



SUPPLEMENTARY ITEMS
BUSINESS PAPER

ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL

To be held on

Wednesday, 9 December 2020
4pm

at

Guyra Council Chamber

Members

Viv May PSM - Interim Administrator

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

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Item:	8.2	Ref: AINT/2020/38906
Title:	Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027, Delivery Program 2018-2021 and Resourcing Strategy 2020-2021: Public Exhibition	Container: ARC17/2315
Responsible Officer	Acting Director Organisational and Corporate Services	
Author:	Renata Davis, Principal Advisor - Corporate Planning	
Attachments:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Draft Community Strategic Plan 2017-20272. Draft Delivery Program 2018-20213. Draft Resourcing Strategy 2020-20214. Summary of IP&R Changes	

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to endorse for public exhibition the Draft Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027, Draft Delivery Program 2018-2022 and Resourcing Strategy 2020-21, as reviewed, to:

- align to extend legislative timelines for Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R);
- adopt previously exhibited Delivery Program 2018-2021 changes; and
- meet the requirements of Council's Special Rate Variation application to IPART.

2. OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION:

That Council

- Endorse the following documents for public exhibition for a minimum of 28 days, pursuant to the requirements of the Local Government Act 1993:**
 - Draft Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027;**
 - Draft Delivery Program 2018-2022; and**
 - Draft Resourcing Strategy 2020-2021.**
- Note the inclusion in the Draft Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027, Draft Delivery Program 2018-2022 and Draft Resourcing Strategy 2020-2021 of Armidale Regional Council's intention to apply to IPART for a Special Rate Variation, at a rate to be determined following public consultation.**
- Following the exhibition, a report be presented to Council, which outlines community feedback, along with the final Integrated Planning and Reporting Plans for adoption.**

3. Background

The review of the Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027, Delivery Program 2018-2021 and Resourcing Strategy 2020-2021 is in response to legislative timeframe adjustments and regulatory compliance, and in preparation for Council's Special Rate Variation (SRV) application in 2021.

In response to COVID-19, the NSW Government extended a number legislative timeframes. These changes included postponing the Council Elections that were due to be contested in 2020 to the new date of 4 September 2021.

Accordingly, the Council's current Delivery Program will apply for a further 12 months and any proposed additional activities, that are significantly different to those in the existing document, are required to be placed on public exhibition.

It has also come to Council's attention that a series of minor changes to the Delivery Program 2018-2021 were placed on public exhibition, but not included in the suite of Integrated Planning and Reporting documents adopted on 26 June 2019. Those changes are included in the Draft Delivery Program 2018-2022 attached to this report and are recommended for public exhibition.

Additionally, at the Ordinary Council Meeting on 28 October 2020, Council resolved to commence community engagement on a proposed Special Rate Variation application and to formally notify IPART that Council intends to submit a Special Rates Variation. In order to comply with the expectations of IPART, Council must review the Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027, Delivery Program 2018-2021 and Resourcing Strategy 2020-2021 to include reference to its intention to apply.

4. Discussion

Council must comply with the requirements of the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework, as required by the NSW Local Government Act 1993, and NSW Local Government (General) Regulation 2005.

The IP&R Framework is built on a quadruple bottom line, that is, the pillars of sustainability of economy, social, environmental and civic leadership. The framework requires the development, implementation and review of the following planning components:

- A Community Strategic Plan (covering a timeframe of at least 10 years);
- A Delivery Program (four-year plan aligned with the term of each council);
- An Operational Plan and Budget (one-year plan);
- A Resourcing Strategy – comprising the Long Term Financial Plan (10-year plan), Workforce Management Plan (four-year plan) and Asset Management Strategy and Plans (10-year plan)

A full review of the Community Strategic Plan, including extensive community consultation, and the development of a new Delivery Program will occur following the Council Elections on 4 September 2021.

The purpose of this review is to adopt a number of small, but significant, changes such as the addition of Council's intention to apply for a Special Rate Variation, in accordance with the advice of the NSW Government:

"The existing Delivery Program will apply for a further 12 months, maintaining the key themes and any activities not yet completed. Where additional activities are proposed that are significantly different to those identified in the existing Delivery Program, the usual public exhibition requirements will apply."

Delivery Program 2018-2021

In May 2019, Council placed a revised Delivery Program 2018-2021 on public exhibition as part of the Operational Plan and Budget process. The Delivery Program changes were exhibited to the public and no specific submissions were made on the changes, however the Delivery Program was an omitted attachment from the final documents and did not get formally adopted. Those changes are included in this report for formal adoption.

The changes were derived through consultation with Councillors were aimed at creating more achievable, well-communicated Principal Activities. The specific changes to the Delivery Program are attached in a separate summary document.

Council has also extended the timeframe of the Draft Delivery Program to 2018-2022 to reflect new legislative requirements and deadlines.

Special Rate Variation

In 2021 a temporary Special Rate Variation of 10% (above the rate peg) applied by the former Armidale Dumaresq Council over a seven year period will expire, reducing Council's overall rates income by \$1.5 million annually. Funding generated from the temporary Special Rate Variation has paid for key asset renewal programs including the maintenance and renewal of community assets including roads, bridges, storm water drainage and facilities.

On 28 October 2020, Council resolved to begin public engagement on three SRV options, to formally notify IPART that Council intends to submit an SRV application, and to include rates harmonisation in the community engagement.

The Special Rate Variation process is an extensive process of economic analysis, asset assessment, community engagement and applications. IPART has advised that as part of the preparation, Council should ensure that its intention to apply for the Special Rate Variation is outlined clearly in its IP&R documents.

Council has modified the Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027, Delivery Program 2018-2021 and Resourcing Strategy 2020-2021 accordingly, and the revised draft documents will be placed on public exhibition for 28 days, as required by the Local Government Act 1993.

5. Implications

5.1. Policy

As outlined in the report.

5.2. Risk

The adoption of the Delivery Program 2018-2022 will ensure that Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting documents are aligned with revised legislative timeframes, and that previously exhibited Delivery Program changes are formally endorsed by Council.

It is necessary to update the Community Strategic Plan, Delivery Program and Resourcing Strategy to meet the requirements of the Special Rate Variation process and be able to submit a successful application to IPART for the 2021-2022 financial year.

Not undertaking the recommended Special Rate Variation steps could result in the inability to, at a minimum, retain the existing temporary Special Rate Variation and result in a significant detrimental impact on the 2021-2022 budget and ongoing.

5.3. Sustainability

The IP&R suite of documents supports financial and corporate sustainability by providing an annual works plan for the organisation, which supports the medium and long-term planning of the Delivery Program and Community Strategic Plan.

These documents also contains a number of actions and initiatives based on improved environmental sustainability to be delivered during the 2020-2021 Financial Year.

5.4 Financial

A considerable amount of effort and resources has been committed to the Special Rate Variation process to date. This work has been funded in the current 2020-2021 Budget and outlined in the 2020-2021 Operational Plan.

The rating impacts of SRV scenarios have been communicated to the community. The following SRV options have been proposed:

1. A permanent SRV of 18.5% plus 2.0% rate peg (total 20.5%) commencing in 2021-22;
2. A permanent SRV of 8.5% plus 2.0% rate peg (total 10.5%) commencing in 2021-22; and
3. Discontinuation of the temporary SRV of 10% (above the rate peg) applied by the former Armidale Dumaresq Council and ending on 30 June 2021.

6. Consultation and Communication

The Draft Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027, Draft Delivery Program 2018-2022 and Draft Resourcing Strategy 2020-2021 will be placed on public exhibition for 28 days. This process will coincide with an extensive program of community engagement for feedback on the three Special Rate Variation scenarios. The feedback from the public exhibition will be reported back to Council and the final documents will be presented for adoption in January 2021.

7. Conclusion

As part of the Special Rate Variation application process, and to ensure compliance with legislative requirements, Council officers seek endorsement to place the Draft Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027, Draft Delivery Program 2018-2022 and Draft Resourcing Strategy 2020-2021 on public exhibition for 28 days.

Item:	9.4	Ref: AINT/2020/43844
Title:	Former War Memorial Library Building – Lease to University of New England Building.	Container: ARC16/0875-4
Responsible Officer	Acting Director Organisational and Corporate Services	
Author:	Will Winter, Principal Advisor Economic Development	
Attachments:	Nil	

1. Purpose

To delegate the General Manager authorisation to contract with UNE Smart Region Incubator (SRI) for the lease of the former Memorial Library Building located at 142 Faulkner Street.

2. OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

- a. Authorise the General Manager to negotiate an agreement between Council and the University of New England Smart Region Incubator for a lease of 124 Faulkner Street previously known as the Armidale War Memorial Library, for delivery of business support and mentoring programs aimed at strengthening the business and social wellbeing of the Region.**
- b. Provide a concession within the terms of the lease which takes into account the investment by the University of New South Wales in Council's asset.**
- c. Proceeds with the lease in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Act.**

3. Background

Over the past fourteen months the University of New England, through its Smart Region Incubator, has expressed interest to lease the former War Memorial Library Building as a space to grow regionally based businesses, through digital and face to face connections with investors, mentors and groups of community stakeholders. The proposal offers practical solutions to the findings of two business symposia hosted by Council in 2019, in which business to business mentoring programs were identified as a high priority. The proposed lease will bring UNE-SRI's skills and networks to the CBD of Armidale, creating a tangible nexus for 'town with gown' initiatives and generating both pedestrian and vehicular traffic for local businesses. It will enable further expansion of SRI successes which, over four years since its inception, has assisted more than fifty eight start ups and created in excess of one hundred and fifty jobs across the New England North West Region.

The proposed lease will be enabled by public safety building upgrades completed by Council in 2020. A multiple year lease will provide UNE-SRI with sufficient time to capitalise on up-front building fit-out capital expenses estimated at \$600,000, budgeted in the first half of 2021. These capital expenses will be complemented by further allocations by UNE of approximately \$300,000 for delivery of business support programs through the business hub over the first two years, commencing July 2021.

4. Discussion

The proposed Contract with UNE will be informed by a recent estimate of the commercial value of the 540m² space to be leased. The commercial value of these potential revenue streams for Council will be offset by a reduced annual lease for the building which takes into account the value of capital works proposed by UNE. Consideration may also be given to the programming offered and likely economic benefits to flow from this investment to the wider community. These benefits include additional employment, increased investment and growth in gross regional product attributable to start-up businesses involved, and business efficiencies enabled via the Centre's programs.

5. Implications

5.1. Policy

This proposal will help to realise economic development objectives the Economic Development Strategy and Community Strategic Plan.

5.2. Risk

All matters concerning Council's risk will be considered as part of the lease development.

5.3. Sustainability

This program allows businesses the opportunity to maintain their sustainability throughout this economic climate and into the future.

5.4. Financial

This agreement includes UNE's agreement to fund utility expenses and upkeep of the building. It is expected that, apart from minor repairs and maintenance to the building structure, the agreement with UNE is likely to reduce operational cost savings for Council.

6. Consultation and Communication

The proposed agreement between UNE-SRI and Council will enable fulfilment of objectives determined through two business symposia in 2019. The initiative will also help to build pedestrian and vehicular traffic in the Armidale CBD aligned with Mall vibrancy plans, and help to provide an exciting platform for the development of practical, outward facing 'town with gown' collaborations over the next ten or so years.

Subject to the terms of the lease public notice may need to be given.

7. Conclusion

General Manager authorisation to contract a lease agreement with UNE-SRI for 124 Faulkner Street will enable the utilisation of a valuable Council-owned asset, for the achievement of business and Regional economic growth objectives over the next decade and beyond, while helping to reduce annual operational costs for Council.

Item:	9.5	Ref: AINT/2020/43853
Title:	Updated Financial Statements for Year Ended 30 June 2020 Container: ARC17/1711	
Responsible Officer	Interim General Manager	
Author:	Brad Munns, Financial Accountant	
Attachments:	1. General Purpose Financial Statements FY2020 v3 2. Special Purpose Financial Statements FY2020 v3	

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to recommend the adoption of the revised draft financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2020, as attached. The previous sets of financial statements adopted by Council on 23 September 2020 were presented for audit in accordance with Section 413(1) of the *Local Government Act 1993*. The revised draft financial statements, as attached, reflect the recommended audit and disclosure amendments which have impacted on the results for the year.

2. OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION:

That Council:

- a. Adopt the Updated Draft Financial Statements for the Year Ended 30 June 2020, as presented.**
- b. Authorise the Interim Administrator, Acting General Manager and Responsible Accounting Officer to sign the Statements by Councillors and Management on the preparation of the General Purpose and Special Purpose Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2020 as prescribed by Section 413(2)(c) of the *Local Government Act 1993*.**
- c. Authorise the Acting General Manager to issue the audited Financial Statements for the Year Ended 30 June 2020 immediately upon receipt of the Auditor's Reports subject to there being no material audit changes or audit issues.**

3. Background

Section 416 (1) of the *Local Government Act 1993* requires that a Council's financial reports for a year must be prepared and audited within four months after the end of that financial year.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Office of Local Government extended the lodgement date from four months to five months. Council received a request from the auditor to apply for a further extension of time and the Office of Local Government granted a further extension until 23 December 2020.

The Responsible Accounting Officer is required to prepare a set of statements in the approved form in accordance with the:

- *Australian Accounting Standards;*
- *Local Government Act 1993;*
- *Local Government Regulations;* and
- *Local Government Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting.*

4. Discussion

The Updated Draft Annual Financial Statements for the Year Ended 30 June 2020 are attached to this report.

There are 2 sets of independent financial statements:

- a) General Purpose Financial Statements (Consolidated Fund); and
- b) Special Purpose Financial Statements (Water and Sewer Funds).

The first draft financial statements, adopted by Council on 23 September 2020 were referred to audit in accordance with Section 413(1) of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

During the year, there were 5 transactions/issues of significance which required separate disclosure in the financial statements:

1. The Introduction of new accounting standards which impacted on the recording of income, Contract liabilities and contract assets;
2. The Tingha Boundary Adjustment which was effective 1 July 2019 resulted in the transfer of \$40.4 million of net assets from Council to Inverell Shire Council at nil consideration;
3. The receipt by Council of Crown Land parcels devolved from the NSW State Government;
4. The recognition by Council of RFS Fleet assets; and
5. Land and Property noted as available for sale required reclassification from existing asset registers.

Audit has substantially completed the audit and provided Council with amendments to the first set of draft financial statements. Council has accepted the audit amendments and reflected those amendments in the attached updated draft financial statements.

5. Implications

The impact of the amendments is outlined in the table below:

First Draft	First Draft Financial Statements \$	Amendment \$	Updated Draft Financial Statements \$
Total Income	82.0m	14.5m	96.5m
Total Expenses	76.3m	0.1m	76.4m
Net Operating Result from continuing operations	5.7m	14.4m	20.1m
Loss on Boundary Adjustment	-	(40.4m)	(40.4m)
Net Result for the year	5.7m	(26.0m)	(20.3m)
Gain on revaluation	4.4m	2.9m	7.3m
Other movements (Tingha Boundary Adjustment, Crown Land, RFS assets)	(30.9m)	30.9m	-
Total Comprehensive Income	(20.8m)	7.8m	(13.0m)

First Draft	First Draft Financial Statements \$	Amendment \$	Updated Draft Financial Statements \$
Total Assets	945.1m	2.8m	947.9m
Total Liabilities	78.7m	(7.6m)	71.1m
Net Assets	866.4m	10.4m	876.8m

Key performance indicators are included in Note 29(a) for the Consolidated entity and Note 29(b) for individual funds in the General Purpose Financial Statements.

The draft Financial Statements were submitted to the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee for review on 15 September 2020.

The Statements by Councillors and Management were signed on 23 September 2020 and the completed set of draft Financial Statements were referred to Council's Auditor.

Upon receipt of the Auditor's Reports, the audited Financial Statements and Auditor's Reports will be placed on public display for comment with written submissions required to be lodged within 7 days.

The signed audited Financial Statements, together with the signed Auditor's Reports will be presented to the public at a Council meeting in accordance with Sections 418(2) and 419(1) of the Local Government Act 1993. Council's Auditor will attend the meeting.

The audited Financial Statements will form part of Council's 2019-2020 Annual Report.

5.1 Policy

There are no policy implications for Council associated with this report.

5.2 Risk

The Australian Government, under the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013, requires all Commonwealth entities to establish and maintain appropriate risk management systems and have an audit committee. The Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014 and Commonwealth Risk Management Policy 15 prescribe the requirements for how risk is to be managed.

5.3 Sustainability

This report contributes to the delivery of the Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027: Leadership for the Region Community Outcome 3 – being that Council demonstrates sound organisational health and has a culture which promotes action, accountability and transparency.

5.4 Financial

Preparation of Council's Financial Statements and completion of the annual audit is included in Council's approved budget.

6. Consultation and Communication

Upon receipt of the Auditor's Reports, the audited Financial Statements and Auditor's Reports will be placed on public display for comment with written submissions required to be lodged within 7 days.

7. Conclusion

This report recommends Council adopt and sign the Updated Draft Financial Statements for the Year Ended 30 June 2020. The financial statements will then be issued under delegation if there are no further material audit changes or audit issues discovered as a result of the audit finalisation process.

Item:	10.20	Ref: AINT/2020/43828
Title:	NSW Crown Lands approves transfer of Crown road known as Springhill Lane (application W624284) to Armidale Regional Council Container: ARC16/0001-5	
Responsible Officer	Interim General Manager	
Author:	Scot MacDonald, Director Businesses and Services	
Attachments:	1. Springhill Lane	

1. Purpose

On the 30th November 2020, Armidale Regional Council was advised by NSW Crown Lands it had approved the transfer of Crown road known as Springhill Lane to Council.

2. OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION:

- a. That Council notes the approval by NSW Crown Lands of the transfer of the Crown road known as Springhill Lane to Armidale Regional Council.**
- b. That Council acknowledges the strong community appeal to retain Springhill Lane for public amenity and biodiversity protection.**

3. Background

NSW Crown Lands advertised its intention to dispose of the Crown road known as Springhill Lane in south Armidale.

Council received 34 letters or emails requesting Council acquire Springhill Lane for on-going community and environmental benefit. Council staff and the Administrator inspected the site and met with residents.

At the Ordinary Council Meeting of the 23rd October 2020, a Report to Council recommended ARC seek to have Crown Lands transfer the land to Council at no cost. This recommendation was adopted and Council subsequently wrote to Crown Lands registering its interest in the disposal process.

4. Discussion

Springhill Lane is valued by the community as a walking track. Council staff advised the Lane has high biodiversity values and there have been recordings of Koalas.

Failure to acquire the Lane and retain it for community use would have disrupted connectivity and risked a loss of endangered habitat.

As noted in the September report to Council, acquisition of Springhill Lane aligns with Community Strategic Plan (2017-27) – Environment and Infrastructure : Community Outcome 3 “Regular review of open space related Asset Management Plans to ensure parks, sportsgrounds, water recreation facilities and other open space meets community needs and is provided to an acceptable level of service and accessibility standards”.

5. Implications

Springhill Lane, South Armidale is now retained for community and environmental benefit in perpetuity.

5.1. Policy

No known Policy implications.

5.2. Risk

The operational risk is the future burden on ratepayers to maintain the lane. These operational tasks include signage, weed control, rubbish removal and mitigating fire fuel loads. Staff advised these expenses would be absorbed in the Parks budget, but will require on-going effective financial management from Council to undertake these additional community and environmental functions.

5.3. Sustainability

Council staff advised Springhill Lane consists of koala habitat, endangered ecological communities and functioned as a wildlife corridor. These values will be preserved through acquisition and management by Armidale Regional Council.

5.4. Financial

On acquisition, new signs and gates are anticipated to cost \$3000. This will be charged to Parks maintenance operational budget.

Council staff estimates the cost of maintaining Springhill Lane is \$ 500 per annum.

6. Consultation and Communication

Council staff and the Administrator visited the site and engaged with residents regarding the future of Springhill Lane. Council received 34 letters or emails advocating for the retention of Springhill Lane as a community and ecological asset. On adoption of this report, Council will advise the residents of the approval of transfer of Springhill Lane from NSW Crown Lands to Armidale Regional Council for community use.

Council communications staff will advise the community of the acquisition of Springhill Lane.

7. Conclusion

The community strongly advocated for the acquisition of Springhill Lane to retain it as an asset for perpetuity. Council staff confirmed the Lane has ecological and biodiversity values. NSW Crown Lands has advised Council it has approved the transfer to Armidale Regional Council.

Item:	10.21	Ref: AINT/2020/43902
Title:	Your High Street program grant submission	Container: ARC20/4412
Responsible Officer	Interim General Manager	
Author:	Scot MacDonald, Director Businesses and Services	
Attachments:	1. Your-High-Street-Guidelines	

1. Purpose

To advise Council will be preparing a submission to the NSW Government Department of Planning Industry and Environment program *Your High Street*.

2. OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION:

That Council submit a grant application to the *Your High Street* program managed by the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment to fund improvements to Bradley Street Guyra.

3. Background

In late November 2020, Armidale Regional Council was advised the NSW Department of Planning Industry and Environment had launched a new program *Your High Street* and was calling for grant applications. Council is eligible to apply for the program.

The aim of the program is to “to make permanent changes that improve the amenity of a high street in their area”.

4. Discussion

The NSW Government is endeavouring to revitalise and activate public spaces to assist in the recovery following the Covid19 economic and social restrictions.

The program aims to improve amenity in one High Street in the local government area.

Council staff has recommended focussing on Bradley Street Guyra given the limited funding and ability to add value to the works currently underway in Guyra's high street.

Applying for funding to improve the main street of Guyra aligns with Armidale Regional Council's Community Strategic Plan (2017-2027).

Environment and Infrastructure: Community Outcome #3

- Partnerships with all levels of government to support the provision of improved infrastructure for the region.
- Allocate resources and investigate opportunities to access grants and funding to further improve infrastructure across the region.

Growth, Prosperity and Economic Development: Community Outcome #3

- Provide Central Business District (CBD) infrastructure that supports a more vibrant and varied offering of shopping experiences for tourists.

4.1. Policy

The Project Manager will consider Council's 'Public Art Policy' 2018.

4.2. Risk

Delivering the main street upgrade project in Guyra has encountered delays arising from previously unknown underground fuel tanks. Their removal and remediation has required unexpected costs and associated extra time for project delivery.

Project planning will have to consider any further legacy features of Bradley Street that could lead to additional costs and delivery setbacks.

4.3. Financial

Council plans to apply for the maximum funding limit of \$1,000,000.

There is no co-contribution required from Council.

5. Consultation and Communication

Grant guidelines inform Council of the requirements to consult the community. Given the application closure date of 29 January 2021, this will be challenging. Informal discussions with the Guyra and District Chamber of Commerce have commenced. These will be expanded according to guidelines.

6. Conclusion

The NSW Government's *Your High Street* program is an opportunity for Council to undertake externally funded works on Bradley Street, Guyra to improve public space and assist the community and businesses recover from Covid-19. The program aligns with Council's Community strategic Plan to improve infrastructure including in the CBDs of its centres.

Item:	10.22	Ref: AINT/2020/44065
Title:	Gate and Stock Grid on Public Roads Policy	Container: ARC16/0652
Responsible Officer	Interim General Manager	
Author:	Scot MacDonald, Director Businesses and Services	
Attachments:	1. Draft Gate & Stock Grid on Public Roads Policy	

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Report is to place on public exhibition a draft policy on Gates and Stock Grids on Public Roads for the Armidale Regional Council (ARC) local government area.

2. OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION:

That Council place the draft Policy on Gates and Stock Grids on Public Roads for public exhibition and comment from the 10 December 2020 to 27 January 2021.

3. Background

Council has not harmonised and updated the 'cattle grid' policies of the former Guyra Shire Council and Armidale Dumaresq Council.

A Report to Council was presented to the Ordinary Council Meeting in June 2018, but action was deferred. As a consequence there remain two conflicting policies contributing to confusion and inconsistent advice to landowners and ratepayers as to who bears responsibility and costs associated with gates stock grids on Council roads.

4. Discussion

Stock grids and gates on Council roads are a private benefit to owners of the infrastructure or the landowner that requested the former Armidale Dumaresq Council to construct a grid on a Council road.

The infrastructure causes costs to be transferred to the broader public. These costs include maintenance, administration, dispute resolute and risk management. Grids and gates on public roads inhibit travel and increase costs for road users.

The aim of an equitable grid and gate policy is to assign the costs of the infrastructure to the beneficiaries and not burden the broader community with inequitable expenses.

The Administrator (2016 to 2017) and newly elected Armidale Regional Council failed to harmonise the grid policies of Guyra Shire Council and Armidale Dumaresq Council. The policies were considered in Council in 2018, but action was deferred.

The key conflict in the two policies is regarding ownership. Landowners owned grids in the former Guyra Shire Council. In the former Armidale Dumaresq Council, grids were owned by Council. There is no evidence for the assertion that the merger of the Councils included an undertaking for the new Council to assume ownership of grids and gates on Council roads. The draft policy explains grids on Council roads in the former Armidale Dumaresq Council area will be removed if their ownership is not transferred to a landowner.

Ownership of grids on Council roads by Council is not equitable as the primary beneficiary of the infrastructure is the owner of the asset (or relevant landowner in the case of the former

Armidale Dumaresq Council). Maintenance of these assets cannot be justified given Council's primary responsibilities to maintain public roads and bridges used by the broader public.

Council's role is to regulate road use; any infrastructure built on public roads and fund maintenance of roads and other public infrastructure. Not to fund or maintain private assets or assets that specifically benefit a landowner.

5. Implications

The draft policy states ownership and maintenance of grids and gates on Council roads will rest with the person or business constructing the grid (subject to approval by Armidale Regional Council). Adoption of this draft policy intends all grids and gates on Council roads will be the responsibility of the owner. Including responsibility for maintenance. Maintenance guidelines are outlined in the draft policy.

5.1. Policy

Draft policy to replace POL087.

5.2. Risk

Two conflicting Stock Grid policies across the ARC LGA is an operational, financial and reputational risk. The draft policy proposes an equitable, consistent policy across the Council LGA.

The policy update was deferred in 2018 on the grounds of financial hardship in the rural community. Deferral transferred the risk and cost to the broader community while retaining uncertainty and inconsistency.

5.3. Financial

Council does not budget for Grid management and maintenance on Council roads. Expenditure on grids and gates on Council roads requires less expenditure on roads, bridges and parks across the LGA.

6. Consultation and Communication

To develop the draft policy Council undertook a consultation process with the assistance of GHD. The communications strategy was undertaken in October 2020 and focussed on the Armidale and Guyra branches of NSW Farmers Association. GHD led the primary stakeholders through a discussion process identifying the key issues; former policies and their preferred outcomes. From this consultation, a draft Grid and Gate Policy has been developed.

Council communication staff will promote the exhibition of the draft policy and engage the community through a range of platforms.

7. Conclusion

Two inconsistent grid and gate policies from the former Guyra Shire Council and Armidale Dumaresq Council have not been harmonised and updated. The objective of a new policy is consistency; equity to all ratepayers and assigning responsibility for the cost of this private infrastructure to the owner (or major beneficiary in the former Armidale Dumaresq Council LGA).

The Report recommends the draft policy be placed on public exhibition for an extended period allowing for the Christmas and New Year break.

Item:	11.5	Ref: AINT/2020/43841
Title:	Small Business Relief Grants - Applicant assessment notification Container: ARC19/3530	
Responsible Officer	Acting Director Organisational and Corporate Services	
Author:	Jade Meddemmen, Event & Administration Coordinator	
Attachments:	Nil	

1. Purpose

To advise Council of the recommended applicant recipients for the Small Business Relief Grants (\$2000 cash grant) that have been selected by both independent and ARC panel members.

2. OFFICERS' RECOMMENDATION:

- a. That Council approve the recommended applicants provided in this report for the Small Business Relief Grants.**
- b. That the remaining funds of \$14,000 be reallocated to projects as determined by the General Manager that meet the goals of the grants program being to support local economic stimulus and social positivity post bushfire disaster.**

3. Background

The Small Business Relief Grants were developed and included in the project list utilising NSW State Drought Stimulus Funding. There were 50 x \$2,000 grants available, applications were open from 2 October 2020 and closed 30 October 2020. The grants were advertised via the following channels; Social media, Radio promotion, Council E-News and Media Releases. A total of 46 applications were received. 43 applicants were deemed eligible and are recommended for funding.

The purpose of the program was to provide an economic boost to the small businesses within the Armidale Region. The grants were to provide opportunity for businesses to sustain their operations through the current economic climate.

4. Discussion

The recommended successful applicants are as follows:

1. Dragon Security Operations
2. Deer Park Motor Inn Armidale
3. New England Ag Solutions
4. Armidale Framing & Art Supplies – Gallery One Two Six
5. AgriBusiness Concepts
6. J.R Evans
7. Country Creations by Michelle
8. Funtastic Family Entertainment
9. N D Joyce Constructions Pty Ltd
10. Khammo
11. Gathered Goods
12. Carr's NewsXpress Armidale

13. Guyra Exhaust Tyre and Battery
14. DJ Wholesale Fruit Market
15. The Travelling Cappuccino
16. Metz Quarry
17. Abbotsleigh Motor Inn
18. Fusspots at Ebor
19. Harwood Swimming
20. New England Collective
21. Travel 195
22. Westwood Motor Inn
23. The Meating Place
24. Richardsons Hardware and Agriculture
25. West Kunderang Recreational Retreat
26. Cedar Lodge Motel
27. Spinners Haven
28. Blanch's Roofing Contractors
29. Freshly Berried/The Clique Curation
30. Armidale Tree Group
31. Chadd Electrical Contractors
32. Echidna Gully
33. Royal Hotel Guyra
34. Top of the Range Shearing
35. Armidale Family Support Service Incorporated
36. Christopher Garrett
37. Brown and Krippner Pty Ltd
38. Ultramac
39. McCann Fine Art
40. Nucleo
41. Melaleuca Enterprises
42. Crop Hair Design
43. Black Heart Games

The three applications that are not recommended for funding were considered ineligible due to the following reasons due to:

- not being defined as a locally owned business
- being a business applying on behalf of community groups
- a potential conflict of interest

Should the above recommendations be adopted, there will be \$14,000 remaining in the program. It is recommended that these funds are reallocated to existing or new projects that meet the original intention of the grants program to enhance the resilience of the local small business community and provide an economic stimulus. This would require a scope adjustment made to the funding body to request this alteration.

5. Implications

5.1. Risk

Reputational risk: Assessment of the applications was completed by both internal ARC staff and also members of the Former *Regional Growth and Place Activation Peak Advisory Committee* so to provide transparency.

5.2. Sustainability

This program allows businesses the opportunity to maintain their sustainability throughout this economic climate.

5.3. Financial

Funding for the grants will be accessed from the NSW State Drought Stimulus Funding as per agreed project delivery list.

6. Consultation and Communication

Local community members were consulted to assist with the assessment process.

7. Conclusion

The above list of grant recipients met the required suitability criteria and is recommended by the assessment panel for endorsement by Council.