



JUMP ON 'BOARD'

WITH ROUS COUNTY COUNCIL

Rous County councillors are responsible for overseeing the management of bulk drinking water supply, flood mitigation and weed biosecurity services across major parts of the Northern Rivers region.

This information resource aims to help councillors understand the unique role of Rous County Council and its governing body by answering some frequently asked questions.

What is a county council?

In NSW, a county council is a special type of local government organisation that can be established to undertake one or more functions on behalf of a group of local councils.

A county council is a separate entity. The local councils that establish a county council are referred to as its 'constituent councils'.

Why are county councils created?

County councils are setup to deliver more efficient and cost-effective service and infrastructure provision on a regional scale.

For example, a water supply system may supply drinking water for six local government areas. Rather than each local council individually sourcing, treating and supplying water, they can establish a county council to manage the entire region's drinking water supply.

Or there may be specific issues or risks (such as weed biosecurity) affecting several local councils in a particular region. Again, a county council may be created to oversee the management of these issues using a strategic, whole-of-region approach.

How many county councils exist in NSW?

There are currently nine county councils in NSW.

How are county councils governed?

County councils operate under the *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)*, like local councils.

A county council must have a governing body (often referred to as its 'Board'), which is responsible for managing the organisation's affairs. This governing body must meet at least four times a year.

The governing body is made up of members ('county councillors') who are elected by each constituent council from among their own local councillors.

Each county council is also required to employ a general manager.

Who is Rous County Council?

Formed in 2016, Rous County Council is the only multi-purpose county council in NSW.

We are responsible for providing critical natural resource management services (bulk drinking water supply, flood mitigation and weed biosecurity) across major parts of the Northern Rivers region.

Prior to our formation, these services were managed by three distinct county councils: Rous Water, Richmond River County Council and Far North Coast Weeds.

Who are Rous County Council's constituent councils?

Our four constituent councils are:

- Ballina Shire Council
- Byron Shire Council
- Lismore City Council
- Richmond Valley Council.

What services does Rous County Council deliver?

We are responsible for providing:

- Bulk drinking water supply, flood mitigation and weed biosecurity services for the Ballina Shire, Lismore City and Richmond Valley areas.
- Bulk drinking water supply and weed biosecurity services for the Byron Shire area.
- Retail drinking water supply services directly to over 2,000 customers.

We also provide weed biosecurity services to the Kyogle and Tweed Shire councils on a fee for service basis.

Where is Rous County Council located?

Our main administration building (including county council chambers) is in the Lismore CBD.

We also have depots in South Lismore, Monaltrie and Woodburn as well as two water treatment plants at Nightcap and Emigrant Creek.

From late 2024, most of our workforce and operations are set to be unified at a new home base on Gallans Road near Ballina. This modern facility will also feature fit-for-purpose county council chambers.

Who is Rous County Council's governing body?

Our governing body comprises eight county councillors – two elected representatives from each of our four constituent councils. Our county councillors are elected for a four-year term.

The role of Rous County councillors is to represent their constituent council as well as make decisions that are in the best interests of the region Rous County Council serves.



How often does Rous County Council’s governing body meet?

Ordinary meetings of our governing body are held six times a year (on the third Wednesday of every second month). These meetings are subject to the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)*.
The agenda becomes available to county councillors one week prior to the scheduled meeting.

Are Rous County councillors remunerated?

Yes, all Rous County councillors are paid an annual fee that is determined for county councils by the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal.
The Tribunal set both a minimum and maximum fee. Our governing body can then fix the annual fee to be paid to its members within these limits. Any annual fee that is fixed by the governing body must be the same for each member.
If the governing body does not fix an annual fee, each member must be paid the minimum fee determined by the Tribunal.

Does Rous County Council have a chairperson?

Yes, Rous County Council’s governing body elects a chairperson from amongst its members.
The chairperson holds office for one year and is responsible for presiding at the governing body’s meetings as well as exercising other functions of Rous County Council as required.
The chairperson is also paid an additional annual fee. Again, the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal sets both a minimum and maximum fee, which can then be fixed by the governing body within these limits.
Rous County councillors also elect a deputy chairperson. The governing body can resolve to pay the deputy chairperson an additional fee for such time as they act in the office of chairperson.

Do Rous County councillors have additional travel requirements?

Given the extent of Rous County Council’s region of operations, our county councillors are required to travel beyond their own local government areas.
County councillors must be able to travel to and from governing body meetings and may also be required to attend approved site inspections, conferences and other official engagements or functions.
We ensure our county councillors are reimbursed all reasonable travel expenses related to defined county council business.

ROUS COUNTY COUNCIL AT A GLANCE

Region of operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• NSW Northern Rivers.
Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bulk drinking water supply, flood mitigation and weed biosecurity.
Service area	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Four local government areas: Ballina Shire, Byron Shire, Lismore City and Richmond Valley.• Population of over 130,000 people.
Key organisation stats	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formed via merger in 2016.• Eight county councillors (including a chairperson and deputy chairperson).• Over 90 staff (including general manager).• Head office in Lismore CBD.• Most staff and operations to be unified at a new home base near Ballina from late 2024.
Financial snapshot (2020/21)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Total assets: \$620M.• Capital expenditure: \$5.9M.• Total income: \$30.5M.• Total expenditure: \$26.2M.• Operating result: \$4.3M surplus.