

2021-2024 STATE OF OUR REGION REPORT



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Wiradjuri people who are the traditional custodians of the land on which we live, work and play. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging of the Wiradjuri Nation and thank them for their care of the land, water and sky and extend that respect to other Indigenous Australians.

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Chief Executive Officer's Message

During the past Council term, we renewed our commitment to serving residents and visitors in the Dubbo Region.

Despite a shortened term due to COVID-19, which postponed elections twice, we continued to focus on core community values.

Council's role, which has been traditionally centered on roads, rates, and waste management, has expanded to include community-focused initiatives such as infrastructure development, economic growth, housing solutions, liveability, leadership, and ensuring environmental sustainability.

Communicating this broader role has enabled us to proactively address emerging challenges across various sectors.

As the region reopened, we also saw the return of major events with the Sky Castle lighting installation delivered in partnership with the NSW Government, expanded entertainment programs at the Wellington Civic Centre and Dubbo Regional Theatre and Convention Centre, the Dubbo Art Fair at the Western Plains Cultural Centre and the NSW Junior State Cup Northern Conference which boosted the economy during a traditionally low-visitation period.

The past three years has seen an increase in costs to goods and services and Council has not been immune to cost shifting or the rising cost of living. Financial sustainability remains a key focus for us as we look at the budget each year, to ensure we effectively undertake our role as custodians of our community assets in the long term.

The following report will highlight the previous Council's term and objectively track Council's progress against our Community Strategic Plan (CSP) as we work towards a better region in 2040.

I look forward to working with you and the community to progress, partner and deliver on opportunities to better serve our community and shape the region's future during your term as elected members.

Murray Wood Chief Executive Officer

Financial sustainability remains a key focus for us ...to ensure we effectively undertake our role as custodians of our community assets in the long term



About this report

Dubbo Regional Council is required under the Local Government Act 1993 and the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework and Guidelines to prepare a State of Our Region report that provides information on Council's implementation and the effectiveness of the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) in achieving its social, environment, economic and civic leadership objectives over the previous term of Council.

This report, along with the Annual Report and six-monthly performance report, are the key points of accountability between Dubbo Regional Council and our community. This report provides the community with an update on the achievements of Dubbo Regional Council from 2021 to 2024. It outlines the progress towards achieving the Towards 2040 CSP by summarising the successes, showcasing key projects delivered, providing information about how effective the objectives have been and identifies key challenges and pressures that Council faced in meeting the objectives. This report assists with the review of the CSP.

Council adopted the Towards 2040 CSP on 27 June 2022. The CSP identifies the main priorities and aspirations for the future of the Local Government Area and takes into consideration the issues and pressures that may affect the community and the level of resources that will realistically be available to deliver their long-term objectives. The CSP is required to answer the following questions:

- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to be in 10 years' time?
- How will we get there?
- How will we know we've arrived?

The State of Our Region Report is organised and presented to address the six themes of Towards 2040:

- Housing
- Infrastructure
- Economy
- Leadership
- Liveability
- Environmental Sustainability

To read more about our Integrated Planning and Reporting visit <u>dubbo.nsw.gov.au</u>



OR SCAN THE OR CODE

Elected Council December 2021 to September 2024

Dubbo Regional Council has a rich cultural heritage and a diverse Local Government Area which is represented in the elected Councillors.

Mayor: Mathew Dickerson Deputy Mayor: Richard Ivey

Councillors:

- Joshua Black
- Lewis Burns
- Shibli Chowdhury
- Vicki Etheridge
- Jessica Gough
- Damien Mahon
- Pamella Wells
- Matthew Wright



(back row from left) Lewis Burns , Matthew Wright, Vicki Etheridge, Pamella Wells , Joshua Black, Jessica Gough. (front row from left) Shibli Chowdhury, Deputy Mayor Richard Ivey, Mayor Mathew Dickerson and Damien Mahon.

Summary of Notice of Motions by status

Councillor term



Meetings held

- 24 Standing Committees
- **33** Ordinary Council
- 124 Community Committees

606 resolutions

• 60 Completed

- 6 In progress
- 2 Outstanding

Delivering our community's vision

In 2040 we will be an innovative, resilient and sustainable region with opportunities to grow and a high quality of life.

- Our thinking, practices and solutions will make things better for all generations and be innovative
- Our community will respond to challenges and become stronger and resilient
- Our natural and built environment will be sustainable •
- Our housing, economic, educational, social, equity, cultural, entertainment and recreational facilities will have opportunities to grow
- Our community will have a high quality of life



THRIVING

ECONOMY



AFFORDABLE LIVING



OPPORTUNITIES

CULTURE AND

HERITAGE

URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE

QUALITY OF LIFE



VILLAGE INFRASTRUCTURE



COLLABORATION



ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY



TRANSPARENCY

The objectives in the CSP cover a broad range of Council functions and create a balance for delivering the majority of the actions and initiatives in a sustainable manner. They also acknowledge that some initiatives and actions cannot be delivered entirely by Council and identify where Council may have an advocacy role on behalf of the community.

Council will have the following roles when implementing this Plan:





LEADER

COLLABORATOR

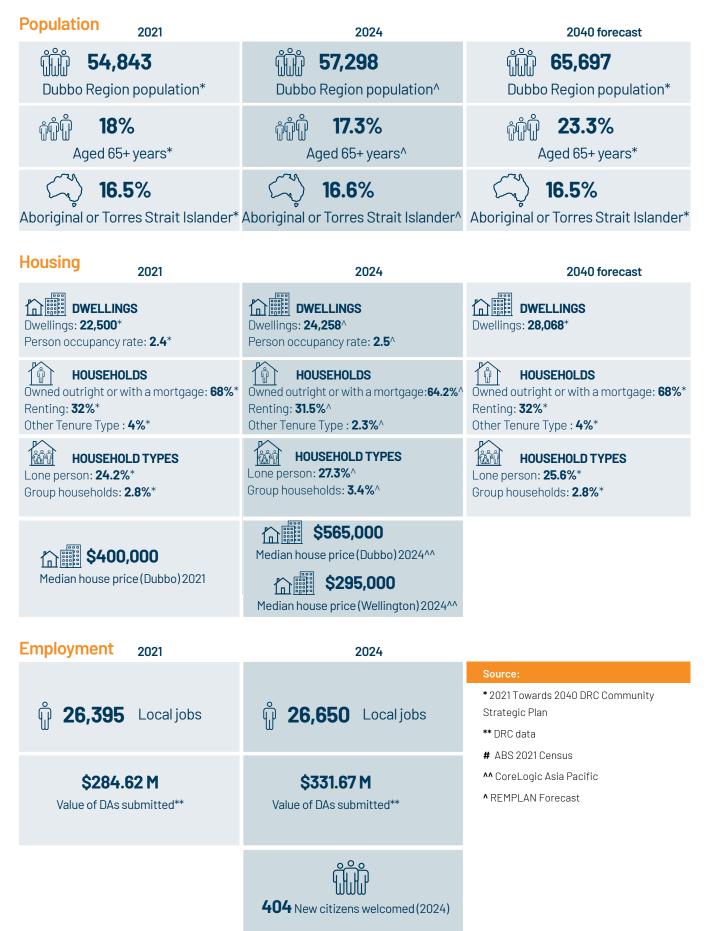


ADVOCATOR

PROVIDER

6

Dubbo Region at a glance



Theme 1. Housing

We are a well-designed region that includes a variety of housing types, densities, locations and price points

Our strategies

1.1: Housing meets the current and future needs of our community

1.1.1: A variety of housing types and densities are located close to appropriate services and facilities

1.1.2: Housing is affordable and secure

1.1.3: Urban renewal occurs in the Dubbo Central Business District and Wellington Town Centre

1.1.4: Public and social housing are integrated into residential areas

1.1.5: Development opportunities are communicated to the community

1.2: An adequate supply of land is located close to community services and facilities

1.2.1: Land is suitably zoned, sized and located to facilitate a variety of housing types and densities

1.2.2: Adequate land is available in the villages for development

1.2.3: Development is supported by a strategic and affordable infrastructure framework

1.2.4: Rural and productive agricultural land is managed sustainably

1.3: Short-term and emergency accommodation is available

1.3.1: Short-term accommodation is available for the workforce associated with significant infrastructure, major projects and employment generators

1.3.2: Crisis and emergency accommodation supports the needs of the community

Why it's important

A range of affordable housing ranked with high importance for residents who participated in the Community Insights Survey managed by Council in 2024.

Overall 80 per cent of people ranked a range of affordable housing as important or very important, while their satisfaction sat at 54 per cent. The affordability of housing was one of three areas that fell into the needs improvement area of the overall scorecard from the survey.

Across Dubbo and Wellington considerable land is available for the development of housing and in the past three years Council has been working with the appropriate agencies to develop many of these areas.

Council recognises the importance of affordable and available housing when looking at the growth of the region; with new investment opportunities and businesses being put forward there needs to be a place for new residents to live. Workforce accommodation for major investments is also something that must be considered.

Council has a number of roles to play when it comes to housing including the identification of land, setting appropriate policies though planning instruments and assessing applications as well as building and maintaining relationships with stakeholders. Council also has a role to play in negotiating and advocating the government in respect of the need and demand for public housing and crisis accommodation.

Through the roles outlined Council remains committed to being on the front foot in tackling the housing shortage crisis.

Council's progress

In the past three years there has been a steady increase in the development sector. Council has approved 1,472 applications with 603 for single dwellings, 679 other residential dwellings, representing \$994.87 M value of development.

Residential Land development:

The North-West Urban Release Area consists of 375 hectares of vacant land on the north-western fringe of Dubbo. Under the design controls developed by Council the development of the area will see a mixture of medium and higher density living in the area.

Developer contribution plans, including road upgrade retirements for this area have also been drafted. Council is also continuing to ensure developed land in Keswick Estate is available to provide affordable and competitive entry into the housing market for home buyers in a location close to retail and medical services.

Large lot residential study:

Australian Government Funding from the Housing Support Program – Stream 1 will assist Council to create Regional and Affordable Housing Strategies while further developing the North-West Urban Release Area Master Plan. The strategies will help drive increased delivery of new housing in the region and in turn get more people into homes. It will provide a clear framework that considers demographic, supply and demand factors for housing as well as different typologies, land use opportunities and potential barriers to meet those needs.

Regional Energy Zone:

Council are actively participating in the Central-West Orana Renewable Energy Zone (REZ)Steering Group – Workforce Accommodation to assist in ensuring the workforce accommodation issues for the REZ are adequately planned for. To assist further Council has agreed to lease land at Keswick Estate to Squadron Energy or an associated entity to assist with workers accommodation in the region. Zoning for the area of land has been changed to general residential and existing minimum lot sizes have been removed for approximately 10ha of land.

Indicators

Legend; Community Insights Survey 2024 results

↑Increase ↓Decrease (compared to 2022 survey)

Level of Community satisfaction with range of affordable housing



Level of Community Satisfaction with Development Approvals



New residential developments support our diverse community needs



Theme 2. Infrastructure

We have well-maintained, fit for purpose and new infrastructure that helps our community grow

Our strategies

2.1: The road transportation network is safe, convenient and efficient

2.1.1: Traffic management facilities enhance the safety and efficiency of the road transport network

2.1.2: The road network meets the needs of users in terms of traffic capacity, functionality and economic and social connectivity

2.1.3: Additional flood-free road access over the Macquarie River at Dubbo is provided

2.1.4: Adequate and convenient car parking is available in commercial centres

2.1.5: Council works collaboratively with government and stakeholders on transport-related issues

2.2: Infrastructure meets the current and future needs of our community

2.2.1: Water and sewer infrastructure and services meet the needs of the community

2.2.2: Solid waste management services meet the needs of the community

2.2.3: Urban drainage systems meet the needs of the community

2.2.4: Enhanced telecommunications coverage is available in the region

2.2.5: Council maintains infrastructure and delivers services at the adopted service levels as agreed with the community

2.2.6: Council utilises a modern and efficient plant fleet that meets operational needs

2.3: The transportation systems support connections within and outside the region

2.3.1: Appropriate and well-connected rail infrastructure is available

- 2.3.2: A network of cycleways and pedestrian facilities is provided and maintained
- 2.3.3: Public transport services are available in our villages
- 2.3.4: Our community has convenient air access to a variety of destinations
- 2.3.5: Roadside environments and entrance statements are developed and maintained

Why it's important

Infrastructure provides the foundations for our community and some of the services that are relied upon in our everyday lives. Well developed infrastructure, including roads, utilities and public facilities ensures efficient transportation, access to essential services and promotes business investment.

Infrastructure plays a key role in community well-being by providing reliable water and waste management, while effective infrastructure planning helps mitigate risks such as drought, flooding or traffic congestion, creating a safer and more resilient environment.

Traditional infrastructure includes roads, reticulated sewer and water supply, stormwater drainage, and street lighting that aims to deliver a safe environment for our community.

The Dubbo Region lies at the the junction of three highways and has access to capital cities across eastern Australia through a daily rail service and flights from the Dubbo Regional Airport. The community also has access to Bodangora Airstrip which is a vital asset for the Wellington community.

The provision and maintenance of infrastructure is a key consideration for Council and the community across the wider Local Government Area. The provision of appropriate infrastructure provides economic development opportunities and ensures our community can continue to benefit.

Ultimately, infrastructure forms the backbone of our region's development, fostering both social and economic prosperity.



Council's progress

Infrastructure and asset renewal:

A backlog of asset renewal works has been highlighted over the past term of Council and focused on in the annual budget each year.

Council has been working at not only upgrading assets, but also planning for the future years when it comes to determining what needs to be upgraded.

The 3D printed amenities facility demonstrates Council's ability to lead the way by utilising cutting edge technology to build infrastructure that was due for renewal. The trial build has since lead to further interest in the technology including State Government interest in building homes in Dubbo using the 3D printing technology.

Water for the future:

An optimisation study of the John Gilbert Water Treatment Plant is being undertaken with short, medium and long term priorities for capital works being identified.

The Northern Borefield Pipeline project extended Dubbo's existing groundwater infrastructure by implementing a further 9km of pipeline and connected three new bore sites in North Dubbo with the John Gilbert Water Treatment Plant in Macquarie Street, Dubbo.The Wellington Groundwater pipeline project was also started.

Roads network:

Flooding events in 2022 destroyed much of the road network across the Region with Council working hard to identify and repair areas as we moved from crisis to recovery.

In other areas Stage 2 of the Boundary Road Extension Project and the Wheelers Lane rehabilitation works were completed. Boothenba Road intersection upgrade was also completed.

Community areas highlighted:

A new amenities facility was constructed in Elston Park while further amenities at the Riverside sporting precinct were officially opened.

A playspace for the children and visitors of Brocklehurst was opened while in Wellington the pedestrian bridge crossing the Bell River near Cameron Park was completed.

The Waste Strategy for 2024/2034 was created and has been placed on public exhibition with an outcome to be determined by the newly elected body.

Indicators

Legend ; Community Insights Survey 2024 results

Increase Decrease (compared to 2022 survey)



Theme 3. Economy

We have a strong and diverse local economy that provides employment opportunities for people of all ages and abilities

Our strategies

3.1: Visitor economy growth is supported

3.1.1: Diverse and unique visitor opportunities are explored, developed and supported

3.1.2: Events that foster cultural, recreational and community interaction opportunities are supported

3.1.3: Visitor accommodation is available

3.2: Employment opportunities are available in all sectors of our economy

3.2.1: Employment and investment opportunities for all sectors of the community are fostered

3.2.2: Traineeships and employment pathways are available for all sectors of the community

3.2.3: The growth, development and diversification of the agricultural industry is supported

3.2.4: The Dubbo Central Business District and Wellington Town Centre are supported by commercial activation programs and activities

3.3: A strategic framework is in place to maximise the realisation of economic development opportunities for the region

3.3.1: Land is suitably zoned, sized and located to facilitate a variety of development and employment generating activities

3.3.2: The Dubbo Central Business District and Wellington Centre are supported by long-term plans

3.3.3: Major investment is proactively attracted and supported in line with regional opportunities

Why it's important

Council has a role in providing leadership in the region to promote the significant economic development opportunities available and to partner with existing business, industry and providers to ensure our workforce has the appropriate range of skills and experience to meet industry demands. A strong regional economy attracts investment and encourages business development, which leads to increased innovation, job diversity and resilience against unplanned economic downturns.

The Dubbo Region includes significant tourism assets which serve to drive the visitor economy and attract significant numbers of both domestic and overseas tourists. Some of these assets including the Wellington Caves and Old Dubbo Gaol are facilitated by Council, adding to Council's already vast portfolio of assets.

The region benefits from its strategic location in the centre of NSW at the junction of the Golden, Newell and Mitchell highways as well as the connections offered by the Dubbo Regional Airport to Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney. The region is also traversed by the Main Western Rail Line which provides connections for both passengers and freight between the east and west as well as being in close proximity to the Inland Rail network. The location of the region and the significant infrastructure and transport connections in place ensure the foundations for the development of a diverse economy are provided for.

The region's economy is also strongly reliant on robust health and education services. This is reflective of the role the region now plays in servicing a significant percentage of the population of western NSW.



Council's progress

Established partnerships with local businesses:

Council has actively established partnerships with local businesses through various initiatives and engagements. A notable example is the three-year contract for the NSW Touch Junior State Cup, which draws visitors and boost the local economy during a traditionally quieter period of the year in February.

Council also hosted and participated in key workshops such as the 2023/2024 Housing Reference Group, the Mayoral Developers Forum and Chamber of Commerce breakfasts, where business leaders and stakeholders collaborate on regional development.

In addition, annual food safety inspections, conducted at approximately 278 retail food premises, including home-based food businesses, ensure compliance and support the local food industry.

To further promote economic activity, Council organises Shop Local campaigns, Christmas promotions, Small Business Month events and new resident nights, all of which strengthen community ties and stimulate local spending.

Support for diverse and unique visitor opportunities:

Council signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Taronga Western Plains Zoo for the Serengeti Plains Visitor Experience Program and the Regional Hospitality and Tourism Centre of Excellence. Council assisted the zoo with the application for the grant program and will assist with ongoing administration of the grant funding. The Serengeti Plains Experience includes 20 premium eco-cabins fronting an open range animal exhibit as well as café, restaurant and function centre with adjoining pool and playground.

The annual Financial Assistance programs saw funding opportunities made available for community events and destination events. These are over subscribed each year showing the growing need for financial support among event organisers each year.

Traineeships and employment pathways:

Council invested funding into the BOOTS (Building Opportunities through Outreach Training and Support) women in construction program. The program is a fee free trade readiness program which prepares participants to enter the construction industry and potentially secure employment. The program was organised by Abergeldie and the NSW Department of Education. Due to the success of the program Council will support further programs that assist women in gaining employment in the construction industry.

Dubbo Regional Airport:

In 2024 Council secured the RAAF PC21 Exercise which saw 40 personnel relocate to Dubbo for two weeks to undertake RAAF training, using the airport as the base. With the first exercise a success the RAAF will now relocate four exercises per year to Dubbo Regional Airport which will be scheduled when the NSW RFS Large Air Tanker service is not in operation.

Indicators



Theme 4. Leadership

We have leaders who are engaged, transparent, accountable, and represent the best interest of our community

Our strategies

4.1: Council provides transparent, fair and accountable leadership and governance

- 4.1.1: Council encourages and facilitates two-way communication with and between stakeholders and the community
- 4.1.2: Council's decision-making processes are open, transparent and accountable
- 4.1.3: Council provides quality customer service
- 4.1.4: Statutory requirements are met and services are provided in a cost-effective and timely manner
- 4.2: The resources of Council are sustainably managed
- 4.2.1: The system of raising revenue is equitable, and revenue from grants and other income sources is maximised
- 4.2.2: Technological capabilities meet the requirements of Council and the community
- 4.2.3: A highly skilled, diverse and motivated workforce is maintained
- 4.2.4: The business activities of Council provide financial returns to the community
- 4.2.5: Service reviews are conducted to improve the performance of Council

Why it's important

Leadership aims to ensure the delivery of the actions and initiatives provided by the community is achieved across a variety of connected stakeholders, levels of government, and other interconnected service providers. More importantly our leaders are the champions of Council's IP&R framework and an effective liaison between the community and Council.

Leadership ensures Council continues to operate within its means and ensure income streams, including land rates, are treated with respect and value for money. Council recognises that there are limited funds to deliver all of the identified actions and initiatives outlined by the community which means decisions must be undertaken.

The CSP will guide Council's actions up until 2040, allowing leaders to have a view on the future while continuing to leverage and maintain existing community assets.

Council looks to ensure this decision making is open, transparent and accountable by providing the community with regular updates on the Delivery Program and Operational Plan, which link back through to the aspirations outlined in the CSP.

Council's progress

Two-way communication:

A centralised hub for all public participation and engagement activities, YourSay was launched in 2023 allowing community to engage, participate and provide feedback on a range of Council's projects, plans, policies and studies. YourSay is one way Council can ensure our community understands the vast variety of projects and works we undertake. It allows community member to have their say in consultation processes, as well as during public exhibition periods.

Accessibility is a priority:

Following COVID-19 and online Council meetings, Councillors and staff returned to the Council chambers and offices for meetings each month. The Council Chambers in Dubbo were moved to create a new accessible Council Chamber on the lower floor of the Council Administration Building. Not only did this create greater access to Council meetings for the community, the chambers are now part of a multi-purpose suite of rooms, allowing staff to utilise the space as meeting rooms when not in use as the Chamber. The former Chamber area will be repurposed into staff working areas. Council also undertook an accessibility trial to investigate opportunity to improve website accesibility compliance. Following this trial, four websites have implemented the accesibility widget.

Internally an Inclusion, Diversity and Belonging committee and charter were endorsed with the committee established and regular meetings held.

Connection with Community:

A referendum at the 2021 Local Covernment Election saw the wards abolished and it was decided 11 councillors would be elected at the 2024 elections.

Council took a leadership role in the Federal Government's 2023 Referendum, providing a Q and A event highlighting both sides of the argument, and providing key information for the community, allowing them to determine which way they would cast their vote.

Financial Considerations:

During the past term Council undertook a review of its long term financial plan as well as worked with AEC Group on a Financial Sustainability Review.

These bodies of work highlighted the financial pressures faced by Council, while also drawing further attention to the increasing pressures of the cost of living.

Council remains committed to finding service efficiencies but is also not immune to rising costs, cost shifting from other levels of government as well as varying economic and market challenges.

Indicators

Legend ; Community Insights Survey 2024 results

Level of community satisfaction with the visibility and involvement of elected officials within the community



Level of community satisfaction with Council's provision of information



↑Increase ↓Decrease (compared to 2022 survey)

Level of community satisfaction with Council's engagement with the community



Level of community satisfaction with Council being a wellrun and managed Council



Theme 5. Liveability

We are a diverse, vibrant, safe and healthy region that includes a variety of public spaces and amenities

Our strategies

5.1: The health and safety of the community is improved

5.1.1: Effective medical services and facilities are available

5.1.2: The needs of older people and people with a disability are monitored to ensure appropriate services and facilities are available

5.1.3: There is an appropriate level of policing in our region

5.2: Our First Nations communities and cultures are celebrated and enhanced

5.2.1: The health, education and socio-economic status of our First Nations communities is improved

5.2.2: The culture of our First Nations communities is recognised and celebrated

5.2.3: Items, areas and places of First Nations cultural heritage significance are protected and conserved

5.3: The lifestyle and social needs of the community are supported

5.3.1: The social services requirements of our community are identified and met

5.3.2: A variety of youth activities and entertainment is available

5.3.3: People have access to a range of burial and interment options

5.3.4: Our community values domestic, companion and other animals

5.4: Our community has access to a full range of educational opportunities

5.4.1: Access to a variety of high quality education facilities, opportunities and choice is available

5.4.2: Childhood, pre-school and after hours care meets the needs of the community

5.4.3: Access to a high standard of library services and facilities is available

5.5: Our community has access to a diverse range of recreational opportunities

5.5.1: Passive and active open space is located to maximise access and use by the community

5.5.2: Unique recreation and open space facilities are available

5.5.3: Our sporting facilities cater for a wide range of events and opportunities

5.6: The diversity of our heritage, cultural services and facilities are maintained and promoted

5.6.1: Our community participates in and celebrates the high quality of cultural services and facilities available

5.6.2: Culturally and linguistically diverse peoples' culture and heritage is celebrated

5.6.3: Items of heritage significance are protected, conserved and adapted for re-use where appropriate

Why it's important

The quality of life our community enjoys comprises of a number of interconnect components.

During the Community Insights Survey 2024 87 per cent of respondents rated their quality of life living in the Dubbo Region LGA as 'good' to 'excellent'.

The rural aspect, country living, and open spaces were rated as the most valuable aspects of living in the Dubbo LGA, while the quality and variety of services, facilities and infrastructure and the sense of community were also rated highly.

Over the next decade, the following areas were deemed the priority, addressing crime and safety issues; road, traffic and infrastructure; and services and facilities to cater for growth.

Our quality of life and the liveability of the community is underpinned by key elements that include access to health care, education, public health and safety, recreation and an understanding of our past in terms of Aboriginal and European heritage.

Council has a community leadership role in ensuring our population is provided with services and facilities in line with those provided in other areas, however, it should also be recognised that while these services add to the liveability of the area, Council's role in some areas is to advocate for the community to governments and other service providers.

Crime and safety are viewed by our community as a high priority for addressing. Council's work on the Community Safety and Crime Prevention Plan will outline Council's role in various areas, as all levels of government work to address the issues of crime across the region.

Our community has access to a unique range of arts and cultural facilities and parks and recreation facilities providing opportunity for our community that is unparalled in regional NSW.

Council's progress

Grants for community organisations and events:

Council coordinated and administered grants to provide assistance to local community organisations, not-for-profit organisations, sporting groups and businesses that make a difference in their local area.

These grants and assistance programs aim to:

- Support community organisations with financial support for projects that deliver social or environmental outcomes to the Dubbo Regional Local Government Area to help create, enhance or build community well-being and amenity.
- Provide financial assistance to locally organised events that deliver social and cultural benefits, creating social connections and improving the liveability and well-being of our residents.
- Support events that help elevate the Dubbo Region as a destination for events and assist in driving visitation and delivering significant economic benefits.
- Assist in the development of arts and culture in the Local Government Area.
- Support conservation works for owners of properties listed as a heritage item in the Dubbo Regional Local Environmental Plan 2022.

Activities and entertainment:

During the past term Council has hosted or facilitated a number of different activities and entertainment to cater for the varied interests in our community.

In 2022, Council welcomed the Rabbitohs and Canberra Raiders to Apex Oval as part of the NRL season, with a second sell-out crowd as the state opened following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Following State Government grant funding Council hosted the interactive public art installation Sky Castle by ENESS which saw over 24,000 people visit the site during the duration of the events.

Alongside Seattle and Athens, Dubbo also hosted the Aerial Fire firefighting Asia Pacific Conference in 2023, with Tangent Link announcing the return of the conference to Dubbo in 2025.

Upgrades to playgrounds and sporting facilities:

A number of parks and recreation areas have been upgraded with the Victoria Park play space moved on the site while the former area was reconfigured to become a dedicated fitness zone.

State Government funding assisted with upgrades to the Nita McGrath Netball Courts, lighting for John McGrath Ovals, a refurbishment of the Victoria Number One Oval Grandstand and an upgrade to a section of the Tracker Riley Shared Pathway.

Council adopted the Macquarie River Corridor North and South Precinct Masterplan with works in that area to be guided by the master plan.

Cultural facilities and awareness:

Twenty years since the first sod was turned on Dubbo's Shoyoen Japanese Gardens a birthday celebration was held with hundreds of people enjoying live music, tea ceremonies and cultural performances.

The \$14.4 million Wiradjuri Tourism Centre was granted approval with works on the building expected to start in 2025.

The Public Art Strategy was endorsed and placed in action with further funding being sought, while the first exhibiting artist for the HomeGround Regional artist program was displayed at the Western Plains Cultural Centre.

From cradle to grave:

The importance of Council's services catering for all ages is highlighted by our commitment to these services. Rainbow Cottage Daycare Centre celebrated 30 years as a childcare centre under Council's leadership, while the Macquarie Regional Library introduced the 1000 books before school program to promote the importance of early literacy.

Council's Cemeteries Improvement Plan is also underway, with the launch of a new platform on DRC&ME allowing residents and funeral directors access to a wide range of services including applications, internment bookings and plot reservations.

Disability improvements:

The current 2022-2025 Disability Inclusion Action Plan is up for renewal next year. Council will undertake an engagement process before the development of a 2025 -2028 is undertaken and presented to Council. The plan will continue to assist in the removal of barriers so that people living with a disability have a better opportunity to live a meaningful life and enjoy the full benefits of our community.

Indicators

Legend ; Community Insights Survey 2024 results

↑Increase ↓Decrease (comp

e (compared to 2022 survey)

Level of community satisfaction
with sporting groundsLevel of community satisfaction
with event support within the
communityCommunity satisfaction
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Convention CentreImage: Community of the community satisfaction
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Level of Community satisfaction with Macquarie Regional Libraries (Dubbo and Wellington)



Level of community satisfaction with Arts & Cultural services & programs



Theme 6. Environmental sustainability

We have a healthy natural environment that is resilient to the impacts of climate change and natural hazards

Our strategies

6.1: We achieve net zero emissions

6.1.1: Investment in renewable energy opportunities are encouraged and supported

6.1.2: Council buildings and facilities are energy efficient, carbon neutral and utilise renewable energy sources

6.1.3: Alternative modes of transport are available

6.1.4: Existing and new development is sustainable, has sufficient greenspace and efficiently uses resources

6.2: We recognise, plan for and respond to the impacts of climate change

6.2.1: The impacts of climate change are identified and addressed through collaboration with our community and government

6.2.2: Water supply is provided efficiently and sustainably to our community

6.2.3: Waste management processes reduce our environmental footprint and impact on the environment

6.3: Land use management sustains and improves the built and natural environment

6.3.1: The quality of the Macquarie, Talbragar and Bell river corridors are managed and enhanced

6.3.2: Stormwater discharge into receiving waters is limited

6.3.3: Endangered ecological communities, threatened species, habitats and environmental assets are protected

6.4: We plan for and mitigate the impacts of natural events and disasters

6.4.1: People and property are protected from fire-related incidents

6.4.2: Development does not place the community at risk from flood impacts

6.4.3: Local emergency management organisations and local State Emergency Services are capable of responding to emergencies

Why it's important

The climate in Australia is changing with many extreme weather events observed since the 1950s. The weather events of the past five to 10 years in the region have included severe drought to devastating floods. The management of fire, flood and drought risks are mitigated through comprehensive planning which allows emergency services and relevant government agencies to respond to these events collaboratively.

The LGA has one of the highest take-up rates for solar energy provisions in Australia. The CSP recognises that the community, businesses and industry understand the financial and environment benefits of renewable energy and the role it can play in a sustainable future.

Council acknowledges the impacts climate change is playing on the region and is committed to environmental sustainability by prioritising investment in renewable energy and aiming for energy efficiency and carbon neutrality.

The development of sustainable communities with adequate greenspace, efficient water supply ad waste management system reduces environment impact.

The health of the Bell, Macquarie and Talbragar Rivers is important for the health of the natural environment in the region. The continued conservation of the natural environment and the further education of the community in the importance of environmental issues will ensure we sustainably manage the environment for future generations.



Council's progress

Drought and water supply management:

Proactive planning for drought management in the future is a focus with Council partnering with Narromine Shire Council to create a drought resilience plan that works on a regional scale, considering drought resilience beyond water security and including environmental and social resilience needs.

With a focus on the future Council has also constructed new bores and associated pipelines in Wellington and Geurie. The Macquarie River Pump Station project works also continue and upon completion this will allow the Geurie Water Treatment Plant to operate on both river water, bore water or a mix of both.

Council launched the Water Portal app which allows residents to monitor and manage their water consumption via their mobile device.

Diversion of waste:

Reducing Council's environmental footprint and diverting waste from landfill is a priority, with Council working closely with Mid-Western Regional Council and Narromine Shire Council on educating the community on this important topic. Together with these groups, Council took part in the Scrap Together FOGO Education Campaign, helping educate the community on the importance of the FOGO service.

A polystyrene recycling program was trialed and put into action full time as well as a textile recycling program, which has seen positive results for the community.

A first-of-its-kind solar panel recycling program was also established, providing second hand solar panels a new lease on life. There are more than 2.8 million small-scale solar systems installed Australia-wide and Dubbo is the second largest installer of small-scale solar systems in NSW, with current predictions showing by 2025 there will be between 3,000 and 10,000 tonnes of solar panel going to landfill per year.

Reduction in emissions:

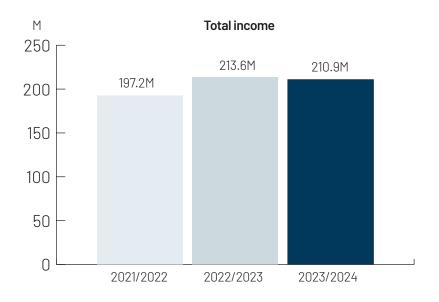
Council resolves to achieve net zero emissions through several portals including alternative modes of transport. In December 2022, Councillors adopted the Zero Emissions Fleet Strategy and Implementation Plan, designed to support and guide Council in reducing greenhouse gas emissions associated with its fleet operations. Since the adoption a number of electronic vehicles, including a lawn mower have been purchased in line with asset renewal.

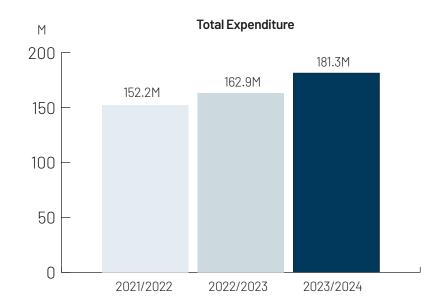
Four new public electric vehicle charging stations were also installed in Wellington, two at Wellington Library and two at Wellington Caves, adding to the growing EV charging network across the Dubbo region.

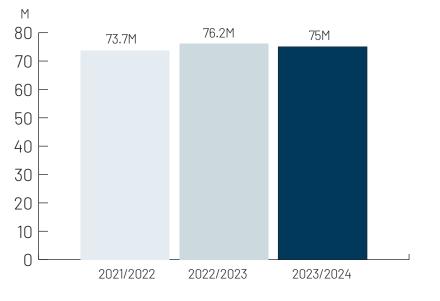
Indicators

Legend ; Community Insights Survey 2024 results	↑Increase ↓Decrease (compared to 2022 survey)
Level of community satisfaction with Environmental education and awareness	Level of community satisfaction with waste and recycling initiatives
3.36 t	کری 3.69

Financial performance







Total capital works program expenditure

Challenges faced by Council

The start of the 2021/2022 financial year saw the final stage of COVID-19 lockdown living, with NSW working to reach a vaccination goal that would re-open the state for travel. Council worked closely with other departments to ensure messaging and availability of vaccinations for the community with clinics and testing stations conducted in the city, towns and villages.

The pandemic affected Council's established revenue streams, creating a real 'pinch' to the bottom line of Council's overall budget with an expectation that it was to worsen short term.

This downturn was then followed by some of the worst flooding the Dubbo Region has experienced with the natural disaster causing large amounts of damage across the region.

Proposed works post COVID-19 were once again put on hold as Council moved from crisis mode to clean up following the natural disaster.

Recovery funding assisted as assets were repaired across the region. Two years later works are still occurring in some areas to rectify damages caused by the floods.

As a result of these disasters financial sustainability has also been an important measure across the past term.

Long term financial sustainability is a key challenge for Council with an increased demand for services beyond what has traditionally been provided to the community, cost shifting from other levels of government and aging infrastructure.

Recommendations to the incoming Council

The incoming Council will need to review the existing CSP before 30 June 2025 and either endorse the existing plan, endorse amendments to the existing plan, or develop and endorse a new plan.

It is noted that the CSP was last updated and reviewed in 2022. During the review a sixth theme of Environmental Sustainability was added to ensure Council's need to address the risks of climate change were highlighted following community recommendations.

Should Council plan to amend the existing or develop and endorse a new plan there will need to be proactive engagement with the community as the CSP seeks to give emphasis to community-led strategy development rather than Council-led.

The CSP provides mutual benefits for Council, Government agencies, non-Government agencies and community groups in working together to deliver services for the community. To work effectively, it is important to build on established relationships and utilise existing forums to identify common goals and strategic partnerships.

An important part of gathering information is to look at existing and proposed plans, strategies and other sources of information to see what has been highlighted before and what is planned for the future.



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