

COUNCIL RISES TO CHALLENGING TIMES

Kyogle Council has met the challenge of bushfires, flood, drought and COVID 19 while still rolling out another record capital works program, totalling \$20.8 million.

That brings to \$96 million in capital works Council has delivered since the adoption of its Long-Term Financial Plan in 2015, Mayor Danielle Mulholland said.

“The last 18 months or more has seen our community confront substantial challenges and I’m proud to be part of a Council and community, that continues to punch above its weight and deliver for our future,” Cr Mulholland said at the release of the council’s Annual Report.

“I am very proud that Council successfully secured State and Federal grant funding totalling \$19.7 million in 2019/2020.

“This assisted us to deliver increased road upgrades and bridge replacements across our Local Government Area (LGA) including the replacement of 13 timber bridges.

“Our community confronted the challenges of devastating drought and bushfires and with State and Federal assistance Council delivered \$3.4 million in drought and bushfire recovery packages, including distributing over \$1 million in community and business grants.

“To ease the financial burden on drought-affected rural residents facing water shortages, Council waived its service charge for bulk water sales.

“We recognised climate change as a contributing factor to uncertainty and established a Climate Change Working Group.

“Council led a project to ensure local communities are more prepared and better able to recover from disasters, winning the NSW Get Ready Community Award.

“2020 produced challenges not seen in 100 years due to COVID-19, and we managed to keep our doors open and deliver essential services to our community without disruption.”

To help the community through the pandemic, Council also adopted relief measures to support businesses and ratepayers, including;

- rent relief for Council’s commercial tenants,
- suspension of debt recovery measures, and
- waiving interest payable on outstanding rates and charges

“COVID-19 slowed tourism but we are confident of the future after recording 23,000 unique visitors to the Visit Kyogle website in 2019/2020 alone,” Cr Mulholland said.

“Further adding to confidence in our local economy, we saw \$15.2 million of development approvals in our LGA across 2019/2020.

“Planning for our future is one of the most important jobs Council has and earlier this year we adopted a \$412 million Long Term Financial Plan to futureproof our Local Government Area, which includes over \$162 million in capital works over the next 14 years.

“Once again, one of the most significant achievements of the year was the improvement in Council’s financial position. Council was issued with a clean audit opinion from the NSW Audit Office, and achieved five out of the six financial benchmarks, with only the Own Source Revenue Ratio below target, which is due to an increase in external grant funding.

“Kyogle Council is no longer the forgotten Council in the hinterland of the Northern Rivers, instead we are a recognised leader in our field.

“Recognising the importance of strong leadership and his role in ensuring Council continues to deliver for our community, we also reappointed Graham Kennett as our General Manager for a further five years.”

Related Links;

Annual Report 2019-2020;

<https://www.kyogle.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Annual-Report-2019-20.pdf>

Financial Statements 2019-2020;

<https://www.kyogle.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Kyogle-Council-Financial-Statements-2019-20.pdf>

Long Term Financial Plan 2021/2034 adopted June 2020;

<https://www.kyogle.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Adopted-KC-Long-Term-Financial-Plan-June-2020.pdf>

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Other achievements during 2019/2020 (from 2019-20 Annual Report)

- 20.64km of sealed roads rehabilitated, and 13.83km of reseals
- Initial sealing of 14km of Clarence Way south of the Bruxner Highway, and sections of Lynches Creek Road
- 279km of unsealed roads graded and 55.7km of gravel re-sheets completed
- 13 timber bridges replaced including;
 - Completion of the \$1.8 million bridge to replace Hootons Bridge at Tabulam funded with assistance through the Australian Government's Bridge Renewal Program
 - Completion of the \$1 million bridge to replace Needhams Bridge at Tooloom with funding through the Australian Government's Bridge Renewal Program and the NSW Government's Fixing Country Roads Program
 - Completion of the \$1.8 million bridge to replace Findon Bridge at Grevillia with funding through the Australian Government's Community Development Grants
- More than 49,797 potholes patched
- Pool attendances down from 31,000 to 16,412 across our three pools due to COVID-19 forced shutdowns
- Community financial assistance funding of \$30,901
- More than \$770,000 of Bushfire Recovery Funding distributed directly to affected businesses and community groups
- Two new accessible cabins installed, and house renovations carried out, at Kyogle Gardens Caravan Park to provide new visitor accommodation
- Participated in NSW Healthy Towns Challenge – distributing \$15,000 to support community-led health and wellbeing activities
- Re-established the Kyogle Youth Advisory Committee as 'Swoopin' Season'
- Collaborated on and supported the development, launch and promotion of the new Northern Rivers NSW regional brand
- Adoption of the Kyogle Local Strategic Planning Statement, providing a framework for growth and development across the local government area
- In partnership with Kyogle and District Chamber of Commerce, Council delivered Small Business Month and International Women's Day activities
- Successfully secured \$1.4m from the NSW State Government's Stronger Country Communities Fund Round 2, focussing on projects identified in the Visions of Village Life Master Plans and other community priorities
- 100m of new urban stormwater pipes laid
- Installation of new floating pontoon deck and boat ramp at Bells Bay
- Installation of footpaths at Old Bonalbo to provide connectivity to the local shop and improve the existing footpath from the hall to the school
- Drilled new bores at Tabulam and Bonalbo as part of emergency drought works and to help improve the long-term security of the water supply
- Refurbished the water reservoir in Bonalbo
- Complete internal fit out and new deck for Kyogle library
- Invest Kyogle website launched
- Further development of the Community Led Evacuation Centre project

Highlights from the Long Term Financial Plan adopted June 2020

- Investigation and construction for the Tabulam, Mallanganees and Wiangaree sewerage schemes projects, with detailed design included in 2019/20 and construction planned to commence in 2022/23 and finish in 2025/26 at a total cost of \$8.98 million with assumed 75% subsidy as per NSW Governments Safe & Secure Water program
- Investigation and construction for the Tabulam water supply project, with options investigations included in 2019/20 and construction planned to commence in 2021/22 and finish in 2023/24 at a total cost of \$2.6 million with assumed 75% subsidy as per NSW Governments Safe & Secure Water program
- Funding for a new indoor sports complex in Kyogle in 2022/23, with \$5 million allocated at 50% external funding to allow for gym, indoor basketball/netball court, and indoor pool in complex
- Additional capital works budgets of \$410,000 per year from 2020/21 and ongoing, across the community infrastructure and parks and gardens budgets to help with delivery of the Visions of Village Life plans, the site-specific Master Plans, and projects identified in the Review of Climate Change Assessment and Adaptation Initiatives.
- Funding for the Kyogle main street landscaping and beautification project in 2021/22, with \$3 million allocated at 50% external funding
- Funding for Kyogle Memorial Institute Hall improvements in 2022/23 with \$800,000 allocated at 50% external funding for stage 2 of the redevelopment of the hall to allow for new amenities and improvements to the supper room
- An initial sealing program targeted to reduce the cost of maintaining sections of unsealed road and to remove isolated sections of sealed road worth \$2m over the next four years from 2020/21, and \$500,000 per year from 2029/30 and ongoing
- Funding of \$140,000 in 2022/23 to allow for LED changeover for street lighting to help Council meet its renewable energy targets and reduce operating costs
- Additional funding of \$520,000 in footpath renewals over the four years from 2020/21, to address backlog by replacing existing footpaths in poor condition.
- Increased budget allocation for delivery of action plans included in adopted floodplain risk management plans, including voluntary house purchases, with \$250,000 per year added for the life of the plan, at the current 80% external subsidy level.
- Additional funding of \$400,000 in stormwater renewals over the next four years from 2020/21, to address backlog of poor condition stormwater in urban areas
- Funding to allow Council to meet the renewable energy targets included in the Sustainable Council and Community Action Plan, following delivery of \$400,000 of solar PV installations in 2020, with the 2030 target of 100% renewables to be funded from energy savings over the period from 2020/21 to 2029/30.