

1. Notice of Motion – Acquisition of low-lying, high-risk rural floodplain areas

An investigation on the acquisition of low-lying, high-risk rural floodplain areas will be conducted and options will be provided to Council for feedback through a workshop later in 2023 regarding a policy position.

2. Retail water customer account assistance

The General Manager has delegation to approve financial assistance by application of Council's "Retail Water Customer Account Assistance" policy equating \$25,000.00.

Due to the 2022 flood, an increase of water leaks was experienced and demand for financial assistance also increased. The Finance department proposed to reallocate \$25,000.00 of budget for additional assistance.

At today's meeting (21 June 2023), Council discussed and resolved the budget for customer account assistance to now equate to \$50,000.00 for the current financial year.

The Finance staff will continue to seek approval from the General Manager to grant the recommended financial assistance where required.

3. Appointment of Chair and Independent External Member – Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee

Mr Brian Wilkinson's four (4) year term as Independent Chair of the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee will expire in September 2023 and Council formerly acknowledged and thanked his contributions made to the committee.

A recruitment process was conducted resulting in two preferred candidates. Council resolved to appoint the preferred candidates being:

- Laurie Lefcourt as Chair for a four (4) year term commencing at the conclusion of the hand over period, and
- Raymond Wong as Independent Member for a four (4) year term.

4. Statement of Commitment

Over the past 18 years, Rous has developed a strong track record of working together in partnership with local First Nations people and Elders.

In 2013, Council resolved to develop the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), adopted its first RAP in accordance with the Reconciliation Australia framework in 2016, and an Innovate RAP in 2021. Key actions endorsed include:

- building and nurturing a working relationship with Traditional Custodians
- preparing and delivering cultural awareness training for all staff
- establishing a RAP Advisory Group
- participating in NAIDOC Week celebrations
- working toward the active employment of First Nations peoples.

The RAP Advisory Group consists of a Rous Councillor, Traditional Custodians, Local Aboriginal Land Council representatives, as well as other relevant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders.

The Group provides advice to Council to support the implementation of the RAP and is instrumental in assisting Rous with building positive, respectful relationships between First Nations Australians and our broader community.

A Statement of Commitment is a step forward in declaring why these relationships are essential to Rous and acknowledgement that consultation regarding Aboriginal cultural heritage matters when it comes to progression of projects like the Future Water Project (eg. the Dunoon Dam proposal).

Council resolved that the below draft Statement of Commitment be endorsed as presented at today's meeting.

“Rous County Council is committed to collaborate with the peoples of the Bundjalung Nation to manage the land and environments on which we conduct our work.

Since 2002, Rous has worked purposefully with Traditional Custodians in our drinking water catchments. This journey has laid a solid foundation on which we will continue to build a strong and long-lasting relationship with the region's Bundjalung peoples.

We acknowledge that the peoples of the Bundjalung Nation were the first people of this land and are one of the oldest continuing living cultures in the world.

We recognise and respect the sacred links and responsibilities that exist between Aboriginal people and the land and water upon which we all live. We recognise the injustices of the past and the harmful consequences which resulted in fractured connections within and between families, communities and to Country.

Wherever we can, we will work with the peoples of the Bundjalung Nation to redress the effects of our shared history. We will sit with, listen to, and learn from, local First Nations peoples. We will better understand, acknowledge, and raise awareness of the historic events and ideas that caused pain and hardships, but which continue to influence daily life and result in hurt and harm in our community today.

We will work with the peoples of the Bundjalung Nation to care for the land on which we conduct our work – this includes adhering to the principles of the Burra Charter to manage cultural heritage sites, and to help restore the deeply important cultural obligations and responsibility to Country of our First Nations communities.”

5. Revised Terms of Reference – Reconciliation Action Plan Advisory Group

The Reconciliation Action Plan Advisory Group (RAPAG) role is to support the strategic direction of Rous with respect to local Aboriginal history, culture and enhancing engagement with the First Nations community across the operational footprint of Rous.

The Terms of Reference have been revised and updated as part of the normal review cycle in consultation with the RAPAG members.

Council endorsed the draft 2022/24 Terms of Reference for the Reconciliation Action Plan Advisory Group.

6. Procurement policy

Council currently has in place a Procurement policy adopted in 2014, prior to the amalgamation of Rous Water, Richmond River County Council and Far North Coast County Council. To align with the first pillar of Council's current Business Activity Strategic Plan – Sustainable Delivery – and the principles of sustainable procurement as outlined in ISO 20400:2017, this pre-amalgamation policy has now been revised.

Prepared by the Governance, risk and Procurement team, general feedback was sought from the Council's leadership team on the revised policy. With targeted feedback sought from Planning and Delivery and Operations staff most commonly responsible for high value procurement activities, to ensure the proposed policy principles were practical and could be applied at an operation level.

The beforementioned feedback has now been incorporated into the revised Procurement policy and associated procedures, where appropriate.

Council resolved to adopt the new policy that will align with Council's strategic direction as well as international standards on sustainable procurement.

7. Information Reports

i) Investments – May 2023

- The RBA cash rate is 3.85%
- Total funds invested is \$37,647,829
- Weighted Average Return is 4.19%
- Interest earned is \$146,231
- Cheque account balance is \$148,455
- Weel account balance is \$25,016
- Ethical holdings is \$4,999,632 (13.28% of current holdings)

ii) Water production and consumption – May 2023

The table below is the May 2023 bulk water sales to the constituent councils in kilolitres compared to the corresponding March sales for 2022 and 2021.

Council	May 2021 (kL)	May 2022 (kL)	May 2023 (kL)	% of Total Sales
Ballina Shire Council	297,070	284,140	305,501	37.8%
Byron Shire Council	187,394	171,100	216,971	26.84%
Lismore City Council	241,395	232,026	236,930	29.31%
Richmond Valley Council	44,392	39,627	48,881	6.05%
TOTAL MONTHLY CONSUMPTION BY CONSTITUENT COUNCILS	770,251	726,893	808,283	

iii) Audit Risk and Improvement Committee – meeting update

Council resolved to receive and note the minutes from the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee meeting of 22 May 2023.

iv) Reports/Actions pending

The Reports/Actions pending were received and noted by Council.

8. Confidential Matters

Chair's Minute – Annual Performance Review: General Manager

Council unanimously approved the General Manager's Annual Performance Review.

Council's business paper and draft meeting minutes can be found via the following link:
<https://rous.nsw.gov.au/business-papers-and-meeting-minutes>