

A photograph of a family walking on a paved path in a park. A man in a white t-shirt and sunglasses is holding the hand of a woman in a black dress. A young child is riding a red and blue tricycle. In the background, there are modern buildings with wooden slat facades and a white building with arched windows. The scene is set during the day with soft lighting.

*state of the
Ballina Shire
report*

2022 -2024

ballina
shire council

Mayor's Message



Welcome to the State of the Ballina Shire Report for the Council Term of 2022 to 2024.

There is no doubt that the 2022-2024 Council term has been a period marked by both challenges and remarkable achievements for Ballina Shire. As we moved beyond the impacts of COVID-19, our community faced new hurdles, particularly the devastating floods of 2022. In response, we quickly mobilised, working closely with all agencies to establish a Flood Recovery Centre and a Distribution Hub supported by volunteers. These critical initiatives were instrumental in supporting those affected and highlight our community's resilience and the power of partnerships in times of crisis.

Connected Community

We have made great strides in building a more connected and inclusive community. Major projects such as the opening of Wollongbar District Park and the Pop Denison Park junior and senior playgrounds have created vibrant spaces for our residents to gather and enjoy. Our continued focus on improving accessibility is evident with the completion of new footpaths across key areas in Ballina, enhancing safety and connectivity.

Infrastructure projects like the River Street Duplication have significantly improved traffic flow and safety, easing congestion and making our roads safer for all users. In the past two years alone, Council has delivered over \$155 million in capital works from 2021/22 to 2023/24, investing directly into the infrastructure that supports our community's growth and wellbeing.

Healthy Environment

Environmental sustainability remains a cornerstone of our vision for Ballina Shire. The adoption of our Climate Change Policy commits us to using 100% renewable electricity and achieving net-zero operational emissions by 2030. With 1,153KWpa of renewal energy generated on Council sites (as at June 2024). We installed a combined 1,119KW solar systems across 14 council sites, we are actively reducing our carbon footprint. Our ongoing initiatives, such as the Healthy Waterway Strategy and Illegal Dumping and Litter Prevention Strategy, are designed to protect our natural surroundings, ensuring a cleaner and healthier environment for future generations.

Prosperous Economy

Key projects like the Lennox Village Vision have revitalised the town centre, making it a more attractive and vibrant space for both residents and visitors. Our upgrades to the Ballina Byron Gateway Airport, including carpark expansions, terminal upgrades, and new passenger screening, have enhanced the airport's capacity, now surpassing 620,000 passengers in 2023/24 and boosting our local economy.

Significant investments in road infrastructure have greatly improved connectivity across the Shire. We are committed to maintaining high-quality infrastructure to support our thriving community with preliminary works underway to duplicate the Fishery Creek and Canal Bridges.

Engaged Leadership

We are dedicated to fostering a transparent and inclusive decision-making process. Platforms like [YourSayBallina.com.au](https://www.yoursayballina.com.au) have empowered residents to engage with Council on key projects, including the Wardell Village Centre Revitalisation and the Lennox Head Strategic Plan. Our recent community survey showed satisfaction levels of 88%, reflecting our commitment to delivering services that meet community expectations.

During this term, we said farewell to the following Councillors, and I thank them for their commitment and dedication to serving Ballina Shire: Jeff Johnson (four terms – 16 years, and one year as Deputy Mayor), Eoin Johnston (two terms – eight years, and three years as Deputy Mayor), Stephen McCarthy (two terms – eight years), Rod Bruem (one term – three years), and Nigel Buchanan (one term – three years).

I'm extremely optimistic about the future with our newly elected Council in September 2024.

As we look to the future, we are beginning the process of developing the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) for 2025-2035. I encourage everyone to get involved in this engagement process. Your input is vital in shaping the future of Ballina Shire, ensuring it reflects the needs and aspirations of our community.

Together, with your participation, we will continue to build a resilient, sustainable, and connected Ballina Shire—a place we are all proud to call home.

Cr Sharon Cadwallader
Mayor Ballina Shire Council

Ballina Shire Councillors 2022 - 2024



Top to bottom:

Councillors Sharon Cadwallader (Mayor), Eoin Johnston, Phil Meehan, Rod Bruem, Stephen McCarthy, Jeff Johnson, Eva Ramsey, Kiri Dicker and Nigel Buchanan.

Established Flood Recovery Centre and Distribution Hub



Adopted and commenced delivery of Kingsford Smith Masterplan



Safety improvements at Byron Bay Road/ Ross Lane



Expansion of Ballina Byron Gateway Airport Carpark



River Street Duplication (Stage 2 – Henry Philp Avenue to Tweed Street)



Kerr Street Duplication and Bentinck Street Lights



Pop Denison Park – Senior Kids Playground



Wardell Village Revitalisation



Pearces Creek Road Bridge (joint project with Lismore City Council)



Development of Land in Southern Cross Industrial Estate, Ballina and Russellton Estate, Wollongbar



Land Release Wollongbar Urban Expansion Area



MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS 2022 - 2024



Pop Denison Park – Junior Kids Playground



Airport Passenger Screening and Terminal Upgrade



Angels Beach / Bangalow Road Roundabout Upgrade



Adopted Community Engagement Strategy and launched YourSayBallina website



Airport Runway Overlay



Commenced preliminary River Street Duplication (Duplicating Fishery Creek and Canal Bridges)



Wardell Wharf and Boardwalk



Commenced Tamar Street Bus Interchange



Completed Lennox Head Rural Fire Shed



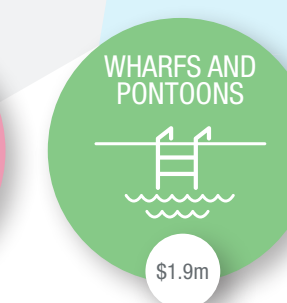
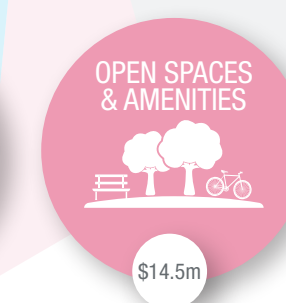
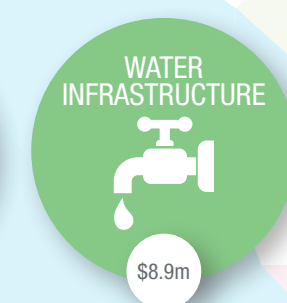
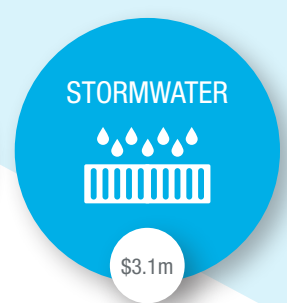
Adopted Sharpes Beach Carpark Upgrade



Completed \$11.5 million Lennox Head Village Upgrade

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

Over \$155.2 million in Capital Expenditure for the period 2021/22 to 2023/24 with spend in these major categories



COMMUNITY INDICATORS

CONNECTED COMMUNITY (CC)	CSP BASE	TARGET	LATEST	SOURCE
COMMUNITY INDICATORS				
Population aged 35 - 49	17.8%	> 21%	17.6%	Census
<i>Explanation: We are currently below the NSW State average (for this age group) and our aim is to increase this percentage over time. The age structure of Ballina Shire's is indicative of the area's era of settlement and provides key insights into the level of demand for services and facilities (as most services and facilities are age-specific). People in this age group often have families and are paying mortgages.</i>				
Walk Score of Ballina	49	> 50	49	Walk Score
Walk Score of Alstonville	76	> 70	76	Walk Score
Walk Score of Wardell	19	> 20	24	Walk Score
Walk Score of Lennox Head	71	> 70	70	Walk Score
<i>Explanation: Walk Score analyses walking routes to nearby amenities. Points are awarded based on the distance to amenities such as parks, schools, shopping, dining/drinking, entertainment/culture. Amenities within a 5 minute walk (400 metres) are given maximum points. (www.walkscore.com): 90-100 Walker's Paradise (daily errands do not require a car). 70-89 Very Walkable (most errands can be accomplished on foot). 50-69 Somewhat Walkable (some errands can be accomplished on foot). 25-49 Car-Dependent (most errands require a car). 0-24 Car-Dependent (almost all errands require a car).</i>				
Malicious damage to property	593.8 (NSW Avg 624.6)	< 826	529.3 (NSW Avg 611.6)	BOCSAR
Theft incidents	2213.9 (NSW Avg 2136.6)	< 2711.1	2830.3 (NSW Avg 2366.8)	BOCSAR
<i>Explanation: Rate is provided per 100,000 population. We want to reduce crime committed so that our community feels safer.</i>				
Visitation to Council pools (# per annum)	289,549	> 260,000	279,000	Delivery Program
Usage of community facilities (hours per annum)	NA	> 25,000	26,035	Delivery Program
<i>Explanation: We believe the higher the visitation to community facilities, the more connected we are as a community, and demonstrates that facilities suit our needs.</i>				
People who provide voluntary work (with an organisation)	22.9%	> 25%	17.3%	Census
<i>Explanation: We believe the higher the participation level of voluntary work the stronger and more unified we are as a community.</i>				

ENGAGED LEADERSHIP	CSP BASE	TARGET	LATEST	SOURCE
COMMUNITY INDICATORS				
Community satisfaction (including neutral)	90%	> LGA Coastal Regional Benchmark	88%	Resident Survey
<i>Explanation: Our aim is to maximise satisfaction levels within the community.</i>				
Satisfaction with our level of communication	79%	> 94%	74%	Resident Survey
<i>Explanation: The higher the satisfaction rate the more informed the community.</i>				
Percentage of customer requests to Council dealt with effectively within allocated timeframe	92%	> 90%	85%	Council Records
<i>Explanation: The higher the percentage, the more effectively Council is responding to customer requests.</i>				
Increase revenue generated from commercial property	\$2.6 million	> \$ 2 million	\$2.6 million	Council Records
<i>Explanation: The greater the revenue generated from commercial property means our finances are well managed and helps to offset costs to the ratepayer.</i>				
Continue to meet 'Fit for the Future' benchmarks	7 out of 7 benchmarks	Meet 7 out of 7 benchmarks	6 out of 7 benchmarks	Office of Local Government
<i>Explanation: Councils deemed Fit for the Future are sustainable and able to deliver quality services to their communities. Benchmarks include financial sustainability, infrastructure and service management and efficiency in service delivery. By being Fit for the Future Council is able to access cheaper finance to build and maintain the facilities our community needs, such as better roads and bridges and regional facilities.</i>				

PROSPEROUS ECONOMY (PE)	CSP BASE	TARGET	LATEST	SOURCE
COMMUNITY INDICATORS				
Contribution to the Northern Rivers Gross Regional Product	16.32%	increase	15.9%	Economic Profile
Ballina Shire Gross Regional Product	\$2.18 billion	increase	\$3.04 billion	NIEIR
<i>Explanation: If we can increase our contribution to the overall GRP it means we are growing economically at a higher rate than our immediate neighbours.</i>				
Workforce participation rate	53.2%	> 62%	55.5%	Census
Full-time employed	50.6%	> 52%	49.2%	Economic Profile
Part-time employed	38.5%	> 41%	40.6%	Economic Profile
Unemployed	3.6%	1% less than the regional avg	2.7%	Economic Profile
<i>Explanation: With our population ageing we need to encourage people to remain in work to contribute to our economy and to feel valued. The indicators above refer to people who reported being in the labour force, aged 15 years and over.</i>				
Youth undertaking tertiary studies (aged 18-24 years)	28%	> 28%	not yet available	Census
<i>Explanation: We want more of our youth undertaking tertiary studies. This indicator represents the 18-24 age group who reside in Ballina Shire attending either Technical, a Further Educational Institution or University.</i>				
Tourism – total visitors (overnight/day trip/international) per annum	845,250	> 800,000	976,000 (2023)	Tourism Research Australia
<i>Explanation: If we can maintain growth and then extend the average spend per day per visitor, as per the next indicator; our net economic benefit will increase. These numbers assume a 3% annual growth rate.</i>				
Tourism – total spend	\$318 million	> \$300	\$419 million (year end 2023)	Tourism Research Australia
<i>Explanation: By encouraging visitors to spend more per day we limit any negative impacts that may arise from a need for high increases in tourism numbers (visitors).</i>				

HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT	CSP BASE	TARGET	LATEST	SOURCE
COMMUNITY INDICATORS				
Greenhouse emissions per capita (tonnes)	10	< 14.0	9	Snapshot Climate Report
<i>Explanation: Reducing greenhouse emissions provides environmental benefits and lowers our overall use of resources.</i>				
Water utilisation per connection (kilolitres)	154	< 165	141	Council Records
<i>Explanation: Water is a scarce resource and we need to minimise our use through education, conservation and recycling strategies. Usage will change dependent on rainfall and weather conditions.</i>				
Recycled water use	13.3%	> 20%	7.2%	Council Records
<i>Explanation: The higher the level of reuse the better we are using our resources. Calculated in line with DPOP reporting, that is: recycled water used as a percentage of average dry weather flow</i>				
Total kerbside domestic waste to landfill per capita (kg)	182	< 250	168.2%	Council Records
<i>Explanation: To minimise the use of landfill we need to encourage high levels of recycling and reduce the waste that ends up in the landfill.</i>				
Habitat restored	20.5%	> 25%	not yet available	Various
<i>Explanation: Our overall native vegetation cover is low and we need to ensure this does not worsen, and aim to restore habitats where possible.</i>				
Ecological Carrying Capacity	Low	Improve	not yet available	Various
<i>Explanation: Our current habitat carrying capacity is poor and we need to ensure this does not worsen, and aim to improve, where we can.</i>				
River health	D+	Improve	D (Autumn 2024) C- (Spring 2023)	Ecohealth Report
<i>Explanation: Incorporates the Coastal Zone Management Plan for the Richmond River and allows us to examine activities in water quality and planning.</i>				



CONNECTED COMMUNITY



146
residents
welcomed as new
Australian Citizens
in 2021/22

\$240,000
donations provided
to community and
sporting groups
from 2021/22 to
2023/24

279,000
average
swimming pool
patrons
each year

26,035
hours usage
of community
facilities per
annum

People told us they want to feel connected to a community which is respectful, inclusive and tolerant of all ages and cultures. We want to feel safe and supported. We want to live in an area that is relaxed, where we know our neighbours, where people are happy and friendly and where the needs of all residents, from the young to the old, and those with disabilities are treated equally and fairly.

“We feel safe and resilient...”

Actively promoted safety and well-being by:

- Completing **child car seat, caravan, shared path, bike, and pedestrian safety campaigns** under the **Road Safety Action Plan**.
- Ensuring **90% compliance** through pool inspection program for mandatory swimming pools.
- Managing **parking compliance** in town centres with **licence plate recognition** for timed parking.
- Investigating **non-compliance issues** to enhance community safety.
- Initiating **CCTV scoping study** in key areas, completed by July 2024.
- Incorporating **Child Safety Provisions** from the Office of the Children’s Guardian into Council policies.

Prepared for epidemics, natural disasters, and environmental changes by:

- Responding to **illegal works and non-compliance requests**, issuing notices as needed.
- Conducting **compliance work program audit** to enhance response times, developing a program template.
- Focusing **compliance program** on high-risk developments and environmental harm.
- Addressing compliance cases in **Local Court and Land and Environment Court**, including illegal filling and asbestos disposal.
- Creating **Short Term Rental Accommodation compliance factsheet and webpage** under new NSW Government rules.

Monitored the built infrastructure and community services by:

- Completing **Lennox Head Rural Fire facility**.
- Implementing **Climate Change Action Policy** to achieve net-zero emissions and 100% renewable electricity by 2023.
- Progressing **Ballina SES Headquarters** project with finalised concept design and location; detailed design underway.
- Updating **Business Continuity Plans** to address flood risks and ensure emergency response.
- Investigating tourism and function centre complaints in rural areas.

“We have a sense of belonging within the community...”

Promoted community interaction, education, and sense of place by:

- Replacing weather damaged **Cultural Ways Signage** in East Ballina.
- Increasing **Northern Rivers Community Gallery visitation by 45%** and named finalist in **North Coast Tourism Awards**.
- Completing scoping for the **Movement and Place Strategy**.
- Providing **\$360,000 in Festival and Events funding**.

Enhanced community interaction, volunteering, and well-being by:

- Supporting our **volunteers** at the Northern Rivers Community Gallery, Visitor Information Centre, Ballina Byron Gateway Airport with local famils and thank you events.
- Managing **dog compliance** with coastal patrols
- Upgrading **off-leash dog areas** at Gap Road, Alstonville and Compton Drive, East Ballina and finalised outdoor exercise spaces at **Ballina Animal Shelter**.
- Partnering with **Lismore City Council** for temporary animal care at Ballina shelter.

Supported disadvantaged groups by:

- Updating **recruitment** webpage to attract diverse applicants
- Launching **Try a Trade** program for female apprenticeships.
- Reviewing **Disability Inclusion Action Plan**.
- Commencing **Aboriginal Partnership Agreement** with **Jali Aboriginal Land Council**.
- Increasing **women’s opportunities** in trades via targeted recruitment.
- Hosting inclusive events like **Together Arts and Community Wellbeing Day** with **Auslan interpretation**.
- Preparing **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy** with focus on apprenticeships from target groups.

“There are services and facilities that suit our needs...”

Provided strategies for older residents to be part of our community by:

- Establishing interagency **Flood Recovery Centres**, offering a **one-stop service hub** for flood impacted residents.
- Completing **viewing platforms and pathways** near Sharpes Beach, enhancing **coastal pathway access**.
- Improving **Ballina Indoor Sports Centre** facilities, adding activities like **Pickleball** and **Table Tennis**.
- Upgrading **Lennox Park** with accessible pathways, seating, bus stops, and amenities for residents with mobility needs.

Provide young people with a range of leisure activities by:

- Adopting the **Sport Facility Management Policy** in May 2022 to guide facility upgrades and maintenance.
- Upgrading **sports ground lighting** at Fripp Oval, Saunders Oval, Netball Courts, Lyle Park and Ballina Heights
- Building and upgrading **Chickiba athletics facility**.
 - new netball courts, amenities, shelters and lighting
 - hockey clubhouse, landscape and lighting upgrades.
- Upgrading **playground facilities** at Cummings, Elevation, Fitzroy, Wardell, and Madden Parks.
- Opening **pickleball** facility at Lumley Park with Alstonville Tennis Club.
- Upgrading to a multi-sport facility at **Wardell Tennis Courts**.

Supported improved health outcomes by providing equitable access to community facilities by:

- Completing **pathways** at Old Pacific Highway (Newrybar), Banksia Avenue (Lennox Head), and Rifle Range Road (Wollongbar).
- Completing **Pop Denison Park Junior and Senior Children’s Playgrounds** including landscaping, shelters and furniture.
- Completing **footpath works** at Green Street, Alstonville, Gibbon Street, Lennox Head, Main Street, Alstonville and Chickiba Drive, East Ballina.
- Developing a **bike connection plan** linking Lennox Head to Fig Tree Hill.
- Investigating the Bangalow to Ballina link with a business case for Ballina to Bangalow route, aiming to connect with the **Northern Rivers Rail Trail**.

During our community engagement people told us they want a vibrant and diverse local economy that provides a range of jobs and opportunities for people of all ages. Importantly, we want to ensure there are job opportunities for our young people so they do not have to leave the area to find work. We want to attract innovative and progressive businesses that will ensure our villages and towns continue to thrive and prosper.

“We are an attractive destination...”

Promoted our area as an attractive place to visit by:

- Featuring **tourism info** in Community Connect; secured Ballina's listing on **Meet in NSW Conferencing site**.
- Producing **Ballina Coast and Hinterland maps** and unique prawn merchandise.
- Keeping industry updated with a **weekly newsletter** on recovery, grants, and events.
- **Growing social media reach** significantly on Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok.
- Developing a **new visitor guide** and expanded distribution efforts.
- Collaborating on **local events**, tourism career promotions, and volunteer training at attractions.
- Initiating **digital itineraries** and destination-specific campaigns; presented to tourism groups.

Provided opportunities for new business by:

- Finalised Voluntary Planning Agreements and LEP amendment for commercial and retail development in **Ballina Heights**.
- **Lennox Head Village Upgrade** completed including Byron and Ballina St intersection, landscaping, and stormwater works.
- Successfully exhibited **Planning Proposal for Ballina Heights**; LEP amendment approved.
- Updating planning framework at **Power Drive, Cumbalum** enabling new retail developments.

“We support business diversity, sustainability and choice...”

Provided an efficient and cost-effective regulatory environment for doing business:

- Issued **94% of Section 10.7 Certificates** within four days, (meeting the target >90%).
- **DA processing time** averaged 152 days, (not meeting target of ≤ 60 days).
- **41.3% of Complying Development Certificates** issued within 10 days (not meeting the target >80%).
- **Construction Certificates** market share averaged 34.3% (close to the target >50%).
- **51.3% of Building Information Certificates** issued within 20 days (below target >90%)
- Issued 427 **Section 68 Plumbing/ Drainage Approvals** annually (almost meeting the target >450pa).

Enhanced connectivity to capital cities:

- **Ballina Byron Gateway Airport upgrades** completed, including car park and terminal, and **runway overlay**.
- Airport revenue averaged **\$8,244,233**.
- Airport **operating surplus averaged 32.3%** (meeting the target >30% refenue).
- **Passenger numbers** averaged 593,506, (consistently exceeding target 550,000).

Operate Council business activities that support economic development:

- **Stokers Quarry** consultant engaged for Mountain Bike Track expansion.
- **Tuckombil Quarry** planning proposal underway to rezone for film, arts, and recreational uses.
- **Flat Rock Tent Park revenue** averaged **\$560,000** (consistently meeting targets >\$550,000).
- **Commercial property vacancy rate** achieved 0% full occupancy.

“Liveability is high across the shire...”

Facilitate commercially viable industrial precincts:

- **Southern Cross Industrial Estate** lots on Boeing Avenue, Ballina nearing completion.
- **Russellton Industrial Estate, Wollongbar** lots nearing completion.
- **71 Tamar Street, Ballina** operational as a car park.

Facilitate residential land:

- **Wollongbar Housing Project**, awaiting Council decision on housing.
- **Lennox Head Village Upgrade** completed.
- **Housing Strategy** adopted.

Delivered infrastructure that supports residential living:

- **Hutley Drive** - Southern section design 90% complete; awaiting approvals for construction.
- Roundabout extension for **Angels Beach Drive/Tamarind Drive** completed.
- Duplication of **Canal and Fishery Creek Bridges** preliminary investigations continue.
- **North Creek Road Bridge** reinstatement progressing with preconstruction investigations.
- **Wardell Town Centre Beautification** in progress.



PROSPEROUS ECONOMY



- \$3.04 billion** gross regional product
- 3.4%** unemployment rate
- 15.9%** contribution to the Northern Rivers Gross Regional Product
- \$419 million** tourism dollars spent per year (year end 2023)
- 1.33 million** visitor nights booked in Ballina Shire (year end 2023)

During our community engagement people told us they want to have confidence and trust in their elected representatives and want a genuine partnership with Council where their voices are heard and their opinions respected. Our community wants resources to be used efficiently and responsibly. People want Council to act locally but to also work effectively and collaboratively with other levels of government, private sector organisations and community groups to drive economic and social prosperity.

“Decision-making is inclusive, transparent and underpinned by sustainability...”

Reflected community sentiment in corporate publications by:

- Adopting **Community Strategic Plan** at June 2022 Ordinary meeting.
- **Surveying** community with results showing a 91% satisfaction level.
- Reviewing all **council-adopted policies** within term of Council to align with community expectations.

Encouraged community involvement in planning and decision-making by:

- Launching **YourSayBallina** platform in July 2022 to improve community engagement (Visits = 57,305, Contributions/Comments/Posts = 2,924, Participants Registered = 1,546). Projects with the highest online engagement include (submissions in brackets):
 - o Lennox Head Strategic Plan (455)
 - o 4WD Access – Seven Mile Beach (265)
 - o Hampton Park Reserve Master Plan (244)
 - o Shaws Bay Coastal Management Program (186)
 - o Ballina CBD Parking Study (176)
 - o Sharpes Beach Carpark Upgrade (149).

Advocated for community issues with government bodies by:

- Seeking **social housing support** and land for **affordable housing and homelessness initiatives**.
- Requesting funding for **waste reduction**, including **automated recycling**.
- Pushing for infrastructure investment in **Pacific Highway upgrades** and **Cumalalum Interchange development**.
- Supporting **employment lands** development at **Southern Cross Industrial Estate**.
- Advocating for **affordable election costs**.
- Advocating for **pensioner rebates** to ease seniors' financial burden.
- Engaging in **flood immunity projects** for flood-prone areas.
- Requesting a reduction in the **Emergency Services Levy** to lessen Council's financial strain.

“Council’s finances and assets are well managed...”

Proactively pursue revenue opportunities, cost savings and/or efficiencies by:

- Aligning with the **Fit for the Future Program**, adopting the Long-Term Financial Plan targeting an operating surplus by 2027-2031 through fiscal restraint and income increases.
- Launching a **business excellence framework** for operational improvements, including a new emergency dashboard on Council's website.
- Keeping **Asset Management Framework** updated with policy reviews, asset revaluations, and a dedicated management team.

Used modern systems and equipment by:

- Implementing an **Authority Asbestos register** and improved **geospatial data flows** for better performance.
- Progressing **cyber security** with a new email filter, multi-factor authentication, and DMARC setup.
- Adding **Internet of Things gateways** at reservoirs, enhanced **endpoint security**, streamlined **data structures**, and introduced **UpGuard** for web security.

Provided effective risk and safety practices by:

- Updating **Risk Management Framework** with insurer-aligned practices and new **Contract Works Insurance**.
- Completed internal audits, monitored by the **Audit Risk and Improvement Committee**, and set a **Continuous Improvement Pathway** for insurance.
- Strengthened **cyber security** compliance, with ongoing updates and guidelines developed for **ARIC** performance assessments.

“Our leaders work effectively with other levels of government and councils...”

Provided prompt, knowledgeable, friendly, and helpful advice by:

- Average completion time for **90% of customer requests** within 15 days.
- Maintaining a **94% complaint response rate** within 15 working days (exceeding the **80% target**).
- **Community Survey 2024** results indicated 88% satisfaction with Council's response and service.

Encouraged a motivated and adaptive workforce by:

- Endorsing and implementing **Workforce Management Plan**.
- Increasing female workforce participation through **female traineeships** and partnerships with Novaskill and Real Futures for Women.
- **Staffing statistics:**
 - o Staff turnover averaged 15% (above target of 10%).
 - o Staff training averaged 93% (exceeding the 80% target).
 - o Sick leave averaged 9.6 days (over target of fewer than 8 days).
 - o Workers' compensation claims averaged 18.7 annually (within target of fewer than 20).
 - o Lost hours due to claims averaged 587.7 (below the target of 1,000 hrs).

Delivered responsive and efficient services by:

- **98% of applications** determined under delegated authority (exceeding 95% target).
- 70% target met for **development application referrals** completed within 21 days.
- **Council website visits** averaged 556,082 (surpassing annual target of 400,000).
- **Operating budgets compliance** averaged 95% (within 5% of approved funding).
- **Capital works compliance** averaged 83% (within time and 20% budget limits).
- **Kerbside missed bin services** averaged 11 per month (within target).



ENGAGED LEADERSHIP



556,082
council website visits per year

98% development applications determined under delegated authority

90% customer requests resolved within service delivery targets

88% satisfaction rate with Council's response and service

6 out of 7 Fit For the Future benchmarks met

\$2.6 million in revenue generated from commercial property



HEALTHY

ENVIRONMENT

168kg
waste per
person sent
to landfill in
2023/24

7.2%
of water use is
recycled water

10 tonnes
greenhouse
emissions
per capita

936
smart meters
operational across
the water network

58%
of waste
diverted from
landfill to
reuse/recycling

141kl
water used per
household
(well below
165kl target)

The health and preservation of our natural environment was a strong recurring theme from our community engagement. We want to continue to find a balance between development and the environment to ensure we preserve what people love so much about living here. We want to restore and repair our waterways and areas that have been degraded to maintain aquatic and birdlife. We understand the importance of peace, serenity and harmony with nature. We want our built environment to meet our needs but not at the expense of our natural environment or the people who live and work here.

“We protect, respect and enhance our natural environment...”

Our planning considers past and predicted environmental changes:

- **Coastal hazard studies** are underway, supported by data gathering and DPI's Riparian and Bank Stabilisation Study for stage 2 Coastal Management Plan initiatives.
- Received grants for **flood studies**, covering overland flood studies in key areas.
- Corporate **Emissions Reduction Plan** adopted May 2024, with **Climate Change Adaptation Plan** finalised July 2024.
- **Sand levee projects** and **Coastal Zone Management Plan** actions progressing, with complex RFT in final review stages.
- **Scoping study grant** secured to update Coastal Zone Management Plan, aligning with CMP frameworks and funding avenues.

Initiatives to improve waterways:

- Completed final designs for **Teven recreational site**. Vegetation and creek stabilisation, driveway and fencing upgrades underway.
- **Beachwatch Program** extended for post-flood water quality checks, advising no-swim areas due to contamination.
- **Shaws Bay marine vegetation monitoring** ongoing; educational signage installed.
- **Lake Ainsworth** projects advancing, covering riparian planting, weed control, and beach nourishment preparations amid flood challenges.
- **North Creek water quality** monitoring finalised with project timelines adjusted to incorporate new CSIRO data.
- **Urban stormwater upgrades** completed, with new projects launched after detailed assessments in Wardell, Alstonville, and West Ballina.
- **Richmond River management** is progressing with data supporting advanced hydrological modelling.

Beautify and protect streetscapes and open spaces by:

- **Street tree replacements** at Lennox Head and additional plantings aligned with the Lennox Village Vision.
- **Wardell planting program** completed, achieving goals under the Wardell Strategic Plan.
- Proactive **fig tree monitoring** carried out with essential works completed.
- Quarterly **infill planting and community street tree projects** received positive feedback, with additional trees added to larger projects like Lennox Village Vision and River Street upgrades.
- Co-hosted **Annual Lennox Head Community Tree Planting Day** with Geolink.

“Our operational choices are based on sustainability and limit our impact on the environment...”

Implemented total water cycle management practices by:

- **Swim Local training** completed for staff to improve water quality and asset data collection.
- **Electrical conductivity monitoring** started at wastewater stations, with **CCTV cameras** assisting in detailed sewer assessments.
- **936 smart meters** now operational across the network, and 2,411 properties connected to **recycled water**.
- Revised **recycled water agreements** prepared for Alstonville customers, with hydraulic model reviews.
- Staff engaged with DPE to **align the IWCM Plan** with the new regulatory framework.
- **Flow meters** added in Wardell and Ballina Heights for better water balance monitoring.
- **Recycled water indicators:** Health incidents average 0.33 (Target: 0); Microbial compliance 99.67% (Target: 100%); Chemical/Physical compliance 99.33% (Target: 100%); Water consumption per connection 146.67 kl (Target: ≤ 170 kl); Recycled water during dry weather 8.33% (Target: ≥ 20%).

Used our scarce resources wisely by:

- **Water loss reduction program** mostly complete, with repairs pending for Wardell zone due to part delays.
- Participating in **Active Leak Detection**, identifying 117 network leaks; repairs progressing.
- Securing DPE funding for **bulk metering upgrades**, adding flow meters at key reservoirs.
- Ranger team trialing Aero Ranger technology for **smart licence plate recognition**, enhancing officer safety.
- **Kerbside recycling** diversion averaged 58.33% (near target 59%)
- **Light fleet CO2 rating** averaged 193.33 g/km (within target ≤ 200)
- **Water main breaks** averaged 0.67 per 30km (met target ≤ 1).

Reduced resource use through innovation by:

- **CO2 emissions** from built assets averaged 8,421 tonnes, meeting target (≤ 9,800).
- **Renewable energy generation** averaged 1,076 kW, below the 1,200 kW target.
- **Energy consumption** from built assets averaged 9,646 MWh, above the ≤ 9,000 MWh target.

“Our built environment is respectful of the natural environment and ecosystem...”

Implemented plans that balance the built environment with the natural environment by:

- **River Street Duplication** (Fishery Creek and Canal Bridges): Geotechnical and concept design in progress.
- **Contributions Plans:** Open Spaces and Community Facilities contributions plans adopted, supporting local development.
- **Climate Change Policy** adopted for corporate emissions reduction strategy.
- **Lennox Head Strategic Plan** adopted.
- **Environmental Protection Zone** framework refined for landowner consultations.
- **Ballina LEP amendment** finalised for rural subdivisions.
- **Development Control Plan** amended for minor updates.
- **Strategic Urban Growth Areas** review completed.
- **4WD Access policy** revised, with changes to beach permit system.
- **Killen Falls** Vegetation Management Plan and **Ocean Breeze Reserve** Management Plan progressing.
- **Illegal Dumping Strategy** with litter components completed.
- **Extractive Industry Strategy** published on interactive webpage.

Minimised negative impacts on the natural environment by:

- **Biodiversity Strategy** adopted with \$50,000 state funding for ecological mapping and vegetation updates.
- **Alstonville Cemetery Master Plan** adopted, with beam installations to increase burial capacity.
- **Pollution Incident Reporting** averaged 4 incidents (target of 0 incidents not met).
- Inspected average of 237 **OSSM Systems** (met target >100).
- **Environmental Protection Licence Compliance** of 98.33% (almost met target of 100%).
- **Compliance Licence Reports** for water/wastewater and waste 100% on time (met target).

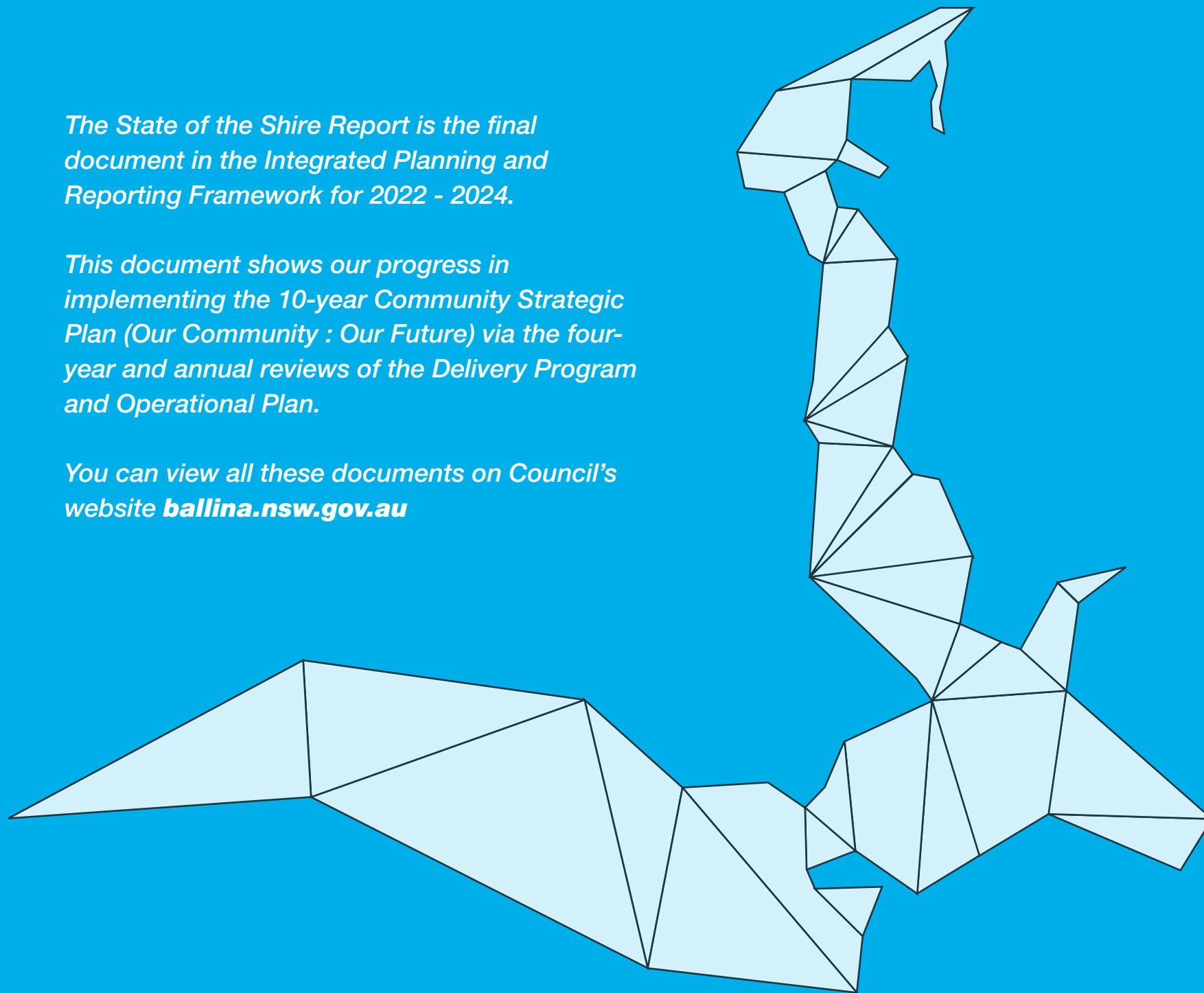
Matched infrastructure with development by:

- **Contribution Plan** for Open Spaces and Community Facilities adopted.
- **Development Servicing Plans** for water, wastewater, and recycled water adopted and pending registration with NSW Department.
- **Environmental Licence** 100% compliance with limits and timely submissions for water, wastewater, and waste reports (met targets).

The State of the Shire Report is the final document in the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework for 2022 - 2024.

This document shows our progress in implementing the 10-year Community Strategic Plan (Our Community : Our Future) via the four-year and annual reviews of the Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

*You can view all these documents on Council's website **ballina.nsw.gov.au***



ballina
shire council

40 Cherry Street | PO Box 450 | BALLINA NSW 2478 | **ballina.nsw.gov.au** | council@ballina.nsw.gov.au