

Council News

Winter 2022 edition



New stage in the Armidale Mall

ARC adopts turnaround strategy underpinned by proposed SRV

\$1 secures old Armidale Courthouse

2022-23 budget snapshot

ARC teams-up with Backtrack for flood safety

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ARMIDALE
Regional Council

Mayor's Message



As I reflect on the last six months as mayor of this wonderful region I can't help but be excited and optimistic about the future.

That is not to say it hasn't been

challenging and a lot of hard work but I've had the great pleasure to meet so many wonderful people from all walks of life and from all parts of the local government area.

The hard work your councillors have been putting in, along with staff, during the last six months, to set a course for success as a regional city of significance has been commendable. This course is underpinned by an ambitious target of 4,000 new jobs by 2040 in order to grow our population to where it needs to be. Only a few weeks ago we achieved one of the essential infrastructure building blocks that will help us achieve our goals with the funding announcement by Member for Northern Tablelands Adam Marshall for \$27 million for the raising of the Malpas Dam Wall.

To achieve this vision there will, however, be challenges ahead. Our region is at a fork

in the road. One route is to manage the inevitable decline of the Council and our region, the other is to take a bold approach and grow our way out of our current trajectory.

Your councillors have invested a significant amount of time over the past few months reviewing council operations and putting together the budget, Delivery Program and Operational Plan which were adopted at the June meeting. The new Council is focused on a platform of economic responsibility and putting Armidale Regional Council back on its feet financially.

We are determined to drive our growth strategy as this is the only way we can save our region. Turning around the fortunes of our region is going to take commitment from all of us. It won't be easy but it will be necessary to deliver the future we want for our families and the generations to come. The combination of a stagnating population and not having rates appropriately set by councils before us has led to the revenue issues we face today.

This is not an overnight fix and will take years to rebuild but this plan is long-term and works towards sustainability for future

generations. The Delivery Program 2022-2026 outlines the initiatives that this council will undertake to achieve the goals in your Community Plan. It is broken into two phases – "Restore" and "Thrive". The elected body has analysed countless scenarios and this Delivery Program presents the most feasible options fit for our region, now and into the future.

During August and September we will be consulting with you on the proposed 50 percent Special Rate Variation. Council has a multi-million-dollar shortfall in asset maintenance and that backlog is swamping us – particularly our road network. While we want to be a progressive and expanding council, we also need to fix what has not been done in the past and get back to basics, increase efficiency, recover asset costs and deliver greater levels of service – issues that have been frustrating the community for many years.

It's time to become a region of significance once again. A region that deliver the basics exceptionally and efficiently and is thriving and competitive in all aspects.

**Mayor
Sam Coupland**

\$1 secures old courthouse for the community

Armidale Regional Council has secured the old Armidale Courthouse as a public asset for the people of the Armidale region acquiring the building precinct from the NSW Government for \$1.

The old Armidale Courthouse has been mothballed and secured in a vacant state by the NSW Government for the past nine years. Council has championed for it to be retained as a public asset due to its historic value and flagship location in the Armidale Mall, however council's poor financial position has previously been a significant barrier to council taking on the building.

Mayor Sam Coupland said our current financial position still restricts our ability to reopen the building in any meaningful way anytime soon.

"We felt the need to step in to ensure property NSW did not consider a private sale of such an important public asset," said Mayor Coupland

"Council acquired the asset for \$1 and has forecast the costs of holding the courthouse in its current state as about \$50-60K per annum. We are able to afford the holding costs for the next few years through recent land sales in Armidale.

What council, on behalf of the



From left: General Manager James Roncon, Cr Paul Packham, Mayor Sam Coupland, Member for Northern Tablelands Adam Marshall, Deputy Mayor Todd Redwood and Cr Paul Gaddes outside the old Armidale Courthouse.

community, has taken on is a building that will need millions of dollars spent to make it a useable space for future generations."

Council will not be able to make any significant upgrades to the building without funding through more land or property sales and this will also need to be supplemented with NSW Government grant funding.

Coinciding with council's decision to secure the old Armidale Courthouse as a public asset is the inclusion of the site on the NSW Heritage Register announced by member for Northern Tablelands Adam Marshall.

"The 162 year old building is the oldest public building in Armidale and the site, including the old Sheriff's Office and a collection of moveable heritage items will now be under a Conservation Management Plan," said mayor Coupland

"The heritage registration should also assist us, with the support of Adam Marshall, to secure funding for major restoration and future development."

Council will undertake consultation with the community and interested stakeholders on potential future uses of the site.

ARC adopts turnaround strategy underpinned by proposed SRV

Strategic budget documents that set a plan to turnaround the systemic revenue issues of the past 20 years was the cornerstone of the adopted budget that will be underpinned by a community consultation process to support a proposed 50 percent Special Rate Variation (SRV).

In the 2022-23 financial year Armidale Regional Council (ARC) will go into deficit dipping into reserves to fund the budget. This approach has been on the assumption that ARC receives approval for an SRV and to allow the organisation to ready itself for the significant strategic work required to climb from the mire. While approval for the SRV is far from guaranteed and ARC will undertake extensive community consultation on the proposal from August, the decision to adopt a deficit budget provides council the time it needs to focus on the preparatory work required to ensure it can take full advantage of an SRV that will come into effect in the 2023-24 financial year.

If ARC continues on its current trajectory without addressing a \$7.8 million funding shortfall for core operational and capital service levels and asset renewal requirements, ARC would continue to decline. In the 2021-2022 financial year just maintaining current services levels would require a 40% increase in general rate revenue. Now a year on it has increased to

50% in the 2022-2023 financial year. Every year that we don't address the declining state of infrastructure assets it gets worse and becomes more expensive to correct.

Armidale Mayor Sam Coupland said the two options for ARC are clear; an SRV as part of the solution to restore the real cost of maintaining assets and providing services to grow and be sustainable or a managed decline where the state of our assets and infrastructure continue to worsen due to an inability to be able to afford to maintain them.

"Our region voted to make this a better place to live but this can only happen if we make the hard decisions now," said Mayor Coupland

"Over the past 25 years we have drifted into a perfect storm of unsustainably low rates in both the old Armidale and Guyra council areas compounded by a stagnating population.

"The ever tightening financial position saw an accumulation of under investment leading to further asset deterioration and a lack of a viable plan to turn the situation around. We have two options, choose to do nothing and manage the further decline in assets and services or grasp the nettle and deliver a growth solution.

"If we don't invest in asset renewal now the more costly it will become to address in the future.

"As a group of elected representatives we have chosen to make the hard decisions and not leave the problem to future generations. We have plans afoot to become a region of significance, growing jobs and taking our rightful place amongst the best regional centres in NSW. We want our community to join us on that journey."

Planning is underway now to deliver extensive community consultation on the proposed 50 percent SRV and this will commence in August.

The suite of documents within the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework include the Advancing our Region Community Plan; Delivery Program 2022-2026; Resourcing Strategy; Operational Plan and Budget 2022-2023; Revenue Policy 2022-2023 and the Fees and Charges 2022-2023. These documents can be viewed on the council website.

The Community Plan sets the visions and goals for our region. It is a 10-year plan that identifies the community's main priorities and future aspirations. Council's Delivery program is a statement of commitment to the community by each newly elected councillor for their four year term. It identifies and prioritises initiatives to achieve the community's long-term goals outlined in the Community Plan. The one year Operational Plan outlines initiatives from the Delivery Program that will be delivered each year.

Online customer self service portal

Did you know that Council has an online customer self service portal? And that it works on any device including your phone? Just look for the 'Self Service' link on our website to find out what you can do online. Popular online services include:

- Certificates: apply and pay for copies of certificates
- Payments: pay your rates, water, sundry debtors and development

applications

- Planning Enquiry: enquire on development applications or property information
- Register: access your rates and water information and set up direct debit payments
- Report It/Request it: submit customer service requests
- Change of Address: change your postal address

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Operational Plan & Budget snapshot

2022-2023

Armidale Regional Council (ARC) has formulated the Operational Plan and Budget 2022-2023 during a time of difficult circumstances and, in doing so, it has determined a road-map for the future. This road-map is outlined in the Delivery Program 2022-2026 and is based on a plan to spend the next two years focused on restoring the Council's financial viability and then using the improved financial position to invest in infrastructure and quality community services. Of course this is on the assumption that ARC receives approval for a Special Rate Variation (SRV). This is far from guaranteed. Community consultation on the SRV is scheduled to commence in August.

The 2022-2023 Budget forecasts an operating **deficit for the General Fund of \$3.2 million and a \$2.5 million draw down on internal reserves.** Without intervention (Approved SRV application), this could not be sustained into the future. However, the forward path determined by Council includes increasing revenue and therefore beyond 2022-23 it is expected that the operating deficit and associated draw down from cash reserves will be eliminated.

A \$1.3 million operating surplus is forecast for the Water Fund and a \$0.9 million operating surplus is forecast for the Sewerage Fund. The Consolidated result is therefore a \$1 million operating deficit.

Unfortunately, it is not possible for Council to 'do nothing' at this juncture and a range of difficult decisions are needed to address the poor financial outlook for the General Fund. This is critically important because the General Fund contains provision for all Council services apart from water and sewerage and the funding available supports the maintenance of critical assets such as roads, bridges, pathways, kerbs, stormwater drains and public buildings.

Budget Overview

- \$1.0m consolidated operating deficit
- \$97.9m capital program
- \$3.2m forecast for unrestricted cash

Budget Challenges

In preparing its Draft Operational Plan and Budget 2022-2023, Council had to consider the large structural deficit inherent in the existing General Fund budget and this is resulting in the following issues:

- Ongoing low unrestricted cash position,
- Insufficient funding for operational service levels,

- Insufficient funding for the maintenance and renewal of assets,
- Inability to take on additional borrowings without creating further financial stress, and
- High reliance on grant funding for core asset renewal programs.

Operational Budget Summary

The 2022-2023 Draft Budget includes a consolidated operating deficit of \$1 million with the following fund results.

Fund	Operating Surplus/ (Deficit)
General Fund	(\$3,193,172)
Water Fund	\$1,284,942
Sewerage Fund	\$912,034
Consolidated Result	(\$996,196)

Capital Budget Summary

The 2022-2023 capital program has been developed with a focus on maintaining and renewing existing infrastructure and assets. With the inclusion of over \$77 million in grant funding, Council's 2022-2023 capital program totals \$98 million.

Around \$10.4 million will be spent in key asset renewal programs including kerb and gutter and footpath replacement, road rehabilitation, urban and rural road re-sealing, gravel re-sheeting, causeway and bridge renewal, stormwater drainage and building renewals.

Description	Budget
General Fund	\$84,245,091
Water Fund	\$12,125,790
Sewerage Fund	\$912,034
Consolidated Result	\$97,920,881

Key Projects

There are some 55 projects and programs to be delivered in 2022-2023 on top of the general services and activities that Council delivers each year.

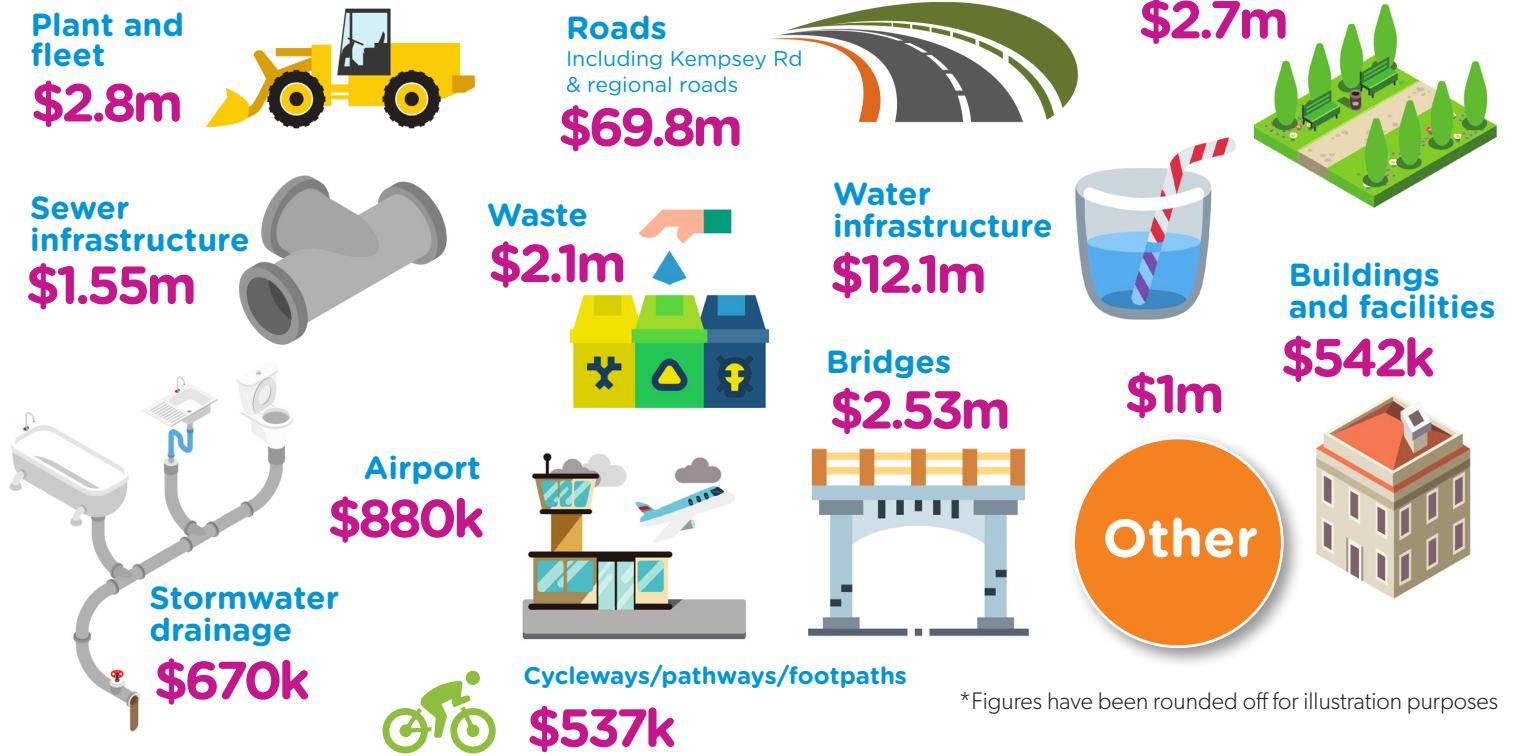
Some of these projects include:

- Develop a Guyra Precinct Group to focus on key initiatives for the Guyra Community
- Asphalt overlay or reseal for main airport runway \$750,000
- Consider housing and homelessness initiatives through the Council Key Pillar

Working Groups

- Adopt a Customer Experience Strategy including actions to improve service to both internal and external customers
- Complete a program of SRV funded works including kerb and gutter program, footpath program, urban and rural reseal program, gravel resheeting and building renewal program \$1,550,690
- Develop an updated Arts and Cultural Strategic Plan for the next four years
- Finalise the business case for an upgrade or rebuild of the Guyra Preschool and Long Daycare Centre and adopt the preferred solution
- Implement Stage 2 of the Property Divestment Program \$200,000
- Coordinate the inaugural Armidale Spring Games in October including hockey, cricket and football bringing thousands of players to the region over three days - \$112,000 grant
- Big Chill Festival - \$200,000 grant
- Secure additional funding and complete the replacement of timber bridges – Bakers, Boorolong, Lambs Bridges, through the Bridge Renewal Program - \$2,083,500
- Rehabilitate 860m of road on Kelly's Plains Road - \$1,242,108
- Rehabilitate 47km of road on Kempsey Road - \$54,250,000
- Deliver Stage 1 of the Creeklands Masterplan through Public Spaces Legacy Program funding - \$2,500,000
- Complete Guyra Aquatic Centre upgrades including amenities block and play equipment - \$200,000
- Installation of recreational fishing jetty as part of the Dumaresq Dam Recreational Area Upgrade project - \$94,000
- Deliver the rural reseals renewal program including bitumen resealing of rural roads and additional heavy patching of pavement defects on previous works - \$1,040,000
- Deliver a Roadside vegetation Management Program - \$150,000
- Investigate options and funding for the replacement of the Armidale Sewer Plant
- Install a new Puddledock raw water treatment main and new pump station as a backup water supply to the Armidale Water Treatment Plant - \$9,775,790
- Develop and implement a Housing Strategy - \$75,000
- Prepare a Rural Futures Land Use Strategy to identify and protect prime agricultural land - \$75,000

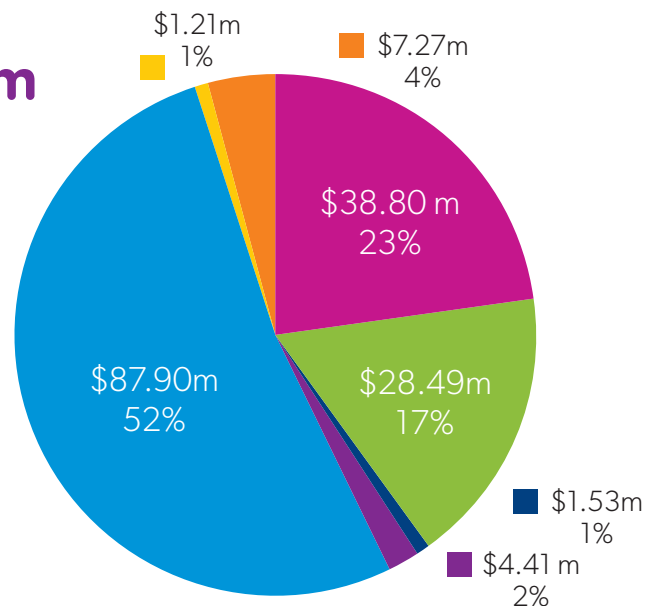
2022/23 Capital Program - \$97.92m



*Figures have been rounded off for illustration purposes

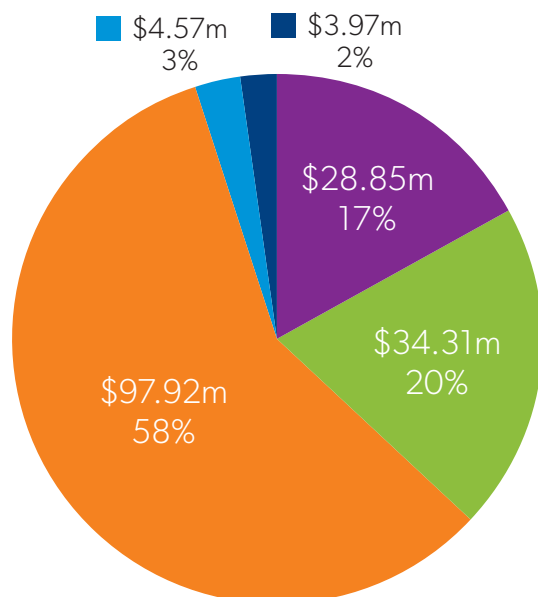
Where the money comes from \$169.61m

- Rates and annual charges
- User charges and fees
- Interest revenue
- Other revenues
- Grants and contributions
- Sale of assets
- Transfer from cash reserves



Where the money goes \$169.61m

- Employee costs
- Materials and contracts
- Capital expenditure
- Loan repayments
- Transfer to cash reserves



Kerb and gutter renewal program rolls-out across city

Small inroads are being made in addressing Council's extensive asset renewal backlog with the commencement of a \$400k kerb and gutter program.

Council's difficult financial position has meant a number of important capital renewal programs have either not been prioritised or not undertaken for many years. The renewal of essential infrastructure like kerb and guttering is vital in ensuring the city's urban road network is maintained and fit for purpose. Council staff have undertaken a significant review of the roads network and have focused on reinstating some of our regular renewal programs.

General Manager James Roncon said that past decisions to not fund some of our ongoing renewal programs on our roads network were made because of our precarious financial position.

"Even though the kerb and gutter renewal program was postponed for financial reasons in the past, unfortunately that decision has a long term impact," said Mr Roncon

"Our assets and finance teams have worked very hard to identify efficiencies in other areas of our operations and redirect council funds to reinstate some of our renewal programs across our rural and urban roads network.



Dumaresq Street kerb and guttering

"We still have a huge financial shortfall to adequately manage our assets at the level they need to be maintained however we have managed to focus on some of the worst sections and problem areas on our urban and rural roads."

The kerb and gutter program commenced in the CBD on Dumaresq Street between Hungry Jacks and Dangar Street. Followed by Rusden Street between Dangar and Faulkner Streets and identified streets across

the city. The program is expected to take approximately three months to complete, weather permitting. Traffic management will be in place and there may be minor delays. Further information on the program is available on the Works and Projects page on the council website.

Property owners and residents in streets identified for renewal will be notified before work is scheduled to commence.

Volunteers celebrated for National Volunteer Week 2022

National Volunteer Week is held annually in May and to celebrate, the region's volunteers were recognised in the New England Volunteer Awards ceremony held in the Armidale Town Hall for their selfless community service.

15 locals were nominated across the Armidale Volunteer Referral Service (AVRS) Awards and the Alwyn Jones Community Service Award.

Armidale Regional Council Mayor Sam Coupland presented the awards and said it was an opportunity to thank volunteers for generously giving their time to the region.

"Volunteers help make our community stronger and the awards ceremony is a way we can show our appreciation for their dedication.

Thank you to each and every volunteer for stepping up and making the region a better place."

A list of award recipients follows:

AVRS Employee Volunteer – Armidale Town & Country Real Estate

Armidale Town & Country Real Estate has provided two staff members every week to deliver meals to the vulnerable community

members for the last five years. They never fail to turn up and have proven to be extremely reliable. The staff are usually a lot younger than other regular volunteers and the clients seem to appreciate seeing their younger faces.

AVRS Adult Volunteer - Susie Stevenson

Susie Stevenson was recognised for her work with the NSW Adult Migrant English Program and is also a valued member of the TAFE NSW AMEP Volunteer Tutor team.

AVRS Senior Volunteer (65+years) - Jenny Hayden

Jenny Hayden has been recognised for her tireless volunteer work for Guyra Support Services (GSS). She has been volunteering for GSS for over 15 years, delivering meals on wheels to Tingha residents, organising other volunteers in the area and doing the monthly roster. Jenny also provides transport for all clients in Tingha to Armidale and Inverell.

AVRS Volunteer Team - Armidale Transport to Treatment Volunteers

Armidale Transport to Treatment volunteers have been commended for their free

transport service to cancer patients in the Armidale Local Government Area, who have no access to family support or transport. This service became uncertain with COVID restrictions when NSW Health regulations limited one patient in a car at a time and volunteers were called upon to do up to three shifts a week and also utilising additional vehicles to make sure the cancer patients could attend their appointments to continue treatment.

Alwyn Jones Community Award – NERAM Volunteer Team

NERAM Volunteer Team have been awarded for their work with New England Regional Art Museum and assisting with almost every aspect of the organisation, ranging from public programs, exhibitions, events, education programs, library and archiving and more. The work from volunteers allows NERAM to provide the community with cultural events and experiences. The volunteers go above and beyond what is asked of them and their wealth of knowledge is priceless.

Hillgrove WW1 medals return home

Two World War 1 medals have returned home to Hillgrove after 103 years, and are now on display in the Hillgrove Museum.

The medals, presented to Private LJ Fox, are the Department of Defence medal awarded to Australian Imperial Force soldiers who returned from active service, and a special engraved medal funded by the citizens of Hillgrove and presented to each local soldier who returned from active service.

About 120 young men from the Hillgrove district enlisted in the First World War; of those, 34 died on active service. Private Leonard J Fox, who preferred to be called Edward, enlisted in April 1916 in the 33rd Battalion – often referred to as ‘New England’s Own Battalion’ as it recruited in the region and trained in Armidale. Private Fox sailed from Sydney with the battalion in October 1916, and served for more than a year in France. He was shot in the arm and thigh at Messine Ridge in July 1917 and returned to Australia in early 1918, with a

medical discharge.

The medals were donated recently by Dorothy Bell. Dorothy inherited them from her mother, but she was unaware of a family connection to any LJ Fox, and asked the Hillgrove Museum for assistance in finding descendants of Private Fox. In an interesting research twist, Museum Officer Bronwyn Clarke discovered that in 1921, Private Fox changed his name to Edward Kerwan and that was a name familiar to Dorothy, as her fondly-remembered Great Uncle Ted.

As Ted Kerwan has no descendants, Dorothy donated the two medals and his Returned Services League membership badges to the Hillgrove Museum. Less than 100 of the Hillgrove medals were made, and Private Fox’s is the only one at the Museum – a tangible symbol of the respect of the community for its young men who volunteered to risk their lives for their country.

The Hillgrove Museum is open Friday to Monday from 10am to 2pm.



Hillgrove Museum volunteer, Sarah Milne, with medals and badges

Reforms support disaster victims to rebuild homes

Council resolved to make changes to local planning laws to support homeowners wanting to repair or replace homes destroyed by a natural disaster.

The changes to the local planning laws will protect home owners who have lost homes through a natural disaster from being forced to meet changes in planning controls or development standards in the intervening years since the homes were originally constructed. Under the changes council cannot refuse a DA on the basis it does not comply with a development standard or other provision in the applicable LEP.

Councillor Paul Packham spoke in firm support of the proposed planning reforms and requested council make a further commitment under policy to permit, where possible, the repair and rebuild of buildings without the need for the DA, and investigate an appropriate reduction in DA fees for replacement buildings that do require a DA.

“I want council to provide every assistance possible to people who are affected by natural disasters to get their homes and their lives back on track as soon as possible and with the least financial burden possible,” concluded Cr Packham.

Council will now refer the proposed reforms to the NSW Government to seek their endorsement prior to them coming into effect.

Big Chill Festival draws crowd of thousands from near and far

Civic Park transformed into a sea of people during May as locals and travellers from as far as Tasmania and Western Australia lined up to attend this year’s Big Chill Festival.

Approximately 3300 tickets were sold for the event and 200 children came along with their families to experience a weekend sampling local craft beers and boutique wines, listening to a line-up of stellar music, and enjoying the abundance of food and barbecue-related produce.

Armidale Regional Council Mayor Sam Coupland said the event was another huge success and Council has received an overwhelming amount of positive feedback from local community members and attending vendors.

“The event has been a huge draw card for locals and it’s becoming quite the attraction for tourists, with 30 percent of ticket sales purchased from visitors outside the Armidale region.

Festival-goers came from near and as far as Queensland, Tasmania, Western Australia, Victoria and all over NSW, creating a buzz in the city and boosting our local economy,” said Mayor Coupland.

Saturday’s headline entertainment, Sheppard, and the performance by Lisa Hunt were definite crowd-pleasers for this year’s Big Chill Festival.

Weekend highlights also included the retail, food and beverage vendors who flocked in for the event, reporting amazing sales and most selling out of goods by the end of the festival.

The ice-skating rink opened up to the public on Friday and has been an incredibly popular element to the Big Chill Festival.

“Over 2000 ice-skating tickets were sold on the weekend and a number of schools have also booked in for student skating sessions this week.

Skaters are sure making the most of the ice rink while it’s in town and re-booking sessions following their initial glide under the festoon lighting,” said Mayor Coupland.

The ice-skating rink is open daily from 10am to 8pm until Sunday 29 May. Tickets can be purchased at www.bigchill.com.au and NSW Discover and NSW Parent Vouchers are accepted.

“The Festival is gaining momentum and Council would like to thank everyone who came along and supported the event.”

This year’s Big Chill Festival was made possible by a \$400,000 two-year grant from the Federal Government and \$147,500 NSW Government grant to support the ice-skating rink.

Council meetings

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

- Wednesday 27 July 2022, 4pm (Armidale)
- Wednesday 24 August 2022, 4pm (Armidale)
- Wednesday 28 September 2022, 4pm (Armidale)
- Wednesday 26 October 2022, 4pm (Armidale)

The public are welcome to attend a council meeting or watch the live streaming on Council's YouTube channel.

Meetings will also be live streamed at the Guyra Civic Administration Building.

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 live streamed. 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.

To apply registration is available on council's website. Search public forum.

Live Streaming



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158 Bradley St, Guyra

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Council teams-up with Backtrack for flood safety

Flood gates are being installed across eight Dumaresq Creek causeways to improve safety during flooding events through improved visibility and larger and more prominent signage as well as simpler operation providing greater efficiencies for council staff.

Like many cities, Armidale was established near a reliable watercourse, later named Dumaresq Creek. The city is divided by the Dumaresq Creek Floodplain and access across the creek is via causeways or bridges.

Low impact flooding can be a common occurrence particularly over the last 12 months with above average rainfall.

Chief Officer Assets and Services Alex Manners says closures in the past across flooded causeways were managed with portable barriers that could easily be avoided by motorists doing the wrong thing.

"The new flood gates manufactured and installed by the Backtrack team provide a permanent solution to managing flooded causeways along the Dumaresq Creek," said

Mr Manners

"The gates will stop people from attempting to bypass the barrier and enter a flooded area, but also provide a simpler and more efficient system for staff when closing and opening the causeways."

Council called for quotations to construct and install 16 flood gates and the youth organisation Backtrack were successful.

Works Operations Manager for Backtrack Graeme McLean said the project was a great fit for the youth program.

"This project has been fantastic for the Backtrack youth to use the skills that they have been taught like welding, traffic control, excavating with the mini digger, measuring, cutting and fabricating the gates."

The eight gates will be installed at:

- Taylor Street
- Faulkner Street
- Beardy Street
- Niagara Street
- Dangar Street
- Two in Dumaresq Street

UNE and Council to work together

Leaders from the University of New England (UNE) and the Armidale Regional Council (ARC) have formalised their commitment to work together to develop Armidale and the region as a 'Learning Region'.

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) demonstrates the commitment to a long term partnership to achieve mutually beneficial goals.

At a meeting between executives including the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor, UNE presented initiatives underway as a part of their ten year Future Fit strategy, which links directly with the wider Armidale agenda and compliments core

UNE goals, while ARC executive equally presented their forward plan and growth initiatives.

General Manager of Armidale Regional Council James Roncon said solid and enduring relationships amongst influencer organisations are critical to the future of the Armidale Region.

"Being able to engage and collaborate on the key initiatives that align our respective organisations makes perfect sense; where the alignment is not there, we simply support one another's endeavours. In my view this is exactly what our community would expect us to do for the betterment of the region," Mr Roncon said.