

KEMPSEY SHIRE COUNCIL

Annual Report 2017-2018

Part A: Year in Review

COVER

Kempsey Shire Council
2017 - 2018 Annual Report
Part A: Year in Review

INSIDE COVER: A YEAR IN REVIEW

The Kempsey Shire Council 2017-2018 Annual Report provides a comprehensive account of Council's performance from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018. This document is one of the key components of the Integrated Planning and reporting Framework, legislated by the NSW Government. It is an integral part of Council being open and accountable in reporting to our community.

Indigenous Acknowledgement

Council acknowledges and pays respect to the Dunghutti people, traditional owners and custodians of the Macleay Valley. We acknowledge the culture of elders past, present and future and their unique contributions to the life of this Valley.

Reading this Report

The 2017-2018 Annual Report is presented in three volumes

- Part A – A Year In Review, providing a community overview of the highlights, achievements and challenges of the financial year
- Part B – Statutory Information, legislated detail about Council's operations and expenses
- Part C - Financial Statements

The full document suite is available to view at Council's Offices and libraries or from Council's website kempsey.nsw.gov.au

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MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR

The 2017-2018 financial year has been one of significant review, challenge and change. Councillors had identified the need to work more closely with the community on our vision for reshaping the Macleay, and working towards a more efficient, customer-focused Council.

The resulting transformation program looked at how the entire organisation works and how it was led and managed. For Council to deliver the results we set out to achieve, our organisation's culture and management needed to change to address the gaps that had been identified.

That change and the significant amount of staff changes particularly in Councils management level, has consumed much of the last financial year. With that comes challenges in delivery and achievement of service levels but those short-term service impacts will deliver long term efficiency.

Councillors are confident that the transformation program has resulted in us now having the right management and reporting lines in place to create a positive culture for our staff, and that we have the skills and experience in the right roles to get the job done.

All change is difficult no matter how it comes about, but it can be exciting. I believe this change has occurred for the right reason and in the right way and it will make a positive difference.

Over the last 12 months we've also worked to bring Council and the community closer together and to increase the opportunities for residents to have their say. Staff have set-up stalls, delivered information and taken your feedback at markets, the Kempsey Show and various community events throughout the year.

Councillors have embraced the Community Catch-up series, hosting workshops in Stuarts Point, Frederickton and South West Rocks over the financial year. These events have been well attended in each village and created time for Councillors to sit with residents, learn about their aspirations and their challenges and start preparing more detailed plans on how we can work together to meet expectations.

In September 2017 we conducted a community survey to help identify community priorities for Council to seek additional grant funding. These priorities reflect the actions in Council's Operating Plan and four-year Delivery Program. Many of those priorities are now being realised through State and Federal funding streams particularly with successful grants for public amenities, sports facilities and playgrounds. These projects will be delivered and reported on over the next couple of financial years.

As Councillors we've faced several difficult and polarising decision points over the last 12 months. We've tried to encourage each other and the community to listen to and respect each-others views, while seeking out facts to inform decisions.

Our key focus areas for programs and activities that make the Macleay Valley healthy, wealthy, safe and connected remain the foundation of our decision making. Over 2017-2018 we've made great strides in ensuring we have a Council organisation and a community that is being built for the future and we can continue to all be proud of.

Liz Campbell, Mayor

FEATURE: BUILDING AN ENGAGED COMMUNITY

Over the last 12 months Council has actively worked to create more regular and varied mechanisms for the community to have their say and share their vision for the future of the Macleay.

Council commenced a program of quarterly Community Catch-ups, held in towns and villages across the shire. The meetings are less formal than a council meeting and involve Councillors and senior staff out in the community inspecting sites of interest and building relationships with residents. The Catch-up also involves a facilitated workshop capturing what residents love about the area, the changes they want to see and how they see Council and the community working together on that vision.

The first catch-up was held in October 2017 at the Stuarts Point Community Hall with about 40 residents participating in discussions and site inspections at Stuarts Point, Grassy Head and Fishermans Reach. Further Catch-ups have also been held this financial year in Frederickton and South West Rocks.

Council will continue the quarterly Catch-up series around the Shire with each meeting resulting in a summary report that is then circulated back to participants before ongoing engagement in order to develop a Community Plan for the location. These area specific plans will be valuable in reviewing the Macleay Valley Community Strategic Plan.

Council have also continued to expand the online engagement platform Your Say Macleay. Over the last year 4,800 people have visited the site and had the opportunity to participate in more than 30 surveys. The most engagement was achieved in September 2017 for the survey that asked the community to nominate their grant funding priorities. This important feedback has been valuable in several successful funding applications since.

Council staff have also participated in a range of events, markets and information displays to help increase community connections. These include stalls at the Kempsey Riverside Markets, Naidoc Week, Youth Week and the 137th Kempsey Show in April 2018. At the Show residents had the opportunity to find out more about the services provided with Council staff from across customer services, libraries, tourism, waste, weeds and community relations on hand to answer questions and provide information. (356 words)

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

Water Supply Services - Large Local Water Utilities Award

Kempsey Shire Council won the 2017 inaugural Sam Samra Award in the category of Water Supply Services - Large Local Water Utilities (LWU). The Award which is co-sponsored by Local Government NSW, the NSW Water Directorate and the Department of Primary Industries – Water, recognises improvements in best practice service delivery by council local water utilities in New South Wales. Finalists and winners of the Award were determined following an assessment of performance data from the annual NSW Water Supply and Sewerage Performance Monitoring Report over the last ten years. (89 words)

OUR COMMUNITY, VISION AND VALUES

Our Communities Vision – 2036 Community Strategic Plan

We live in a community that provides opportunity to all, to prosper in an environment that supports wellbeing, connectedness and access to the resources the community wants and needs.

Our Values

Being Healthy

Being Wealthy

Being Safe

Being Connected

Council's Mission

Council's role is to take a leading position in partnering with other levels of government, business and community groups, and individuals to make the community's vision a reality. To achieve this we rely on our commitment to being a professional, friendly and ethical council that consults with and listens to the community.

This commitment requires Council operating with strong leadership; keeping the community informed and engage; demonstrating respect for all and working together in partnership.

Community Profile

- Kempsey Shire, located approximately 400 kilometres between Sydney and Brisbane on the NSW Mid North Coast, covers an area of 337,874 hectares between the Pacific Ocean in the east; Five Day Creek in the west; and from Grassy Head in the north, to Kundabung in the south
- The 2017 Estimated Resident Population for Kempsey Shire is 29,534 and is forecast to grow to 34,148 by 2036.
- The number of dwellings in Kempsey Shire is 13,795. This is forecast to grow to 16,331 in 2036, with the average household size falling from 2.35 to 2.30 by 2036.
- Empty nesters and retirees (aged 60 to 69) make up the largest single age bracket in the Shire, 16.4%, followed by parents and homebuilders (aged 35 to 49) 15.9%
- Kempsey Shire's Gross Regional Product is estimated at \$1.08 billion, which represents 0.2% of the state's GSP (Gross State Product).
- The Shire has 10,824 employed residents and 2,240 businesses.

- There were 10,847 jobs located in the Kempsey Shire in the year ending June 2017.
- In 2017, the Household services sector accounted for 39.5% of employment in Kempsey Shire. The importance of this sector has increased over the last 10 years (34.7% in 2007)

Source: .Id (<http://kempsey.nsw.gov.au/econodev/ksc-profile.html>)

COUNCILLORS

Mayor Liz Campbell

Councillor Mark Baxter

Councillor Leo Hauville

Councillor Sue McGinn OAM

Councillor Bruce Morris

Councillor Anthony Patterson

Councillor Dean Saul

Councillor Anna Shields

Councillor Ashley Williams

OUR ORGANISATION AND WORKFORCE

Workforce Snapshot 2017 -2018

- Council had a head count of 287 employees with 250 Full Time Equivalent jobs
- 57.1% of Council's workforce is over 45 years of age and of this 30% are over 55 years of age.
- The workforce is 27.2% female and 72.8% % male.
- The average length of service of our employees as at 30 June 2018 was 8.64 years, with service by gender of females 7.37 years and males 6.98 years.
- Staff participated in 6,407 hours of training courses and conferences across the year, including tertiary sponsored studies. The participation rate of employees undertaking training was 87.5%. We continue to provide a focus on updating the skills and knowledge of staff in leadership skills.
- The staff turnover rate for the 2017-2018 financial year was 7.64% which indicates that employees find Council as a stable employer and provides for security of long-term employment.

SPECIAL RATE VARIATION FUNDED WORKS

Roads and Bridges work

Council has approval from the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) to charge a variation (SRV) to the base rate amount in order to fund an expanded and ongoing program of maintenance and rehabilitation on roads and bridges. This program of work aims to improve the standard and lifespan of the roads and bridges assets by replacing or repairing the most critical sections.

For 2017-2018 this rate variation resulted in an additional \$2.6 million being invested into additional infrastructure work.

SRV Funded road and bridges projects were:

Collombatti Road

Armidale Road (River St) Elbow St to North St

East St Crescent Head - Main St to Korogora St

Elizabeth St SWR - Gregory St to Landsborough St

Entrance St Swr - Rudder St to Quarry St

Stuart St Kempsey - Forth St – End

Tozer Street – Rehabilitation

Wentworth Ave South West Rocks - Arthur St to End

Mcintyres Bridge - Nulla Nulla Creek Rd

Andersons Bridge - Austral Eden Outer Road

Knauers Bridge - Kinchela Creek Left Bank Rd

Environmental Projects

Council have funded significant environmental restoration projects to manage, protect and preserve our waterways and natural environment over the last 16 years, by applying a special Environmental Levy to Council's rates.

The Environmental Levy projects for 2017-2018 resulted in an investment of \$520,712 and included the noxious weed program; scoping works on Estuary Management Plans for Killick Creek, Macleay River and Korogoro Creek; and capital works for flood mitigation.

The full list of all Environmental Levy projects and their budget is available in Part B of this Annual Report.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

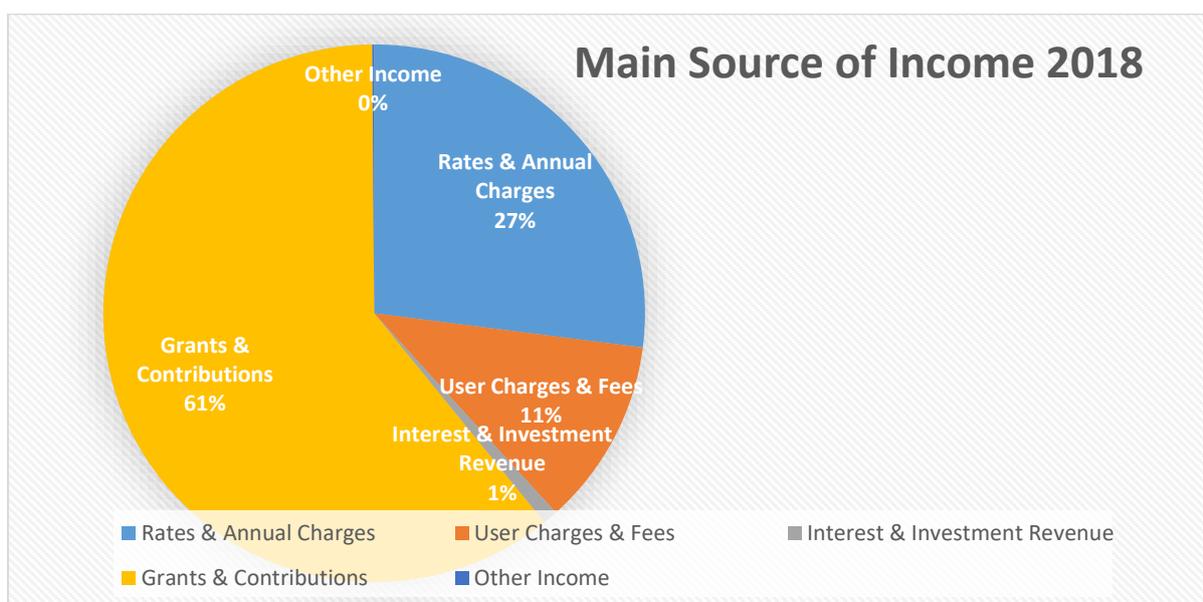
Council's operating result for 2017-18 was \$62.5M. The net operating result before capital amounts was a \$2.8M deficit.

Council's operating result (\$62.5M including the effect of depreciation and amortisation expense of \$24.8M) was \$62.1M higher than the 2016-17 result. This increase is largely attributable to the following:

- ordinary rates income increased by \$0.8M.
- annual charges for sewerage services increased by \$0.8M.
- grants and contributions provided for operating purposes increased by \$2.8M. This was predominantly due to additional RMS contributions of \$4.6M received for ongoing maintenance of sections of the old Pacific Highway (Macleay Valley Way – Frederickton to Eungai) dedicated to Council in 2017-18. This was partly offset by declines in the financial assistance grant (an advance payment was received for the first time in 2016-17) of \$2.5M.
- grants and contributions provided for capital purposes increased by \$61.1M. This was predominantly due to non-cash dedications from the RMS of various assets associated with the old Pacific Highway (Macleay Valley Way – Frederickton to Eungai) totalling \$58.8M. Council also received \$2.1M for the South Kempsey Village Bypass.
- materials and contracts expenses increased by \$2.3M, mainly due to increased road maintenance works.

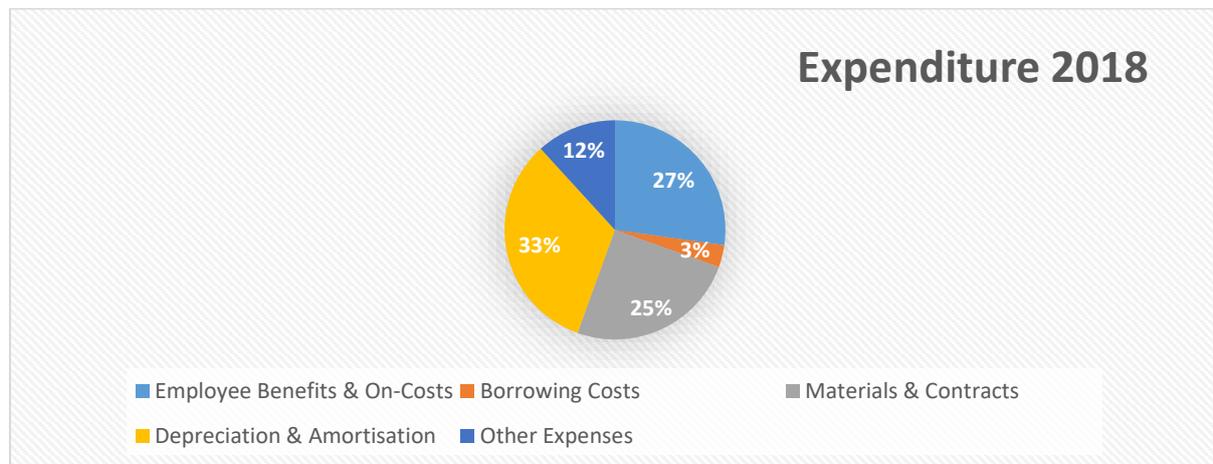
Sources of Income

Council's key sources of income are grants and contributions from other levels of government (\$83,951m) and rates or annual charges levied on landowners (\$37,390 m)



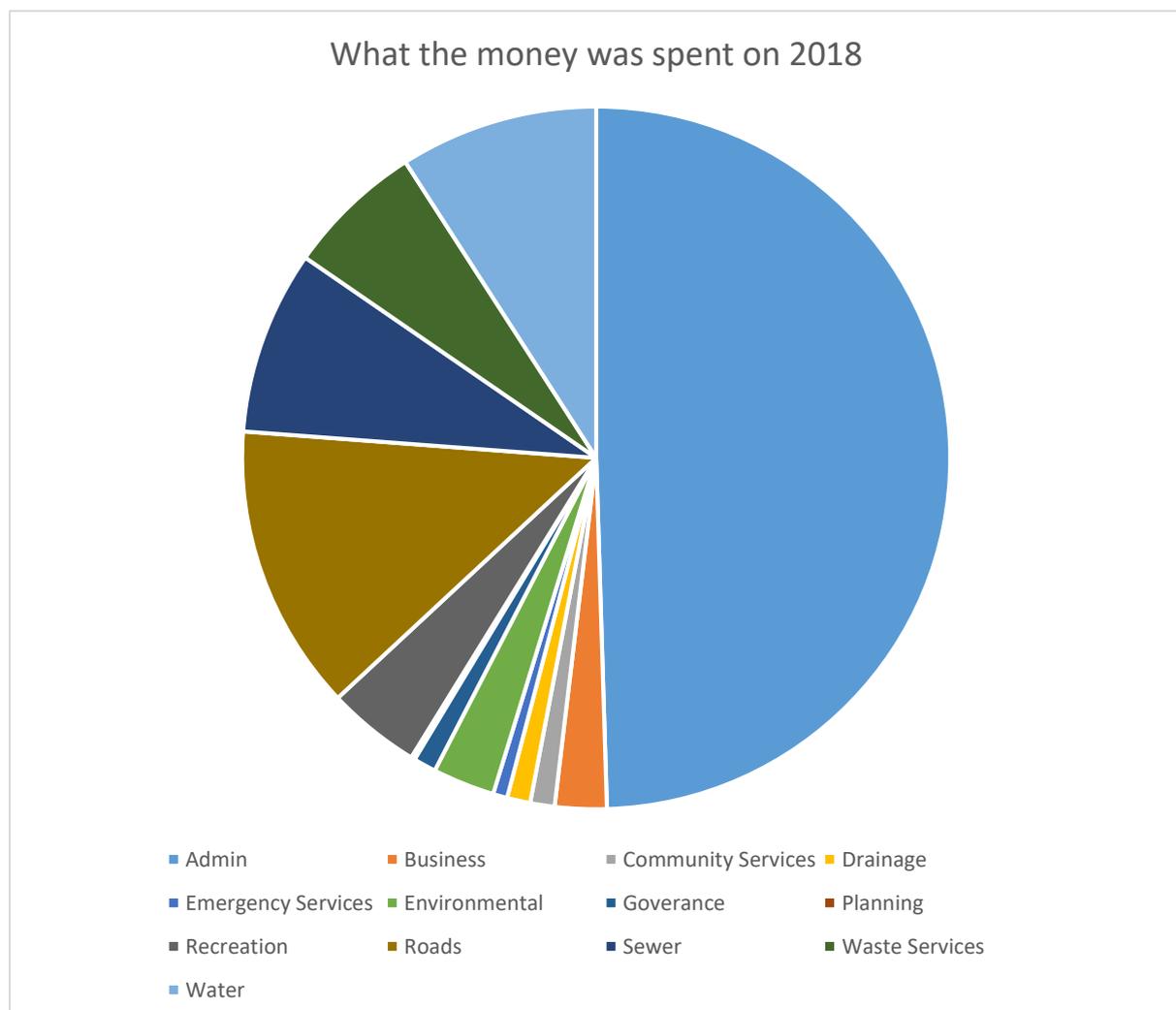
Operating Expenses

Council's expenditure for the year was \$75.760 million made up in part of \$20,642 million employee costs and depreciation expenses of \$24.818 million.



What was the money spent on?

The graph below shows a breakdown of Council's operating expenditure by activity.



Breakdown:

| | |
|--------------------|--------|
| Admin | 49.52% |
| Business | 2.36% |
| Community Services | 1.11% |
| Drainage | 1.06% |
| Emergency Services | 0.65% |
| Environmental | 2.83% |
| Governance | 1.04% |
| Planning | 0.18% |
| Recreation | 4.27% |
| Roads | 13.18% |
| Sewer | 8.45% |
| Waste Services | 6.28% |
| Water | 9.07% |

Statement of Financial Position

The graph below shows Council's net accumulated financial worth at the end of the financial year, broken down into three categories.

| Financial Position | 2018 \$'000 | 2017 \$'000 | 2016 \$'000 | 2015 \$'000 | 2014 \$'000 |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Assets (A) (What Council owns) | 1,134,724 | 1,064,919 | 1,098,365 | 1,068,531 | 1,200,083 |
| Liabilities (L) (What Council owes) | 59,766 | 58,965 | 61,131 | 64,593 | 65,484 |
| Equity (A-L) (What Council is worth in \$ terms) | 1,074,958 | 1,005,954 | 1,037,234 | 1,003,938 | 1,134,599 |

Liabilities

Borrowings account for \$46.116 million, representing 75.44% of Council's liabilities. Council's loan liability increased by \$181,000 in the financial year.

Financial Snapshot

- Net worth: \$1.074 billion
- Written Down Value of Councils Assets: \$1.075 billion
- Asset Additions: \$17.570m
- Total income: \$138.297m
- Largest Revenue Source: Annual Charges - \$18.842m
- Revenue from Government Grants: \$14.651m
- Total Expenses: \$75.760m
- Annual Depreciation costs: \$24.818m
- Current balance of borrowings: \$46.116m
- Cash and Investments held: \$50.147m

COMMUNITY GOAL WE VALUE BEING HEALTHY

What does Council aim to deliver?

- Provide safe, reliable water supply to serviced areas
- Implement fluoridation to Kempsey and Crescent Head water supplies
- Regulate food risks to the public
- Provide services to cater for an ageing population
- Provide sporting fields, play facilities and public spaces
- Operate public pools
- Maintain footpaths
- Support education for healthy eating programs
- Minimise impacts of waste and safe disposal of waste products
- Ensure development is undertaken to safe and reasonable standards
- Ensure sustainability of infrastructure to meet expected future growth
- Regulate public health risks
- Ensure future burial needs are catered for
- Removal of wastewater products from serviced areas
- Ensure animals don't create a nuisance or safety risk
- Manage and regulate impacts of development
- Plan for a sustainable environment
- Manage and remediate the estuary eco-system
- Minimise the impact of noxious weeds on the environment and the economy
- Maintain the stormwater drainage system

Contributing to a healthy community

- 3101ML potable water provided to the community
- 1.2km water mains renewed
- 4 water pumps refurbished
- 166 food premise audits
- 28 play areas
- 85,110 visits to four outdoor pools
- 70km footpaths across Shire
- 1117 responses to companion animal complaints
- 132 responses to environmental issues
- 1,250 private properties inspected to identify weed infestations
- 98.4km stormwater drainage pipes
- 12,160 premises receive garbage collection service
- 471 development applications processed
- 266 public health inspections
- 82 swimming pool inspections
- 868 onsite septic tank inspections
- 2,680 Section 149 Planning Certificates issued
- 11 cemeteries
- 127 burials
- 22 water pump stations
- 8 sewerage treatment plants

FEATURE: New waste collection system

Waste collection is one of the most significant services delivered by Council with over 12,000 premises across the Shire receiving a waste collection service. A 10-year waste collection contract with new contractor Cleanaway commenced in July 2017.

The new "Sort and Save" domestic waste collection service aims to increase waste diversion of organics and recycling out of landfill and therefore reduce costs. The service changes included;

- Utilising a \$187,500 LG Organics NSW EPA grant to implement a three-bin domestic waste service that involves fortnightly red bin landfill or yellow bin recycling collection and weekly green organics and food waste collection
- All serviced households received new bins, kitchen caddy with compostable liners, a recycling caddy bag, reminder fridge magnet and informative waste service guide
- Two new bin size options (140L organics and 360L recycling)
- Free bulky goods vouchers for waste management centers
- Low-cost flat rate for domestic disposal of household asbestos.

Cleanaway officially opened its local base in September 2017, bringing to the Valley 10 local jobs and flow-on benefits for several local businesses. Cleanaway's South Street operations include a waste call centre staffed by locals who are trained to answer waste and bin enquiries, and a depot for the six state-of-the-art trucks that service the Shire.

In the first year of the new service, Macleay residents successfully diverted 60 per cent of all waste away from landfill. Residents have prevented the equivalent of two Olympic sized swimming pools full of waste from entering local landfill by sorting recycling and placing food and garden waste in the green bin rather than the red one. Ultimately this has saved the community over \$125,000 in State levy payments.

An additional 1700 tonnes of food and garden waste was made into nutrient rich compost used by local farmers and gardeners, while carbon dioxide equivalent emissions were reduced by 1400 metric tonnes.

Community education is a key element to ensuring a 'best practice' waste collection system. Council has played a key role in local campaigns in the lead-up to and beyond the new service including an EPA anti-littering program, National Recycling Week competition, Clean up Australia Day, MIDWASTE's Less is More de-cluttering and Bee Wax Wraps workshops. Additional recycling services over the Christmas to New Year period and the provision of dog-litter bags and Picitup kits have also made a practical difference.

The Award-winning mobile Community Recycling Centre trailer (mCRC) made possible through funding of \$71,817 received from the NSW EPA Better Waste & Recycling program, continues to provide a valuable convenient service visiting 16 townships around the Shire.

HEALTHY HIGHLIGHTS

Community playground partnerships

Kempsey Shire Council has been working with several community groups and organisations to create new and expanded playgrounds in West Kempsey and Horseshoe Bay. The Horseshoe Bay Playground upgrade was driven by the South West Rocks Sport and Recreation Association and involved local volunteers who helped install equipment, build decking and plant gardens. Grant funding was received through Fundability and the Nestlé Community Fund to purchase new equipment including an all-abilities inclusive orbiter, a triple swing with joey seat, monkey bars and additional seating and materials for a mud kitchen built by students from Kempsey High School.

The creation of a family friendly park in West Kempsey on the corner of Cochrane and Leith Streets is another example of Council partnering with the community. The park includes seating and picnic areas, swings and play equipment for young children, a safe area for bike riding and general play and outdoor fitness equipment. (163 words)

Crescent Head Reserve playground

Crescent Head residents and visitors can now enjoy improvements to the Crescent Head reserve foreshore with the installation of new play equipment. As part of Council's commitment to playground maintenance and the ongoing playground inspection program, the seaside playground equipment was determined as requiring replacement. The new equipment is made of more durable materials that will perform better in the extreme salt air environment and will prevent the structure from deteriorating. (73 words)

Footpaths

Footpaths play an important role in our community both for access and for those who enjoy walking as a regular form of exercise. Council has an ongoing program for maintenance and refurbishment of the Valley's seventy kilometres of footpaths. Specific projects have seen 948 metres of footpath replaced in the last financial year including sections on Eden St and Forth St in the Kempsey CBD, Marsh St, Elbow St and Harold Walker Avenue in West Kempsey, Lachlan St in South Kempsey and Marine Parade in Stuarts Point. (93 words)

Companion animals

This year a partnership between the Kempsey Pound and not-for-profit animal rehoming organisations has seen 301 cats and dogs rehomed. Friends of Kempsey Pound is one of the local rehoming organisations that actively works with Council rangers to rehome many dogs and cats that may be impounded. Council rangers praise the work of the volunteers and stress the importance of having pets de-sexed and microchipped as well as a collar with a clear name tag with contact details so that they can be reunited with their owner if they become lost. Council also offers designated leash free areas within most of the Shire's towns and villages and has a brochure on the website showing these areas. (116 words)

Estuary Coastal Zone Management Plan

Work started this year on the review of the Estuary Coastal Zone Management Plans for the Macleay River, Killick Creek and Korogoro Creek by inviting the community to provide feedback about how they use some of our waterways and how they would like to see them looked after. Updated Coastal Management Plans developed with financial and technical support from the Office of Environment and Heritage and Coastal Management Consultants BMT, will be a guide for council to preserve and improve the habitats, recreational amenity and resilience of these estuaries into the future. (88 words)

South Kempsey Rezoning

With the completion of the Pacific Highway Bypass, Council took opportunity to investigate ways to stimulate economic activity in retail and commercial precincts in Kempsey. An amendment to the Kempsey Local Environmental Plan undertaken in 2017 means a greater range of housing types and retail shops will now be permissible on Lachlan Street, South Kempsey. The decision to rezone the street came after significant liaison with property owners, the Department of Planning and Environment as well as a public exhibition of the proposed changes. The rezoning of Lachlan Street aims to increase employment opportunities, improved services, an increase in property value and greater retail choices. (105 words)

Water mains

Council manages 630 kms of water pipes in the Shire. Regular inspections and maintenance of water mains are undertaken to ensure the system continually operates at maximum efficiency and to ensure that residents are provided with clean drinking water. Water construction crews have replaced sections of the water main in Second Avenue and between Third and Ninth Avenues in Stuarts Point and on South West Rocks Road either side of Kinchela Bridge. Other work achieved this financial year includes the replacement of water mains on Elbow Street, Wide Street and Sherwood Road. The bracketing system, holding the existing water main on the side of the Jerseyville Bridge, was also recently reinstated. (113 words)

Sewerage

\$8.7 million in State Government funding was secured in May 2018 towards the first stage of the Central Kempsey Wastewater Treatment Works project to transition the existing, aged waste-disposal system over to best-practice and latest technology treatment works. The three-stage Central Kempsey Wastewater Treatment Works project will see the consolidation of three sewerage schemes - South Kempsey, West Kempsey and Frederickton and is valued at \$50 million. (64 words)

COMMUNITY GOAL

WE VALUE BEING WEALTHY

What does Council aim to deliver?

- Promote literacy through the provision of library services
- Encourage tourist visitation
- Ensure suitable infrastructure exists for business owners
- Support services to increase value in local business
- Maximise opportunities from the bypass
- Support increased levels of educational attainment
- Build returns from agriculture
- Provide transport network
- Timber bridge replacement program

Contributing to a wealthy community

- 65,000 literary, research or online resources available through the libraries
- 4 library locations and a mobile service operating 86 hours a week
- 5 holiday parks
- 651 km sealed road
- 589 km unsealed road
- 3 bridges replaced
- 86 timber road bridges
- 6 timber foot bridges
- 2.3km renewed kerb and guttering
- \$148M annually via tourism spend
- 20,094 visitors to information centres
- 10,043 potholes repaired 10,043

FEATURE: Roads remain a focus

Kempsey Shire Council undertake an extensive road works program covering over 650 kms of sealed roads and more than 580kms of unsealed roads. The works program balances safety, risk and available budget to deliver on the planned works.

Council's program of works is not only about renewing infrastructure but involves significant maintenance and repairs to improve safety and the longevity of our road network. Renewal works to sealed roads over the 2017-2018 year included South West Rocks Road, Sherwood Road, Plummers Lane and ongoing works on Tozer St and Lachlan St. Unsealed roads that were gravel resheeted include Jacks Crossing Road, Suez Road, Rainbow Reach Road, Willi Willi Road, Armidale Road, Collombatti Road and Beranghi Road.

Kerb and guttering renewal works were completed on Cameron Street, Chifely Place, Douglas Fentiman Street, Eric Kennedy Street, Frank Archibald Street, Greenfields Avenue, Harold Coutman Street, James Carney Crescent, Keith Dunn Street, Memorial Avenue, Mitchell Avenue, Robert Eggins Street and Taylor Street.

A comprehensive program of road reconstruction works to improve the streetscape of Lachlan Street, South Kempsey is the last component of the Kempsey Corridor Master Plan project and has been jointly funded by Kempsey

Shire Council and the State Government as part of the handover of the old Pacific Highway. Valued at \$800,000, the program of work involves upgrading and replacing the road pavement, the existing stormwater system, kerb and guttering and footpaths. The section between Middleton and Carri Streets was completed over the financial year with work continuing to Middleton Street and including the installation of a roundabout to improve traffic flow.

Up to 70 truck movements a day have been diverted away from the residential areas of Middleton and West streets in Kempsey with the opening of the extension of South Street to Gowings Hill Road. The new road was officially opened in February 2018 by Member for Oxley Melinda Pavey and Mayor Liz Campbell who were joined by Council staff and representatives from the project contractor, Eire Constructions. Just over \$3 million in project funding was made possible through contributions from the Restart NSW Fixing Country Roads program, Roads to Recovery Program and Kempsey Shire Council.

Increasing safety and making the driving conditions more consistent were the aims of Kempsey Shire Council's road reconfiguration work on Macleay Valley Way, north of Frederickton. The works valued at \$4.5million and funded by RMS, involved eliminating north and southbound overtaking lanes between the Frederickton highway interchange to the old Bellimbopinni School. The former highway stretch has become two lanes, one north and one south instead of three lanes. Re-sealing work, reconstruction of road shoulders and changes to line marking continue at various locations north of the old Bellimbopinni School. (431 words)

Feature: An engaging Library program

In the 2017-2018 financial year the Kempsey Shire Library and the surrounding branches offered a staggering 228 events with 2,340 attendees. The calendar offered a variety of presentations, educational events and programs including author talks, book launches, creative workshops for adults and school holiday activities for children. A big focus for the library in recent years has been forming partnerships with various community groups, organisations and businesses to co-deliver events and services.

Council's library and community relations staff partnered with Skills Link, NSW Health, Home Instead Senior Care Mid North Coast and local businesses such as Wayne Mossop Tai Chi to conduct 19 free activities for local seniors as part of the NSW Seniors Festival in April 2018.

Children's Makey Makey robotic workshops, which were made possible due to a successful partnership between the library and Telstra were very popular along with the 'Create your own mini greenhouse' workshop hosted in partnership with Bunnings and the Lego Builders Program for children aged 2-3 years using Lego to develop early literacy and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) skills.

Exhibitions and guest speakers are a regular feature on the library calendar, showcasing a diversity of talent. 2018 started with a rarely seen view of World War One cartoonist Hal Eyre's work displayed at Kempsey Shire Library as part of a travelling exhibition, drawn from the State Library of NSW collection of 357 original drawings purchased in 1920. The display featured reproductions of 20 of

his most comical cartoons which are beautiful and enlightening illustrations of the debates and controversies of the time.

Guest Speakers provide an interactive way for residents to engage in the literary world. The library hosted talks from Mid North Coast author Greg Barron's on his latest book, *Whistler's Bones*, historian and author Noeline Kyle speaking on her research and writing on women in history, Kaylene Parker from Alzheimer's Australia presented as part of Dementia Awareness month as did local historian Bruce Cain.

Getting creative, the Kempsey Shire Libraries launched a campaign to get books returned and to help those in need. The Food for Fines campaign means library members existing overdue book fines are be waived in exchange for canned or long-life food. All items collected were donated to local charities to distribute in Christmas food hampers to those in need in the local community.

139 children aged three to 17 read 2,380 books as part of the Summer Reading Club program which was held across the Shire's library branches at Kempsey, South West Rocks, Stuarts Point and Hat Head. The themed program encourages a continued love of reading and ongoing multi-literacy skills development and culminated in a Reading Club party in January 2018 with the announcement of four major prize winners.

Keeping a focus on the written word, approximately 30 local primary school children created their own short stories with award-winning children's authors, Belinda Murrell and Oliver Phommavanh during a visit from the Byron Writers Festival StoryBoard Bus. The travelling, free creative writing program is an initiative of the Byron Writers Festival aimed at getting young people excited about literature, literacy and creativity. (522 words)

WEALTHY HIGHLIGHTS

Southern Gateway sculpture

A seven-metre-tall sculpture, celebrating the rich history of the area, now welcomes travellers as they enter the Macleay Valley from the southern exit of the Pacific Highway. A selection panel including representatives of the Macleay Valley Arts Council, Dunghutti artists, residents, the Macleay Business Chamber, young people and Council awarded the southern gateway sculpture commission to artists Paul Johnson and Gail Mason from Artventure for their work titled "Trees". Artventure's sculpture installed in May 2018 is a representation of the history of the Macleay in a contemporary form and provides a visually striking piece that people can engage with. The work, featuring LED lighting, includes three key shapes representing indigenous bark canoes to honour the original inhabitants of the Macleay - the Dunghutti people, a cross cut saw to represent the early cedar getters, and the ribbed frames of the timber boat building industry. (139 words)

Holiday Parks

Council is Reserve Trust Manager of five holiday parks along the coast of the Macleay Valley. In 2017, Australian Tourism Park Management (ATPM) was awarded the contract to manage Holiday Parks at Crescent Head, Hat Head, Horseshoe Bay, Grassy Head and Stuarts Point. More than 500,000 visitors come to the Macleay Valley each year where they can embrace the regions rich history, natural attractions, fresh produce and growing events scene. Since commencement ATPM has launched a new website with online booking capabilities and has improved branding across all the parks. (98 words)

Macleay Valley Food Bowl

Macleay Valley Food Bowl producers joined more than 5,000 retailers, chefs and hospitality decision makers at the *Fantastic Food and Drink* tradeshow at the ICC Sydney Exhibition Centre in April 2018. The Macleay Valley Food Bowl has also been established as a regular stall holder at the Kempsey Riverside Markets and The Gladstone Quality Market and will continue to participate at other foodie events such as Beef in the Vines at Cassegrain Winery. (73 words)

New visitor guide

The new-look 30-page A4 Visitor Guide, *Drop In to the Macleay Valley Coast* was launched in December 2017 and features information and tips for people interested in visiting the Kempsey Shire. The guide highlights the region's many attractions including its scenic hinterland, quaint riverside villages and the coastal townships and presents case studies of local business and lifestyles of residents in the region. A total of 30,000 copies have been distributed to local, regional and interstate Visitor Information Centres as well as to local businesses. (85 words)

Bridges

Bridge works form part of Council's strategic objective to support a wealthy community, by increasing the value of production and providing key links within the local transport network. Road users continue to have improved access to safer and more reliable local travel as aging timber bridges have been upgraded as part of Kempsey Shire Council's \$2.2 million Bridge Replacement Program.

Whalens Bridge at Austral Eden Inner Road was prefabricated in Queensland before being delivered in one piece. It is the first road bridge to be installed in the Shire made of composite fibre. Through the year Council's bridge team also erected Knauers Bridge; a new bridge on Left Bank Road Kinchela and completed the replacement of two 50-year-old timber bridges on Nulla Nulla Creek Road (McIntyres Bridge) and on Schmidts Road (Schmidts Bridge) along with the smaller Bung Hole Bridge on Nulla Nulla Creek rd. (130 words)

COMMUNITY GOAL

WE VALUE BEING SAFE

What does Council aim to deliver?

- Increase awareness of the need for disaster plans
- Build networks for community support after disasters
- Emergency preparation and response
- Provide flood mitigation infrastructure to reduce flood impacts
- Assist in crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) and communication
- Support national domestic violence awareness campaigns
- Swift removal of graffiti in our urban areas
- Education programs on road safety
- Revitalise Kempsey CBD to instill community pride and ownership
- Activities to reduce alcohol related issues
- Provide street lighting to urban areas and the road network
- Road safety improvements
- Increase beach safety through lifeguard services

Contributing to a safe community

- 5 lifeguard patrolled beaches during peak holiday seasons
- SMS flood alerts sent to network of 200
- 74 CCTV cameras currently installed throughout the region
- 175 flood gates and control structures
- 33 measuring stations recording flood and rainfall data
- 350 students and young drivers attended road safety programs, information and training days supported by Council
- 60 bike helmets were distributed to young cyclists through the Aboriginal Road Safety program event

FEATURE: Community safety infrastructure installed

One of Council's key focus areas is to help our community feel safe by working with other agencies to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour. Council led the push to have CCTV cameras installed in key areas and safety grants from State and Federal Governments has supported the ongoing roll out of cameras in various locations across the region.

Engagement has been an important element of the project and camera locations were selected after consultation with the community, local business owners, and discussions with Police. Presentation of the Community Action Plan to groups including business representatives, licensed premises owners and other community groups was met with a positive response. Face to face consultation with business owners in Kempsey, Crescent Head and South West Rocks also resulted in support for the project.

Seventy-four cameras have now been deployed in the Macleay Valley with 33 located in the Kempsey CBD and Riverside Park, eight in South West Rocks, nine in Crescent Head and a further 24 cameras at various Council locations including the Civic Centre and Kempsey Regional Saleyards.

The introduction of CCTV cameras has improved activation of the public areas of Riverside Park, Crescent Head Foreshore and in South West Rocks. The cameras assist in protecting community infrastructure such as children's playgrounds, barbeque areas, shelters and amenities. During 2017 the Riverside Park playground was upgraded and expanded and there is a greater usage of this space. The Riverside Markets, which occur on first Saturday each month, has grown from approximately 60 stalls to now 120 stalls each month. The next stage of the project will see increased lighting in Riverside Park, helping to further activate this space.

In South West Rocks the CCTV cameras overlook the caravan park, barbecue shelter and children's playground. The community organised and led the re-vamp of this playground last year. The cameras add to a sense of wellbeing and safety and with the new equipment has seen additional children and families using the area.

Crescent Head foreshore has also experienced an increase in usage with a new amenities block, an upgraded children's playground and use for small scale festivals. As a popular holiday spot this area was identified as a site of anti-social activity with competing interests of residents, holiday makers, patrons from licensed venues, and a large caravan park. The introduction of the CCTV network has helped to capture the movements of people through this popular public space and provide a greater sense of security for users. (411 words)

SAFE HIGHLIGHTS

Road Safety

Kempsey Council work alongside the Roads and Maritime Services to coordinate and promote a range of community safety campaigns to encourage safer driving and improved road users behaviours. In conjunction with the state-wide Saving Lives on Country Roads campaign and NSW Police enforcement during the June long weekend Council actively promoted road safety throughout the shire via digital message boards, print and social media advertising and hosting two road safety events; a road safety information stall at South West Rocks and a free child car safety seat checking day.

Kempsey Shire Council supported the 2018 Yellow Ribbon Road Safety Week, which is organised by SARA (Safer Australian Roads and Highways) with its partners the Australian Automobile Association Altus Traffic and Road Safety Education. The week focuses on improving safety on our roads and highways as well as remembering those who have lost their lives or have been seriously injured in road accidents. Free events held in the Macleay include two Seniors Road Safety Awareness workshops during the NSW Seniors Festival, Helping Learner Drivers Become Safer Drivers workshops and a Bike Helmet Exchange as part of Youth Week. (187 words)

Beach safety

Each year, the Australian Lifeguard Service (ALS) and local Surf Life Saving Clubs work with Kempsey Shire Council to provide surf patrols across the shire to keep residents and visitors safe during peak holiday periods. Data provided by the ALS shows that during the 2017-2018 season there were 46 rescues performed and 10 calls for ambulances across local beaches. Favourable weather conditions across 2018 Easter long weekend saw 979 people visit Grassy Head Beach and 2,891 people visit Horseshoe Bay Beach. The ALS data shows that one rescue and 105 preventative actions were carried out at Grassy Head Beach over the weekend along with 204 preventative actions and one first aid treatment at Horseshoe Bay Beach. (116 words)

Discussing domestic violence

Council and Kempsey Family Support Service installed flags along Smith Street, Kempsey in acknowledgement of the 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence and White Ribbon Day which both commenced on the 25 November 2017. The purple flags, which read 'our community says NO to domestic violence', help raise awareness about violence against women. The flags stayed flying during the entire 16 days of activism. Council encouraged residents to join the campaign to eliminate violence in our community by taking the White Ribbon Oath. (88 words)

SWR Access Improvements

Improvements to kerb ramps and a new pedestrian crossing refuge were carried out in South West Rocks as part of Kempsey Shire Council's Pedestrian Access and Mobility Plan (PAMP) which is designed to increase mobility for pedestrians and motorised scooters. Council also supported the South West Rocks Lions Club's project to create a new access ramp so that elderly people and those with a disability can safely access the sandy area at Back Creek. The Lions Club received a \$15,000 NSW Government grant under the Community Building Partnership Program for the project which was opened in December 2017. Council supported with logistics and provided materials for the installation of handrails and fencing. (114 words)

Flood preparedness- Lower Macleay

The NSW SES, in partnership with the SES Lower Macleay Community Action Team and Kempsey Shire Council, conducted the Lower Macleay Flood Hypothetical exercise in March 2018 aimed to provide residents with a clear understanding of their flood risk and to help participants develop a plan to prepare for, respond to and recover from floods. Seventy-six participants were present to get advice from a panel of emergency services. A copy of the hypothetical results can be found on the Kempsey Shire Council website. (87 words)

Clyde Street Flood marker

In June 2018 the CBD flood marker in Clyde Street Mall, Kempsey received a facelift. The existing marker was repainted by INDOtheArtist. The updated pole features bright colours so that the heights of previous major floods can clearly be identified. The original flood marker was installed back in 1999 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the devastating 1949 Macleay River floods in which six lives were lost and many businesses and homes destroyed. The renewal is a joint project between Council and the NSW SES - Mid North Coast Region. (90 words)

COMMUNITY GOAL WE VALUE BEING CONNECTED

What does Council aim to deliver?

- Provide and maintain public areas and recreational facilities for use by the community
- Provide and maintain public toilet facilities
- Provide suitable parking
- Work with community groups
- Support community events and activities
- Provide access to transport and infrastructure services

Contributing to a connected community

- 23 public toilets cleaned and maintained
- 14 car parks maintained
- 200+ people attended Festival of Small Halls event in January 2018
- 12 playground inspections conducted per month
- 77 ha of parkland maintained
- 5,015 Kempsey Shire Council facebook followers
- 1,257 Macleay Valley Coast facebook followers
- 44 Mayoral Community Fund 2017-2018 recipients including local schools

FEATURE: Supporting Community Events

Kempsey Shire Council supports many community projects and events around the Shire. Council directly hosts events including Australia Day and Citizenship Ceremonies, road safety days and various Youth Week activities. In partnership with local venues and artists, Council led Live and Local Macleay, a series of free live music events held in various locations in the Valley, and worked with major event coordinators to bring the Festival of Small Halls and Queens Baton Relay to the area.

More than two hundred residents and visitors attended Frederickton's historic School of Arts hall for a night of live music as part of the Festival of Small Halls Summer Tour 2018. The tour brings musicians from the Woodford Folk Festival on the road to play at tiny halls in communities all over Australia. Kempsey Shire Council supported the event by providing the venue, promotion and coordinated the catering with the help of Frederickton Newsagency and Fredo Pies.

Several departments within Council collaborated to deliver Macleay Live and Local which included 34 different acts delivering 51 performances, bringing live music into 19 venues across Kempsey, South West Rocks and Crescent Head in March and June 2018. The program aimed to create a 'music trail' to encourage audiences to move from venue to venue. It served to foster emerging artists with many receiving further opportunities to return to venues. Council received funding from the Live Music Office as part of a strategic Initiative by Create NSW to increase opportunities for live music in Regional NSW. South West Rocks was the first to host the Live and Local Macleay. Hosting venues included the Seabreeze Beach Hotel, Heritage Cafe, Sixty Degrees Café and the Horseshoe Bay Kiosk and markets.

Community events play an important role in building our sense of place, creating cohesion in the community and to drive tourism in the region. Council provides both in-kind and financial support to key local events. Event support was provided to the Slim Dusty Festival, Veteran's Week Golf, Sculptures in the Gaol and the Akubra Classic.

Taking part in the celebration and acknowledgement of local business, Council supported the Macleay Valley Business Awards and within the Macleay Valley Food Bowl initiative, sponsorship is provided to local producers to attend the Kempsey Riverside and Gladstone Quality Markets, and other food based events to showcase their goods. (386 words)

CONNECTED HIGHLIGHTS

Boatramps

Locals and visitors who enjoy boating or recreational fishing have benefited from upgrades to boat ramps in Kempsey and Jerseyville thanks to funding from Kempsey Shire Council and the NSW Government under its NSW Boating Now program. The work involved the construction of a 125m² timber wharf at Riverside Park, Kempsey, adjacent to the playground as well as a 2.4 metre-wide floating pontoon for the Jerseyville boat ramp within Rotary Park. The Regional Boating Plan identified a wharf in Kempsey would create an access point to the river for maritime users and the floating pontoon at Jerseyville improves launching and retrieval for boats and encourages more use of the site particularly during peak holiday periods. (114 words)

NAIDOC Week 2017

The importance, resilience and richness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages was the theme of national celebrations marking National NAIDOC Week in July 2017. The Kempsey celebrations focused on celebrating the local Dunghutti language and culture.

Pre-NAIDOC Week celebrations were held at Kempsey South Public School on Wednesday 28 June with other local primary schools attending. A commemorative march was held on July 3rd on Belgrave St which moved to Clyde and Forth Streets before finishing at Services Club Park, Kempsey with a presentation and morning tea. A special storytime session for NAIDOC Week was held the following day at Wigay Aboriginal Culture Park. (108 words)

Planned Communications

Kempsey Shire Council's Communication Strategy uses a range of channels to communicate with the community including the post, phone, face to face, traditional media and online tools. Regular media releases are supported with scheduled print media articles on community matters and the Mayors column. Council's online engagement portal, "Your Say Macleay" encourages residents to provide feedback on local matters. The Kempsey Shire Council website is a primary source of information with other dedicated websites serving the specific audiences including tourism and agriculture. The use of social media helps residents and visitors to keep in touch with events and urgent updates. In addition to Council's main Facebook and Instagram pages, information is also distributed via the Macleay Valley Coast, Macleay Valley Food Bowl and Macleay Valley Holiday Parks social media pages. (130 words)

Amenities upgrade

The public amenities block adjacent to the Visitor Information Centre in South Kempsey Park received a full internal and external refurbishment this year. Feedback by residents via council's Community Priorities survey in 2017 identified upgrades to public amenities is a key priority. The refreshed amenities block provides better facilities for visitors and locals to South Kempsey Park and compliment the road improvements to Lachlan Street. (66 words)

Seniors Expo

Council's library and community relations staff partnered with Skills Link, NSW Health, Home Instead Senior Care Mid North Coast and local businesses such as Wayne Mossop Tai Chi to conduct 19 free activities for local seniors as part of the NSW Seniors Festival. The festival, which ended on 15 April, was the most successful to date. (57 words)

Dementia awareness

As part of Dementia Awareness Month, Kempsey Shire Library hosted a free TimeSlips creative storytelling session. TimeSlips uses storytelling as a pathway to communication and social interaction for people with memory loss and dementia. Facilitator Lisa Hort presented the participants with a photo and invited them to provide imagination-based responses to questions about it. Their responses were recorded and used to shape a story around the photo, allowing them to feel a sense of connection and creative agency. (78 words)

Youth Week

Kempsey Shire Council supported a colour fun run, skateboard painting workshops, a free music night and the Youth Homelessness Matters Day March, as part of the local 2018 Youth Week celebrations. Youth Week is targeted at young people aged 12-25 and embracing the theme 'Unity through Diversity' and is an opportunity to celebrate and support our young people across the shire. (61 words)

COMMUNITY GOAL

WE VALUE GOOD GOVERNANCE

What does Council aim to deliver?

- Community engagement support for Council's decision making
- Customer Service Centre
- Corporate administration including policies, procedures and Council meetings
- Corporate information services
- Financial services and reporting
- Fleet management
- Human resources
- Corporate governance
- Civic events

Contributing to good governance

- 3 citizenship ceremonies
- 10 new citizens
- New citizens have emigrated from 4 different countries
- 32,719 Customer Service enquiries received (Telephone and Service Centre)
- 94.3% of customer enquiries resolved at first contact
- 96 average number of hours after Council meetings that minutes are available
- 17 seconds average wait when calling customer service
- 24/7 emergency response service

Feature: New management team

In July 2017 Council adopted a new organisational structure, realigning four previous Directorates to just two - Corporate and Commercial; and Operations and Planning, which resulted in several staffing changes from the General Manager to management level.

New General Manager, Craig Milburn was appointed in early December 2017 and participated in selecting his team before his formal start with Council in February 2018. Director of Corporate and Commercial, Stephen Mitchell, also commenced in February 2018 having come from a role with Mid North Coast Local Health District as Commercial Manager - Strategy, Contracts and Procurement. In March 2018, Robert Fish accepted the Director of Operations and Planning role, bringing almost 18 years' experience in Local Government and engineering project management to the position.

Managers were then appointed across nine sections within the two Directorates, with many bringing valuable external experience in local government and the private sector. The new leadership have worked quickly to engage staff, develop an organisational vision and values and create stronger internal and external communication. (170 words)

GOVERNANCE HIGHLIGHTS

Customer service

To assist the community to engage with Council and access information and services, Kempsey Shire Council provide front counter service, full phone and email response services 5 days per week and a 7-day, 24-hour emergency response service. This year, Council received 32,719 Customer Service telephone and service centre enquiries with 94.3% of these customer enquiries resolved at first contact. Staff work to receive, process and respond to enquiries in an efficient manner and are continuing to review and assess process improvements. (90 words)

Australia Day Awards

Outstanding citizens and groups were recognised for their contributions to the community at the 2018 Australia Day Awards ceremony. Mayor Liz Campbell together with our Australia Day Ambassador, Joel Pilgrim, announced the four recipients of this year's awards at a ceremony on the eve of Australia Day at the Slim Dusty Centre. Congratulations to Citizen of the Year - Elizabeth (Betty) Green, Young Citizen of the Year - Abigael Baker, Volunteer of the Year - Richard Collins and Community Group of the Year - Baylin's Gift Charity; an organisation committed to educating young people and their support networks on depression, anxiety, gender/sexual identification and suicide awareness. (108 words)

Joint Organisation of Councils

The inaugural meeting of the Mid North Coast Joint Organisation (JO), held in Kempsey, has paved the way for how the Councils will work with the NSW Government on high priority projects in this region. Forming the Mid North Coast JO is in response to the NSW Government's declaration of eleven joint organisations across regional NSW comprising of over 90% of existing regional councils. Cr Liz Campbell was elected Chairperson of the Mid North Coast JO and believes it builds on a successful history of working well across the region and is the next stage of the collaborative relationship with both Mid North Coast councils and the State Government. (109 words)

Citizenship Ceremonies

Through the Department of Immigration the Mayor is delegated the honour of performing the formal ceremony to grant Australian citizenship. Conducted irregularly as part of the monthly Council meeting, ten residents representing 4 different countries of origin have been welcomed as citizens in the Macleay in the last year. Congratulations are extended to all of our new citizens in the Macleay Valley. (61 words)

Female trainees in Council

Local Government Week is an important week for NSW councils as an opportunity to share the ways in which Council plays a role in the community. In 2017, Council highlighted the work of two female trainees employed with Council in the article "Women to the front of Council" highlighting that Kempsey Shire Council held the largest trainee program of any Council or water utility in NSW. (67 words)