



# End of Term Report

# 2016 -

# 2021





# Acknowledgement of Country

In preparation of this document Council acknowledges the Bundjalung of Byron Bay - Arakwal People are the Traditional Custodians of the land in Byron Shire, and form part of the wider Aboriginal nation known as the Bundjalung.

Byron Shire Council and the Traditional Custodians acknowledge the Tweed Byron Local Aboriginal Land Council and the Jali Local Aboriginal Land Council under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1983.

Council also acknowledges all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who now reside within the Shire and their continuing connection to country and culture.



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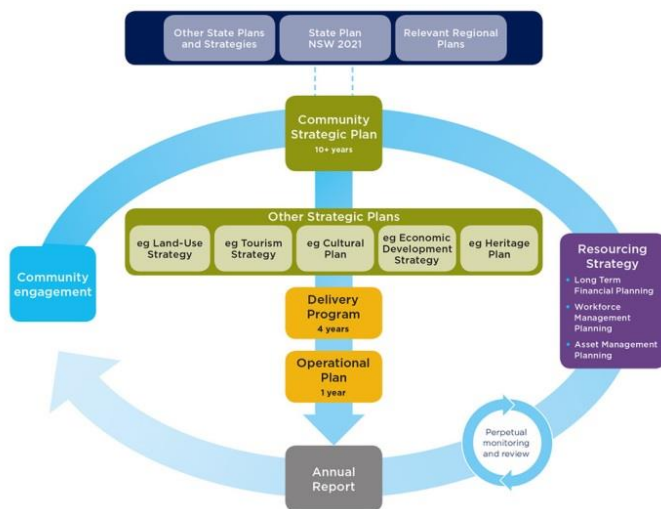
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# Executive Summary

The End of Term Report provides an update on Council's progress towards achieving the community objectives in the Community Strategic Plan 2028 - 'Our Byron Our Future'.

This report is a requirement under the *Local Government Act 1993* and forms part of Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework.



This report documents how Council has responded to the community's goals and aspirations identified in the Community Strategy Plan.

The achievements of our Council are really something to be proud of and celebrated.

The report is structured according to each of the 'Our Byron, Our Future' Community Strategic Plan (2018-2028) objectives:

## INFRASTRUCTURE

We have infrastructure, transport and services which meet our expectations

## COMMUNITY

We cultivate and celebrate our diverse cultures, lifestyle and sense of community

## ENVIRONMENT

We protect and enhance our natural environment

## GROWTH

We manage growth and change responsibly

## GOVERNANCE

We have community led decision making which is open and inclusive

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In the 2020 Community Satisfaction Survey, **78%** of residents were at least somewhat satisfied with the performance of Byron Shire Council, a significant increase from **69%** in 2016

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# Our Elected Representatives

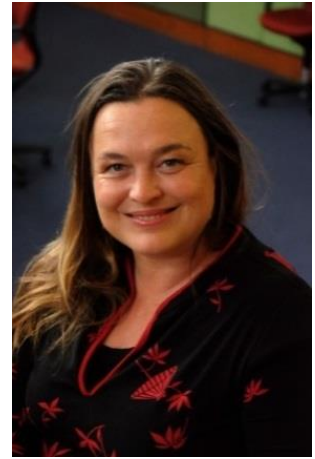
Council has nine councillors and a popularly elected Mayor. The following Councillors were elected in the 2016 NSW Local Government Elections and held office until the December 2021 Local Government election. Cr Simon Richardson resigned as Mayor and Councillor in April 2021. Cr Lyon was elected Mayor by the elected representatives for the remainder of the term.



**Former Mayor  
Simon Richardson**



**Mayor  
Michael Lyon**



**Deputy Mayor  
Sarah Ndiaye**



**Cr Basil Cameron**



**Cr Jan Hackett**



**Cr Jeannette Martin**



**Cr Cate Coorey**



**Cr Alan Hunter**



**Cr Paul Spooner**



# Our Workforce

## General Manager

Mark Arnold

The General Manager is the most senior employee of Council, selected and appointed by the Council, on a renewable fixed term, performance-based contract for a maximum of five years. Mark Arnold was appointed to the position of General Manager in 2018, having previously served as the Director Corporate and Community Services.



**From left:**

Director Corporate and Community Services, Vanessa Adams

General Manager, Mark Arnold

Director Sustainable Environment and Economy, Shannon Burt

Director Infrastructure Services, Phillip Holloway

## Our Values



WE LEAD WITH ENTHUSIASM  
AND PURPOSE



WE ARE OPEN, HONEST  
AND RESPECTFUL

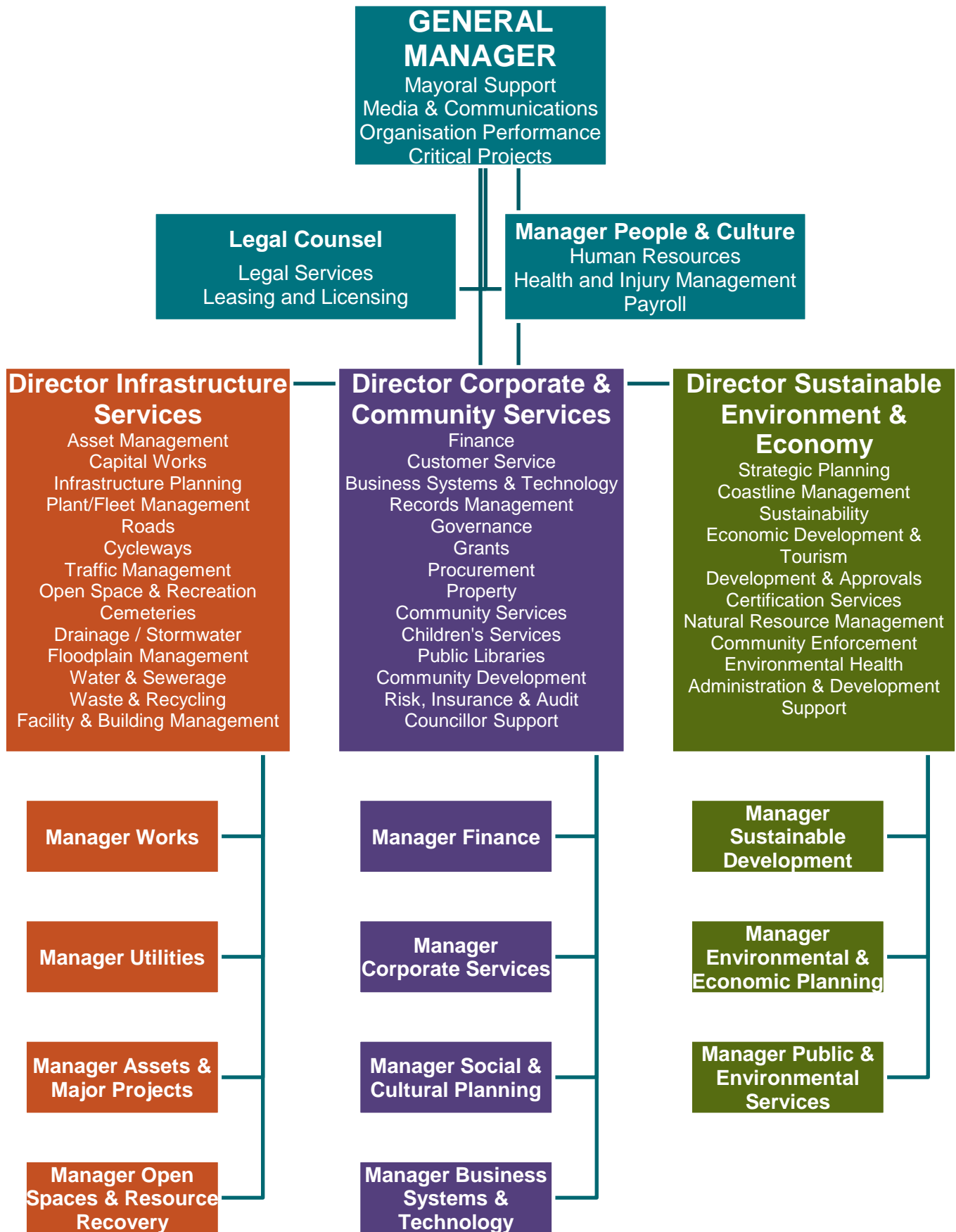


WE FOSTER WELLBEING  
AND CREATIVITY



WE ACHIEVE OUR GOALS AND  
SUCCEED TOGETHER

# Organisation Structure



# Annual Operational Plan Progress

Each year, Council plans the specific activities that will be delivered to contribute toward the Delivery Program and in turn, the Community Strategic Plan. The outcome of those activities is reported annually in the Annual Report. A snapshot of the progress from each year is provided below.

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
<b>Achieved</b>	57 (53%)	124 (52%)	243 (80.7%)	322 (78%)	341 (79.9%)
<b>Substantially Achieved</b>	49 (44%)	96 (41%)	26 (8.6%)	45 (10.9%)	46 (10.8%)
<b>Partially achieved</b>	N/A	N/A	26 (8.6%)	30 (7.3%)	25 (5.9%)
<b>Deferred/ delayed</b>	N/A	N/A	6 (2%)	16 (3.9%)	13 (3%)
<b>Not achieved</b>	2 (3%)	18 (8%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (0.5%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>238</b>	<b>301</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>427</b>



Achievement of activities up  
from **53%** in 2017 to **80%** in 2021



# Byron Shire Profile



**35,773**

Population  
ABS ERP 2020

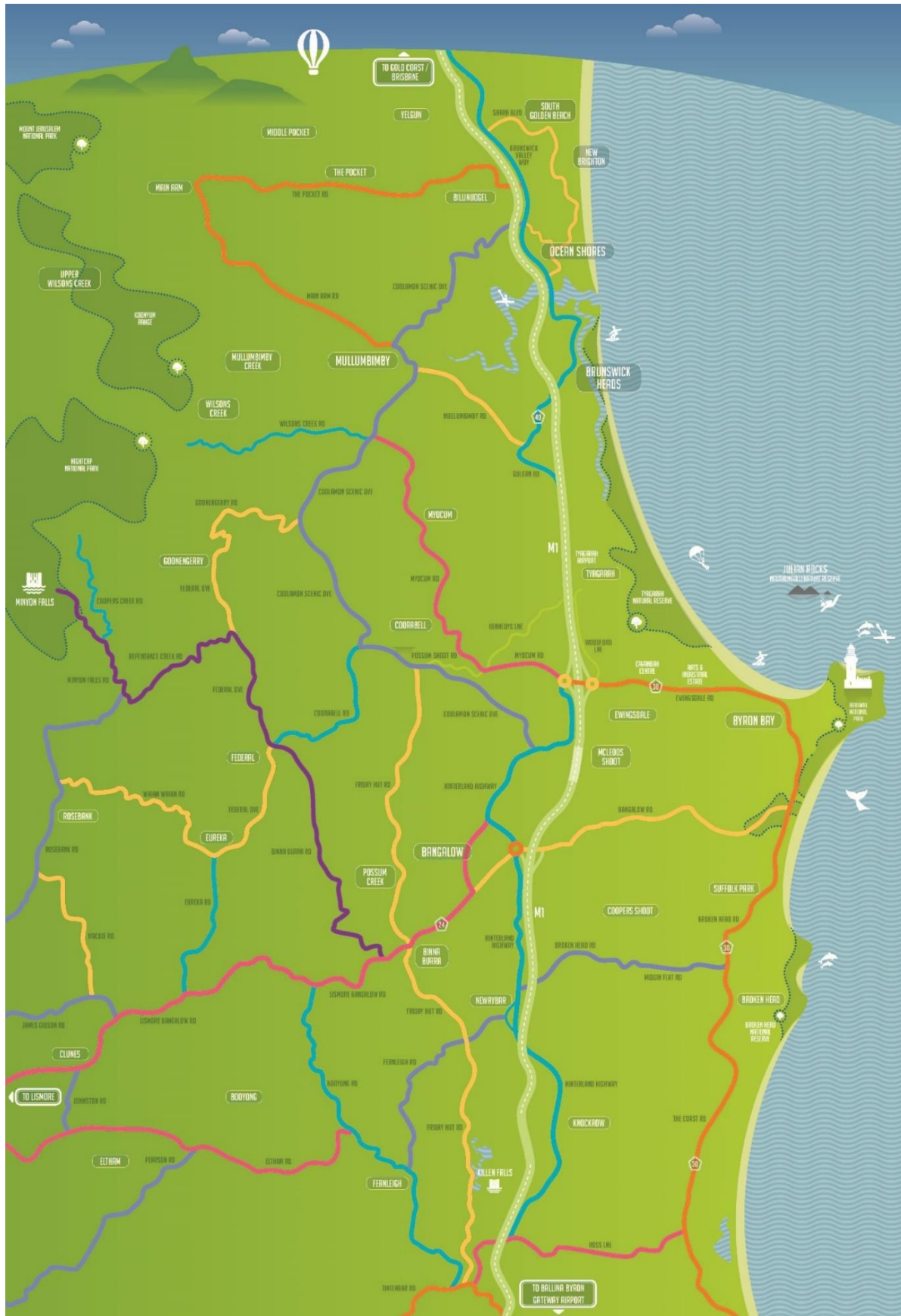
**7% increase**  
since 2016



**566.7km<sup>2</sup>**  
land area



**2.4 million**  
annual visitors  
(pre-COVID)





# Community Objective 1:

## We have infrastructure, transport and services which meet our expectations

The CSP objective is to have transport and services that meet our needs. Works and projects delivered demonstrate Council's absolute determination to provide a safe, accessible, and maintained road network, bridges, and services including water, sewer, and waste.

With an infrastructure backlog of an estimated \$38.1 million in 2016, and high demand for new infrastructure, the newly elected Council determined that improving infrastructure was its number one priority. This marked the start of a journey that included the introduction of pay parking in Byron Bay, approval from IPART for a special rate variation and a strategic approach to grant applications. The results in the Shire are evident on our roads and bridges and importantly the smaller, local projects, like our bus shelter replacement program and stormwater inflow and infiltration project that are making an immense difference to the day-to-day lives of residents of all ages.



# Strategy 1.1 - Provide a road network which is safe, accessible and maintained to an acceptable level of service

## Key Achievements

- ✓ Over 30 years in the making, the \$25.75m **Byron Bay Bypass** project officially opened to traffic. This was the largest infrastructure project that Council has ever delivered. Construction included three new roundabouts and almost 2 kilometres of new shared path and footpath. The Bypass offers a more efficient route through town. Data showed that traffic in the CBD dropped by approximately 30 percent after the bypass opened which was a terrific result.
- ✓ Incorporated the infrastructure priorities defined by the Community Solutions Panel into the **Transport Asset Management Plan**
- ✓ Continued to deliver **flooding and stormwater capital works projects** and maintenance programs across the shire to manage flood risk including but not limited to drain clearing, stormwater drainage system upgrades, flood gauge and flood pump maintenance annually

### Roads

- ✓ Road and drainage maintenance was broadened significantly with the addition of shire wide programs of heavy patching, reseal and AC overlay. This allowed a greater focus on pavement rehabilitation on roads that would not normally see capital works expenditure.
- ✓ The Terrace, between Mullumbimbi Street and Fingal Street, in Brunswick Heads, was completely rebuilt and a new road surface laid
- ✓ The equivalent of half a million recycled glass bottles went into the construction of the Shire's first recycled glass road at the Resource Recovery Centre at Myocum
- ✓ Undertook a laser assessment of the condition of the entire sealed road network



### **Council maintains 609km of roads**

42km of regional roads, 475km of sealed roads, and 92km of unsealed roads



## Bridges

- ✓ In 2016, of the 121 road **bridges and causeways** in the Byron Shire, 40% of the bridges and over 50% of the causeways were found to be in poor or unserviceable condition. Delivering the bridge and causeway replacement and upgrade programs in innovative ways has allowed Council to do more projects, reduce our infrastructure backlog, significantly improve road safety, reduce maintenance costs, increase the resilience of the road network to flooding and improve the health of our waterways by restoring navigability for fish and aquatic life.
- ✓ Granted \$5.18 million for our innovative approach to **replacing five timber bridges** with repurposed Australian Defence Force bridges. The Bangalow Bridges Replacement project saw the replacement of Booyong, Parkers, James, O'Meara's and Scarrabelottis bridges with new steel bridges. The timber from the old bridges was salvaged and recycled into many projects around the Shire.
- ✓ **Timber restoration of Brunswick Heads' iconic South Arm Bridge** was an impressive \$1.7m restoration project that not only kept, but enhanced, the timber features of a charming old bridge.
- ✓ The **Byron Creek Bridge at Bangalow** was replaced at a cost of \$2.3 million, accompanied by a further \$1 million spend on improvements to Bangalow Road which connects Bangalow to Byron Bay.



**80% of bridges in fair to good condition**  
up 20% compared with 2015/16

## Strategy 1.2 - Provide essential services and reliable infrastructure which meet an acceptable community standard

### Key Achievements

- ✓ A new \$2.3M **North Ocean Shores sports field** was opened on Shara Boulevard, in Ocean Shores.
- ✓ Laid a hi-tech **irrigation system** underneath the grass in Apex Park, with sensors to monitor weather conditions, soil moisture, evaporation, wind levels and rainfall – automatically adjusting the amount of water being put into the area
- ✓ The **Lot 12 Eol** was designed to seek an organisation to partner with Council to see 2.6 hectares of land transformed into a precinct with innovation and creativity at the core of business and development.
- ✓ **Strategic Asset Management Plans** developed with ongoing collaboration with community and stakeholders in relations to capital upgrades, renewals, and enhancement works based on audit data and condition reports.
- ✓ At a cost of \$5 million over five years, in 2019/20 we started our **Reducing Stormwater in the Sewer project**



**\$43.5 million capital program delivered**  
largest ever in 2020/21, up by  
89% compared with 2015/16

## Strategy 1.3 - Support, through partnership, a network of integrated sustainable transport options

### Key Achievements

- ✓ Developed key plans and strategies in relation to transport infrastructure, including the adoption of an **Integrated Transport and Movement Plan (ITMP), Bike Plan, and Pedestrian and Access Mobility Plan (PAMP)** to ensure the transport system is fit for purpose.
- ✓ 10 year **Bike Plan and Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan** attracted enormous interest from the community and were endorsed in September 2019.
- ✓ Supported the **\$8.4m Byron Bay Bus Interchange** in partnership with Transport for NSW. The interchange took buses out of Jonson Street, another significant step towards moving the Byron Bay CBD towards a place for people and bicycles more than cars and buses.

#### Footpaths and Cycleways

- ✓ Constructed over **3.4km of new shared paths and 4.9km of new on-road cycle ways**, including Bangalow Deacon Street share path and Balemo Drive
- ✓ Delivered the \$2.8 million **Byron Bay to Suffolk Park Cycleway**, significantly improving connectivity and cycling safety along the route.



**8.3km**

**of new share paths and cycle lanes**  
9% increase to the network



## Strategy 1.4 - Provide a regular and acceptable waste and recycling service

### Key Achievements

- ✓ **Integrated Waste Management and Resource Recovery Strategy** adopted
- ✓ **Towards Zero** – Byron Shire's Integrated Waste and Resource Recovery Strategy was adopted, with the target of sending zero waste to landfill by 2029.
- ✓ Substantially progressed plans to build a **bioenergy facility** that converts local organic green waste into 100% renewable energy and produces a compost by-product, which will be a first in the southern hemisphere.
- ✓ 92% of residents were satisfied with '**Garbage Collection**' ranked among the highest satisfaction scores along with recycling services, at 83%
- ✓ **Community Recycling Centre** opened in July 2016 - 158 tonnes of household problem waste including paints, gas bottles, fire extinguishers, car batteries, motor oil and smoke detectors have been dropped off for recycling or safe disposal, with an estimated saving to council and the community of over \$323,900.
- ✓ Significantly expanded and rejuvenated our **public place bin network** from 301 general waste bins and 14 recycle bins to 252 waste, 165 recycle bins and 4 organics bins, most of which are in customised cabinets to reflect the towns and villages in which they are situated.
- ✓ Kerbside composition audits conducted in 2020 revealed that **71% of all kerbside waste was diverted from landfill**, compared to 51% in 2016, so residents have made significant improvements in keeping their recycling and organics out of landfill.



On a per resident basis,  
**Byron Shire collects less residual waste  
and more than 2.5 times more recyclables**  
than averages for other council areas

## Strategy 1.5 - Provide continuous urban water and sewerage services within the Shire

### Key Achievements

- ✓ Expanded our **Urban Recycled Water Scheme** to include toilets, gardens, and parks.
- ✓ Two **new reservoirs** were constructed in Bangalow (1.45ML) and Coopers Shoot (10ML) to ensure a sustainable water supply for residents and businesses
- ✓ Improved **STP energy performance** through energy efficient upgrades/ replacements to assets such as pumps and motors. Installation of solar panels has also seen a reduction in power cost at STPs - providing approximately 20% of each site's electricity requirements
- ✓ **Smart water metering** pilot trial was rolled out in Mullumbimby.
- ✓ **Annual Drinking Water Management Plan** reviews were completed.
- ✓ **South Byron Sewage Treatment Plant** (STP) Stage 3 remediation of the Tertiary Ponds
- ✓ 200kL of residential water use per connection. **Water restrictions** were implemented to manage water use during the 2018-2020 drought.



**More than 20% of the water we use** for urban purposes in Byron Bay is recycled, up from 12% in 2016

## Strategy 1.6 - Manage traffic and parking in an efficient manner

### Key Achievements

- ✓ The vision '**Cars out and people in**' for our towns was supported through initiatives like car sharing services
- ✓ Completed and significantly progressed a number of key **parking management reviews** to help manage parking and traffic in an efficient manner across the Shire
- ✓ **Resurfaced car parks** and line marking of parking bays throughout the Shire including Main Beach and Clarkes Beach car parks
- ✓ Provision of **traffic management facilities** and traffic controllers within Byron Bay, when deemed necessary, to provide increased safety for road users and pedestrians



#### **\$12.1m Pay Parking revenue generated**

and has been put towards infrastructure maintenance and improvement projects. Council resolved to split the revenue:

**50% outside Byron**

**25% for Byron Bay**

**25% for Byron Town Centre Masterplan Projects**

Some of the infrastructure funded in part by pay parking contributions include:

- Urban and rural drainage maintenance
- Gravel resheeting programs
- Bangalow Road (Hayters Hill)
- Pine Avenue
- Coomburra Crescent, Ocean Shores
- Tyagarah Road
- Durrumbul causeway
- Sunrise roundabout
- Broken Head Road
- Marine Parade Footpath
- Massinger Street





## Community Objective 2: We cultivate and celebrate our diverse cultures, lifestyle, and sense of community

Sharing Byron Shire with more than 2.4 million visitors a year highlights the importance of the second objective in our CSP with residents wanting facilities and gathering places where they can enjoy each other's company as neighbours, friends and as a community. With the drought, bushfires, floods and COVID-19 pandemic in 2019/20 our community was tested, and Council responded with considered projects and opportunities for people of all ages, including our most vulnerable residents.

## Strategy 2.1 - Support and encourage our vibrant culture and creativity

### Key Achievements

- ✓ **Lone Goat Gallery** renovations enabled a dynamic exhibition program, including performance, visual, sculpture, varied materials, artist talks, and workshops.
- ✓ **5 Citizenship ceremonies** conducted each year to confer new Australian citizens
- ✓ The **Arts and Culture Policy, Public Art Strategy and Public Art Panel** continued to inform Council's approach to enhancing opportunities for interaction with art in public spaces.
- ✓ A number of annual **community events** were supported across the Shire including Soul Street New Year's Eve event, NAIDOC Week, Australia Day events, Seniors Week, Harmony Day, and Youth Week events.



#### **Soul Street attracted 4,000 people**

The annual family-friendly event 'Soul Street' celebrates the start of the New Year (pre-COVID)

## Strategy 2.2 - Support access to a wide range of services and activities that contribute to the wellbeing of all members of the Byron Shire community

### Key Achievements

- ✓ Conducted a **Street Count** in September 2018 which was the first of its kind in regional NSW and achieved its goal of raising the profile of homelessness in Byron Shire and regional areas. The Department of Communities and Justice adopted this initiative and rolled out a state-wide count in February 2020.
- ✓ The **End Rough Sleeping Byron Shire** (ERSBS) Collaboration is an innovative community response to rough sleeping developed in partnership with over 40 local stakeholders and the state-wide End Street Sleeping Collaboration.
- ✓ **Connections Week** collected the stories of 72 people sleeping rough, providing important data about people's experiences of homelessness, which can now be used as evidence to support policy and system change and coordinate support services
- ✓ Continued to partner with the **Access Consultative Working Group** (ACWG) to provide expertise and guidance on access and inclusion matters based on lived experience
- ✓ Supported and facilitated accessible, high quality **early childhood education** and activities



The first regional council to employ a dedicated **Rough Sleeping Project Officer** alongside **2 Public Space Liaison Officers** (PSLOs) who provide a respectful and compassionate response to issues arising from homelessness in public places



## Strategy 2.3 - Provide accessible, local community spaces and facilities

### Key Achievements

- ✓ **Love Byron Halls** project found new ways to activate the old halls and support our local creative communities
- ✓ Completed capital works and improved access to several Council-owned **community buildings**. Improvements were delivered at community buildings including Brunswick Heads Memorial Hall, Marvell Hall, Durrumbul Hall, Mullumbimby Neighbourhood Centre, Suffolk Park Community Centre, Mullumbimby Civic Hall, Mullumbimby Drill Hall, Ocean Shores Community Centre, South Golden Beach Community Hall.
- ✓ **Accessible parking** has been improved through a targeted review in both Byron Bay and Brunswick Heads.
- ✓ Installation of a **new accessible pathway** servicing Torakina Beach at Brunswick Heads
- ✓ Upgrades to **public toilets and amenities** across the Shire including those at Gaggin Park, Tom Kendall Oval, South Golden Beach, and Byron Recreation Grounds
- ✓ Adopted plans for the construction of a new **\$2 million recreation precinct and skatepark at Sandhills** in Byron Bay, a project that when completed will provide major links between the beach, recreation grounds and central business district.
- ✓ Upgraded 14 bus stops under the **Bus Stop Accessible Improvement Program**



**70% of buildings**  
**are in 'Excellent' condition**  
up from 21.6% in 2016

## Parks and Playgrounds

- ✓ **Railway Park upgrade** has transformed a run-down and unwelcoming public space in central Byron Bay into a beautifully designed and landscaped park– a thriving meeting place, and 'heart' for the local community to gather and take pride in
- ✓ Completed **five major park upgrades** in 2019/20 at a value of \$3.38 million at Railway Park Byron Bay, Waterlily Playscape at Ocean Shores, Bangalow Parklands, Gaggin Park at Suffolk Park and Federal Park
- ✓ New adventure playground at the **Bangalow Parklands**
- ✓ Upgraded **Waterlily Park** and installed an all-abilities flying fox, an accessible two storey treehouse, two new accessible carparks and accessible pathways that link the playground, amenities, and parking area
- ✓ **Three skateparks were upgraded**, Brunswick Heads, Federal and Mullumbimby, and a pump track was established in Suffolk Park to increase recreational opportunities for youth and families



**Satisfaction  
with parks and  
playgrounds**

**83%**

up from 72% in  
2016

## Strategy 2.4 - Enhance community safety and amenity while respecting our shared values

### Key Achievements

- ✓ When an emergency, such as a flood or fire, arises, Byron residents can go straight to our **Emergency Dashboard** for information. Behind this website technical information is available to the SES, providing data and predictive modelling that will ultimately give people more warning about flood events
- ✓ Delivered a range of **community safety initiatives** based on a Safer Community Compact and including design projects, place making initiatives, installation of CCTV in hotspot areas, and lighting upgrades
- ✓ Deployed technology to improve **disaster response** and recovery by preparing field devices and training staff in readiness to respond to a natural disaster
- ✓ Launched the **COVID-safe Summer Byron** campaign which is designed to be a visual reminder to people about the importance of health measures such as social distancing



**80% satisfaction**

with quality of town centres and public spaces  
up from 70% in 2016

## Strategy 2.5 - Encourage community appreciation of cultural vitality and diversity

### Key Achievements

- ✓ **National Aboriginal and Islander Day of Celebration (NAIDOC) Week** celebrations were held each July to celebrate the history, culture, and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- ✓ Developed the **Byron Shire Heritage Strategy** to guide future actions and ran a successful annual heritage grants program
- ✓ Worked with the Arakwal Corporation, Jali Local Aboriginal Land Council, and National Parks and Wildlife Service to develop shared educational and statutory signage for the **Ti Tree Lake area**, helping community to protect this important Aboriginal place into the future.
- ✓ New **gateway to Mullumbimby** features a new totem pole and refurbished rotunda to represent the indigenous heritage of the Arakwal people and share the cultural history of Mullumbimby
- ✓ Supported and recognised the heritage of the Byron Shire through the facilitation of the **Heritage Panel**, holding a **Heritage Forum**, and providing **free heritage advice days** throughout the year.





## Community Objective 3: We protect and enhance our natural environment

Our Shire is a 'biodiversity hotspot' - home to some of the last remnants of the ancient rainforests that dominated Australia 40 million years ago, as well as graminoid clay heath found nowhere else in the world. Protecting and enhancing this is a huge responsibility, especially in the face of climate change.

Acknowledging the importance of our third CSP objective, major milestones and achievements were met in 2020/21 with protection and improvement of our natural environment at the core of activities to ensure our biodiversity is protected for future generations.

## Strategy 3.1 - Partner to protect and enhance our biodiversity, ecosystems and ecology

### Key Achievements

- ✓ The **Integrated Pest Management Strategy** 2019-2029 uses innovative, environmentally friendly approaches to pest management to minimise herbicide use across the Shire.
- ✓ A robust, peer-review process, was used to develop the **2020-2030 Biodiversity Conservation Strategy** - a plan of action to support all landholders to develop projects and seek funding to protect and enhance our unique biodiversity
- ✓ Community partnerships established to protect and enhance **Koala habitat**, including working with local schools to deliver tree planting programs
- ✓ Hosted the highly successful **dog breakfast** to educate pet owners on wildlife and domestic pet interactions
- ✓ **Flying Fox Camp Plan of Management** recognises the vital role flying foxes play in our ecology but acknowledges they are not always the easiest neighbours to live with.
- ✓ **95 hectares, and more than 15 kilometres of riverbank**, was restored by Council and community bush regenerators
- ✓ Continuing to apply **Environmental Zones** on land with high environmental values to support their ongoing protection, including some private land, through outcomes agreed with landowners.



**265 hectares annually**  
**of bush regeneration**  
up from 130 hectares in 2015/16

## Strategy 3.2 - Strive to become a sustainable community

### Key Achievements

- ✓ Council has set itself the goals of achieving 100% **net zero emissions** for its operations by 2025 and sourcing 100% of Council's energy needs through renewable energy by 2027.
- ✓ Installed 414 kilowatts of **solar systems** across our assets including a \$380,000 solar roof in our public carpark in Mullumbimby
- ✓ Council charged into the future with the installation of zero emissions **electric vehicle charging stations**
- ✓ **Initiatives to tackle waste and littering**, including:
  - Installed 123 Enviropole butt bins across the Shire
  - 'Smoke Free Byron Beaches' enforced a smoking ban on our beaches
  - 'Take 3 for the Sea Byron', aimed at reducing plastic pollution, resulted in 6,321 pieces of rubbish collected
  - Installed 34 dog poo bag dispensers with compostable bags for use at dog beaches and parks throughout the Shire
  - Kicked off the 'Byron loves BYO' campaign to address the growing problem of single-use takeaway items
- ✓ Council declared a **climate emergency** and prepared a Climate Adaptation Plan. Based on the latest climate science projections for the region, the 100 Adaptation Actions address the four climate scenarios:
  - Flooding due to extreme rainfall
  - Coastal storm surges due to severe storms and sea level rise
  - Extreme heat
  - Increased fire weather



**Since 2017, 78% reduction in cigarette butt litter on our beaches and a 40% reduction in overall litter across the Shire**

## Strategy 3.3 - Partner to protect and enhance the health of the Shires coastlines, estuaries, waterways and catchments

### Key Achievements

- ✓ Continued preparing a **Coastal Management Program** (CMP) to address coastal hazard risks, preserve habitats and cultural uses, encourage sustainable development, maintain recreational amenity and resilience, and adapt to emerging issues.
- ✓ Undertook extensive community consultation on the **Main Beach Shoreline project** (Jonson Street protection works) to look at how Byron Bay can be protected from coastal erosion.



**24.7km of the Brunswick River restored for fish navigation all year round**, up from 10 days a year for only a short distance from the river mouth.



## Strategy 3.4 - Support and secure our farming future

### Key Achievements

- ✓ **Agricultural Cluster Group** was established bringing together local farmers and industry representatives to guide the delivery of agriculture
- ✓ Adopted an **Agricultural Action Plan** and commenced implementation with the engagement of an Agricultural Project Officer
- ✓ Launched the '**Farmers Farm and Cows Do Moo**' booklet to help people understand what life in rural areas is like, especially when it comes to farming, noise, and things like waste management.
- ✓ **Smart Farms – Small Grants project** delivered a Rural Land Management Handbook, Land Management Workshops, and a mentoring program



## Community Objective 4: We manage growth and change responsibly

With property prices in some areas rising by up to 30% in the last 12 months, one of the highest increases in the state, and more than 2.4 million tourists a year dropping in, the pressure for growth in our Shire is enormous.

Our CSP objective of managing growth and change responsibly is an incredible challenge. Our community is ferocious about protecting all the things they love about the Shire and Council has to balance community aspirations with appropriate development and provide a blueprint for the future where development fits and reflects the character of our towns and villages rather than defining them. Thinking outside the box to develop unique solutions for our community is second nature to us.

## Strategy 4.1 - Support the visions and aspirations of local communities through place-based planning and management

### Key Achievements

- ✓ Developed **Place Plans** for Mullumbimby and Bangalow. Each has its own character and style, and each community is passionate about what they value most about the places they live, work and play.
- ✓ Established the **Place Planning Collective** – 19 community volunteers with local knowledge and passion helping to advise and assist in the implementation of key projects from each adopted Place Plan
- ✓ The **Byron Arts and Industry Estate Precinct Plan** guides future development to support the eclectic needs of this commercial and residential community to continue to evolve this disused public space area into a connected and creative space. The first project to be delivered from the Precinct Plan was a 'pocket park,' providing green space amongst the warehouses and businesses.
- ✓ Council's adoption of the **Byron Bay Town Centre Masterplan** in 2016 set the vision and strategy to guide the future of the town centre. The Byron Masterplan Guidance Group was established to guide implementation.
- ✓ The upgrades of **Railway Park** and the **Byron rail corridor** considerably increase the footprint and integrity of Byron Bay's public spaces. For the local community, the tangible and immediate benefit of this project has been a reclaiming of space that had felt lost to them – a renewed focus on people and a reconnection to the places in which community congregates, celebrates, and plays



#### Byron Bay Town Centre Masterplan

The \$2.1m upgrade of Railway Park, was completed in October 2020, as a focal point and the 'heart' of the town centre.

## Strategy 4.2 - Support housing diversity in appropriate locations across the Shire

### Key Achievements

- ✓ Innovative **Affordable Housing Contributions Policy** adopted, allowing Council to capture affordable housing contributions from infill development
- ✓ Pre-COVID, one in five residences in Byron Shire was a **short-term holiday let** property, pushing up the cost of long-term residential rental properties, with Byron Shire having some of the most unaffordable housing in NSW. Byron Shire received an exemption from the state-wide position on supporting short-term holiday accommodation, allowing Council to develop a bespoke solution, with a 90 day threshold in the most impacted towns in the Shire
- ✓ Supported a **Tiny Homes Planning Proposal** intended to enable development of 'tiny houses' on Council owned or managed land
- ✓ **Residential Strategy** adopted that recognises that no single housing type can satisfy everyone's household requirements and that it is important to provide a greater housing mix and choice in the Shire
- ✓ Council's **development assessment processes** continue to evolve. Council was an early adopter of the NSW Planning Portal for development, compliance, and other post consent certificates.



**Average of 750 development applications / year,**  
worth over an estimated average of \$280m annually.  
**8.8% increase** in satisfaction rating for development application processing.



## Strategy 4.3 - Promote and support local business development, education and employment opportunities

### Key Achievements

- ✓ Council signed a Memorandum of Understanding with ServiceNSW to simplify the process of opening a café or small bar in Byron Shire. **'Easy to do Business'** is an online platform that tackles the time, complexity and duplication issues that businesses can face when starting or growing a business in NSW.
- ✓ A free **Byron Region Food handbook** was prepared by Council on behalf of the Northern Rivers councils, celebrating the work of 114 agricultural producers and food manufacturers across the region.
- ✓ **Supported businesses through the COVID-19 pandemic**, and facilitated Mental Health and Business Resilience workshops



**5,097** registered businesses in the Shire  
an increase of over 12% since 2017

## Strategy 4.4 - Support tourism and events that reflect our culture and lifestyle

### Key Achievements

- ✓ A shire-wide **'Byron Unfolded' map** was designed, to help visitors discover hidden gems and attractions spread across the Shire.
- ✓ More than 1,200 residents took part in Kitchen Table Discussions to shape the future of tourism in Byron Shire over the next 10 years. The survey findings were considered by a panel of 26 randomly selected residents whose recommendations have formed the basis of the recently developed **Sustainable Visitation Strategy**. The new Strategy resets the way we think about tourism and sets out actions to enable greater balance and protection for our people and our natural environment.
- ✓ The **Byron Business Events Bureau** was launched to further Byron as a key conference destination in Australia. Council played a key role in setting up the 'Bureau' alongside a group of very passionate tourism industry stakeholders.
- ✓ Refurbished the **Byron Visitor Centre**, with the facility upgraded to the latest technology to provide a wide range of information, as well as showcasing the area's cultural history



**In 2019, Byron Shire welcomed a record 2.41 million visitors.** In three years pre-COVID-19 tourism had grown by a whopping 60 percent

## Strategy 4.5 - Work to improve community resilience in our changing environment

### Key Achievements

- ✓ **Business and Industrial Lands Strategy** finalised which guides Council's decision-making and key actions to manage the future growth of retail, commercial and industrial land in our Shire
- ✓ Coordinated the **Flood plain risk management study**
- ✓ Developed innovative planning provisions in relation to **rural weddings and events**. The 'rolling development consents' is a NSW first and was developed through in-depth and thoughtful consultation between residents and industry
- ✓ Following the 2017 floods, developing community resilience, and embedding disaster recovery into **emergency management** has been a joint project of the Byron and Tweed Shire Councils, sharing a Community Development Officer (recovery) role and working collaboratively on evidence-based, best practice solutions for community led resilience and recovery.
- ✓ Adopted **Donations and Spontaneous Community Volunteering frameworks**, which yielded positive results in the November 2019 bushfires.



## Community Objective 5: We have community led decision making which is open and inclusive

Our community is active and engaged with Council activities – getting people to have a say and voice their opinion is not something we struggle with! This CSP objective is close to the hearts and minds of many of our residents who want to be involved in our decision-making processes.

Earlier community surveys told us a significant part of our community were dissatisfied with some services provided by Council. There has been a significant shift since, indicating the work being done is starting to be visible in the community and that we are on the right track to ensuring consideration for our residents and customer service are at the core of everything we do.



## Strategy 5.1 - Engage and involve community in decision making

### Key Achievements

- ✓ This term Council has been on a serious mission to find new ways of connecting and engaging more objectively with a wider cross-section of our community. In 2018 Council started to explore the idea of **deliberative democracy** and partnered with the newDemocracy Foundation in a two-year pilot research project.
- ✓ Inclusive community consultation and stakeholder engagement has been facilitated through embedding community led governance principles into the **Community Engagement Policy**
- ✓ Our digital engagement platform, **Your Say Byron Shire** is the key method we communicated with our community about projects. There were 17,300 visits to the site in 2020/21.
- ✓ In a NSW first, a new co-design model was used for '**The Byron Model**', a community-led framework for making democratic decisions in Byron Shire that can be widely supported by community.
- ✓ Established a **YouthSay program** to capture the views and aspirations of young people living in Byron Shire
- ✓ Commenced **livestreaming Council Meetings**, allowing members of the public to watch and participate online



#### **427 people registered on the Citizen Lottery**

Since February 2020, participants have been randomly chosen to deliberate on 2 citizen panels and participate in various community engagement projects.

## Strategy 5.2 - Create a culture of trust with the community by being open, genuine and transparent

### Key Achievements

- ✓ Council's **new website** went live in February 2018. The new website was designed to enhance accessibility and include modern features with the aim of making it easier and faster to do business with Council. The website is continually improved. The website attracted 1,186,127 users in 2020/21.
- ✓ Through the COVID pandemic and weather events, including significant floods and bushfires, Council continued to provide **timely information to the community**.



#### Social media continued to grow

Council now has over  
**9.4k followers** on Facebook  
and **2.5k on Instagram**

## Strategy 5.3 - Deliver a high level of customer service

### Key Achievements

- ✓ Developed a proactive customer service culture to deliver service excellence through the **Customer Service Strategy** with three simple principles
  - The customer is at the centre of all we do
  - We are easy to do business with
  - All staff are Customer Service Officers
- ✓ Offered a range of ways for people to provide **information or feedback** including face to face meetings and online meetings along with the advertising on radio, in the newspaper, E News, and media releases
- ✓ Expanded customer service function to **Byron Visitor Centre**
- ✓ **'Report It'** online service rolled out to make it easier and faster for people to make a request or seek information.
- ✓ Piloted **3D modelling** to provide additional information on significant development proposals



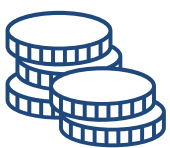
#### **5% increase in Customer Satisfaction in 2020**

73% of those who had contacted Council were at least somewhat satisfied with the way their contact was handled and 42% had their issue resolved after the first contact.

## Strategy 5.4 – Manage Council's assets and allocate resources in a fair and holistic manner

### Key Achievements

- ✓ Council negotiated with the NSW Government to acquire the **Mullumbimby Hospital site** following strong community support and encouragement. Guiding the redevelopment of the site are the recommendations of the Mullumbimby Hospital Site Project Reference Group (MHSPRG), which were developed over the course of 12 months and adopted by Council in December 2018.
- ✓ Purchased the old **Byron Bay Hospital** from the NSW Government for \$1 to re-purpose it as the Byron Community Hub.
- ✓ Council undertook an intense community engagement program to seek approval from the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for a **special rate variation** to inject funds into infrastructure investment. IPART approved an increase of 7.5 per cent per year for four years which raised \$11.72 million. This rate increase became a permanent addition to Council's general rates revenue.
- ✓ A **Community Solutions Panel** deliberated to determine Council's future infrastructure spending priorities. The panel identified the values that now inform Council's decisions about infrastructure – including safety, community well-being, connectivity, equity, environmental consciousness and excellence in design, with 'safety and risk' at the top of the list.
- ✓ Secured **\$25 million** because of the NSW Government's Road and Infrastructure Election Commitment, in recognition of the challenges of a regional council with a population of 35,081 managing more than 2.4 million tourists. This funding is being allocated across the Shire, translating to significant roadworks and other projects including a new skatepark at Sandhills at Byron Bay and the completion of the Byron Bay to Suffolk Park cycleway



### 7.5% Special Rate Variation per annum over 4 years

The additional funding was spent on roads, stormwater drainage, rural drainage and culverts, buildings, public amenities, and parks.



# Strategy 5.5 – Manage Council's finances sustainably

## Key Achievements

- ✓ **\$83 million own-source revenue**, up 28% compared with 2015/16.
- ✓ Council's **Procurement Framework** is supported by a robust Annual Procurement Plan. Initiatives to improve procurement of goods and services, including centralising contracts, developing a sustainable procurement policy, implementing online requisitions and purchase cards – realised savings of approximately \$1.2m (over 3% of the annual materials and contracts budget).
- ✓ Implementation of **VendorPanel** platform and an improvement to our Sustainable Choice Score.
- ✓ **Grants management** has been critical to our success in delivering projects that our community wants and needs and grant funding has assisted with the delivery of priority projects across the Shire.
- ✓ COVID-19 has impacted Council's finances over the last two financial years, negatively impacting Council revenues and causing additional expenditure. Whilst Council's primary goal of \$1million in **unrestricted cash** has not been able to be maintained, considering the impacts the current projected balance of \$0.5million is satisfactory.
- ✓ Amend Council's **investment policy** to invest surplus funds held into Environmental and Socially Responsible purposes when able or opportunities arise whilst maintaining compliance with the NSW Ministerial Investment Order.
- ✓ **Loan refinancing** in 2019/20 created an annual saving of approximately \$667,900, a total of \$13.3m over the life of the loan.



## Performance Measures

Operating performance ratio: **-6.87** ✗ **does not meet benchmark**  
Own source operating revenue ratio: **72.50%** ✓ **exceeds benchmark**  
Unrestricted current ratio: **2.41x** ✓ **exceeds benchmark**  
Debt service cover ratio: **2.18x** ✓ **exceeds benchmark**  
Rates and annual charges outstanding percentage: **8.33** ✓ **below benchmark**  
Cash expense cover ratio: **9.36** ✓ **exceeds benchmark**

## Strategy 5.6 - Manage Council's resources sustainably

### Key Achievements

- ✓ **Proactive risk management** continues to be a priority with several key initiatives delivered including a review of the Business Continuity Plan, the implementation of the Annual Internal Audit Plan, improved Internal Audit reporting, staff training, and the ongoing review and embedding of the Risk Management Framework
- ✓ **Relationships with key stakeholders and government agencies** are key to the delivery of services and projects and work on maintaining and building effective relationships is ongoing. Some highlights include:
  - Partnering with Transport for NSW to deliver Byron Bus Interchange and collaborate on major transport routes including Ewingsdale Road;
  - Participating in DPIE-Crown Lands Executive and Operational Working Groups to represent local councils' interests;
  - Regional collaboration via the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation of Councils on housing affordability challenges;
  - Delivery of \$25M in road and tourism infrastructure projects working with the Department of Regional NSW.



**85% of Council's policies are current or under active review.** All adopted policies are published on Council's website.



# Awards and Recognition

## 2019 Local Government Sustainable Procurement Award

The awards recognise excellence and best practice in the field of procurement in the Local Government sector. Council was recognised for the Bangalow Bridges Renewal project involving the replacement of five old timber bridges in the Bangalow area with repurposed steel bridges from the Australia Defence Force (ADF).

## 2019 NSW Food Surveillance Champion Awards

Byron Shire Council's Environmental Health team took out one of the top gongs at the 2019 NSW Food Surveillance Champion Awards. The team won the regional award for outstanding performance and achievement in food safety for its work with festivals and markets. Byron Shire hosts the largest number of festivals outside the Sydney area. Pre-Covid-19, there were between 90-100 festivals or events a year with new ones continually emerging, and the team inspected around 800 food businesses at festivals and events.

## NSW Local Government Excellence in the Environment Award

Council's Butt Free Byron Shire campaign won a NSW Local Government Excellence in the Environment Award for Community Waste Services. The campaign aims to reduce litter in Shire, with a focus on cigarette butts, and has been hugely successful with a 78 percent reduction in cigarette butt litter over 12 months.

## Statewide Risk Management Excellent Awards – Strategic / Enterprise Risk Initiative

Council was the proud recipient of an award for our fraud and corruption policy in the Strategic/Enterprise Risk Initiative category, recognising excellence for a risk initiative which promotes improvement at a higher/organisational level, addresses risks impacting the whole organisation, or relates to organisational decision-making or management planning.

## Australian Institute of Landscape Architects' National Award of Excellence for Play Spaces

Byron Bay's Railway Park won the National Award for Excellence in Play Spaces. Judges described the Railway Park play space as "a sensitive and purposeful collaboration between the Council, the local community and the region's Aboriginal community, the Arakwal People".

## **AILA NSW Awards Landscape Architecture**

Byron Shire Council's redevelopment of Railway Park won two awards at the 2020 NSW Landscape Architecture Awards. Railway Park was named a winner in the Parks and Open Spaces division and the bespoke playground won an award in the Play Spaces section – both were the outstanding work of local landscape architect firm, Plummer and Smith.

## **2020 Local Government NSW AR Bluett Award**

Byron Shire Council took second place in the quest for the most prestigious honour given to a council in NSW. The AR Bluett Award has been presented annually since 1945 and is given to the Council in NSW, which is regarded to be the most progressive, across all areas of operation, in a 12-month period.

## **Local Government NSW Culture Change, Innovation and Excellence**

The Talking Future Tourism engagement program undertaken to inform Byron Shire Council's Sustainable Visitation Strategy was highly commended at the prestigious Local Government NSW Awards.

## **Local Government NSW Environment Awards**

Council was the overall winner of the 'Innovation in Planning, Policies and Decision Making' section for its Biodiversity Conservation Strategy 2020-2030. Council's Biodiversity Conservation Strategy includes a plan with 90 measurable actions to support conservation across all departments, on private land and in adjacent Local Government Areas.

