

Clarence Valley Council
End of Term Report
2016-2021

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MAYORAL INTRODUCTION



Cr Jim Simmons
Mayor

As the current Council term comes to an end, it is time to reflect on the challenges we have faced and a time to identify some of the objectives for the new Council to consider when it takes office in December.

The past two years have been one of the most challenging periods for all tiers of government and this has been no exception for our local Council. The changes we all faced due to COVID resulted in the current Council extending their term for an extra year. Embracing the opportunities that technology offers meant we were able to continue with business as usual.

The Clarence Valley was severely impacted by bushfires from August 2019 to January 2020. It was quite possibly the most challenging and devastating event to strike the Clarence Valley, with over 160 homes destroyed and 2 lives lost. We worked with state and federal governments to support affected communities during the bushfire disaster, including meetings with the Governor General and his wife, RFS and SES. The landscape is already recovering but the human and economic impacts will continue to

be felt for a long time and we need to continue to support these communities. As we work through the recovery process, we have also been able to develop strategies to ensure our community is more resilient and better prepared for challenges that may come our way.

Our community felt the blow when the tragedy in Christchurch, New Zealand struck at our hearts. We will not forget about the terrible events of that day that shocked us all. Our community showed support and compassion and sent messages of love and kindness. We offered our hand of friendship and are forever connected in unity with the people of Christchurch.

At a local level, the challenges we have faced have focused our attention on supporting our community members and businesses.

We had a strong focus on financial sustainability throughout the term. Council's debt levels at 30 June 2016 were \$130 million, and by 30 June 2021 we have reduced this debt to \$95.9 million. We also recognised the need for more funding to upgrade Council's road network. The Special Rate Variation (SRV) approved by IPART in May 2018 of 8% (inclusive of rate peg) each year for three years, to be retained permanently in the rate base, provides Council with an additional \$5.3 million each year to be dedicated to repair and upgrade of roads and road related infrastructure, floodplain assets, parks and open spaces facilities. This additional revenue, along with Fit for the Future operating improvements and efficiency savings of \$8.598 million achieved during this term, now places Clarence Valley Council in a more sustainable financial position.

When IPART wanted to review the Local Government Rating System we strongly supported an increase to the pension rebate in line with rate pegging and successfully lobbied the NSW Government to fund the extra cost for the Emergency Services Levy so our ratepayers didn't bear this cost.

We have received an unprecedented amount of funding from the state and federal governments which has enabled us to achieve infrastructure projects that would be well beyond business-as-usual for this council. It's fast tracked many projects like the Grafton Waterfront Precinct, Yamba Road roundabouts and timber bridge replacements. This trend has continued and our capital works program over the next few years will see many more projects come to fruition.

Peripheral to council, but certainly impacting our operations, big infrastructure projects like the new Correctional Centre and realignment of the Pacific Highway occurred during this term. The second crossing over the Clarence River at Grafton reduced trip times and congestions and changed the way Clarence Valley residents went about their daily lives. Whilst funded by state and federal government,

these big infrastructure projects had a huge impact on our staffing resources. Many staff hours were spent supporting planning, construction and contractors. These projects had a huge impact on our community and certainly benefited our economy and the local business sector.

Recently, Community Information Days have been held to inform the review of our Community Strategic Plan. Touching base with the community is particularly relevant given the impacts of bushfires, COVID and flooding. Feedback from the community members will inform the revised Community Strategic Plan, which will be endorsed by the newly elected Council. It will help steer future decision making and guide the new Council in the future as it develops its own Delivery Program highlighting the things it wants to achieve during its term.

Finally, Councillors voted in July to acquire the disused Nymboida Hydro Power Scheme from Essential Energy in a move to safeguard the region's water security moving forward. Contracts were finalised early September, bringing the building's assets and associated licenses under Council ownership.

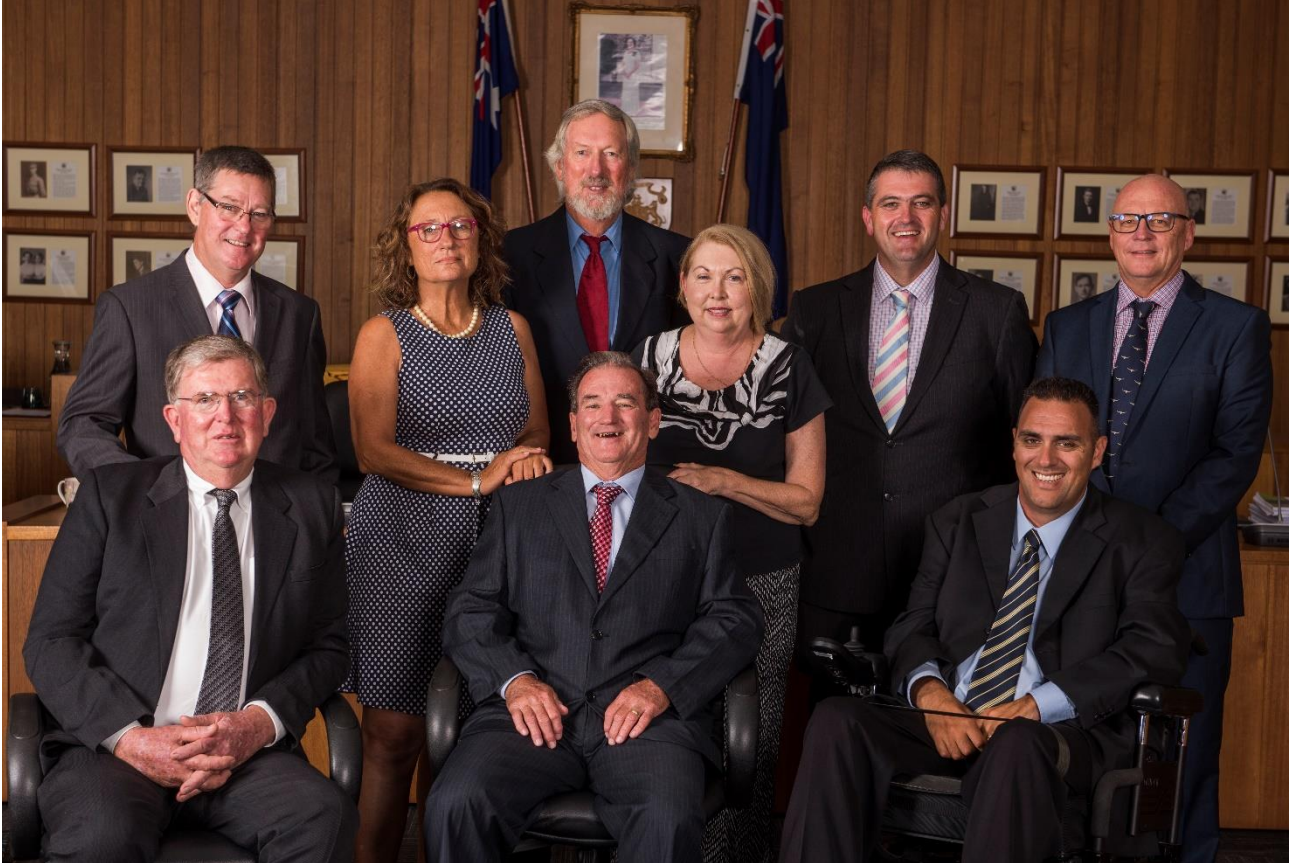
I would like to take this opportunity to thank my fellow Councillors for their commitment and dedication to the community over the past five years.

Kind regards

Cr Jim Simmons

Mayor

COUNCILLORS 2016 TO 2021



Rear: Arthur Lysaught, Debrah Novak, Greg Clancy, Karen Toms, Richie Williamson, Peter Ellem
Front: Andrew Baker, Jim Simmons, Jason Kingsley

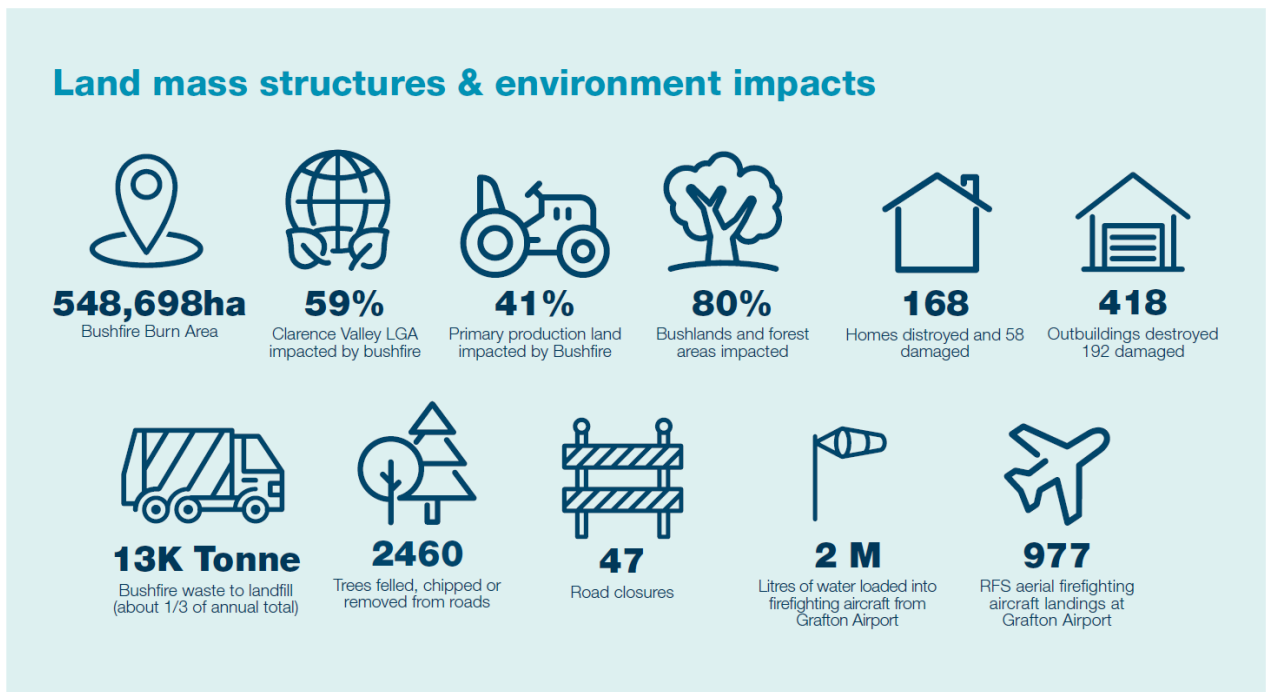


SOCIETY

Natural disasters

From 2016 to 2021, the Clarence Valley has experienced significant natural disasters. From the drought, a catastrophe that plays out slowly, to the bushfires that swept through our lives at an unimaginable pace. And of course, there’s always our beautiful river systems – our fickle friends that provide bounteous economic, social and environment benefits but can also take that away at a whim. Add to all this a few major storms and COVID, and Clarence Valley Council has been consumed by reacting and recovering from emergency situations continuously for the last two years.

Following on from the bushfires, Clarence Valley Council was ranked the second most-impacted local government area on the multi-disaster index for 2020.



The additional workload and pressure on resources has been on a scale never seen by Clarence Valley Council, and yet the staff managed to continue with business-as-usual and continue to serve our community and meet demanding needs.

Headspace

When the Clarence Valley suffered through a mental health crisis, Council advocated heavily for a Headspace service to be introduced to the area.

We were successful in establishing Headspace, and the youth mental health service was established. This is a rare occurrence and is evidence of the need, support and drive emanating from this cause.

Councillors supported a challenging new direction for Council's Community and Function Centre (Grafton) and it was made available for the Headspace organisation. This is now one of the best Headspace facilities in Australia.

PCYC

After 14 years of advocacy, the Clarence Valley has a new PCYC. The establishment has included a \$4 million upgrade to the Grafton Sports Centre.

Young people in the Clarence have access to new sporting opportunities and support services. PCYC is focused on improving social outcomes for the community.

Our Healthy Clarence

Our Healthy Clarence is a network of community organisations brought together to advocate and support wellbeing and mental health in the Clarence Valley. Council has supported this program since its inception.

This network of committed services and community members has worked hard to create an action plan that focuses on the wellbeing of Clarence Valley residents. The work done by the group, and supported through council, has been recognised at state and federal level, supported with funding and used as a basis for best practice.

Clarence Care and Support

Changes to the community care sector, in particular the NDIS, meant managing this service became more difficult for Council. The service needed to be more responsive to demands than was possible under local government.

Council's decision was to transition to specialist provider Wesley Mission to ensure this service was maintained and essential community services were not lost.

Clarence Youth Action

Clarence Youth Action was supported by Council to enable a group of young people to engage their peers across the LGA. Staff supported young people with grant applications, project delivery, mentoring and pathways to other service partners.

Clarence Youth Action directly assisted at-risk young people to provide a safe, welcoming community.

Cultural mapping

Draft cultural mapping, the major component of the Yaegl Cultural Heritage Mapping Project, has been completed. The project's working group included representatives of the local Yaegl Aboriginal community, National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), Clarence Valley Council and its consultants.

A change of management of Aboriginal cultural heritage in NSW government agencies has resulted in the overall carriage of responsibility to be transferred from NPWS to Heritage NSW.

While project handover to Heritage NSW has been delayed due to COVID, it will be progressed once the working group can meet again to sign off on final maps and coordinate data management and CVC staff training



Youth Week colour fun run

Community Initiatives Program

Through the Community Initiatives Program, we donated a total \$483,645 to community organisations across the Clarence Valley over the duration of the Council term. See table on next page.

Year/round	Non-profit organisation	Project/initiative	Funded	Financial year total
2016/17 -				\$112,735
Round 1	Woombah Residents Association Inc	To waive the fees of Woombah Public Reserve - park and stage hire - Woombah Christmas Carols 02/12/16.	\$894	
Round 2	Birrinba and Harwood Island Community Committee Inc	Lower River Harmony Day	\$1020	
	Grafton Truck Drivers Social Club	40th Grafton Truck Show 2017 -Traffic control costs and VMS board hire	\$1500	
2017/18 –				\$93,555
Round 1	Glenreagh Memorial Museum, a subcommittee of Glenreagh School of Arts Inc	Towards costs of 2018 Cedar & Steam Art and Photography Exhibition Mar 2018.	\$1800	
Round 2	Gummyaney Aboriginal Preschool	Contribution toward materials (sandstone boulders, logs) for a natural educational outdoor learning environment with a cultural perspective for Aboriginal children and parents.	\$620	
	Maclean Lions Club	Contribution towards road closures and bins for Lions MacMarket Day on 6 Jan 2018.	\$1780	
2018/19 –				\$108,462
Round 1	Live Prawn Productions Inc	Towards the cost of hiring the Raymond Laurie Sports Centre for Circus Skills Workshops for up to 14 weeks during term one of 2019, which will culminate in a free community performance at Yamba River Markets during Plunge 2019.	\$1204	
Round 2	Woombah Residents Association	To cover the cost of: board for advertising events \$114.40, a spotlight \$79 and a foldaway table \$97.50 (\$290.90) & waiving the fees of \$1088 (TBC) to hire the Woombah Recreation Reserve and stage for Carols by Candlelight 2018.	\$1088	

	Iluka Emporium Inc	To cover the cost of materials and facilitators to run mini workshops for community members at 2 Iluka Emporium Open Days.	\$1050	
<hr/>				
2019/20 –				\$76,924
Round 1	Little Scottish Town Youth Theatre Group Inc	To waive the fees of hiring the Maclean Civic Hall for rehearsals and performances of Wizard of Oz - Youth Edition from 14 December 2019 until 29 March 2020.	\$420	
	Clarence River U3A	To waive the fees of hiring the Treelands Drive Community Centre and Woolli Street Hall for a diversity of seniors' activities including dancing, games, and photography; as well as meetings and a forum during 2019/20.	\$1200	
Round 2	Glenreagh Creative Group Inc	Contribution towards venue space for craft group to host workshops and charity fundraisers from Glenreagh School of Arts hall	\$1100	
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2020/21 –				\$91,969
Round 1	Lawrence Public School P&C	Front garden project with assistance from family group volunteers and Lawrence Landcare for advice, for children to experience environmental learning	\$1000	
	Iluka Koala Reserve Trust	To cover the cost of a wildlife pond restoration & commemorative bench seat.	\$1565	
Round 2	Mudyala Aboriginal Corporation	FEE WAIVER: Northern NSW women's Rugby League KO 2021 at Yamba 12/13 June 2021.	\$840	
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		TERM TOTAL:		\$483,645
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INFRASTRUCTURE

Playground Strategy

The Playgrounds Replacement Plan (2015-2024), an integral component of the Playgrounds Asset Management Plan (AMP), has provided for a greater play space experience across a hierarchy of playgrounds. It has enabled Council to maximise its resourcing for both new builds and maintenance.

The Playgrounds Replacement Plan identified a total 55 actions to be completed during the 10-year planning period and included staged asset disposal, relocation, renewal and upgrade works. The implementation of the plan is on schedule, by the end of 2020/21 planning period 71% of the actions were implemented.

Clarence Valley Council has been successful in building on its capacity to deliver playground projects by securing \$806,041 in grant funding.

Federation Park playground, Copmanhurst was renewed in July 2021. The playground is set between the existing skate park, BBQ and public amenities being framed by sandstone blocks and concrete footpaths. When visiting you will find a swing, slide and climbing tower, spinner and see-saw. There is also a footpath link between the road, public amenities and skate park.



Before and after – Jacaranda Park

Significant recreation improvements have been made to the Townsend Inclusive Playspace, with the provision of a multiuse half-court, inclusive and accessible playground, picnic shelter and facilities, footpath connections along Scullin St, shade structures and plantings.

The project cost is \$572,430 being funded and supported by the Australian Government, NSW Government, Lions Club of Maclean, and Council.

The Playgrounds AMP anticipates and plans for future organisation needs by transforming the playground network into a financially sustainable asset. Not only can Council now afford to manage the network of playgrounds across the large local government area, but the community is benefitting from a plan to upgrade all playgrounds across the network. The plan is ensuring the Clarence Valley community has safe, inclusive and exciting play experiences now and into the future.

The award-winning (Highly Commended Award - 2020 NSW Local Government Excellence Awards - Asset Management and Infrastructure Initiatives) Jacaranda Park is one of the largest inclusive play spaces in Australia and is a great example of focusing resources for maximum outcome.

Sports field upgrades

To enable the community to enjoy the outdoors and their favourite sports like soccer, rugby league, rugby union, cricket, touch football, league tag, athletics, and AFL, Council manages over 35 grass sports fields.

We regularly maintain these facilities and undertake minor capital works on all playing surfaces and the facility buildings.

Rushforth Park has had major capital works including the design and construction of new LED lights in 2019 and a new clubhouse structure in 2020. The lights project includes lighting three full-sized soccer pitches under energy efficient LED lighting which allows for training and night games. The new building includes accessible amenities, food and beverage spaces, a first-aid room and storage, as well as a competition office and community space. This park is the home of soccer, housing five clubs and hosting many others during the winter competition. The new facility was welcomed by the community after years of lobbying.

The Yamba Sports Complex received a new purpose-built facility in 2019, using the National Rugby League design standards. This one is the first in the Clarence to include four unisex changerooms, accessible public amenities and a huge community space, plus an office, storage and food and beverage areas.

In 2019, Ellem Oval playing surface in Grafton was redeveloped and now has a new turf cricket wicket, irrigation and a perimeter fence. It has dramatically improved the playing surface and has been welcomed by the primary users including AFL and cricket teams.

Ken Lesson Oval received a major renovation and upgrade in 2021 which saw new accessible change rooms, a renovation of the existing change room, new accessible amenities and a complete renovation of the canteen and storage areas. This is shared facility in the heart of Iluka is used frequently by soccer, cricket and rugby union teams.

CV Regional Airport RFS Airbase

The establishment of a new air response control centre and Rural Fire Service (RFS) storage facility at the Regional Airport was great timing to support the response to the 2019/20 bushfires. The facility provides for improved fire-fighting capability and response activities for planned and emergency bushfire management. It was funded by the RFS through the Rural Fire Fighting Fund.

Rushforth Road Depot

Consolidation and rationalisation of our works depots was a controversial decision which has paid off. Reducing the number of aging assets and investing in the new Rushforth Road facility has provided a safer, purpose-built environment which provides greater workplace efficiency. Additionally, the project aimed to reduce annual operating costs by \$1 million annually

Yamba Road roundabouts

A Traffic Impact Assessment commissioned by Council in 2015 showed Yamba Rd intersections were set to fail (Yamba Rd/Treelands Dr 2021). Action needed to be taken to manage traffic flow and reduce trip times so that economic opportunities rapidly opening for Yamba and the broader region could be achieved.

The initial proposal was for traffic lights, which would be lower cost, with quicker installation and less disruption. Community sentiment felt traffic lights would change the character of this coastal town. This resulted in Council deciding to install three roundabouts at major Yamba Rd intersections. This project has been completed before construction deadlines and under budget. Successful grant funding applications meant this project was completed in this Council term, which is far beyond council's business-as-usual capacity.



Maclean Supermarket

The Lower Clarence Retail Strategy (2007) outlined the preferred locations for retail outlets in the lower Clarence. For Maclean, the strategy identified the need for a new 2000m² supermarket in the CBD.

Between 2007 and 2011, several attempts were made to attract a developer to bring a new supermarket to Maclean but were unsuccessful.

The plans for a new 2000m² supermarket were developed by a private investor between 2012 and 2016. After extensive negotiations, planning proposals, council land sales, land reclassifications, re-zonings and land swaps, a final DA was approved in December 2016. The new IGA Supermarket opened in October 2019 and is centrally located in the Maclean CBD, adjacent to Cameron Park.

Water

Ultraviolet treatment (UV) of water at Rushforth Rd and the villages of Wooli, Minnie Water, Glenreagh and Coutts Crossing has been installed and commissioned. The UV treatment of water provides an additional treatment barrier with a subsequent reduction in drinking water quality risks.

Council's main water supply is dosed with fluoride. NSW Health funded a project to fully upgrade the fluoride dosing plant located at Rushforth to ensure the dosing system is compliant with NSW Fluoridation Code. The new dosing system ensures the safety of the treatment plant operators and minimises waste, a big improvement on the old system.

Remote water meter reading has been introduced in some rural and sparsely populated areas. This has resulted in increased efficiencies in meter reading.

Funding for water main renewals in River St, Maclean and Coldstream St, Yamba was approved by Council to be brought forward so work could be completed at the same time as other upgrades in these areas.

The ongoing ClearSCADA upgrade has now been completed for lower river sewer pump stations (SPS) and sewage treatment plants (STP), Clarenza STP and all water sites including water treatment, water pump stations, reservoirs and Shannon Creek Dam. This enables Council employees to remotely monitor water and sewer sites and act quickly should an alarm be raised.

The new Greaves St flood pump station and refurbished Heber St flood pump station have also been added to the ClearSCADA network, allowing for remote monitoring of these sites during flood events.

Sewer

Further sewer augmentation was carried out with the removal of a pump station on Brooms Head Rd. Additional pump stations have been added to the network due to developments in Clarenza and Junction Hill.

The North Grafton Sewage Treatment Plant upgrade has progressed through the preliminary investigation and approval stages.

Former sewage treatment sites at Ilarwill, Maclean and Townsend have been rehabilitated, removing the public liability risk to Council from having disused STP sites.

Sewer main relining was undertaken in some of the worst condition underground assets throughout the Clarence Valley. Relining increases the remaining life of the asset and improves wastewater flow through the reticulation network.

Aboriginal Communities Water and Sewerage

The Aboriginal Communities Water and Sewerage Program engages Clarence Valley Council to provide water and sewer services to three discreet Aboriginal Communities, two in our local government area and one in Tenterfield Shire due to proximity. Council worked with the program, plus DPIE and NSW Health, to identify the water quality risks to the communities and to determine appropriate mitigation measures to ensure delivery of safe water. Subsequently, ultra-filtration water treatment plants were installed in the communities of Malabugilmah and Jubullum. The water treatment plants ensure the communities always receive safe drinking water. The upgrades were fully funded by the Aboriginal Communities Water and Sewerage Program and have provided an excellent outcome for the people living in these communities.

Swimming pool rationalisation

Council maintains and manages public swimming pools at Grafton, South Grafton, Maclean, Yamba and Glenreagh. In 2019, the Ulmarra pool was decommissioned, providing an opportunity to incorporate this site into Bailey Park and revitalise the area.

Minor capital works have occurred annually at all pools. Major works, including stage one of a filtration plant upgrade, were completed at Maclean Pool in 2020. A purpose-built equipment facility was constructed to house new filtration equipment and pumps. This ensures compliance with water regulations for public pools. Additionally, the project included new storage and an accessible unisex change room.

In 2021, detailed design for stage one of the Grafton pool redevelopment was completed. This includes a new indoor centre with a 25m competition pool as well as a new heated pool. A 50m outdoor pool, grandstand and shade structures are also incorporated. There is a focus on sustainability by including environmental features like solar, LED lights and water tanks and the colours and textures selected which are sympathetic to the heritage conservation area. Funding has not been secured for implementation, however having a detailed plan means we can be ready for opportunities when they are presented.

We are currently investigating opportunities for the sale or long-term lease of the South Grafton pool.

Maclean Riverside Precinct

The Clarence River has long been an important feature of Maclean's local economy. Its use for fishing and transport is common to both the Aboriginal community and to early settlers. As traditionally occurs in flood prone towns, the businesses and community turned their back on their greatest asset, the river.

The Maclean Riverside Precinct Plan focus is reconnecting the community to the river and has created a vibrant area where tourists and locals gather for shopping, relaxation, events and river-based activities. The plan has attracted nearly \$3 million dollars in NSW and Australian Government funding.



Combined with this Council's contribution, significant inroads have been made into the implementation of the Precinct Plan.

Grafton Regional Saleyards

The Grafton Regional Saleyards is an important hub for Clarence Valley agriculture, with regular livestock selling held weekly on Tuesdays and store sales monthly, usually on Thursdays.

The facility provides an important gathering space that brings local farmers and buyers together to share and support the economic and social wellbeing of the agricultural sector. The saleyards usually see a throughput of between 35-45,000 head annually and in 2021 there have been significant increases in some sales.

With funding from the NSW Government Truck Wash Program, upgrades to the truck wash to widen and provide access to B-Doubles were completed in 2019-20. With funding assistance of \$1 million from the Federal Government Drought Communities Program, further improvements to the saleyards are proposed with improved drafting, yards, scanning and catwalks proposed to be completed by December 2021.

Fixing Country Bridges

Our bridge crews have recently completed construction of McPhillips Road, Bridge 3 – Jackybulbin Tullymorgan Rd, Bridge 4 – Jackybulbin Tullymorgan Rd and Mangrove Bridge No 2 Tullymorgan Rd.

We will start construction of Rhodes Bridge in February 2022 and Dignans Bridge in March 2022, followed by Sweeneys, Minnie Waters Bridge 1 and 2 and McIntosh Bridge. It is envisaged that the remaining group 1 bridges will be completed by external contractors. The concept and detailed design of those bridges has been awarded to a consultant.

Preliminary investigations including environmental assessments (REF), Hydrology/Flood Assessments, Geotechnical Investigations and Survey for all bridges are underway, despite a 3–4-week delay due to COVID lockdown restrictions.

Nine larger bridges in the Fixing Country Bridges program were recently put out for a joint EOI tender process with Kyogle Council, to be broken up into 3 x Design & Construct contracts. At this stage, the aim is for construction to commence in April/May 2022.

James Creek Road and McIntyres Lane

With the community of James Creek growing, the need to seal James Creek Rd became a Council priority. The \$675,000 project to seal the final 1km of the gravel section was completed three weeks early and on-budget.

The final 'missing link', the 1km dirt section of McIntyres Lane, was also prioritised by the Council and completed in early 2020.



ECONOMY

Clarence River Way Masterplan

Clarence River Way Masterplan's aim was to position the Clarence River as one of the nation's great river experiences. It was not conceived as one single thing, but the combination of many interrelated actions spread over a large geographical area and time frame.

CRW has been used to generate funding and guide strategic development initiatives along the Clarence River and in its towns and villages. It has enabled Council to achieve many infrastructure projects beyond its financial capacity as well as focus the whole organisation on achieving these actions. Taking this strategic approach has meant Council has been able to capitalise on opportunities to leverage Australian and NSW Government funding.

CRW has successfully secured over \$17.6 million in grant funding, with a matching contribution from Council of just \$1.9 million. That is a significant return on investment for Council.

The Clarence River Way Masterplan has proven that proactive planning, backed by plenty of community input and consultation, is a winning combination

Ulmarra Community Economic Development



In 2017, Ulmarra was an extremely disgruntled community. The realignment of the Pacific Highway meant they would be bypassed and economic input from tourism would be lost. In addition to this, the community was debating the pros and cons of sewerage the town, flying foxes had inhabited their town park and Council was considering removing their community pool.

Community Economic Development planning was undertaken to identify the needs and priorities of the community. The outcome of this was the Ulmarra Village Community Economic Development Plan, which identified actions to be undertaken by Council and community to increase community cohesion and improve Ulmarra’s economic opportunities.

This strategic project has realised \$2.3 million in NSW Government funding for the implementation of the Riverside Precinct Plan. The community has also delivered on the actions, increasing community pride and sense of place. The partnership with Council has also improved relationships.



Just like the Ulmarra example, Community Economic Development programs have been replicated across the Clarence. Building community capacity whilst providing council guidance and support is pivotal to a vibrant local economy. It is a proven formula for empowering community, focusing aspirations and leveraging grant funds.

Easy To Do Business and Vibrant Places

Looking for ways to reduce the burden on business by cutting red tape and stimulating economic activity, Council successfully applied to join the Easy To Do Business Program, and became a Small Business Friendly Council in partnership with the Small Business Commissioner’s Department and Service NSW.

As a result of the Pacific Highway bypassing several communities in the Clarence Valley, Council considered ways to help businesses attract more trade. The replacement of footpath permit and licencing rules with a more common-sense approach to make streetscapes more vibrant was initiated. Vibrant Places is a fee and regulation-free program which allows business to be innovative in their use of public space to attract customers and make our CBDs more attractive.

Kane Douglas Rugby Oval

In recognition of Kane’s achievements since captaining the local Yamba Buccaneers under 17s to a premiership win, the new oval at Yamba rugby fields was named the Kane Douglas Rugby Oval. Kane has had a wonderful international career since graduating from the Yamba Buccaneers. He played for Leinster in Ireland; Bordeaux in France and had eight seasons playing Super Rugby for Queensland and New South Wales. He has also represented Australia in international rugby, including the 2015 Rugby World Cup.

CV Regional Economic Development Strategy

Working alongside the NSW Government, we collaborated with industry and community to build a sustainable economic development platform. The approach was to build on the distinctive and unique strengths of the Clarence Valley. Economic principles suggest that unique strengths provide regions with sustainable economic advantages.

As the Clarence Valley was severely impacted by bushfires, the Clarence Valley Regional Economic Development Strategy was subsequently updated in 2020 to include a bushfire addendum.

Special Events Sponsorship

The Special Events Sponsorship program sponsored an average of 35 events annually prior to 2020 and COVID interruptions. These events covered a wide range of themes, including community, art, local food, hot rods, camp ovens, sports, jacarandas, dragon boats, music, goanna pulling, dance, dog agility, ocean swims and more. The main purpose of the Special Event Sponsorship for Council is to sponsor events that boost the local economy via the visitor economy. The program achieves this by providing a return on Council's investment of approximately \$8 million annually. There is also a plethora of social benefits provided by the events sponsored in the program.

The Sports Tourism Program has also been a success in terms of achieving the goal of boosting the local economy via the sports visitor economy. The program has attracted approximately 52 events since it began in 2013 and provided a return on Council's investment in the range of \$21 million. The program has put the Clarence Valley on the map for outdoor sporting events, with river-based events showing a big potential.

Clarence Canoe and Kayak Trail

The development of the Clarence Canoe and Kayak Trail map kit engaged several stakeholders. With nature-based tourism growing more popular, the kit would be used to promote the Grafton hinterland to a much broader tourism audience.

Increasing knowledge and safety on the river and encouraging use of a professional guide was a key driver for the kit's development.

The project was also used to launch an industry development program, the Clarence Canoeing and Kayaking Cluster. River tourism operators assisted with local river knowledge and collaborated to develop support networks.



Grafton hockey support

To support local hockey and the economy through securing the NSW Championships, Council provided Grafton Hockey Association with a loan for \$150,000 at 3.64% p.a. interest to be repaid over 10 years by monthly principal and interest instalments of \$1,493.15. The loan was used for the replacement of synthetic turf on the Brent Livermore Field at the Fisher Park Hockey Complex, Grafton to upgrade the fields to state championship standard.

Development applications

Period	Applications received	No of Applications Approved	Value of Approved Works	No of Lots Approved	Average Days Processing (including stop-the-clock days)
July 2020 to 30 June 2021	1,002	916	\$161,309,422.30	151	63
1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020	750	722	\$163,329,389.20	315	76
1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019	828	771	\$122,648,827.81	132	54
1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018	849	819	\$119,931,797.00	171	40
1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017	875	803	\$88,748,704.00	67	32



ENVIRONMENT

Climate change response

In November 2018, Council adopted an Emissions Reduction and Renewable Energy Strategy with targets for Council's operations. The targets are to reach 50% renewable energy supply before 2030 and a 40% reduction in emissions from 2016/17 levels before 2030. There are also longer-term goals to reach net zero emissions.

Council has been actively implementing the strategy over the last two financial years, primarily targeting stationary energy emissions. As a result, we now have a portfolio of some 42 PV solar systems on Council buildings with a generating capacity of over 1200kW and 5 battery storage systems with 82kWh of storage.

We have also upgraded our minor road street lighting to LED, with main road upgrading happening in the latter part of 2021. Over 1300 lights have been replaced with LEDs in Council buildings and nine sports fields have had field lighting upgraded with LEDs. Our passenger fleet vehicles are also being converted to hybrids. It is estimated that we have already achieved a 15% reduction in emissions.

In early 2019, Council recognised the climate emergency and the requirement for urgent action to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions. This recognition reinforced the actions Council was taking to meet its adopted emission reduction targets. Council has also developed an ambitious Community Energy and Emissions Reduction Strategy which will guide and encourage the Clarence Valley community to act across all sectors to reduce the Clarence's carbon footprint.

Biodiversity actions

Protecting our environment is a high priority for our community. This includes projects ranging from the protection of brush-tailed rock wallabies at Shannon Creek Dam, to improving management and local information on the endangered coastal emu and our local koala populations.

In partnership with DPIE, we support the conservation of the endangered coastal emu by managing the emu registers for recording sightings, providing invaluable data for the conservation of this species. We support the Clarence Valley Koala Working Group to engage landholders in the koala areas of Ashby, Lawrence and Waterview Heights to plant koala food trees.

We have been working with the Yaegl community to carry out bush regeneration works on Country (\$98,000 NSW Environmental Trust).

The rehabilitation of flying fox colonies and mitigating impacts on local residents has also been a focus.

Successful grant funding allowed Council to conduct on-ground actions to help with flying fox management in areas where the community is most affected.

Roadside WIRES information signs

We have been working with the Saving Our Species Program to monitor brush-tailed rock wallabies on Council-owned lands at the Shannon Creek Dam. Camera traps are used to identify use of the habitat features and determine threats to the population from vertebrate pests such as foxes.

Moratorium on mining

At its meetings of 26 November 2020 and 27 April 2021, Clarence Valley Council adopted a position to oppose future mining in the Clarence River Catchment following a petition signed by 10,000 local residents in opposition to mining activity in the Clarence. This was tabled in the NSW Parliament in October. Council sought the support of adjoining councils that have responsibility for areas draining into the Clarence River Catchment to ask them to pass resolutions to oppose mining in areas affecting the Clarence River Catchment.

Council is seeking a moratorium on mining and mining exploration in the Clarence River Catchment on behalf of the community, who are concerned that mining will not only have detrimental environmental effects but also put at risk the drinking water for the Clarence and Coffs Harbour Council areas and significant industries like the fishing industry.

Waste services

Domestic waste collection service continues to provide a comprehensive and cost-effective collection and processing service, which achieves over 60% diversion from landfill. There are approximately 2.2 million kerbside bin empties each year. Two new landfill cells were developed on time and within budget. The new cells constructed by a local contractor were constructed to the highest environmental standard, providing over 388,000 cubic metres of landfill space or approximately nine years of landfill.



Water efficiency

In 2020, Clarence Valley Council and Coffs Harbour City Council developed and adopted a new Regional Water Efficiency Strategic Plan which will help ensure our precious water supply resources are used as efficiently as possible.

Policy – Gas-filled balloons

The Gas Filled Balloons on Council Managed Lands Policy was adopted by Council on the 25 February 2020, in response to the 2016 CSIRO study which identified gas-filled (helium) balloons among the top three most harmful pollutants threatening marine wildlife, along with plastic bags and bottles.

Any released gas-filled balloons can have a significant impact on litter, and on our marine and coastal wildlife. At best they become litter, at worst they may enter our bushland, stormwater networks, rivers and oceans where they can be ingested, strangle or entrap animals.

The policy prohibits the use, release, sale or distribution of gas-filled (helium) balloons from facilities and land under the care, control and or management of Council.



LEADERSHIP

Leadership in crisis conditions

Strong leadership was required when the onslaught of bushfires in mid 2019 took hold and devastated our community.

Key to leadership in a time of crisis is communications. We understood that communications in recovery should go beyond merely sending information to actually forming a dialogue with the community. Effective communications provide a basis for important social processes such as bonding between individuals, groups and communities. Council used a range of face-to-face communication channels, hosting community workshops and setting up a Disaster Recovery Access Point in our Customer Service Centre in Grafton. This, along with multiple other communications, helped reach those devastated by bushfire directly, or indirectly through family and friends. Council acknowledged the General Manager showed exceptional leadership at this time.

Council was awarded a first prize for Communications In Recovery at the NSW Local Government RH Dougherty Awards.



Sale of surplus property

A depot and office rationalisation program was undertaken as part of Council's strategy to reduce surplus property assets. Surplus sites included former depots located at Bruce St, Grafton and Schwinghammer St, Lilypool Rd and Brickworks Lane in South Grafton and also former office sites in Pound St and Victoria St, Grafton, Spring St, South Grafton and MacNaughton Place, Maclean. In line with this program and commitment to a service review, various parcels of vacant land and commercial properties such as the McDonalds South Grafton site and a former playgroup building in Kelly St, South Grafton, were disposed of, as they were not required for strategic purposes.

This rationalisation program helped Council reduce its long term financial and operational liabilities.

Country University Centre

The Country University Centre was established in Grafton to provide academic support to make tertiary education more accessible to our community. The facility provides high-speed internet and resources to assist students as well as creating a support network often found on campus.

Council provided advocacy support to a team of community members working to establish the CUC, while the NSW and Australian Governments contributed \$1.3 million in funding for the establishment.

Citizenship ceremonies

The Mayor continued to welcome our newest Australians by conducting Citizenship Ceremonies. Nearly 150 new citizens have been welcomed to the Clarence Valley since 2016.

ANZAC commemorative services

On ANZAC Day, we commemorate all Australians and New Zealanders who served and died in all wars, conflicts and peacekeeping missions. We're proud to support our local diggers and their families. Councillors attend events and Council helps organisations across the Clarence facilitate these services through venue hire, equipment provision, road closures and ensuring parks and gardens are looking their best.

Bookable

Making transactions easier for our customers is the reason online booking platform Bookable was created. Bookable is a one-stop-shop for the community to book council venues. Whether it's a wedding or sporting event, Bookable streamlines the process and lets you see when a venue is available, while allowing our community and sporting clubs to manage multiple bookings with ease.

CCTV Market Square

There has been an increased level of surveillance and security at Market Square, Grafton since the introduction of CCTV.

Blackspot repeaters

When fire storms tore through Ewingar and Nymboida, it left the communities devastated. It also left them with no communications, which inhibited capacity to connect; to tell family they were OK, to seek support, to plan an emergency response. Council responded quickly and within days, council staff had installed blackspot repeaters in Ewingar and Nymboida community recovery spaces.

Working Group on Campers

At its April 2020 meeting, Council resolved to fund three additional permanent full-time rangers for the regulatory services team. The new positions, for a Ranger, an Aboriginal Identified Range and a Parking Officer have now been recruited.

These additional resources enable us to be more proactive in the surveillance of illegal camping at the key holiday destinations of Yamba, Iluka and Angourie. Wooli and Minnie Waters have also been an area of focus to the south. The inclusion of a dedicated Parking Officer has also seen an increase in patrols in the CBD areas of Grafton, Maclean and Yamba. Increasing resourcing for a more proactive approach to patrolling illegal camping was a key suggestion of the Working Group in Campers.

The final Working Group on Campers meeting was held in June 2021. The group, comprised of community and business representatives, government agencies and council representatives, was a resounding success.

Disability inclusion

The 2017-2021 Disability Inclusion Action Plan has provided a guide for Council to meet both its responsibilities to people living with a disability, and the requirements of the NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014.

This term, Council have been able to progress the plan to ensure the community is accessible to all.

Under the plan, we have created an access committee made of community members and Councillors, which has had an influence over several projects and initiatives including the creation of mobility maps, draft planning documents for the Grafton Bridge Project and advocating for safer pedestrian crossings.

Key achievements include:

- Access and inclusion planning is now included in the planning of all events.
- Council instigated the creation of accessible parking spaces installed in the new Grafton Bridge carpark.
- Free accessibility workshops were run for businesses during NSW Small Business Month.
- Jacaranda Park and Alex Bell Park have been updated to include all access play. The 'wheelspin' at Jacaranda Park provides all children the liberating experience of dynamic movement. Not only does it accommodate wheelchairs, it allows several children the opportunity to spin together.
- As part of the planning, approval and legal requirements all new and or refurbished commercial buildings are compliant with disabled access requirements
- Pippi Beach and Wooli Beach now have improved all-access areas.
- Following a review of all public toilets, a draft public amenities strategy and public toilets strategy have been completed.
- MLAK (disabled access) keys are given to residents free of charge, offering access to public facilities afterhours.
- Access improvements have been made to electronic systems and processes, including our new website and streaming of council meetings.
- Refurbished Administration building that is fully accessible to all the community and includes a lift to the Mayors Office.

COUNCILLOR MEETING ATTENDANCE, TRAINING AND CONFERENCES

Council and Committee Meeting attendance register - September 2016 to June 2021

Total number of meetings held:

Council	54
Extraordinary	10
Corporate, Governance and Works	48
Environment, Planning and Community	48
Workshops	44

Individual Councillor register of attendance

BAKER		LYSAUGHT		SIMMONS	
Council	50	Council	44	Council	49
Extraordinary	10	Extraordinary	8	Extraordinary	9
Committee	45	Committee	41	CGW Committee	41
Workshops	44	Workshops	39	EPC Committee	41
				Workshops	42
CLANCY		NOVAK			
Council	48	Council	48		
Extraordinary	9	Extraordinary	9		
Committee	40	Committee	44		
Workshops	40	Workshops	32		

Individual Councillor register of attendance

ELLEM		TOMS	
Council	50	Council	47
Extraordinary	9	Extraordinary	10
Committee	45	Committee	43
Workshops	24	Workshops	40

KINGSLEY		WILLIAMSON	
Council	45	Council	48
Extraordinary	9	Extraordinary	10
Committee	42	Committee	42
Workshops	38	Workshops	37

Attendance register for Training and Conferences

Councillor	Lysaught	Baker	Novak	Clancy	Kingsley	Ellem	Simmons	Toms	Williamson
LG NSW Annual Conference (13 & 14/10/2019)							1		
Code of Conduct (6/8/2019)		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Code of Meeting Practice (9/7/2019)	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1
Rescission Motions (9/6/2020)									
LG NSW Financial								1	
NSW Coastal Forum (18 & 19/11/2020)				1					
LG NSW Annual Conference (23/11/2020)				1			1		
LG NSW Understand LG Finances for Crs (5/5/2021)			DN A						

Attendance register for Training and Conferences

LG NSW Planning 101 for Crs (26/2/2021)			DN A						
LG NSW Public Speaking & Presentation			DN A						
Constituent Relations & Social Media (8/3/2021)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

*DNA – Booking confirmed but Did Not Attend

STRATEGIES AND MASTERPLANS

The following strategies and plans underpin the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework and our planned activities and projects.



In preparation

Brooms Head Holiday Park Concept Plan
 Brooms Head Holiday Park Business Development Strategy and Masterplan
 Cameron Park Masterplan
 Clarence Coast Holiday Park Strategic Plan
 Gallery Business Plan
 Glenreagh Floodplain Risk Management Plan
 Grafton CBD masterplan and parking strategy
 Grafton Pool Detailed Design
 Iluka Riverside Holiday Park Concept Plan
 Minnie Water Holiday Park Concept Plan
 Plunge Festival Strategy
 Public Halls Strategy
 Public Amenities Strategy
 Rural & Tourism Impact Assessment & Recovery Strategy
 Rushforth Road Water Treatment Plan Masterplan
 See Park Masterplan
 Wooli Holiday Park Concept Plan



Implementation progressing

Crown Lands Plans of Management
 Koala Plan of Management for Ashby, Woombah and Iluka
 Local Strategic Planning Statement
 Playgrounds Asset Management Plan Rushforth Park Masterplan
 Solid Waste Management Strategy 2020-2027
 Strategic Business Plan for Sewerage Services
 Strategic Business Plan for Water Supply Services
 Ulmarra Riverside Precinct Plan & Baileys Park Concept Plan
 Water Efficiency Strategic Plan
 Yamba Sporting Complex Masterplan
 Maclean Riverside Precinct

Adopted

Alipou Creek Floodplain Risk Management Plan
 Biodiversity Strategy 2020-2025
 Brooms Head Vegetation Management Plans
 Bush Fire Risk Management Plan & Village Protection Strategies
 Calypso Yamba Holiday Park Business Development Strategy & Masterplan
 Harwood & Village Community Economic Development Plan
 Harwood & Village Riverside Precinct Plan
 Interim Drought Management Plan
 Maclean Catchment Local Growth Management Strategy 2011
 Maclean Flying Fox Management Strategy 2018

Clarence Coastal Reserves Management Strategy
Clarence Regional Library Local Studies Plan 2021
Clarence Regional Library Management Plan 2018
Clarence Regional Library Marketing Plan 2021
Clarence Regional Library Strategic Plan (Action Plan) 2012-2022
Clarence River Wharves Development Plan
Clarence Valley Settlement Strategy 1999
Community Energy and Emissions Reduction Strategy
Corcoran Park Masterplan
Diggers Camp Vegetation Management Plans
Drinking Water Management Plan
Grafton Pool Masterplan
Grafton Waterfront Precinct Masterplan

Maclean Urban Catchment Local Growth Management Strategy 2011
Moriaties Vegetation Management Plan
Regional Weed Action Plan & North Coast Regional Strategic Weed Management Plan
Pilot Hill Vegetation Management Plans South Grafton Skatepark Plan
South Grafton Heights Precinct Strategy 2007
Ulmarra Village Community Economic Development Plan
Urban Tree Management Strategy
Yamba Retail Commercial Strategy 2002
Yamba Street Tree Masterplan
Yamba Angourie Coastal Walk
Wooloweyah Vegetation Management Plans
Maclean Civic Hall Concept
Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction & Renewable Energy Target Strategy



Pending review

Aquatic Facilities Strategy 2013
Clarence River Way Masterplan
Coastline Zone Management Plans
Crown Lands Plans of Management
Grafton & Lower Clarence Floodplain Management Plan
Iluka Floodplain Risk Management Plan
Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy
Open Spaces Contribution Plan 2011
Open Space Strategy 2012-2021
Sports Facilities Strategy
Wooli Wooli and Clarence River Estuary Management Plans
Wooli River Floodplain Risk Management Plan
Yamba Floodplain Risk Management Plan
Brooms Head Holiday Park Concept Plan
Brooms Head Holiday Park Business Development Strategy and Masterplan
Cameron Park Masterplan

Clarence Coast Holiday Park Strategic Plan
Gallery Business Plan
Glenreagh Floodplain Risk Management Plan
Grafton CBD masterplan and parking strategy
Grafton Pool Detailed Design
Iluka Riverside Holiday Park Concept Plan
Minnie Water Holiday Park Concept Plan
Plunge Festival Strategy
Public Halls Strategy
Public Amenities Strategy
Rural & Tourism Impact Assessment & Recovery Strategy
Rushforth Road Water Treatment Plan Masterplan
See Park Masterplan
Wooli Holiday Park Concept Plan

EVENTS

The following strategies and plans underpin the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework and our planned activities and projects:

Year event held	Event	Event organiser	Hosting fee	ROI
2016	Yamba Triathlon Festival	Elite Energy	\$10,000	\$444,600
2016	Yamba Surf Festival	Surfing NSW	\$5,000	\$580,320
2016	Trainee Golf Pro Am	Yamba Golf Club	\$500	\$35,100
2016	AMT Junior Tennis Championships	Tennis NSW	\$3,000	\$310,284
2016	U13 State Hockey Championships	Hockey NSW	\$8,500	\$1,170,000
2016	Lawn Bowls State Pennant Finals	Bowls NSW	\$5,000	\$452,088
2016	Regional Qualifiers NSW Golf Open	NSW Golf	\$2,500	\$182,520
2016	Clarence 100	Paddle NSW	\$2,500	\$176,064
2016	National Boardriders Series	Surfing NSW	\$1,000	\$56,160
2016	Cricket NSW Country Plate & Country Cup	Cricket NSW	\$3,000	\$328,536
2017	Combined High School Rowing	Rowing NSW	\$4,000	\$336,960
2017	Yamba Triathlon	Elite Energy	\$10,000	\$418,860
2017	Men's Masters Over 50s State Hockey Champ	Men's Masters Hockey	\$2,000	\$261,612
2017	AMT Junior Tennis Championships	Tennis NSW	\$3,000	\$310,284
2017	Northern NSW Raid Rogaine	Qld Rogaine Association	\$1,000	\$81,875

2017	Women's Masters State Hockey Championships	Hockey NSW	\$9,500	\$1,170,000
2017	Mountain Bike Australia National Enduro Series	MBA	\$6,000	\$419,200
2017	Wave Ski Australian Open	Wave Ski Australia	\$3,500	\$272,448
2017	Special Olympics Football & Cricket	Special Olympics NSW	\$1,200	\$85,674
2017	Clarence 100	Paddle NSW	\$2,500	\$176,064
2017	Yamba Yoga Festival	Starlight Festivals	\$2,000	\$235,800
2017	Adventurethon Multisport Festival	Adventurethon	\$8,000	\$628,800
2018	AMT Junior Tennis Championships	Tennis NSW	\$3,000	\$310,284
2018	Combined High School Rowing	Rowing NSW	\$4,000	\$336,960
2018	Junior Girls U15 State Hockey Championships	Hockey NSW	\$10,000	\$1,170,000
2018	Clarence 100	Paddle NSW	\$2,500	\$176,064
2018	Wave Ski Australian Open	Wave Ski Australia	\$3,500	\$272,448
2018	Yamba Yoga Festival	Starlight Festivals	\$4,000	\$314,400
2018	Yamba Triathlon	NXSports	\$4,500	\$372,600
2018	Champions League Basketball 3x3	CBL	\$2,000	\$217,350
2018	Single Fin Longboard Surf Competition	Clarence Head Longboarders	\$2,000	\$158,976
2018	Cricket Pathway Challenge	North Coast Cricket Zone	\$4,000	\$317,492

2019	State Hockey Championships	Hockey NSW	\$10,000	\$1,170,000
2019	Yamba Yoga Festival	Starlight Festivals	\$4,000	\$314,400
2019	AMT Junior Tennis Championships	Tennis NSW	\$3,000	\$310,284
2019	Geoquest 48 Hour	Wild & Co	\$5,000	\$458,460
2019	Yamba Triathlon	NX Sports	\$4,500	\$372,600
2019	Cricket NSW Country Pathways Championships	Cricket NSW	8,000	\$686,400
2019	Clarence 100	Paddle NSW	2,000	\$176,064
2019	2019 Waveski Surfing Australian Open	Wave Ski Australia	3,500	\$272,448
2020	Yamba Triathlon	NX Sports	\$4,500	\$372,600

Total: \$15,913,079



Council donation to the Grafton Jacaranda Festival.



L-R: Alicia Savelloni (CVC), Maclean Veteran Golfers Geoff Grayson and Bob Harvey












Above: Lower Clarence Dance Eisteddfod. Right: Clarence Head Longboarders.



ASSETS

At the end of this council term, we own and maintain:

	4 MUSEUMS	4 LIBRARIES +1 MOBILE LIBRARY	1 ART GALLERY	23 COMMUNITY HALLS
	36 SPORTING GROUNDS	5 SWIMMING POOLS		
	5 HOLIDAY PARKS	415 HA OF PARKS & RESERVES	16 CEMETERIES	1 SALEYARD
	84 BUS SHELTERS	22 CARPARKS	44 BOAT RAMPS	28 WHARVES & JETTIES
	1497km OF SEALED ROADS	942km OF UNSEALED ROADS	122km OF FOOTPATHS & CYCLEWAYS	
	123 TIMBER BRIDGES	156 CONCRETE BRIDGES	46 FLOODPLAIN CROSSINGS	121km OF FLOOD BLOCKS & LEVIES
	11 WASTE & RECYCLING CENTRES	3 DEPOTS	2 ADMINISTRATION CENTRES	
	11 SEWER TREATMENT PLANTS	93 SEWER PUMP STATIONS	412km OF SEWER MAINS	
	1222km OF WATER MAINS	28 RESERVOIRS	22,082 WATER METERS & CONNECTIONS	175km OF STORM WATER PIPES

FINANCE

SRV outcomes

In 2015, all councils in NSW were required to lodge a submission with IPART to determine whether or not they were 'Fit For The Future'. As with many other councils in NSW, Clarence Valley was assessed as 'not fit', due to not meeting all the financial criteria, particularly in relation to achieving a balanced General Fund net operating result before capital grants and contributions and our capacity to maintain and renew our infrastructure to an acceptable level.

Just prior to the 2016 local government elections, Council lodged an application for a Section 508 (A) Special Rate Variation (SRV) with IPART. This involved applying for a special rate increase of 6.5% p.a. (including the rate peg limit) for five years from 1 July 2016, which translated to a cumulative increase in ordinary rates of 37% by year five (2020-21), with the additional revenue to be used solely on the repair Council's roads and road-related infrastructure. The aim was to bring our road network up to an acceptable condition and provide ongoing funding to keep it that way. The Section 508 (A) SRV application was approved in part as a Section 508 (2) SRV, with a 6.5% increase (inclusive of rate peg) in general rates income approved for one year only, with the additional revenue generated due to cease on 30 June 2017.

With the election of the new Council in September 2016, it was agreed that an SRV was not the only solution to the problem, and that Council should undertake an extensive review of its operations with a view to reducing costs. Several workshops were undertaken with Councillors, the Office of Local Government and the Executive Team to discuss a range of options to reduce the General Fund 2017/18 budget deficit of \$15.3M (inclusive of depreciation) over four years (from 2017/18 to 2020/21).

At the 18 April 2017 Ordinary Council Meeting, the *2017/18 to 2020/21 Efficiency Savings and Improvement Opportunities* report (Item 13.016/17) was presented to Council. This report presented a range of efficiency savings and proposed a further SRV. Council resolved that the efficiency savings and improvement opportunities identified in the report would be incorporated into Council's Draft 2017-18 Budget and Long-Term Financial Plan. Secondly, it was resolved that Council incorporate the proposal for an SRV of 8% per year for three years commencing 2018/19 (with the cumulative increase of 25.97% to be retained permanently in Council's rate base) in Council's Integrated Planning & Reporting documents, which were adopted for community consultation at the May 2017 Council meeting (Item 13.026/17).

At the June 2017 meeting, Council adopted the 2017/18 to 2020/21 Efficiency Savings and Improvement Strategies which identified \$8.598 million in savings over four years. Council also resolved to apply to IPART for the SRV of 8% per year for three years commencing 2018/19. In May 2018, the SRV was approved by IPART and as a result Council now has an additional \$5.3 million (above rate peg) each year to be dedicated to the repair and upgrade of Council's roads and road related infrastructure, floodplain assets, parks, and open spaces facilities.



L-R: Pound Street, Villiers to Duke profiled areas heavy patched November 2018, new amenities facility at Rushforth Park.

Over the term of this Council, staff numbers have been significantly reduced, in part because of the adopted Efficiency Savings and Improvement strategies, which involved the reduction of 27 FTE in 2017/18 and a saving of \$1.9 million. A further reduction came in 2020 as result of Council transferring the Clarence Care + Support services to Wesley Mission.

Staff numbers from June 30 2016 to June 30 2021:

Date	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Adopted FTE	549.63	549.63	512.47	517.77	520.36	472.07

In 2016, Council started the rationalisation of Council property holdings, which included the sale of four Council depots and three administration buildings in Grafton and South Grafton. The net proceeds from these sales came to \$4.125 million, which

was used to assist funding for the construction of the new Rushforth Road Works Depot in South Grafton. Staff moved into this new facility in 2018 and the reduced duplication and efficiencies of working from one central location in Grafton/South Grafton enabled Council to reduce operating costs by \$970,000 per year (refer Item 6a.20.051 December 2020).

In May 2021, Council considered a final report (Item 6c.21.068) on the targeted improvement strategies adopted by Council in June 2017. This report acknowledged the difficulties experienced with managing the impacts of the natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic, and that many of the original improvement strategies had been replaced by alternate strategies over the years with final adjustments being included in the 2020/21 and 2021/22 budgets. As a result, the June 2017 monetary value of improvement strategies had been achieved, with an additional \$244,387 in revenue recorded by the end of 2021/22.

Despite achieving the adopted efficiency savings and having the increased revenue from the SRV, Council has not achieved a balanced Operating Performance Ratio in the General Fund (as at 30 June 2021) as anticipated.

It is also acknowledged that Council still has a long way to go to bring its infrastructure assets, in particular Council's road network, up to an acceptable condition. This task was always going to be something that could only be achieved over the long term with additional revenue from the SRV.

Local government is like no other business; it is complex and diverse and subject to significant regulation and governance, accountable not only to the community but also to several other government agencies.

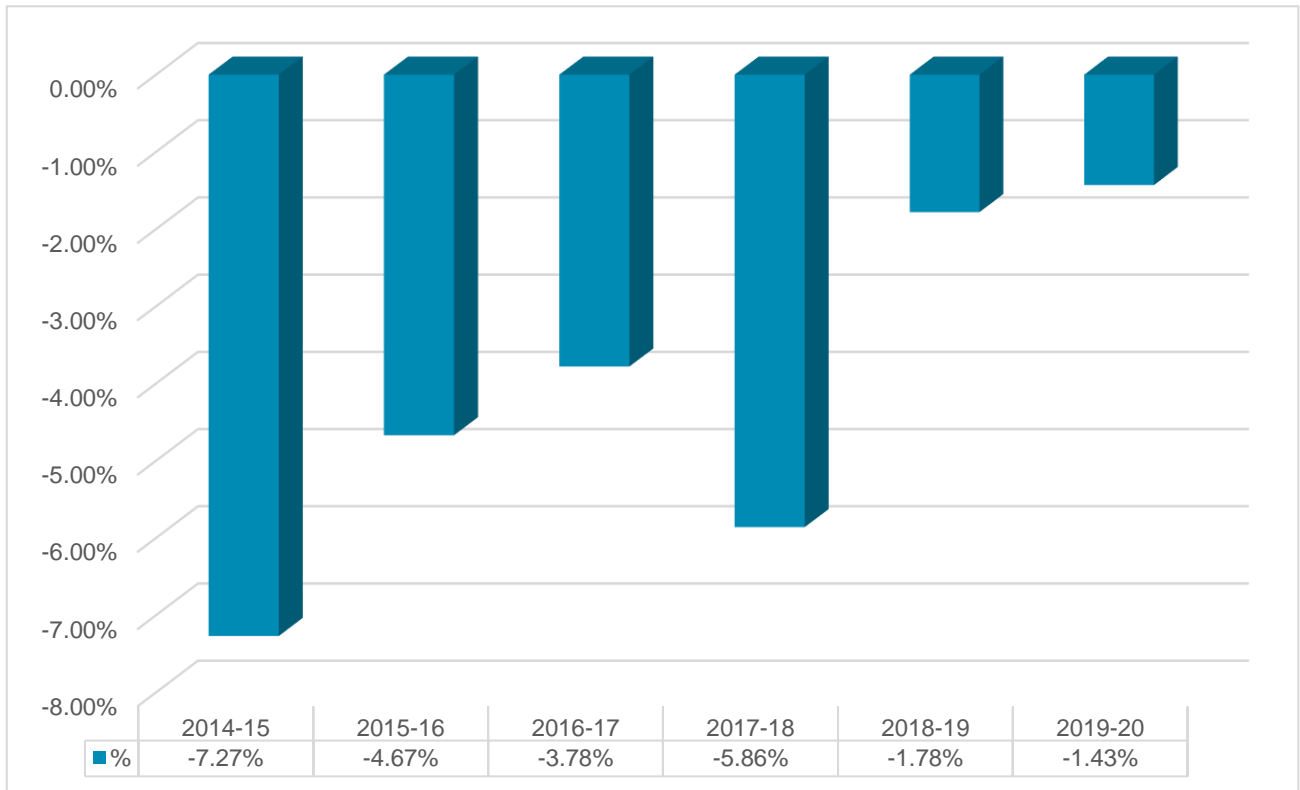
In recent years, this Council commenced significant investment in corporate systems and technology to not only improve our asset data collection but also to reduce the manual and administrative workload associated with managing such a regulated business. Our intention is to simplify and ease the way the community does business with us and to also reduce further the cost of administering the organisation so we can increase the amount we spend on direct services to the community.

We recognise we still have a road ahead of us, but believe we have a robust organisation structure and plan to address our weaknesses and that, because of the financial strategies adopted by the 2016 Council, the organisation is in a sound financial position.

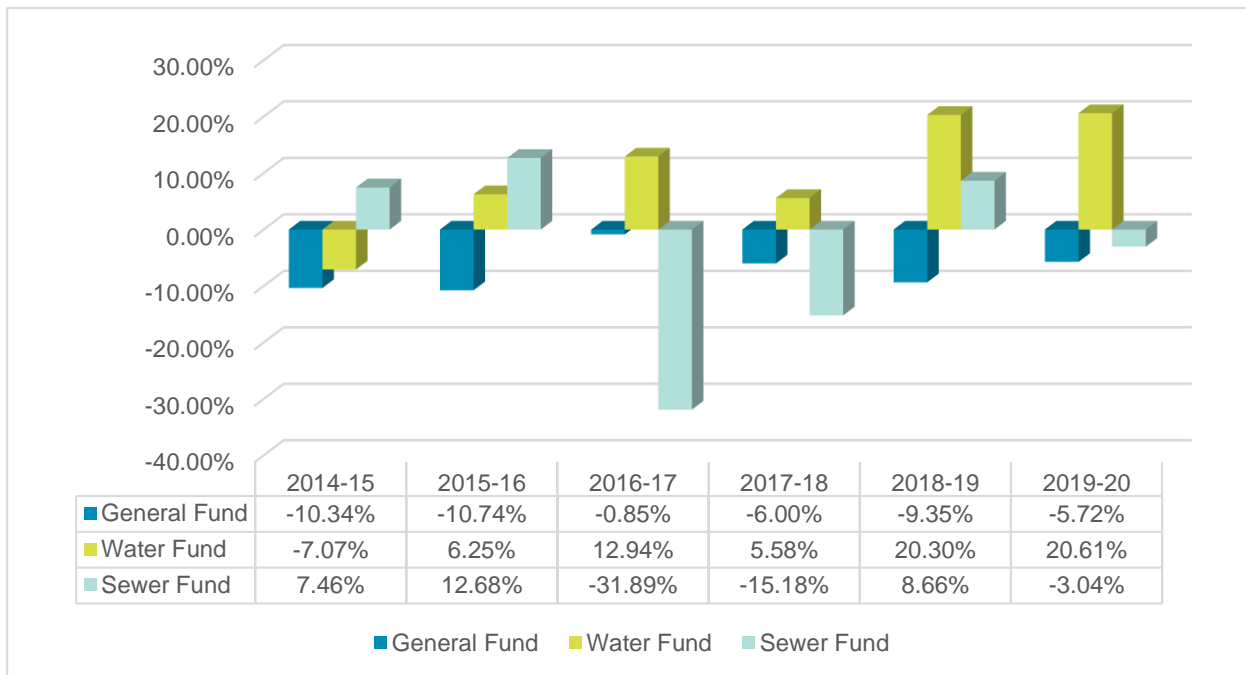


Clockwise from top: Orara Way, Braunstone, Blaxlands Creek Rd, Armindale, McIntyres Lane Gulmarrad; (p43) Jacaranda Park, unsealed road trial on Lawrence Tully Morgan Rd, Old Glen Innes Rd, Chambigne (p44)

Operating Performance Ratio (Consolidated)



Operating Performance (By Fund)



Loan Borrowings Balance (Consolidated) \$000

