

# 2018/19 Annual Report

# Balranald Shire Council



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# Balranald Shire Council's 2018/19 Annual Report

This annual report has been compiled to outline council's achievements for the 2018/19 financial year, as well as provide a detailed financial analysis on Council's operations. The annual report not only reports on what Council has done during the financial year, but also takes the opportunity to acknowledge the good work done for the community.

The annual report highlights the diversity of services Council provides to the community and how these services were achieved with the resources available to Council.

This annual report also presents how Council met its statutory requirements, as required by various Acts.

## Annual Report – Summary

The annual report focuses on:

- An overview of who we are;
- how the achievements occurred against Council's commitments, as outlined in the Community Strategic Plan;
- Measurement against expected results;
- how Council met its statutory reporting requirements; and,
- Council's overall financial performance.

## Acknowledgement to Country

Balranald Shire Council acknowledges the Mutthi Mutthi, Paakantyi and Ngiampa People, the traditional owners and custodians of the lands in our Region, and we pay respect to the Elders – past, present and emerging.

## Further Information

Hard copies of this annual report are available at the Balranald Shire Council, 70 Market Street Balranald, during business hours.

Electronic copies are also available on our website. To request a copy, email or phone our Customer Service Centre using the details below:

WEB: [www.balranald.nsw.gov.au](http://www.balranald.nsw.gov.au)  
EMAIL: [council@balranald.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@balranald.nsw.gov.au)  
PHONE: (03) 5020 1300



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# Mayors Foreword 2018/19



Balranald Shire Council Mayor,  
Cr Alan Purtill

It is my pleasure to present the Balranald Shire Council 2018/19 Annual Report.

Balranald Shire was very fortunate to commence the 2018/2019 year with a ceremony dedicated to a former Town and Shire Clerk, Norma Male. Norma's family donated her certificates, medals and memorabilia, which are proudly on display in the foyer of the office. Norma was Town Clerk from 1944-1956 and Shire Clerk 1957-1974 at Balranald Shire. Norma had a massive impact to Balranald Shire and Community.

Council staff have been extremely busy completing a number of capital works projects to improve our assets including:

- Formation and construction of MR 67, giving a complete sealed road between Ivanhoe and Balranald.
- Construction works on MR514 (Oxley Road) to achieve an all-weather road.
- Upgraded the existing truck-wash facilities to cater for road trains, including lighting for 24 hour access.
- Developed a working party with Sporting Clubs in Balranald to enable improvements to be conducted on the Balranald Swimming Pool and Balranald Football/Netball Club rooms through grant funding.
- Maintenance works on Ivanhoe – Mildura Roads with drought-related funding.
- Several maintenance grading on our unsealed roads to ensure safety of road users.
- Maintaining our water quality during the blue-green algal bloom to ensure safe filtered water for the residents.
- Installed new valves and maintenance works with Balranald Water Network.
- Upgraded Euston Sewerage Pumps.
- Construction of footpaths in Euston

We have been successful in receiving a grant of \$4.68 million for the construction of a 15-bed High Dependency Unit at Bidgee Haven Hostel.

Council also joined the newly established Far West Joint Organisation which consists of members from Balranald, Wentworth Central Darling Shire Councils and Broken Hill City Council.

During the year, Council formed a Youth Council consisting of members from Balranald Central and St Joseph's schools to enable the voices of our young people to be heard.

Finally, I would like to say that although Office of Local Government served a notice of public inquiry on Council in January 2019, the Council, staff and community will continue to work together to keep our Shire moving forward, to ensure that we can all share in a more resilient future despite the continual changes forced upon us.

I trust the 2018/19 Annual Report will provide you valuable information on the operations and management of your community.

- Alan Purtill



# About Balranald Shire Council

Balranald Shire Council (BSC) is located in the south western district of NSW, approximately 850km south west from Sydney and 450km north of Melbourne. It covers an area of 21,699 square kilometres, making it the fifth largest Shire in the State. The main townships are Balranald (population 1,200) and Euston (population 600), located on the banks of the Murrumbidgee and Murray Rivers respectively. Other localities in the Shire include Kyalite, Oxley, Penarie (Homebush), Hatfield and Clare. The total population of Balranald Shire is just under 2300 persons. Approximately 7 percent of the Shire's population is Indigenous.

The Balranald Shire is often described as 'a potential geographer's living classroom' (Toohey, 2010). It is the pivotal place of two great Australian landscapes: to the east the Riverine Plain and to the west the Murray Darling Depression. Their respective formation processes have created today's unique vegetation landscape.

Balranald Shire's waterscape is unique with 5 Rivers meandering and converging within and around the shire (the Murrumbidgee, Murray, Lachlan, Wakool & Edward rivers). This makes the area an ideal destination for fishing, camping, boating, canoeing, kayaking or just chilling on the banks.

Culturally, the Shire is rich in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous history. Mungo National Park, which is part of the world heritage listed Willandra Lakes region, is primarily located in the Balranald Shire and has world archaeological significance with evidence of human occupation dating back at least 50,000 years. South-western NSW was settled by Europeans from the late 1840's, and the Shire has important sites showcasing pastoral industry, inland port heritage and colonial built infrastructure.

The economy of the Balranald Shire Council is strongly connected to agriculture including grains (dryland and irrigated), sheep and cattle. However diversification has occurred to encompass horticulture, viticulture, organic agriculture, tree (fruit and nut), timber harvesting and tourism. The Sturt Highway provides the east west route for flow of goods, services and visitors to the Shire.



# Key Achievements

Some of the key achievements by Council during the 2018/19 financial year include:

- New seal of 11.2km and reseal program of 12.74km done on MR67, also known as Wooltrack Road;
- New seal of 3km done on MR514 Oxley Road;
- Completion of a new truck wash facility;
- Completion of sewer pond upgrade;
- Sealing of Cowper Street to Euston cemetery in Euston;
- Relining of 4.1km of sewer mains in Balranald;
- Grid replacement on the Wooranbara-Corrong Road and Mildura Ivanhoe Roads under Roads to Recovery funding;
- Completion of the 2016 flood repair program, which saw 12.1km of road reformed and drainage repaired as well;
- Euston consisting of footpath and roundabout to link to Central Business District area and completed sealing of Cowper Street to the cemetery;



Sealing of Cowper Street to Euston cemetery



Sealing of MR67 Wooltrack Road



New Balranald truck wash facility – Opening by The Hon. Adam Marshall, MP and Minister for Agriculture and Balranald Shire Council Mayor Alan Purtill

# Financial Results

A summary of Council's 2018/19 financial results is below. More detailed information can be found in the Financial Statements attachment at the end of the annual report.

	<b>2019 \$'000</b>	<b>2018 \$'000</b>
<b>Income Statement</b>		
Total income from continuing operations	18540	13,902
Total expenses from continuing operations	13,780	13,170
Operating result from continuing operations	4,760	732
<b>Net operating result for the year</b>	<b>4,760</b>	<b>732</b>
Operating result before grants and contributions provided for capital purposes	916	369
<b>Statement of Financial Position</b>		
Total current assets	12,644	10,092
Total current liabilities	(3,129)	(2,321)
Total non-current assets	145,464	142,407
Total non-current liabilities	(2,545)	(2,783)
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>152,434</b>	<b>147,395</b>
<b>Other Financial Information</b>		
Unrestricted current ratio (times)	3.78	4.06
Operating performance ratio (%)	(3.35%)	(5.95%)
Debt service cover ratio (times)	11.45	7.23
Rates and annual charges outstanding ratio (%)	5.89%	4.60%
Infrastructure renewals ratio (%)	83.24%	97.91%
Own source operating revenue ratio (%)	34.90%	39.82%
Cash expense cover ratio (months)	11.94	11.03

Council total cash and investments as at 30 June 2019 was \$9,846 million. This total is then broken down into external and internal reserves.

<b>Reserve Description</b>	<b>2019 \$'000</b>
External Reserves	4,091
Internal Reserves	5,075
Unrestricted	680
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,846</b>

Some of the detailed reserves are as follows. For a full listing, please refer to the Financial Statements attachment:

<b>Reserve Description</b>	<b>Reserve Type</b>	<b>2019 \$'000</b>
Water Supplies	External	1,531
Sewerage Services	External	748
Waste Management Services	External	400
Unspent Grants Funding	External	1,362
Financial Assistance Grant	Internal	2,092
Future Development Fund	Internal	750
Plant Replacement	Internal	467
Caravan Park	Internal	248



# Balranald Shire Councillors

Balranald Shire Council is represented by eight members consisting of the Mayor and seven councillors. All councillors are elected on a four year term and are elected by voters from the Balranald Shire.

Council had eleven ordinary meetings and four extraordinary meetings for the 2018/19 financial year. Meetings are generally held at the Council Chambers, at 70 Market Street Balranald, every third Tuesday of the month. Council meetings are open to the public, except in circumstances where matters require confidentiality due to legal/ commercial in confidence matters. Business papers are made available on Council's website at <http://www.balranald.nsw.gov.au/council-documents/council-agenda/>



Mayor – Cr Alan Purtill



Deputy Mayor – Cr Leigh Byron



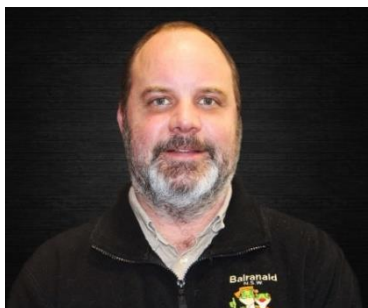
Cr Stephen O'Halloran



Cr Jeff Mannix



Cr Jo Roberts



Cr German Urgate



Cr Doug Allen



Cr Trevor Jolliffe

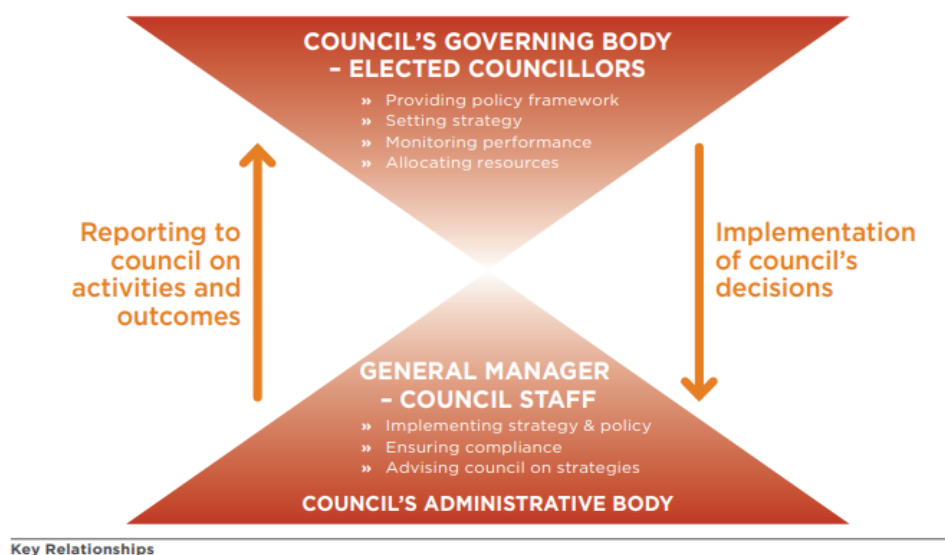
The Local Government Act 1993 prescribes the collective role of a council's governing body as follows:

- » to direct and control the affairs of the council in accordance with the Act
- » to provide effective civic leadership to the local community
- » to ensure as far as possible the financial sustainability of the council
- » to ensure as far as possible that the council acts in accordance with the principles for local government (as described above) and the plans, programs, strategies and policies of the council
- » to develop and endorse the community strategic plan, delivery program and other strategic plans, programs, strategies and policies of the council
- » to determine and adopt a rating and revenue policy and operational plans that support the optimal

allocation of the council's resources to implement the strategic plans (including the community strategic plan) of the council and for the benefit of the local area

- » to keep under review the performance of the council, including service delivery » to make decisions necessary for the proper exercise of the council's regulatory functions
- » to determine the process for appointment of the general manager by the council and to monitor the general manager's performance
- » to determine the senior staff positions within the organisation structure of the council
- » to consult regularly with community organisations and other key stakeholders and keep them informed of the council's decisions and activities
- » to be responsible for ensuring that the council acts honestly, efficiently and appropriately.

The role of councillors is best summarised in the following diagram:



Source: [https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2016%20Councillor%20Handbook%20-%20FINAL\\_0\\_0.pdf](https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2016%20Councillor%20Handbook%20-%20FINAL_0_0.pdf)

The Mayor and Councillors are paid an annual fee within the guidelines set by the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal. All Councillors are paid for expenses incurred in discharging their functions and responsibilities. The Mayor's Fee for 2018-19 was \$25,881 plus a Councillor Fee of \$11,859. The Councillor Fee for 2018-19 was \$11,859 for each Councillor.

Payments paid to Councillors have been in accordance with Council's Payment of Expenses & Provisions for Mayor & Councillors Policy. This can be viewed on Council's website.

Expense Category	Amount \$
Mayoral telephone and communications	1,749
Provision of vehicle for mayoral duties	6,828
Mayoral and Councillor travel (Meeting Attendance)	4,689
Mayoral and Councillor travel (NSW - Outside Shire)	9,093
Mayoral and Councillor travel (Interstate)	2,639
Mayoral and Councillor travel (Overseas)	0
Conferences and seminars attendance	9,238
Training and skill development expenses	0
Expenses of any spouse, partner or other person who accompanied a Councillor	0
Expenses involved in the provision of care or an immediate family member of a Councillor	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>34,236</b>

# Committees of Council

Committees can be one of three types: Council committee, advisory committee or statutory committee. Council uses committees to deal with routine or one-off decisions which could take up valuable council time.

One way for Council to exercise its function is through the use of Council committees. Such Council committees are established under Section 355 of the *Local Government Act 1993* and these committees can be given the ability to make decisions on behalf of Council. All decisions made at a committee level need to be recommended to, and ratified by, Council at its monthly Council meeting.

Some committees also bring a particular expertise or set of skills to recommendations which Council doesn't have in-house. Advisory committees fit this role. The recommendations by an advisory committee are not binding on Council unless adopted by Council at its monthly meeting.

Finally, some committees are also created under another statutory legislation.

Committee Name	Frequency	Purpose	Members (Minimum Requirement)
<b>Council Committees</b>			
Audit & Risk Management Committee	Quarterly	TO provide independent assurance and assistance to Council on risk management, control, governance, performance and external accountability responsibilities	3 councillors 3 community members 2 Council staff
Economic Development & Grants Committee	Bi-Annually	To consider matters for economic development, promotion & grants in regards to major projects.	8 councillors 2 Council staff
Infrastructure & Development Committee	Bi-Annually	To consider matters related to the functional responsibilities of the Infrastructure and Development department of Council	8 councillors 3 Council staff
Caravan Park Committee	Bi-Monthly	To consider matters in regard to the maintenance, improvement and management of the Balranald Caravan Park	8 councillors 1 Council staff Caravan park manager (by invitation)
Crown Lands Trust Management Committee		To manage all Crown Lands in Balranald Shire Council	
<b>Statutory Committees</b>			
Traffic Committee	Monthly	Review the provision of traffic control facilities and measures on public roads within the Balranald Shire boundaries	8 councillors Police & RMS persons 1 Community member
Local Emergency Management		Responsible for the preparation and review of plans in relation to the prevention of, preparation of, response to and recovery from emergencies	

Advisory Committees			
Australia Day Committee	Annually	To discuss Australia Day program and select winners of the awards for each category	3 councillors 2 community members 2 Council staff
Balranald Beautification Committee	Monthly	To carry out authorised voluntary works in Council reserves	3 councillors 6 community members 1 Council staff
Balranald Retirement Hostel Committee	Bi-Monthly	To consider matters regarding the development of the Balranald retirement hostel	3 councillors 3 community members 2 Council staff
Balranald Tourism Committee	Monthly	To consider matters in tourism & promotion, maintenance, improvement & management of Council owned tourism facilities	3 councillors 6 community members 2 Council staff
Cultural Committee	Bi-Annually	To promote all aspects of the Arts	3 councillors 5 community members 1 Council staff
Euston Beautification and Tourism Committee	Monthly	To carry out authorised voluntary works in Council reserves	2 councillors 5 community members 1 Council staff
Community Safety Precinct Committee	Bi-Monthly	To provide our community with a forum to discuss strategies for reducing crime & improving safety	3 councillors Representatives from Police, schools, aboriginal land council & general community
Youth Council Committee		To provide opportunities for young people to achieve a sense of personal achievement and self-worth, and have an active positive role in the Balranald community	
Staff Consultative and Work Health & Safety Committee		To facilitate consultation and cooperation between Council and its employees in regards to Human Resources, training and work, health & safety in the workplace	



## Donations by Council

One way that Council supports and actively participates in the community is through its donations and contributions program. Each year, Council makes available to community groups the opportunity to apply for grants that can be used in programs that provide community benefit.

Donations and contributions can be either in the form of monetary, a waiver of fees or in-kind.

For 2018/19 year, Council approved the following donations and contributions:

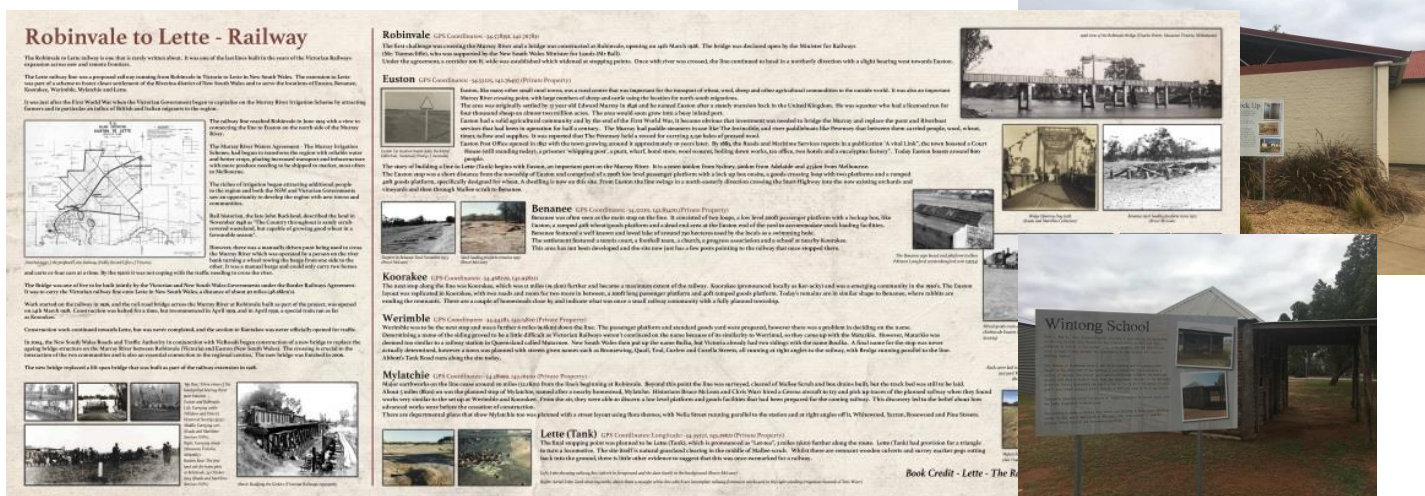
Organisation/ Community Group	Amount \$
Mallee Almond Blossum Festival	500
Euston P&C	630
Balranald Swimming & Triathlon Club	500
Balranald Early Learning Centre	500
Clare Public School	500
Murrumbidgee Classic Fishing	500
Balranald Central School	625
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School	1,441
Lodge Balranald No. 214	500
Balranald Men's Shed	500
Your Dream Program (Student Wellbeing)	7,000
VRA Rescue Squad	2,500
New's Year Eve Committee	3,500
Euston Robinvale Ski Race	2,000
Balranald Country Education Fund	5,000
Presbyterian Church	300
CanAssist	80
Balranald Community Arts & Crafts	4,990
Balranald Lions Club	1,020
<b>Total</b>	<b>38,149</b>
<b>In-Kind Donation</b>	
Balranald 5 River Outback Festival	3,235

# Tourism Report

Balranald Shire Councils efforts in continuing to improve visitor and residents experiences in 2018–2019 included investment in digital advertising and with collaboration between National Parks NSW, Destination Riverina Murray and Balranald Shire Council, we engaged with We Are Explorers to develop footage of our town and natural landscapes in the Balranald Shire.

Visitation numbers at the Visitor Information increased by 7% in 2018/19 which is a credit to the services and facilities that are provided by Council staff at the Discovery Centre.

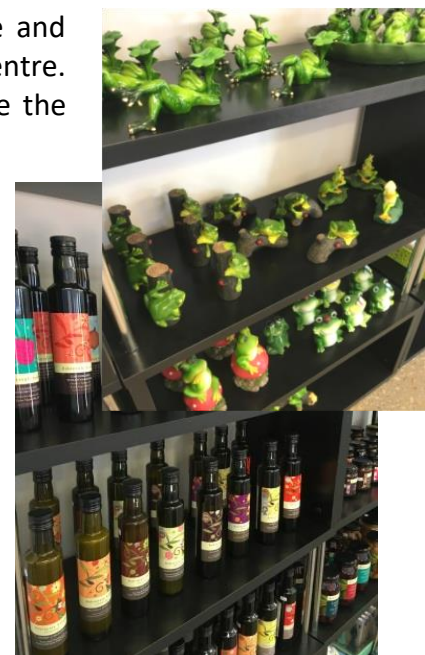
Heritage Near Me Grant funding was acquitted with the final product being storyboards of the buildings located on site at the Discovery Centre and commencement of stories around the Railway extension from Euston to Lette.



We continued to revisit the merchandise on sale at the Visitor Centre and made changes to the way we display the merchandise in the Visitor Centre. This enabled us to give better wheelchair access and more space inside the centre for people to generally wander around.

We hosted a Visual Merchandise Display network for the community, with a workshop in Council Chambers followed up by some one on one site visits in various locations throughout Balranald.

With the use of the knowledge gained, the retailers, including the visitor centre displayed their products to gain maximum exposure and turnover within their businesses, which included our Visitor Information Centre.



Balranald Visitor Information Centre Accreditation was renewed in February with a site visit from The Tourism Group. Ensuring the standards for the use of the italic i are retained, we completed our own self audit prior to the site visitation which identified that we did not display the italic i on the building. This was addressed during the visit and was immediately rectified with the building now displaying the Visitor Information Centre wording and logo on all three public facing sides of the building.



An invitation to Destination Riverina Murray Board to hold their monthly Board meeting in Balranald with the help of General Manager Richie Robinson; was accepted and we successfully hosted the group of 10 who had travelled from as far as Albury. We were able to include a visit to Yanga Homestead and a quick site seeing tour of Balranald, with support from German Ugarte of Outback Geo Adventures and Simone Carmichael and Joanne Pedler from National Parks New South Wales. At the end of their meeting, we provided a sneak preview of the work we had been doing with We Are Explorers, showcasing Balranald, Yanga National Park and Mungo National Park which gave them reason to return with their families in the future. This was the first time the majority of the group had visited and the first time Board meeting was held in Balranald.

Balranald Shire Council continued their support of many events that were held throughout the Shire in 2017/18. Some of these events included:

#### 5 Rivers Outback Festival

October saw the holding of the Balranald 5 Rivers Outback Festival held between 5<sup>th</sup> and 7th October, Balranald 5 Rivers Outback Festival brought the retail, community and tourism activities together with The Balranald Gallery kicking the event off with the Official Opening of the Festival with the BAL-ARCHIES Art Exhibition.

The 4WD Muster Outback Adventure headed out for a day in the outback before returning to The Big Bash at Greenham Park for some live music and great family entertainment.

Rounding out the weekend was a more live music at the Balranald Ex-service Club with some barefoot bowls.



The Inaugural Great Murray River Salami Festival was held in Euston where more than 100 entries were received and the judges 'enjoyed' taste testing salami from very early in the morning.





Other events held throughout the year and supported by Balranald Shire Council included:



Balranald Race Club Races  
Murrumbidgee Fishing Classic

Robinvale/Euston Ski Races

New Year's Eve Celebrations Balranald

St Joseph's School Fete

Australia Day Celebrations in Balranald and Euston

Easter Bunny in Balranald

National Parks New South Wales and Balranald Shire Council formed a strong relationship in 2018/19 which included the promotional product with We Are Explorers. We also commenced, under a Memorandum of Understanding, the sale and promotion of Yanga Homestead self-guided hand held guides, which gives our visitors the opportunity to visit the historical Homestead and provide a small income to the Visitor Centre.

New banners were supplied and installed in Market Street, showcasing Yanga Woolshed and the World Heritage Listed Mungo National Park.



Our joint promotional We Are Explorers Campaign initially targeted the 18 – 35 yo age group (in line with Destination New South Wales target) enticing them to experience what the outback has to offer. Filming took place over 3 days and captured experiences which included:

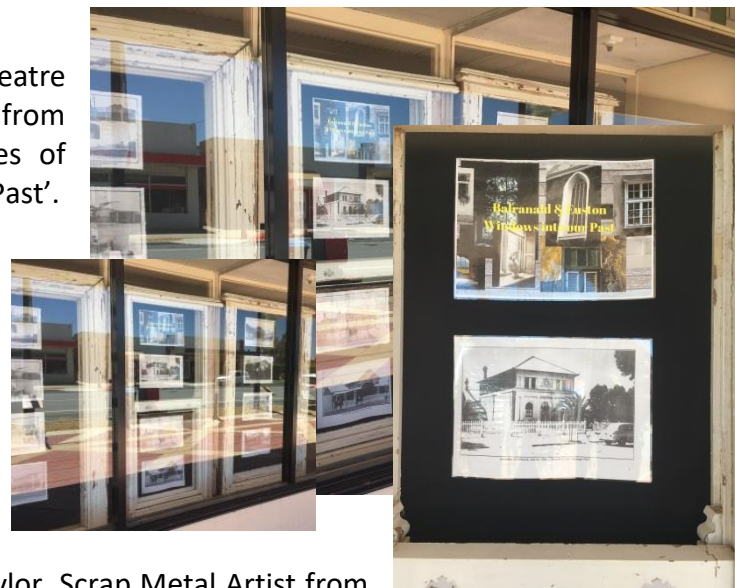
- Bike hire at the Balranald Visitor Information Centre
- Great food at the Balranald Discovery Centre Café
- Fishing in Balranald
- Kayaking on Yanga Lake
- Yanga Woolshed Tour
- Accommodation at Lake Paika
- Walls of China Tour with Discovery Staff at Mungo National Park





Our visitors were also provided with some insight into our history with copies of historical images collected from members of our community.

Using space in an empty space within the Royal Theatre complex and using some window and door frames from the Balranald Court House, we presented images of Balranald and Euston – labelled ‘Windows into our Past’.



Euston also had some additions to the existing public art on display in Medley Park. The Euston Beautification and Tourism engaged with Stuart Taylor, Scrap Metal Artist from Deniliquin, to construct a life size kangaroo which was installed along the pathway in the park.

The kangaroo cheekily hides behind a bush and is made up of many different types of tools that also has other animals and birds scattered through the area.

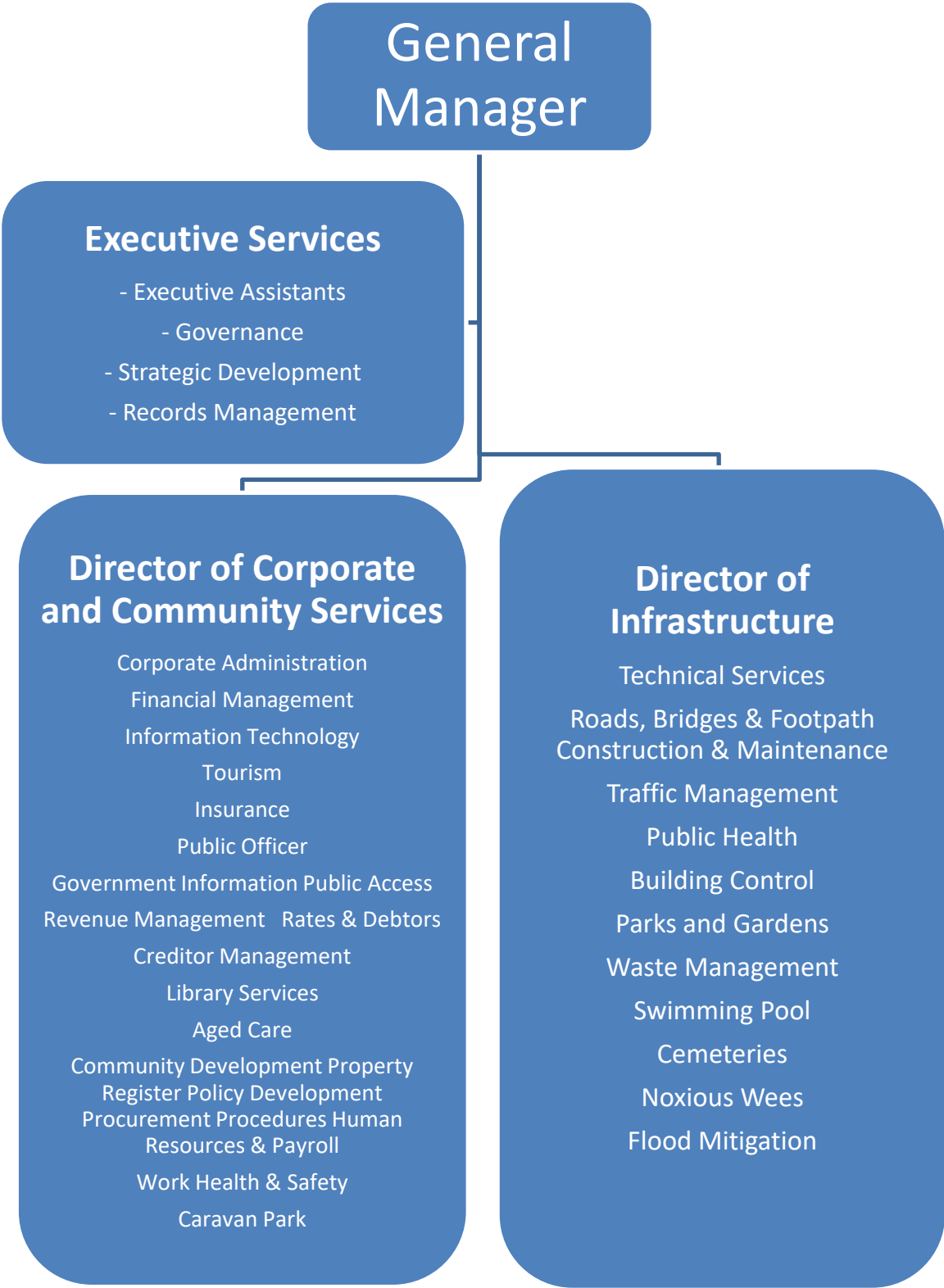


We look forward to continuing to provide services and experiences to the community and visitors in 2019/20.



# Council Organisation Structure

Council’s organisational structure is based on a two director function with an executive services department.



# Community Growth Forum

On the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> October 2018, across two nights, Council hosted its first Community Growth Forum.

Council invited representatives from industry, small business, emerging industries and most importantly OUR COMMUNITY to come along and participate in a Forum to:

- Collaborate and network – building relationships and awareness.
- Learn about present and future developments in our community
- Identify specific challenges and opportunities that are both cross-cutting and industry specific
- Develop strategies and prioritise actions to strengthen and grow current and emerging industries

Council was delighted with the turn out. Council registered more than one hundred attendees on the first evening and approximately two thirds of these people returned on day two. These participants played a pivotal role in shaping our Community's future – actively developing strategies to ensure that we have ***"Sustainable Communities and Vibrant Futures"***.

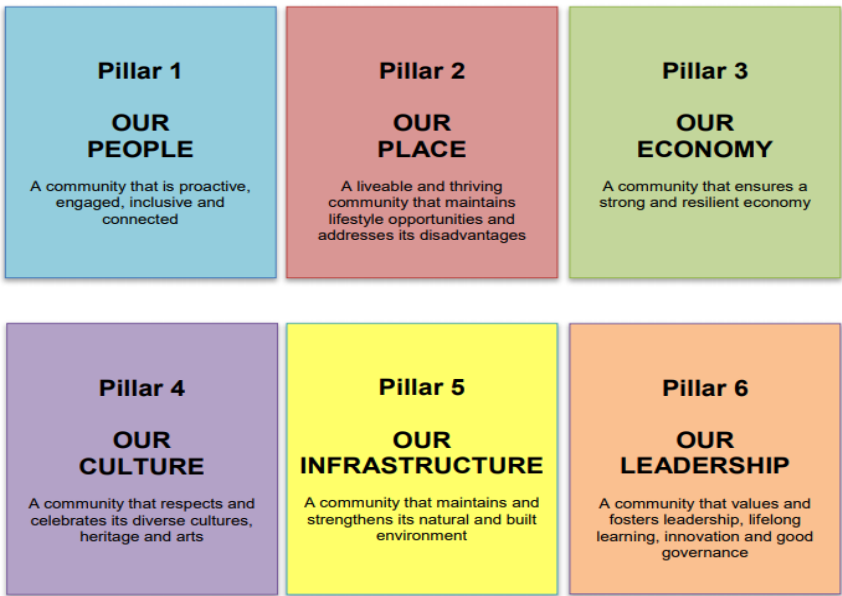
All the data recorded by attendees during workshops and discussions throughout the two days will be used to formulate a Regional Economic Development Strategy. This strategy drives real actions and real benefits for our Community on its growth journey into the future.

Council is proud of what was achieved over the duration of the event and would like to thank the all the groups and individuals who sponsored and/or presented during the 2 days.



# Council’s Community Strategic Plan

*Balranald Shire 2027, or CSP*, is not a plan, but a long term planning document for all stakeholders with an interest in the future of the Balranald Shire and its community. The CSP document was adopted by Council in 2017 and proceeds to map out over a 10 year period the ways Council will achieve the ‘Six Pillars of Well Being’, namely:



Each pillar has community strategic objectives with which the Council aims to deliver on. The six pillars were developed after listening to the community. The community identified a number of values that were highly appreciated by the Community, namely:

<b>Social Inclusiveness</b> Valuing and respecting the contribution of all community members, regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnicity, cultural background or length of residency
<b>Partnership and Collaboration</b> All organisations committing to cooperate, collaborate and network to ensure maximum positive outcomes for the residents of the Shire
<b>Sense of Community</b> Retaining the unique sense of rural township, country feel heritage, safety, freedom and family/community connection
<b>Positive Mindset</b> Fostering community attitudes that embrace change, proactive ‘can do’ behaviours, optimism, hopefulness and the belief in the community being architects and builders of social and economic future
<b>Access and Equity</b> Providing all residents with adequate health, educational, learning, housing and recreational opportunities facilities and programs
<b>Asset and Opportunity Focus</b> Building upon local assets, capacities, creativity, diversity and existing initiatives; and facilitating opportunities and experiences that enable all residents to see and experience their communities as places of potential and opportunity
<b>Respect for the Environment and Sustainable Practices</b> Respecting the natural environment, cultures and heritage and ensuring that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs
<b>Celebration</b> Encouraging pride and time of celebration relating to the community’s heritage, uniqueness, cultures and achievements
<b>Transparency and Accountability</b> Ensuring all initiatives, programs and services have transparent performance monitoring, review and evaluation
<b>Business Excellence</b> Encouraging a strong, innovative, customer-focused, profitable and collaborative business environment



# Pillar 1: Our People

‘A community that is proactive, engaged, inclusive and connected’

Council strategic objectives are:

Create opportunities for community members to socialise and connect	Create and promote opportunities for community awareness and participation in the life of our community	Involve, support and prepare our young people with the skills and knowledge to fully engage with the community and achieve their potential
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Expand opportunities for social interaction.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Implement a welcome strategy;</li><li>- Encourage understanding, respect and tolerance between our diverse communities;</li><li>- Improve communications and information dissemination;</li><li>- Improve Council’s engagement with the community.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Develop and implement a youth strategy.</li></ul>

How was this pillar achieved in 2018/19?

- Council organised events such the Senior’s week luncheon and Australia Day. Council also provides support to various other events, such as Balranald Outback 5 Rivers festival, Murrumbidgee fishing classis and New Year’s Eve festivities;
- Continue to promote the Balranald Shire as a tourism destination with a major campaign undertaken called the ‘We Are Explorers’ in joint collaboration with National Parks NSW and Destination Riverina Murray;
- Re-implement a youth council to encourage Balranald Shire youth to run and participate local events, such as Youth Week;
- NAIDOC Day was held at Mungo National Park;
- Council continued to provide a community newsletter on a monthly basis and regular social media. Council also commenced a weekly radio segment on 3SH;
- Council held a community growth forum in October 2018 whereby representatives from industry, small business, emerging industries and the community came together to discuss challenges facing the Shire, as well as develop strategies to promote industry growth in the Shire;
- Council recommenced the Youth Council, which is designed to engage youth at a local level through events. The Youth Council is run by youth members with guidance and support

from Council;

- Council parks and gardens staff have worked with school students to teach them gardening and volunteering skills. The aim is to promote outdoor participation and pride within the community.

## Pillar 2: Our Place

### ‘A liveable and thriving community that maintains lifestyle opportunities and addresses its disadvantages’

Council strategic objectives are:

Promote our community as a lifestyle, work and business destination	Create opportunities to assist community members who are disadvantaged, or have a disability	Provide and promote a wide range of lifestyle opportunities and activities, facilities and the environment to provide safe and living communities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Prepare a population retention and attraction strategy;</li><li>- Promote opportunities from potential mining, horticultural and energy investments;</li><li>- Towns are safe and inviting for locals and visitors;</li><li>- Develop a series of communication mediums to promote the benefits of living and working in our community.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Identify groups within our community facing hardship and disadvantage;</li><li>- Plan for an ageing population;</li><li>- Develop a disability inclusion action plan.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Plan, construct and maintain recreational facilities;</li><li>- Create and/ or promote events.</li></ul>

How was this achieved in 2018/19?

- Council continue to see developments occurring in the Shire.
- Council was successful in obtaining a \$4.7 million grant to construct a new wing on the Bidgee Haven aged care hostel. Construction is to commence in the 2019/20 year and the new wing will provide a further \* rooms at the hostel for dementia residents.
- Newsletter and social media;
- Council actively promoted a visit from the Office of Environment and Heritage where the community was invited to come along and learn about how to manage their electricity usage.

# Pillar 3: Our Economy

## ‘A community that ensures a strong and resilient economy’

Council strategic objectives are:

Strengthen the capacity and opportunities for our local economy	Develop and promote our community as a desirable place to stop, shop and stay and experience the Outback and river environments of South Western NSW	Lobby and facilitate the community gaining its fair share from regional investment to ensure sustainable provision of appropriate social, cultural and physical infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Implement regular business networking and training initiatives;</li><li>- Promote use of enterprise creation and expansion schemes and funding sources;</li><li>- Joint community initiatives.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Formulate and implement a Balranald Shire Tourism and Marketing Strategy;</li><li>- Improve Heritage Park (Discovery Centre Precinct);</li><li>- Develop an eco-trail in the Euston Forest;</li><li>- Improve links between Balranald communities and Mungo and Yanga National Parks;</li><li>- Promote inclusion of Mungo Park in Australia’s Landscapes program;</li><li>- Implement physical improvements to Market Street.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Prepare an Economic Development strategy;</li><li>- Utilise the Trade Training Centre to enhance the range of local training programs;</li><li>- Instigate an Organics Centre of Excellence;</li><li>- Maximise regional development opportunities.</li></ul>

How was this achieved in 2018/19?

- Council supports BEC Connect, which brings workshops to Balranald. Those workshops included visual merchandise display and how to manage social media;
- Signage for Discovery Centre including goal, Wintong School and museum;
- Council continued to develop a positive relationship with National Parks in relation to Mungo and Yanga National Parks. Some of the work done include new banners promoting the parks, hand held guides for Yang Homestead and the implementation of the ‘We are Explorers’ campaign;
- Council commenced Market Street improvements. A total of \$1.8 million has been received in grant funding to revitalise the Market Street, or main road through Balranald. Works include footpaths, paving, street furniture, trees and redesign of Market Street layout;

# Pillar 4: Our Culture

‘A community that respects and celebrates its diverse cultures, heritage and arts’

Council strategic objectives are:

Promote opportunities to acknowledge and celebrate our diverse cultures, heritage, artistic expression, religions and faiths

- Identify, protect and interpret our significant heritage sites

How was this achieved in 2018/19?

- Mungo National park is a world listed heritage national park. Council has continued to work with NSW National Parks to promote and protect the park. The ‘We Are explorers’ campaign is an example of this joint inter-agency venture;
- Council continues to promote and sponsor the Bal- Archies. This is a yearly event where art works are display and judged;
- Council continues to be an active contributor to the South West Arts initiative.



Mungo National Park



# Pillar 5: Our Infrastructure

‘A community that maintains and strengthens its natural and built environment’

Council strategic objectives are:

To preserve and enhance our natural environments ensuring they remain sustainable, healthy and clean	Promote key health, community communications and infrastructure improvements	Plan, maintain and develop key transport, energy and community infrastructure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Continual focus on reducing our environmental footprint and being environmentally sustainable;</li><li>- Maintain healthy and clean river systems.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Extend mobile coverage especially in the Hatfield/ Claire areas and the National Parks;</li><li>- Prepare strategic plans for water and sewer supply;</li><li>- Prepare and implement plans and strategies in support of maintaining health standards in the Shire.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Identify and lobby for key transport and road infrastructure improvements;</li><li>- Provide for more and improved footpaths, bike paths and mobility scooter paved concrete paths;</li><li>- Identify potential access to new energy technologies and infrastructure;</li><li>- Create more tourism opportunities and offers with the existing aerodrome and other transport facilities;</li><li>- Provide community infrastructure.</li></ul>

How was this achieved in 2018/19?

- Council undertook new and renewal footpath works in the Euston and Balranald townships;
- Council undertook new sealing works on the MR67 Wooltrack road (11.2km) and MR514 Oxley road (3km);
- Council undertook 18.73km of re-seal works on regional, rural and local roads;
- New truck wash facility constructed;
- The sewer relining program in Balranald saw

# Pillar 6: Our Leadership

‘A community that values and fosters leadership, lifelong learning innovation and good governance’

Council strategic objectives are:

Promote strong leadership and governance that underpins a more strategic approach to community engagement, community and regional development and organisational sustainability	Strengthen collaboration and partnerships across all levels of government	Advocate on issues and opportunities to achieve our community aspirations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Establish a Leadership Development Network and Strategy.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Strengthen the Balranald Interagency Group;</li><li>- Seek collaborative approaches in both planning and delivery of community services.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Encourage community member participation in decision making;</li><li>- Ensure that Council is efficiently managed to provide civic leadership and good governance to meet all the future needs of our community.</li></ul>

How was this achieved in 2018/19?

- Council became a member of the Far West Joint Organisation. This group consists of 5 Councils and the aim is to promote development and inter-council in the regional through projects and sharing of services;
- Council invited representatives from industry, small business, emerging industries and most importantly OUR COMMUNITY to come along and participate in a Community Growth Forum to:
  - Collaborate and network – building relationships and awareness.
  - Learn about present and future developments in our community
  - Identify specific challenges and opportunities that are both cross-cutting and industry specific
  - Develop strategies and prioritise actions to strengthen and grow current and emerging industries

# Infrastructure Projects Completed

The table below shows the infrastructure capital projects Council has either completed or commenced during the 2018/19 financial year.

Project	Status	Cost \$
<b>Buildings</b>		
Balranald Rural Fire Service shed	Work in Progress *	24,973
Greenham Park multi-purpose hall	Work in Progress	1,794
	<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>26,767</b>
<b>Other Structures</b>		
Euston riverfront works	Completed	48,278
Euston parks wave medley seating	Completed	13,098
Euston cemetery access road sealed	Completed	29,670
Balranald truck wash facility	Completed	394,102
Tourism heritage activation works	Completed	44,251
Caravan park pool fencing	Completed	7,200
Balranald aerodrome fencing renewal	Completed	21,337
Balranald Market street revitalisation	Completed	36,836
Euston recreation reserve incl. netball courts	Work in Progress	2,122
Records Management storage container	Work in Progress	5,655
Our Rivers, Our Region project works	Work in Progress	4,749
	<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>607,298</b>
<b>Road Infrastructure</b>		
MR514 sealing works	Completed	320,696
Roads to Recovery works	Completed	310,526
MR67 Wooltrack sealing works	Completed	2,394,435
MR67 Wooltrack resealing works	Completed	501,445
MR67 heavy patching	Completed	46,191
Mildura-Ivanhoe road drought works	Completed	347,297
Balranald Island road	Completed	12,095
Balranald Market street revitalisation	Work in Progress	59,025
	<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>3,991,710</b>
<b>Footpaths</b>		
Balranald footpaths renewals	Completed	22,908
Euston footpaths new/ renewals	Completed	14,111
	<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>37,019</b>
<b>Water Supply</b>		
Raw water pumps renewals	Completed	21,031
Valves replacement	Completed	74,923
Water meter renewals	Completed	9,472
AC mains renewals	Completed	10,723
Water tower renewal	Work in Progress	805
Water treatment plant renewal	Work in Progress	7,500
	<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>124,454</b>

Project	Status	Cost \$
<b>Sewerage Services</b>		
Sewer relining	Completed	583,206
Sewer pond upgrade	Completed	129,059
Mains renewals	Completed	112,801
	<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>825,066</b>
<b>Swimming Pools</b>		
Janelle Masters swimming pool revitalisation	Work in Progress	<b>3,269</b>
<b>TOTAL INFRASTRUCTURE WORKS</b>		<b>5,615,583</b>

\* Balranald Rural Fire Service shed been funded by the local RFS Brigade. Council recognises RFS assets on the Council asset register



Balranald sewer pond works



MR76 Wooltrack road works





# Statutory Information



# Bidgee Haven Retirement Hostel

Council owns a fully accredited 15 bed aged care facility, the Bidgee Haven Retirement Hostel. In accordance with Carers Recognition Act 2010 (CR Act), s 8(2) Council meets all its obligations under the Carers Recognition Act.

The Council owned Aged Care Facility had a significant financial turnaround during the 2017/18 financial year with a profit of \$117,000 compared to a \$65,000 surplus in the previous year. This can be attributed to continued change in processes and a committed and dedicated Hostel Manager and staff.

The facility has been fully booked with Residents enjoying the homely environment, home style meals cooked for them and many activities. Special Events are celebrated involving Residents, their families, staff and other community members. Events celebrated this year included Christmas Day, an Australia Day celebration with a visit from the Australia Day Ambassador, Easter celebrations, Remembrance Day, Anzac Day, special authentic international dinners and many external excursions.

Council was successful in receiving a \$4.7 million grant to build a new dementia wing onto the current Bidgee Haven hostel. This project is expected to commence in the 2019/20 financial year.



## Contracts Awarded Greater than \$150,000

Details of each contract awarded by Council during the 2018/19 financial year are presented in the table below. Note that employment contracts are excluded.

An \* indicates that the value is indicative.

<b>Contract Description</b>	<b>Awarded To</b>	<b>Cost (Inc. GST) \$</b>
Balranald gravity sewer main relining and repair program	Interflow Pty Ltd	814,000
Supply, delivery and placement of sprayed bituminous surfacing	Primal Surfacing Pty Ltd	Schedule of rates

## Disability Inclusion Act 2014

In accordance with the Disability Inclusion Act 2014 section 13(1), Council endorsed its Disability Inclusion Action Plan in March 2017. The plan covers the period July 2017 to June 2019. The plan can be viewed on Council's website.

Balranald Shire Council embraces the inclusion of people with a disability in all aspects of community life. Less than One percent (1%) of the Balranald Shire population identify as needing assistance because of a disability.

Council, through community consultation, has identified the following areas where improvements to disability accessibility can be done:

- Placement of braille signs on toilets;
- Installation of automatic doors on toilets and some Council facilities;
- Improve the layout of the visitors information Centre to allow easier mobility;
- Lowering of counter tops at Council facilities where general public interact with staff;
- Improve and implement footpath and mobility scooter path access; and,
- Provide more disabled parking spots around the town.

## Equal Employment Opportunities

Code of Conduct training is delivered to all staff across the organisation. Council has the appropriate policies and procedures in place to govern our EEO management Plan. Council actively supports the principles and practices of Equal Employment Opportunity.

Our induction process and job advertisements adhere with our EEO policies.

## Functions Delegated to Other Organisations

Council didn't delegate any functions to other organisations for the 2018/19 financial year.

# Government Information Public Access (GIPA)

Council is required to prepare an annual report on activities undertaken during the financial year relevant to the Government Information (Public Access) Act, 2009 (GIPA).

Council GIPA reportable totals are as follows:

- Received 0 access application requests;
- Received 0 access application invalid requests;
- 0 applications reviewed under Part 5 of the Act; and,
- 0 applications transferred to other agencies.

Council makes available to the public all relevant policies, minutes of Council meetings, minutes of Committee meetings and any other documents where there is a public interest content, including the Community Strategic Plans, Operational Plans and Budget. This information is available on Councils website, and is also on display at Councils office. Documents to be adopted with a period of community consultation are displayed at Councils office, as well as at public venues (Balranald Library, Euston Post Office, Kyalite Hotel and Clare Public School) in the other population centres within the Shire area. These locations and times are advertised in local media sources to raise awareness within the community.

## Legal Proceedings

A summary of legal proceedings either commenced by, or commenced against, Council are summarised as follows. The figures show the total cost to council.

Description	Status at 30 June 2019	Cost to Council \$
<i>Debt recovery</i> Recovered as part of rates, water and debtors	Ongoing	3,234
<i>Caravan Park</i> Proceedings against park management	Ongoing	66,873
<i>Employment Matter</i> Employment dispute	Completed	7,960

## Planning Agreements

Council did not enter into any planning agreements for the 2018/19 financial year.

## Public Interest Disclosures

Council is required to have a Public Interest Disclosures Policy under section 6D of the Public Interest Disclosures Act, 1994 (the PID Act). Council's policy must have procedures for receiving, assessing and dealing with public interest disclosures, having regard for the Ombudsman's guidelines in



formulation of the policy for the purposes of the Act.

Our policy conforms to Council's Code of Conduct, Equal Employment Opportunity Policy, Workplace Harassment Policy and Workplace Grievance Procedure Policy.

The policy is accessible to all staff and the public via Council's website and is required to be reviewed every two years (the current version was adopted in February 2017).

Description	Number
Number of Public Officials who made PIDs	0
Number of PIDs received	0
Number of PIDs finalized	0

## Rates and Charges Written Off

Description	Postponed Rates	Conservation Agreement	Pensioner Rebates	Balance Write-Offs	Total
General Rates	0	0	34,121	3,227	<b>37,348</b>
Water Supplies	0	0	16,660	2,021	<b>18,681</b>
Water Supplies - Usage	0	0	0	890	<b>890</b>
Sewer Services	0	0	5,565	60	<b>5,625</b>
Extra Charges	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>56,346</b>	<b>6,198</b>	<b>62,544</b>

## Special Rate Variation

Balranald Shire Council (Balranald Council) applied for a multi-year special variation to:

- increase its general income by 10% for each year from 2018-19 to 2024-25, a cumulative increase of 94.87% over seven years, and
- retain this increase in its rate base permanently.

The SRV only applies to the General rate component of the annual rates notices – the increases under this SRV do not apply to the waste, water and sewer access charges. IPART's decision was as follows:

### 1.1 We have approved Balranald Council's application for a special variation

We decided to allow the special variation as requested.

Our decision means that Balranald Council may increase its general income between 2018-19 and 2024-25 by the annual percentages shown in Table 1.1. This will allow the council to fund operating and capital expenditure for its key assets, buildings and roads.<sup>2</sup>

The annual increases include the rate peg of 2.3% in 2018-19, and an assumed rate peg of 2.5% in future years. The cumulative increase that we have approved of 94.87% is 76.24% more than the assumed cumulative rate peg for these years. This increase may be retained in the council's general income base permanently.

Whilst the percentage increase is significant, Balranald Council's average residential rate at \$283 per year in 2017-18 is substantially lower than the average rates charged by neighbouring councils and its OLG Group 9 peers. Even with the proposed increase, Balranald Council's forecast average rate in 2024-25 (at \$552) is lower than neighbouring councils' current rates, and significantly below the NSW average rate (\$1,017 average in 2015-16). The council's average rate to income ratio in 2024-25 is forecast to be similar to its Group 9 peers.<sup>3</sup>

The IPART decision highlighted the fact that even with the SRV, Council's forecast average rate in 2024-25 of \$555 is lower than neighbouring council's current rates and significantly below the NSW state average. The additional funding generated for 2018/19 year from the SRV was \$134,852.

The additional funding raised through the SRV was allowed to be spent for the purposes of funding operating and capital expenditure for its key assets - buildings, roads, bridges and drainage networks, and improving its financial sustainability.

## General Managers Remuneration

The total remuneration comprised in the remuneration packaged of the General Manager during the year was \$259,991.

## Senior Staff Remuneration

The total remuneration package for Council's two senior staff for the year (excluding the General Manager position) is broken down in the following components:

It should be noted that the Director of Infrastructure Development position was vacant for the period 27<sup>th</sup> October 2018 to 20<sup>th</sup> January 2019.

Description	Total Remuneration \$
(i) The total of the values of the components of their packages	237,067
(ii) the total amount of any bonus payments, performance payments or other payments made to them that do not form part of the salary components of their packages	0
(iii) the total amount payable by the council by way of the employer's contribution or salary sacrifice to any superannuation scheme to which any of them may be a contributor	50,666
(iv) the total value of any non-cash benefits for which any of them may elect under the package	0
(v) the total amount payable by the council by way of fringe benefits tax for any such non-cash benefits	6,982
<b>Total</b>	<b>294,715</b>

## Work Carried Out on Private Land

Council undertakes private works. For 2018/19 financial year, the revenue generated from private works was \$94,491 Council is, under Section 67 of the *Local Government Act 1993*, is able to perform private works by agreement with the owner or occupier of any private land.

- Examples of works done during 2018/19 under Section 67 included: Water and sewer connections;
- Water and sewer maintenance;
- Driveway access construction.

## Swimming Pool Inspections

Under the *Swimming Pools Act 1992*, Council is required to make provision for the inspection, at least once every 3 years, of any swimming pool situated on premises on which there is tourist and visitor accommodation or more than 2 dwellings.

For 2018/19 financial year, Council undertook one (1) inspection. Of this number, one (1) was compliant.

## Stormwater Management Services

Council did not levy any stormwater levy for the 2018/19 financial year.

Expenditure on the stormwater infrastructure was as follows:

Stormwater Services	Cost \$
Repairs and Maintenance	2,520

## Companion Animals Management

Council employs Rangers who are primarily responsible for administering the Companion Animals Act 1998.

Only dogs are kept at the Council pound. For the 2018/19 financial year, pound statistics are:

Description	Number
Placed into the Pound by seize by Council ranger or owner surrender	20
Shown As:	
Return to Owners	10
Euthanised dogs	2
Sold/ Re-homed	1
Released to re-homing organisations	7

There were no dog attacks reported to Council for the 2018/19 financial year.

Funding spent by Council in 2018/19 totaled \$15,466 compared with 2017/18 \$5,778. Expenditure includes animal upkeep, repairs to the pound and ranger costs.

Council undertook education programs and strategies that focused pet desexing. This included displaying the pet desexing month posters (July), encouraging people to desex their pets when registering or enquiring about registering. Also, Council undertook distribution of companion animal desexing information via newsletter & posters.

There are no designated off-leash areas within the Balranald Shire Council local government area.

# Audited 2018/19 Financial Statements

Council's 2018/19 audited financial statements are provided as a separate attachment.