

Council News

Winter 2021 edition

Tourism aids region's economic recovery



Mother of Ducks Lagoon, Guyra.

PLUS: Important information about your rates.

See page 2 for details.

Budget and Operational Plan adopted

Important changes to your rates

Save the date: Local Government elections

\$3 million for Creeklands redevelopment

Should the number of councillors be reduced?

Support flows for Malpas Dam upgrade

Message from the Mayor

The 2021 Local Government elections will be held on Saturday September 4. This is an exciting opportunity for those in our community who are passionate about making positive change, to take action and nominate as a candidate.

I encourage as many people as possible to nominate as our region needs a diverse range of effective representatives. The new governing body will need to work collaboratively with Council's management team to ensure that your Council can become a highly respected and effective institution.



Being a councillor has been a major highlight of my career. I have found it an enriching experience and it is in my view the ultimate in community service.

Council's website has a range of helpful information and resources for candidates, including key dates for nominations, how to register to campaign (this is separate to

nominating), and links to helpful information about what is involved in the election process.

This election is also important as it will include a constitutional referendum on whether to retain the number of councillors at eleven or to reduce that number to nine. Electors will be required to answer a simple 'yes' or 'no' to the referendum question and the results of this decision will not come into effect until the 2024 election. The case for both sides can be found on page 3 of this newsletter.

Everyone on the electoral roll is required to vote at the September 4 election. If you are unable to attend a polling booth in person, visit Council's website or the NSW Electoral Commission website for information on pre-poll and postal voting.

On behalf of Council, I thank the community for its input and cooperation through the consultation process for the 2021-22 Operational Plan and Budget. Council held two community information sessions in June, and the draft documents were placed on public exhibition to allow for community input. Council was pleased

to adopt the 2021-22 Operational Plan and Budget at the June 29 Extraordinary Council meeting.

In adopting the 2021-22 Operational Plan and Budget Council is continuing the difficult process of financial recovery. Council is determined to get back to financial basics to ensure a focus on sound service delivery and adherence to core local government values. The 2021-22 budget has been formulated during a challenging period for both Council and the community.

I am excited and most optimistic for the future of the Armidale region. Council has received an unprecedented level of State and Federal grants for projects such as the Armidale Airside Business Park, timber bridges replacements, roads construction, Dumaresq Creeklands restoration, Guyra main street upgrade and much more.

Our region's future is most promising and I believe we are on the cusp of exciting times ahead.

Cr. Ian Tiley
Mayor

Operational Plan & Budget snapshot

The 2021-22 Budget and Operational Plan was recently adopted following a period of community consultation.

The Operational Plan and Budget has a focus on back to basics service delivery and improved financial results and is the first step of a long and disciplined road in maintaining levels of service to the community and improving Council's financial position.

This has been impacted by the recent drought, bushfires, floods and the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2021-22 Draft Operational Plan and Budget attempts to mitigate these impacts as far as possible without cuts to services. The budget position is supported

with strategies to ensure costs are tightly controlled and financial management across the business is a key priority.

There is some good news to come out of the 2021-22 Operational Plan and Budget. Council has been able to take advantage of considerable stimulus funding provided by State and Federal Governments to combat the negative effects of the drought, bushfires and the pandemic.

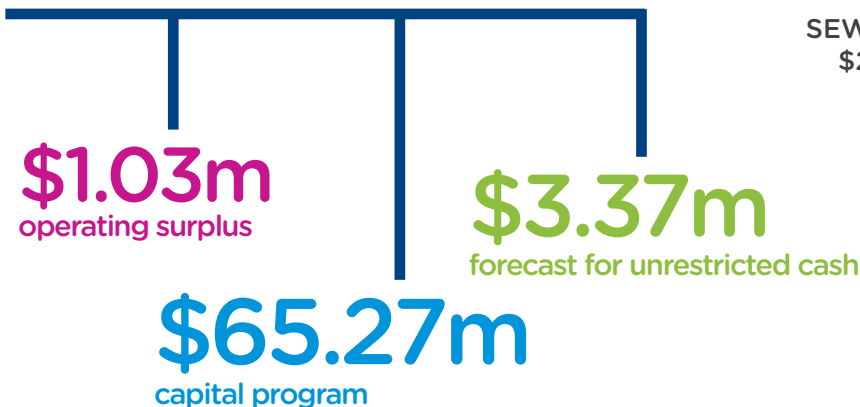
Council was also successful in obtaining approval to turn a temporary Special Rate Variation into a permanent one from 2021-22 financial year. This will provide critical funding for asset renewal.

In 2021-22 Council will direct \$5.8 million into key asset renewal programs including kerb and gutter and footpath replacement, urban and rural road resealing, gravel resheeting, stormwater drainage and building renewals.

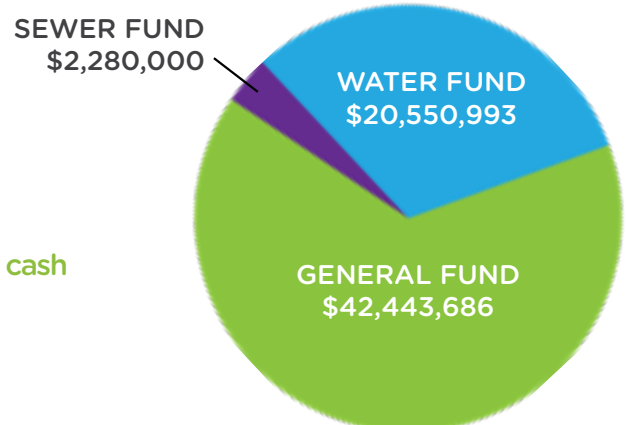
With the inclusion of over \$36 million in capital grants, Council's 2021-22 capital program totals \$65 million.

The next page will show the key projects for the year, as well as information about key changes to fees and charges and where Council's revenue comes from.

Budget overview:



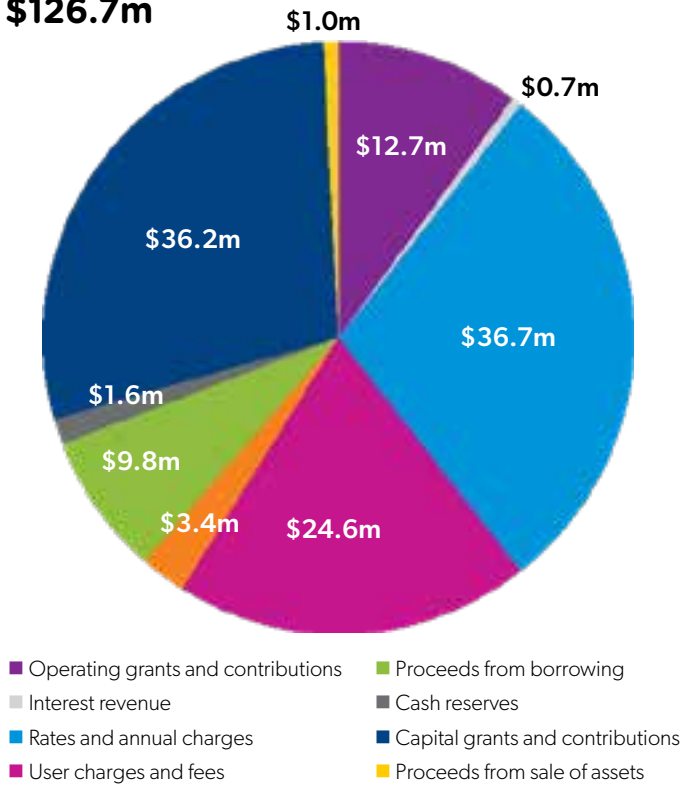
Capital budget:



Budget breakdown:

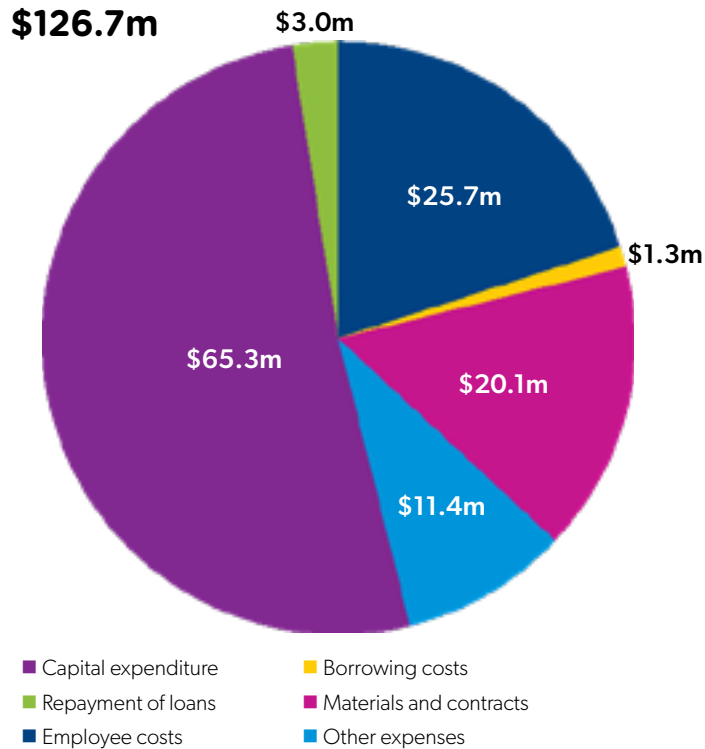
Where will the money come from?

\$126.7m



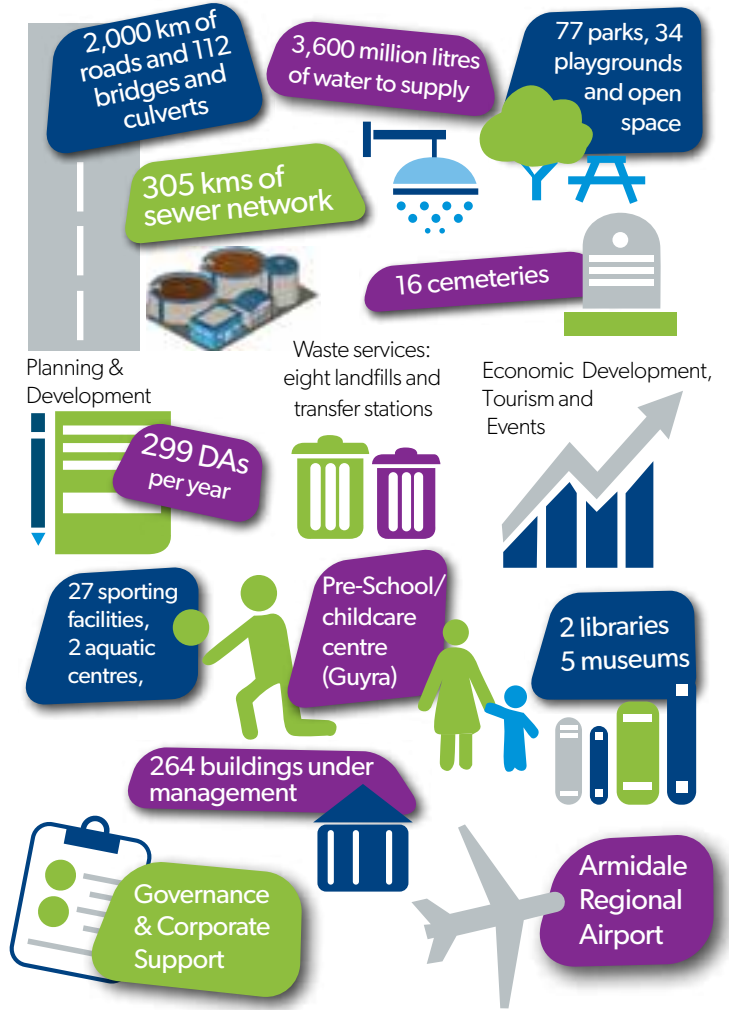
How will the money be spent?

\$126.7m



Your rates in action:

Revenue collected through rates and annual charges is used to maintain and manage community assets and services including:



Visit our website to see the full list of fees and charges for 2021/2022, and how these changes will affect you.

Rates Harmonisation & SRV

Harmonisation: A gradual four year rates harmonisation implementation has been adopted. At the end of the four year period (2024-25), the former Armidale Dumaresq and Guyra Shire will be fully merged under the same rating structure. The one exception is the Armidale-Industrial sub-category that will merge with the Armidale-Business category from July 1 2021.

Note that while harmonisation does not increase the total rates collected by Council, residents may see changes to what they pay as the distribution between some categories will change.

To find out how rates harmonisation affects you, search for the Revenue Policy available on Council's website.

SRV: A permanent Special Rate Variation (SRV) of 10.5% came into effect on July 1 2021 following extensive community consultation and approval by IPART.

This permanent SRV replaces a temporary one that expired in June 2021. The 10.5% includes the annual 2% rate peg increase as also determined by IPART.

For more information about how the SRV affects you, visit our website.

Key projects:

There are 85 projects and programs to be delivered in 21/22 on top of the general services and activities that Council delivers.

Some of these projects include:

- Kempey Rd Disaster Restoration (\$15m)
- Bridge replacements & upgrades (\$4.2m)
- Kempey Rd Big Hill Project (\$4.4m)
- Puddledock water main & pump station upgrades (\$11m)
- Armidale Spring Games (\$135k)
- Rockvale Rd/Marsh St main upgrade (\$1.6m)
- Dumaresq Dam Wall Upgrade (\$3.4m)
- Library infrastructure grant improvements (\$166k)
- Rural & Urban Reseal Program (\$2.8m)



2021 Local Government election

On Saturday 4 September 2021 the community will be required to vote for eleven new Councillors to represent the region over a three year term. The Mayor and Deputy Mayor will then be elected by Council.

This year's election will be held in conjunction with an important constitutional referendum to determine whether the number of Councillors should be reduced from eleven to nine. The result of this won't take effect until 2024.

Those who are passionate about making positive change in our community are also being encouraged to consider nominating as a candidate.

Please note, if you are planning on running as a candidate, before accepting political donations or making payments for electoral expenditure, you must be registered for the election. Accepting political donations includes raising funds through fundraisers.

Electoral expenditure is any expenditure that promotes or opposes a political party or candidate, or influences the vote at the election. To register, visit the NSW Electoral Commission website.

From July 6, you will be able to officially nominate as a candidate.

Visit our website or www.elections.nsw.gov.au for more information about the election and the process for candidates.

Key dates:

Registrations to campaign:

- Now open, closing 12pm 4 August 2021

Nominations for candidates:

- Now open, closing 12pm 4 August 2021

Postal voting:

- Applications open 27 July 2021, closing 5pm 30 August 2021

Pre - poll voting:

- Begins 23 August 2021, closing 3 September 2021.

Election day:

- Saturday 4 September 2021.

For more key dates visit :

www.elections.nsw.gov.au

Are you prepared for the constitutional referendum?

There are a number of important points to consider when voting whether or not the number of councillors should be reduced.

To help you make an informed decision, we have created a list of pros and cons for your consideration.

Should the number of councillors be reduced from eleven to nine?

For

- Savings of \$49,620 per annum (the fee per councillor is \$24,810pa).
- Reduced ongoing costs (minimum \$10,000 per councillor for things such as phones and professional development).
- The current ratio of 1 councillor to 2,792 residents is high compared to other councils.
- Increased efficiency and effectiveness.
- Quality over quantity.
- Many regional councils with larger geographical areas only have nine councillors.

Against

- Financial savings are a small price to pay to ensure good representation.
- Difficult for a small cohort to understand all of the key issues across such a large geographic area.
- May be difficult for nine councillors to support the current number of community advisory committees.
- Community access to councillors may be reduced.
- A larger number of councillors can provide a broader range of perspectives.
- Smaller numbers may lead to Council being controlled by political or self interest groups.
- May be more difficult for lesser known candidates to get elected.

2022 Australia Day awards Nominations now open

Do you know someone who deserves to be recognised for their selfless dedication to the community? Why not nominate them for an Australia Day award?

Nominations open 1 July to 25 November 2021.

Visit the Australia Day page on our website to fill out a nomination form or drop into one of our offices to pick up a hard copy form.



Bradley Street reopens to traffic



Guyra's Bradley Street reopened to traffic on Tuesday 22 June after the installation of a temporary seal was completed, bringing Stage Two of the \$2.7 million reconstruction and upgrade of Guyra's main street a step closer to completion.

Additional works will need to be completed later this year/early 2022 to install the permanent asphalt, as the process requires warmer weather.

Stage Two of Guyra's main street upgrade is a \$450,000 project and has been jointly funded by the NSW Roads to Recovery Program and merger funding.

For more information, visit the Works and Projects page on our website.

Industry & tourism the key to recovery

With its awe-inspiring scenery, quality of life attributes and world-class education facilities, it is no surprise that Armidale, Guyra and surrounding villages are becoming top choices for tree changers. Now there is another drawcard for those looking to make a change and move to the New England.

According to the latest Armidale Regional Council Economic Profile, the region has seen a rise in employment with more than 980 jobs (+6.8%) being added over the past five years. Key areas of growth include health care, transport and logistics, construction and financial service sectors, which together have added 732 jobs. Over the same period the population has become more highly skilled, adding more than 700 additional employees with a diploma or higher qualifications.

This growth is supported by huge investment in industry, such as Costa's Tomato Farm and its recent success in securing Federal funding to install Fibre to the Premises high speed internet.

This will increase internet bandwidth at the Costa site for its hi-tech farming operations and will enable expansion in the use of robotics and artificial intelligence to grow tomatoes, creating new employment opportunities in the region.

In addition to this, the region is seeing large investment in the renewable energy sector. The Metz Solar Farm is being built east of

Armidale, and is expected to create around 200 jobs during the two year construction phase, with roles such as labourers, electricians, forklift and truck drivers, site-based office roles and contractors expected to benefit. This boost will hopefully see a spike in sales for local businesses, with this set to have positive effects on the local economy.

Council has also encouraged this growth through holding large scale events to increase visitor numbers.

The Big Chill Beer and Barbecue Festival and the Armidale Spring Games are prime examples of how we are enticing people to the region. If you want to hear more about all of the exciting things happening across our region, visit our website to subscribe to Council's fortnightly E-news and the weekly What's On calendar.



Important update to stock grids policy

The updated Gates and Stock Grids on Public Roads policy came into effect on July 1, harmonising the former Guyra Shire and Armidale Dumaresq Council policies for the design, installation, maintenance and responsibility for gates and stock grids on Council-owned roads.

Landholders will now be primarily responsible for the maintenance and installation of stock grids and gates.

Council aims to identify private owners for all grids and gates on council roads. Stock grids and gates without a nominated owner by July 2022 may be removed.

Residents and property owners who are the benefactor of a stock grid or gate on a public road should contact council's Maintenance Overseer Fred Noone at fnoone@armidale.nsw.gov.au in order to nominate custody before July 2022.



Grant finder

Your one stop shop for finding grant funding

Armidale Regional Council has joined forces with one of Australia's most powerful grant search engines, Grant Guru, to deliver a free website for business and community grants.

Community members can simply use the search engine to find available grants and filter grants by specifying location, industry and type of project. Visit Council's website or visit armidaleregion.grantguru.com.au

What's On calendar

Keep up to date with everything happening around the region.

You can now subscribe to a weekly What's On calendar sent straight to your inbox.

Visit our website to subscribe.

Support flows for Malpas upgrade

Malpas Dam's spillway will be raised by 6.49 metres based on the recommendations from reports from the NSW Public Works Advisory, the NSW Urban Water Services Armidale Yield Study and the Malpas Dam Upgrade Assessment undertaken by Council staff.

This will increase Malpas Dam's storage from 12.2 gigalitres to 27.6 gigalitres, and while this won't provide the full secure yield required over the 30 year time frame, it will significantly increase the storage volume and will add the capacity to accept pumped inputs from other catchments. Council will now prepare a business case and explore funding options.

Search our website for more information about the project.



Have you seen the new murals in the CBD?



\$3 million for Armidale Creeklands Master Plan

Northern Tablelands MP Adam Marshall recently announced \$3 million from the NSW Government's Public Spaces Legacy Program to start Stage 1 of Council's Creeklands Master Plan. The funding was secured as a result of Council's Development and Planning Team reaching DA targets.

Stage 1 of the redevelopment includes the creek area at Albion Park opposite TAFE and grassed areas adjacent to the Monckton Aquatic Centre and skatepark. The redevelopment will clean up the vegetation and increase visibility in the area.

For more information about the project, search our website.



Do you own a pet?

As a pet owner, you must ensure your dog or cat is:

- Registered
- Microchipped
- Given an identity tag

Visit the Animals and Pets page on our website for information about the requirements of owning a pet, what to do if you've lost or found a pet, how to deal with barking dogs, and where to take your dog for off-leash exercise.

Big Chill Festival highlights

Did you enjoy the Big Chill Beer and BBQ Festival?

After the success of the inaugural event, it will be returning next year.

See some of the highlights below:

2900
attendees

29
trade vendors

21
BBQ competitors



New playground for Wollomombi

Children in Wollomombi are enjoying a brand new playground after the new facility officially opened in May.

The \$100,000 project was funded by the Australian Government's Bushfire Recovery Fund and includes all new equipment, a rope climbing tower, and a new barbecue area.

The equipment received some good use after the community flocked to the official opening event which was funded by the NSW Bushfire Community and Resilience Fund Stream 1 Council Led Community Events.



Missed a council meeting?

We have you covered.

Skip the lengthy agendas and take a look at our simple council meeting wrap-ups.

Head to our website after each meeting to catch up on everything that was discussed.

Need to find a business or community group?

Visit our online community directory today to search or add a business or group.

Council meetings

The general public is welcome to attend any Armidale Regional Council meeting:

- Wednesday 28 July in Guyra
- Wednesday 25 August in Armidale

Seating is limited during COVID-19 restrictions. Register by emailing executiveoffice@armidale.nsw.gov.au

Public Forum

Council holds a Public Forum prior to each Council meeting to hear submissions from members of our community on items of business to be considered at the meeting (Have Your Say) and for invited presentations. The Public Forum is not webcast (live streamed) or recorded. The public is welcome to attend.

For Ordinary Council Meetings, invited presentations take place at 3pm on the day and Have Your Say takes place at 3:30pm on the day.

Catch up on a meeting or watch online

If you missed a council meeting or you can't make it in person, you can watch the live stream via Council's YouTube channel.

A brief meeting wrap-up will be provided in the days following the meeting which can be found in the News section on our website.

Contact Us

Call: 1300 136 833

Email: council@armidale.nsw.gov.au
Visit a Customer Service Centre at:
135 Rusden St, Armidale or
158 Bradley St, Guyra

Follow us



Street names honour airport champions

Two prominent roads in the new Armidale Airside Business Park called Cameron Drive and Waller Avenue commemorate the tireless work of two local champions that have been instrumental in the development of the airport and aviation in the region.

The streets are named after former President of Dunaresq Shire Council Donald Cameron who was instrumental in the main runway being developed from grass to tarmac.

Clive Edmund Gordon Murray Waller was an engineer that came to Armidale in 1949/50 to manage the Government owned Aerodrome in Armidale. Clive would often have to put flares out in the middle of the night to allow flights to land. To read more, visit our website.



Park'nPay app

Armidale Regional Airport now has the NSW Government's Park'nPay smartphone app. Simply download the app to your phone, choose the nearest meter, enter your number plate and parking duration and make payment through the app. You'll then receive reminders when your parking is about to expire, and you will have the option to top up if you need to.

For more information on how to use the app, visit the Park'nPay website.

Have your say

Visit yoursay.armidale.nsw.gov.au to see what's currently on public exhibition and voice your opinion about important issues affecting the region.

Disaster Dashboard now live



The Disaster Dashboard is your one-stop shop for information, advice and alerts about emergencies such as drought, bushfires and floods.

Head to the homepage of Council's website and follow the link to the dashboard.

Works and Projects

Keep up to date with road closures, road works, and major projects by heading to the Works and Projects page on our website.

