

# 2022 2023

## ANNUAL Report



**Narrandera**  
Shire Council



Welcome

**Nginyanhi Wiradjuri mayiny gawaymbanha nginyalgir Wiradjuri-gu  
Ngurambung-gu We the Narrungdera Wiradjuri people welcome  
you all to Wiradjuri Country**

## Acknowledgement

**Narrandera Shire acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the first Australians and recognises that they have a unique relationship with the land and water. Council recognises that we are situated on the traditional lands of the Narrungdera Clan, of the Wiradjuri Nation who have lived here for thousands of years. We offer our respect to their elders past and present and through them, to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.**





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*COVER PHOTO*  
*Destination and Discovery Hub*

# NARRANDERA SHIRE COUNCIL

## Annual Report to 30 June 2023

Section 1. The reporting

Section 2. The attachments

Appendix A Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009  
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Appendix B Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994 – Annual Report for the year ending 30 June 2023

Appendix C Modern Slavery Annual Report 2022-23

Appendix D Audited Financial Reports for 2022-23

Appendix E Update for the Disability Inclusion Action Plan  
2022-26 ending 30 June 2023

Appendix F Delivery Program 2022-26 Annual Report ending 30 June 2023

### ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

This document has been prepared in accordance with Sections 406 and 428 of the Local Government Act 1993 and also the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021. Other statutory and guideline documents include the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009, Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998, Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994, Carers' Recognition Act 2010, Disability Inclusion Act, 2014 and the Integrated Planning and Reporting Guidelines for local government in NSW issued September 2021 by the Office of Local Government.

This report is accessible for viewing and printing from Council's website, with each section available as a separate document. Please visit [www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au](http://www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au), select Council from the main menu and then select Council Reporting.

Copies are on public display at Council's Administration Centre located at 141 East Street, Narrandera and may be viewed between the hours of 9:00am and 4:30pm weekdays. Photocopy charges apply if any page or pages are requested to be copied.

### LOCATION OF COUNCIL'S ADMINISTRATION CENTRE



141 East Street

NARRANDERA NSW 2700



(02) 6959 5510



(02) 6959 1884



[council@narrandera.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@narrandera.nsw.gov.au)



[www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au](http://www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au)



<https://www.facebook.com/NarranderaShire/>



<https://www.instagram.com/narranderashirecouncil/>



<https://www.linkedin.com/company/narrandera-shire-council/>

### HOURS OF OPERATION OF COUNCIL'S ADMINISTRATION CENTRE

Enquiries	9.00am	-	4.30pm
Cashier	9.00am	-	4.00pm



# 2022-2023 COUNCILLORS ELECTED 4 DECEMBER 2021

*Term Ending September 2024*

Mayor  
Deputy Mayor

Cr Neville Kschenka  
Cr Cameron Lander

Councillors

Cr Jenny Clarke OAM JP  
Cr Peter Dawson  
Cr Tracey Lewis  
Cr Braden Lyons

Cr Kevin Morris  
Cr Narelle Payne  
Cr Sue Ruffles



**Councillor Neville Kschenka**



**Councillor Cameron Lander**



**Councillor Sue Ruffles**



**Councillor Peter Dawson**



**Councillor Tracey Lewis**



**Councillor Braden Lyons**



**Councillor Kevin Morris**



**Councillor Narelle Payne**



**Councillor Jenny Clarke OAM**



## Message from The Mayor

*Welcome to the 2022-23 annual report for Narrandera Shire Council. Let me firstly acknowledge the traditional owners of the land of Narrandera Shire, the Wiradjuri people, and I pay my respects to the Elders past, present and emerging.*

*In the 2021-22 Annual Report I reflected on how COVID-19 had affected our lives, but as a Council we continued to move forward by completing projects and starting new ones. As I write this report, some of the most visible projects include the Skywalk adjacent to the Lake Talbot Tourist Park, the Northbank Bridge across the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Canal and, of course, the new Narrandera Destination and Discovery Hub at Marie Bashir Park which is nearing completion. The Hub is an exciting project and will contain a dedicated area for visitor services, a permanent exhibition area where people can discover Narrandera Shire's nature-based and cultural stories in a contemporary space with interactive displays, improved access, public amenities and workspaces. The Hub will help establish Narrandera as a starting point for exploring many of the attractions and opportunities available in the Riverina.*

*Most of our projects would not be possible without the support of both the Federal and State Governments and I thank them for their continued commitment to our Shire and to regional Australia. Speaking of regional Australia, our rural communities have benefitted greatly over the past century through the advocacy and fundraising activities of the Country Women's Association of NSW (CWA). In August 2022, Cr Clarke represented Council at the Narrandera CWA Branch 100th birthday celebration and I was fortunate to be able attend the Barellan CWA Branch celebrations at the heritage-listed CWA Rest House.*

*Across the year I attended many workshops, conferences and individual meetings with service providers to our Shire. In particular, I held quarterly meetings with NSW Police about staffing matters, incidents and the possibility of planning for a new police station at Narrandera. The General Manager and I liaise closely with the Murrumbidgee Local Health District to both retain and enhance services to our Shire's residents; in particular I want to see dialysis services for Narrandera Shire residents.*



*Amongst the highlights of my year is attending school presentation ceremonies across the Shire. Although Council financially sponsors all schools and TAFE, I enjoy attending, for not only the recognition of academic achievement of students, but also to hear about the community achievements of individual students and how they go above and beyond their school tasks to help others. The Clontarf Academy invited the General Manager and me to their annual awards ceremony in December 2022 and I was really pleased to see these young men recognised for their achievements.*

*The latter half of 2022 saw major flooding along the Murrumbidgee River. Council once again assisted where it could to maintain essential services to residents of the Shire, with Council continuing to lobby for flood-free access to Gillenbah. Listening to our community is very important and, with fellow Councillors and senior staff, I attended the annual listening posts at Barellan, Grong Grong, Narrandera and Sandigo. These community sessions provide the ideal opportunity to meet with residents to find out about their concerns, what projects, repair works and road maintenance they would like to see undertaken. The events are also a useful forum for updating the community on current and future projects or other proposals. I take this opportunity to thank my fellow Councillors and also the employees of Narrandera Shire Council for their efforts, loyalty and support during the reporting year.*

*Councillor Neville Kschenka, Mayor*



## Message from **George Cowan, General Manager**

At 30 June 2023, Council completed another successful year having delivered a number of community projects, but Council's long term financial position is looking uncertain with ongoing rate-pegging at levels below actual cost. The combined effects of fair value accounting for assets, increasing compliance costs and increasing community expectations have taken their toll, however ways to create financial stability for the immediate future will be discussed by Council in coming months.

As a Council we eagerly await completion and fitout of the Narrandera Shire Destination and Discovery Hub which is planned to be opened in coming months. This exciting new centre replaces the now demolished Visitor Information Centre, creating a destination for visitors and encouraging them to stay and discover our natural features, our culture, our koalas, our art and our heritage features.

Along with the Mayor, we attended many workshops, conferences and held individual meetings with service providers to our Shire. In particular, I liaise closely with the Murrumbidgee Local Health District, our State Member and also the Minister for Health about retaining and enhancing services to our Shire residents. I will continue to lobby for dialysis services for Narrandera Shire residents. During the year, Council staff continued to focus on engaging with the community through our website, our Facebook page and through direct communication such as our newsletter, in person or by telephone.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Mayor and Councillors for their leadership during the reporting year, and to also thank the staff for their efforts and achievements across the year.

George Cowan, General Manager



# Narrandera

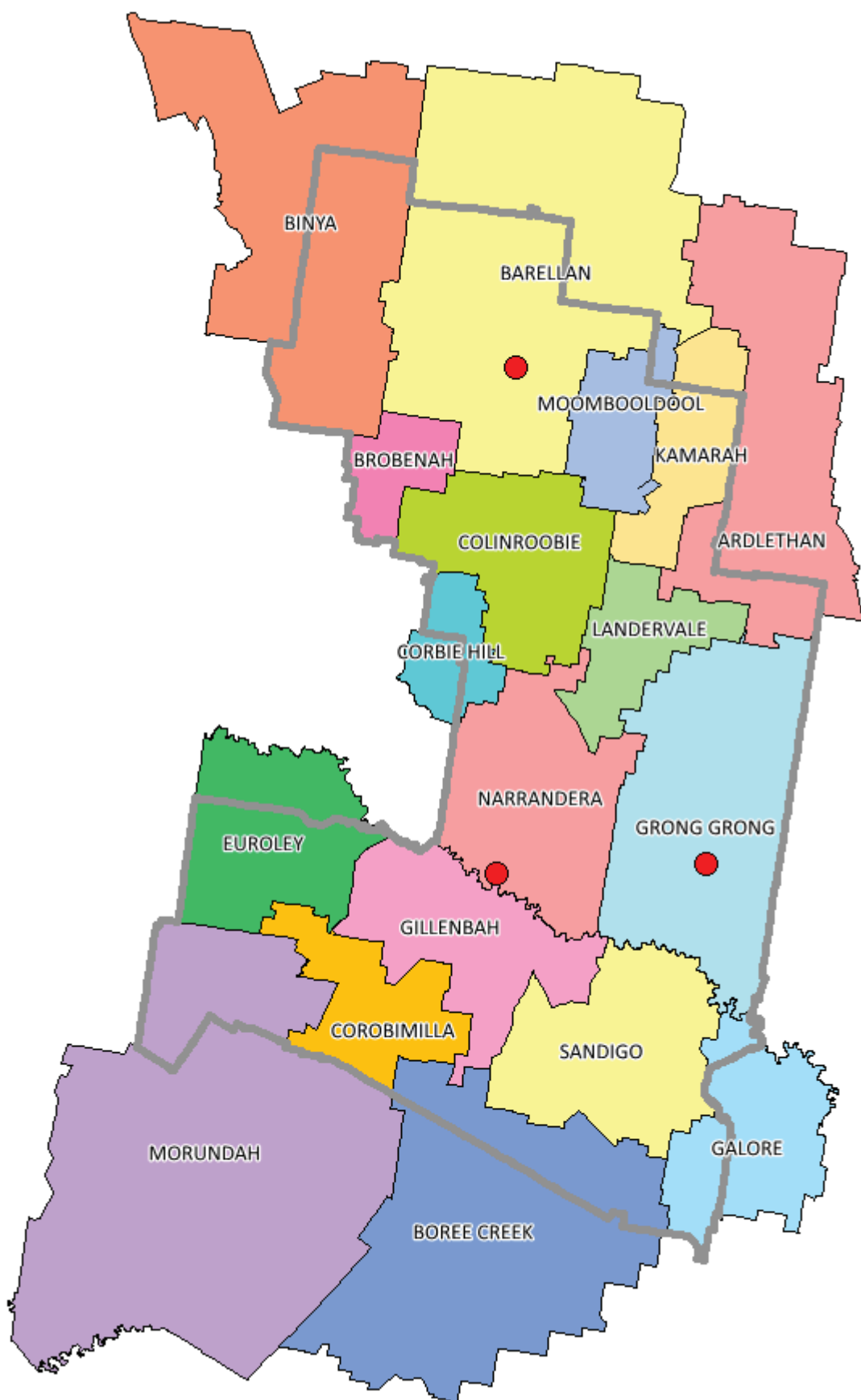
## Shire area

The Shire has an area of 4,117 square kilometres and provides for a population of 5,698 persons\*. The principal centres of population are Narrandera, Barellan and Grong Grong.

Narrandera Shire Council manages a broad range of general community services including Narrandera Community Transport, Narrandera-Leeton Airport, Narrandera Shire Library, Narrandera Visitor Information Centre, Narrandera Arts and Community Centre, as well as recreational facilities such as Narrandera's Lake Talbot Water Park and the Barellan War Memorial Swimming Pool.

Council controls amenities and services such as sporting fields, waste management and recycling services across the Shire, essential water supply and sewerage infrastructure for the town of Narrandera.

Council is also responsible for a number of environmental and public health services, like planning and development services, companion animals' control, and managing infrastructure including roads, bridges, cemeteries, open space parks and gardens, public amenities, skate park and picnic areas.



(\* source 2021 Census data supplied by the Australian Bureau of Statistics – 2021 Census All Persons QuickStats viewed 31 August, 2022 <https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/LGA15800> )



## Meetings

Council meetings are held on the third Tuesday of the month commencing at 2:00pm, with any approved public presentations made to Council from 1:30pm. The December meeting is traditionally brought forward to the second Wednesday of the month and there is often no meeting in the month of January. Council's website and social media channels confirm meeting details and any changes of date for the community.

Community members are encouraged to attend public meetings of the Council and livestreaming of Council meetings is available through Council's website and Facebook page.

Council conducts most of its business in an open forum. Exceptions are those matters deemed confidential in accordance with Section 10A of the Local Government Act, 1993, such as personnel matters, the personal hardship of any resident or ratepayer, commercial information of a confidential nature or alleged contravention of any code of conduct.

## 2022-2023 Management Team

General Manager

Deputy General Manager Corporate & Community Services

Deputy General Manager Infrastructure Services

Mr George Cowan

Mr Martin Hiscox

Mr Shane Wilson

*‘To preserve and enhance the lifestyle of our communities by encouraging, promoting and facilitating the sustainable development of the Shire.’*

Our vision

# Achieving Together

Our values

**Ethical**

Transparent and equitable in all our actions

**Caring**

Helpful, supportive and thoughtful towards each other and our community

**Loyalty**

Pride in our work and our organisation

**Accountability**

Responsible for our actions

**Integrity**

Trustworthy, honest and consistent

**Respect**

For each other and the role we play

**Safety**

To work safely to protect ourselves and the public.



## Section 1

# The Reporting

### OVERVIEW

Council either retained or adopted the following strategic documents in June 2022 for the 2022-23 reporting year:

- Community Strategic Plan 'Our Narrandera Shire' long term 2022-34
- Delivery Program – 4 year term 2022-26
- Operational Plan – 1 year term 2022-23
- Resourcing Strategy (including a Long-Term Financial Plan, an Asset Management Strategy, and a Workforce Plan)

The Community Strategic Plan titled Our Narrandera Shire 2034 and other supporting plans such as Our Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-26 can be found on Council's website or by selecting the following link – Council Plans.

### DEVELOPING AND REPORTING ON THE PLANS

The set of strategic documents was developed following extensive community consultation on what the community and Council determined were the priorities for the Shire. The priorities are contained within one or more of the five themes within the Plan and identify actions and measurable targets to be delivered.

A major element of Integrated Planning is that Council must report to the community on actions and progress to date within the Delivery Program. Narrandera Shire Council reports on these achievements every six months. These reports are also available for viewing or download from Council's website [www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au](http://www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au) or by selecting the following link Council Reporting.

Attached within Section 2 Appendix F are the 2022-26 Delivery Program comments as at 30 June 2023.

The Narrandera Shire Council Community Strategic Plan was developed to continue to build strong partnerships within our community as well as to celebrate what we have achieved. Our community and partners have been instrumental in helping to identify the strategic priorities, which are demonstrated in our five themes.

**1** Our Civic Leadership

**2** Our Community

**3** Our Economy

**4** Our Infrastructure

**5** Our Environment

Local Government in New South Wales is governed primarily by the Local Government Act 1993, and the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021, however there are many additional statutes that Council must also observe. A particular area where Council has taken a proactive approach over many years to ensure good governance is the establishment of an Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee. The Annual Report from the Committee for the 2022-23 reporting year is provided below and prepared by the Chairperson, Mr John Batchelor:

## **Audit, Risk & Improvement Committee Report – Year Ended 30 June 2023**

### **Introduction**

This report is made in accordance with the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee's (the Committee) Internal Audit Charter and covers the financial year ending 30th June 2023.

The Committee has a key role in the governance framework of Council by providing Council with independent oversight, objective assurance and monitoring of Council's audit processes, internal controls, external reporting, risk management activities, compliance with Council's policies and procedures, and performance improvement activities.

### **Background**

The Committee was formed in 2014 as part of Council's governance structure following the issue of guidelines by the Office Local Government in 2010. For the reporting year the Committee operates under a revised Charter adopted by Council on 17 September 2019 with the objectives of the Committee supported by obligations under Section 428A of the Local Government Act, 1993 for keeping under review the following aspects of Council's operations –

- Compliance,
- Risk management,
- Fraud control,
- Financial management,
- Governance,
- Implementation of the strategic plan, delivery program and strategies,
- Service reviews,
- Collection of performance measurement data by the Council, and
- Any other matters prescribed by the regulations.

Also under this Section, the Committee is also to provide information to Council for the purpose of improving the Council's performance of its functions.

In December 2022 the NSW Office of Local Government issued new guidelines for the Committee which are scheduled to be implemented from 1 July 2024. The Committee is moving to the new guidelines with the recent adoption of both the Model Terms of Reference and the Model Internal Audit Charter, and the recruitment of a 3rd independent member.

The 2023-2024 report will contain more information on how the Committee has evolved to meet the

### **Committee Meetings Held During the Period**

The Committee met on the following dates –

- 6th July 2022
- 15th August 2022 (extraordinary meeting to consider the draft financial statements for 2021-2022.
- 5th October 2022
- 23rd November 2022
- 8th March 2023.

Attendances at meetings have included by Zoom where necessary.

### **Membership**

The Committee comprised the following membership during the reporting period –

<i>Voting Independent External Members</i>	<i>Meetings Attended</i>
John Batchelor (Chairperson)	5
Gayle Murphy	5
 <i>Voting Council Representative *</i>	 <i>Meetings Attended</i>
Cr Cameron Lander	5
 <i>Non-Voting Attendees</i>	
George Cowan - General Manager	4
Martin Hiscox - Deputy GM Corporate & Community	4
Craig Taylor - Governance and Engagement Manager	4
Bec Best – Finance Manager	2
Melissa Gilmour - Secretariat Support	2
Amanda Collins – Secretariat Support	2

Representatives from the NSW Audit Office and Council's external auditors are invited to the ordinary meetings and attended using Zoom technology.

Mr Phil Swaffield from the National Audits Group is also invited to the ordinary meetings and attends in person where possible, otherwise attendance is by using Zoom technology.

### **Internal Audit Program**

The National Audits Group continues to provide Internal Audit services and will continue in this role until 30 September 2023.

During 2022-2023 the Committee received the following Internal Audit reports:

- Fleet Management
- Financial Grants Management
- Events Management
- Workplace Health and Safety Management



For 2023-2024 the following Internal Audit workplan was set and the following reports will be sought during the reporting year:

- Personnel Succession Planning/Attraction
- Corporate Governance Framework
- Treasury Functions - Investments
- Community Transport

The Committee acknowledges that the implementation of recommendations requires the commitment of significant resources, particularly at senior officer level. The Committee will continue to take an active role in the scoping of internal audit assignments with a view to more precise targeting of assignments to specific areas of risk. It is anticipated that this will reduce the range and number of recommendations that require the attention of senior staff.

The Committee has continued to monitor management actions in relation to issues raised in previous Internal Audit Reports.

In addition to the above it is also recognised by the Committee that management -

- Issues reminders to key staff in relation to the importance of identifying risks and then recording options to deal with these risks to ensure that they are within acceptable risk parameters,
- Monitors identified risks and reports any significant incidents or near misses to the Committee,
- Develops and reviews key strategic documents such as the Strategic Internal Audit Plan in consultation with the Committee and the internal auditor. This annual review allows the Committee or internal auditor to identify emerging risks and the opportunity to assess current controls.
- Makes presentations to the Committee on any key documents issued by external authorities such as the Audit Office NSW findings on procurement within local government identifying areas of concern and how Narrandera Shire Council adapted processes and/or procedures to reduce risks in these areas.

### **Annual Financial Statements and External Audit**

At the meeting held 15 August 2022 the Committee reviewed the draft Annual Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2022. Council's Finance team is congratulated on the timely completion of the Statements.

The Committee reported to Council that it knew of no matter that would prevent Council from executing the certificates required by section 413 of the Local Government Act, 1993.

The Committee has also reviewed all correspondence from the external auditor in relation to the external audit. In reviewing the 2022 Financial Statements the Committee did however raise concerns in relation to the potential impact of continuing operating losses in Water Fund operations and drew this to the attention of Council

The major items of correspondence were:

- Audit Reports 2022
- Final Management letter 2022
- Engagement Closing Report 2022
- Annual Engagement Plan 2023

### **Approach of the Committee**

The Committee takes what may broadly be described as a 'risk management' approach which includes

- Monitoring the risk exposure of Council,
- Reviewing the level of resources allocated to internal audit and the scope of its authority,
- Reviewing the scope of internal audit plans and the effectiveness of the function,
- Reviewing reports of internal audit and the extent to which Council and Management react to matters raised by internal audit,
- Facilitating liaison between the internal and external auditor to promote compatibility, to the extent appropriate, between their audit programs,
- Critically analysing and following up on any internal or external audit report that raises significant issues relating to risk management, internal control, financial reporting and other accountability or governance issues raised,
- Identifying and referring specific projects or investigations deemed necessary through the General Manager, internal auditor, and the Council as appropriate,
- Addressing issues brought to the attention of the Committee that are within the parameters of its Charter,
- Considering and recommending any changes to the Committee's Charter and the Internal Audit Charter.

### **Staff**

The Committee wishes to formally record its appreciation for the assistance it has received from the General Manager, George Cowan, Deputy General Manager Corporate and Community, Martin Hiscox, Governance and Engagement Manager, Craig Taylor, Finance Manager, Bec Best and the secretarial support provided by Melissa Gilmour and Amanda Collins.

### **Conclusion**

Council's Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee continues to operate effectively and will continue to monitor issues raised both in the External Audit Reports and the Internal Audit Reports and where necessary will highlight issues for the consideration of Council.

John Batchelor

Chairperson

Narrandera Shire Council Audit Risk and Improvement Committee

12 September 2023

# Information Management

## Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009

The focus of Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA) is to maintain and advance a system of responsible and representative democratic government that is open, accountable, fair and effective. The GIPA requires Council to proactively release information where possible, providing there is no over-riding public interest against disclosure. It establishes four ways that the community can access Council information, being Mandatory Disclosure, Informal Release, Formal Access, and Proactive Release. Council continues to work towards providing as much open access information as it can to the community through its website and other mediums.

## GIPA Disclosure Log

The following disclosure log records information released in response to formal access applications that may be of interest to other members of the public (unless the applicant objects to its recording). The complete 2022-23 GIPA Annual Report was submitted to the Information and Privacy Commission of NSW on 22 September 2023 and has also been attached to this annual report in Section 2 Appendix A.

Reference	Date of Decision	Topic/Information Requested	Information Released
GIPA-22-9	26 July 2022	Sought available information from 2018 on Lot B DP 403262.	Available information provided however some documents released have had information redacted in accordance with Section 14 (2) Table 3 (a) of the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 that could reasonably be expected to reveal an individual's personal information.
GIPA-22-11	23 September 2022	Sought available information about part of the road reserve adjacent to 89 to 101 East Street, Narrandera.	Available information provided however some documents released have had information redacted in accordance with Section 14 (2) Table 3 (a) of the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 that could reasonably be expected to reveal an individual's personal information

## Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994

Council is required to report annually on its obligations under the Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994 (PID Act).

This is where a disclosure can be made by members of an organisation of illegal, immoral, or illegitimate practices under the control of their employers to persons or organisations that may be able to initiate remedial action. The report must be in accordance with the requirements of Section 31 of the PID Act and Clause 4 of the Public Interest Disclosures Regulation 2011 (PID Regulation).

For the reporting period there were **NO** disclosures received.

The complete 2022-23 PID Annual Report was submitted to the Office of the NSW Ombudsman on 22 September 2023 and has also been attached to this annual report in Section 2 Appendix B.

## Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998

Council has adopted the Model Privacy Management Plan as provided to Council by the Office of Local Government without amendment. There were no privacy complaints received during the reporting period.



## Mayoral and Councillor Provisions

Council's Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy details financial, equipment, facilities and support provided for elected members. This policy was reviewed and adopted by Council on 5 January 2022 in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993.

### Mayoral and Councillor Financial Provisions

Payments made relating to the Mayor and Councillors during 2022-23 totalled \$162,691 and comprised the following:

Expense Item related to Civic Duty	Amount
Mayoral allowance	\$ 27,600
Councillor fees	\$ 103,310
Councillor superannuation	\$ 16,127
Councillor travelling costs – Councillors	\$ 786
Councillor attendance at LGNSW conference	\$ 0
Councillor attendance at other conferences	\$ 8,139
Councillor professional development	\$ 3,152
iPad and other technology	\$ 757
Telecommunication costs	\$ 2,160
Value of telephone calls made by the Mayor or reimbursed to Councillors	\$ 660
Interstate visits by Councillors	\$ NIL
Overseas visits by Councillors	\$ NIL
Expenses of any spouse or partner of a Councillor	\$ NIL
Expenses for childcare or immediate family care	\$ NIL

For the reporting year, the following Councillors undertook professional development either through personal studies or other delivery methods:

Councillor Name and course or activity undertaken	Amount
All Councillors – Understanding LG Finances for Councillors	\$ 1,855
All Councillors – Chairing and effective meeting procedures for Councillors	\$ 1,200

### Equipment and Facilities - Commitment to Participation, Equity and Access

Narrandera Shire Council encourages all members of the community to be involved in Local Government, in particular to nominate for election to Council.

An elevator from the ground floor to the first floor of Council's Administration Centre is available for any person with a disability. Large screen monitor, microphones, sound system and hearing aid loop have been installed to support people with a hearing impairment. Council is committed to providing transportation or other reasonable facilities to assist people with disabilities who are involved in civic duties as an elected member.

### **Use of Equipment and Facilities by the Mayor**

Appropriate administrative support is provided for the Mayor to carry out the duties of the Office, including a fully furnished Mayoral Office for Council business and a ceremonial chain. The administrative support cost for the Mayor is estimated to be \$12,917 per year (based on a single support employee for an average of one hour per day multiplied by 250 workdays).

Appropriate stationery such as pens, paper, diary and other appropriate items are provided to assist the Mayor in the performance of the day to day duties at a cost of approximating \$250. The Mayor is provided with a mobile telephone for Council use only which is capped at a monthly limit of \$150. Appropriate refreshments and beverages are provided as required by the Mayor for hospitality purposes.

### **Return of Equipment and Facilities**

Councillors are to return to the General Manager any Council-owned and provided equipment following completion of their term in office or prior to commencing a period of extended leave of absence or at the cessation of their civic duties.

## **Modern Slavery**

### **Narrandera Shire Council Modern Slavery Statement Reporting Period: Financial Year 2022-23**

#### **Introduction**

This Modern Slavery Statement is provided by Narrandera Shire Council in accordance with Section 428 (4) of the NSW Local Government Act, 1993. This statement outlines Narrandera Shire Council's commitment to combatting modern slavery and the measures we have implemented during this reporting period to reduce the risk of our procurement activities resulting in or contributing to human rights violations.

#### **Organisational Structure and Supply Chain**

Narrandera Shire Council is a rural Council located on the banks of the Murrumbidgee River and in close proximity to the regional cities of Wagga Wagga and Griffith. Council recognises the importance of taking steps to ensure that goods and services procured by and for our Council are not the product of modern slavery. Our supply chain includes many suppliers of goods, services or works with the highest categories of spend being transport and communications, recreation and culture, and sewerage network.

#### **Policy**

Narrandera Shire Council adopted its revised Procurement Policy on 16 May 2023 which outlines Council's commitment to preventing and addressing modern slavery in all its procurement activities.

#### **Outcomes**

Implementation of the above policy resulted in Council's Procurement Policy being updated and available for reference by all staff.

The Modern Slavery Annual Report for 2022-23 is included as Appendix C at the end of this document.

## SERVICE REVIEW

### Requirements

Councils are required to undertake service reviews as part of 'promoting better practice', a means of assessing performance and promoting continuous improvement. The reviews are designed to act as a 'health check' examining the extent to which there are appropriate strategies, policies, systems and procedures in place in the following areas:

- **Strategic planning** focuses on Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting arrangements including how well it engages its community in planning for service delivery, how well it delivers against its Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program, and how it reports to the community.
- **Financial sustainability** is an assessment of Council's current service delivery against the budget for that service as well as long-term financial planning and asset management.
- **Governance examines** how effective the management of the service is and what the expected outcomes are the actual outputs delivered.
- **Service delivery** effectiveness and efficiency is measured through a consideration of customer satisfaction, service standards and achieving outcomes.

While the purpose of a service review is to ensure continuous improvement, a rolling program of service reviews can also put councils and councillors in a better position to:

- Respond to changing customer priorities and needs.
- Determine the right mix of services and align services with the council's vision.
- Define statutory and non-statutory services and consider the potential for divestment of services.
- Generate financial savings.
- Review and optimise service levels and build staff capacity and skills.

### Actions taken by Council during 2022-23

Construction of the much-anticipated Destination and Discovery Hub (The Hub) commenced in March 2022, with the centre expected to be completed by the end of October 2023.

Given that The Hub was designed to accommodate exhibitions, static displays, retail space, visitor service staff and other members of staff, The Hub and its staffing levels were the first Service Review to be actioned.

The review commenced, led by the Economic Development Manager, however, is currently on hold due to the manager's resignation and ensuing recruitment process. Given that The Hub is an essential part of the role's responsibilities, the incoming Economic Development Manager will progress this review and the outcomes will be presented as part of the 2023-24 Annual Report.

### Financial Performance Measures

The audited financial statements for the year ending 30 June 2023 show that Council mostly meets or exceeds the benchmarks established by New South Wales Treasury Corporation (TCorp) except for 'Own Source Operating Revenue Ratio' and 'Infrastructure Backlog Ratio'.

The following graphs have been extracted from the Narrandera Shire Council audited financial statements for the year ending 30 June 2023 which are attached to this document in full within Section 2 Annexure D.



### 1. Operating performance ratio



Benchmark: — > 0.00%

Source of benchmark: Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting

#### Purpose of operating performance ratio

This ratio measures Council's achievement of containing operating expenditure within operating revenue.

#### Commentary on 2022/23 result

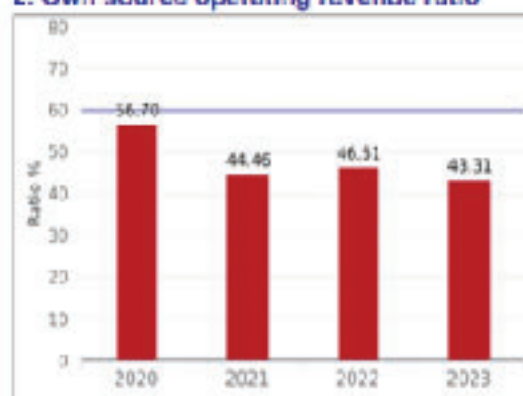
2022/23 ratio 15.77%

Council's operating performance has been impacted by the receipt of significant operating grants that remain unspent at 30 June 2023.

Ratio achieves benchmark

Ratio is outside benchmark

### 2. Own source operating revenue ratio



Benchmark: — > 60.00%

Source of benchmark: Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting

#### Purpose of own source operating revenue ratio

This ratio measures fiscal flexibility. It is the degree of reliance on external funding sources such as operating grants and contributions.

#### Commentary on 2022/23 result

2022/23 ratio 43.31%

Own source revenue has again been impacted by additional grant funding for Local Roads and Community Infrastructure (Covid-19 economic stimulus), Fixing County Bridges, Regional and Local Roads program, Pothole grant and the Financial Assistance Grant 100% prepaid.

Ratio achieves benchmark

Ratio is outside benchmark

### 3. Unrestricted current ratio



Benchmark: — > 1.50x

Source of benchmark: Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting

#### Purpose of unrestricted current ratio

To assess the adequacy of working capital and its ability to satisfy obligations in the short term for the unrestricted activities of Council.

#### Commentary on 2022/23 result

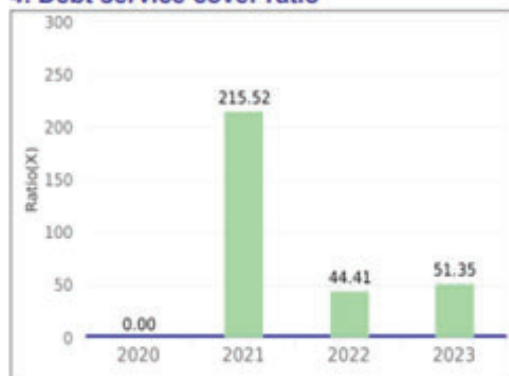
2022/23 ratio 6.57x

Council's ratio remains well above the benchmark with more than adequate funds to satisfy its short term obligations.

Ratio achieves benchmark

Ratio is outside benchmark

#### 4. Debt service cover ratio



Benchmark: — > 2.00x

Source of benchmark: Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting

##### Purpose of debt service cover ratio

This ratio measures the availability of operating cash to service debt including interest, principal and lease payments

##### Commentary on 2022/23 result

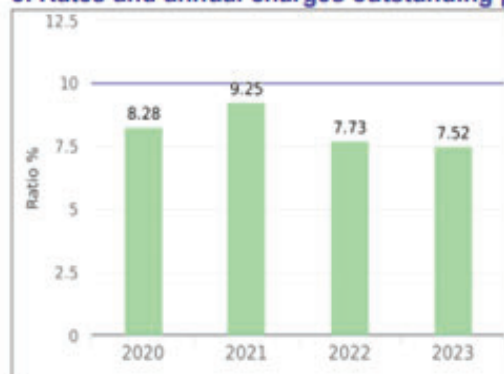
2022/23 ratio 51.35x

Council currently has two external loans with the uptake of the Barellan sewer loan in 2022 and Lake Talbot pool in 2021. Internal loans exist from the Water fund to the General fund \$164,000

Ratio achieves benchmark

Ratio is outside benchmark

#### 5. Rates and annual charges outstanding percentage



Benchmark: — < 10.00%

Source of benchmark: Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting

##### Purpose of rates and annual charges outstanding percentage

To assess the impact of uncollected rates and annual charges on Council's liquidity and the adequacy of recovery efforts.

##### Commentary on 2022/23 result

2022/23 ratio 7.52%

Council's outstanding rates have improved considerably and are at a satisfactory level having been achieved through a fair debt recovery program.

Ratio achieves benchmark

Ratio is outside benchmark

#### 6. Cash expense cover ratio



Benchmark: — > 3.00months

Source of benchmark: Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting

##### Purpose of cash expense cover ratio

This liquidity ratio indicates the number of months a Council can continue paying for its immediate expenses without additional cash inflow.

##### Commentary on 2022/23 result

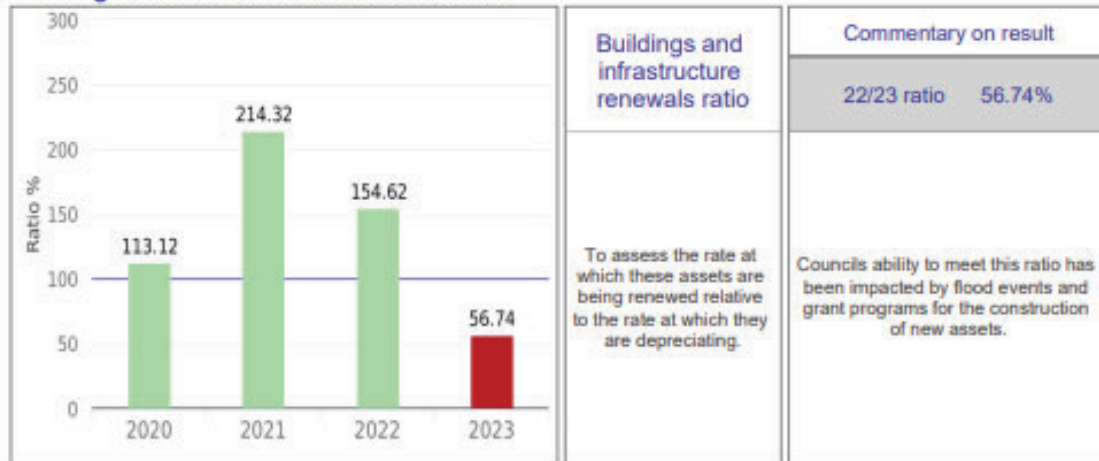
2022/23 ratio 21.51 months

Council has more than adequate cash to meet ongoing expenses for over 21 months without requiring additional cash inflows.

Ratio achieves benchmark

Ratio is outside benchmark

### Buildings and infrastructure renewals ratio



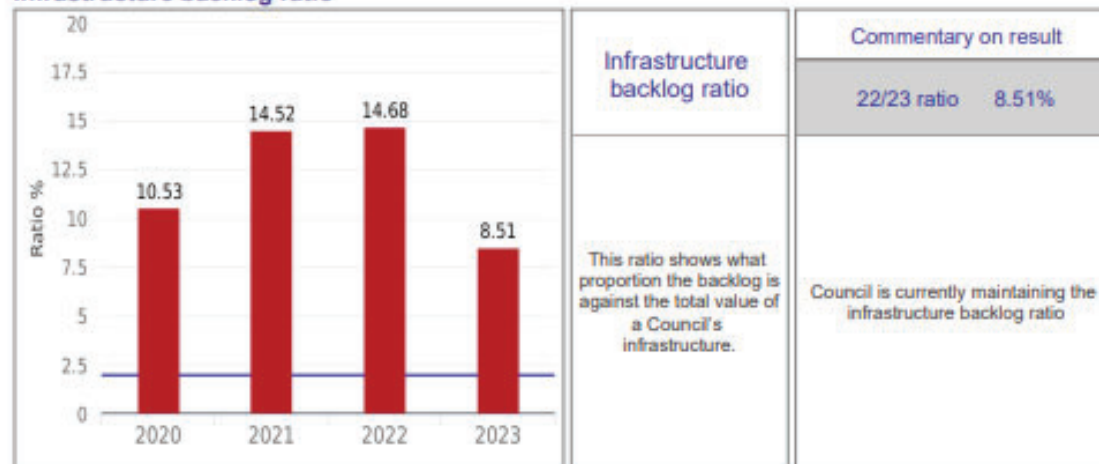
Benchmark: —  $\geq 100.00\%$

Ratio achieves benchmark

Source of benchmark: Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting

Ratio is outside benchmark

### Infrastructure backlog ratio



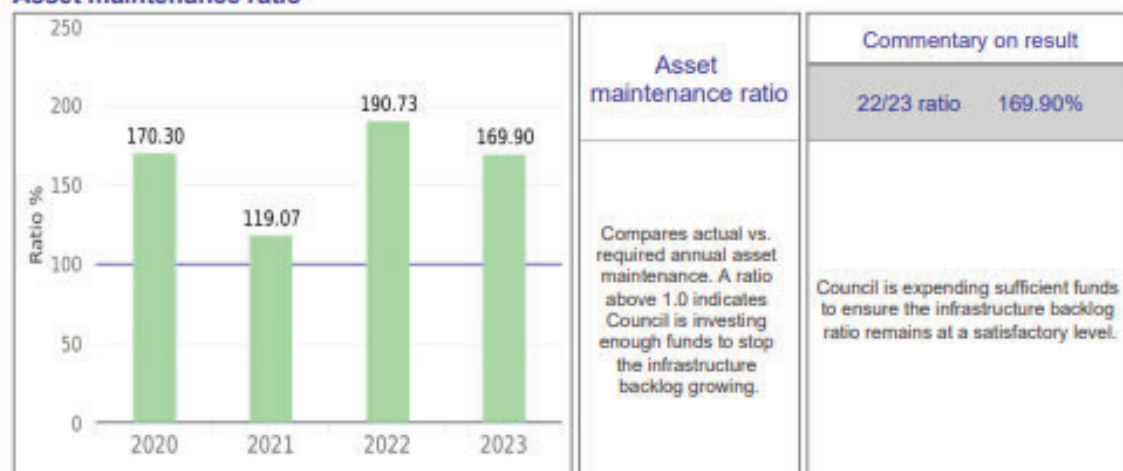
Benchmark: —  $< 2.00\%$

Ratio achieves benchmark

Source of benchmark: Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting

Ratio is outside benchmark

### Asset maintenance ratio



Benchmark: —  $> 100.00\%$

Ratio achieves benchmark

Source of benchmark: Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting

Ratio is outside benchmark



## **FINANCIAL REPORTING**

### **Statutory Financial Reports**

Council's audited financial reports for the year ending 30 June 2023 are attached as Appendix D. The Office of Local Government on 19 September 2023 advised that Narrandera Shire Council was the first General Purpose Council in NSW to have its 2022-23 financial statements completed.

### **2022/2023 ASV – Certification**

On 13 December 2021 the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) announced a rate peg for the 2022-2023 financial year of 0.7%. The Office of Local Government and IPART recognised that due to delayed Council elections and the determination of the 2022-2023 rate peg at a lower rate than Councils had forecast, Councils did not have sufficient time to prepare a special variation (SV) within the normal timeframe. The NSW Government and IPART agreed to a one-off additional special variation (ASV) for the 2022-2023 financial year only.

Narrandera Shire Council had budgeted for a rate peg increase of 2.0%, with a substantially lower rate peg of 0.7% set by IPART, Council proceeded to lodge an ASV equivalent to 1.3% above the rate peg limit to align with the forecast increase of 2% - our Council resolved on 15 March 2022 to apply for the additional special variation and was 1 of 86 NSW Councils to successfully receive approval from IPART.

On the 17 June 2022, IPART issued its Instrument of Approval under Section 508(2) of the Local Government Act, 1993 with Council to report this to the community through its 2022-2023 Annual Report.

Clause 2 a) i) of the Instrument of Approval

- Council's actual revenues for 2022-2023 was \$6,237,237.58, the projected revenues for 2022-2023 was \$6,166,517.00.

Clause 2 a) ii) of the Instrument of Approval

- The difference between Councils actual revenues and the projected revenues was \$70,720.58. This difference arose because the accounting treatment for pensioner rebate expenses was initially identified as a grant, however accounting standards require that it is to be included as rate revenue.

Clause 2 a) iii) of the Instrument of Approval

- The additional income raised by the addition special variation was \$67,600.

## **RATES AND CHARGES**

### **Abandonments**

During the 2022-23 reporting year, rates and charges totalling \$5,516.89 were abandoned due to a statutory requirement or the amount deemed as irrecoverable based on legal advice.

Sundry debtor amounts totalling \$1,682.59 (exclusive of GST) were abandoned as irrecoverable.

### **Pensioner Rebates Granted and Subsidy Claimed**

Pensioner rebates totalling \$201,831 were granted during 2022-23. Of this amount \$111,007 was recovered through subsidies received from the NSW State Government.

## Statement Of Council's Principal Activities

Following is a statement for each of Council's principal activities setting out:

- Revenue and expenses for 2022-23
- Assets held by Council at 30 June 2023

### B Financial Performance

#### B1 Functions or activities

##### B1-1 Functions or activities – income, expenses and assets

Income, expenses and assets have been directly attributed to the following functions or activities. Details of those functions or activities are provided in Note B1-2.

\$ '000	Income		Expenses		Operating result		Grants and contributions		Carrying amount of assets	
	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022	2023	2022
<b>Functions or activities</b>										
Our Community	7,193	5,579	6,253	6,117	940	(538)	5,915	4,357	40,024	34,636
Our Environment	1,324	1,458	1,636	1,624	(312)	(136)	219	496	3,129	2,891
Our Economy	1,644	2,655	2,853	3,332	(1,209)	(677)	7	343	7,540	7,096
Our Infrastructure	10,104	7,581	10,359	9,014	(255)	(1,433)	5,531	4,006	223,235	193,645
Our Civic Leadership	13,962	13,140	3,363	3,195	10,599	9,945	7,732	6,889	22,277	18,800
<b>Total functions and activities</b>	<b>34,227</b>	<b>30,443</b>	<b>24,464</b>	<b>23,282</b>	<b>9,763</b>	<b>7,161</b>	<b>19,404</b>	<b>16,091</b>	<b>296,205</b>	<b>257,068</b>

## DEBT RECOVERY

### Legal Proceedings for the Recovery of Overdue Amounts

During 2022-23 Council was involved in legal action for the recovery of overdue rates and charges in addition to overdue debtor accounts.

For the twelve months ending 30 June 2023, Council initiated the following action for recovery of outstanding:

Nature of Action	Amount excluding legal expenses	Legal Expenses	Result
<b>Sundry Debtors</b> No sundry debtor matters actioned during the reporting period.	\$0.00	\$0.00	N/A
<b>Rate/Water Debtors</b> Council actioned the recovery of arrears of rates and charges using the services of Executive Collections for the issuing of letters of demand, Statement of Liquidated Claim, Judgement, Summons of Examination, Writ, Warrant, and Garnishee.	\$61,417.57	\$28,203.51  NOTE: This amount includes legal action costs for arrears carried forward from previous years	Recovered \$55,542.60 Continuing legal action \$17,102.05
<b>Sale of Land</b> 4 matters actioned during 2022-23 sale of land proceedings	\$16,375.64	\$21,159.12	Recovered \$16,375.64 Abandoned as irrecoverable \$0

## Summary of Legal Expenses

Activity Centre	Amount \$ (excl GST)
General advice, property matters, human resource matters	\$ 269
Debt recovery matters	\$ 53,894
Sale of industrial land	\$ 3,841
TOTAL	\$ 58,004

## Contracts

During 2022-23 there were five contracts awarded by Council equal to or above \$150,000 being:

Contract Details	Value
Q 22-23-10 Detailed design for Barellan levee was awarded to Dryside Engineering at a cost of	\$173,250.00
T 21-22-06 Design and construct Lake Talbot Skywalk was awarded to Ezibuild Pty Ltd at a cost of	\$626,000.00
T 22-23-02 Design and construct fire station at Landervale was awarded to Joss Facility Management at a cost of	\$650,311.00
T 22-23-04 Design and construct solar PV panel and battery installation at various locations was awarded to Energus Pty Ltd at a cost of	\$466,050.00
Q 22-23-37 Design and construction of the pedestrian deck at Lake Talbot Water Park was awarded to Roddy Engineering at a cost of	\$154,541.00

## Statement of all Corporations, Partnerships, Trusts, Joint Ventures, Syndicates or other bodies in which Council held a controlling interest

During the reporting period Council did not hold any controlling interests, either by itself or in conjunction with other councils in any company.

## Statement of all Corporations, Partnerships, Trusts, Joint Ventures, Syndicates or other bodies in which the Council participated during the year

Council is a member of the Western Riverina Libraries (WRL), a collaborative of six local government areas sharing resources and technical services. WRL provides the Narrandera Shire Library with access to the greater regional library facility and the mobile library vehicle where clients in remote areas of the Shire or confined to their homes are able to access public library facilities.

Council is a funding contributor to Western Riverina Arts (WRA) with the Community Development Manager a member of the Board. WRA is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to supporting the development and promotion of the arts.

Council owns 10,000 shares in Narrandera District Investments Limited being the Narrandera franchise of the Bendigo Bank.

## Works on Private Land

Council undertook works such as roadworks, mowing grass and removing excess vegetation on private land in 2022-23 raising revenue of \$318,338. Council policy about charging for these private rates is as follows:



Plant hire rates	Reviewed each year based on commercial rates, includes operator
Additional labour	Actual cost plus on costs and overheads
Stores and materials	Actual cost plus 25% for overheads

Section 67 of the Local Government Act, 1993 provides that Council must not carry out work under this section if it is proposed to charge an amount less than the approved fee unless the proposed fee is made by resolution of the Council at an open meeting of Council before the work is carried out. During the reporting year there were no Private Works undertaken at less than the rates set and therefore no Council resolutions required by Section 67 (2) (b) of the Act.

### Capital Works Program 2022-23

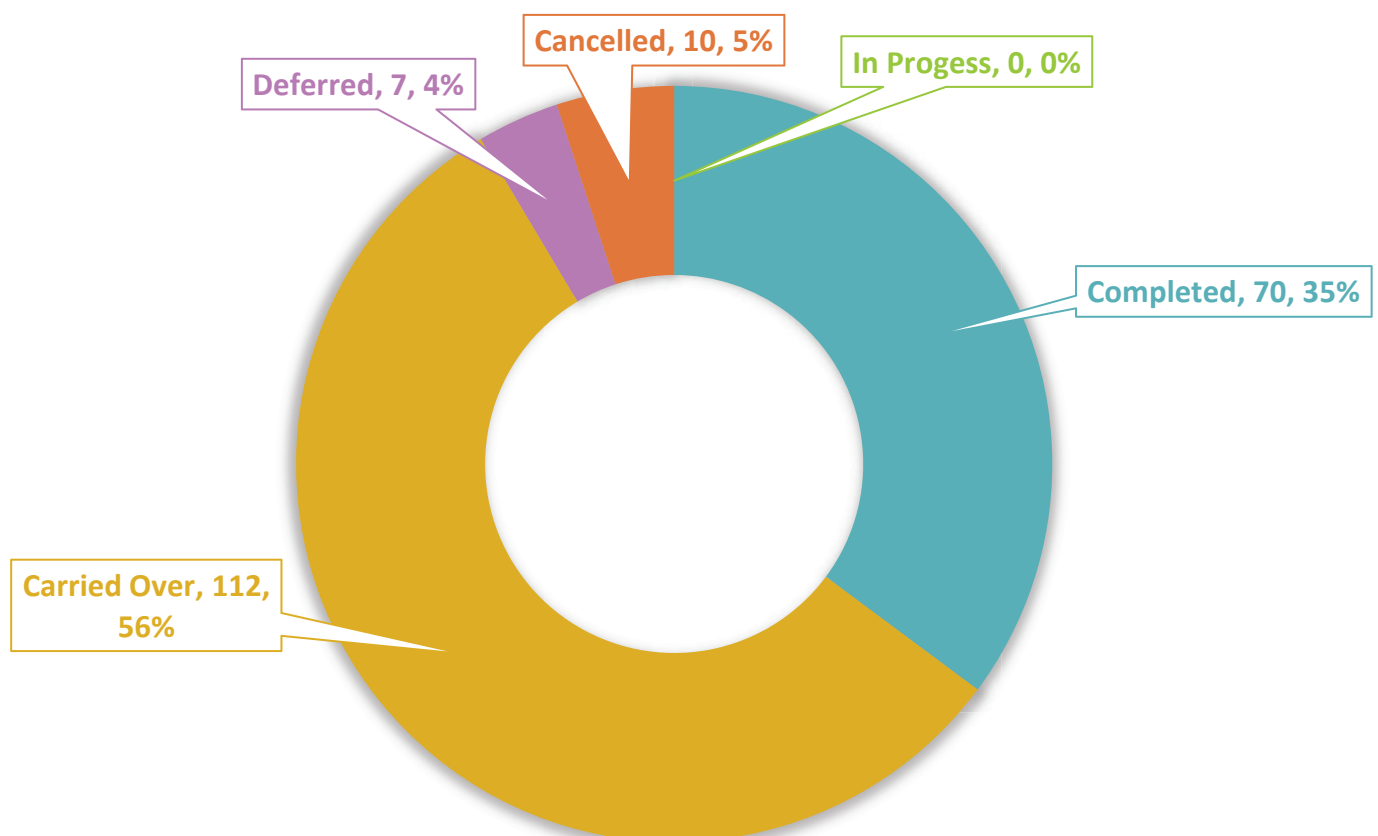
For the 2022-23 capital works program Council adopted an original budget of \$15,913,225 relating to General Fund \$12,128,225, Water Fund \$385,000 and Sewer Fund \$3,400,000.

During the year, Council adopted carry over works and other items not originally in the budget to be added to the program leaving the total budget of the program to be \$32.745 Million.

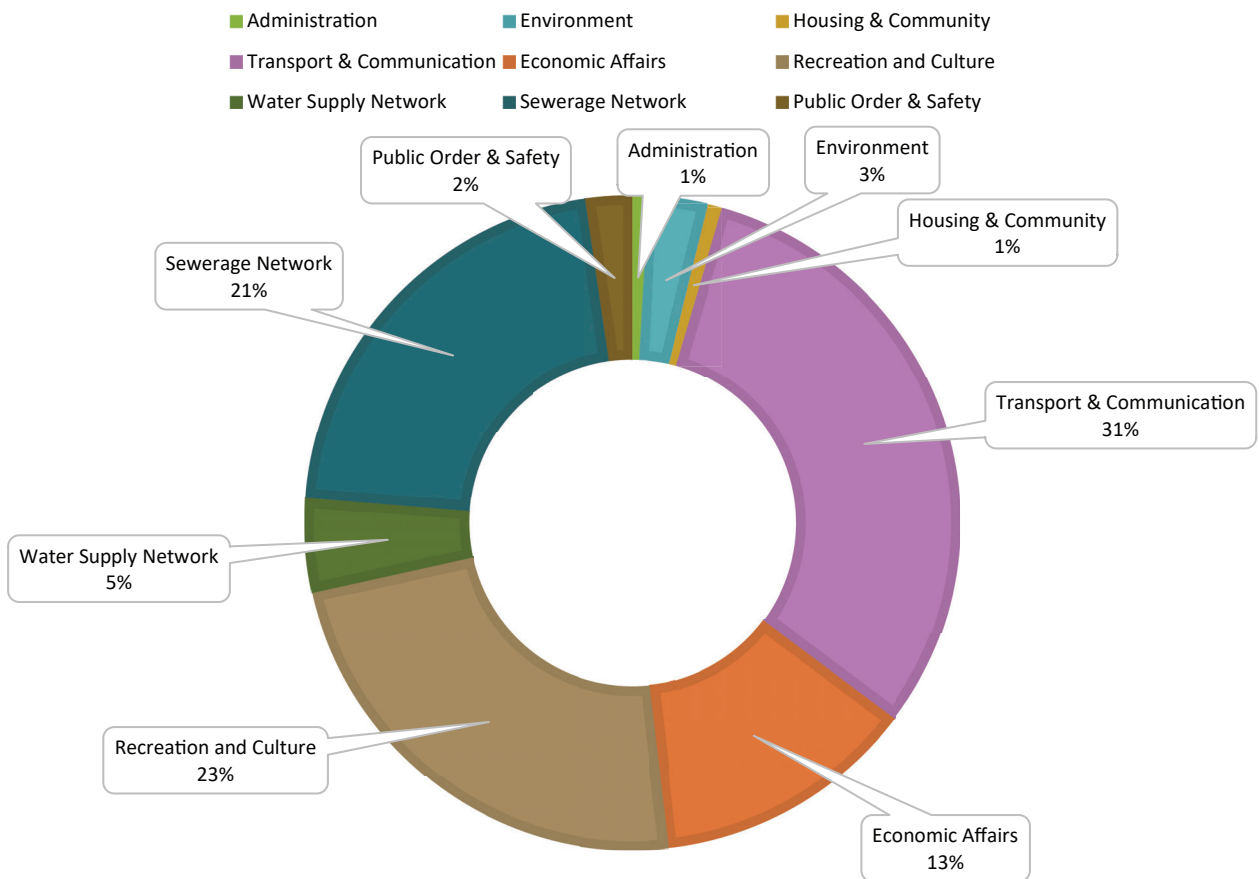
As at 30 June 2023:

- 35% of the program was complete
- 5% was cancelled
- 56% was in progress and carried over to 2023-24
- 4% of the program was deferred until a later date.

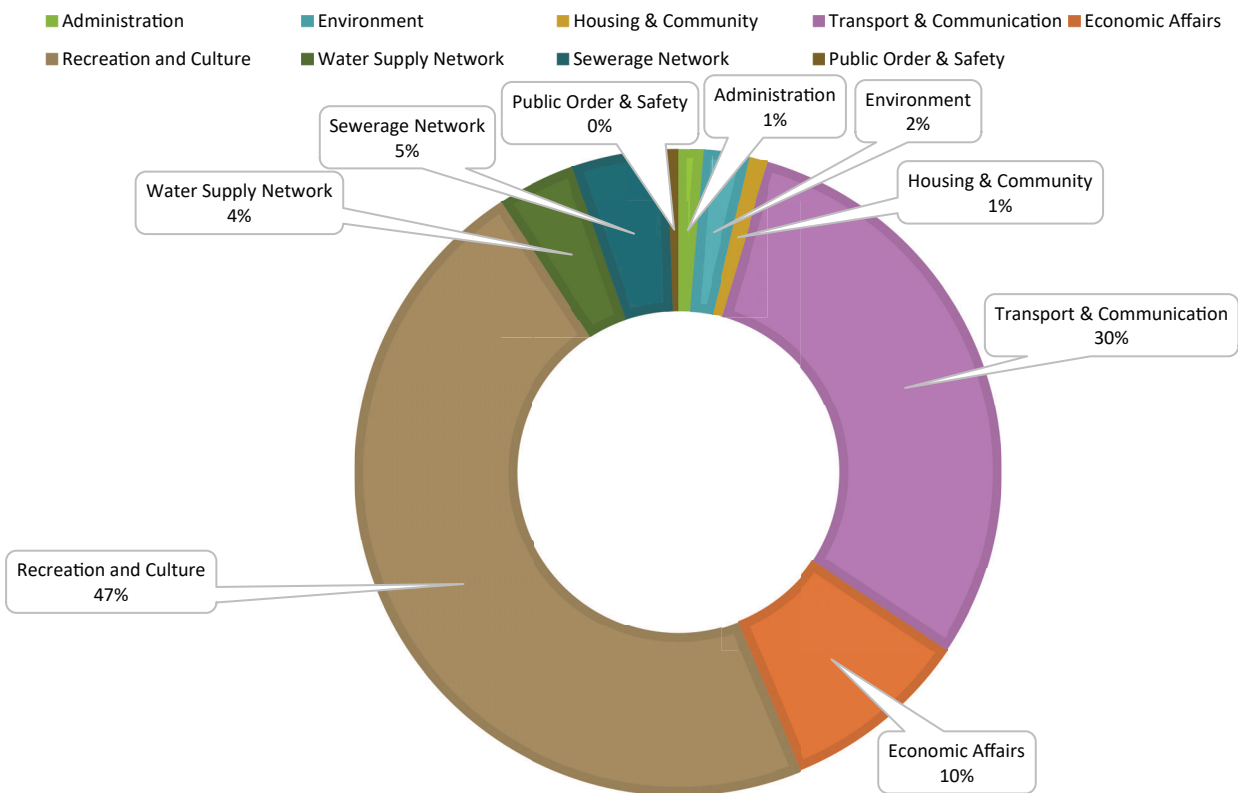
### CAPITAL PROGRESS % - 30 JUNE 2023



## ALL AREAS BUDGET % - 30 JUNE 2023

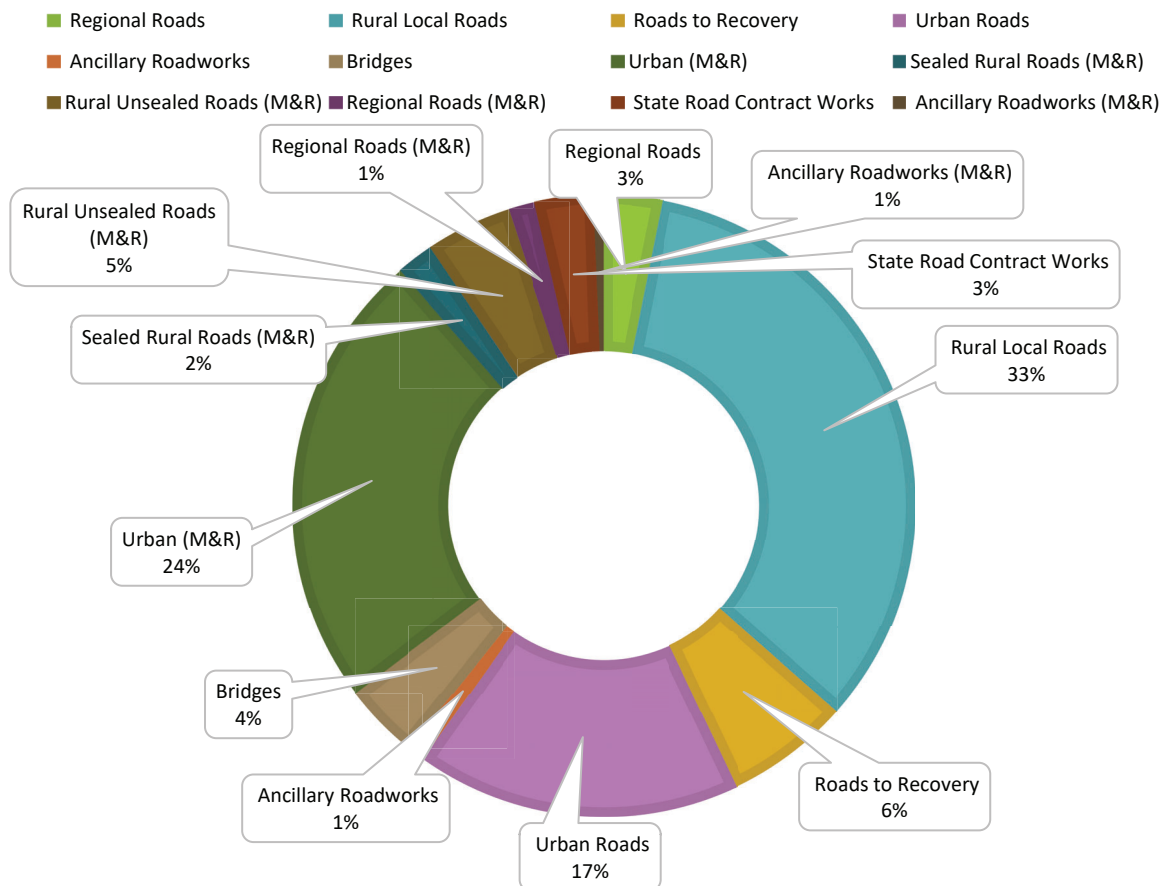


## ALL AREAS ACTUAL % - 30 JUNE 2023

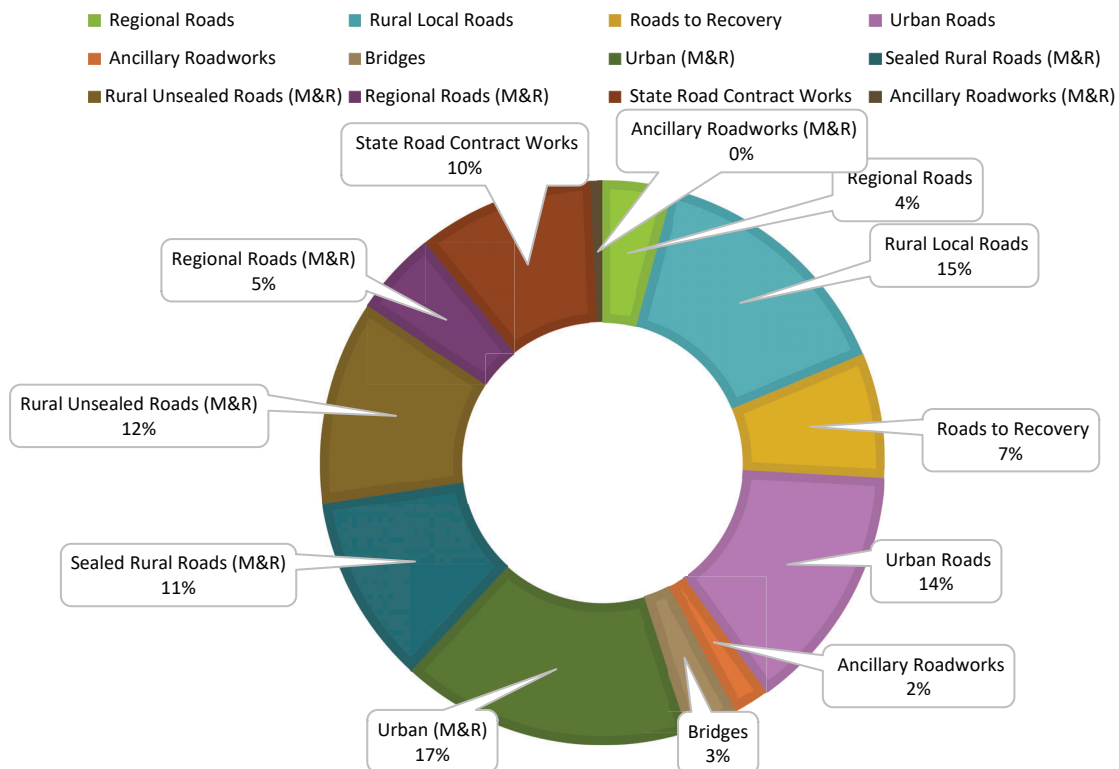


Council's transport and communication program made up a significant portion of Capital Expenditure as at 30 June 2023. The Rural Local Roads and Urban Roads Program had the largest percentage of expenditure with the majority grant funded.

## ROADS BUDGET % - 30 JUNE 2023



## ROADS ACTUAL % - 30 JUNE 2023



## COMPETITIVE NEUTRALITY OTHER ENTITIES THAT CAN EXERCISE SOME FUNCTIONS OF THE COUNCIL

Council in 2022-23 operated one Category 1 businesses and one Category 2 business.



### *Category 1 Business*

- At 30 June 2023 Council operated one Category 1 business being the Narrandera Water Fund.
- Financial statements for these activities are included within Council's financial statements which form Appendix C to this report.
- The financial statement for Council's Category 1 business activity discloses National Competition Policy National Payments including corporate taxation equivalents, dividends paid and rate of return on capital.

### *Category 2 Business*

- At 30 June 2023 Council operated one Category 2 business, being the Narrandera Sewer Fund. Financial statements for this activity are included within Council's financial statements which form Appendix C to this report.
- The financial statements for Council's Category 2 business activities disclose National Competition Policy Payments including corporate taxation equivalents, dividends paid and rate of return on capital.

Council has a complaint handling mechanism to deal with any concerns about Council not complying with competitive neutrality arrangements applying to the public sector. Council did not receive any complaints in relation to its Category 1 or Category 2. businesses for the financial year 2022-23.

## **ENTITIES THAT CAN EXERCISE SOME FUNCTIONS OF THE COUNCIL**

### **Section 355 Committees**

Section 355 of the Local Government Act, 1993 allows Council to delegate some of its functions to an approved Committee. Council uses this delegation in several key areas and appoints community-spirited people to manage facilities or functions through the committee structure.

Community involvement in managing community facilities provides better outcomes for residents, engaging and promoting inclusiveness and providing the opportunity for individuals to participate in local community life.

The revitalised Section 355 Committee structure was adopted by Council in September 2018 and was again endorsed by the new Council in January 2022.

The following Committees operate under the Local Government Act, 1993 and have delegated functions:

- Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee
- Narrandera-Leeton Shire Council's Joint Airport Management Committee
- Parkside Cottage Museum Committee

The following Advisory Groups did not have delegated functions, but assisted Council in its decision making during 2022-23:

- Arts and Culture Advisory Committee
- Australia Day Planning Advisory Committee
- Bettering Barellan Advisory Committee
- Domestic Violence Advisory Committee
- Grong Grong Community Advisory Committee
- Koala Regeneration Advisory Committee
- Lake Talbot Environs Advisory Committee
- Narrandera Railway Station Facility Advisory Committee
- Narrandera Stadium Advisory Committee
- Parks and Gardens Advisory Committee
- Sports Facilities Advisory Committee

### **Partnerships, Co-Operatives and Joint Ventures**

Partnerships, co-operatives or other joint ventures to which Council was a party in 2022-23 included:

- MIA Rural Fire Zone Service Agreement
- Riverina and Murray Joint Organisation (RAMJO)
- Western Riverina Arts (WRA)
- Western Riverina Libraries (WRL)

## 2 Our community

The 2021 Census information provided by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) details that there were 5,698 residents within Narrandera Shire. Of these persons, 50.49% were female and 49.51% were male.

Of the total Shire population, 12.68% identified as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent and 23.28% of the population aged 65+. Analysing the Shire workforce 2,463 persons over the age of 15 were reported as being in the workforce, with 58.9% employed full-time, 30.2% employed part-time and 5.6% employed under other conditions.

<https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/LGA15800> - viewed 3 October 2023

### YOUTH

The Narrandera Youth Advisory Council held regular monthly meetings to discuss important matters relating to the youth of the Shire, including access to mental health services such as the Blue Tree Project initiative, grant funding opportunities, Youth Listening Posts, and various school holiday programs funded by the NSW Government under the School Holiday Break Program.

The Youth Advisory Council welcomed six new members and currently has nine active Youth Councillors. At the Youth Mayoral elections, Cr Wesley Bamblett was elected Youth Mayor and Cr Madeline Fraser was elected Youth Deputy Mayor. Madeline has since resigned from her role with the Youth Advisory Council.

The Community Liaison Officer made several successful grant submissions to facilitate youth-led programs activities, including Youth Week, Winter Break, Spring Break, Summer Break and Autumn Break programs. Activities included movie nights, slime run, craft sessions, art sessions, skateboard workshops, roller skating workshops and discos.

The Community Liaison Officer continues to work in partnership with the Narrandera High School to facilitate Girls' Group which meets each Wednesday and focusses on wellbeing programs for girls in Years 7-10.

### Assistance to Narrandera Little Connections Playgroup

Council continues to provide a building for use by the Narrandera Play Group to conduct its weekly activities. The premises are at the rear of the Emergency Operations Centre and the building is currently provided free of charge.

### Assistance to Narrandera Pre-School on Dixon Park

Council is the owner of the land upon which the Narrandera Pre-School on Dixon Park is sited. The centre provides learning-based activities and social interaction for children prior to entering mainstream schools. The rental per year to occupy the site is a peppercorn amount.

### Recreational Activities

The Community Liaison Officer and Community Support Manager actively seek funding to hold events for the children of the Shire.

### Playground Equipment

Council continues to replace and enhance play equipment at various locations across the Shire. The adventure playground located at Marie Bashir Park is a much loved and used facility by locals and visitors alike. A new playground is proposed to be built adjacent to the water reservoirs in Watermain Street, Narrandera

## **Festivals/Street Parades and Competitions**

Where possible to do so, children from all schools within the Shire are invited and encouraged to participate in various street festival parades and also participate in colouring in competitions, such as those run as part of the annual bike week.

## **Assistance with School and TAFE Awards**

Council continues to financially sponsor scholastic and merit awards at annual school presentations across the Shire. Council is represented by the Mayor or the General Manager where possible.

## **ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY**

Council continues to support the Aboriginal community through representation on relevant committees and administrative support for the interagency group. The Mayor, General Manager and Community Liaison Officer meet quarterly with the Aboriginal Elders Group to discuss matters of interest and concern within the community. These meetings give the Aboriginal community a platform to raise important issues, such as employment and education, with Council.

The Aboriginal Elders Liaison Committee held four formal meetings and several informal meetings to discuss matters of importance including the Wiradjuri Wall, NAIDOC Celebrations, concerns about educational opportunities for Aboriginal students and several other Council projects.

Council has implemented an Aboriginal careers initiative.

The Narrungdera NAIDOC Committee successfully planned and hosted NAIDOC events with assistance from the Community Liaison Officer. Planned events provided an opportunity for the community to come together to celebrate Aboriginal culture and highlight the significance of the traditions within the Aboriginal culture.

*Photo credit: Jack of Hearts Studio at the event Wirramarri Long Way from Home - created by The Cad Factory, The Clontarf Academy and the Narrandera Fisheries Centre. April 2021*



*Youth Councillors Mayor Wesley Bamblett, Cr Alyssa Sanders, Cr Braden Lyons, Cr Memphis Singh, Deputy Mayor Maddie Fraser*





## ROAD SAFETY

As a partner in the NSW Government's Local Government Road Safety Program (LGRSP), Narrandera Shire Council employs a Road Safety Officer to develop and implement local road safety projects.

Council again supported NRMA Safer Driving - Wagga Wagga to provide Safer Drivers Courses locally in September 2022 and March 2023.

Had this not been available, Narrandera learner drivers would need to travel to Wagga Wagga, Griffith or Leeton to complete the course, placing Narrandera residents at a disadvantage compared to learner drivers in larger centres.

The Safer Drivers Course helps drivers on their L-plates to prepare for driving solo when they graduate to provisional licences. The learner drivers who participated received 20 hours of logbook credit for completing the five-hour course. Council provided a venue, promoted the course, and covered travel costs of presenters to bring the course to Narrandera. Helping Learner Drivers Become Safer Drivers (HLDBSD) workshops were offered at the same time as the Safer Drivers Course. The HLDBSD workshop is for anyone supervising a learner driver including parents, relatives, friends and carers. The workshop helps supervisors to feel confident and motivated to provide supervision for learner drivers.

Facebook competitions, highlighting sleeping in a swag as Plan B were held over the football Grand Final and Christmas to New Year periods. To enter participants needed to share their Plan B on the 'win a swag' posts on Council's Facebook page.

Courtesy Breath Testing (CBT) was held in conjunction with the 'win a swag' promotion at events including Narrandera race days. This initiative aims to increase awareness and discussion in the community regarding drink driving and reinforce the Plan B message to avoid driving after drinking.

Variable Message Sign (VMS) boards were placed on state roads within Narrandera Shire for the December-January holiday period and at Easter. A range of messages were displayed to drivers, focusing on speed, fatigue, and drink-drug driving. This was supported by a local social media campaign over the same periods.

Vouchers for provided for free child restraint checks/fitting by authorised fitter Rodney Flanagan from Safari Motors were provided for 11 child restraints to be correctly fitted.

A range of activities, including Coffee with a Cop, Survive the Ride and Seniors Road Safety workshops, was held for National Road Safety Week to highlight road safety messages.

Motorcyclists from as far as Albury travelled to Narrandera to attend the Survive the Ride workshop developed specifically for motorcyclists. The workshop focused on improving skills by enabling riders to recognise their mistakes and how to avoid them in the future.

Seniors' Road Safety Workshops held during Seniors' and National Road Safety Weeks provided information and tips to improve safety when on or near roads. The workshops included information and checklists for all road use whether driving, riding, walking, catching public transport or using mobility scooters.

Bicycle, skateboard, and scooter safety was highlighted during Youth Week using an online quiz with questions highlighting rules related to road safety and riding on footpaths. The immediate feedback to the entrants helped improve their knowledge of the relevant rules and potential consequences.





A monthly road safety editorial was published in the Narrandera Argus to provide continual road safety messages with local content and relevance. This proactive campaign included promotion of timely road safety messages such as double demerit point periods, fatigue during holiday periods, rural road safety, drink and drug driving, local crash statistics and road safety tips. In addition, a social media campaign was used to deliver road safety messages across a broad range of issues.

## **NARRANDERA SHIRE LIBRARY**

2022-23 was a year of reopening and rebuilding, with the Library reintroducing services and activities such as Story Times, Lego Club and VR in a new Living With COVID era. Two successful Library Infrastructure Grants made great improvements to the Library Service. Narrandera and Carrathool Shire received a grant of \$196,000 for replacement of the shared Narrandera-Carrathool Mobile Library. Notification of the successful application came during COVID lockdowns which delayed implementation of the project. The new Mobile Library was officially launched on the 18 April 2023.

The Library was also successful with a Kidz Zone Library Infrastructure Grant of \$35,523 to revamp the children's area including purchase of new shelving and furnishings specifically designed for children's usage. Purchase and installation of a smart TV provides an opportunity for interactive activities and access to resources such as Story Box Library. The funding also provides for installation of wheels on the large print and AV shelving, allowing them to be moved to provide more space for larger activities.

The Library provides a range of activities for all members of the community, such as Children's Book Week visits from local schools, a wide range of school holiday activities, twice monthly story times, weekly Lego Club and Little Lego sessions. A range of services and facilities are provided including internet and computer access, and free wi-fi.

Extensive fiction and non-fiction collections provide for adults as well as young adult, with junior and picture book collections for younger readers. It offers a wide selection of DVD titles, magazines, large print and audio books, and access to eBooks, eAudio and eMagazines through BorrowBox.

The Library is a popular venue for community meetings and activities, and for outside organisations providing access and services to the Narrandera community such as Centrelink Rural Agency and Sureway.

The Library's Youth Space continues to be used by the Youth Council and the Narrandera High School Girls' Group and is the scene for a range of school holiday activities ranging from Christmas craft through to virtual reality sessions. It is a very popular spot on Tuesday afternoons for Lego Club, on Thursdays for board games, and as a venue for training and meetings where users can take advantage of the high-quality display and conferencing facilities. This year it provided a very comfortable venue for Seniors' Festival movies and gala concert broadcast.

The Library has a strong focus on literacy, providing support materials for teachers, parents and students, including those who are home schooling. It is a valuable resource for local and family history researchers as it holds a collection of local history materials including the Murrumbidgee Cemeteries Database, and microfilm copies of the Narrandera Ensign from 1888-1913 and the Narrandera Argus from 1899 to the present day.

The mobile library vehicle provides a visiting service to schools and pre-schools in Narrandera, Barellan and Binya, as well as providing town stops and a home library service in Barellan, Binya, Grong Grong and Narrandera.



## MULTICULTURALISM

Council acknowledges the diversity of people within the community and residents have access to LOTE (Languages other than English) materials and resources through Narrandera Shire Library, the Western Riverina Libraries co-operative and via the State Library of NSW.

Customer service team members are aware of the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) where telephone or online assistance is available for people who do not speak English and for English speakers who need to communicate with them.

Brochures and publications in languages other than English are readily available from the NSW Office of Local Government website.

## NARRANDERA SHIRE CULTURAL PLAN

The Narrandera Shire Cultural Plan 2021-31 was adopted in May 2021 and is a 10- year guide for Council's investment in the arts and cultural sector. It is intended to be actioned within the context of Council's Long Term Financial Plan, Community Strategic Plan, Disability Inclusion Action Plan, Positive Aging and Youth Strategies.

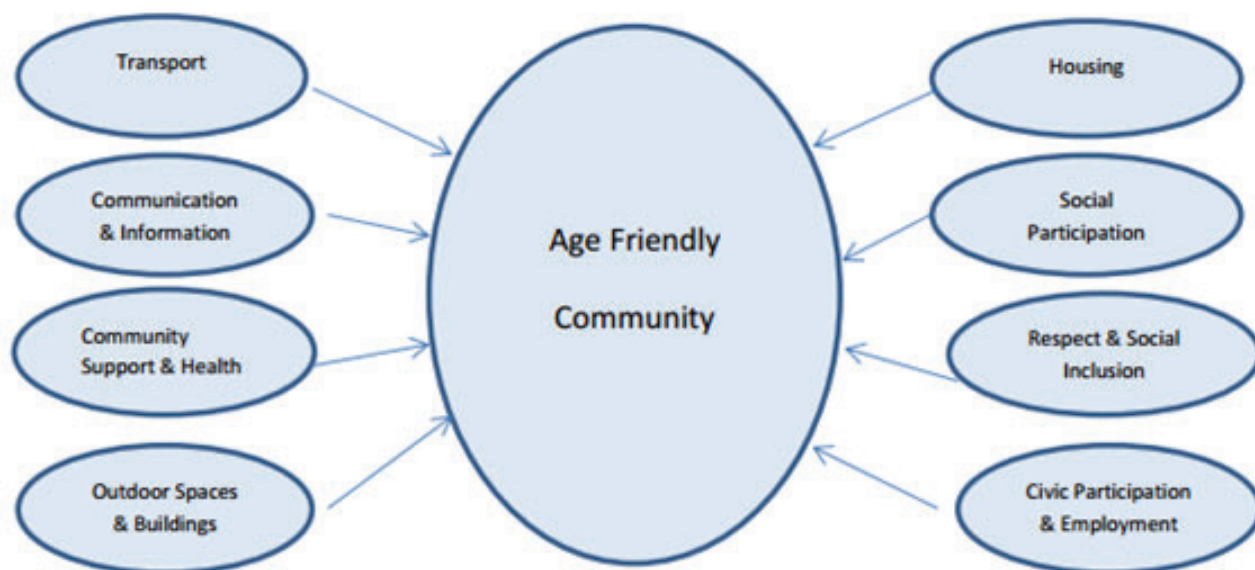
The Arts and Cultural Advisory Committee has been actively working on the Cultural Plan goal of Developing an environment of accessible and inclusive arts and culture for residents and visitors through the Wide Open Narrandera program that they co-ordinate and run in conjunction with NACNET (Narrandera Arts and Creative Network).



## POSITIVE AGEING STRATEGY

Positive Ageing means creating an aged-friendly community by enhancing the quality of life for older people. This can be achieved through the provision of opportunities for improving and preserving a person's health, their independence, their degree of personal responsibility and their participation and security within the community.

The Positive Ageing Strategy identifies priority issues, addresses Council's role, and outlines actions both in the short and medium term. The strategy is also integrated into Council's Community Strategic Plan.





Although Council has adopted the Positive Ageing Strategy, this does not mean all of the issues identified can be completed by Council alone. Often Council requires the support, resources, goodwill and assistance of community groups, business community, individuals and other levels of Government. For example, where there is a need for additional services at the local hospital this is the responsibility of the NSW State Government, however Council can act as an advocate on behalf of the community.

Council provides funding for the annual Seniors' Festival in Narrandera. This year it was augmented by grant funding allowing an extensive local program for Narrandera Seniors Festival 2023. As part of the Strategy in 2022-23, Council ran and auspiced a range of Tech Savvy Seniors programs providing skills training in devices and connectivity.

## **DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN**

The Narrandera Shire Council Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017-21 (DIAP) is guiding Council to meet its requirements under the Disability Inclusion Act, 2014. The Disability Inclusion Act, 2014 has four focus areas:

- Developing positive attitudes and behaviours
- Creating liveable communities
- Supporting access to meaningful employment
- Improving access to services through provision of better systems and processes.

Council initiated extensive consultation with the community during 2021 and 2022 to develop the latest Disability Inclusion Action Plan titled Our Disability Inclusion Action Plan – 2022-26 and ongoing consultation ensures that priorities remain current and appropriate budgets are included. The annual update on the progress of the Disability Inclusion Action 2022-26 is included in this report as Attachment E.

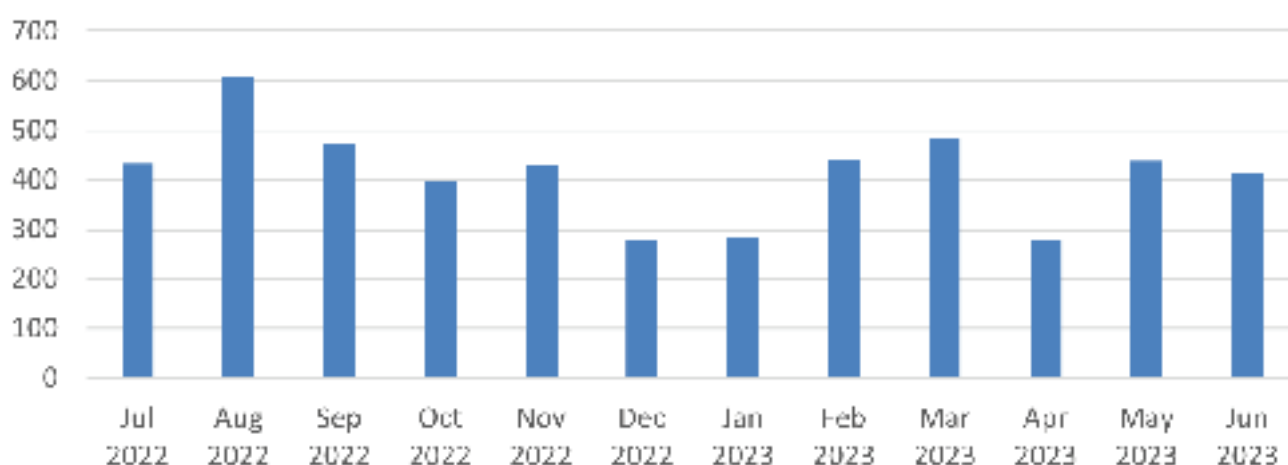


## COMMUNITY TRANSPORT AND HOME SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Narrandera Shire Council services both Narrandera and Leeton Shires and administers five services under the Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP), supported by four part-time employees, one casual employee, 22 volunteers and a fleet of 10 vehicles. Narrandera Shire CHSP services are located within the Community Services Building at 4 Victoria Square in Narrandera, while the Leeton Community Transport Office is located within the Multi-Services Building at 3 Wade Avenue, Leeton.

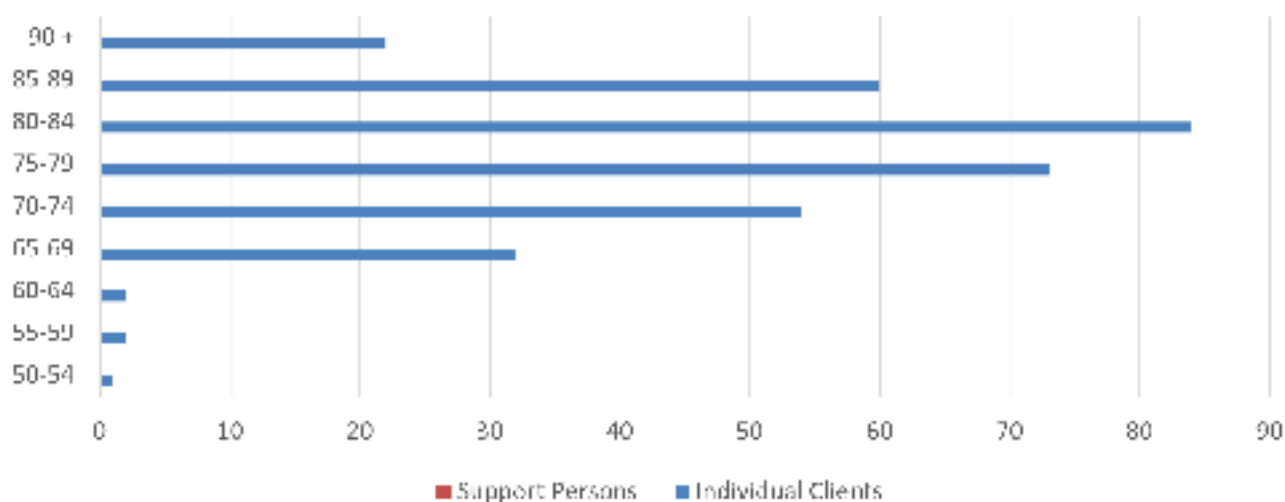
The Commonwealth Home Support Programs funded through the Commonwealth Government are aimed at helping aged community members remain safely in their own homes. During the 2022-23 reporting year, Council provided services such as community transport, social support, flexible respite, home modifications and maintenance to over 356 individual clients aged 65 years and older, or 50 years and over for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

### Trips Per Month



*Community Transport clients 65 years and older or 50 Years and older for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander per month.*

### Home Support Clients by Age Range



Commonwealth Home Support clients by age group



## **COMMUNITY TRANSPORT - PROVIDING ACCESS FOR OUR COMMUNITIES**

The Narrandera Leeton Community Transport service is funded by Transport for NSW on behalf of the Commonwealth Government – the aim of the program is to provide access and social inclusion to the aged and transport disadvantaged members of the Narrandera Shire and Leeton Shire communities.

Clients aged 65 years and over, or 50 years and over for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, access Community Transport through the My Aged Care referral portal. Those who are transport disadvantaged can access Community Transport by registering for the service at the Community Services Building, Leeton Community Transport Office or by telephoning 02 6959 5558.

Community Transport works in partnership with organisations such as Murrumbidgee Local Health District, Murrumbidgee Primary Health Network, Marathon Health, Narrandera CanAssist and Leeton CanAssist to provide transport options to residents needing to attend medical appointments in Wagga Wagga, Griffith and Albury. Community Transport also works with the Narrandera Flag booking provider, providing vouchers to eligible clients for local out-of-hours transport needs.

Equally important is the transport provided to access the local community for shopping and social events. Where possible, prescheduled bus services are provided from Barellan to Leeton, Barellan to Wagga Wagga, Leeton to Wagga Wagga, Leeton to Griffith, and Narrandera to Wagga Wagga.

All Community Transport vehicles display Community Transport branding and are easily identifiable for clients and the general public. Whilst Community Transport did see a slight decline in service delivery due to COVID-19, in 2022-23 the Narrandera- Leeton Community Transport provided 14,254 trips to residents and travelled over 214,869 kilometres, providing services to over 1,400 active clients. Many of the clients use the service on a regular basis as their sole means of transport.

Wheelchair accessible vehicles are located in both Narrandera and Leeton Shires, with the service increasing its wheelchair accessible vehicles from three to four to accommodate the loss of a wheelchair accessible taxi in Leeton.

CanAssist had limited opportunities for fundraising due to the COVID-19 pandemic. To ensure CanAssist was able to continue to support local community members, Community Transport provided free transport to CanAssist clients.

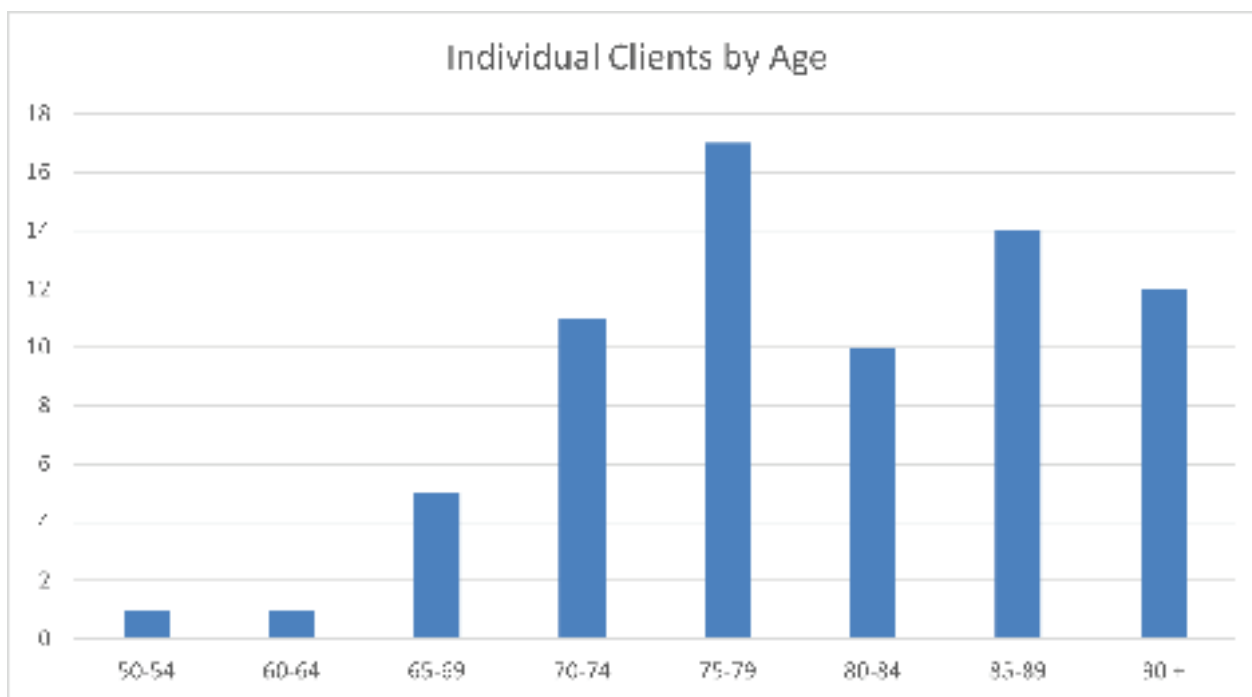
Narrandera and Leeton Community Transport relies heavily on the incredible generosity of 22 volunteer drivers who worked a staggering 8,800 hours within the reporting period.

## **SOCIAL SUPPORT AND RESPITE**

Social isolation is a critical issue for the aged. Through Social Support services provided by CHSP workers and volunteers, eligible clients are assisted to remain integrated in the community, leading to better health and well-being. Under this program, a staff or volunteer companion assists clients to attend social activities of the client's choice. This is a flexible program and has been highly successful in making a real difference to socially isolated people. For the 2022-23 reporting year, over 2,786 hours of combined Social Support was provided to 68 clients located within both Narrandera and Leeton Shires.

Social support services include day trips and outings, coffee shop visits, shopping, running errands, a quiet drive, or even a cup of tea and chat at home. Narrandera Leeton Social Support also offers large groups outings such as trips to the Whitton Malthouse and Altina Wildlife Park.

A small program for respite care is provided, primarily for the benefit of carers of frail aged people or people with a disability. It allows the carer to have time out to attend to personal matters.



## HOME MODIFICATION AND MAINTENANCE

Home modification is a service where the necessary changes are made to a client's home to allow them to move around safely and continue living in their own home. Many clients are referred to the service upon discharge from hospital. Modifications are clinically assessed by an occupational therapist and include fitting of handrails, ramps and handheld showers. For the reporting year, 25 clients were assisted with modifications.

Under the home maintenance program, eligible CHSP clients access services such as yard and garden maintenance, changing light globes, replacing tap washers. The emphasis of this program is to assist clients to maintain their home environment as a safe and habitable area. A total of 592 hours of maintenance was provided during the 2022-23 reporting year.

## MY AGED CARE

As of 1 July 2015, all clients over 65, or over 50 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders must apply for services through the My Aged Care portal. If seeking only one service, the client is assessed over the phone and a referral sent to the service for eligible clients. Where client needs are more complex, they are referred to the Regional Assessment Service (RAS) for a face-to-face assessment.

## NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is a program funded by the Commonwealth Government to help persons under 65 years of age, or 50 years of age for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, who live with a significant or permanent disability. This program commenced on 1 January 2018 providing people with a disability a choice and greater control over the support services that they receive. It is designed to facilitate greater access for community members and to help set goals for a successful future.

When the NDIS is fully operational it is estimated that 140,000 people with a disability in New South Wales alone will have access to support services.

## Compliance with the NSW Carers (Recognition) Act 2010

The Act establishes obligations for public sector agencies and additional obligations for human service agencies. For Council this means ensuring that its employees and agents have an awareness and understanding of the NSW Carers' Charter. Council employees and volunteers are made aware of their obligations at induction.

Events like National Volunteer Week recognise the valuable contribution that volunteers make to the community as a whole.

## The Arts

### NARRANDERA ARTS AND COMMUNITY CENTRE

The Narrandera Arts and Community Centre experienced a major change in the past year with temporary relocation of the Visitor Information Centre (VIC) into the performance area of the building while work progresses on the new Destination and Discovery Hub.

Although halving the useable exhibition space, the temporary relocation of the Visitor Information Centre provided a unique opportunity for local artists to hold exhibitions through the Wide Open Narrandera 2022-23 program. The program saw the activation of the Arts Centre, during the period when the centre was also hosting The Visitor Information Centre, with a series of monthly exhibitions featuring local and locally connected artists.

The Committee is continuing to review the plan and will work with the Narrandera Arts and Creative Network, Western Riverina Arts and LCAIN to identify opportunities and work towards achieving more of the plan's goals.

### MUSEUMS

Narrandera Shire Council supports two volunteer-run museums. Narrandera Parkside Cottage Museum and Barellan Museum are operated by committees with assistance from Council employees. Council partners with Museums and Galleries NSW to fund a part-time museum advisor to assist with development and sustainability of the museums.

Both museums received Culture, Heritage and Arts Regional Tourism (CHART) grant funding this year. Parkside Museum was also successful in obtaining funds for a residency by Dr David Kaus who is advising on the First Nations and the Lethbridge Collections. An Activation project working with a variety of artists through the CAD Factory and the grant funded Soundscape Project, developed in partnership with the CAD Factory pairing local stories with one of Parkside's vintage telephone exchanges, is now up and running and creating much interest with younger visitors.

### Western Riverina Arts Board

WRA is dedicated to actively supporting the development and promotion of the arts in the Narrandera, Leeton and Murrumbidgee Shires and the City of Griffith Council. The Board and Regional Arts Director's mission is to ensure the vitality and sustainability of our community's diverse and rich culture. The Arts Board, funded by Regional Arts NSW and the local government areas, works in partnership with artists and communities to encourage participation, involvement and passion for all things creative in the Western Riverina.



## COMMUNITY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Council contributed a total of \$14,652 to a number of community organisations across the reporting year for a variety of projects and contributed financially to a number of special projects.

The contributions were contributed or granted by Council in accordance with Section 356 of the Local Government Act 1993.

2022-2023 Financial Assistance	Value
AAPA – rental subsidy	\$5,082.00
Australian Air League	\$1,300.00
Barellan and District Netball Association	\$1,500.00
CWA Narrandera Evening Branch	\$1,000.00
Immune Deficiencies Foundation	\$480.00
Narrandera Meals on Wheels	\$2,000.00
Narrandera Pre-school	\$1,950.00
Narrandera Rodeo Committee	\$300.00
School academic awards within the Shire and TAFE NSW	\$560.00
South Wagga Rotary Club	\$480.00

Council supported the community in other ways such as:

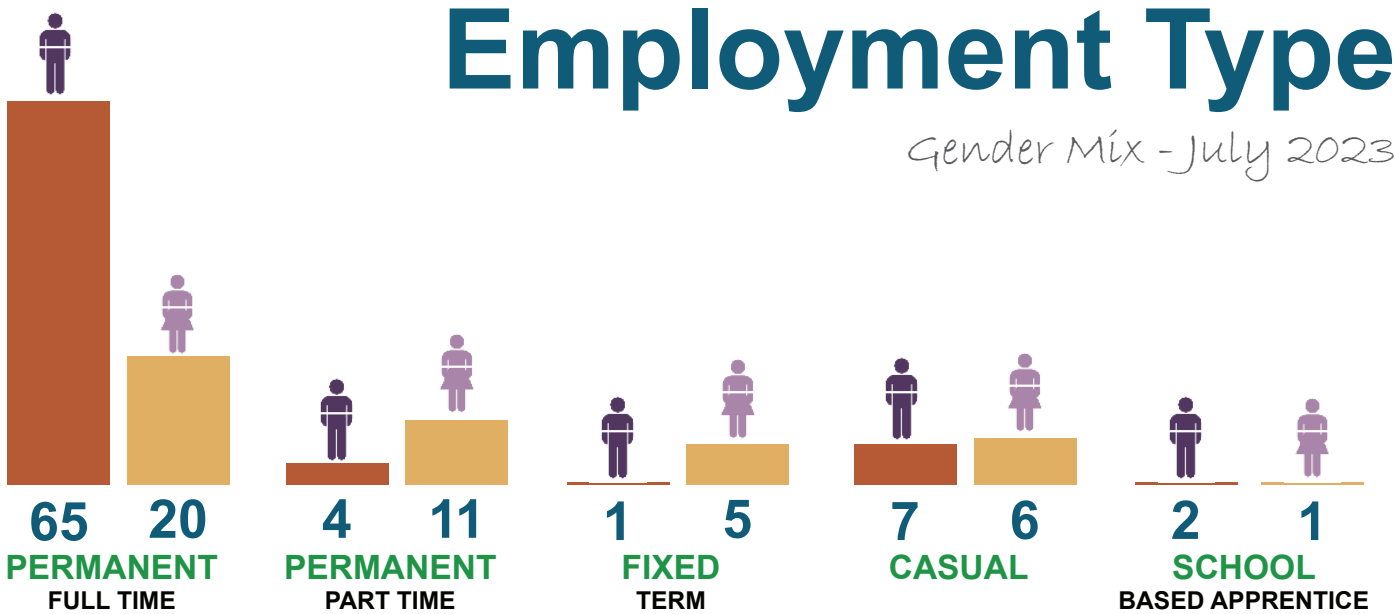
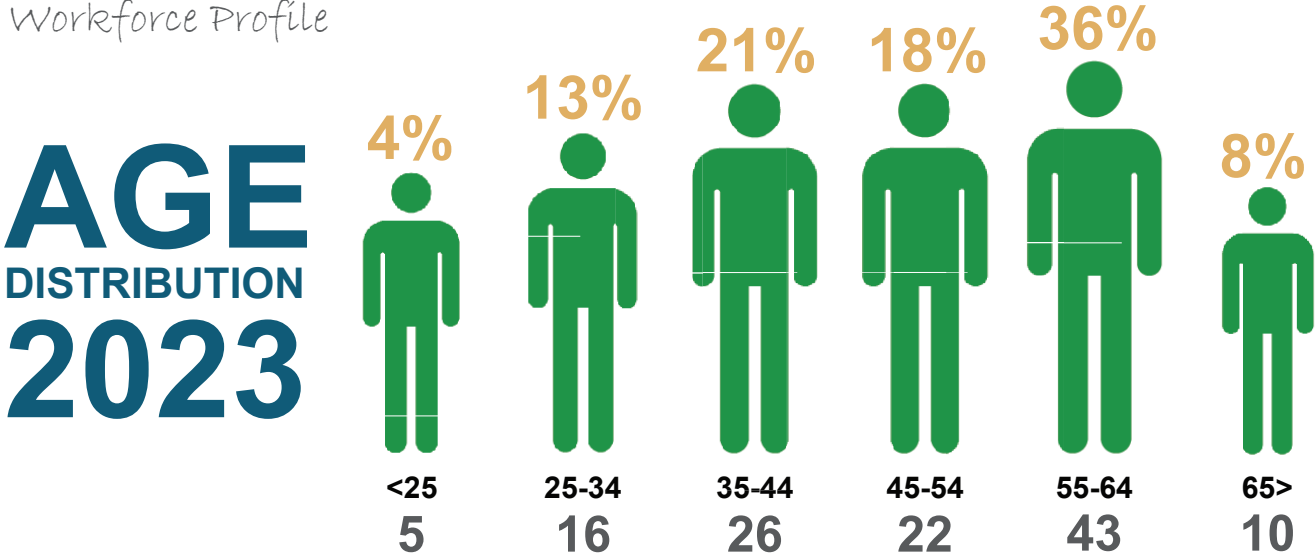
- Assistance by subsidising community art exhibitions at the Narrandera Arts and Community Centre, six months totalling approximately \$1,200 (incl GST).
- Subsidisation of rental for two tenants of Council-owned properties.
- The former residence at the Narrandera-Leeton Airport has been leased to the Australian Airline Pilot Academy (AAPA) as a debriefing centre for use by trainee pilots. It is hoped that the AAPA will recognise the significance of the airport location and the commitment of Council to enhancing the aviation industry that, at a future date, the airport may be considered as the site of a new flight school. Rental subsidy for the debriefing centre for 2022-23 was \$5,200.
- A residential property owned by Council is currently leased by a doctor from the Narrandera Medical Centre. A subsidised rental is provided to retain a skilled professional in Narrandera and the 2022-23 subsidy was \$9,880.
- Narrandera and District Community Radio has a licence agreement with Council for the use of space on the 3 Ngurang Road communications tower. The agreement states that no rental is to be charged to the Narrandera and District Community Radio and for 2022-23 the subsidy equates to \$3,183.91 (incl GST).
- Council also receives requests to waive user fees and charges such as the annual Golden Boot Challenge at the Narrandera Sportsground.



OUR PEOPLE  
Human Resources

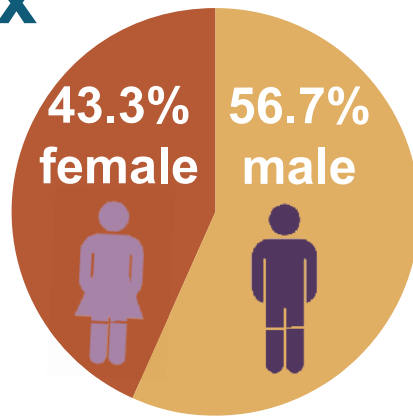
Council continues to recognise that its human capital is one of its most valuable resources and strives to develop a highly skilled and motivated workforce. The 2022-26 Workforce Management Plan was developed, endorsed and adopted by Council during the reporting period.

Workforce Profile

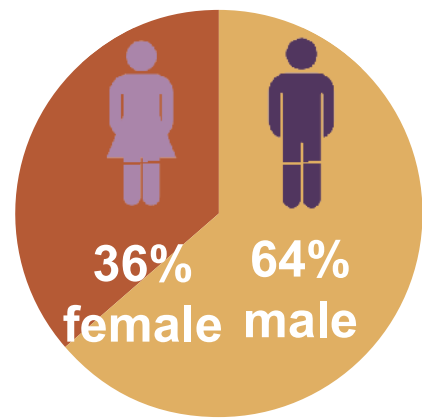


## Gender Mix

Whole  
Organisation  
July 2023



2017



2023

Whole  
Organisation

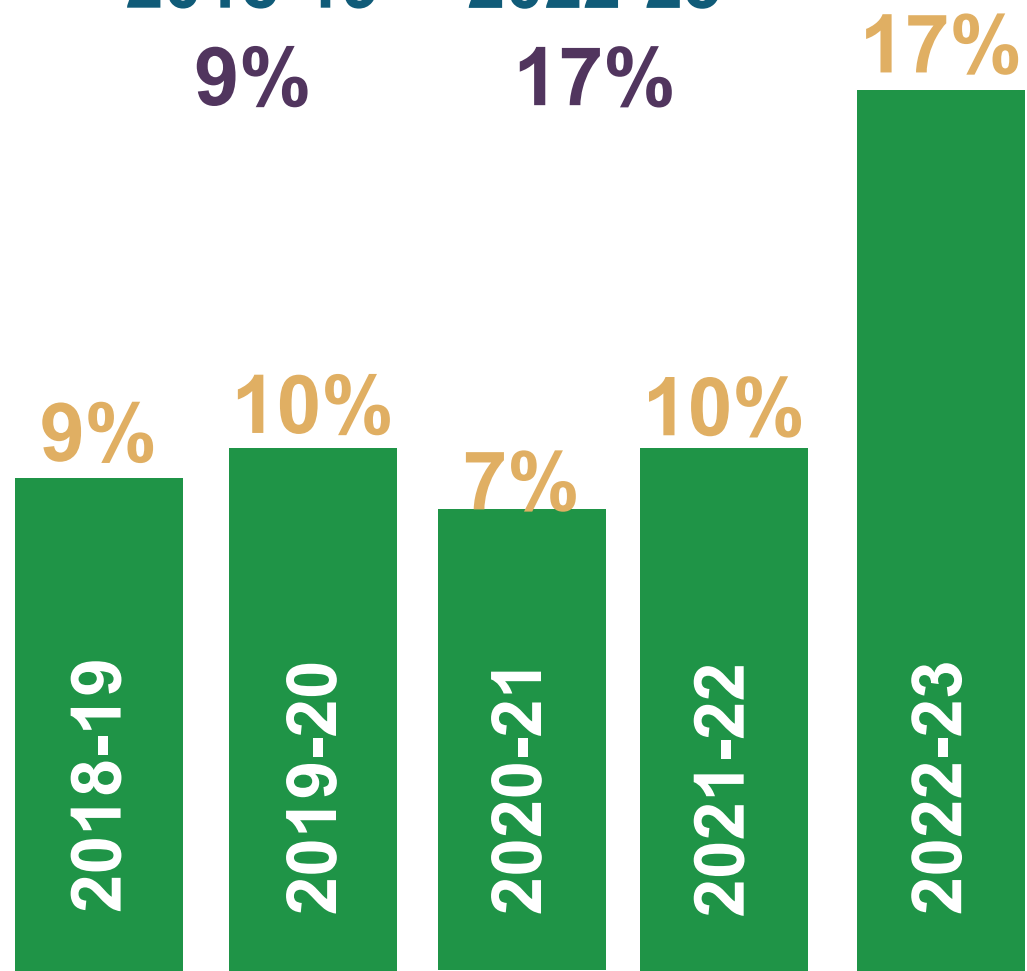
## EMPLOYEE TURNOVER

2018-19

9%

2022-23

17%



## Employee Training

Employees attend training to maintain and develop the skills required by Council to fulfil its statutory obligations and to efficiently carry out its functions to serve the residents of Narrandera Shire.

A training needs analysis is prepared annually as part of the performance review process so priorities for training can be determined. Individual and organisational training plans are developed, and training recommended within the constraints of the available budget according to the following hierarchy:

1. Legislative requirement (such as traffic control qualifications)
2. Essential skill competency for salary progression
3. The organisation is at risk by not having knowledge/training.
4. Supports the Community Strategic Plan
5. An identified area of required skill development.

Employees, with their respective manager/supervisor and Human Resources, have a joint responsibility to ensure that training targets are achieved and managed.

Training Cost by Category for 2022-2023	Cost
Category 1 legislative requirement	\$ 22,010.00
Category 2 required competency	\$ 17,052.81
Category 3 organisational risk	\$ 25,184.12
Category 4 supports Community Strategic Plan	\$ 3,984.00
Category 5 required skill development	
WHS training	\$ 13,006.00
Other training costs (includes wages, plant, creditors)	\$ 14,649.73
Higher education	\$ 23,269.00
Total	\$ 119,155.66

## Attainment of Qualifications

Four employees achieved qualifications with the support of Council

Qualification	Number of Employees
Bachelor of Business (Marketing)	1
Certificate IV in Accounting and Bookkeeping	1
Certificate II in Business – School Based Apprentice	1
Certificate IV in Business (Records and Information Management)	1

## New Employees

New employees, volunteers, school-based apprentices and work placement students are required to complete an induction program. The program takes each individual through the employee handbook, work, health and safety requirements, policies and Council's Code of Conduct requirements.

14 inductions were undertaken, including the following work placement students and school-based apprentices.



*Left to right: IT School Based Apprentice – Charlie Ireland, library School Based Apprentice – Lydia Murcia, Events School Based Apprentice - Memphis Singh, Year 10 Work Placement Student from Narrandera High School - Will Thornton.*

## Performance Appraisal System

Ongoing appraisals are undertaken in accordance with the Local Government (State) Award and Council's salary system policy. Council continues to improve the online employee performance management system (EPM) and has purchased add-on modules to complement and enhance the module.

## Narrandera Shire Council Consultative Committee

Council's Consultative Committee meets bi-monthly and comprises elected union and employee representatives and management representatives. The Local Government (State) Award identifies key areas of consultation, and these are confirmed in the Committee's constitution. The Committee provides a participative forum to consult and discuss matters of mutual concern, devise solutions and work cooperatively in workplace reform.

While the Committee does not have power to make decisions, it endorses proposed actions, suggests alternative actions, and can make recommendations to management. Committee members act on behalf of their constituents by raising matters for consideration, providing feedback, and acting as a conduit between employees and management.

## Equal Employment Opportunities

Council actively supports the principles of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) in the areas of recruitment, selection criteria, training and employee development programs, promotion and conditions of employment. By engaging the EEO principles, Council ensures that all employees (or future employees) have an equal opportunity to enjoy a rewarding and challenging career with Council.

The following table provides insight into how the composition of the Narrandera Shire Council workforce has changed since 2004.



<b>EEO Groups % of total workforce at Narrandera Shire Council</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
Women in leadership roles	2.40%	3.75%	2.51%	4.59%	6.06%	5.88%	6.55%
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people	4.94%	6.25%	5.03%	4.59%	9.09%	10.92%	10.65%
People from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD)	0%	1.25%	3.35%	1.83%	1.51%	1.68%	0.81%
Youth (under 25)	4.94%	6.25%	2.51%	4.58%	6.81%	6.72%	4.09%
People with disability requiring work-related adjustment	1.23%	1.25%	0.84%	0.92%	1.51%	0.84%	0.81%

The objectives of Council's EEO Policy are:

- Eliminate and ensure the absence of discrimination in employment on the grounds of race, sex, religion, marital status, sexual preference and physical and/or intellectual impairment in Council.
- Promote equal employment opportunities for all employees.
- Ensure confidentiality for all applicants for positions with Council.

Council has a focus on groups who are under-represented in the workforce, by encouraging employment applications including:

- Women in senior leadership roles
- Aboriginal people
- People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds (CALD)
- Young people (under 25 years of age)
- People living with a disability.

The concept and application of workplace diversity is not limited to the above groups. It also embraces other aspects of employees' life and identity including:

- Age
- Carer's responsibilities
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity
- Educational level
- Socio-economic background
- Gender balance in non-traditional roles.

## Annual Reporting of Labour Statistics

Circular 23-08 issued by the Office of Local Government 10 July 2023 requires Councils to report on their labour statistics within the Annual Report at a specific 'relevant day' – for the 2022-23 reporting year.

On the date specified, Wednesday 23 November 2022, the following were directly employed by Council and performed paid work:

Status	Number of Persons
Permanent full-time	74
Permanent part-time	7
Casual	4
Fixed-term contract	7

On Wednesday 23 November 2022, the following information also applied:

Status	Number of Persons
Senior staff	1
Engaged under contract or other arrangement with employer wholly or principally for the labour	0
Supplied under a contract or other arrangement with employer as apprentice or trainee	0

## Senior Staff

At 30 June 2023 Council had one designated senior staff position being the General Manager. The total value of the remuneration package of the General Manager was \$323,234 comprising:

- salary component of \$286,391 (inclusive of rental subsidy of \$7,040)
- 10.5% superannuation guarantee amount of \$28,606.
- \$8,237 in Fringe Benefits.

## Employee Assistance Program

Council offers an Employee Assistance Program that provides confidential and professional assistance for employees experiencing difficulties of a personal or work-related nature.

## Workplace Health and Safety (WHS)

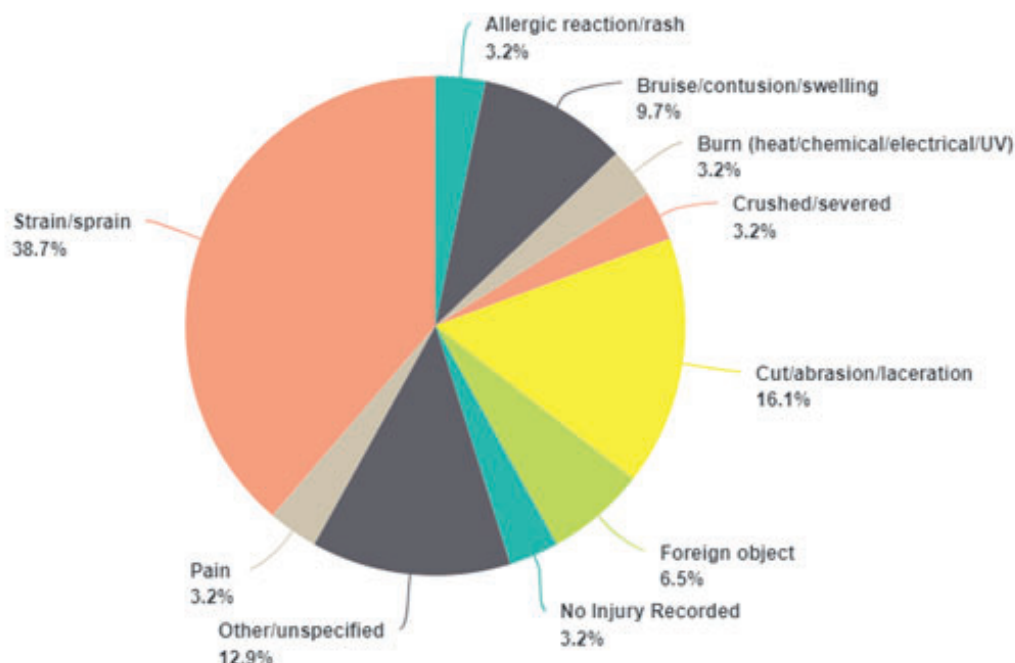
The Enterprise Risk Management Plan (ERM) promotes an integrated approach to risk management across all areas of Council. The ERM was actioned across the organisation during the 2022-23 reporting year. The Council's Enterprise Risk Register was continually discussed at senior management meetings, and reviewed and updated periodically to ensure all emerging risks were identified and mitigated.

Risk identification is an essential part of every job and aims to decrease the number of incidents and injuries. Risks that could affect workers, the community and the environment are continually reviewed and, once identified, are considered in all decision making. To highlight the importance of risk management and ensure workers are informed and using risk management in their everyday roles, WHS Responsibilities and Risk Management training has been arranged for all managers and supervisors.

The number of work-related injuries and accidents continues to decline, with near miss and incident (not resulting in injuries) reports increasing. This is pleasing to show that there is more awareness around risk. The focus will now be on reducing hazards and risks identified through the near miss reporting.

## Details of Injuries/Incidents for 2021-2022

### Mix of Injuries/Illnesses, Current Status



### Workplace Health and Safety Committee

The Workplace Health and Safety Committee (WHSC) meets bi-monthly to discuss all WHS matters. The Committee continues to review new and reviewed policies and procedures and assists in the planning of Council's WHS objectives. The hazard inspection schedule is carried out monthly by the Enterprise Risk and Safety Officer (ERSO) accompanied by a committee member, inspecting Council properties and worksites. These inspections continue to be a high priority and allow teams the opportunity to rectify hazards as they arise. The WHSC works with each section to implement changes to rectify any hazards identified to ensure a safe working environment. In-house training has been arranged for all Committee members on their roles and responsibilities as a part of the Committee. Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS) are a high priority and continue to be reviewed for each specific project to ensure compliance, that all site-specific risks have been assessed, and action plans developed to mitigate any risks.

Council's COVID-19 risk management plan was reviewed and adjusted to reflect the current pandemic conditions with the safety of workers and community a priority. These documents have been updated based on Government advice.

### Health and Well Being Day

Employee programs provide employees with a valuable insight into issues which may be affecting their health and provide options on how to improve their wellbeing. The Human Resources team held a Health and Wellbeing Day for all employees in December 2022. This initiative included sessions on exercise, nutrition, mental health and cancer awareness. After a successful day, the health and wellbeing day will become an annual event.



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Narrandera Economic Development Strategy

Narrandera Shire Council has updated its Economic Development Strategy (EDS) for 2023-26, focusing on achieving positive economic outcomes and long-term economic growth to support businesses and residents. The comprehensive five-year plan is the result of targeted consultation with key stakeholders and the community, ensuring that it aligns with the specific needs and aspirations of the Narrandera Shire.

The consultation process provided a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by the local businesses and communities, enabling the strategy to be tailored accordingly and ensuring the project reflects community values and considers industry needs.

The primary objective of the Narrandera Economic Development Strategy is to boost job creation and facilitate business growth within the region. The strategy aims to attract new businesses, while supporting the expansion and diversification of existing ones. By encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation, the strategy seeks to foster a vibrant and dynamic business community that will contribute to the overall growth and prosperity of Narrandera Shire.

### Narrandera Connectivity Roadshow

The Connectivity Roadshow was an initiative aimed at addressing connectivity issues in the region and providing valuable information and support to the local community. The roadshow aimed to address connectivity issues faced by residents and businesses in the Narrandera Shire and was attended by a variety of stakeholders, including residents, business owners, and community leaders, indicating a broad representation of the local community.

The Regional Tech Hub offered independent advice and assistance on connectivity issues, navigating phone and internet options, understanding different types of connections, data plans, and ways to save on plans. Telstra, as a major telecommunications provider, presented sessions focusing on their services in the region, network coverage, an update on the 3G closure, and information on 4G and 5G technologies. Attendees had the opportunity to ask questions and seek help with home and mobile connectivity issues.

The Tech Exec conducted workshops and mentoring sessions covering effective use of devices, understanding device operations, cybersecurity, using the internet for everyday tasks, and safely choosing and using relevant apps.

The roadshow successfully identified connectivity issues in the region, such as bad coverage in rural areas, poor internet connections, problems with the National Broadband Network, internet plans, and the lack of awareness about available technologies and services to overcome connectivity challenges. It encouraged community engagement by providing a forum for sharing experiences and concerns related to connectivity.

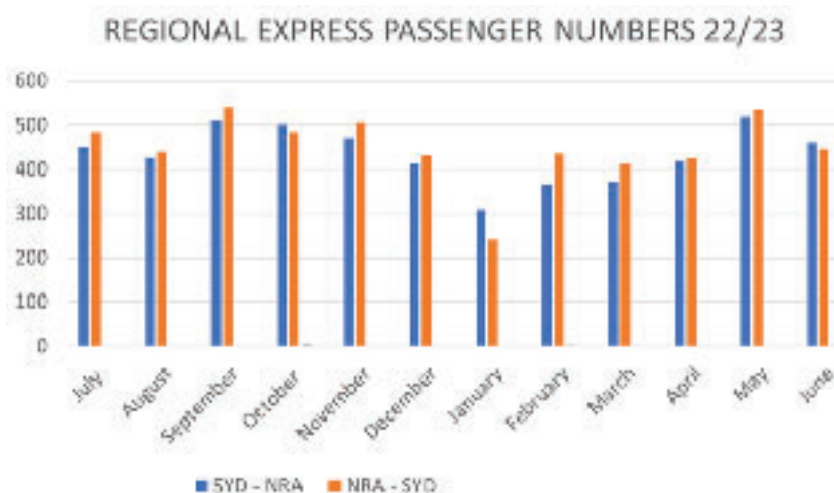
Overall, the Connectivity Roadshow appears to have been a valuable tool in addressing connectivity issues and fostering communication between the community and relevant stakeholders. By identifying challenges and engaging various parties, the roadshow has set the groundwork for potential solutions and improvements in connectivity in Narrandera Shire.





## REX / Australian Airline Pilot Academy (AAPA)

REX airlines and the Australian Airline Pilot Academy (AAPA) provides essential aviation services within Narrandera Shire. REX offers regular passenger flights to and from Narrandera Airport, providing convenient travel options for residents and tourists. During the 2022-23 reporting period 5,220 passengers travelled Sydney-Narrandera and 5,388 passengers travelled from Narrandera-Sydney. Main customer profiles include travel for medical, business and events.



As a leading aviation education institution, AAPA has state-of-the-art facilities, experienced instructors and comprehensive flight training programs to train the next generation of pilots. Council maintains an ongoing contact with AAPA to assist the proposal to establish a satellite training facility in Narrandera. AAPA continues to use the airport residence as a briefing centre for trainee pilots and their instructors, and negotiations towards the higher objective are ongoing. Council subsidises the AAPA by paying rent for the briefing centre property which amounted to \$5,200 for the reporting year.

## Reverse Vending Machine

The Reverse Vending Machine (RVM) continues to be very successful, with significant volumes deposited throughout the year and vouchers redeemable locally at Coles Supermarket Narrandera. The vouchers have enabled an increased number of shoppers to spend at a local venue, potentially bolstering local employment.

Over the 2022-23 financial year a total of 2,353,029 containers were deposited at the Narrandera facility. A total of \$214,211.00 was provided to community members in vouchers.

Breakdown of amounts collected from Coles Supermarket Narrandera are shown on to the right.

The benefit of having a local RVM and redeemable location means that shopper drift to other centres has reduced. This strongly meets the Narrandera Business Group and Council's joint objective of people shopping locally. Another positive is the notable reduction in roadside bottles and cans.

Month	Amount	Month	Amount		
July	\$13,219.10	January	\$25,106.70		
August	\$10,488.50	February	\$19,918.20		
September	\$15,140.60	March	\$19,363.00	TOTAL	\$214,211.00
October	\$20,006.40	April	\$23,221.60		
November	\$15,565.10	May	\$15,244.00		
December	\$18,873.50	June	\$18,064.30		

**Solar Farm Developments**

A key driver of economic activity in Narrandera Shire has been the rise of solar farms. Several farms are being established in the Shire, bringing substantial investment and job opportunities to the community.

Avonlie Solar Farm commenced construction mid–2022 with the project being commissioned in mid-2023. Once completed the Avonlie Solar Farm will comprise more than 450,000 solar panels with a total energy capacity of up to 245MW(DC). Once complete, Avonlie Solar Farm will generate approximately 500 gigawatt hours of renewable energy per year. During the peak construction phase the project created 200 direct and 320 indirect jobs and, once completed, the facility will create four direct and 12 indirect jobs during the operational phase.

Yarrabee Solar Farm Stage 1 construction is yet to commence, with a projected early-2024 start. The project is expected to support between 150-200 positions during construction phase and 10-15 positions during the operational phase.

The Grong Grong Solar Farm’s Haystacks Solar Garden will host Australia’s first large-scale solar garden. This farm is being developed by Komo Energy, partnering with communities, landholders and businesses who want to invest in, develop and benefit from renewable energy. The project, which has a connection agreement with Essential Energy, commenced construction in late 2022.

**Small Area Labour Market Statistics**

Council’s Economic Development section monitors the Small Area Labour Market quarterly results to observe trends for Narrandera Shire and other rural centres within NSW. Unemployment numbers fluctuated during the period, with unemployment sitting at 4.3% during the March 2023 quarter. The Small Area Labour Market data for Narrandera was consistent in its movements for the period when compared with other Riverina towns.

Small area labour market statistics for Narrandera, source Small Area Labour Markets data: Department of Jobs and Small Business.

Quarter/Year	Unemployment	Labour Force
June 2022	122 persons or 4.4%	2,795 persons
Sept 2022	144 persons or 5%	2,786 persons
Dec 2022	151 persons or 5.2%	2, 889 persons
Mar 2023	126 persons or 4.3%	2,939 persons

**Flexible Options Housing Estate**

Council owns a suitably zoned parcel of land on the corner of Crescent and Elwin Streets in Narrandera where an area of 1.4 hectares is available for residential development. The site has the potential for over 20 two- and/or three-bedroom homes set in an environment conducive to independent secure living, but also offers the opportunity for a suitable mixed housing estate.

Council commissioned concept plans for an independent living style development to fulfill the needs of downsizing local seniors and continues to seek expressions of interest from potential partners.

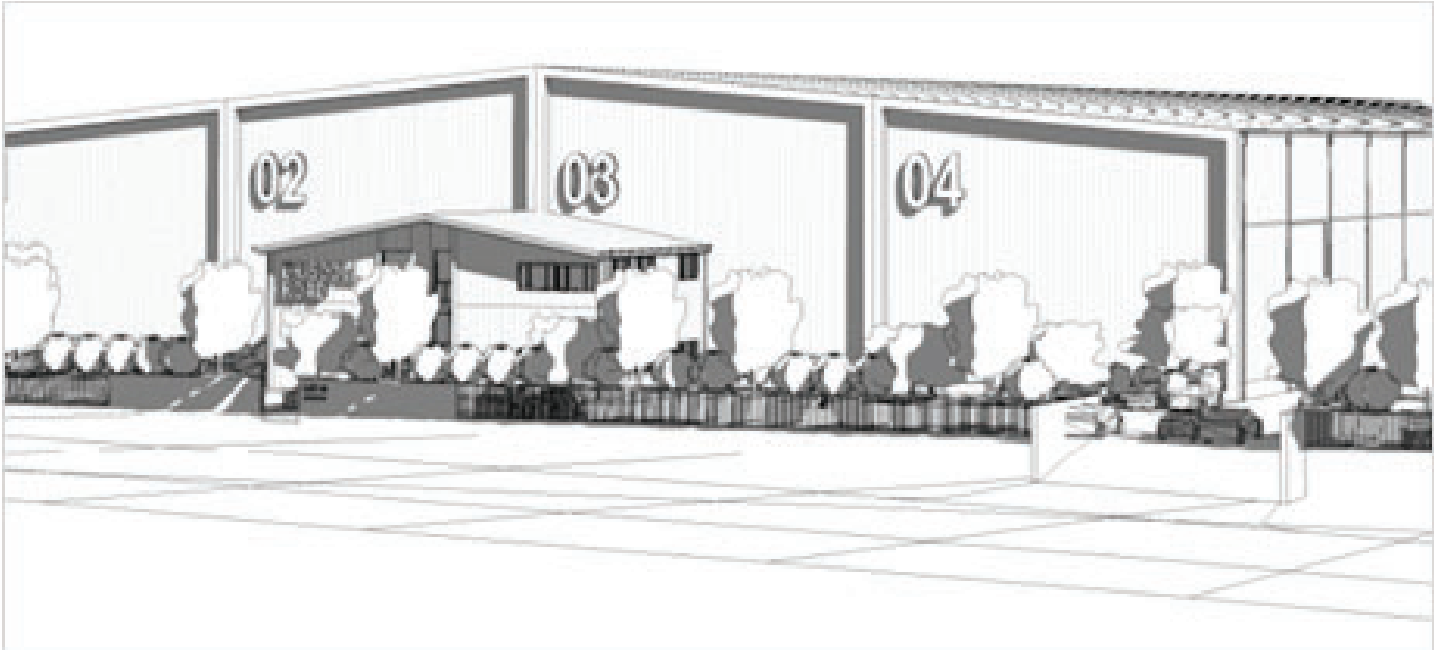
**Red Hill Industrial Estate**

The existing Red Hill Industrial Estate has reached capacity of available land, leaving limited options for new businesses or the expansion of existing ones. This situation poses a significant challenge for economic development and attracting new investments to the area. Council is investigating funding for expansion of the industrial estate to address this shortfall.

## **Bhullar Group**

Narrandera Shire welcomes the Bhullar Group and its construction of a steel fabrication factory valued at \$14.2M. The investment will not only provide economic benefits to the Bhullar Group but will contribute to the local community through new job creation for up to 150 staff. Additionally, the investment has helped in development of infrastructure which indirectly supports other local businesses. Bhullar's development will lead to advancements in engineering technology in the region.

Michael Bhullar, from Bhullar Group said "We are very excited to commence stage 1 of our major manufacturing and fabrication facilities in Narrandera. This project will deliver growth, employment as well as partnering opportunities with local businesses. From Narrandera, Bhullar Group will be able to contribute to the construction and infrastructure landscape nationally."



*Concept drawings – Bhullar Group*

## **MARKETING AND TOURISM**

### **Visit Riverina Membership**

By actively participating in Visit Riverina as a member council, Narrandera Shire has enjoyed numerous benefits including regional collaboration and collective marketing efforts, allowing pooled resources and amplified marketing messages. Narrandera has been promoted widely as an attractive destination within the broader Riverina region through this collaboration.

### **Attendance at the 2022 Canberra Caravan Camping Lifestyle Expo**

Participating in the 2022 Canberra Caravan Camping Lifestyle Expo as part of Visit Riverina was a strategic move yielding significant benefits.

The event provided a valuable opportunity to showcase the Shire and wider region to a diverse audience. Visitors, previously unaware of Narrandera Shire, left with a better understanding of its unique offerings and are more likely to consider future visits.

Presenting at such a prominent event successfully increased Narrandera's visibility and generated interest among potential tourists and caravan enthusiasts.

### **Tourism and Economic Development Coordinator Appointed Chair of Visit Riverina**

Appointment of the Tourism and Economic Development Coordinator as Chair of Visit Riverina reflects Council's commitment to driving regional tourism growth and further strengthening our collaborative efforts. Through this leadership role, Council will have an opportunity to shape the region's marketing strategies, leverage partnerships, and ensure that Narrandera has a voice at a regional level. This appointment enhances Council's reputation as a proactive and engaged participant in regional tourism initiatives.

## **Community Events Program Success**

Reconnecting Regional NSW - Community Events Program achieved remarkable success, contributing to the vibrancy and appeal of the region. Narrandera successfully hosted several notable events, each attracting a diverse range of visitors and locals alike.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA UPDATES**

### **Narrandera Tourism Facebook Page**

During the reporting period, the Narrandera Tourism Facebook page achieved a reach of 175,978 providing the audience with opportunities to view the page's posts and updates.

The reach of the Narrandera Tourism Facebook page experienced a notable increase of 32.2% compared to the previous period. This growth is significant and indicates an expanding audience for the page's content. The increase demonstrates that more people are being exposed to tourism-related information, updates, and promotions shared on the Facebook page. This positive trend suggests that the page's content is resonating with the target audience and attracting new followers or potential visitors to Narrandera.

The Facebook page visits for Narrandera Tourism during the reporting period totalled 25,048. Page visits refer to the number of times individuals clicked on the page to view its content, posts, and additional information. This metric provides insights into the level of interest generated by the page, as well as the engagement and interaction of Facebook users with the page's content.

The page visits data shows an impressive increase of 612.8% during the reporting period. This substantial growth indicates a significant rise in the number of people actively seeking information or engaging with the Narrandera Tourism Facebook page. The substantial increase in page visits demonstrates that users are not only viewing the page but also clicking through to explore the content and potentially engage further with the tourism offerings in Narrandera.

### **Updated Town Banners**

A recent project to update Shire banners aimed to enhance the visual appeal of these areas, create a sense of pride among locals, and leave a lasting impression on visitors. The new banners successfully transformed the town's entrances and main street, creating an inviting atmosphere that celebrates Narrandera's unique character and fosters a sense of belonging.

They also serve as a warm welcome to visitors contributing to a positive first impression, enticing visitors to further explore and discover the town's rich offerings.

### **Murrumbidgee Trails**

The Murrumbidgee Trails collaboration has been successful in maintaining steady engagement on social media platforms. The collaborative effort among the participating councils has allowed for consistent and coordinated social media content, ensuring a unified brand presence and message across channels. The engagement metrics, including likes, shares, comments, and post reach, reflect the sustained interest and active participation of the target audience. This continued engagement is vital for maintaining visibility, attracting potential visitors, and fostering a sense of community among locals and tourists alike.

The councils involved in the Murrumbidgee Trails collaboration are currently focused on developing a new brochure for 2024. The new brochure plays a crucial role in promoting the region as a desirable tourist destination and serves as a tangible resource providing comprehensive information about the region's attractions, accommodations, activities, and events. The collaborative approach in developing the brochure ensures a cohesive and well-rounded representation of the region, highlighting its unique selling points and encouraging visitation.

The sustained engagement on social media platforms and development of the new brochure signifies the continued commitment of participating councils to effectively promote the Murrumbidgee Trails region. The collaboration has demonstrated its ability to maintain and grow the region's presence on social media, thereby expanding reach and engagement with the target audience.



## Australia Day

Narrandera Shire celebrates Australia Day with a variety of community activities intrinsic to the values of our Shire and the popular celebrations were held at multiple locations. Council co-ordinates Australia Day activities through a volunteer committee and provides some financial assistance to ensure that events across the Shire are supported.

The Australia Day Awards and Citizenship Ceremony was held at Lake Talbot Water Park. The event included an 'Aussie breakfast' served by Narrandera Lions Club, Welcome to Country by Neville Bamblett, Citizenship Ceremony and addresses by Mayor Neville Kschenka, local Australia Day Ambassador Lindy Lou, local Australia Day Ambassador Lorraine Gawne, and Dance Performance by local dancers from Dinawans Connection.

Narrandera Shire award recipients for Australia Day 2023:

- Citizen of the Year – Rex Evans for notable service to the communities and sporting associations of Narrandera Shire.
- Young Citizen of the Year – Brooke Hall for notable service to the community during the preceding year.
- Senior Citizens of the Year – John Gerrard and Beverly Hughes for notable service to the community for many years.
- Environmental Citizen of the Year – Nella Smith for notable service to the community for environmental initiatives.
- Organisations of the Year – Barellan Working Clydesdale Committee and Kurrajong Supported Living for outstanding service/achievement by an organisation (business, group, club or committee) to the community of the Narrandera Shire in the preceding year.



Australia Day Award Recipients, our New Australian Citizens, Australia Day Ambassador Lindy Hou, Local Ambassador Lorraine Gawne and Mayor Kschenka

Australia Day flag raising ceremonies and luncheons were held at the Barellan War Memorial Swimming Pool and the Grong Grong Park/Royal Hotel Grong Grong.



In the afternoon community activities included free kayaking on Lake Talbot, roller disco at Pioneer Hall, water fun at the Lake Talbot Water Park and an Australia Day concert with River Country held at the Narrandera Ex-Servicemen's Club.

Over 100 people also participated in the Narrandera Survival Day March down East Street to celebrate the survival of the oldest living culture.



## Narrandera Hot Rod run 2023

The 50th Narrandera Hot Rod Run was a landmark event that brought together hot rodders and automotive enthusiasts from near and far. This annual gathering has been a long-standing tradition in Narrandera and the 50th edition was celebrated with great enthusiasm and appreciation. The event showcased the town's rich automotive culture, fostered community engagement, and left a lasting impact on all who attended.

**Recognition and Commemoration:** To honour the 50 years milestone, Narrandera Shire Council organised a special BBQ at Marie Bashir Park on Saturday to recognise and congratulate Earlies Custom Rods Club and the hot rodders. This gesture of appreciation and commemoration highlighted the significant contribution made by both the club and the participants in making the event a resounding success.

**User-Pays Policing Cruizin No Boozing:** In a pioneering move, this year's Narrandera Hot Rod Run introduced user-pays policing of the event, particularly the popular Cruizin No Boozing activities. This innovative approach received overwhelming support and appreciation from both hot rodders and attendees. The user-pays policing model ensured a safe and enjoyable environment for everyone involved, promoting responsible behaviour and contributing to the overall success of the event. This initiative set a positive example for similar events in the future, emphasizing the importance of community safety and responsibility.

**Enhanced Saturday Night Experience:** The 50th Narrandera Hot Rod Run featured exciting additions to the Saturday night program. A new light tower installed at the crossing of Elwin and East Streets illuminated the festivities and enhanced the overall ambience. Kiesling Lane was transformed into a hub of entertainment, providing attendees with live music in the evening. These enhancements elevated the event experience and highlighted Narrandera's commitment to creating memorable moments for both participants and visitors.

**Sunday Show N Shine:** The Sunday event was a resounding success, drawing a significant number of attendees and showcasing the impressive array of over 370 cars. This was a true celebration of automotive excellence, with participants proudly displaying their meticulously maintained vehicles. It also featured a variety of food stalls, live music performances, and a vibrant atmosphere that captured the spirit of the Narrandera Hot Rod Run.

The organisers and Mayor of Narrandera Shire Council were publicly acknowledged and thanked, recognising their dedication and support in making the event possible. Steven and Kathleen Alldrick, representing Earlies Custom Rods Club, were presented with a commemorative plaque, symbolising the importance of their dedication and passion for hot rodding.

## SHIRE EVENTS

### Narrandera Horse Trials

Held in August 2022, the equestrian event displayed the skills and talents of riders from various disciplines, drawing participants and spectators who share a passion for equestrian sports, and generated a significant economic impact through increased visitor expenditure and accommodation bookings.



### **Narrandera Community Race Day**

Narrandera Community Race Day provided horse racing, entertainment, as well as community engagement in December 2022. This event not only entertained attendees but also fostered a sense of camaraderie and local pride.

### **Narrandera Rodeo**

Held February 2023, the Narrandera Rodeo brought the excitement and traditions of rodeo to our region, captivating audiences with thrilling competitions and family-friendly entertainment. The excellent attendance numbers boosted tourism and local business activity.

### **Narrandera Soroptimists - Wellness Day**

Narrandera Soroptimists provided a platform for health and wellness enthusiasts to gather, share knowledge, and promote well-being in May 2023. The event contributed to the overall well-being of our community and highlighted Narrandera as a hub for wellness initiatives.

### **A Bit of Country & BBQ**

Held at Narrandera Sportsground on 19 November 2022, A Bit of Country & BBQ was part of the NSW Government Community Events Program. It attracted around 350 attendees, directly involving 20 businesses and five community organisations, with 14 other businesses benefitting indirectly from the event.

A family-friendly experience with free admission and a variety of activities for all ages, it included a jumping castle, balloon sculpting, face painting, and farmyard plaster shapes. One of the highlights was the BBQ demonstrations conducted by Shannon Walker and Rob Gallina who presented different BBQ techniques with various meats, insights and tips. Michael Lyons and Leanne Higgins demonstrated BBQ techniques with a unique twist, using Bush Tucker flavours and proteins to add a local touch to the culinary experience. This area was a hit with attendees, particularly the samples available for tasting.

Live performances featured local contemporary singer Sameera Bashir, Texas Rose, and headline act Southbound XO contributing to the vibrant and enjoyable atmosphere.

### **Narrandera Koala Festival**

The festival was held at Narrandera Showground on 17 September 2022 when approximately 1,500 attendees contributed to the local economy. The Koala Festival directly involved 25 businesses and 11 community organisations, with 20 other businesses benefitting indirectly from the festival.

It celebrated the healthy and growing koala population in the Flora and Fauna Reserve, Koala Regeneration Area, and surrounding areas. The festival also featured a free koala and nature photography exhibition, guided tours of the habitat, and informational sessions from local wildlife and environmental groups. Attendees enjoyed live performances, puppet shows, storytelling sessions, readings, interactive circus workshops, and free amusement rides, including jumping castles and mechanical rides.

### **Narrandera Volunteer Expo**

The Narrandera Volunteer Expo was held on 15 June 2023 at the Emergency Operations Centre. The event attracted displays by 19 community organisations, with a good number of locals attending. Most organisations reported that they were happy with the response from the community and expected to sign up new members/volunteers in the coming months.





**Support for Events in Narrandera Shire**

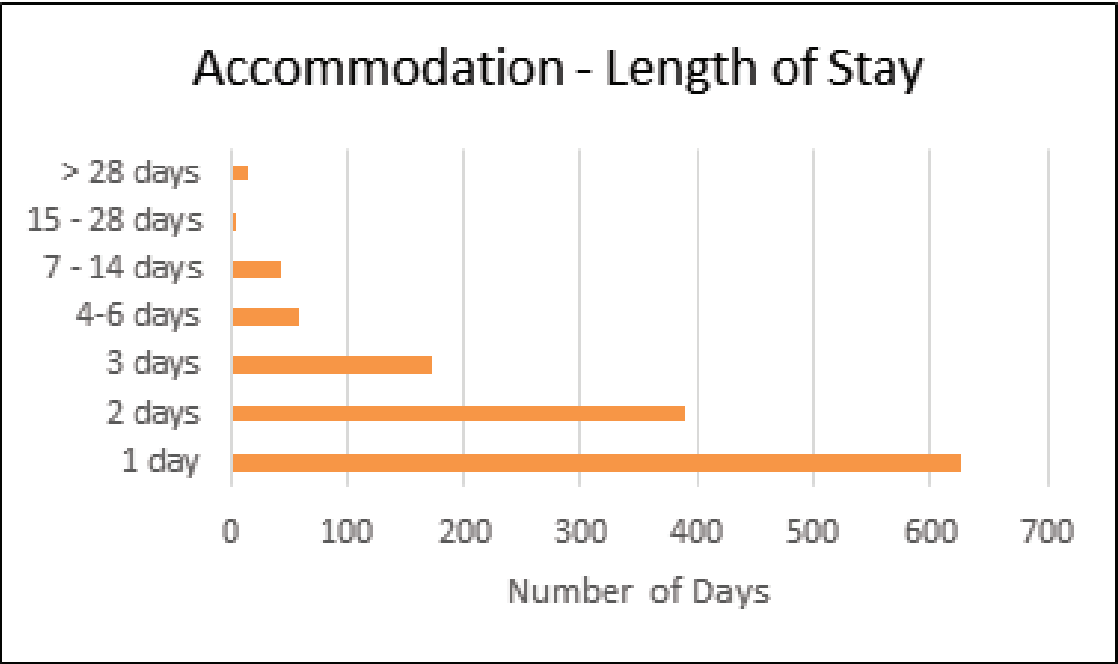
The Events team received 28 event applications during the period, indicating a strong interest in hosting events within the Shire. This is a positive sign for the local community and tourism industry as events attract visitors, boost local businesses, and enhance community engagement. Of the applications received, five were new events. Council received Community Event Program funding during this financial year which provided funding opportunities to event organisers. The Events team offered advice and advocacy to organisers regarding event planning and marketing opportunities. This support is valuable for ensuring events run smoothly and are effectively promoted to attract a larger audience.

**Visitation Statistics**

Narrandera Shire is starting to experience a recovery in visitation as travel patterns return to normal after the impact of COVID-19 and flooding. Visitor trends are positive for the local tourism industry, indicating that more people are choosing to spend time in the area to explore, rather than simply passing through. Fifty percent of visitors are now staying for one to three days as part of their regional holiday, and this shift in visitor behaviour benefits the community in ways such as increased spending in local businesses, more exposure for local attractions, and potentially higher demand for tourism-related services.

Statistics collected by the Visitor Information Centre show the majority of Narrandera’s visitors come from within New South Wales. The VIC also experienced a consistent flow of visitors from both Victoria and Queensland. Recent marketing campaigns, such as the Australian Traveller and the Canberra Caravan and Camping Show, had a positive impact on visitors from Canberra. This suggests that promotional activities targeted at the ACT market have resonated well and attracted visitors to Narrandera Shire.

Based on the statistics, caravan parks are the most popular accommodation option within Narrandera Shire, followed by motels. The popularity of free camping demonstrates the segment of visitors more inclined towards outdoor experiences, while the rise of Airbnb accommodation reflects the growing interest in alternative options. Staying with friends and relatives remains a popular choice for visitors.





2022-2023

### **Playground on the Murrumbidgee**

This project secured \$8 million dollars funding from the NSW State Government. The scope included an impressive rebuild and rebadging of the Narrandera Visitor Information Centre to the Narrandera Shire Destination and Discovery Hub.

Lake Talbot Tourist Park also benefited from the funding with construction of a new amenities block including disabled access and family change rooms, laundry, and a new camp kitchen to replace the existing aged structure. Other works at the park included converting a redundant building into new family accommodation units, and a new playground.

The completed Northbank Bridge project takes advantage of Narrandera's location adjacent to waterways. The newly constructed bridge over the Main Canal connects walking and cycle paths linking existing infrastructure and provides access from the free camping area to the Narrandera Business District.

The Lake Talbot Skywalk when completed will extend over the water at Lake Talbot to provide a unique and scenic views of Lake Talbot, Lake Talbot Water Park and the landscape beyond.

### **Narrandera Destination & Discovery Hub**

This flagship project will allow visitors and local community members to discover Narrandera's nature-based and cultural stories using interactive displays and virtual reality. The building will contain a discovery centre with theatrette, gallery, staff offices and ample space for visitor servicing.



### **Northbank Boardwalk**

The Northbank Boardwalk consists of a raised boardwalk/walkway from the footpath in Melbourne Street to the newly completed pedestrian bridge. This raised walkway platform provides seating for those who want to stop and rest and admire the view. It provides a link between the free camping area at Brewery flat to the Narrandera Business District.



## **STRONGER COUNTRY COMMUNITIES ROUND 4**

### **Sportsground Changeroom Upgrade**

This project involved upgrading existing changeroom amenities underneath the grandstand to meet women-in-sport requirements, including separate cubicles with clean and modern inclusions.

### **Barellan Hall Toilet Refurbishment**

This refurbishment project delivered new fixtures and fittings installed with new tiling, partitions and painting, resulting in a modern facelift for the amenities.

### **Narrandera Sportsground Spectator Pavilion**

Demolition of the former changerooms/club rooms was the first stage of this project, followed by construction of a new spectator pavilion. Future works will include tiered aluminium seating and lighting to complete the work.



### **Barellan Sportsground Spectators Pavilion**

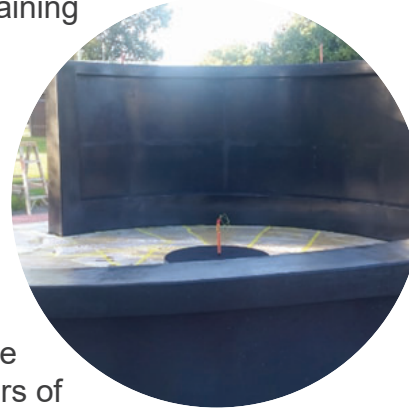
Under construction, this building includes a custom-designed structure to provide exceptional viewing of the oval. Served benches with stainless steel bench tops and sink will complete the fit out.

## Works Office

A new transportable Works Office including office space and a small meeting/training room was constructed at the Narrandera Depot.

## The Wiradjuri Wall

Under construction, this project is a memorial to the Wiradjuri people of the Narrungdera nation. The design consists of curved concrete walls with granite etched inlays and central metal sphere feature.



## Barellan Pump Track

Located at the north-western corner of the Barellan Sportsground, the Barellan pump track evolved from consultation with younger members of the Barellan community.



## Grong Grong Hall Improvements

This project included installation of an outdoor covered area with lighting and drinks bench along the hall's eastern side. The male toilets also underwent renewal with installation of an entry covered structure and privacy screen.

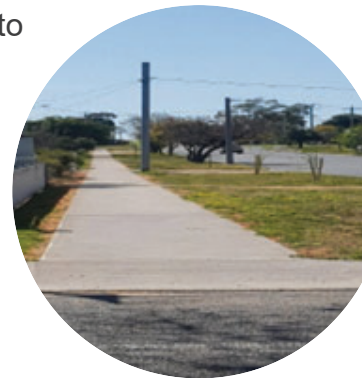
## North Narrandera Footpath

Construction of a footpath network north of the railway bridge along Adams Street to connect Adams, Watermain and Dalgetty Streets and Racecourse Road.

## Narrandera Sportsground Digital Scoreboard

This highly visible project involved purchase and installation of a new 25 square metre digital scoreboard. As well as catering for sporting events, it also has the capability to play movies.

The new scoreboard is located north-east of the playing field



## OTHER PROJECTS

### Pine Hill Water Tanks

Redundant water storage tanks at Pine Hill have been demolished, with removal of the foundation pad underway.

### Pedestrian Deck – Lake Talbot Water Park

Located directly beneath the Lake Talbot Skywalk, the pedestrian deck, will sit on the lake's edge to provide safe and comfortable access to the area. Over 25 metres in length, the fully galvanised steel structure will have three floating pontoons fitted for boat moorings.

### Narrandera Tennis Club – Accessible Unisex Toilet

Narrandera Shire Council in conjunction with the Narrandera Tennis Club is undertaking an accessible facility upgrade. Work includes inclusion of an accessible unisex toilet to the clubhouse.

### Narrandera Tennis Club – Accessible Ramps

Part of the accessible upgrade includes the installation of two accessible ramps. One with viewing platform to access the clubhouse and the second ramp providing access to the lower courts.

### Landervale Bushfire Shed

Narrandera Shire Council, in conjunction with the Rural Fire Service, has engaged Joss Facility Management to construct the new Landervale Rural Fire Station. The shed is expected to be completed by the end of November 2023.

### Barellan BBQ Replacement

Installation of a new dual plate BBQ at Evonne Goolagong Park.

## ROAD NETWORK

### Regional Roads

Council's road construction team completed road rehabilitation works to parts of Barellan Road as part of the Regional Roads Repair Program.

### Barellan Road

Canola Way had heavy patching completed at Cowabbie Creek crossing due to heavy vehicle traffic detours during the natural disaster event of January 2022.

### Sealed Roads

Council completed the widening and sealing of Pamandi and Cowabbie Roads and sealing of Mejum Park Road totalling 19.9km for this project.

Construction commenced for Drover Place, a new road within the Red Hill Industrial Estate. This 580 metres of road will service large industrial developments in the near future.

### Gravel Roads

Council completed over 45.8 kilometres of gravel re-sheet works on roads across the Shire, including Back Yamma, Buckingbong, Devlins Bridge, Euratha, Galore Forest, Galore Park, Kangaroo Plains, Lismoyle, Mannings, Mejum, Mollys Lagoon, Murrell Creek and The Gap Roads.

Routine maintenance grading to 423.5 kilometres of the gravel road network included 65.6 kilometres of emergency flood works, which were carried out following the August onwards flood event.

### Bridges

Council commenced replacement of Mollys and Somerset Bridges under the Fixing Country Bridges (FCB) program with works continuing into the new financial year.

### Footpath and Kerb Works



East Street kerb and footpath on the eastern side from Elwin Street south to Watkins Lane was recently upgraded.



A new footpath was constructed along Mulga Street, Barellan between Boree and Myall Streets with Council funds and a grant for Transport for NSW under the Get NSW Active (Walking) program.





## **WATER AND SEWER PROJECTS**

### **Hydration, Sustainability and Accessibility**

Council took a significant step towards promoting health and sustainability by installing six state-of-the-art water bottle refill stations throughout Narrandera. These stations encourage hydration and help to reduce plastic waste, reflecting Council's commitment to a greener future.

### **Meeting Future Demand**

Council constructed 560 metres of new water mains along Drover Place at the Red Hill Industrial Estate to accommodate the growing needs of our community. This extension along Driscoll Road ensures that industrial development opportunities can progress.

### **Water Mains Cleaning Innovation**

NO-DES Water Mains Cleaning was engaged to undertake a comprehensive water mains cleaning program as part of Council's commitment to improving the potable water supply. 35 kilometres of water mains were cleaned during 2022-23 resulting in better water efficiency, sustainability and a reduction in 'dirty water' incidents.

### **Reliability and Reduced Maintenance**

The water valve replacement program continues as part of Council's ongoing efforts to enhance reliability and to reduce maintenance costs. This program safeguards the uninterrupted flow of water to our community.

### **Effective Leak Detection**

In collaboration with the NSW Department of Planning and Environment, Council launched a leak detection program that uncovered and rectified significant water main issues. The process detected leaks within the infrastructure equating to a combined 20,000 litres per hour in losses in 19 different locations. Actions such as these show the commitment of Council to the conservation of valuable water resources.

### **Water Treatment Plant Upgrade**

Work continued with the water treatment plant upgrade project and NSW Government grant funding was secured for a scoping study to identify a suitable site at Narrandera for a replacement water treatment plant using contemporary water treatment technology. The study is expected to be completed in the second half of 2023 and will include the preliminary planning required for Council to secure funding for design and construction of a new water treatment plant.

### **Sewer System Progress**

The Barellan sewer scheme design has been finalised with tendering for construction completed. Awarding of a tender of this size takes an important step towards meeting the needs of an established community through better sewage management whilst maintaining a commitment to environmental sustainability.





## **STORMWATER MANAGEMENT**

During the stormwater event in late January 2022, an intense localised storm delivered 55 millimetres of rainfall in a short period leading to the flooding of areas along Victoria Avenue and East Street. The SEMC group was engaged by Council to undertake a detailed design to duplicate the existing underground stormwater infrastructure to manage a similar event.

### **Flood Risk Management Prevention Measures**

The 2019 Review of the Narrandera Flood Risk Management Plan & Study identified several flood-protection measures. Council applied for funding to progress to feasibility stage for three of these measures:

- Feasibility and preliminary design of the Northeast detention basin has now been completed. Water Modelling Solutions investigated and modelled a number of options to minimise the eastern catchment flowrates. The completed study enables Council to apply for the next detailed design phase.
- The voluntary house-raising and purchase feasibility study prepared a report identifying eligible properties that met the NSW Government's criteria for house raising and house purchase flood protection measures. Affected property owners were contacted to gauge their interest in participating and the report enables Council to apply for funding to assist these properties.
- Design of Barellan township flood protection will be prepared by Dryside Engineers, who will carry out a detailed design of the preferred levee option. Completion of the design will enable Council to take advantage of future Federal and State Government grants by having a shovel-ready solution to prevent future overland flooding of the Barellan township.

Across the reporting period, Council also continued to carry out maintenance works to maintain Council's existing stormwater drainage infrastructure, including cleaning culverts and open drains.

### **Report on Infrastructure Assets**

The following schedule reports on the condition of Public Works under the control of Council and contains costs in relation to:

1. Estimated cost to bring the asset up to a satisfactory standard
2. Required annual maintenance
3. Actual maintenance as at 30 June 2023
4. Written Down Value
5. Assets in Condition as a percentage of Written Down Value
  - Excellent/Very Good – No work required
  - Good – Only minor maintenance work required
  - Satisfactory – Maintenance work required
  - Poor – Renewal Required
  - Very poor – Urgent renewal/upgrading required

# Report on infrastructure assets as at 30 June 2023

Asset Class	Asset Category	Estimated cost			2022/23 Required maintenance *	2022/23 Actual maintenance	Net carrying amount \$ '000	Gross replacement cost (GRC) \$ '000	Assets in condition as a percentage of gross replacement cost				
		Estimated cost to bring to the standard \$ '000	to bring to the agreed level of service set by Council \$ '000	to bring to the agreed level of service set by Council \$ '000					1	2	3	4	5
<b>Buildings</b>	Buildings – non-specialised	2,538	–	–	425	178	10,811	31,054	2.0%	11.0%	46.0%	39.0%	2.0%
	Buildings – specialised	1,316	–	–	243	154	9,044	17,703	36.0%	3.0%	23.0%	36.0%	2.0%
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>3,854</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>668</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>19,812</b>	<b>48,757</b>	<b>14.3%</b>	<b>8.1%</b>	<b>37.6%</b>	<b>37.9%</b>	<b>2.1%</b>
<b>Other structures</b>	Other structures	1,432	–	–	303	457	12,490	22,094	40.0%	6.0%	25.0%	25.0%	4.0%
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>1,432</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>303</b>	<b>457</b>	<b>12,490</b>	<b>22,094</b>	<b>40.0%</b>	<b>6.0%</b>	<b>25.0%</b>	<b>25.0%</b>	<b>4.0%</b>
<b>Water supply network</b>	Water supply network	3,969	–	–	503	1,306	22,706	44,937	18.0%	6.0%	41.0%	28.0%	7.0%
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>3,969</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>1,306</b>	<b>22,706</b>	<b>44,937</b>	<b>18.0%</b>	<b>6.0%</b>	<b>41.0%</b>	<b>28.0%</b>	<b>7.0%</b>
<b>Roads</b>	Sealed roads pavement	293	–	–	434	259	27,002	41,685	60.0%	7.0%	10.0%	5.0%	18.0%
	Sealed roads surface	3,390	–	–	227	1,192	9,889	21,836	19.0%	4.0%	15.0%	50.0%	12.0%
	Unsealed roads pavement	2,953	–	–	275	1,146	18,852	26,434	12.0%	4.0%	83.0%	0.0%	1.0%
	Bridges	472	–	–	69	8	10,885	18,107	7.0%	45.0%	43.0%	0.0%	5.0%
	Footpaths	6	–	–	28	21	1,326	1,927	28.0%	69.0%	2.0%	0.0%	1.0%
	Bulk earthworks	–	–	–	–	–	68,950	68,950	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Flood-ways	–	–	–	23	–	2,179	2,239	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Guardrail	6	–	–	2	–	324	438	50.0%	34.0%	14.0%	0.0%	2.0%
	Kerb and guttering	–	–	–	78	25	4,357	7,462	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	Traffic devices	–	–	–	14	–	1,137	1,353	79.0%	4.0%	17.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>7,120</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>1,150</b>	<b>2,651</b>	<b>144,901</b>	<b>190,431</b>	<b>56.0%</b>	<b>11.5%</b>	<b>19.7%</b>	<b>6.8%</b>	<b>6.0%</b>
<b>Sewerage network</b>	Sewerage network	639	–	–	287	683	16,416	25,613	48.0%	29.0%	14.0%	6.0%	3.0%
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>639</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>287</b>	<b>683</b>	<b>16,416</b>	<b>25,613</b>	<b>48.0%</b>	<b>29.0%</b>	<b>14.0%</b>	<b>6.0%</b>	<b>3.0%</b>
<b>Stormwater drainage</b>	Stormwater drainage	2,908	–	–	99	–	7,710	11,891	14.0%	43.0%	0.0%	0.0%	43.0%
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>2,908</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>7,710</b>	<b>11,891</b>	<b>14.0%</b>	<b>43.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>43.0%</b>
<b>Open space / recreational assets</b>	Swimming pools	198	–	–	189	168	3,094	4,452	75.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%
	Open Space & Recreational	128	–	–	117	37	1,024	1,946	29.0%	40.0%	15.0%	7.0%	9.0%
	<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>326</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>4,118</b>	<b>6,398</b>	<b>61.0%</b>	<b>12.2%</b>	<b>4.6%</b>	<b>19.5%</b>	<b>2.7%</b>
<b>Total – all assets</b>		<b>20,248</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>–</b>	<b>3,316</b>	<b>5,634</b>	<b>228,153</b>	<b>350,121</b>	<b>42.4%</b>	<b>12.4%</b>	<b>23.9%</b>	<b>15.0%</b>	<b>6.3%</b>

(a) Required maintenance is the amount identified in Council's asset management plans.

## COMPANION ANIMALS

Council is responsible for companion animals within Narrandera Shire and these responsibilities include:

- Operation of the Narrandera Animal Care Facility
- Rehoming unclaimed companion animals
- Microchipping and lifetime registration
- Roaming and stray dogs
- Animal noise complaints
- Reducing incidents of dog attacks
- Trapping feral cats
- Community education and awareness of responsible pet ownership.

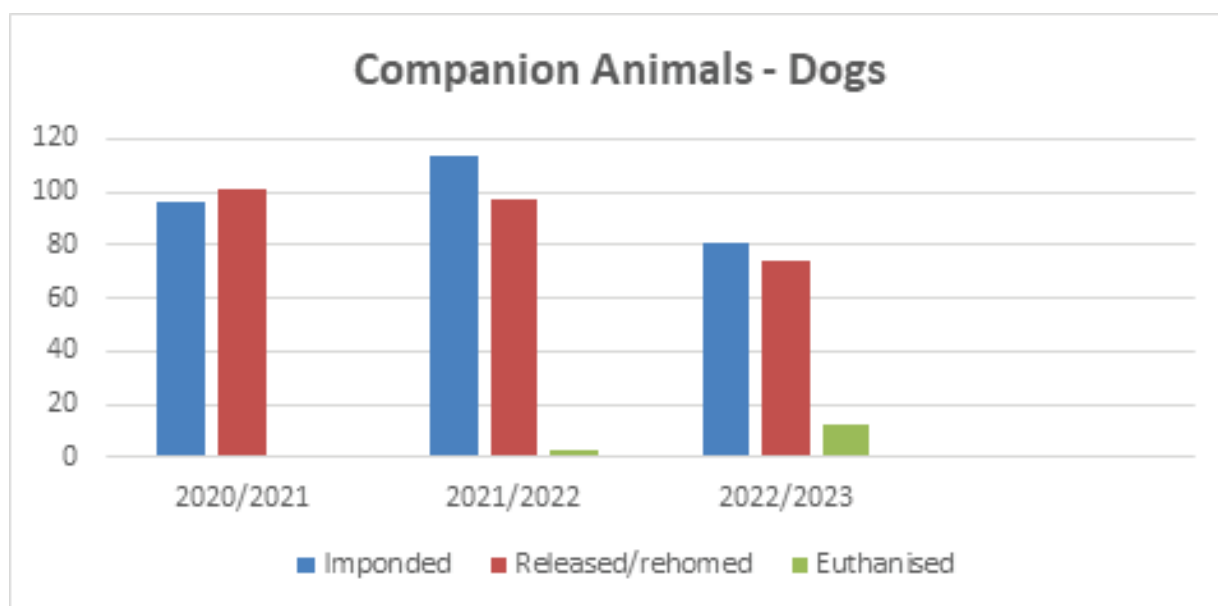
Residential areas in Narrandera, Barellan and Grong Grong are patrolled routinely and in response to call outs. Council updates and maintains data in the NSW Companion Animals Register. Employees also enforce the provisions of the Act by issuing fines, nuisance animal orders, dangerous and menacing dog declarations where required. Council's data relating to dog attacks is lodged through the NSW Companion Animals Register to the Office of Local Government with pound collection returns lodged with the Office of Local Government.

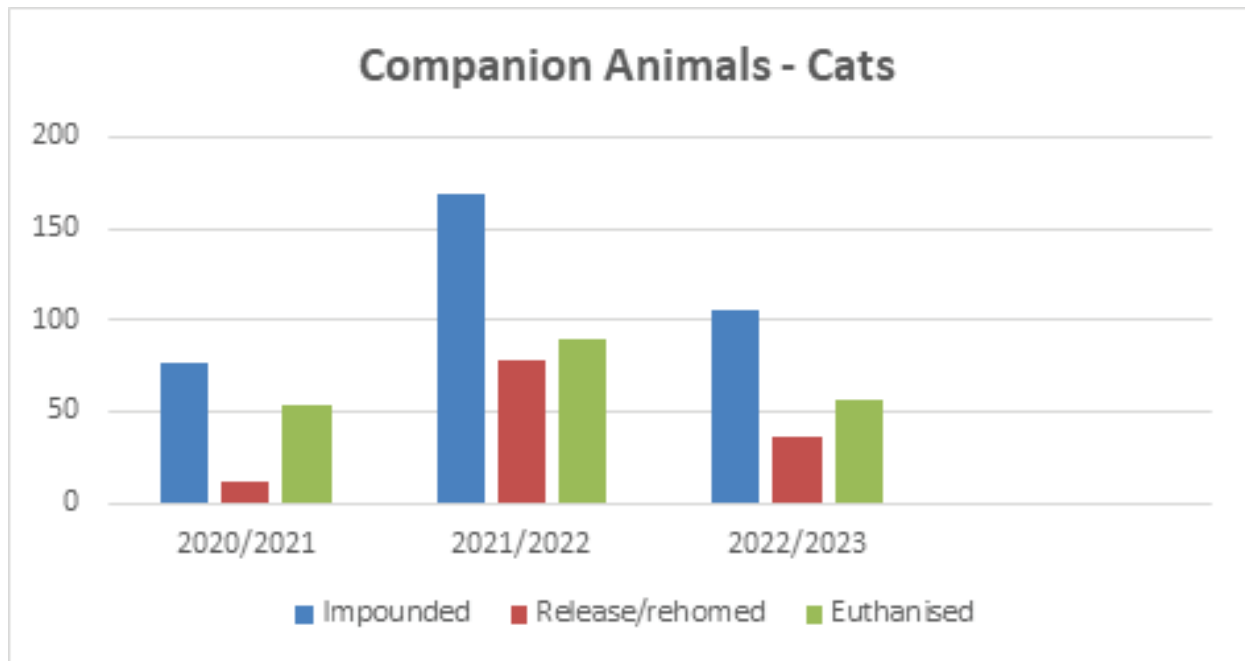
The southern side of Narrandera Sportsground has been a dedicated off-leash area for dogs for many years, however a new fully enclosed off leash/dog park area will open to pet owners in October 2023. Located west of Henry Mathieson Oval, the cost to develop this project was \$46,350.

Council liaises with pet rescue groups to re-home unclaimed and surrendered animals as an alternative to euthanasia. Dogs and cats are only euthanised when deemed unsuitable for rehoming following temperament testing or upon veterinary advice.

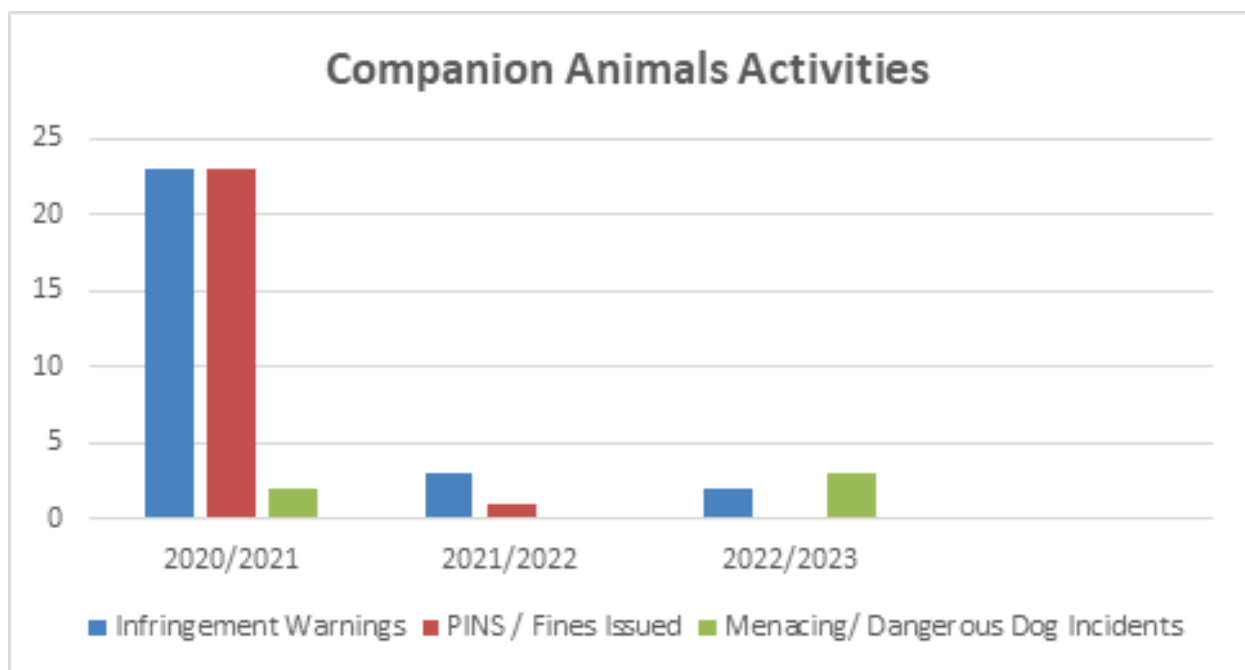
During 2022-23 there were two dog attack incidents reported for the Narrandera Local Government Area.

Impounding, release and other statistics for the reporting year for dogs and cats are also provided to the NSW Office of Local Government.





Enforcement activities by Compliance Officers are recorded and reported on annually. Not recorded are the numerous interactions with community members about the responsibilities of keeping pets and the importance of desexing companion animals.



Income for 2022-23 companion animal registrations was \$4,786 being registration commission from the NSW Office of Local Government.

Expenses for 2022-23 included \$135,318 for wages and salaries, \$11,144 for materials, \$491 for protective equipment, \$887 for telephone expenses and \$10,594 for vehicle operating expenses.



## WHAT WE DO TO MANAGE OUR ENVIRONMENT

Narrandera Shire is renowned for the rich diversity and maturity of the many trees found within its streetscapes, parkland and private gardens. Tree-lined avenues, mature exotic gardens and specimen trees are all present throughout the Shire. Council plays a key role in managing and protecting the environment and continues to protect, restore, enhance and conserve the local environment.

### Tree Plantings

114 trees were planted and 15 tree removals were documented during the 2022-23 reporting year.

### Biosecurity Weeds Management System

The new Biosecurity Weeds Management system is used to conduct inspections, record treatments, schedule weed control programs and generate reports for other agencies.

The new system has already achieved time efficiencies by reducing the time to generate reports and also ensures Council remains compliant to the requirements within the Biosecurity Act 2015.

### Narrandera Irrigation Management System

The new Irrigation Management system is used to control all irrigated areas within Narrandera Shire. The system reports faults and can turn off controllers remotely, achieving cost savings in both water use and staff time.



### Marie Bashir Park Playground Master Plan

Council designed a new masterplan for the Marie Bashir Park playground incorporating specific components the community identified that they would like to see in the playground. The master plan can be used to support grant applications or be constructed when funding becomes available.

The proposed masterplan can be viewed by selecting the following link:

<https://www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au/marie-bashir-park-playground-masterplan>

## **Narrandera Shire Tree Audit and Tree Plotter Management Program**

Council acknowledges that trees play a vital role in the health, social framework and economic sustainability of an area and improve our environment and quality of life. In the long term, trees often create a very real 'sense of place' and enhance the public domain. Trees can also:

- Provide habitat for native animals
- Reduce the effects of urban heat
- Reduce airborne pollution
- Reduce carbon dioxide in the atmosphere
- Protect from soil erosion
- Encourage outdoor activity
- Reduce exposure to the sun and ultraviolet rays
- Create privacy and lessen noise
- Provide a connection to nature
- Soften and screen street infrastructure
- Reduce demand for energy
- Contribute to ecological biodiversity.

Council conducts a tree audit every five years when every street tree is assessed. Findings from the audit are used to prioritise works including maintenance and replacement programs.

Tree Plotter management software is used to ensure that the tree population is managed effectively. The system records all works, has the capability to provide instant condition reports and creates specific tree maintenance packages. It allows Council to look at trends, such as maintenance needs and numbers of new plantings.

## **Weed Management for Biodiversity Conservation**

Council is committed to the ongoing management of weeds and the risks and impacts they have on our community, environment and economy. Council is an active member of the Riverina Weeds Action Program. This program helps develop partnerships to effectively target weeds, identify and stop new weeds early and increase community involvement in weed management.

To carry out this task, Council supports an extensive Weeds Action Program (WAP) involving inspections of private property, Council managed and owned land, and numerous spray programs throughout the year that target a range of weeds.

Biosecurity management mapping system Iconyx schedules and records inspections, and maps weed infestations. A monthly report is submitted to the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Biosecurity Information System (BIS) which details findings from inspections that have taken place during the month.

## **PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

### **Local Strategic Planning Statement**

Council adopted its Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) in August 2020 which set the framework for Narrandera Shire's economic, social and environmental land use needs over the next 20 years.

### **Details of Planning Agreements**

Council did not enter into any planning agreements as per Section 7.5(5) of the Environmental and Planning Assessment Act, 1979 during the 2022-23 reporting year.

Details of any Environmental Upgrade Agreements entered into by Council

THERE were no agreements entered in to by Council during the reporting year.

### **Swimming Pool Inspections**

Council is required to report on the details of private swimming pool inspections in accordance with the Swimming Pools Act 1995 s22F(2) and Swimming Pools Regulation 2018 (SP Reg) CI 23,.

12 swimming pool inspections were undertaken and 12 compliance certificates were issued.

## The Attachments

- A. Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 Annual Report ending 30 June 2023
  - B. Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994 – Annual Report for the year ending 30 June 2023
  - C. Modern Slavery - Annual Report 2022-2023
  - D. Audited Financial Reports for 2022-23
  - E. Update for the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-26 ending 30 June 2023
  - F. Delivery Program 2022-26 Annual Report ending 30 June 2023
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