



Six monthly report

JULY TO DECEMBER 2019



PORT STEPHENS
COUNCIL

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The Six monthly report July to December 2019 has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of Section 404(5) of the *Local Government Act 1993*:

"The general manager must ensure that regular progress reports are provided to the council reporting as to its progress with respect to the principal activities detailed in its delivery program. Progress reports must be provided at least every 6 months."

General Manager's message



Wayne Wallis, General Manager

In our second year of the Delivery Program, the first six months of the financial year have seen some challenging times but also many rewarding occasions as well.

Many of our fellow Councils and communities have been tragically affected by devastating fires across the state with Port Stephens providing support through Rural Fire Services (RFS). We have been fortunate during this period to avoid any major incidents, however our thoughts and continued assistance go out to all those affected in these trying times.

On the home front, we started 2019 with the possibility of a Special Rate Variation and in July 2019 engaged with the community about priority projects that the community still wanted delivered. In August, Council committed to delivering an extra \$15.9 million of major projects in 2020 bringing our total program to almost \$50 million.

Our employees are highly engaged

To cap off the year, we've had some fantastic news that our employee engagement is at a record 74% — our highest ever result. This strong result shows that we are a resilient team that can withstand the challenges while still enjoying coming to work.

Place making taken to an all new level

The success of the Anna Bay 7 day makeover can be seen in the record numbers of volunteers and donations received. The community spirit and tireless dedication of our volunteers, facilitator David Engwicht, his team and Council staff over the 7 days was amazing. The fruits of the project are a true testament to what can be achieved when we all come together as one community.

Council also embarked on a campaign to 'shop local' encouraging residents to spread the cheer by shopping locally and keeping their hard-earned dollars in Port Stephens. At Council we have undertaken research that shows for every \$100 spent at small businesses in Port Stephens, \$60 stays in the local community.

Construction is underway

In the past six months, we have achieved a lot on the ground with:

- construction underway at the Port Stephens Koala Sanctuary
- construction underway for a new sports facility at Karuah's Lionel Morten Oval
- official opening of Apex Park with a new grassed amphitheatre, improved pathways, irrigation, lighting and electrical services to create a multi-functional community space
- opening of the new shared pathway at Boomerang Park Raymond Terrace

- practical completion of construction of the Medowie Sport and Community Club and calls for expressions of interest for an operator.

Funding boost provided

We have also:

- applied for and are awaiting the outcome of \$7.5 million in grants
- successfully secured grants of \$1.8 million
- received \$1.2 million in blackspot funding from the NSW Government's Saving Lives on Country Roads Program for Lemon Tree Passage Road
- received \$2 million in dividends from Council's share in Newcastle Airport operations for the 2018-2019 financial year
- provided \$79,161 to schools and community organisations through Mayoral and Ward funds
- made \$36,000 available through academic scholarships.



Pictured: Mayor Ryan Palmer with the 2019 recipients of the Mayoral Academic Scholarship Program

Planning our future

A 20-year vision for Nelson Bay was endorsed by Council with a Public Domain Plan that is talking about more street trees in the town centre, better connections to the foreshore and Tomaree National Park, a town centre that is people-friendly for walkers and cyclists and more quality spaces for locals and tourists to enjoy year-round.

Another significant body of work that has been underway is drafting of the Local Strategic Planning Statement and Local Housing Strategy. These documents give local effect to State government regional plans and link with the communities priorities in the Community Strategic Plan in relation to land use planning and growth to 2040.

Financial sustainability

Council continues to be financially sustainable with the latest projections estimating an underlying surplus at the end of this financial year of \$0.944 million.

People and awards

We have consistently performed well across our operations, achieving the following awards:

- Winner — Local Government Engineer's Association's (LGEA) Employer of Choice Award 2019
- Winner — Local Government NSW Excellence in the Environment Awards (Innovation in prioritising and managing weeds)
- Winner — Newcastle Airport Pty Ltd (Council is part shareholder) won the Hunter Business Award 2019 for its contribution to the Region.

Fingal Bay was also ranked number 12 in Tourism Australia's top 20 beaches of 2020.



Pictured: Port Stephens Council's Adam Stewart (L), Melissa Rodway and Greg Kable (R) accepting the award from LGEA Committee President Bede Spannagle.



Pictured: Port Stephen's Council's Steve Peart and Bruce Christie, Deputy Director-General of Biosecurity and Food Safety, NSW Department of Primary Industries

I am proud of what we continue to achieve. This past six months has truly demonstrated, how in uniting and partnering together, Council and the community are building a better future for the next generation. It's an exciting year ahead being a new year, a new decade and a new opportunity to make a further difference.

Wayne

Wayne Wallis

Our Port Stephens

Located on the east coast of Australia about two hours north of Sydney, Port Stephens is known for its stunning natural beauty, unique wildlife and strong community spirit. These characteristics make it an ideal recreation, tourist and retirement destination as well as a great place to live, work and play.

The Worimi people are the traditional owners of the Port Stephens local government area (LGA). We value the unique status of Aboriginal people as the owners and custodians of these lands and waters.

Port Stephens was named after Sir Philip Stephens, First Secretary of the Admiralty in the late 1700s and later a Lord Commissioner of the British Admiralty Between 1795 and 1806.

Snapshot	
Region:	Hunter
Area:	858.5 square kilometers
Population:	72,695 people (2018 Estimated Residential Population)
Population projection:	90,384 by 2038
Median age:	45
Population density (persons/ha):	0.81
Population by ward:	West 37% (73% of the land area), Central 32% (21% of the land area), East 31% (6% of the land area)
Major centers:	Raymond Terrace, Medowie, Nelson Bay
Labour force:	29,754 (ABS 2016)
Unemployment:	5.5% (March 2019)
Number of businesses:	4796 (ABSBR 2018)
Gross Regional Product:	\$5.155 billion
Main employing industries:	Public Administration and Safety (15%), Manufacturing (12%), Construction (11%)



Source: Remplan 13 December 2019. For more statistical information, visit the Port Stephens Economic Profile at portstephens.nsw.gov.au/work/economic-development/economic-data-and-advice

Our Council



Community's vision

A great lifestyle in a treasured environment.



Council's vision

Engaged people, working together, delivering valued services.



Council's purpose

To deliver services valued by our community in the best possible way.



Values

Respect

Creating a unique, open and trusting environment in which each individual is valued and heard.

Integrity

Being honest and inspiring trust by being consistent, matching behaviours to words and taking responsibility for our actions.

Teamwork

Working together as one Council, supporting each other to achieve better results for everyone.

Excellence

Improving the way we work to meet the challenges of the future.

Safety

Providing a safety focused workplace culture to ensure the wellbeing of staff, their families and the community.

Elected Council
17 September 2017 to current



Mayor
Ryan Palmer

East Ward



Councillor
John Nell

Central Ward



Councillor
Steve Tucker

West Ward



Councillor
Ken Jordan



Councillor
Glen Dunkley



Councillor
Chris Doohan



Councillor
Paul Le Mottee



Councillor
Jaimie Abbott



Councillor
Sarah Smith



Councillor
Giacomo Amott

Principal activities

Key priorities

The following key priorities were nominated for investigation and progression over the Delivery Program period 2018-2021. Over the past six months, we have investigated funding sources to resource these initiatives and infrastructure projects, with progress achieved as outlined below.

Accessible Port Stephens

Council has completed a number of actions under the Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) and continued to provide ongoing support and services to ensure and promote inclusivity.

Over the period we have:

- Completed a shared pathway at Boomerang Park providing an accessible pedestrian and cyclist thoroughfare through the park. The path provides connections to an accessible playground equipment and public toilet located in the park.
- Upgraded Bagnalls Beach East playground to which have inclusive play elements and accessible pathways connecting the carpark, playground and BBQ facilities.
- Upgraded accessible amenities at Raymond Terrace and Mallabula tennis facilities. Upgrades include an accessible toilet, shower and adult change facilities.

Airport DAREZ drainage environmental approval

Council is seeking to re-establish a direct discharge point from Dawson's Drain to Fullerton Cove in order to support future development in the Williamstown area.

The proposed drainage works involve assessment by three tiers of government and a wide range of permits and approvals, including Commonwealth approvals related to the protected wetlands at Fullerton Cove.

The proposed drainage upgrades are also located in the Williamstown Management Area affected by per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), making the required assessments to authorise the works quite complex. We have commenced the assessment process however, based on the requirements issued by NSW State agencies, it will exceed current budget estimates.

We require additional funding to make up the budget shortfall. We continue to advocate to all levels of government for additional funding to complete the assessments required to seek approval for these critical works. In addition, Council has been very active in advocating to Government for more support on this issue through the Special Activation Precinct process, which is under active consideration by the State Government.

Birubi Information Centre

In September 2019, the Development Application for the Centre was approved by the Hunter Central Coast Regional Planning Panel.

Scoping for detailed design is now occurring.

Coastal Management Program

Over the period Council has been partnering with neighbouring Councils, relevant state agencies and stakeholders to develop a Coastal Management Plan. The plan will set the long term strategy for the coordinated management of land within the coastal zone for the next 10 years.

- Stage One – Scoping study (issues, threats/ hazards and risk identification) is complete
- Stage Two – Detailed studies of vulnerabilities and opportunities undertaken in 2019-2020
- Stage Three – Response identification and evaluation
- Stage Four – Implementation, monitoring and reporting

In July 2019 Stage 1 of the CMP was completed, with Stage 2 now commenced. Detailed technical studies will be completed through 2020 prior to engagement with the community.

Council will commence physical works subject to securing supporting funding.

Cycleways, footpaths and beautification

In December the Mayor officially opened the new \$600,000 shared pathway in Boomerang Park. The 2.5metre wide pathway which spans over 750 metres and includes lighting, entry signage, landscaping and bike racks was made possible by a grant from the NSW Government's Stronger Country Communities Fund, with walkers, runners, skaters and cyclists being able to take advantage of this new route which connects Raymond Terrace.

The shared pathway is now the final piece in the puzzle following installation of a new playground and skate park to the men's shed and senior citizen's facilities



Pictured: front left to right – Councillor Giacomo Arnott, Member of the Legislative Council Taylor Martin MLC and Port Stephens Mayor Ryan Palmer stand with Council staff and community members and cut a red ribbon to officially open the Boomerang Park Shared Path in Raymond Terrace.

Events

Events across Port Stephens continue to grow, creating economic, social and environmental benefits. For the six-month period, Council sponsored events provided an estimated economic impact of \$3,983,860 across the local government area.

We welcomed a number of major events over the period, including:

- PCYC Nations of Origin
- Love Sea Food Tastes
- Ultimate Frisbee
- Williams River Barefoot Marathon
- Asia Footgolf Championships
- Port Stephens Pro
- Real Film Festival



Pictured: Local competitor Jasmine Sampson has been offered a wildcard into the World Surf League Qualifying Series QS6000 event. Image credit: Grant Sproule

Other community events included:

- Port Stephens Hustle in Nelson Bay
- Fern Bay Fiesta in Fern Bay
- Tomaree Arts Festival

Funding investigations

Council continues to be very active in applying for grant opportunities. For the period, applications totalling \$1,817,620 were successfully made consisting of 10 grants.

In addition, funding sources for the PSC2020 program of capital works was put together utilising funds from existing internal sources alongside existing external loan funds. This ensured that this important program of public infrastructure could be commenced.

Gateway, location and town signage

Stage one of the gateway signage program was completed prior to June 2019 with no activity planned for this six-month period. The following stages of the signage program will look at each suburb as funding becomes available.

Key road projects

Council has a plan to deliver a number of key capital works projects. Over the past six months, the following has been achieved on these key projects

- Church Street, Nelson Bay – Council has reconstructed the road pavement along part of Church Street to improve the ride quality and pavement strength, as well as minor drainage improvements and pedestrian accessibility, with the remaining section to be completed in 2020-2021.
- Fairlands Road, Medowie – no activity was planned for the past six months. Project initiation and design will commence in 2020-2021 while construction is scheduled for the 2021-2022 financial year.
- Fingal Bay Link Road (estimated at \$188 million) – The State Government has committed to funding this project, with Roads and Maritime Services leading the planning and delivery of the project.
- Tanilba Road, Mallabula – Council will be reconstructing Tanilba Road from Bay Street to The Parkway Ave North including pavement widening, kerb and gutter construction, and drainage upgrades. Project initiation and design has been deferred to commence in 2020-2021 while construction is scheduled for the 2021-2022 financial year.
- Tomaree Road, Shoal Bay – Council is continuing with the full reconstruction of Tomaree Road between Marine Drive and Verona Road. This is to include pavement widening, kerb and gutter and footpath construction, and drainage upgrades, utilising Council funding as well as Road to Recovery funds. Construction of stage 1 from Rigney Street to Fingal Street occurred in 2019-2020, with stage 2 (remaining works) to be completed when funding permits.
- Warren Street, Seaham – No activity was planned for the past six months. Project initiation and design will commence in 2020-2021 while construction is scheduled for the 2021-2022 financial year.

Koala Sanctuary

The focus for the past six months has been on stage one of the project, with construction of the elevated walkway, access road installation, carpark area preparation and further planning and approvals.

A sod turning ceremony was held in August with the Port Stephens Mayor Ryan Palmer and NSW Minister for Energy and the Environment, the Honourable Matt Kean MP, joining with Port Stephens Koalas to break ground on the multimillion-dollar project.



Pictured: Port Stephens Mayor Ryan Palmer and NSW Minister for Energy and the Environment, the Honourable Matt Kean MP

Medowie Multi-Purpose Community Centre

Construction of a new multi-purpose community centre at Medowie reached practical completion in December 2019, although final fit-out and engagement of an operator will see the centre open in early 2020. The centre will provide:

- club facilities at Medowie Sporting Precinct
- multiple community groups access to use the facility under a sublease agreement with the Medowie Sport and Community Club
- for use as an emergency evacuation centre
- a restaurant, bar, event space, sporting facilities and meeting places.

Off-leash dog parks

Council completed the off leash dog park at Lancaster Park, Soldiers Point in July 2019.

Placemaking

Creating people friendly, vibrant spaces across Port Stephens has been identified as a key priority requiring investment from both Council and the community.

Placemaking activities range from planning and investment to arts, culture and events. Some of the activities over the period include:

- Anna Bay 7 day makeover – facilitated by David Engwicht from Creative Communities. A record number of volunteers participated in the makeover with almost \$40,000 received in donations. Projects included Hannah Reserve, new entrance signage, bus stops, moveable seating, planter boxes and much more.



Pictured: The community of Anna Bay came together this morning to celebrate their hard work during the 7 Day Makeover.

- Street Eats and Beat music style event as part of the Robinson Reserve development.
- Festive Seasons Marketing and Place Activation prior to Christmas in Nelson Bay and Raymond Terrace.
- A 20 year vision for Nelson Bay with the Nelson Bay Public Domain Plan unveiled. Ensuring it is a place where locals and tourists want to live, work and plan.
- Preparation of the draft Fern Bay and North Stockton Strategy which was publicly exhibited during November 2019.
- Submitting a planning proposal for Nelson Bay town centre to the State Government.
- Preparing a development control plan for Nelson Bay Town Centre for exhibition.
- Administering Implementation Panel meetings for Nelson Bay, Raymond Terrace and Medowie Town Centres and collaborating across Council to plan for more parking at Nelson Bay and placemaking including more public toilets in Medowie.

- Developing a Smart City Blueprint and Digital Strategy which will enhance community use of space and placemaking activities. Drafts of these strategies are to be considered by Council in early 2020.



Pictured: Artist's impression of Stockton Street Nelson Bay

Port Stephens Council depot development

A substantial part of Council's work is providing the construction and maintenance of community infrastructure, roads, parks and gardens. The staff and equipment including specialised machinery, require safe locations to store and maintain a substantial specialised fleet. This also includes servicing NSW Rural Fire Service vehicles.

The way that Councils use depots is very different from how they were used when the depots were first built.

The depot location and design was re-assessed following changes to the post SRV funding models.

Councillors have been briefed with options and have provided a preliminary recommendation to rejuvenate the existing Raymond Terrace site and rationalise the existing Administration Building fitout. This will allow for the depot administration, Capital Works and Children Services sections to be all housed at one location as well as meet the needs for Council to supply services to the community. A project delivery program is currently under development.

Strategic Planning Statement and Local Housing Strategy

Council is completing a range of long term strategies to provide an integrated approach to housing through the review of the Port Stephens Planning Strategy 2011 (PSPS). A Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) and Local Housing Strategy (LHS) are being prepared to replace the PSPS as part of the review.

Under the Hunter Regional Plan 2016 and Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2018, the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment committed to preparing guidelines to assist councils in preparing local housing strategies to implement the Regional Plan.

The LSPS and LHS have been drafted and engagement with focus groups, community representatives and industry groups has been undertaken prior to the documents being considered by Council in February 2020.

Williamstown Management area

Department of Defence has prepared a project plan to manage ongoing PFAS contamination remediation.

Council's General Manager has previously participated on the Williamstown Community Reference Group however the State Government abolished the group in October 2019 with individual agencies to liaise directly with the community as required.

Delivery program objectives update



Focus Area One | Our Community

Port Stephens is a thriving and strong community respecting diversity and heritage

C1 Community diversity

100% on track

Operation Plan actions



We have continued to:

- provide facilities and services for children
- provide support for young people to build their confidence and contribution to the community
- encourage Port Stephens to be inclusive and access friendly
- support needs of an ageing population
- support volunteers to deliver appropriate community services.

Our key outcomes include:

- Supporting families through various types of childcare for 40 years, delivering 60% of the annual target childcare places of 67,352 in the six months to December and establishing the OOSH at Fern Bay.
- Drafting the Youth Plan 2020-2022 in consultation with young people, the community, youth service providers and staff.
- Completing and upgrading a range of infrastructure to be inclusive and accessible, refer Key Priorities page 8.
- Reviewing the Ageing Strategy to prepare a Community Well-Being Plan and Ageing Directory.
- Ensuring that key planning documents/strategies such as the draft LSPS, draft LHS Nelson Bay Public Domain Plan and Delivery Program and Fern Bay and North Stockton Strategy are consistent with the Ageing Strategy and include strategies for inclusive planning for seniors living and provide greater housing choices.
- Reorganising the Volunteer/355c Committees to reduce the administrative workload of volunteers and improve volunteer engagement and satisfaction.

C2 Recognised traditions and lifestyles

We have continued to:

- recognise and support local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- support and promote local cultural activities
- recognise and support the heritage of Port Stephens
- provide public libraries as vibrant community spaces.

Our key outcomes include:

- NAIDOC week celebrations which included a Flag Raising breakfast with yarn bombing, Family Fun Day at Murrook and the completion of the Community Coming Together mural on the Lakeside football grandstand.
- Aboriginal interpretive sign projects for Soldiers Point and Birubi Point Aboriginal Places progressing with mock up signs, artwork and shared stories endorsed by Worimi community advisors.
- The Development Application for Birubi Information Centre being approved by the Hunter Central Coast Regional Planning Panel in September 2019.
- Preliminary research and consultation to develop a new Cultural Plan.
- Advisory support provided on the development and implementation of the Tomaree Arts Festival.
- Council approving funding to assist five grant programs with projects ranging from Indigenous Surf Safety Awareness, to improving koala habitats, to a heritage walk brochure for Raymond Terrace to a range of community events.
- Success of the 'Renew Our Libraries campaign' (a joint community and government campaign) enabling an increase in staff hours to expand the mobile library service to include an outreach (homebound service) and to expand the Stories in the Street Literacy program. Library Services has also been successful in gaining grant funding to undertake a refurbishment of the Tilligerry Community Library.
- Our libraries loaning over 145,000 library items, fielding 13,000 enquiries, over 90,000 people coming through the doors, with 11,343 people using the Internet and 6690 using our free Wi-Fi and joining up 1020 new library members.



C3 Community partnerships

We have continued to:

- assist community service providers to effectively deliver services in the region
- support local community events that highlight and foster the creative and diverse nature of our community
- provide recreational and leisure services
- support financially creative and active communities.

Our key outcomes include:

- Updating the online Community directory and Mylink information portal and holding community interagency meetings.
- Planning and support for a number of local community events including Australia Day, REAL film festival, NAIDOC week activities, Youth week and Tomaree Arts Festival.
- Managing Council's Leisure and Recreational contracts including Aquatic Centre management, Surf Lifeguards, leases and licences on community land to ensure contract compliance and manage community expectations.
- Developing a new online Commercial Operator licence and permit application process for static land and water operators, mobile operators, markets and not for profit organisations.
- Over \$79,000 being provided to schools and community organisations through Mayoral and Ward funds.





Focus Area Two | Our Place

Port Stephens is a liveable place supporting local economic growth

P1 Strong economy, vibrant local businesses, active investment

100% on track
Operation Plan actions



We have continued to:

- support sustainable business development in Port Stephens, and
- support and deliver services that attract sustainable visitation to Port Stephens.

Our key outcomes include:

- Placemaking activities as listed under Key Priorities page 13.
- Implementing a range of programs including Small Business Month to increase the capacity and competitiveness of business, support effective business networks, increase networking opportunities and facilitate evidence based decision making.
- Releasing the Port Stephens Business Health Check report to local businesses.
- Implementing a Shop Local campaign promoting the value of spending locally at Christmas. Activities included twilight shopping nights, entertainment, Christmas Carollers, visits from Santa and a “win a local shopping spree” promotion.
- Council investing in outdoor banners, signage and stickers across Nelson Bay and Raymond Terrace to create a festive season look and feel for the town centres.
- Coordinating a Port Stephens Council Event Management Plan for New Year’s event activities.
- Welcoming over 33,000 visitors to the visitor centre.
- Continuing strategic and financial support for new and existing events, refer Key Priorities page 10.
- Developing a new destination branding strategy through Destination Port Stephens and a new Port Stephens Visitors guide.
- Hosting DNSW International Managers and more than 200 international travel agents.
- Commencing construction for the Port Stephens Koala Sanctuary, refer Key Priorities page 12.



tis the season
PORT STEPHENS



Pictured: Performers at the official opening of Apex Park, Nelson Bay and the launch of the inaugural Tomaree Arts Festival

P2 Infrastructure and facilities

We have continued to:

- plan civil and community infrastructure to support the community
- build Council's civil and community infrastructure to support the community
- maintain Council's civil and community infrastructure to support the community
- deliver road infrastructure services on behalf of Roads and Maritime Services.

Our key outcomes include:

- Completing installation of road oriented Internal Vehicle Monitoring Systems (IVMS) to provide records of proof of service, driver safety, and efficient use of plant items for future fleet planning needs.
- Progressing work on road and opens space assets asset revaluations for calculating the value of this inventory.
- Progressing smart parking initiatives for Nelson Bay town centre.
- Processing flood certificates, flooding and drainage advice for Development Applications.
- Processing 281 traffic engineering requests and monthly meetings of the Traffic Committee to consider regulatory controls (traffic control devices and facilities) on local roads.
- Responding to increased requests for heavy vehicle access permits due to the transport of drought fodder.
- Completing King Park Master Plan concept designs for presentation at the February West Ward Sports Council Meeting.

- Planning, consultation and design for PSC 2020 projects.
- Commencing a major Asset Protection Zone cadastral survey for engineering surveys required to support the expanded PSC2020 capital works program.
- Designing a significant number of civil, structural and recreational projects such as Tomaree Road reconstruction and drainage, Lionel Morton Oval Amenities building, the new Karuah Rural Fire Station, various shared pathways and other PSC2020 projects.
- Works underway to construct a new \$1.3 million modern sports facility at Karuah's Lionel Morton Oval. The new building will replace the old clubhouse, include amenities, change rooms, canteen, dedicated referee facilities, storage and first aid room. Funded by Port Stephens Council (\$750,000), the Australian Government's Move It Aus fund (\$500,000) and the Australian Cricket Infrastructure Fund (\$50,000).



Pictured: Mayor Ryan Palmer, Cr Paul Le Mottee and Member for Lyne Dr David Gillespie with members of the Karuah Rugby League Committee.

- Project managing a significant number of civil, structural and recreational projects such as the demolition of the Donald Street Multi-storey Car Park, the construction of the Port Stephens Koala Sanctuary, upgrade of Apex Park Nelson Bay, installation of the Boomerang Park shared path, and reconstruction of the Riverside Park seawall.
- Construction of a significant number of road, landscaping and shared path projects such as the upgrade and sealing of Green Wattle Creek Road, completion of the Nelson Bay Road / Medowie Road roundabout, installation of the missing link footpath on Gan Gan Road and landscaping associated with the new Shoal Bay and Halifax Holiday Park amenities.
- Maintaining Council's 7 operational and historic cemeteries, including opening of the new section of Anna Bay Cemetery.
- Repairing over 10,600 potholes and heavy patching 10,246 sqm representing approximately 1844 tonnes of asphalt used.

- Spraying 133,500 metres, excavating 7,500 metres and mowing 95,000 metres of drains.
- Maintaining state roads in accordance with the approved RMAP for Transport NSW.

P3 Thriving and safe place to live

We have continued to:

- provide land use plan, tools and advice that sustainably support the community
- enhance public safety, health and liveability through use of Council's regulatory controls and services
- support the amenity and identity of Port Stephens
- support emergency services and protect Council assets from bushfires and extreme weather events.

Our key outcomes include:

- Adopting the Nelson Bay Public Domain Plan and preparing a number of other key planning documents, refer Key Priorities page 13.
- Determining 428 development applications, with over \$138.7M worth of development being approved in the six months to December 2019.
- Consistently meeting the Premiers 40 day target during the period and more efficiently processing larger scale development applications, reducing DA processing timeframes to net median 33 days and the 100-day list down to 21.
- Processing building certificates within a net median processing time of 4 days, and 171 Construction Certificates approved. 279 primary inspections and 37 re-inspections of food shops, with 82% of food shops satisfactory at primary inspection rising to 90% following re-inspection.
- Monitoring water quality and compliance with Public Health standards for public swimming and spa pools during the swimming period. 82 pools and spas between October and December were monitored with 77% compliance at primary inspection and non-complaint pools/spas re-inspected to ensure 100% compliance.
- The wastewater program tracking above the targeted number (117%) for the period with a 95% satisfactory result.
- Staff surveying 23 retail food shops as part of a state wide survey targeting the commonly found bacteria *Campylobacter* (associated with raw/undercooked poultry), with no detections of *Campylobacter*.
- Continued liaison and partnership with NSW Environment Protection Authority (NSW EPA) and NSW Department of Primary Industry to achieve good environmental outcomes and share expertise and knowledge, through activities such as joint inspections of commercial facilities.
- Continuing investigations of unauthorised development/land use and reducing outstanding complaints from over 200 to less than 100.
- Rangers undertaking a campaign for dangerous, menacing and restricted dogs, visiting 20 properties with the majority of dog owners compliant.
- Rangers completing 90 patrols in and around schools to promote safe driving and parking around school children.

- Continuing the bulky waste program with success displayed through the high the rate of bookings for kerbside collection.
- Partnering with other state government agencies to deliver meaningful campaigns regarding litter, illegal dumping and enforcement activities.
- Ensuring all RFS and SES buildings are functional and maintained to an agreed level.
- Maintaining Council asset protection zones in accordance with agreed service levels and finalising updating hazard reduction certificate process.
- Staff being involved in one joint Emergency Operation Centre at the RFS Lower Hunter Fire Control due to Catastrophic fire conditions on 12 November.

Focus Area Three | Our Environment

Fort Stephens' environment is clean, green, protected and enhanced

E1 Ecosystem Function

100% on track
Operation Plan actions



We have continued to:

- protect and enhance the local natural environment
- re-educate the community about the natural environment.

Our key achievements include:

- Building a framework to assist staff with communicating environmental policies, strategy and technical advice, with four key areas of policy/strategy being developed as part of the framework including a Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan, Biodiversity Strategy, revised Natural Resources technical specifications and Flora and Fauna guidelines for surveys and management plans.
- 30 environmental impact assessment referrals and 100 tree removal applications completed (79% approved).
- Managing biosecurity risks with 418 sites inspected, 228 sites treated and 72 compliance and enforcement actions undertaken, refer page 4 for Council's award winning success in these programs.
- Undertaking nature conservation programs in collaboration with volunteers to restore, regenerate and rehabilitate natural assets and areas of biodiversity, landscape, cultural, and environmental value. Over the period having:
 - regenerated 175 sites and 268.2 hectares
 - engaged 939 volunteers
 - received 7 new environmental conservation and rehabilitation grants
 - planted 2113 trees
- Providing environmental education programs such as Whale Talks, Wildlife Survival kits and installing environmental awareness signage on a needs basis.



E2 Environmental Sustainability

We have continued to:

- reduce the community's environmental footprint.

Our key achievements include:

- Coordination of the waste collection services with key statistics to 30 November being:
 - 10,130 tonnes of residual waste via the red bin collected and composted
 - 2,267 tonnes of recycling via the yellow bin collected and recycled
 - 1,161 tonnes of green waste collected via drop off days and mulched
 - 3,438 tonnes of mixed wastes received at the Salamander Bay Waste Transfer Station
- Investigating energy reduction through solar panels and low energy lights.

E3 Environmental Resilience

We have continued to:

- encourage community resilience to coastal hazards,
- encourage community resilience to detrimental impacts from the environment
- encourage community resilience to the impacts of climate change.

Our key achievements include:

- Completing the Nelson Bay Marina Sand Movement project, planning works for Conroy Park and submission of a grant application for Little Beach Boat Ramp facility.
- Preparation of Stage 2 work for the Coastal Management Program in liaison with DPIE, refer to Key Priorities page 9.
- Quarterly water and gas monitoring of decommissioned waste landfill sites as per the schedule.
- Capping and rehabilitation of the former waste landfill at Newline Road Raymond Terrace has commenced, with completion date expected to be the end of April 2020 (due to difficulty sourcing approved clay capping required in terms of EPA guidelines).
- Undertaking desktop reviews of the Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan which is well placed to align with the DPIE's guidelines.



Focus Area Four | Our Council

Fort Stephens Council leads, manages and delivers valued community services in a responsible way

L1 Governance

100% on track
Operation Plan actions



We continue to:

- develop and encourage the capabilities and aspirations of a contemporary workforce
- provide strong civic leadership and government relations
- provide a strong ethical governance structure
- provide strong supportive business systems for Council's operations
- reduce risk across Council.

Our key achievements include:

- Continuing the Human Resources program of works including enhancements to the Human Resource Information System, embedding the Capability Framework throughout Council and reviewing the Workforce Plan.
- Hosting a citizenship ceremony in September for 31 conferees from 16 nationalities.
- Newcastle Airport Pty Ltd (which Council is a shareholder) beginning a 3 year trial with Virgin Airways for a new route to Auckland. Construction of Stage 1 of the Astra Aerolab project has also commenced.
- Providing governance and legal services across the organisation, managing legal matters in court and meeting ongoing legislative compliance.
- The internal audit program for 2019-2020 underway, with 10 audits to be carried out and five currently underway.
- Meeting Council's obligations under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 and Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act.
- Reporting the results of the 2019 Community Satisfaction Survey to Council and the community, with overall satisfaction levels at 76%, which whilst below our ambitious new target of 80% was above our historical target of 75%.
- Providing a six monthly report to Council on progress made on the Delivery Program and the 2018-2019 Annual Report.
- Drafting the 2020-2021 Operational Plan and commencing work on the End of Term report for the outgoing Council.
- Lodging a submission on IPART's review of reporting and compliance burdens on local government.
- Rolling out a Project Management Framework to project management champions across Council.
- Carrying out the Corporate Improvement (from ICT maintenance to Business Excellence work) and Integrated Risk Management programs of work.

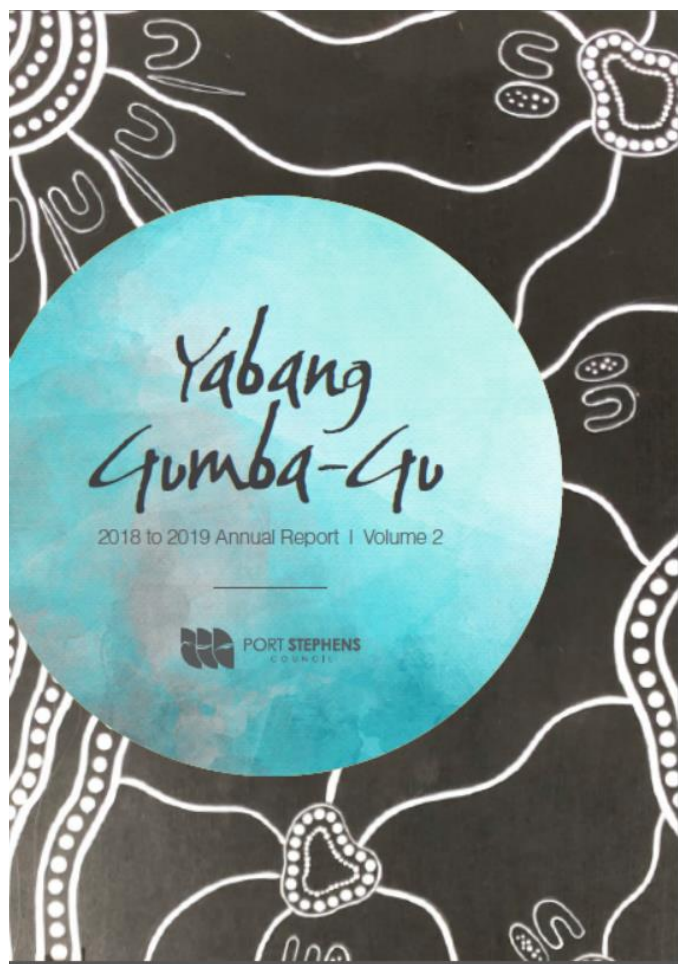
L2 Financial Management

We continue to:

- maintain strong financial sustainability
- maximise non-rate revenue and investment to support Council services.

Our key achievements include:

- Completing Council's Annual Financial Statements for 2018-2019, which included an unqualified Auditor's report.
- Securing additional funding through \$1.8 million in grant funding applications and settling on the sale of three properties with unpaid rates.
- Working towards fully tenating vacant premises in Raymond Terrace CBD, lease renegotiated with Property NSW for 437 Hunter Street Newcastle and completing capital works to upgrade the building.
- Sale of a number of significant parcels within the Salamander Central precinct, progressing the development of 8 townhouse development at 2 Bagnall Avenue, Soldiers Point, progressing a 5 lot subdivision of 795 Medowie Road, Medowie and progressing securing an operator for Medowie Sport and Community Club.
- Practical completion of Shoal Bay and Halifax Holiday Park amenities projects with positive feedback received from our guests. Our Holiday Park Reservation Team has also broken records, receiving \$100,000 in sales in one week. Even with the closure of the Treescape Holiday Park to construct the Koala Sanctuary the Beachside Holiday Parks managed to retain occupancy whilst growing 2.7% in revenue compared to the same period last year. This revenue is in turn available for reinvestment in community infrastructure and services.



L3 Communication and Engagement

We continue to:

- promote a customer first organisation
- provide information in a range of accessible formats
- strengthen Council's reputation
- provide a voice for the community.

Our key achievements include:

- As part of Customer First focus, in late 2019 a roadshow across the organisation was conducted to assist staff with this focus. The Customer Relations team also continue their focus on attaining a target of 80% first point of contact resolution for customer enquiries.
- Reaching over 10,000 followers on Facebook by creating an engaging place where our community can communicate directly with us.
- Successfully carrying out a digital marketing campaign for Waste Services.
- Effectively communicating Port Stephens 2020 projects to the community.
- Carrying out a website review to change the focus from a 'library for all knowledge' to 'what do our community want and need to know?'
- Creating an Emergency Management Dashboard for Port Stephens residents to use in an emergency.
- Rebranding the community newsletter and Children's Services.
- Adopting a Community Engagement Strategy, which will ensure we continue to undertake quality engagement, ensure our community is informed and we understand what matters most.
- Consultation and community engagement on projects such as Nelson Bay parking changes, LSPS, LHS , Fern Bay and North Stockton Strategy, Littorial rainforest, Port Stephens 2020 projects and ongoing capital works projects.

Scorecard

Seven key result measures underpin everything we do at Port Stephens Council:

Seven Result Measures		Status
	<p>1. Service Delivery Target > 95% Integrated Plans delivered on time</p> <p>Achievement: 100% Operational Plan Actions on track (as at 31 December 2019)</p>	
	<p>2. Community Satisfaction Target > 80% Community Satisfaction</p> <p>Achievement : 76% (Source: 2019 Community Satisfaction Survey)</p>	
	<p>3. Employee Engagement Target > 70% Employee Engagement</p> <p>Achievement: 74% (Source: AON Hewitt, 2019)</p>	
	<p>4. Governance Target > 95% Governance Health Check</p> <p>Achievement: 98.1% (as at June 2019)</p>	
	<p>5. Risk Management Target > 80% Risk Management Maturity</p> <p>Achievement: 86% (As at August 2019)</p>	
	<p>6. Financial sustainability Target: underlying financial surplus</p> <p>Achievement: \$0.944 million (As at December 2019)</p>	
	<p>7. Infrastructure Backlog Target: Infrastructure backlog reduced</p> <p>Achievement: \$14.161 million (As at June 2019)</p>	New

Legend:



On track (target achieved or on track to be achieved)



Monitor (<5% off the target)



Off track (>5% off the target)

We successfully balance these key metrics by:

- ensuring that we're delivering on what we say we're going to do
- ensuring our community is satisfied with the level of service
- ensuring our assets are maintained in an acceptable standard
- being financially sustainable
- having the right practices and governance in place
- having an appropriate risk maturity and
- having engaged employees



1. Service Delivery

The following progress has been made on the actions in the 2019-2020 Operational Plan, which contribute to delivering the Delivery Program objectives:

- 100% (90 actions) on track

The following tables are a summary of individual road, community and recreation projects that were completed and are in progress as at 31 December 2019. It is not an exhaustive list of all Capital Works projects carried out during this period.

Roads and Drainage projects completed	Expenditure 1 July to 31 December 2019
Magnus Street/Donald Street, Nelson Bay	\$96,391
Boomerang Park, Raymond Terrace - Shared Pathway	\$560,324
Bus Stop Improvement Program (Country Passenger Transport Infrastructure Grant Scheme) – Hunter River High School Bus Bays	\$112,140
Halifax Holiday Park – Replace concrete slabs	\$74,089
Shoal Bay Holiday Park – Exit onto Government Road	\$135,724
TOTAL	\$978,668

Magnus and Donald Street intersection



Before



After



Boomerang Park Shared Path

Before



After



Roads & Drainage projects in construction	Expenditure 1 July to 31 December 2019
Bus Stop Improvement Program (Country Passenger Transport Infrastructure Grant Scheme) – Fingal Bay and Mt Hall Rd, Shoal Bay	\$14,202
Tomaree Road, Shoal Bay – Stage 1	\$1,880,606
Lemon Tree Passage Road, Tanilba Bay (blackspot)	\$1,157,566
269 to 304 Gan Rd, Anna Bay	\$178,728
Green Wattle Creek Road, Butterwick	\$135,021
TOTAL	\$3,366,123

Roads & Drainage projects in planning	Expenditure 1 July to 31 December 2019
Raymond Terrace Landfill Site Capping	\$840,554
Port Stephens Drive, Anna Bay	\$560,324
Lemon Tree Passage Road, Tanilba Bay (shared path)	\$89,233

Abundance Road, Medowie	\$65,197
Italia Road - SEG 110, Balickera	\$92,735
Lemon Tree Passage Road, Salt Ash (safety improvements)	\$202,221
Sunset Blvd, Soldiers Point (Design only)	\$9,821
Vardon Rd, Fern Bay	\$128,575
Masonite Rd, Tomago	\$165,088
Seaham Road, Nelsons Plains	\$109,369
Foreshore Drive Safer Roads Works, Salamander Bay	\$25,523
Shoal Bay Foreshore Shared Pathway and Shoal Bay Drainage	\$35,010
Foreshore Drive Pavement, Salamander Bay	\$16,600
Waropara Road, Medowie - Shared Pathway	\$ 22,465
Gan Rd (from Nelson Bay Rd to dune access), Anna Bay - Shared Pathway	\$24,159
Mallabula to Lemon Tree Passage, Lemon Tree Passage Rd - Shared Pathway	\$89,233
Ferodale Rd to South St, Medowie Rd, Medowie - Shared Pathway	\$44,861
Levee bank, Raymond Terrace - Shared Pathway	\$16,616
Mustons Road, Karuah - Pavement (Design only)	\$722
Nelson Bay Road, Fern Bay - Shared Pathway	\$36,465
TOTAL	\$2,574,771

Community & Recreational and Structures projects completed	Expenditure 1 July to 31 December 2019
Apex Park, Nelson Bay	\$227,347
Bagnalls Beach (East) playground, Nelson Bay	\$137,281
Kangaroo Point Amenities	\$8,681
Roy Wood Reserve Public Amenities	\$10,173
Boat Harbour Amenities	\$8,679
Yulong Oval, Medowie	\$206,882
Bowthorne Oval seating upgrade	\$42,381
Riverside Park, Raymond Terrace – Stage 2	\$353,339
Raymond Terrace Tennis Club Disabled Amenities	\$81,057
Nelson Bay Marina	\$16,311
Henderson Park, Lemon Tree Passage	\$14,212
TOTAL	\$1,106,343

Bagnalls Beach East Playground Upgrade



Before



After



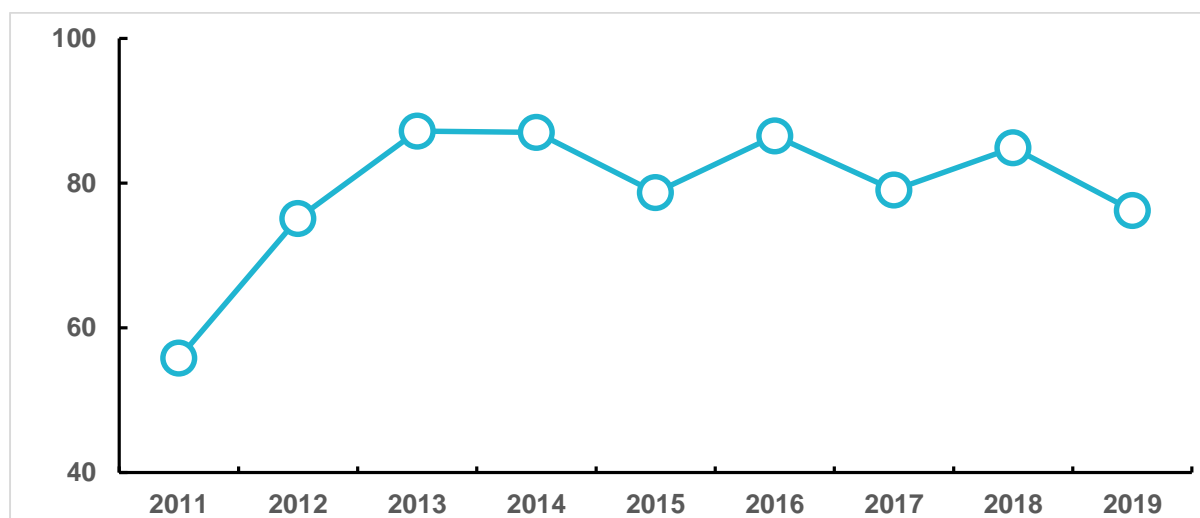
Community & Recreational and Structures projects in construction	Expenditure 1 July to 31 December 2019
Nelson Bay Croquet Club	\$254,702
Nelson Bay Senior Citizen Hall	\$30,104
Pirralea Gardens, Nelson Bay	\$11,097
Shoal Bay West Sand Replenishment	\$48,280
Koala Sanctuary	\$2,415,115
East Donald Street Carpark	\$411,546
Robinson Reserve, Anna Bay	\$331,104
Tilligerry Tennis	\$213,603
Medowie Sports and Community Facility	\$3,597,037
Port Stephens Netball Club Disabled Amenities	\$46,942
Lionel Morten Oval Amenities	\$148,652
RFS Karuah	\$180,191
Halifax Holiday Park Amenities	\$1,679,957
Shoal Bay Holiday Park Amenities	\$1,438,359
TOTAL	\$10,806,689

Community & Recreational and Structures projects in planning	Expenditure 1 July to 31 December 2019
Vi Barnett Athletics Club Disabled Amenities	\$16,665
Fitzgerald Bridge Amenities	\$817
Tomaree Aquatic Centre	\$392
Shoal Bay Foreshore Park	\$30,104
Mallabula Sports Complex	\$11,074
Boat Harbour Amenities	\$8,674
Kangaroo Point Amenities	\$8,681
Roy Wood Reserve Public Amenities	\$10,173
Tomaree Aquatic Centre	\$5,654
Lakeside Aquatic Centre	\$27,670
Vi Barnett Amenities	\$61,570
Boyd Oval Amenities	\$158,450
George Reserve, Salamander Bay	\$19,233
Conroy Park, Corlette - Foreshore Improvements	\$41,753
Soldiers Point Revetment Work	\$48,920
Tomaree Sports Complex, Salamander Bay - Amenities Replacement	\$55,376
TOTAL	\$505,206

2. Community Satisfaction

We conducted our annual Community Satisfaction Survey in June 2019, which yielded an overall satisfaction with our services of 76%, 4 percentage points below our aspirational new target of 80% set in 2018-2019. This result however remains above Council's historical target of 75% with further input to be sought from the community over the coming year as we review the Community Strategic Plan and other integrated Council plans.

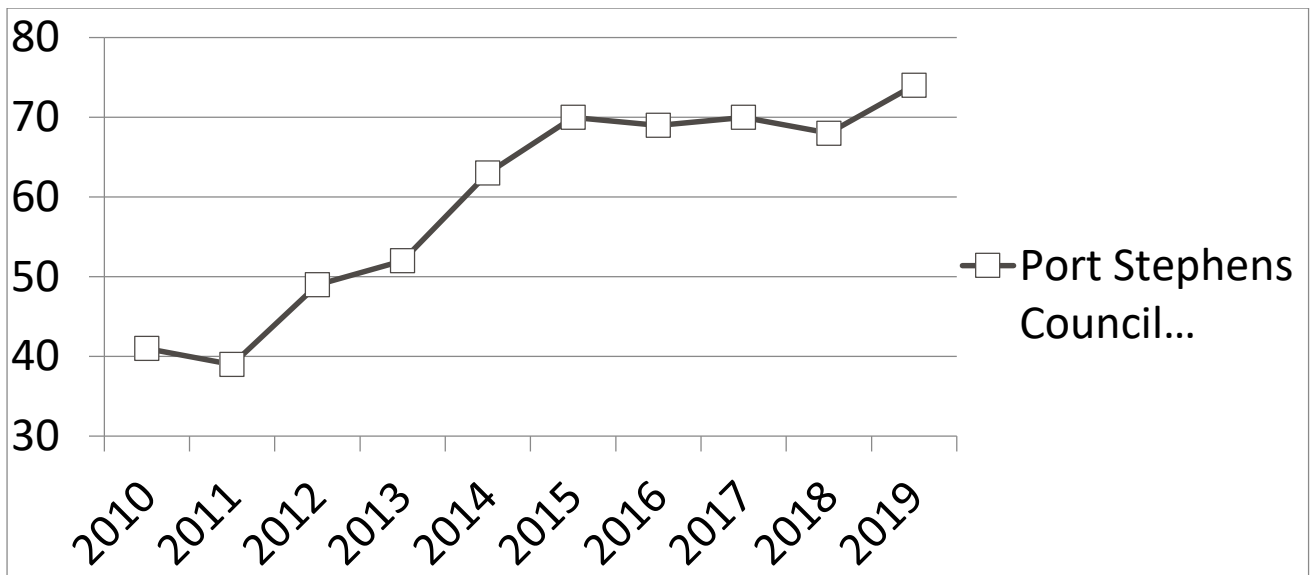
The next survey is proposed to be conducted in May/June 2020.



3. Employee Engagement

The Employee Engagement Survey was conducted in September 2019 with a 74% engagement score. This is our highest ever result.

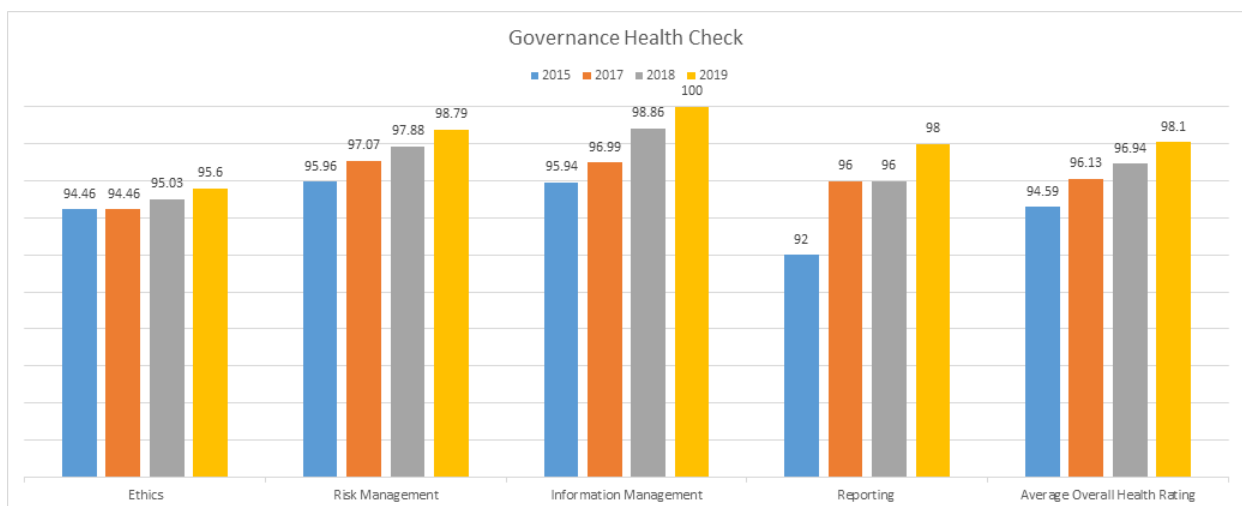
For the first time we have exceeded our ambitious target of 70% which places Council in the top quartile of organisations in Australia and New Zealand. We continue to score significantly above the average local government score of 54%. There have been improvements in all key areas which we focussed on during the year. A robust plan will be implemented with key stakeholders on how to improve over the next 6-12 months and beyond with short- and long-term milestones.



4. Governance

Our Governance Health Check was last conducted in June 2019 and is reviewed on an annual basis. The overall rating in 2019 increased to 98.10 due to further improvements in the areas of secondary employment and complaint handling. Further work has been undertaken to review complaints handling and identify trends that may be occurring and take action where necessary. The rating exceeded Council's target of 95%.

The Governance Health Check is a tool to measure our governance and how well we perform. It covers four areas: ethics, risk management, information management and reporting. The graph below demonstrates our progress in achieving our Governance Health Check scores from 2015 to 2019.



5. Risk Management

The integrated risk management framework continues to perform for Council by reducing exposures in areas of critical risk.

Throughout the last six months of 2019 Council continued to keep under review its varied risk management obligations across all services. These services comprise significant risks relating to compliance, workplace health and safety as well as protection of our environment both in our operations and at a strategic sustainability level.

Council continues to improve the focus on the alignment between strategic risk and the integrated planning documents generated through the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework. This alignment will be used throughout the coming year to ensure that all corporate planning and strategic systems are designed with key risks in mind.

Council's Risk Maturity Rating increased to 86%, up from 83% following a review in August 2019. The Risk Maturity score measures the organisation against three areas: risk management principles, risk management framework and risk management process. The increase is a result of Council's continued efforts to improve risk management across the organisation.

Environmental Management System

Our two Environmental Protection Licences (EPL) were risk assessed by the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA). This assessment forms part of the EPA's risk-based licensing system and aims to ensure that all environment protection licensees receive an appropriate level of regulation based on the level of risk they pose. The risk assessment examines site specific risks posed by each licensed premises to identify any environmental issues that a licensee needs to address and where the EPA needs to focus its regulatory attention. The EPA also examines the licensees' environmental management performance, which includes recognising any Environmental Management Systems (EMS) and operations a licensee has put in place. Both licences have again received a Level 1 Risk Rating, the lowest risk rating given to licences.

The Environmental Management System Officer commenced with Council on the 23rd September 2019. Operational inspections and audits commenced in November 2019 with eight being undertaken to date. These will become more frequent and scheduled with the development of the EMS auditing schedule and tools.

The annual Environmental Management System training was delivered in October 2019 with the following attendees:

- 3 Environmental Awareness for Senior Leaders
- 22 Environmental Awareness (operational)
- 12 Environmental Assessment

There were also 53 new starters who attended the environmental induction program.

Work Health and Safety

Over the last six months we have seen the number of workers compensation claims decrease in number and severity compared to the same period last year.

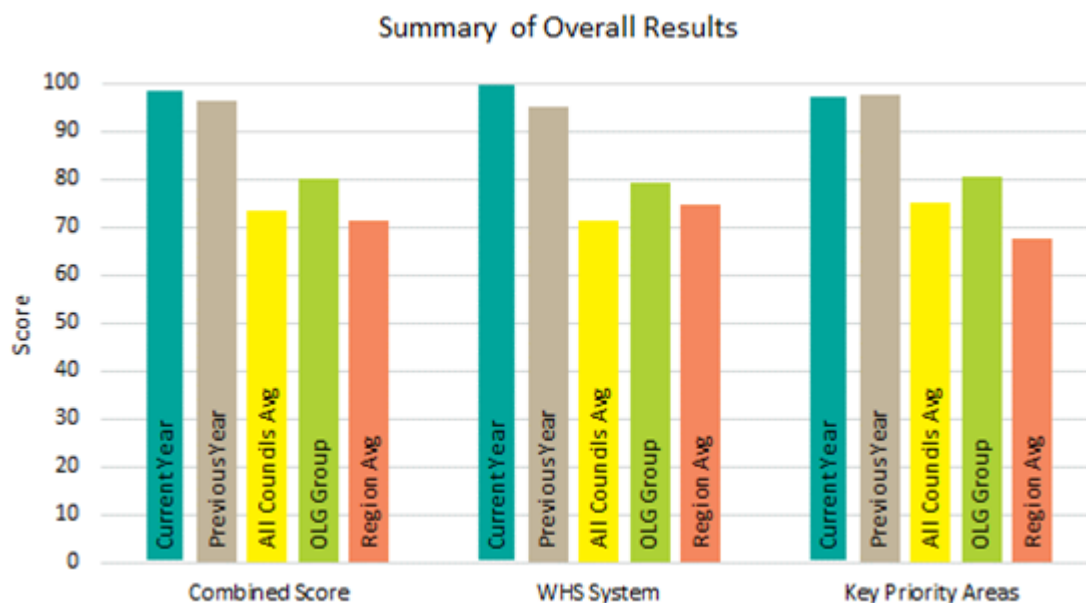
We are continuing to review and refine our emphasis on injury prevention, particularly focussing on sprains and strains, hazard identification, promotion of our health and wellness program, and identification of high risk tasks.

During the last six months we have undertaken:

- 70 Ergonomic assessments resulting in 136 actions
- 15 Workplace Inspections resulting in 99 actions
- 32 Site Safety Compliance Audits completed
- 140 skin cancer checks undertaken

We received the following rebate from our Workers Compensation Insurer, StateCover Mutual LTD.

- Work Health & Safety Incentive \$143,000 (received Dec 2019)



Our Workers Compensation Insurer, StateCover Mutual LTD provides member Councils with an annual WHS self-audit to assist in the evaluation and monitoring of their WHS management system. This comprehensive audit explores a range of issues that are critical to the effective implementation of a WHS management system and the resulting reduction of worker injuries and illnesses.

We have continued to improve upon last year's results with our overall WHS performance being at 98.8% which is above average when compared to the average score for all Councils.

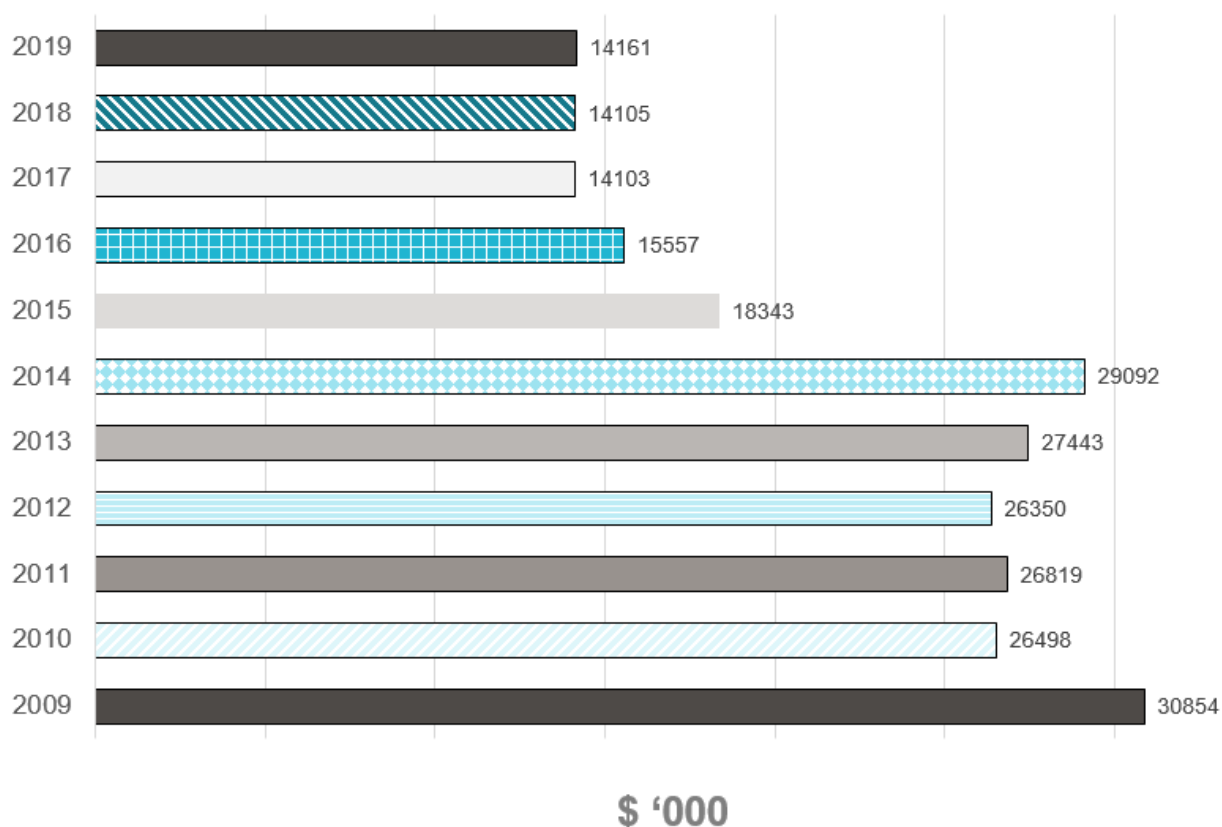
6. Financial sustainability

Council continues to be financially sustainable with the latest projections estimating an underlying surplus at the end of this financial year of \$0.944 million.

7. Infrastructure backlog

The infrastructure backlog is a new measure that has been included in this financial year.

The target is to reduce the backlog, which occurred significantly from 2014 to 2015, remaining relatively stable for the past 3 years. The results for the full financial year will be reported in the June 2020 six monthly report.





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