



KEMPSEY
Shire Council



2016-2021
END OF TERM REPORT
KEMPSEY.NSW.GOV.AU

**Kempsey Shire Council acknowledges the land of the Thunggutti/Dunghutti Nation.
We pay respect to Elders past and present.
We acknowledge the role of emerging leaders to continue to guide us in the future.
We acknowledge the Stolen Generations and the need to change practices to be inclusive.
This land always was and always will be Thunggutti/Dunghutti land.**



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FROM THE GM

I am pleased to present Kempsey Shire Council's 2016-2021 End of Term Report which outlines the progress made in achieving the goals and aspirations set out in the Kempsey Shire Community Strategic Plan, our 20-year vision for the Macleay.

The Community Strategic Plan sets the objectives to shape our Valley's future reflecting the community aspirations and needs. The success of this plan relies on strong working partnerships at all levels of government and with our community. Our values will guide us towards achieving a healthy, wealthy, safe, and connected community that provides good governance and opportunity for all.

This Council term has been one of transformation and transition for the organisation, and one severely impacted

by significant challenges for the community with drought, bushfire, flood and the COVID-19 pandemic effecting how we live and work.

Councillors, management and staff have partnered with the community on our vision for reshaping the Macleay, and continue to work towards a more efficient, customer-focused Council. I would like to acknowledge the considerable efforts of our Councillors, led by Mayor Liz Campbell and successive Deputy Mayors, Cr Ashley Williams and Cr Anthony Patterson, who have contributed to the notable achievements of this Council term.

A review of the organisation's culture and structure in 2017 initiated a period of significant transformation and growth that has



continued over the past four years. Following the establishment of a new Executive and Management team in 2018, we have built solid foundations to deliver the short and long-term objectives as set out in our Community Strategic Plan. Our serious financial position is acknowledged, and constructive steps are

being taken to address this over the coming decade. To navigate Council towards financial sustainability, a Financial Sustainability Strategy 2019-23 and Roadmap were adopted by Council in April 2019.

Council commenced an internal Corporate Improvement Program in





early 2019, and integral to improving our operating position was the need to address key fundamentals in our financial and governance practices; and a new corporate business system was identified as critical. The recruitment of an Internal Auditor and formation of an Audit and Risk Committee in

January 2019 has placed a sharp focus on lifting performance and mitigating risk. Significant progress has been made in transforming Council's corporate business operations with the rollout of new financial, human resources, procurement and billing systems, along with improved GIS mapping and asset management systems.

In October 2019, Council adopted the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy and Destination Management Plan, a core ingredient to assist Council and the business community to drive growth within the Macleay. The goal to generate economic and social development in the heart of Kempsey

FROM THE GM CONTINUED

was aided by the opening of Riverside Cinemas in late 2019, and the Country Universities Centre in March 2021. Council secured the future of Kempsey Regional Saleyards in May 2021 with the adoption of a lease arrangement with Kempsey Stock & Land, further boosted

in July by \$6.3 million in funding for infrastructure upgrades to the saleyards. Council is also in the process of assuming ownership and management of the Slim Dusty Centre which will secure the future of this key cultural and tourism asset for the Shire.

Complementing these corporate advancements has been a targeted capital works and infrastructure refurbishment program to enhance the essential services and facilities Council delivers for the community; supported by an active campaign

to source government funding to secure vital programs. Detailed planning and investigation have enabled development of an integrated water cycle management strategy to ensure water and sewer facilities are future proofed.



Development of Council's Community Infrastructure Strategy, Your Future Places and Spaces, a 20-year plan that will guide the planning and management of Council-owned community infrastructure, will underpin a strategic and evidence based approach to future community facilities.

Some of the major projects to benefit from this approach:

- \$16.3 million grant in 2021 to replace 57 timber bridges throughout the Kempsey Shire
- \$10 million grant injection to Verge and Eden Street Sporting Complex Masterplan in February 2020
- Successful \$17 million joint-funding grant with Port Macquarie-Hastings Council to seal Maria River Road in July 2020

- \$4 million staged repairs to 8km of South West Rocks Road commenced in 2020
- \$4 million to construct an emergency water treatment plant near Steuart McIntyre Dam
- \$2.88 million grant to reseal the remaining 6.2km gravel section of Point Plomer Road
- Macleay Valley Adventure Park Project received an \$11.2 million grant in October 2020
- Construction of the \$4 million Turners Flat Bridge in 2019
- \$3.4 million project to revitalise the Stuarts Point Foreshore.

Making all these achievements possible is the exceptional commitment and hard work by our staff. The dedication of the KSC

team has never been more on display than in their outstanding response to the compounding disasters of drought, bushfire, pandemic and flood that have impacted this Council term. From the outset, we took an active role in helping to lead the emergency response to each of these challenges to ensure we continued to deliver essential services to the community. Our leadership team has focussed on improvements to the organisational culture and structure and the good results in our 2021 Employee Survey – 75% Engagement – suggest that those who responded enjoy high levels of job satisfaction.

I would like to acknowledge the significant contribution, and support to me personally, of our Directors, Steve Mitchell and Robert Fish, who have worked tirelessly to

help lead the organisation and community to achieve the exceptional results as detailed in this report. Our management and staff are committed to partnering with the new Council to continue to deliver the best for the Kempsey Shire community.

Craig Milburn

General Manager

THE 2036 VISION

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.

The values that underpin the Community Strategic Plan

WE VALUE BEING HEALTHY

- Living a rich and fulfilling life
- Living in a healthy environment

WE VALUE BEING WEALTHY

- To have a rich and valuable culture
- To have a wealth of experience
- To have finances to support the lifestyle that makes us happy

WE VALUE BEING SAFE

- Our community is prepared and resilient to emergencies
- We feel safe at home and in public
- The risk of accidents is minimised

WE ARE CONNECTED

- We are involved in our community
- We have vibrant inviting spaces to meet and enjoy
- We work together to make the Macleay Valley a vibrant and welcoming place for everyone





OUR COMMUNITY

Geography

Area	3,381km ²
Location	430km north of Sydney 488km south of Brisbane
Rail (Kempsey)	Located on the North Coast Rail Line
Road	Kempsey is located 5km from Pacific Motorway Interchanges

Demographics

Source: ABS Census 2016

Population (no) Estimated Resident Population	29,921 (ERP, 2020)
Median Age	47
Medium and High Density dwellings (%)	10
Households with a mortgage (%)	25
Couples with children (%)	19
Couples without children (%)	14
Lone person households (%)	26
Aboriginal persons (%)	12
People born overseas (%)	7
SEIFA Index of Disadvantage 2016	888

Economy

Source: NIER 2020

Gross Regional Product	\$1.187 Billion
Local jobs	10,499
Local businesses	2,223
Employed residents	10,155
Building approvals	\$26M
Largest Employing Sector:	Health Care and Social Assistance (17.6%)
Tourism value	Sales \$87.4M; total value \$43M; 474 (FTE)

Lifestyle

Parks (no)	97 (77ha)
Sportsfields (no)	16 (43ha)
Public Swimming Pools (no)	4
Libraries	4

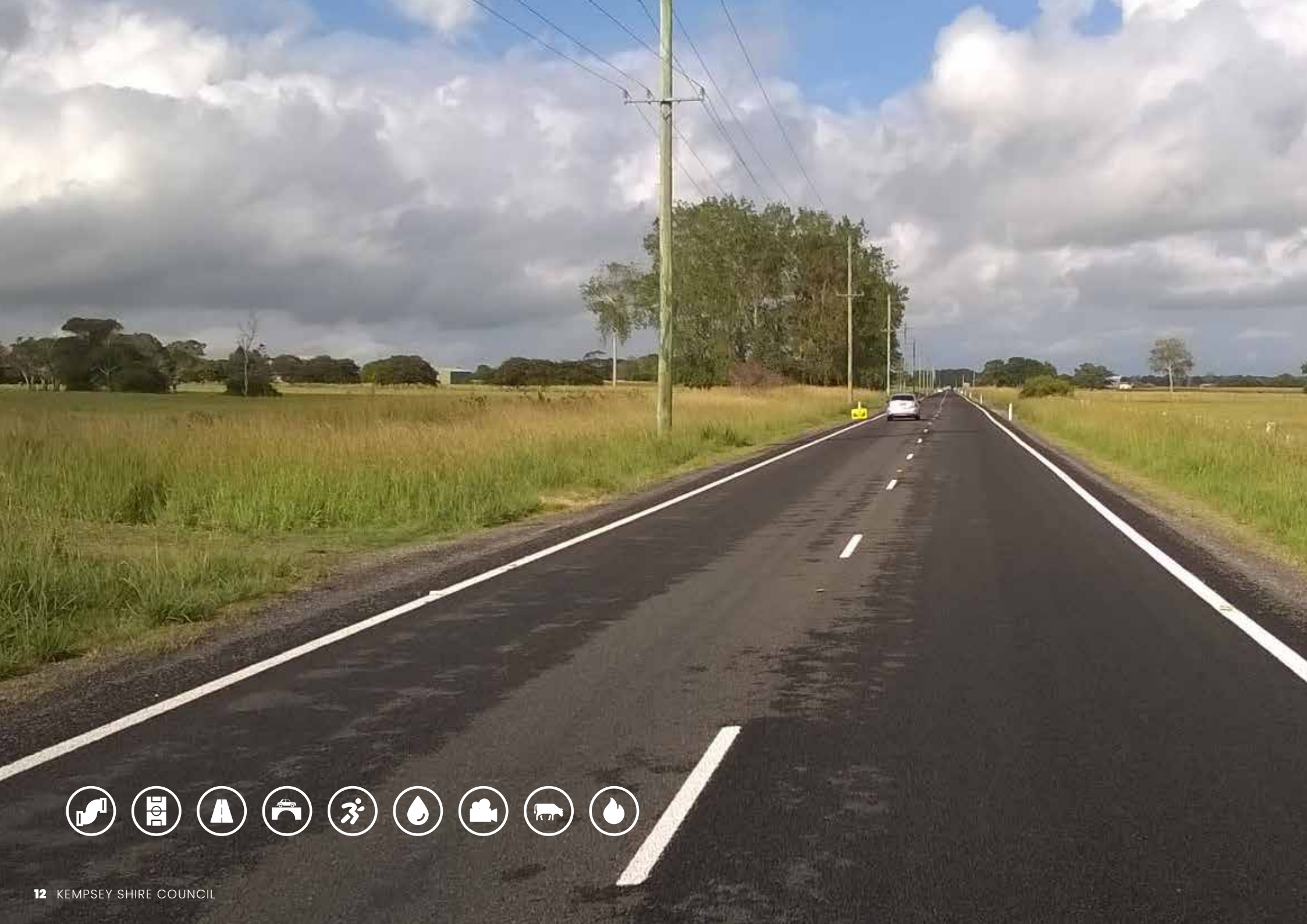
Education

Source: ABS 2016 Census

Bachelor or higher degree (%)	8
Advanced Diploma (%)	6
Vocational (%)	25
No qualification (%)	44
Not stated (%)	17

Note: 2021 ABS Census data has not been released at time of publication





OUR GRANTS ACHIEVED

Kempsey Shire Council has had extraordinary success in securing \$88 million of State and Federal grant funds over the last term of Council (2016-17 to 2021).

A grants status summary is presented quarterly to Council. As at 30 June 2021, 100 successful grant applications had been approved and are funding ongoing or future works, with around 20 more applications awaiting determination.

Some of major grant funded projects delivered across the Shire include:



Five multi-million dollar grants (\$19.3 million) for major water and sewer projects



\$10 million for the Verge and Eden Street Sports Fields, Kempsey



\$2.5 million for the Mid North Coast High Performance Centre, South West Rocks



\$17 million to seal 25km of Maria River Road, funded jointly with Port Macquarie Hasting Council



\$2.8 million to tar Point Plomer Road



\$11.2 million for the Macleay Valley Adventure Park



\$1 million for Drought Recovery and renewal community projects



\$2.4 million for Bushfire Recovery and renewal initiatives



\$3.3 million for Local Roads and Community Infrastructure stimulus projects



\$16.3 million for the replacement of 57 timber bridges throughout the Shire



\$2 million received for the development of the Kempsey Cinema complex



\$2 million for South West Rocks Road and Hat Head Road intersection upgrade



\$2.4 million for the Armidale Road guardrail project, and \$4.9 million for sealing Armidale Road



\$6.5 million funding received for the Kempsey Regional Saleyards infrastructure upgrades

OUR COUNCIL

An elected Mayor and eight Councillors makes up the Kempsey Shire Council



COMMUNITY SATISFACTION SURVEYS

Kempsey Shire Council is committed to continually improving our services and how we deliver them so we can most effectively meet the needs of the community and use our limited resources efficiently. Ongoing research and consultation about community priorities and views is an essential part of giving the community a voice in planning and decision making.

The biannual community engagement survey, conducted by phoning a statistically valid sample of residents from across the Shire, seeks to quantify the community's priorities and satisfaction in relation to Council services.

Community Survey results 2020



- The key drivers of satisfaction with Council's performance are:
 - Council decision making reflecting community opinion
 - Opportunity to participate in Council decision making
 - Financial Management
 - Provision of Council information to the community
- Satisfaction with 'long term planning for the LGA' and 'engaging the community in planning' increased significantly since 2019
- Residents believe that roads, traffic management and bridges will be the highest priority issues within the area over the next 10 years
- The top 5 most important measures within the

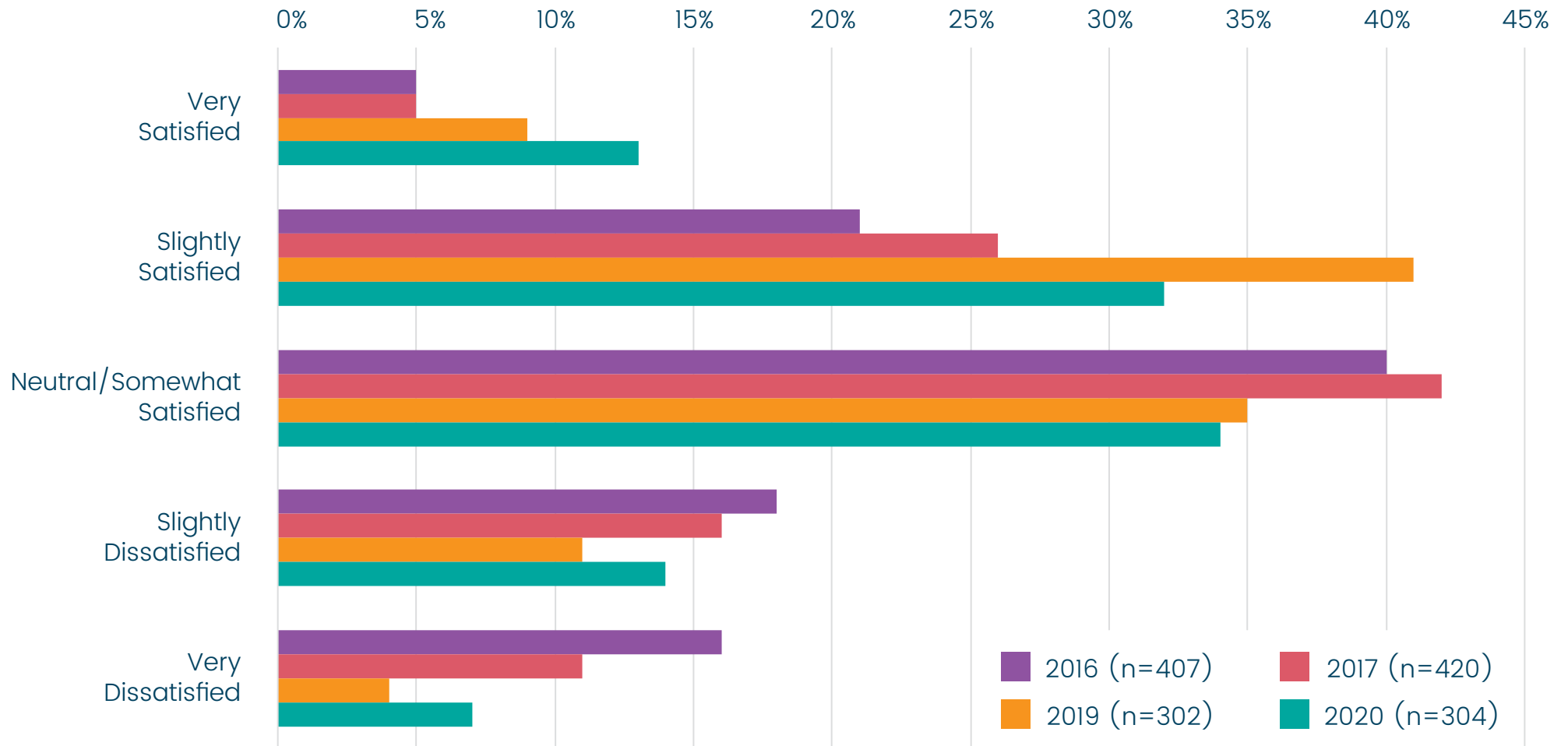
Community Strategic Plan for Kempsey Shire residents in 2020 were:

- Improving employment opportunities
- Promoting community connections in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour
- Working with various agencies in crime reduction
- Minimising risks to our community's health
- Providing infrastructure that enables active lifestyles

The 2020 survey results showed an 8% increase in the number of people who are very satisfied with Kempsey Shire Council, compared to 2019 results, and a significant increase on satisfaction recorded in the first years of the term.

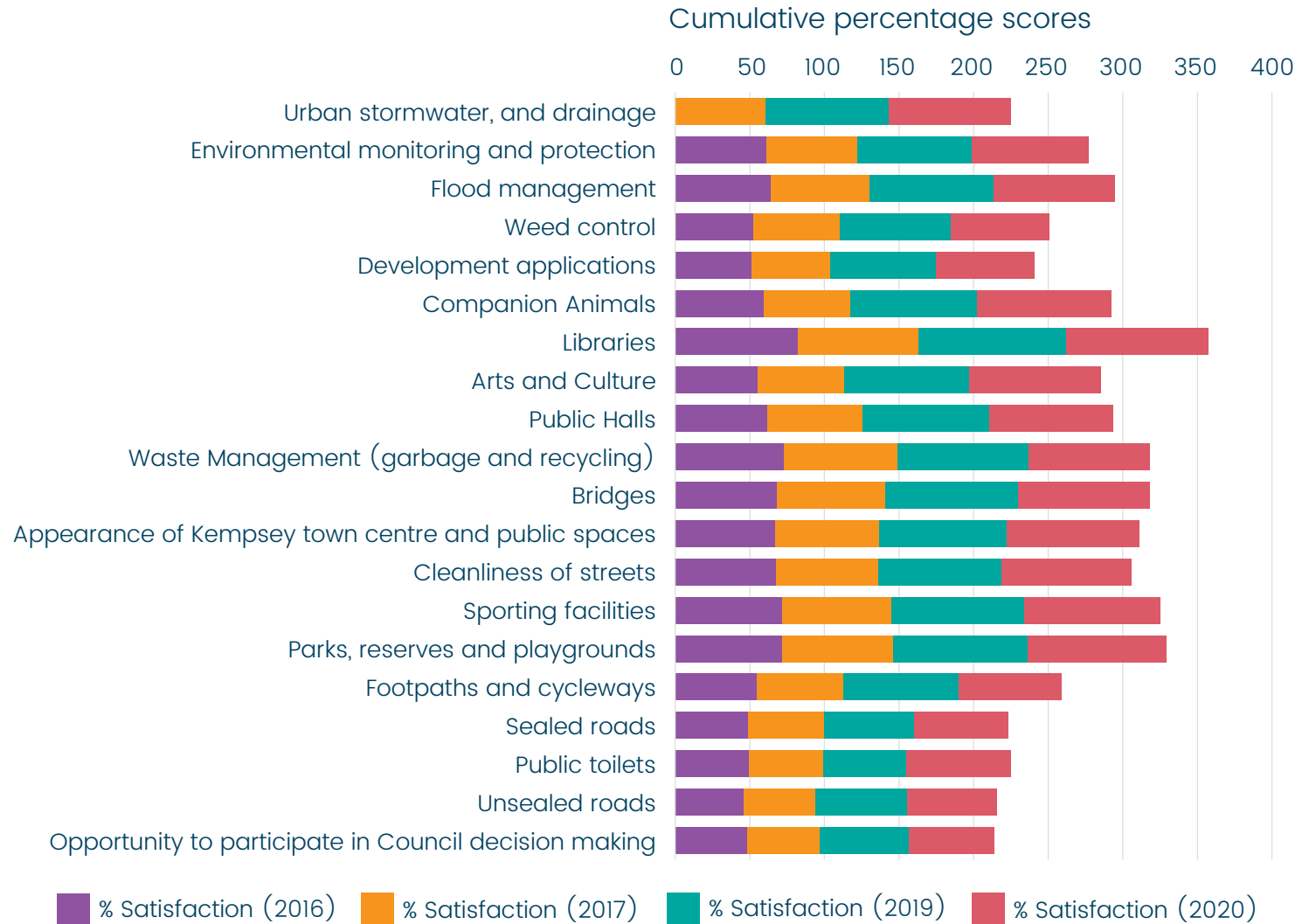
COMMUNITY **SATISFACTION SURVEYS** CONTINUED

Community Survey Results: 2016-2020



Community Survey Satisfaction with 20 Council Services 2016-2020

The community satisfaction in twenty top services over the period 2016 to 2020 is shown in the table. Services with the highest levels of satisfaction are library services, followed by parks, reserves and playgrounds, sporting facilities, waste management, bridges and appearance of Kempsey town centre and public spaces.



MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

The Macleay Valley is known for being a strong and resilient community, and never were these qualities more tested than over the 2016-2021 term of Council. The 2019 summer bushfires compounded local drought conditions and had a devastating social, economic, and environmental impact on the Macleay Valley community. Just as bushfire recovery was starting to achieve results, the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated health challenges, restrictions and lockdowns brought unprecedented change to the way we live and work. Devastating floods in March 2021 added to the complexity of this term of Council.

Drought and water restrictions – 2019

Council's Drought Response Strategy was activated in May 2019. Water restrictions were in place across the Kempsey Shire for a total of 305 days.

The Drought Management Plan (DMP) was adopted by Council in August 2019 to provide a strategic and systematic drought management process. Level 3 was the highest restriction initiated by Council and was in place for 85 days from 2 December 2019. The Macleay River ceased flowing on November 7 for 66 days before flows recommenced on January 12.

Innovation and proactive management were critical during the drought. Proactive dam water quality management practices alongside a trial of the use of solar powered ultrasonic technology reduced the growth of blue-green algae and allowed Steuart McIntyre Dam to be used for water supply, after a two-year suspension due to quality issues. Revisiting the emergency water treatment plant at Kinchela which had not operated for 16 years meant upgrading the plant's electrical, instrumentation, mechanical, telemetry and control systems alongside the bore pumps in the Hat Head National Park.

Complementing the operational efforts was a comprehensive communications and engagement plan including



targeted efforts for the agricultural sector and site visits to local businesses, accommodation centres and top water user industries, to keep the community informed and actively reducing water consumption.



Bushfire Recovery

The bushfire disaster that was to be the hallmark of Kempsey Shire's 2019-2020 summer began in August 2019 in the coastal area of Crescent Head, with a Section 44 Declaration under the Rural Fires Act 1997. Intense bushfire activity in rural areas west of

Kempsey triggered another Declaration on October 26. The Carrai East bushfire on November 8 passed through the village of Willawarrin and impacted many of our small upriver communities, while shrouding the entire Valley in thick and dangerous smoke.

The large-scale bushfire events resulted in 46% of

the shire being burned and more than 340 houses, outbuildings and facilities being damaged or destroyed, along with 11 Council bridges destroyed or damaged. Tragically, one resident lost his life in the fire.

From the outset, Kempsey Shire Council was closely

involved in the emergency response led by the Rural Fire Service and NSW Police. Council staff members worked at the Emergency Operations Centre, Rural Fire Service Operations Centre and the Emergency Evacuation Centre, providing over 500 hours in around the clock support and assistance,

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

in addition to their normal work commitments, to help support the community response effort.

This valuable hands-on experience was reflected at a state and national level, with Council making submissions to the NSW Bushfire Inquiry and

Bushfire Royal Commission, including an invitation to appear before the Royal Commission.

Kempsey Shire has received millions of dollars in state and federal funding to replace and upgrade infrastructure, and to help the community to heal and

recover. Council's Recovery Action Plan, adopted by Council in May 2020 outlines the long-term strategic approach to bushfire and drought recovery.

Locally led, the Action Plan is structured around the recognised Office of Emergency Management

framework that categorises actions into four streams of Built, Environment, Economic and Social. A unique part of the Recovery Plan was the operation of a dedicated Recovery Hub, coordinated by Council and including multiple government and non-government agencies to provide a single source of support and advice for affected community.

A sense of community, as well as a connection to place and the people that share it, has long been an important part of recovering from disasters in the Macleay Valley. The need for connection, helping neighbours and having places to meet, gather and share has never been more significant, and it is a priority for Council to invest in our rural communities and villages, creating opportunities for new growth and even stronger connections.



#KempseyCares

Help our local businesses bounce back from COVID

Leading through a pandemic

Kempsey Shire Council was agile in adapting to the rapidly changing circumstances the COVID-19 pandemic created. Business and workplace practices were modified to effectively manage the evolving restrictions and continue to deliver essential services to the community.

A high-level response plan was prepared, and as a declared event, Council's Business Continuity Plan was enacted, with sub-plans regularly reviewed. Council's Executive and Continuity Management Team monitored and swiftly enacted directives from NSW Government and Health.

Practical examples of community centred leadership include the development of hardship relief measures for ratepayers, support programs

for local business and working as part of the broader Local Emergency Management Committee to assist in logistics and communication for testing facilities, vaccination rollout and targeted support to the most vulnerable members of the community.

Council has focussed on the wellbeing and capacity of our staff as the Public Health

Orders continually impacted working conditions throughout 2020 and 2021. Work from home Policies and Procedures were quickly established, calling for an urgent need to scale up our IT capability and support to provide staff with the resources and access to online systems and methods of communicating remotely with colleagues, customers

and stakeholders. Improved and evolving internal communication including all staff online meetings, e newsletters and an overhaul of the corporate intranet have allowed staff to remain connected. Multiple staff surveys and engagements have provided the evidence to guide decision making throughout this period.



To get involved visit ksc.pub/kempseycares



OUR RESULTS

The Community Strategic Plan outlines aspirational goals for developing effective partnerships and leadership to create a prosperous and vibrant community that attracts investment, wealth, and a culture where we live in harmony and look after each other.

This document outlines the services delivered and actions Council has taken to deliver on the aspirations that we have:

- A community that has the opportunity to be involved in decision making
- Open, meaningful and diverse communication between decision makers and the community they represent
- Partnerships and collaborative projects that meet the communities expectations and needs
- Community hubs which provide access to services and social connections
- Available and accessible preventative health and medical services
- A healthy and active community that is supported by recreational infrastructure and natural assets
- A safe, caring and connected community
- A strong community that is able to identify and address social issues
- Community sponsored and participation in events, programs, festivals and activities
- Greater availability of educational opportunities
- Business and industry training and education facilities sustain our growth
- Increased employment opportunities
- Wealth generating business and social enterprises
- A community that is prepared for natural events



AWARDS AND CITATIONS

- Public Service Medal – **Ron Kemsley** recipient of **NSW Coastal Management Local Government Award** (December 2016), due to his dedication to environmental management, particularly weed management and tree planting on various projects, often before and after his office-based work, and his expertise in acid sulphate soils and floodplain management.
- **Macleay Valley Food Bowl Project** – prestigious 2016 Local Government NSW RH Dougherty Award for

Excellence in Communication and the Luke Hartsuyker’s Federal Member’s Award for Excellence in Communication.

- Kempsey Shire Council has won a **2017 inaugural Sam Samra Award** in the category of Water Supply Services – Large Local Water Utilities. The award recognises improvements in best practice service delivery by council local water utilities in NSW. The award is co-sponsored by Local Government NSW, the NSW Water Directorate and the Department of Primary Industries – Water.
- **2021 RH Dougherty Local Government Week Award** for Innovation in Special Events (population < 30,000) for the Black Summer and Beyond Exhibition, a community led photography exhibition to commemorate the first anniversary of the Black Summer bushfires.



- Council has won 3 awards at the **Macleay Valley Business Awards** being:
 - Excellence in Professional Services Award (for more than 21 employees) and Employer of Choice Award in June 2019
 - Employer of Choice in June 2021.
- **USU Apprentice of the Year** – Paul Thurlow.

- **Crescent Head Foreshore Public reserve amenities was recognised at the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia (IPWEA) NSW Engineering Excellence Awards** (November 2018) for Construction of a Local Government public Works project less than \$500,000. Council was also acknowledged with a highly Commended award for the upgrade of Macleay Valley Way.



OUR HEALTH

- Living a rich and fulfilling life
- Living in a healthy environment

The natural environment, beaches, rivers, climate and animals are the most valued aspects of living in the Kempsey Shire.
Community Satisfaction Survey 2020

20-year Community Strategic Plan vision for a healthy community	Delivery Program Strategies	Council services contributing to a healthy community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having health that allows people to do the things they enjoy • Having health that does not limit people from earning a living • Not suffering from ill health • Living a long and fulfilling life • Living in a healthy environment • The environment being in a healthy state 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan for and provide infrastructure that encourages and allows for active lifestyles • Provide education around healthy lifestyles • Restore damaged environments and removal of environmental threats • Use planning controls to ensure that environmental impacts do not negatively affect lifestyle • Minimise risks to the community's health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing potable water • Providing, planning and maintaining sporting fields, playgrounds and recreation facilities • Footpaths to allow pedestrian access • Waste collection, management and education • Drainage provided for stormwater • Managing and maintaining the estuaries eco systems and river health • Managing the environmental impact of noxious weeds • Sustainable development is planned • Wastewater removed and treated • Public health risks are regulated • Food related health risks are regulated



Making Progress – Council’s Actions 2016–2021



13,046 potable water connections (June 2021)



643 public food audits conducted (2016-21)



1,054 private swimming pool inspections (2016-21)



242,348 visits to Council’s 4 outdoor pools (2016-21)



9.84KMs of water mains renewed (2016-21)



6,129 responses to companion animal complaints (2016-21)



13,207 premises receiving waste collection services (2021)



3,753 onsite septic tank inspections conducted (2016-21)



5,729 private property inspections conducted (2016-21) to educate and minimise the spread of noxious weeds



\$2.5 million spent on stormwater drainage additions renewals and new assets (2016-20)



2,132 development applications processed in under 40 days (2016-21)



\$10.1 million spent on 8 water supply network renewals and new assets (2016-20)



\$3.3 million spent on open space, recreational assets additions renewals and new assets (2016-20)

Investing in our active lifestyles

A desire to balance usable green space, parking, recreational space and enhance the natural beauty was the driving factor behind multimillion dollar upgrades to the foreshore areas at both Stuarts Point and Back Creek, South West Rocks. Both projects were the subject of significant community engagement, seeking to understand how the

community uses the space, their improvement wish list and the desires of the tourists to these beautiful areas.

At Back Creek, a focal point for residents and holiday makers is the new footbridge, built of low maintenance materials but replicating the design and recreational aspects of the original. New accessible amenities and paths, improved parking layout and picnic areas have transformed the area.

The \$3.4million revitalisation of Stuarts Point foreshore has delivered one of the most admired outdoor spaces in the region. Features include a big new playground, community stage and performance space, new boat ramp, retaining walls, drainage and resurfaced roadway to improve access and parking layout. New paths create all abilities access to new amenities, alongside the boardwalk and wharf.

Planning our future development

In September 2020 Council adopted a Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) branded 'Your Future Macleay - Growth and Character' which outlines a vision and road map for planning in our area over the next 20 years.



The LSPS outlines the community's economic, social, cultural and environmental land use needs and aspirations and it will be a foundation for all strategic planning for the area.

Crucially, the document details the special characteristics of 13 locations across our region, from

Kempsey to South West Rocks, Bellbrook to Stuarts Point, Crescent Head to Frederickton, and outlines individual planning priorities for each of them.

A foundation for all future strategic planning, the LSPS was developed following 12 months of workshops, surveys and community engagement across the Shire.

Fighting against noxious weeds

A sustained program of education, eradication and compliance actions are the cornerstones of the battle being waged against noxious weeds and particularly Tropical Soda Apple, present throughout the Shire.

One part of the program, the Tropical Soda Apple Landholder Engagement Program funded by Department of Primary Industries and North Coast Local Land Services enabled inspections of 600 sites, including known infested sites four times annually and investigation of new sites, combined with Landowner Working Groups, meeting to motivate landholders, educate and inform stakeholders of the obligations under the Biosecurity Act 2015 and develop cross regional awareness campaigns.



OUR WEALTH



- To have a rich and valuable culture
- To have a wealth of experience
- To have finances to support the lifestyle that makes us happy

Residents believe that roads, traffic management, bridges will be the highest priority issues within the Kempsey Shire area over the next 10 years.

Community Satisfaction Survey 2020

20-year Community Strategic Plan vision for a wealthy community	Delivery Program Strategies	Council services contributing to a wealthy and prosperous community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earning enough money to afford the lifestyle that makes us happy • Being able to afford the basics that improve our lives • To have a rich and valuable culture • To have a wealth of experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build a positive and strong community culture • Encourage cultural development within the community • Improve employment opportunities • Increase formal education levels within the community • Increase value of production 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library services, support increased literacy • A range of cultural opportunities and activities • Community ownership of events • Providing economic development program to attract business and investment • Tourism promotion and business development • Council owned commercial assets including saleyards, Holiday Parks and Airport • Providing a transport network to support access and trade



Making Progress – Council’s Actions 2016–2021



60,558 literacy, research or online services accessed through Council’s libraries (30 June 2021)



145,307 items borrowed through Kempsey libraries (30 June 2021)

139,450 services provided through the Mid-North Coast Co-operative Library service operating with Port Macquarie Hastings Library including:



85,891 audio & e-books checkouts,



25,167 music downloads,



7,000 live streaming films,



19,614 digital magazine downloads, and



1,178 live streaming of children’s story time.



393,290 visitors in 2020–21, and on average 325,279 visitors staying at the five Macleay Valley Holiday Parks during the period 2016–21 (Source: NRMA, July 2021). Noting COVID19 caused temporary closure of parks from March–May 2020 and cumulative impact of restrictions and natural disasters.



\$74.4 million spent on road renewals and new assets (2016–20)



\$8.4 million spent on bridges renewals and new assets (2016–20)



\$1.9 million spent on footpath renewals and new assets (2016–20)



310 regional delegates attended the Regional Tourism Symposium and Ignite Conferences that were both hosted in the Shire.

Kempsey Cinema – an investment in business and cultural infrastructure

After almost 12 months of construction, the \$6.15 million four screen Riverside Movies complex in Kempsey was officially opened in December 2019.

The project was developed out of Council's 2011 Pacific Highway Bypass Strategy as

a mechanism to revitalise the Kempsey town centre and is an example of what can be achieved when all tiers of government work constructively with the private sector to meet a community need.

Construction costs were shared with the Federal Government investing \$2 million, Kempsey Shire Council \$2 million, and Gowing Bros Limited contributing over \$2,150,000 and the ongoing operational costs. Gowing Bros Limited leases the

cinema to Majestic Cinemas, a company founded in Nambucca on the Mid North Coast over 17 years ago.

A commercial cinema complex had not previously been developed in Kempsey because the population size is not sufficient to drive the revenue required to cover the start-up development costs.

"The reality is that Kempsey's population base was smaller than the size usually required to attract a private

investment to build a cinema complex. But we knew it would work operationally, which is why we advocated strongly for multiple levels of government support to get it started to ultimately provide a valuable recreational and social outlet for locals and tourists, and to stimulate the business opportunities in the centre of town," Mayor Liz Campbell.



Creating local tertiary education opportunities

A major issue for regional Australia is the departure of young people, leaving for university studies, but the March 2021 opening of the Country Universities Centre (CUC) Macleay Valley will change that trend. The

state-of-the-art facility in Kempsey Central, complete with quiet study spaces, social spaces, IT equipment and support staff provides local students enrolled in any Australian university with the resources to gain university qualifications while living at home.

The need to create local educational opportunities has been a long term

priority for Council who facilitated development of the business case, successful grant funding applications to Federal and State Governments, establishment of the operating structure and appointments to the community led CUC Board.

Within the first three months of operation the CUC Macleay Valley had over 100 registered students, more than double the full year target.

A Blueprint for Economic Development and Tourism Growth

Extensive community engagement, stakeholder workshops and peer review were undertaken to develop the Horizon 2030: Macleay Valley Economic Development and Tourism Strategy. Adopted in October 2019, the Strategy is a blueprint for enhancing the vibrancy, diversity and sustainability of the Macleay Valley economy and

supports Council's vision to create a vibrant lifestyle destination where business, industry and investment can prosper.

Horizon 2030 outlines the role of Council in facilitating, supporting and promoting business activity to develop a secure and sustainable employment base and a strong economic future for all communities of the Macleay Valley.

Council has committed to supporting the tourism industry and broader economic development by delivering quality infrastructure, assisted by current and future grant funding together with other large-scale private investments and provide a broad-based foundation to build the economy of the future.



OUR SAFETY



- Our community is prepared and resilient to emergencies
- We feel safe at home and in public
- The risk of accidents is minimised

Community safety and crime prevention are the third highest priority issues identified by the community.

Community Satisfaction Survey 2020

20-year Community Strategic Plan vision for living in a safe community	Delivery Program Strategies	Council services contributing to a safe community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People feel safe in their homes • People feel safe in public areas • People are not unduly affected by antisocial behaviour and crime • The risk of accidents is minimised • Our community is prepared and resilient to emergency events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build community resilience for, during and after emergencies • Implement systems to minimise and mitigate the impact of disasters • Increase education levels within the community in Crime Prevention through • Environmental Design (CPTED) • Promote a sense of community and no tolerance of crime and anti-social behaviour • Provide education on accident minimisation • Provide vibrant public spaces owned by the community • Work with various agencies to reduce the incidence of crime 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency management planning and coordinating response • Building, cleaning and maintaining safe public spaces • Managing public safety programs such as beach patrols and CCTV rollout • Identifying and delivering public art and placemaking opportunities to activate public spaces • Being an active partner with other community driven agencies



Making Progress – Council’s Actions 2016–2021



Five beaches provided with surf lifesaving services throughout holiday period.



175 flood gates and control structures are in place, maintained and operated in flood situations.



Over 500 hours of Council staff time supporting the 2019 bushfire emergency response at the Emergency Operations Centre, Rural Fire Service Operations Centre and the Evacuation Centre.



Providing **24 hour emergency communications** support to keep the whole community informed



SMS alert network database of **200** maintained and activated to support emergency communication.



Sheltered around **1000 residents** and over **900 pets** and livestock through management assistance of the 2019 bushfire evacuation centre at Kempsey Showground.



Alcohol Prohibited Areas (15) and Alcohol Free Zones (9) renewed across the area.



74 CCTV cameras funded and installed throughout the Shire.

Planning Public Infrastructure

Council's Community Infrastructure Strategy, Your Future Places and Spaces, is a 20-year plan to guide the planning and management of Council-owned community infrastructure to provide safe, quality and fit-for-purpose community infrastructure. It provides the basis for Council investment in new or upgraded public facilities, informing our planning and internal operations.

Following an audit of community facilities, a range of community engagement activities held in August 2019 helped to gauge the community's interests and priorities, with an issues and opportunities paper prepared in December. The draft Community Infrastructure Strategy, Your Future Places and Spaces, was presented to Council in April 2020 and exhibited until July. The final Community Infrastructure Strategy was adopted in September 2020.

The Flood of Three Peaks

The March 2021 flood natural disaster had a substantial impact on the Kempsey Shire and surrounding areas of the mid-north coast. Council administrative staff and management supported the multiagency response from the Emergency Operations Centre over a period of 2.5 weeks, with 24-hour operations in place during the periods of higher risk. Council staff within the EOC

coordinated road closures, community assistance and emergency support and communicating river levels and impacts to the community through more than 50 comprehensive updates via social media and website over the course of the emergency.

Council's Infrastructure Delivery and Water and Sewer teams ensured essential water supplies and sewerage systems were safe, sandbagged the Kempsey CBD,



operated flood mitigation infrastructure and kept our roads and bridges as safe and accessible as possible for local residents and Emergency Response crews. Council staff in our Environmental Health, Waste and Recovery Hub areas of the organisation also provided significant support in response to the flood, with expert advice and determining quick but sound solutions to complex issues being a key requirement.

Recognition of the General Manager's and Staff's dedicated service in supporting the emergency response effort was outlined in external correspondence received from Detective Chief Inspector Mid North Coast Police District, Darren Jameson, who assisted as Kempsey Shire's alternate Local Emergency Operations Controller.

Surveillance improving safety

Working with other agencies to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour, Council has sought grant funding to improve the network of community safety infrastructure. CCTV cameras have been installed in key areas across the region following successful applications for State and Federal Safer Communities funding. Engagement with the community, local business

owners, and discussions with Police informed the decisions on where to locate new cameras. The network of 74 cameras was finalised in 2021 with the installation of CCTV cameras in South Kempsey and West Kempsey. Additionally, Council has been at the forefront of installing pathways and installed lighting for community safety in Brighton Park, Riverside Park and South Kempsey Park as part of Safer Communities Funding.



OUR CONNECTIONS

- We are involved in our community
- We have vibrant inviting spaces to meet and enjoy
- We work together to make the Macleay Valley a vibrant and welcoming place for everyone

Being close to friends and family and the friendly people of the shire were rated the third most valued aspects about living in Kempsey.

Community Satisfaction Survey 2020

20-year Community Strategic Plan vision for living in a connected community	Delivery Program Strategies	Council services contributing to a connected community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People are involved in their community • People treat others with courtesy and respect • People support and assist others in the community • People have a range of options to become involved in community activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a range of meeting places and infrastructure for community use • Create a shared social view • Include social behaviour as part of education • Provide opportunities for people to be involved in the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide recreation areas and public facilities for use by the community • Maintain the public use facilities across the Shire • Advocating for social inclusion and fairness • Working with and supporting community groups



Making Progress – Council’s Actions 2016–2021



Disability Inclusion Action Plan adopted in June 2017 and reviewed in late 2019. Helping to remove barriers and enable people with disability to participate equally and fully in the community.



12 playgrounds inspected monthly



77 hectares of parkland maintained



14 carparks are maintained



Estimated over 5,500 community members connected with Council run events

Council’s social media presence as at 16 July 2021 shows increasing community connections with:



10,899 Facebook followers



1,582 Instagram followers



869 LinkedIn followers



355 Twitter followers



869 Library Facebook followers

Reflect level Reconciliation Action Plan endorsed by Reconciliation Australia and Council to go on public exhibition ahead of June 2022 adoption

Supporting Aboriginal Culture and Heritage

With 12 per cent of Kempsey Shire's population Indigenous, Council partners regularly with the Aboriginal community on projects and activities to help build a resilient and vibrant community.

Kempsey Shire Council is a strong supporter of NAIDOC Week activities held to celebrate our proud Dunghutti culture

and heritage within the Macleay Valley. Supporting the organising committee with funding, traffic planning, promotion and logistical support the Naidoc Week march and flag raising ceremony has become an important acknowledgement of the official launch of local NAIDOC Week celebrations which include a range of cultural, artistic and family activities throughout the valley.

The Bellbrook community

celebrated the 2018 unveiling of the sculpture Wupu Manhatinum (Travelling Star) a public artwork dedicated to the late Aboriginal elder and artist, Aunty Esther Quinlin. The piece, located in the Bellbrook park celebrates Macleay's rich cultural heritage and marks the western gateway into Dunghutti country. It was funded by Kempsey Shire Council and Create NSW with support from Kempsey Family Support Services, MNC Local Area Health District, Many Rivers Regional

Housing and the Bellbrook Progress Association.

Corroboree Magic is a mosaic unveiled in June 2021 outside the Westpac Bank in Smith Street. Uncle Richard Campbell consulted with artists Guy Crosley and Elwyn Toby and together they dreamt up the idea for a giant mosaic. This dream became a reality with over 200 students contributing to the masterpiece, using pieces of colourful tiles and applying Dunghutti imagery to create Corroboree Magic.



Community Grants

Kempsey Shire Council recognises that many important services across the shire are best delivered by community organisations. We are passionate about supporting not-for-profit organisations as they help to improve life in our shire and the well being of residents. For many years Community groups, individuals and organisations have been encouraged to apply for funds for upcoming programs, events or

projects that help build a supportive and connected Macleay Valley. Funding was distributed through the Mayoral Community Fund and sectional budgets, providing an inconsistent level of funding on an ad hoc basis.

To ensure that Council is consistent with its support of local organisations, and to increase the capacity of local community organisations to successfully obtain a range of grants, in 2019 Council resolved to reintroduce a new

Community Grant Program that was fair, transparent and accountable.

The redeveloped Community Grants Program has streamlined the funding provided to the community by Council under one overarching framework, using the principles as outlined by the Australian Institute of Grants Management.

In two years of delivering the updated Community Grant Program more than \$160,000 has been made available to community groups funding around 40 projects and infrastructure upgrades that are prioritised and implemented by the community. Information sessions, development of guidelines, FAQs and resource materials as well as providing dedicated staff support has allowed community leaders and volunteer organisations to develop the skills required to access funding from other levels of government.

Stunning walkway creates accessible connections

\$357,000 grant received from the NSW Government's Stronger Country Communities Fund and additional Council contributions enabled the design and construction of a walkway to connect the beach at Horseshoe Bay, the headland car park and recreational facilities such as kiosk, surf club and playground. As a component of the Horseshoe Bay masterplan, significant community engagement was sought, and the final designs were adjusted following community feedback on the alignment. Complementing the natural beauty of the headland the walkway enhances landscape flows using features such as multiple viewing points, rock step paths to the beach, and timber seating. The project also included improved mobility access to the beach.



OUR GOVERNANCE



20-year Community Strategic Plan vision for operating with strong leadership

- Develop, review and improve the corporate activities and services that enable the organisation to deliver the agreed program to the community.

Delivery Program Strategies

- Support operational delivery with internal facilitation and support
- Engage the workforce in delivering services to the community
- Implement organisational efficiency measures and improvements
- Manage financial assets and corporate reporting
- Improve community trust and organisational innovation

Council services contributing to strong governance

- Planning for and managing Council workforce
- Operating a safe and efficient fleet
- Monitoring and reporting on the procurement processes and overall financial position
- Information, communication and technology services and improvements
- Independent audit and risk management
- Community engagement and communications to create a role for community in decision making



Making Progress – Council’s Actions 2016–2021



30+ Internal Audits

and reviews have been undertaken in accordance with approved annual audit plans and resulted in the implementation of numerous key process improvements across Council operations including corporate governance, fleet, procurement, payroll, development contributions and work, health, and safety.



14 Audit and Risk Committee meetings held (2018–2021).



Over the term **15 Citizenship ceremonies** were held welcoming **119 new citizens**



Approximately **180,000 customer service telephone enquires** received during the period.



94% of customer enquires resolved at first contact via the front counter



78% of customer enquires resolved at first contact via the telephone

In its 3rd year of subscription, in 2020–21 there were **48 engagement projects** connecting the community via Your Say Macleay. There are now:



21,300 site visitors



1,300 engaged visitors



14,000 aware visitors



5,300 informed visitors

A Commitment to Engaging

A strong focus on enhancing our community engagement and connectedness formed part of the guiding principles outlined in the Community Engagement Strategy, adopted in November 2019. Council engaged widely with the community, staff and external stakeholders to

provide input to the Strategy, which provides Council and the community with the clear process and expectations for the community to have their say in a meaningful way, and its approach involves a two-way conversation between Council and the community. The Strategy combines Council's broad community engagement approach and the statutory requirements for

public exhibition for planning functions.

The Strategy has been supported with the introduction of an online engagement portal Your Say Macleay, generating awareness and creating accessible opportunities for thousands of residents to provide feedback each year. The quarterly Community Catch-up series commenced

in 2018 and is held in towns and villages across the shire. The meetings are designed to be less formal than a Council meeting and involve the Mayor, Councillors and senior Council staff out in the community inspecting sites of interest, answering questions and building relationships with residents.



Joint Organisation of Council's

The inaugural meeting of the Mid North Coast Joint Organisation (JO), held in Kempsey, paved the way for how the Councils will work with the NSW Government on high priority projects in this region. The Mid North Coast JO was formed 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, the next stage of the collaborative relationship with both Mid North Coast councils and the State Government.

Data Driven Asset Management

A key priority within Council's Corporate Improvement program has been substantial work undertaken to improve our knowledge and understanding of the performance of our assets. This has included two major data capture projects for roads, including ancillary

road assets, and land improvement infrastructure.

Council with the support of a contractor (Assetic) undertook a substantial project to spatially locate, classify, and assess the condition and maintenance status of Council's land improvement infrastructure. The project involved visiting over 100 sites including the airport, parks & reserves, sport fields, tourist parks, pools, waste facilities and SES & RFS facilities over a two-month period. In total over 2700 assets such as BBQs bins, furniture and playground equipment were located and assessed.

Council used mobile based GIS software supplied by Assetic to capture and process the data. The data captured will be used as basis for the revaluation of the Land Improvement Assets as at the 30th June 2021. The data will also be used in preparation of Council's Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP) and future Capital Works Program.





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