



Annual Report 2018-19
Part A - Community Report Card

Part A - Community report card



THIS PAGE: Councillors Jonathan Galletly (top) and Bradley Widders starred in a series of community education videos about the water restrictions and tips for water saving.

COVER: Chalk artist Rudy Kistler was one of the celebrated international performers at the inaugural Colour New England Street Arts Festival.

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Foreword

2018–2019 Annual Report

The Annual Report is one of the many ways Armidale Regional Council reports back to its community and stakeholders. It is one of the key components of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework legislated by the NSW Government.

The Report focuses on the financial and operational performance of Council and provides a snapshot of Council's achievements throughout the financial year.

The Armidale Regional Council 2018- 2019 Annual Report is presented in three parts:

- Part A – Community Report Card
A summary of Council, its operations, major projects and achievements.
- Part B – Statutory Information
A comprehensive report on key indicators and statistics as required by the Office of Local Government.
- Part C – Financial Statements
Independently audited statements that give a detailed picture of the financial management of Council.

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land and pay our respects to elders past and present.

The Armidale regional Community pays tribute to their love of land, love of people, and love of culture.

We all share the beauty of this land, the richness of its soil and the uniqueness of its wildlife.

Let us walk together in the footsteps of love and understanding.

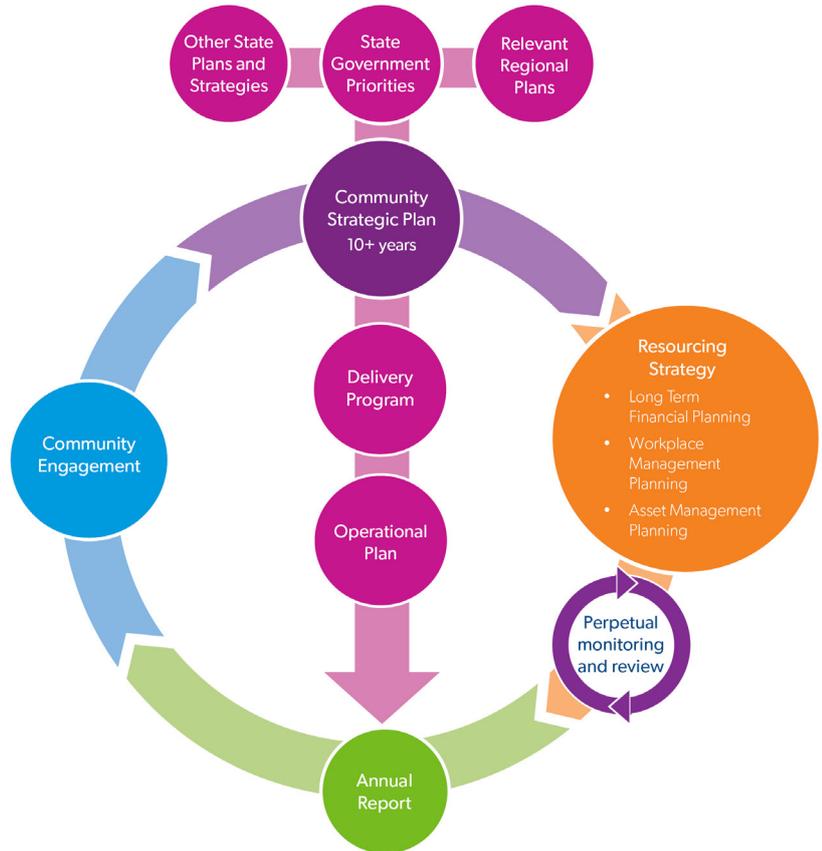
While valuing diversity, let us share the same hope for a better future.

Integrated Planning & Reporting Framework

All NSW councils are required to develop and report on a set of plans and strategies which assist in identifying and responding to community aspirations and needs.

This framework is known as the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework and aims to:

- integrate and streamline statutory planning and reporting
- strengthen strategic focus
- align with national sustainability frameworks
- ensure accountability and responsiveness to local communities



Framework plans & reports

Council has a suite of plans and reports within its Integrated Planning & Reporting framework.

Planning		Reporting
 <p>2018-2019 OPERATIONAL PLAN</p>	<p>Community Strategic Plan (CSP) 2017-2027</p> <p>A 10-year plan outlining the goals and aspirations of the community, captured through extensive community engagement.</p> <p>Delivery Program 2017 – 2021</p> <p>Delivery Program – strategies for the term of the elected Council to achieve the goals of the CSP.</p> <p>Operational Plan 2018-2019</p> <p>Operational Plan – annual plan of actions that support the Delivery Program strategies</p> <p>Resourcing Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asset Management Strategy • Workforce Management Plan • Long-Term Financial Plan <p>A set of plans and strategies to ensure Council has the necessary resources and assets, and that Council plans for the future accordingly.</p>	<p>Annual Report 2018-19</p>
 		<p>Delivery Program report</p> <p>Quarterly Operational Plan report</p>



An Autonomous Vehicle Trial (ARDi) operated by Council and a number of partners began with passenger services at the University of New England campus.

Mayor's Message

2018/2019 was the start of a defining moment in our region's history.

The worst drought in recorded history and the first time water restrictions have been imposed for Armidale town water users, this period is likely to be remembered for how our community dealt with the water shortages.

This issue dominated Council activities during the latter half of 2018/2019, as we took action to supplement and protect our town water supplies, while informing and working with our community for vital reductions in water consumption.

It was the start of a long-running campaign to prolong supplies to our town water customers in Guyra and Armidale, to push back a projected 'day zero' when water reserves were expected to run out, while taking appropriate steps to assist rural residents.

Those actions – and the wonderful response of our community – set us on a positive course to ensure this crossroad in our history is characterised by the resilience and enterprise Council and the community displayed in dealing with this crisis.

That push for great water security included the start of construction of a \$12 million Malpas Dam to Guyra pipeline. In 2018, the NSW Government announced funding for the pipeline to provide a much more secure water supply for Guyra households and business. Its construction was fast-tracked when Guyra's own water supply came within 100 days of running dry, while a milk transporting company was contracted to truck water from Armidale to the Guyra water treatment plant.

Water restrictions were introduced in March – the start of a

steady escalation to the maximum Level 5 restrictions – and a massive community education campaign was implemented to change behavioural change in water consumption.

It has been a harsh lesson for the region, which had previously enjoyed a very high level of water security.

The year was also tinged with a little sadness when the Armidale region bid farewell to Tingha, as a local government boundary realignment moved the township and surrounds to the Inverell Shire Council area. Members of the community had been pushing for the shift, because many residents work and play in Inverell and use its services, and both councils endorsed the move after two rounds of public consultation.

While the councils and community worked together to make the transition as smooth as possible, the area was hit by a terrifying bushfire that affected a number of rural properties and threatened the boundaries of the town. Emergency personnel, community support services and residents rallied wonderfully to manage the crisis, which has proven to be a taste of things to come later in the year.

Our region also had new reasons to celebrate, with the new Colour New England Street Festival and International Buskers Festival.



Councillor Simon Murray

CEO's Message

While the water issue demanded significant Council time and resources, the organisation was forging ahead with its other duties and initiatives.

That included a sweeping transformation of the organisation, dubbed ARC 2022, which was set in motion in late 2018. ARC 2022 is exploring every opportunity to transform the organisation into a progressive regional council that gets things done and positions the region for the long term. It is focused on continuous improvement, from a complete overhaul of the staff structure to relatively minor changes in operating procedure, to maximise Council's cost efficiency and effectiveness to meet community needs.

A 21st Century Libraries Strategy for the Armidale and Guyra libraries, a review of the Guyra Preschool & Long Daycare Centre operations, changes to planning approvals and a Smart Parking strategy for the Armidale CBD were among many ARC 2022 initiatives.

So was a new Armidale Regional Airport Business Park officially launched for development in 2018/2019, coinciding with the completion of a roundabout on the New England Highway to improve access to the site and another industrial park being established.

A revitalisation of the Guyra main street hit an unexpected hurdle when initial excavations found a number of disused fuel tanks beneath Bradley Street. Specialists were engaged to detect any additional tanks, stabilise or remove them and ensure any contaminated soil was properly managed. That cleared the way for Stage 1 of the road's reconstruction to be completed later in 2019.

Council's close cooperation with other organisations in the region included construction of a new State Emergency Services headquarters in Guyra and a Rural Fire Service Logistics Hub, as part of expanding RFS regional activities at Armidale Regional Airport.

At the same time, efficiency improvements, new sources of revenue and reductions in non-essential spending turned a \$3.8m budgeted operating deficit into a \$0.9m deficit



CEO Susan Law

Our Councillors



Mayor Simon Murray



Deputy Mayor Lib Martin



Councillor Peter Bailey



Councillor Jonathan Galletly



Councillor Diane Gray



Councillor Andrew Murat



Councillor Debra O'Brien



Councillor Margaret O'Connor



Councillor Dorothy Robinson



Councillor Ian Tiley



Councillor Bradley Widders

Council meetings

From July 2018 to June 2019, Council held:

* 11 Ordinary Council Meetings

* Two Extraordinary Meetings

Councillor	Ordinary meetings		Extraordinary meetings	
	Attendances	Absences	Attendances	Absences
Cr Murray	11	0	2	0
Cr Martin	10	1	2	0
Cr Bailey	11	0	1	1
Cr Galletly	11	0	2	0
Cr Gray	8	2*, 1	2	0
Cr Murat	10	1	1	1
Cr O'Brien	11	1	2	0
Cr O'Connor	11	0	2	0
Cr Robinson	11	0	2	0
Cr Tiley	9	1*, 1	1	1
Cr Widders	10	1	2	0

* Leave of absence granted

Committees of Council

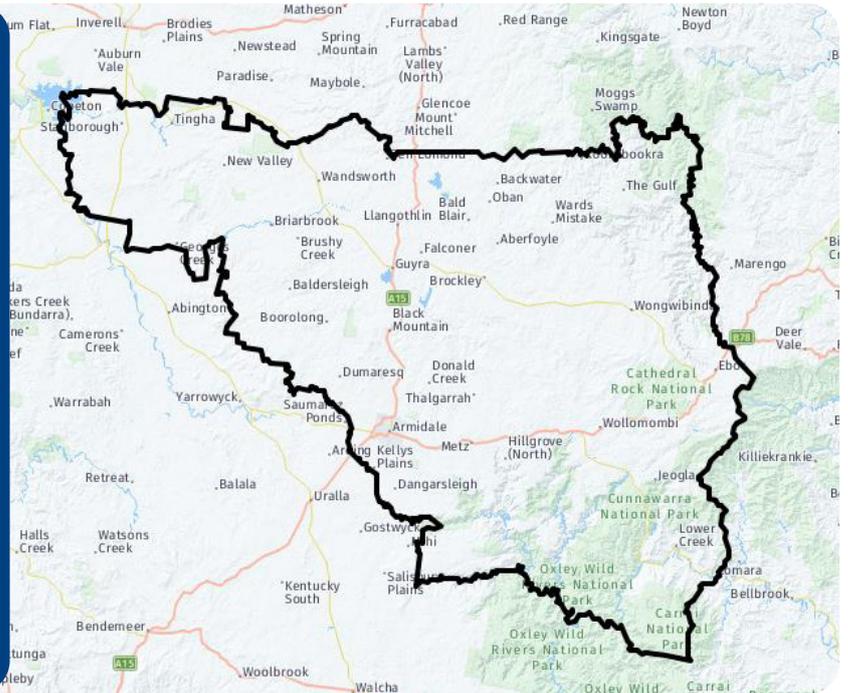
Committees of Council provide an opportunity for councillors to engage directly with community members on key community and Council matters in regular and inclusive meetings.

Councillors who Chair and participate on each of Council's Committees:

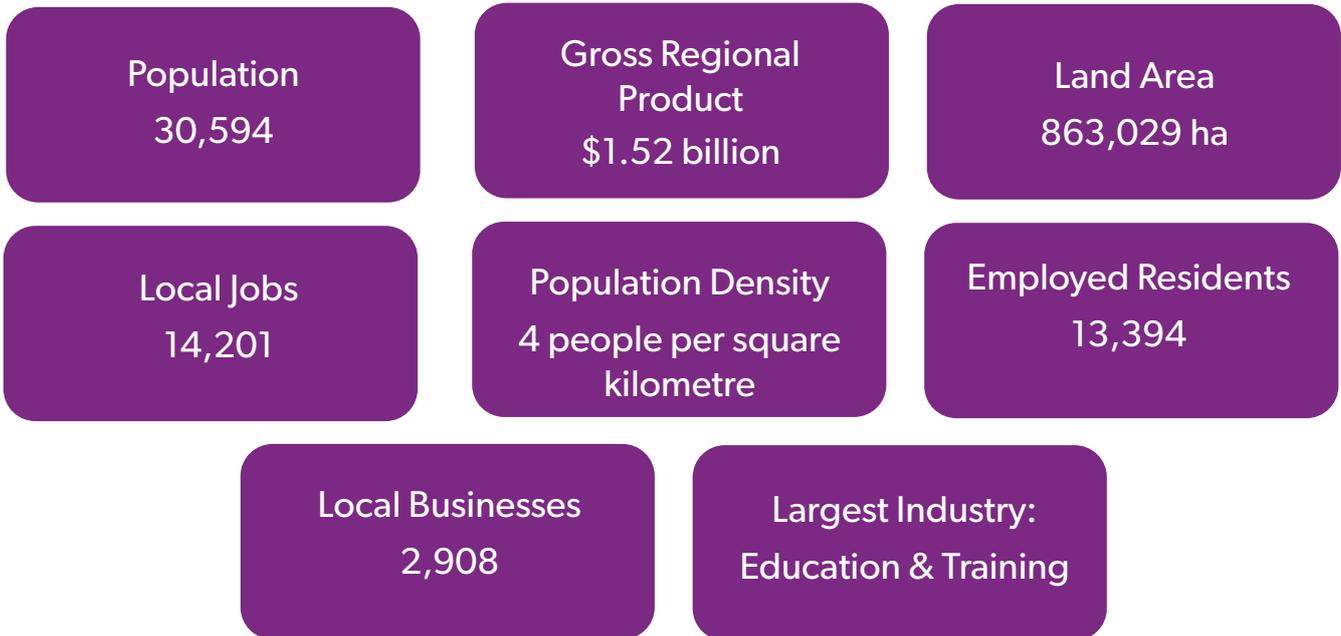
Council Advisory Committees	
Arts and Cultural Advisory Committee	Cr O'Connor (Chair), Cr Gray
Armidale Regional Sports Council (S355)	Cr Widders (Chair), Cr Galletly
Armidale Regional Youth Advisory Committee	Cr Widders
Audit & Risk Committee	Cr Gray, Cr O'Connor
Business Advisory Committee	Cr Gray (Chair), Cr Martin
Community Wellbeing Advisory Committee	Cr O'Brien (Chair), Cr Robinson, Cr Tiley
Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee	Cr Robinson (Chair), Cr Gray
Floodplain Management Advisory Committee	Cr Galletly (Chair), Cr Tiley
Gayinyaga Aboriginal Advisory Committee	Cr O'Brien
Regional Growth Advisory Committee	Cr Bailey (Chair), Cr Murat, Cr Gray
Traffic Advisory Committee	Cr Martin (Chair), Cr Robinson

Our Region & Community

The Armidale Regional Council area is located in the New England Region of NSW, approximately 500km north of the Sydney CBD and 500km south of the Brisbane CBD. Its vibrant, innovative and inclusive community enjoys an enviable mix of rural and regional lifestyles, with vast and productive agricultural land, cohesive local towns and villages, and a progressive Armidale city that provides many essential services to the region.

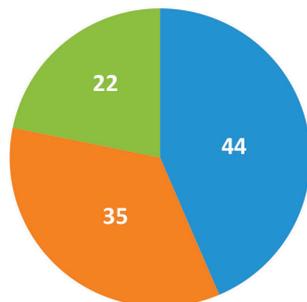


Armidale Region Key Statistics



Our population

-  Under 30 years
-  31- 60 years
-  Over 60 years



Population change during past five years

↑ 2.6%

Our Council

Values and Guiding Principles

Organisational Values

Council Values were updated in June 2019 to better align with the organisation's strategic directions and priorities. These common values, which are promoted across the organisation, are embodied by staff in their approach to working at Council.

Resilient

- Facing issues head-on and be determined to find a solution
- Staying calm when things get tough or complicated
- Believing in yourself

Behavioural statements

- Don't put off the hard stuff. Face problems and issues head on. Be determined to find a solution even if means not keeping everyone happy.
- Keep Calm and Carry On. Don't panic when things get tough or complicated. Stick to your plan or routine.
- Be open to change but also recognise that sometimes you will be out of your comfort zone.

Wellbeing

- A safe and supportive workplace that enable our people and our community to flourish

Behavioural statements

- Build a strategy for wellbeing, to develop a culture of support and performance
- Manage and communicate change effectively
- Manage workloads and develop coping strategies
- Build psychological safety and manage stress
- Mitigate risk factors that can impact on team members and workmates

Unity

- Working together to maximise our achievements.
- Working closely with our community to meet its needs and desires as effectively and cost-efficiently as possible
- Supporting one another to achieve our personal goals and lift the organisation to greater heights

Behavioural statements

- Break down divisions within the organisation – we are all serving the same community and pursuing shared goals.
- By supporting one another and enable each of us to achieve as personal goals, collectively we lift the organisation to greater heights.

Agile

- Adaptable and open to change
- Flexible and capable of adjusting quickly and effectively

Behavioural statements

- Open to change, new technologies and new ways of working
- Aware and responsive to changes in our industry and community
- Dynamic and focused on solutions

Achievement

- Following through, kicking goals and celebrating wins

Behavioural statements

- Have a go and make a difference
- Dynamic and focused on solutions
-

Limitless

- Removing things that restrict our power
- Striving for continuous improvement
- Backing our decisions and exploring ways to make things happen

Behavioural statements

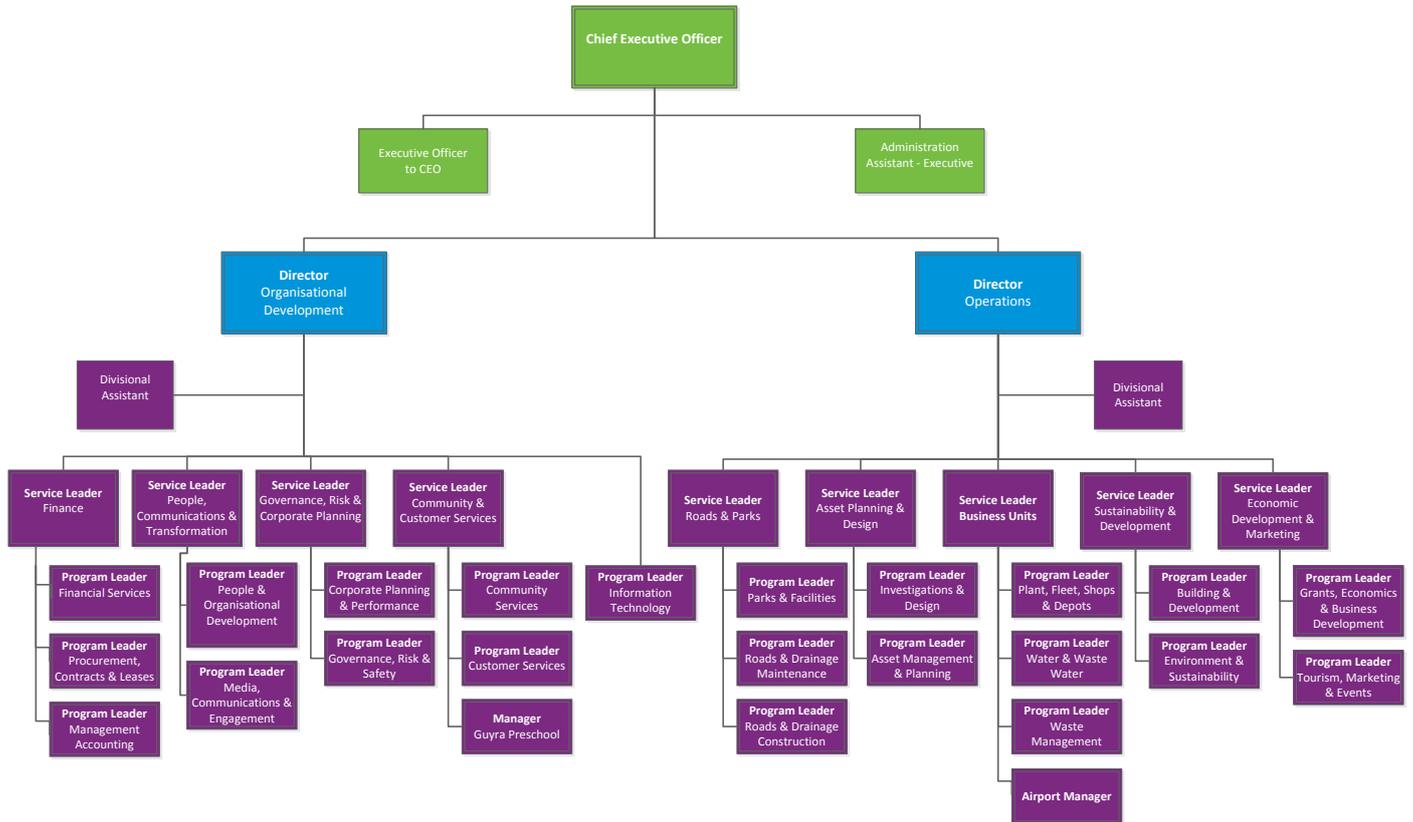
- Always move forward positively in your thinking, customer service and relationships
- Be agile, resilient and challenge the norm

Code of Conduct

Council's Code of Conduct sets the standard for ethical behaviour and sound decision making for Councillors, staff and members of Council Committees.

The Code guides those governed by it to act in a way that enhances public confidence in local government. Councillors, staff and other representatives are responsible for understanding and administering the Code, and Council assists by providing appropriate training.

Organisation structure in 2018-19



Senior Staff 2017-18

Chief Executive Officer



Susan Law

Susan Law began her role as CEO on 23 July 2018, bringing many years' experience in leadership in Local Government - in Australia and overseas. Ms Law also ran a successful business in organisational management, strategic planning, and organisational transformation.

During 2018 and 2019, she implemented an organisation-wide ARC 2022 Transformation Program to embrace new technology and other opportunities to operate more efficiently and cost effectively. This program aligned with substantial improvements to Council's budget bottom line and internal processes.

Group Leaders

Service Delivery - Mark Piorkowski

The Group Leader - Service Delivery is responsible for providing leadership and setting strategic direction for the following service streams: Roads & Parks; Asset Planning & Design; Business Units; Sustainability & Development; and Economic Development & Marketing.



Organisational Services - Lindsay Woodland

The Group Leader Service Delivery is responsible for providing leadership and setting strategic direction for the following service streams: Finance; Information Technology; People, Safety and Communications; Governance, Risk and Corporate Planning; and Community and Customer Services.



Our workforce



- Female staff 30.5%
- Male staff 69%
- Average age of workforce 46 years
- Staff who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 11.9%
- Staff who come from a non-english speaking background 3%
- Staff who identify as having a disability 3%

ARC 2022 Transformation Program

In 2018, Armidale Regional Council embarked on a program to reform the way it works and transform into a progressive Council that seeks opportunities and strives for excellence.

The four-year transformation program, known as ARC 2022, is embracing new technology and other opportunities to help Council operate more efficiently and cost effectively.

Staff have been working in teams to scope and implement projects designed to streamline and improve Council services and strengthen the organisation's financial position. Projects range for small adjustments to sweeping changes, as Council works towards a prosperous future for our region. Some significant project milestones have already been reached, such as completing Phase 1 of the Smart Parking Strategy.

ARC 2022 has achieved substantial improvements in Council's budget bottom line.

ARC 2022 projects started during 2018-2019 include:

- develop an Armidale Regional Airport Business Park
- review commercial opportunities for Council's plant and vehicle fleet
- review Guyra Preschool and Long Daycare Centre operations to maximise its financial viability and sustainability
- review service levels for parks operations
- boost the services, profile and attendances at Monckton Aquatic Centre.
- implement a Smart Parking Strategy to improve the availability of parking in the Armidale city centre
- develop a 21st Century Libraries Strategy to make our libraries more vibrant hubs
- improve efficiencies in customer service
- review Council's organisational structure.
- develop a professional development plan
- develop a Safety Excellence Program for Council staff.

Our Performance



The Community Strategic Plan 2017-2027 was established through an extensive community engagement process and sets out the goals and aspirations of the regional community.

This critical Plan provides the foundation for Council to develop the strategies and actions it will undertake to create the physical, economic and social environment the community seeks.

This section outlines Council's achievements in working towards the goals of the Community Strategic Plan.

Growth, Prosperity & Economic Development

The growth and development of our region has far-reaching and positive impacts on our social and economic quality of life. Council understands the importance of supporting local business, attracting new residents and industry, and promoting technology, education and skill advancements.

Community Strategic Plan outcomes

-  The community experiences the benefits of an increasing population
-  The agricultural sector is supported as one of the pillars of growth and to sustain local and national food security
-  The visitor economy generates additional revenue and employment to boost the local economy and creates opportunities for more vibrant cultural activities
-  Economic development is supported through new initiatives, innovation and additional resources to assist growth of business and industry

Highlights

- \$6 million State Government investment in the Armidale Regional Business Park
- construction of the \$12 million Malpas to Guyra water pipeline for domestic and commercial use
- 10 successful Stronger Country Community Fund grant applications totalling \$ 4.444 million
- the Autonomous Vehicle Trial (ARDi) offers passenger services at the University of New England
- 7.5% increase in visitor numbers to Armidale Visitor Information Centre (50,643)
- support for a \$67 million expansion of the Costa Group's glasshouse tomato production at Guyra
- a dedicated motorcycle map launched as part of New England High Country promotions
- paid parking introduced at Armidale Regional Airport
- successful inaugural Colour New England Streets Arts Festival
- Stage 1 of a Parking Strategy to overhaul parking in Armidale's central business district
- Rail Trail feasibility study sparks further investigation
- support for Armidale Servies Club's \$7 million motel development

PREVIOUS PAGE: The reconstruction of Bradley Street as part of the Guyra Central Business District upgrade.

Community Outcome

\$6 Million for 73-lot Armidale Business Park



Plans for the Armidale Regional Airport Business Park forged ahead, following the announcement of \$6 million in State Government funding. The 73-lot development is projected to create up to 200 new jobs by attracting new business to the region and encouraging the expansion of local companies. Council constructed a \$3 million roundabout on the New England

Highway to improve access to the Business Park site, the neighbouring regional airport and the historic Saumarez Homestead.

Council has been in talks with a number of businesses keen to purchase industrial and commercial lots in the 17.5-hectare business park. A widespread marketing campaign is underway to attract further interest and investment.

Maps launch creates motorcycle mecca

Community Outcome

A ground-breaking motorcycle tourism map was launched through a partnership between HEMA Maps, BMW Motorrad and tourism alliance New England High Country.

The map is central to a 'My Favourite Corner' campaign to entice riders to the region, which boasts some of the best routes for motorcycle rides in Australia.

The campaign covers Walcha, Uralla, Inverell, Glen Innes, Tenterfield and Armidale and targets a wide variety of riders.

The region's top eight rides are featured

in the map, covering Thunderbolts Way, Waterfall Way, Old Glen Innes Road, Gwydir Highway, Oxley Highway, Tourist Drive 19, Bruxner Highway and Mount Mackenzie Drive.

To celebrate the map's launch, BMW Motorrad chose the region to host the 25th anniversary edition of the popular BMW Safari program, providing riders with a number of pre-marked routes with varying levels of difficulty.

New England High Country is an alliance of several local governments including Armidale Regional Council.

Community Outcome

Inaugural Street Art Festival splashes some colour



The Colour New England Street Arts Festival was held for the first time in April, attracting large crowds to live music and visual art.

The festival, held in Armidale's Beardy Street Mall, hosted many acclaimed artists including traditional New Orleans-style band Dixieland Jazz Group, popular youth band Earth Device, NECOM's Percussion Ensemble, and the Bellydance Earth and Sky Troup dance ensemble.

Entertainment also included a black and white silent film, complete with piano

accompaniment, and a light extravaganza highlighting the mall's beautiful heritage buildings.

Council partnered with local venues to provide live music experiences throughout the city, offering a platform for many local acts.

The festival secured a \$20,000 grant from the NSW Government's 2019 Incubator Event Fund, which assists rural and regional events in their first or second year to grow attendances and tourism numbers.

Parking overhaul for Armidale CBD

Community Outcome

A new parking strategy is bringing Armidale's central business district parking in line with other major regional centres.

The Car Parking & Mobility Study recommends a number of changes to parking time zones in the Armidale CBD and better enforcement of those time restrictions.

The study is an initiative of the Mall Vibrancy Plan, which aims to increase levels of activity in Armidale's retail

heart and strengthen the viability of local business. The study found the CBD already had an adequate supply of parking, based on the proportion of spaces occupied during peak times, but better management of that supply was needed so motorists had more equitable access to parking.

It recommends Council adjust time zones to reflect durations in other regional CBDs of similar size.



ROSE
LIFE
burgers
& Chips
& Snacks

Royal Hotel

TOOHEYS NEW

TOOHEYS
NEW

TAB

TINGH
AUTO
PORT

STORE

GIVE
WAY

Leadership for the Region

Council provides an important leadership role in our community. It endeavors to be a strong, inclusive and dynamic Council that will deliver the best outcomes and represent our community through responsible decision-making and advocacy.

Community Strategic Plan outcomes

-  The community is engaged and has access to local representation
-  Council exceeds community expectations when managing its budget and operations
-  Council demonstrates sound organisational health and has a culture which promotes action, accountability and transparency
-  Council has the strategic capacity to understand the key issues for the region both now and in the future

Highlights

- smooth transfer of the Tingha township and surrounds to the Inverell local government area, under a boundary adjustment
- turned a \$3.8m budgeted operating deficit position into a \$0.9m deficit through efficiency improvements, identifying new sources of revenue and reducing non-essential spending
- Councillor Cuppas community engagement events held in Ben Lomond, Ebor and Hillgrove
- lobbied State Government to gift the Old Courthouse to the community
- successful land auction to recover outstanding rates
- rural property address signs introduced to assist emergency services
- Land Divestment Strategy developed to identify surplus land holdings and plan a staged divestment.
- review of service levels across Council
- new Code of Conduct Policy adopted by Council to conform with Office of Local Government standards
- new Organisational Structure developed to reflect changes in strategic direction for Council

PREVIOUS PAGE: A boundary adjustment announced by the NSW Government transferred the rural community of Tingha to the Inverell Shire Council area

Community Outcome

Boundary adjustment moves Tingha

A boundary adjustment announced by the NSW Government transferred the rural community of Tingha to the Inverell Shire Council area.

The transfer, effective 1 July 2019, followed a long-running push from Tingha residents to be part of Inverell Shire. Inverell is the town's nearest large regional centre and has a large community of interest for many of its residents.

Armidale Regional Council consulted with the community in 2017 and conducted more comprehensive engagement in 2018, to ensure all

households and property owners in the targetted area had an opportunity to provide input on the proposal.

A large response to a postal ballot by Council showed a majority of residents supported the transfer. Council worked closely with Inverell Shire Council to respect the wishes of the Tingha community and apply for the boundary adjustment. Significant work was completed by Council in anticipation of the boundary review and the two councils expedited the necessary steps to make the transition as smooth as possible for Tingha residents.

Councillor Cuppas tour

Community Outcome



A Councillors' Cuppa tour of the region continued in 2018, giving residents the opportunity to chat with the elected members about the issues most important to them.

Hillgrove, Ben Lomond and Ebor were the focus of this year's Councillors'

Cuppas, held between August and November. Many residents took the opportunity to speak directly and informally with the councillors, on topics including roads and traffic speeds, maintenance of villages, culvert upgrades and waste disposal charges.

Land auction

Community Outcome

Forty-one properties went to auction in September as Council sought to recoup a total of \$524,214 of unpaid rates and other charges.

In each case, the sales were a final option to recoup outstanding debts. Each property owners had received numerous requests to pay the outstanding rates and charges or come to a satisfactory

arrangement to settle their debt to Council. All NSW councils have a similar policy addressing debt recovery for unpaid rates.

Twenty-nine properties sold during the auction and another 10 sold afterwards by private treaty. The properties sold for a total of \$704,005, recovering \$439,800 in unpaid rates.

Community Outcome

New Headquarters for Guyra SES



The Guyra NSW State Emergency Service unit moved into its new Starr Road headquarters.

The new headquarters, jointly funded by Council and the NSW Government, enables the unit to house its 30 members, modern vehicles and equipment under

one roof, allowing it to respond more quickly to emergencies.

Its former headquarters on Falconer Street, the unit's home for more than 20 years, had not been fit for purpose for many years. The ageing buildings were too small and in need of serious upgrade.

Rural property signs

Community Outcome

Rural property address signs were introduced to improve entrance visibility, following enquiries from rural residents and councilors.

The prominent blue and white addressing

signs can display both property number and name, in accordance with rural addressing standards, and help emergency services locate properties during an emergency.



Our People, Our Community

Council supports our region to be inclusive, supportive, inspiring, healthy and progressive by providing the services and support that allow our community members to engage in the interests they enjoy, while having access to the services they need.

Community Strategic Plan outcomes

-  Community programs, services and facilities meet the needs of the community and provide a safe place to live
-  Events and cultural activities provide the community with an opportunity to celebrate the unique culture and lifestyle of the region
-  Services are provided to ensure inclusiveness and to support the vulnerable members of our community
-  Services and activities are provided for all ages and segments of our community to promote life-long learning, healthy living and community wellbeing

Highlights

- development of a 21st Century Libraries Strategy, informed by extensive community engagement
- review of the Guyra Preschool & Long Daycare Centre, including plans for expansion and future options for its management
- singer and choir coordinator Leanne Roobol and regional development leader Aileen MacDonald named Armidale and Guyra Citizens of the Year respectively
- Women's Day celebrations featuring guest speaker Emma Weston, prominent agritech entrepreneur
- New England Sports Awards ceremony, featuring presentation by international hockey player Georgina Morgan
- Armidale Regional Council Youth Awards for outstanding achievements in sport and recreation, arts, business, academic achievement and community initiatives
- A Day in the Dale NAIDOC celebrations with the theme of 'Because of Her We All Can'
- 15 metre-long dragon mural produced in the Armidale War Memorial Library by artists David Allen and Fiona McDonald
- Christmas in the Mall celebrations, with the lighting of Armidale's community Christmas Tree, markets and music.

Community Outcome

Blueprint for 21st Century Libraries



Council began developing a blueprint to make the Armidale region's libraries more vibrant hubs where people can learn, join in group activities or just meet friends. The 21st Century Libraries Strategy will include ideas from the community about how the Armidale and Guyra libraries can implement technology, facilities and

services to best cater to future literary, studying and community requirements. Extensive consultation encouraged users and non-users of the library to contribute feedback, to complement ideas from the library team about ways to build upon the libraries' high-quality facilities and services.

Youth Forum tackles burning topics

Community Outcome



Young people from throughout the district attended the successful Armidale Regional Youth Forum to discuss key issues confronting their generation.

The annual forum, held at Armidale Bowling Club, gave young people aged 14 to 24 years the opportunity to speak up and discuss the topics that concern

them most. The Armidale Regional Youth Advisory Committee (ARYAC) coordinated the event, with assistance from Council, and selected four topics for discussion: sexuality & sexual health, mental health, drugs & alcohol, and cyberbullying/bullying.

Community Outcome

Future-proofing Guyra Pre School



A review of Guyra Preschool & Long Daycare Centre looked at future location and management options to ensure childcare service's ongoing viability. The daycare and preschool centre was established as a community-managed venture, before the former Guyra Shire Council assumed responsibility for operating the service from 1 January 2009. The service continued under Armidale Regional Council has been since been expanded to include Out of

School Hours Care.

Continuous changes and improvements available to childcare providers throughout NSW and Australia prompted Council to explore how the centre could provide a more efficient and effective service to the community.

The review includes options to acquire further land to double the size of the centre to 58 children, as well as exploring broader community and industry interest in operating the service.



Environment & Infrastructure

The environment we live in has a direct impact on our quality of life and our ability to function as a productive and safe community. Council provides the essential services and public amenities that help preserve and maintain our beautiful region, supports a sustainable and healthy lifestyle, and provides safe and essential infrastructure and transport for the community.

Community Strategic Plan outcomes



The unique climate, landscape and environment of the region is protected, preserved and made accessible



The community can participate in initiatives which contribute to a sustainable lifestyle



The community is provided with the essential and resilient infrastructure it requires for daily life, and has access to a prioritised schedule of infrastructure works



The community has access to transport which enables connectivity both locally and outside the region

Highlights

- secured funding for \$4.67 million Kempsey Road 'Big Hill' improvements
- \$618,000 upgrade of two Armidale roads under 2019-20 Black Spot Program
- started construction of \$12.8 million Malpas Dam to Guyra Pipeline
- removed disused fuel tanks in preparation for Guyra Main street upgrade
- expanded City to Soil organic waste operations to Guyra
- supported planning and design of new Rural Fire Service Logistics Hub
- reconstructed and sealed Platform Road in Kelly's Plains.
- Kempsey Road Improvements at Oakey River.
- upgrade Shand Drive and stormwater drainage at Armidale Regional Airport
- implemented water restrictions and community education for behavioral change
- trucking company engaged to transport water from Armidale to Guyra Water Treatment Plant until Malpas Dam to Guyra Pipeline is completed
- constructed new roundabout on New England Highway to provide access to Armidale Regional Airport Business Park being developed
- Armidale Regional Airport apron extension designed to accommodate larger aircraft
- \$14 million Waterfall Way Regional Landfill constructed
- Black Gully Flying Fox Camp Management Plan adopted and vegetation clearing started
- expert panel formed to seek solutions to woodsmoke issues in Armidale
- online plumbing application processing implemented

PREVIOUS PAGE: A Black Gully Flying Fox Camp Management Plan was adopted to mitigate the impacts on neighbouring residents.

Community Outcome

Malpas pipeline underway



The \$13 million Malpas Dam to Guyra Pipeline project neared completion and is planned to open late 2019

The 19.8km pipeline will provide improved water security to Guyra town water customers by linking to the

13,000-megalitre Malpas Reservoir east of Black Mountain.

It will supplement the existing water storage at Guyra, which has been deemed insufficient long-term and does not meet secure yield standards.

Airport Roundabout and Road Upgrades

Community Outcome

A new roundabout on the New England Highway was fully reopened to traffic, providing safer access to Armidale Regional Airport and a \$6.5 million Armidale Business Park industrial subdivision being developed next to the terminal.

The project's imminent completion coincided with the start of drainage works on the nearby Shand Drive, to improve road access to industrial sites along the northern end of the airport. Shand Drive is being upgraded from

a private access road to industrial subdivision standards, in a two-year project.

The upgrade enhances access to a new Rural Fire Service regional hub at the airport, which includes a Logistics Shed constructed late last year and a Remote Area Firefighting Team training facility nearing completion.

Shand Drive also provides access to a number of air service operators and the road's improvement will facilitate further development at the airport.

Community Outcome

Flying Fox management

Council adopted a Flying Fox Camp Management Plan following an influx of thousands of flying foxes into Black Gully in early 2018.

The plan addresses community concerns and helps mitigate impacts, while making necessary provisions for the flying foxes.

Measures include a 15-metre-wide buffer

zone created by vegetation clearing.

The plan takes into consideration the 44 community submissions, as well as feedback from community surveys

Council also waved a \$125 tree removal fee for affected residents and set aside funds to subsidise identified trees for removal.

Drought water conservation measures

Community Outcome



In the face of a severe and relentless drought, Council implemented a number of initiatives to preserve declining water reserves and maintain town water supplies.

Water restrictions were implemented and a target set to reduce average water consumption from around 220 litres per person per day to a maximum of 160 litres.

Water restrictions have been in place in both Guyra and Armidale for many months, with both the Guyra and Armidale town water supplies moving to the maximum Level 5 restrictions.

Initiatives included a shower head

exchange program, offering free water-efficient shower heads, and free mulch days for residents.

Contractors were engaged to use visual and acoustic methods to detect hidden water leaks in the Guyra water distribution network. Around 47 leaks were detected and work began to repair the leaks.

Council continues to provide the community with water saving information and solutions to cope with the drought, while investigating longer-term solutions to make the region more resilient to extended dry periods.

Community Outcome

Guyra main street fuel tank removal



Contractors finished removing disused fuel tanks from beneath Guyra's main street, clearing an obstacle for a \$2.7 million upgrade of the town's central business district. A total of eight steel tanks were found under the eastern side of Bradley Street and removed or stabilised between February and March.

The street upgrade will complement the street's historic architecture, create a more consistent theme throughout the street landscape and provide a safer environment for pedestrians. It will also feature street art created in cooperation with local artists and school students.

Tingha Plateau fire

Community Outcome

Council assisted in ongoing management of the Tingha Plateau fire, under supervision from the NSW Rural Fire Service.

During the horrific fire event, Council staff were on the ground clearing roads, assessing trees and working alongside Inverell Shire Council staff

and emergency services teams in water cartage and grading to manage the fire front.

Council also provided support at an evacuation centre for people affected by the fire, offering information, access to supplies and support services.

Backtrack partnership improves Dumaresq Dam reserve

Community Outcome



Local youth are learning valuable skills and an emerging Armidale recreational facility will receive upgrades through a partnership between Council and not-for-profit social enterprise BackTrack.

Delegates from the two organisations formalised the next step of an initiative to engage young people to improve facilities at the Dumaresq Dam recreation area, equipping them with skills and experience as a stepping stone to employment.

Participants in BackTrack's training programs have been working at the dam for nine months, building bridges and

upgrading walking trails throughout the site.

Council and Backtrack representatives signed a licence agreement for grazing on sections of the dam site, taking the program to the next phase.

BackTrack was established 13 years ago to assist young people experiencing difficulties that could otherwise keep them out of training and employment. It has achieved great success in instilling its young participants with the self-confidence, skills and motivation to return to further education and move into the workforce.

Financial Overview

In its third financial year since the merger, Council’s 2018-19 Audited Financial Statements demonstrated a financial position that achieved six of the six performance ratios reported on by the Audit Office of NSW, an improvement on 2017-2018.

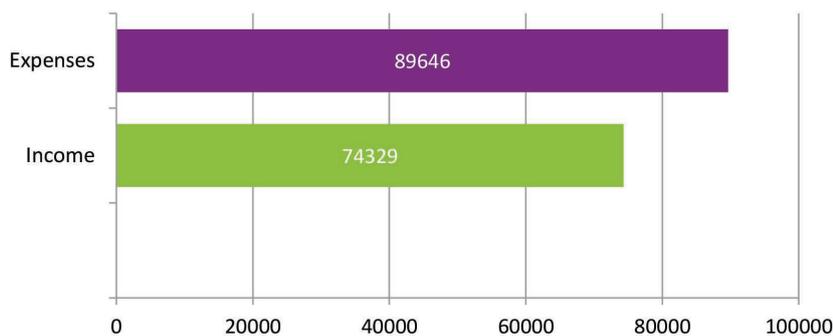
Council’s full audited financial statements for 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019 can be found in Part C of this report.

Operating Income to Expenditure

Council achieved a net operating result of \$15.3 million in the 2018-2019 financial year, an \$18.5 million improvement on the net operating result achieved in the 2017-2018 financial year. This improvement was mainly due to a \$12.6 million increase in revenue through a combination of increased user charges and fees revenue and grants for operating and capital projects, such as the Malpas Pipeline and Roads to Recovery projects. Total expenses reduced by \$5.9 million with a \$5.0 million reduction in losses from disposals of assets during the year and an overall reduction of \$0.9 million in all other expenses.

	2019 \$m	2018 \$m	Variance \$m	Variance %
Rates and annual charges revenue	32.3	31.0	+1.3	▲
Grants and contributions revenue	30.9	21.7	+9.2	▲
Operating result for the year	15.3	(3.2)	+18.5	▲

Net operating result ('000)



Statement of Financial Position

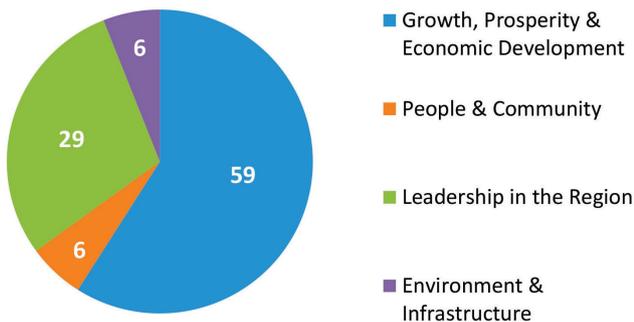
The balance sheet shows a positive picture, with net assets up \$21.4 million from the previous financial year. The required indexation of water and sewer assets resulted in an increase of \$6.1 million in the carrying value of those assets. Along with an increase of \$10.1 million in investments, these two items contributed to an overall increase of \$17.7 million in total assets, while total liabilities decreased by \$3.7 million, mainly due to the repayment of borrowings during the year.

	2019 \$m	2018 \$m	Variance \$m	Variance %
Current Assets	83.6	79.4	+4.2	↓
Non-Current Assets	860.3	846.8	+13.5	↑
TOTAL ASSETS	943.9	926.2	+17.7	↓
TOTAL LIABILITIES	46.7	50.4	-3.7	↑
NET ASSETS	897.2	875.8	+21.4	↑

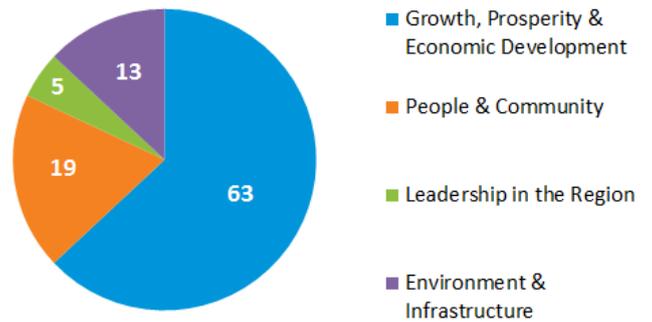
Income and expenses as related to Community Strategic Plan

The distribution of income and expenses across the four Community Strategic Plan functions is demonstrated below. Growth, Prosperity and Economic Development represented the largest quota in relation to both income and expenses.

Income



Expenses



Grant funding

Grant Funding provides Council the opportunity to engage in community activities, provide services and build infrastructure it would not ordinarily be able to afford because of funding constraints. Grants are usually achieved through a competitive application process and must be reported through an acquittal process.

Grants are generally sourced through State and Federal bodies. They can provide full funding or partial funding (usually through a 50% funding contribution that must be matched by Council).

Grants received by Council during 2018-2019 from external bodies:

Grant	State or Federal	Funding received
SES Guyra	State	\$7,841
Youth Development - Youth Services App	State	\$15,000
Youth Development - Youth Week	State	\$2,227
Guyra Preschool - Operations	State	\$139,907
Guyra Preschool - Upgrade	State	\$10,000
Economic Development - Small Business Month	State	\$5,000
Economic Development - Growing Local Economies	State	\$25,000
Building Better Regions - The Regional Cooperative Project	Federal	\$93,000
Rural Fire Service - M&R Grant	State	\$345,080
Rural Fire Service Logistics Shed	State	\$488,435
Rural Fire Service RAFT Shed	State	\$484,000
Rural Fire Service FCC Armidale	State	\$9,820
Rural Fire Service Hillgrove Brigade Station Upgrade	State	\$53,469
New England Street Art Festival	State	\$20,000
Stronger Country Communities Fund - Adventure Playground	State	\$329,901
Stronger Country Communities Fund - Armidale Hydrotherapy Pool	State	\$360,755
Stronger Country Communities Fund - Moran Oval Upgrade	State	\$80,614
Stronger Country Communities Fund - Mother of Ducks Lagoon Upgrade	State	\$151,530
Stronger Country Communities Fund - Guyra Community Hub Upgrade	State	\$132,000
Stronger Country Communities Fund - Tingha Skate Park	State	\$37,620
Roads & Maritime Services - Street Lighting Subsidy	State	\$84,000
Transport Infrastructure Upgrades	State	\$1,200
Automated Vehicle Trial	State	\$637,323
Truckwash Upgrade - Roads & Maritime Services	State	\$14,282
Truckwash Upgrade - Federal	Federal	\$14,282
DCP - Water Filling Station	Federal	\$50,000
DCP - Kempsey Road	Federal	\$939,882
DCP - Cattle Grid Replacement	Federal	\$75,797
DCP - Boorolong Road Upgrade	Federal	\$197,209
Roads & Maritime Services - Moredun Road Causeway Repair	State	\$50,000

Grant	State or Federal	Funding received
Roads & Maritime Services - Toms Gully Road Drainage	State	\$34,500
Roads & Maritime Services - Puddledock Road	State	\$153,000
Roads & Maritime Services - Bridge Replacement Program	State	\$592,633
Roads & Maritime Services - New England Highway Roundabout	Federal	\$250,000
Rural Unsealed Roads	Other	\$10,588
Waste Less Recycle More	State	\$22,324
Recycling Relief Fund	State	\$64,954
Armidale Organics Processing Expansion	State	\$41,157
Malpas Dam Pipeline	State	\$9,699,787
Crown Lands	State	\$35,099
Museums - Mentorship Program 2018	State	\$3,000
Safety & Security CCTV CBD Precinct	Federal	\$210,067



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