEP includes the regional biodiversity corridors and waterways. These are public maps. Land use applications in these zones do trigger additional assessment criteria and considerations. Council is updating its fine scale vegetation maps and it is the intention for these maps to be part of the publicly available NSW Government's State Vegetation Type Map (SVTM). Accurate fine scale data will guide any future Koala Plan of Management development and any important vegetation plots that may need to be included in the State's Biodiversity Values Map, which is an important mapping tool for planning and regulation.</p> <p>A15.8: The Bowral South New Living Area Master Plan and Servicing Strategy are still being finalised. One of the aims of the Draft Master Plan for the area is to bring the Wingecarribee River into public ownership, for recreational purposes and to preserve native habitat in the area. The emerging Master Plan also provides an opportunity to connect to the existing walkways in East Bowral to Bong Bong Common, through Bowral South NLA, along the Wingecarribee River. A report is being considered during the June 2024 Council meeting to start negotiations with the relevant landowners in the area, to realise this active transport route.</p> <p>A15.9: The Climate Change and Environment Community Reference Panels operate within the terms of reference for the Community Reference Panels adopted by Council. In addition to the quarterly meetings, several out of session meetings have been held to discuss relevant matters such as the Community Emissions Action Plan (CEAP).</p>



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		<p>Q15.10: I do NOT support ‘Sustainable Living’ being included in the Levy. The Levy was not approved for human benefit but for our Australian native community wellbeing.</p> <p>Q15.11: I see that Walking Track Maintenance is again UNFUNDED. Walking being THE MAJOR ACTIVITY recorded in the survey of the community’s recreation and also a huge tourist attraction. Although this is core business and not a Levy project good people management is fundamental to good biodiversity care. With this project was a proposal to produce a booklet on ‘Short Walks in the Wingecarribee’ for which signage would need to show distance, degree of difficulty and feature, in order to correspond to the booklet. Has this been abandoned?</p> <p>Q15.12: Reporting of the Levy expenditure is obfuscated by not itemising the part payments of salaries and items. ‘Disclosing’ where the funds have gone should be clearly available and understandable to the community paying it. I would also like to see what grants have been applied for and which have been successful.</p> <p>Q15.13: I understand Wingecarribee Shire Council (WSC) activities are held up by a shortage of staff. As this has gone on for some time there must be quite a large amount of unpaid salary accumulated that could be used for well supervised, qualified contractors to maintain and improve restoration sites in the Shire. Weeds do not stop growing and reclaiming the hard-won improvements.</p>	<p>A15.10: Sustainable Living was part of the proposed Environment Levy program was put to the public in 2016 and ultimately approved by IPART. Sustainable living elements receive approximately 14% of the Environment Levy. It is important to note that Council’s Sustainability Services program in the Operational Plan is 70% funded by Council’s general fund.</p> <p>A15.11: Basic maintenance such as tree removal and some minor works are undertaken by the Bushland Field Officers on a reactive basis, and capital projects are identified to respond to renewal of built elements. However there is no dedicated maintenance team for the walking trails – which is the basis for the unfunded project listing. Restoration and signage of the Box Vale Track will be completed in 2024/25, with the focus then shifting to the trails from Lake Alexandra Trailhead in 2026/27 and the Mount Gibraltar trails in 2027/28.</p> <p>Information, Promotion and Marketing still forms part of the wider Recreational Walking Tracks Strategy, however priority is first being given to returning the tracks to a satisfactory condition.</p> <p>A15.12: Council currently reports its budget to what is termed as Level 4. In the Environment Area this rest are the 4 budget areas of Bushland and Biosecurity, Natural Resource Management and Sustainability Services (pages 88-88 in the Draft Operational Plan). In these areas the Environment Levy contribution is as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bushland and Biosecurity \$720,000 2. Natural Resource Management \$677,423 3. Sustainability Services \$231,178 <p>A15.13: Council does utilise contractors in the delivery of the Environment Levy program. In years when staff shortages have been experienced, Council has been able to transition the program and increase the number of contractors engaged. For example, with the 22/23 program Council increased its contractor engagement by an additional 62% to compensate for staff shortages experienced throughout that financial year.</p>



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		<p><i>“Biodiversity is the foundation of life, including human life. It supports essential ecosystem services like clean air and water, fertile soils, crop pollination, climate regulation and the resources we need for food, medicine, and basic materials. Biodiversity also enables species to reproduce successfully and provides plants and animals with capacity to evolve and adapt in the face of challenges like climate change.”</i></p> <p>Greening Australia- International Biodiversity Day.</p> <p>It is time the expenditure of the Environment Levy is reviewed and restored to its original objectives and made clearly available to the community.</p>	
16	J. Slattery Colo Vale	<p>2024 2025 Draft Operational Plan and Budget Feedback</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on Council’s draft 2024/2025 Operational Plan and Budget. I congratulate council staff on providing a relatively easy to read and informative document for what is an extensive and complex topic. I also congratulate council / our administrator for initiating reporting and commentary down to Level 4 Service Areas.</p> <p>My feedback on two areas is outlined below:</p> <p>Recreational Walking Track Strategy - Understanding</p> <p>It is great to see the following Capital Works are planned for our recreational walking tracks, noting that there is still a substantial amount of work still to be funded so hopefully grants are being actively sought.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •2024/2025 - Furniture renewal at Box Vale Trail Track •2026/2027 - Walking Track Refurbishment at Mt Alexandra Trail Head •2027/2028 - Walking Track Refurbishment at Mt Gibraltar <p>It is extremely disappointing and concerning to see ‘Walking Tracks Strategy 2020 Unfunded Maintenance Works’ is on the Draft Unfunded Projects List again. Does this mean our recreational walking tracks aren’t being maintained to required standards, noting that maintenance is more</p>	



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		<p>than just removing fallen trees from the walking tracks? I note and am extremely concerned that none of the Service Areas have listed Recreational Walking Tracks Strategy in their 'Strategic plans informing our work'. These concerns make me question which service area/s are responsible for managing the provision and maintenance of our recreational walking tracks and strategy.</p> <p>Recreational Walking Track Strategy – My Request I request council advises the community.</p> <p>Q16.1: Which service areas are responsible for managing the provision and maintenance of our Recreational Walking Tracks and strategy plus what services they provide.</p> <p>Q16.2: The status of the Recreational Walking Track strategy implementation plan including implementation time frames for each of the actions. Specific concerns I currently have include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the implementation of the strategy being actively managed? • Is grant funding for Recreational Walking Tracks being actively sought? What grants for Recreational Walking Tracks have been sought in the past financial year? • Surely there are Recreational Walking Tracks actions that can be implemented within existing and or small budgets such as the installation of wayfinding signage at reserves, with the help of the proposed Trail Stewardship programme. I ask this be considered for implementation this financial year. 	<p>A16.1: Management of provision and maintenance of walking trails is shared across the organisation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Basic maintenance such as tree removal and some minor works are undertaken by the Bushland Field Officers on a reactive basis. - Service and Project Delivery (S&PD) directorate are responsible for the identification, scoping and delivery of capital projects for the renewal and/or upgrade of trails and their built elements. <p>There is no dedicated maintenance team for the walking trails – which is the basis for the unfunded project listing.</p> <p>A16.2: An update on the implementation of the Recreational Walking Tracks Strategy was provided at Ordinary Council Meeting 16 August 2023, item 9.16.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restoration and signage of the Box Vale Track will be completed in 2024/25, with the focus then shifting to the trails from Lake Alexandra Trailhead in 2026/27 and the Mount Gibraltar trails in 2027/28. - No grant funding applications were submitted for the Recreational Walking Tracks in 23/24, however applications will be made in 24/25 as opportunities arise. - Current priority is wayfinding and remediation of Box Vale trailhead tracks. And adoption of Bushland Plan of Management.



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#No	Name	Submission	Staff Response
		<p>Q16.3: The condition of all the Recreational Walking Tracks as compared with the audit undertaken in May 2020 and actions that have or are being taken to maintain the tracks. I am concerned that with maintenance being unfunded and the impacts of inclement weather over the past years, the condition of our walking tracks is deteriorating to unacceptable levels.</p> <p>Environment Levy - Understanding It is my understanding that the Environment Levy is used to carry out environmental works and projects that go beyond council's base responsibilities and funding capabilities. (Source FAQ Environment Levy circa 2013) https://www.yoursaywingecarribee.com.au/environmentlevy/</p> <p>I find it difficult to ascertain which, of the very much appreciated, Environment and Sustainability activities are funded by the Environment Levy in part or in full. I understand that the Environment Levy key indicators and progress against targets is supposed to be provided in the State of the Environment Report (resolution ordinary meeting of Wingecarribee Shire Council, held 8 November 2011), however a report has not been published since 2016 and even then, I found it difficult to find this information in the report.</p> <p>Environment Levy - Request My Request, as a way of providing the community with a better understanding of what our Environment Levy actually funds and proposes to fund, I ask the Environmental Levy Program page (page 190) in the 2024/2025 Operational Plan and Budget provides.</p> <p>Q16.4: Specific examples of proposed project activities for each of the Programs, Community Support and Coordination listed in the Environmental Levy Program 2024/25 table e.g. an indication of deliverables for 1.3 Green Web, 2.2 Riparian Management Plans 3.3 Community Sustainability 4.4 Urban Sustainability Partner Program etc. Ideally examples would be provided for each line item in the table.</p>	<p>A16.3: Since 2020 there have been 14 natural disaster declarations that have impacted the Shire, many of which have inflicted damage to trails. Council had to prioritise certain popular trails such as the Box Vale Track to receive attention, and audits of these trails have taken place. Repairs on this trail do require capital works repairs which have been budgeted for. Basic maintenance such as tree removal and some minor works are undertaken by the Bushland Field Officers in response to issues as they arise.</p> <p>A16.4: Council will seek to develop an Environment Levy information page on its webpage to provide clearer information on the Environment Levy expenditure and programs and activities that it supports.</p>



**AGENDA OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL
WEDNESDAY 26 JUNE 2024**

#No	Name	Submission	Staff Response
		<p>Q16.5: Information on positions funded in full or part by the Environment Levy. Similar to the information provided in FAQ Environment Levy circa 2013.</p> <p>https://www.yoursaywingecarribee.com.au/environmentlevy/</p> <p>Q16.6: Information on vehicles funded by the Environment Levy in part of in full. The IPART submission (circa 2013) listed cars for field staff and Environment Levy Corporate Support as separate line items, whilst the 2024/2025 Operational Plan and Budget just lists Environment Levy Corporate Support. Is my assumption that field staff vehicles are now included in Environment Levy Corporate Support, correct?</p> <p>I ask that the above information is included in all future operational plans and budgets.</p> <p>Q16.7: As a wonderful, long established, and cherished community initiative I feel that our Environment Levy needs to be better highlighted on Council’s web site. I ask that a page on our Environment Levy is added to council’s Environment home page “https://www.wsc.nsw.gov.au/Environment” and includes details such as the history of the Environment Levy, confirmation that the levy is used to fund environmental works and projects that go beyond council's base responsibilities along with specific examples of works undertaken, plus how levy has and continues develops.</p>	<p>A16.5: Council will seek to develop an Environment Levy information page on its webpage to provide clearer information on the Environment Levy expenditure and programs and activities that it supports.</p> <p>A16.6: The Environment Levy Budget published on page 190 of the Draft Operational Plan does not show the plant item costs separately. While they may have been included within the Corporate Support line item in previous years’ budgets, this is not included for the proposed 2024/25 budget. The Corporate Support line item is primarily funding levy coordination costs. The plant item costs are shown as a cost against the specific project or program that they are linked to. Detail is provided to some extent in the Level 4 budgets shown in pages 80-88 of the Draft Operational Plan.</p> <p>A16.7: Council will seek to develop an Environment Levy information page on its webpage to provide clearer information on the Environment Levy expenditure and programs and activities that it supports.</p>



We're with you