



Ordinary meeting business paper

Wednesday, 16 August 2023

commencing 10.00 am

Rous Administration Centre (L4), 218-232 Molesworth Street, Lismore

In accordance with clause 5.21 of the *Local Government Act 1993*, attendees at today's Council meeting are advised that this meeting is being 'live' streamed (except for the confidential session).

- All speakers should refrain from making any defamatory comments or releasing any personal information about another individual without their consent.
- Council accepts no liability for any damage that may result from defamatory comments made by persons attending meetings. All liability will rest with the individual who made the comments.
- This meeting must not be recorded by others without the prior written consent of the Council in accordance with Council's Code of Meeting Practice.

AGENDA

1. Opening of the meeting

2. Acknowledgement of Country

Council would like to show its respect and acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Land, of Elders past and present on which this meeting takes place.

3. Apologies and Applications for Leave of Absence or Attendance by Audio-Visual Link by Councillors

4. Confirmation of Minutes of previous meeting 1 - 6

Ordinary Council meeting 21 June 2023.

5. Disclosure of Interest

6. Matters of urgency

7. Notices of Motion / Questions with Notice

Nil matters.

8. Presentation: Brian Wilkinson (ARIC Chair): Audit Risk and Improvement Committee - Performance Report 2022/23

(Refer to Item 12.6 – Chair's Committee Performance report)

9. General Manager reports

Nil matters.

10. Group Manager Corporate and Commercial reports

10.1 Preliminary 2022/23 End of Financial Year Summary and Budget Carry Forwards 7 - 22

10.2 Retail Water Bad Debt Write-off 23 - 24

11.	Group Manager Planning and Delivery reports	
11.1	Proposed change to ownership - Lismore Levee Scheme	25 - 27
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12.6	Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee - meeting update	64 - 73
12.7	Delivery program update: 1 April 2023 to 30 June 2023 ...	74 - 80
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12.9	Annual Report: Rous Regional Demand Management Plan 2023-2024	83 - 87
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13.	Confidential matters	90
13.1	Perradenya Estate - update report	
14.	Close of business	

**MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF ROUS COUNTY COUNCIL HELD
WEDNESDAY, 21 JUNE 2023 AT THE ADMINISTRATION OFFICE, 218-232
MOLESWORTH STREET, LISMORE**

The Chair opened the meeting at 10.05 am.

In attendance:

Councillors:

- Cr Robert Mustow, Richmond Valley Council (Chair)
- Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Ballina Shire Council (Deputy Chair)
- Cr Rod Bruem, Ballina Shire Council
- Cr Michael Lyon, Byron Shire Council
- Cr Andrew Gordon, Lismore City Council
- Cr Big Rob, Lismore City Council
- Cr Sandra Humphrys, Richmond Valley Council

Council Staff:

- Phillip Rudd, General Manager
- Andrew Logan, Group Manager Planning and Delivery
- Helen McNeil, Group Manager People and Performance
- Geoff Ward, Group Manager Corporate and Commercial
- Jonathan Patino, Finance Manager
- Lauren Edwards, Governance and Risk Manager
- Noeline Smith, Minute Taker
- Robyn Waldron, Executive Assistant
- Luka Taylor, ICT Support Officer

Apologies

- Cr Sarah Ndiaye, Byron Shire Council
- Adam Nesbitt, Group Manager Operations

1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Council showed its respect and acknowledged the Traditional Custodians of the Land, of all Elders, on which the meeting took place.

2 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED (21/23) (Cadwallader/Gordon) that the minutes of the meeting held 19 April 2023 be confirmed as presented.

Confirmation of previous minutes (Resolution)		
For	Cr Rod Bruem, Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Andrew Gordon, Cr Sandra Humphrys, Cr Michael Lyon, Cr Robert Mustow and Cr Big Rob	7
Against	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

3 DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

General Manager declared a pecuniary interest in *Agenda Item 14.1 Chair's Minute: Annual Performance Review*.

4 MATTERS OF URGENCY

Nil.

5 NOTICES OF MOTION / QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE

5.1 Notice of Motion: Acquisition of low-lying, high-risk rural floodplain areas

MOVED (Rob/Humphrys) that Council investigate a policy position on the acquisition of low-lying, high-risk rural floodplain areas noting:

- Artificial drainage of the lowest lying land has the worst environmental impact.
- Council has responsibility for drains, canals and floodgates that drain these areas.
- These areas were badly impacted in the recent floods, and residents in these areas are at high risk.
- Current voluntary programs that facilitate acquisition, land use change and the removal of artificial drainage.
- Council's role in broad strategic planning on the floodplain.
- The need to utilise external funding (grant or otherwise) is required.

On being put to the meeting the Motion was Carried.

RESOLVED (22/23) (Rob/Humphrys) that Council investigates a policy position on the acquisition of low-lying, high-risk rural floodplain areas noting:

- Artificial drainage of the lowest lying land has the worst environmental impact.
- Council has responsibility for drains, canals and floodgates that drain these areas.
- These areas were badly impacted in the recent floods, and residents in these areas are at high risk.
- Current voluntary programs that facilitate acquisition, land use change and the removal of artificial drainage.
- Council's role in broad strategic planning on the floodplain.
- The need to utilise external funding (grant or otherwise) is required.

Notice of Motion: Acquisition of low-lying, high-risk rural floodplain areas (Resolution)		
For	Cr Rod Bruem, Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Andrew Gordon, Cr Sandra Humphrys, Cr Michael Lyon, Cr Robert Mustow and Cr Big Rob	7
Against	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

6 GENERAL MANAGER REPORTS

Nil.

7 GROUP MANAGER CORPORATE AND COMMERCIAL REPORTS

7.1 Retail Water Customer Account Assistance

RESOLVED (23/23) (Cadwallader/Rob) that Council:

1. Note the applications for assistance presented in the Retail water customer account assistance report.
2. Authorise an increase of \$25,000 to the existing budget from available budget savings within the Finance department.

Retail water customer account assistance (Resolution)		
For	Cr Rod Bruem, Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Andrew Gordon, Cr Sandra Humphrys, Cr Michael Lyon, Cr Robert Mustow and Cr Big Rob	7
Against	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

8 GROUP MANAGER PEOPLE AND PERFORMANCE REPORTS

8.1 Appointment of Chair and Independent External Member – Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee

RESOLVED (24/23) (Rob/Lyon) that Council:

1. Express its thanks to the Chair, Mr Brian Wilkinson, for his contributions and commitment to the Committee over the last 10 years.
2. Appoint Laurie Lefcourt as Chair of the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee for a four (4) year term commencing at the conclusion of the hand over period; and
3. Appoint Raymond Wong as Independent Member of the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee for a four (4) year term.

Appointment of Chair and Independent External Member – Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee (Resolution)		
For	Cr Rod Bruem, Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Andrew Gordon, Cr Sandra Humphrys, Cr Michael Lyon, Cr Robert Mustow and Cr Big Rob	7
Against	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

9 GROUP MANAGER PLANNING AND DELIVERY

9.1 Draft Statement of Commitment

RESOLVED (25/23) (Cadwallader/Lyon) that Council:

1. Receive and note the intentions of Rous to establish a Statement of Commitment .
2. Endorse the draft Statement of Commitment as presented.

Draft Statement of Commitment (Resolution)		
For	Cr Rod Bruem, Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Andrew Gordon, Cr Sandra Humphrys, Cr Michael Lyon, Cr Robert Mustow and Cr Big Rob	7
Against	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

9.2 Revised Terms of Reference – Reconciliation Action Plan Advisory Group

RESOLVED (26/23) (Rob/Humphrys) that Council endorse the draft 2022/24 Terms of Reference for the Reconciliation Action Plan Advisory Group.

Revised Terms of Reference – Reconciliation Action Plan Advisory Group (Resolution)		
For	Cr Rod Bruem, Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Andrew Gordon, Cr Sandra Humphrys, Cr Michael Lyon, Cr Robert Mustow and Cr Big Rob	7
Against	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

10 POLICIES

10.1 Procurement policy

RESOLVED (27/23) (Cadwallader/Lyon) that Council:

1. Revoke the Procurement policy dated 17 December 2014 (Attachment 2) and any other policies revived as a result of the revocation; and
2. Adopt the revised Procurement policy attached to the report (Attachment 1).

Procurement policy (Resolution)		
For	Cr Rod Bruem, Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Andrew Gordon, Cr Sandra Humphrys, Cr Michael Lyon, Cr Robert Mustow and Cr Big Rob	7
Against	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

11 INFORMATION REPORTS

RESOLVED (28/23) (Cadwallader/Lyon) that the following information reports be received and noted:

1. Investments – May 2023
2. Water production and consumption – May 2023
3. Audit Risk and Improvement Committee – meeting update
4. Reports/Actions pending

Information reports (Resolution)		
For	Cr Rod Bruem, Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Andrew Gordon, Cr Sandra Humphrys, Cr Michael Lyon, Cr Robert Mustow and Cr Big Rob	7
Against	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

12 CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS

MOVED TO CLOSED COUNCIL

RESOLVED (29/23) (Cadwallader/Gordon) that Council move into Closed Council with the press and public excluded from the meeting based on the grounds detailed below:

Report	Chair's Minute: Annual Performance Review - General Manager
Grounds for closure	Section 10A(2)(a) personnel matters concerning particular individuals (other than councillors).

Confidential matters (Resolution)		
For	Cr Rod Bruem, Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Andrew Gordon, Cr Sandra Humphrys, Cr Michael Lyon, Cr Robert Mustow and Cr Big Rob	7
Against	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

The meeting moved to Closed Council at 10.36am

RESUME TO OPEN COUNCIL

RESOLVED (30/23) (Cadwallader/Rob) that the meeting resume to Open Council.

The meeting moved to Open Council at 10.47am.

12.1 Chair's Minute: Annual Performance Review - General Manager

The Mayor read to the meeting the following resolution of Council:

RESOLVED (31/23) (Mustow/Cadwallader) that Council:

1. Accept the recommendation of the Chair and Councillors that assessed the General Manager's annual review on 17 May 2023 as 'More than Satisfactory'.
2. Agree to the recommended change to the General Manager's total remuneration package (TRP) as specified in the report.

Chair's Minute: Annual Performance Review - General Manager (Resolution)		
For	Cr Rod Bruem, Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Andrew Gordon, Cr Sandra Humphrys, Cr Michael Lyon, Cr Robert Mustow and Cr Big Rob	7
Against	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Carried		

13 CLOSE OF BUSINESS

There being no further business the meeting closed at 10.48 am.

Preliminary 2022/23 End of Financial Year Summary and Budget Carry Forwards

Responsible Officer: Group Manager Corporate and Commercial (Geoff Ward)

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Receive and note the Preliminary 2022/23 End of Year Financial Summary Report, acknowledging that it is a preliminary summary prior to end of year adjustments and audit.
2. Approve the funds to be carried forward as detailed in Tables 11 - 12 of this report.

Background

This report provides a preliminary overview of the 2022/23 financial performance of the organisation, detailing the cash transfers to and from reserve and identifying the works to be carried forward to the 2023/24 financial year. It should be noted that non-cash transactions (for example accruals, depreciation) are eliminated to determine the cash amount to be transferred to or from reserve.

While the figures and commentary will provide a guide to performance, it is important to note that it is subject to change as end of year accounting adjustments are in progress and the audit has not yet commenced.

End of Year Financial Summary

The End of Year financial summary is presented for the whole organisation and then broken down on a Reporting Unit basis. Actual income and expenditure is compared to estimates as at the March 2023 quarterly review. The tables summarise the financial performance; accompanying commentary is high level and reflects the preliminary nature of the results.

Whole Organisation

Table 1 shows income and expense for Council. It highlights those preliminary results have generally been better than anticipated with an operating surplus (including capital revenue) of \$4,578,300.

Table 1: Whole Organisation Preliminary Financial Results for 2022/2023

	2022/23 Actual \$	2022/23 Estimated March Review \$	Variance \$
Operating Income	30,540,831	30,127,600	413,231
Capital Income	4,291,917	4,223,000	68,917
Operating Expense	30,254,491	33,221,100	2,966,609
Operating Result (Deficit)	4,578,258	1,129,500	3,448,758
Eliminate Depreciation	7,580,344	7,813,800	(233,456)
Cash Result	12,158,602	8,943,300	3,215,302
Loan Capital Repayment	3,604,564	3,604,600	36
Capital Expense	10,895,589	17,341,000	6,445,411
Transfer to/(from) Reserve	(2,341,551)	(12,002,300)	(9,660,749)
Net Cash Movement	0	0	
Reserve Balance	38,212,549	28,552,000	9,660,549

2022/23 has been a year about resetting priorities and adjusting financial forecasts to better align with current conditions. Council has aimed to get back to business-as-usual conditions post Covid-19 and the 2022 flood events, however, market conditions, pricing of projects and the availability of contractors and staff have impacted services.

Operating revenue has been aided by the increased bulk water price path and success with obtaining grant funds for several projects including the Future Water Program.

Capital income (Section 64 contributions) has again grown slightly as the area experiences an increase in housing developments.

Operating expense was less than forecast by approximately \$2.96 million. This is largely attributable to works planned for contractors and consultants and partly reflected in the carryover requests later in this report.

Capital expense was significantly under budget with various projects not completed in the financial year. A large number of capital works were deferred throughout the year via quarterly budget reviews in order to accommodate the high level of carryovers from the previous year. Later in this report, Council approval is requested to carry the unexpended capital budget forward to the 2023/24 financial year. An assessment of the overall capital works program will be undertaken for the September 2023 quarterly budget review statement with the need to prioritise works and make adjustments in order to set an achievable program for the 2023/24 financial year.

As a result, cash reserves at 30 June 2023 are significantly higher than forecast.

Bulk Water Reporting Unit

Table 2 indicates that overall budget forecasts need refining, with the Reporting Unit achieving a preliminary operating surplus (including capital revenue) of \$5,913,800, which is \$3.13 million better than forecast.

Table 2: Bulk Water Preliminary Financial Results for 2022/2023

	2022/23 Actual \$	2022/23 Estimated March Review \$	Variance \$
Operating Income	23,350,111	23,084,800	265,311
Capital Income	4,291,729	4,223,000	68,729
Operating Expense	21,728,004	24,525,800	2,797,796
Operating Result	5,913,836	2,782,000	3,063,107
Eliminate Depreciation	6,188,731	6,357,300	(168,569)
Cash Result	12,102,567	9,139,300	2,963,267
Loan Capital Expense	3,604,564	3,604,600	36
Capital Expense	9,220,474	12,851,600	3,631,126
Transfer to/(from) Reserve	(722,472)	(7,316,900)	(6,594,428)
Net Cash Movement	0	0	
Reserve Balance	29,420,728	22,826,300	6,594,428

Operating income was in line with the forecast, with the majority of actual income being derived from constituent council contributions for bulk water, which amounted to \$20.59 million.

Operating expense was approximately \$2.79 million below budget forecast. This predominantly relates to operational savings in specific delayed projects with many of these identified for carry overs.

Capital income derived from section 64 developer contributions (\$4.1 million) slightly exceeded budget expectations.

The significant portion of the unexpended budget in the capital works program will need to be carried forward to the 2023/24 financial year.

The reserve balance of \$29.4 million is better than forecast primarily due to the level of projects to be carried forward.

Retail Water Reporting Unit

Retail Water has generally performed in line with the forecast and based on preliminary results shown in Table 3 will record an operating deficit of \$48,882.

Table 3: Retail Water Preliminary Financial Results for 2022/2023

	2022/23 Actual \$	2022/23 Estimated March Review \$	Variance \$
Operating Income	3,159,238	3,099,200	60,038
Capital Income	188	0	188
Operating Expense	3,208,308	3,242,200	33,892
Operating Result	(48,882)	(143,000)	93,930
Eliminate Depreciation	259,431	294,600	(35,169)
Cash Result	210,549	151,600	58,761
Capital Expense	519,416	1,604,300	1,084,884
Transfer to/(from) Reserve	(308,867)	(1,452,700)	(1,143,833)
Net Cash Movement	0	0	
Reserve Balance	2,705,133	1,561,300	1,143,833

Operating income exceeded the forecast budget and is comprised of retail water sales, connection fees and water filling station sales. Revenue from retail water sales is the primary contributor to operating income.

Operating expenditure was slightly below the forecast and is due to small labour savings.

Spending on capital works is significantly below forecast, with Smart Metering (\$142,200) and Reticulation (\$882,000) projects identified for carryover into the 2023/24 financial year.

The reserve is currently in a sound position.

Flood Mitigation Reporting Unit

The Flood Reporting Unit has recorded a preliminary operating loss of \$910,242. It should be noted that depreciation includes the Lismore Levee (approx. \$403,400) and exclusion of this cost reduces the loss to approximately \$506,800.

Table 4: Flood Mitigation Preliminary Financial Results for 2022/2023

	2022/23 Actual \$	2022/23 Estimated March Review \$	Variance \$
Operating Income	1,022,233	1,056,200	(33,967)
Operating Expense	1,932,476	1,807,800	(124,676)
Operating Result	(910,242)	(751,600)	(158,642)
Eliminate Depreciation	748,316	695,300	53,016
Cash Result	(161,926)	(56,300)	(105,626)
Capital Expense	134,565	1,596,700	1,462,135
Transfer to/(from) Reserve	(296,491)	(1,653,000)	1,356,509
Net Cash Movement	0	0	
Reserve Balance	815,409	(541,100)	1,356,509

Operating income relies heavily on grant funding and is slightly below budget.

Operating expenditure exceeded budget by \$124,676 due to flood works completed in the last quarter of 2022/2023 and a loss on disposal of assets of \$84,000.

Capital expense related partially to the renewal and replacement of floodgates and 'heavy' repairs and maintenance work on rural levees. The 'heavy' maintenance work may be relocated to operating expense as part of the end of year accounting adjustments.

The reporting unit holds limited cash reserves of approximately \$815,409. The forecasts allowed for capital expenditure on the Lismore Levee of \$1.3M. This expenditure will now be incurred in the 2023/24 financial year. The expenditure will be funded by grant funding which has not yet been included in the budget. This timing issue is the reason for the forecast cash reserve being negative and is not a realistic outcome as the funds will be received prior to the expenditure occurring.

Weed Biosecurity Reporting Unit

The Weed Biosecurity Reporting Unit has recorded a preliminary operating surplus of \$548 which is an improved result compared to the forecast.

Table 5: Weed Biosecurity Preliminary Financial Results for 2022/2023

	2022/23 Actual \$	2022/23 Estimated March Review \$	Variance \$
Operating Income	2,319,391	2,202,500	116,891
Operating Expense	2,318,843	2,664,500	345,657
Operating Result	548	(462,000)	462,548
Eliminate Depreciation	29,358	30,500	(1,142)
Cash Result	29,906	(431,500)	461,406
Capital Expense	37,103	70,500	33,397
Transfer to/(from) Reserve	(7,196)	(502,000)	494,804
Net Cash Movement	0	0	
Reserve Balance	2,596,604	2,101,800	494,804

Operating income is above forecast by \$116,891 mainly due to grant funding that was received in the last quarter of 2022/23. Operating expense was approximately \$345,657 below the budget forecast. This relates to several grant funded projects that are ongoing into 2023/24.

Capital works came in under budget and the savings have been surrendered to reserves. The reserve balance of \$2.59 million represents a strong position with further works planned for 2023/24 from the available funds.

Richmond Water Laboratories (RWL) Reporting Unit

Table 6 depicts the RWL preliminary operating result is a \$229,697 deficit.

Table 6: Richmond Water Laboratories Preliminary Financial Results for 2022/2023

	2022/23 Actual \$	2022/23 Estimated March Review \$	Variance \$
Operating Income	271,488	271,500	(12)
Operating Expense	501,185	503,800	2,615
Operating Result	(229,697)	(232,300)	2,603
Eliminate Depreciation	3,389	3,500	(111)
Cash Result	(226,308)	(228,800)	2,492
Capital Expense	0	0	0
Transfer to/(from) Reserve	226,308	(228,800)	455,108
Net Cash Movement	0	0	
Reserve Balance	35,992	33,500	2,492

Operating income and expenditure were closely aligned to the revised budget as RWL operations were closed during the year.

No capital expenditure was incurred during the 2022/23 financial year. The reserve balance of \$35,992 will be transferred to unrestricted cash reserves.

Property Reporting Unit

A loss of \$182,129 is the preliminary result shown in Table 7. It is important to note that operating expense includes Perradenya maintenance of approximately \$48,600.

Table 7: Property Preliminary Financial Results for 2022/2023

	2022/23 Actual \$	2022/23 Estimated March Review \$	Variance \$
Operating Income	181,036	163,500	17,536
Capital Income	0	0	0
Operating Expense	363,166	397,600	34,435
Operating Result	(182,129)	(234,100)	51,971
Eliminate Depreciation	49,013	42,600	6,413
Cash Result	(133,116)	(191,500)	58,384
Capital Expense	230,093	310,000	79,907
Transfer to/(from) Reserve	(363,210)	(501,500)	138,290
Net Cash Movement	0	0	
Reserve Balance	1,547,690	1,409,400	138,290

Operating income was close to the forecast budget and consists of rental income from leased properties.

Operating expenditure was also close to the forecast budget and consists of leased properties and Perradenya maintenance expenses.

Construction of the Perradenya land development - Stage 7 is an ongoing project.

The reserve balance of ~\$1.54 million is better than forecast.

Fleet Reporting Unit

Fleet operations generated an operating surplus of \$34,825 as per Table 8 with expenses under budget. A cash surplus of \$336,930 was achieved once depreciation is eliminated.

Table 8: Fleet Preliminary Financial Results for 2022/2023

	2022/23 Actual \$	2022/23 Estimated March Review \$	Variance \$
Operating Income	237,334	249,900	(12,566)
Operating Expense	202,510	79,400	(123,110)
Operating Result	34,825	170,500	(135,675)
Eliminate Depreciation	302,105	390,000	(87,895)
Cash Result	336,930	560,500	(223,570)
Capital Expense (Net of Trade-In)	753,938	907,900	153,962
Transfer to/(from) Reserve	(417,008)	(347,400)	(69,608)
Net Cash Movement	0	0	
Reserve Balance	1,091,192	1,160,800	(69,608)

Operating income is made up of staff contributions for private lease vehicles, interest revenue and a one-off insurance claim received by the Reporting Unit and was closely aligned with the forecast budget.

Operating expense includes all recurrent costs such as repairs/maintenance, depreciation, insurance, registration, fuel etc. less plant hire income. Plant hire income is an internal charge raised against those Reporting Units benefitting from the use of the fleet item. The 'expense' is debited to the benefitting Reporting Unit in the form of a plant hire rate and the 'income' is credited to Fleet.

Operating expenses were significantly under budget by \$123,110. Most of the difference relates to fuel expenses and staff salaries and these costs will need to be reassessed for the 2023/24 financial year.

A significant investment in replacing fleet assets has resulted in a net expenditure of \$753,938 as staff replace items damaged by the 2022 flood events and as part of the normal replacement program.

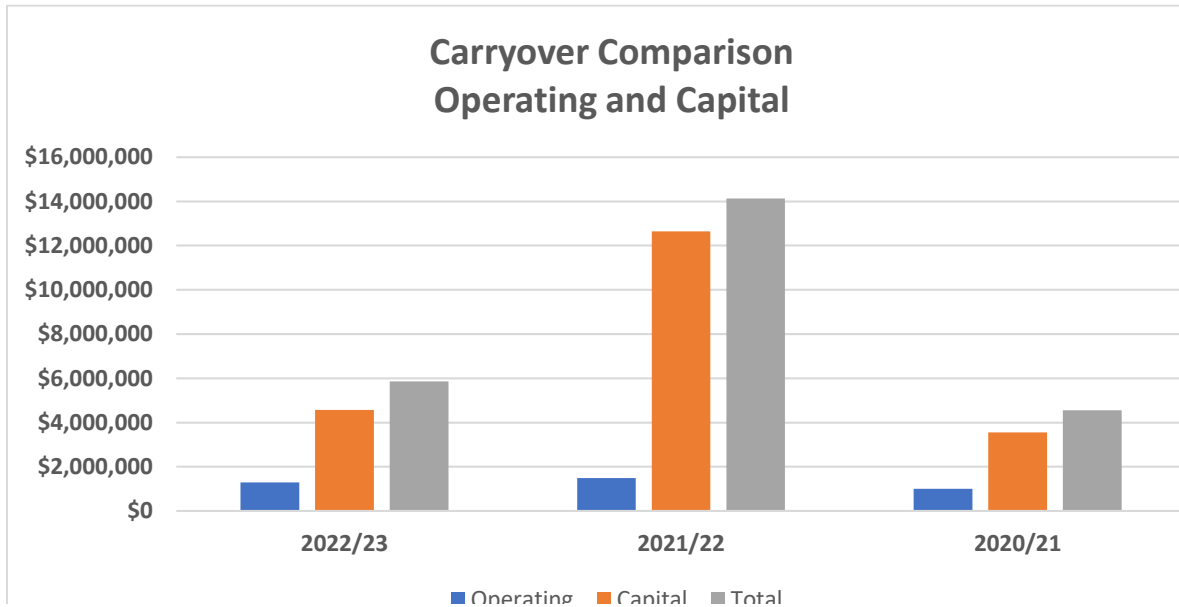
The reserve balance of \$1,091,192 is considered adequate.

Works Carried Forward

This section of the report identifies those unexpended budgets that require being rolled forward to the 2023/24 financial year or in some cases a later financial year. The projects to which the budget relate are either not complete or in some cases not commenced. The works have been split between operational projects and capital works. Additionally, they are presented in three different categories; standard carryovers, major project carryovers and carryovers deferred to later years.

The proposed carryovers from 2022/23 total \$5,853,500 which is a significant decrease on the previous year; 2021/22 totalled \$14,135,000 and 2020/21 totalled \$4,552,800 as per Table 9 below.

Table 9: Carryover Comparison – Operating and Capital



These carryovers predominantly relate to the Bulk Water Reporting Unit (54.7%), the Retail Water Reporting Unit (17.5%) and the Flood Mitigation Reporting Unit (25.4%). It is important to note that the carryover amounts are significantly impacted by the Future Water Program 2060 (FWP 2060), St Helena 600mm Main Renewal (St Helena), Smart Metering/Backflow and Lismore Levee projects. When these projects are removed the carryovers total; 2022/23 \$2,995,500, 2021/22 \$5,422,900 and 2020/21 \$2,156,300. This is displayed in Table 10 below.

Table 10: Carryover Comparison – Operating and Capital (Excluding FWP 2060, St Helena, Smart Metering/Backflow and Lismore Levee)

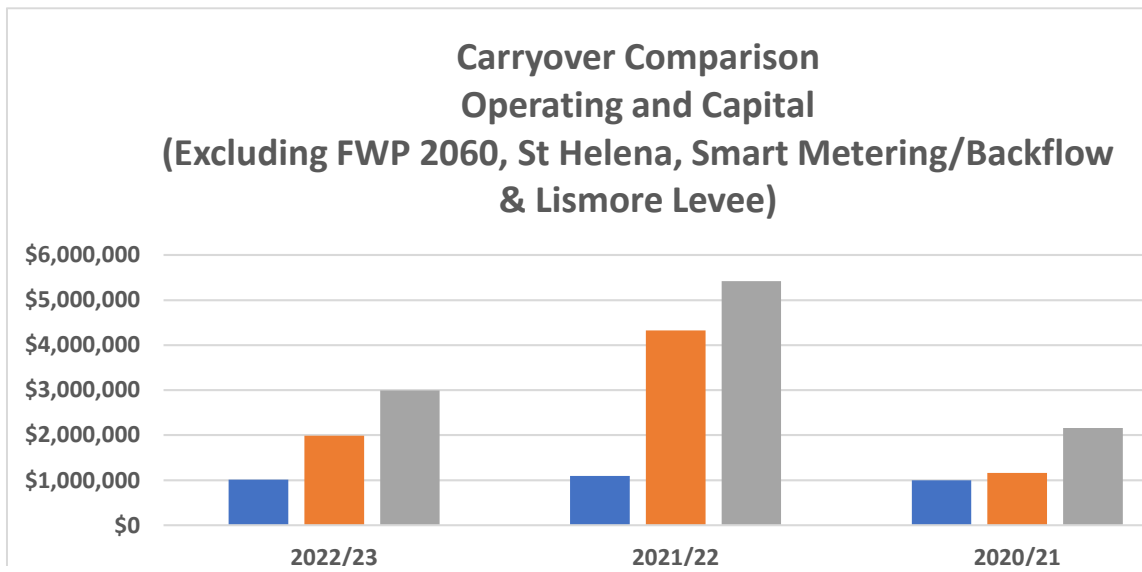


Table 11: Operating Budgets to be Carried Forward

Operating Project Name	Total (\$) 2023/2024	Status	Comments
RCC Branding & Marketing (S-ADMIN)	104,000	Underway	This project will redevelop branding assets (logos, signage, collateral, etc) and implement the subsequent marketing strategy. This project was delayed due to other competing priorities in the 2022/23 FYR.
Ballina 375 Mains Swabbing (P-MAINS SWABBING)	120,000	Underway	Water main cleaning works were unable to be completed during the 2022/23 FYR as there are several limitations on when these works can take place. The works commenced during the July school holidays to limit disruption to customers (including a primary school) and are ongoing.
Review of RCC Development Control Guidance - Drinking Water Catchments (P-CMP)	21,000	Reduced current year budget to offset	A Contractor has been engaged to commence work on: 1) Action A2: OSSM System Planning and Policy Review 2) Action A3: Development Planning and Policy Review. This work commenced in April 2023 and is expected to be completed during the 2023 calendar year. Quotations will be sought in the first half of 2024 and specialist expertise will be engaged in July 2024 to complete this work. The remaining funds are required to carry out this project in the 2023/24 FYR.
Catchment Water Quality Monitoring Program (P-CMP 20-25 A5)	3,300	Reduced current year budget to offset	A contractor has been engaged to conduct a comprehensive review of catchment water quality data (five yearly review), to examine trends in detail and review and update the monitoring program methodologies and outputs. The remaining funds are required to finalise the contract.
EC River Reach Plan Audit (P-CMP 20-25 EC19)	14,100	Reduced current year budget to offset	Some key tasks have been completed as part of the Emigrant Creek River Reach Plan audit. However, work remains to be completed, including finalisation of the new River Reach Plan and preparation of the Property Site Action Plans for the identified priority locations. The remaining funds are required to complete this work so that RCC can proceed to the on-ground implementation phase.
EC River Reach Plan Extension (P-CMP 20-25 EC20)	54,200	Reduced current year budget to offset	The Emigrant Creek River Reach Plan and associated Property Site Action Plans are in the process of finalisation (see above). This has allowed commencement of the on-ground works stage of this multi-year project to improve the condition of riparian buffer zones and adjacent lands for greater buffering and protection of drinking water sources. Funds are required to be carried forward to allow implementation of the Property Site Action Plans through both completion of existing contracts and the engagement of additional contractors for the on-ground work phase.
WRS River Reach Plan Audit (P-CMP 20-25 WR15)	3,300	Reduced current year budget to offset	Audits of the Wilsons River Reach Plan existing and new sites have been completed and preparation of the Property Site Action Plans is underway. The remaining funds are required to finalise the so that RCC can proceed to the on-ground implementation phase.
WRS River Reach Plan Extension (P-CMP 20-25 WR16)	9,900	Reduced current year budget to offset	The Wilsons River Reach Plan and associated Property Site Action Plans are in the process of finalisation (see above). This has allowed commencement of the on-ground works stage of this multi-year project to improve the condition of riparian buffer zones and adjacent lands for greater buffering and protection of drinking water sources. Funds are required to be carried forward to allow implementation of the Property Site Action Plans through the engagement of bush regeneration contractors for the on-ground work phase.
Reconciliation Action Plan (P-RAP)	26,000	Underway	The Reconciliation Liaison Officer (RLO) was employed by Council in February 2022. Following the devastating floods of February and March 2022, the range of partnerships able to be facilitated with key stakeholders has been impacted due to the necessary focus of those organisations on flood recovery and community support. Accordingly, the 2022/23 FYR budget was underspent. RCC has been working with key stakeholders to develop an outline of a Level 3 cultural awareness training program. It is proposed to carryover the unspent funds from the 2022/23 FYR budget to combine with the 2023/24 FYR budget to allow this work to be completed. A local Contractor, with skills and expertise in education for adults has been awarded the work and is underway.
Employee Self Service Application (P-IT ESS)	9,000	Underway	Work on this project to re-install and reconfigure the existing Employee Self Service application started late into the 2022/23 FYR. Funds are required to be carried forward to complete this project in the 2023/24 FYR.
DM Standard Metering Policy (P-DM DMR2)	25,000	Underway	This project, to implement a standard metering policy across the Rous network, is part of the Data Collection, Monitoring and Reporting section of the Rous Regional Demand Management Plan. Hydrosphere Consulting have been appointed and commenced work on this project in June 2023. Funds are required to be carried forward to complete this project by December 2023.
DM Standard Definitions of Connection Types (P-DM DMR1)	35,000	Underway	This project, to implement standard definitions of connection types across the Rous network, is part of the Data Collection, Monitoring and Reporting section of the Rous Regional Demand Management Plan. Hydrosphere Consulting have been appointed and commenced work on this project in June 2023. Funds are required to be carried forward to complete this project by December 2023.

Operating Project Name	Total (\$) 2023/2024	Status	Comments
DM Sustainable Water Partners Program (P-DM SWPP)	21,800	Committed	This program, assisting non-residential customers to improve water efficiency and reduce water/sewer bills, is part of the Rous Regional Demand Management Plan. The remaining budget for the 2022/23 FYR is required to be carried forward to cover committed funds, including \$5,000 to sponsor Water Night and a rebate of \$18,000 waiting to be paid for completed works by Reflections Holiday Parks. Additional funds are available in the 2023/24 SWPP budget to cover the balance of the rebate.
Dam Safety Management System (P-DSMS)	315,100	Partially committed; balance required	This budget is required for multi-financial year projects. The majority of the unspent funds are committed to existing contracts, including with Stantec Australia and Engeny Water Management, and need to be carried forward for the completion of the current risk assessments and the safety review for Emigrant Creek Dam, the consequence category assessment for Rocky Creek Dam, and updating of the operation and maintenance plans for both RCC's declared dams. The remaining uncommitted funds are required to be carried forward for part funding of the geotechnical investigations for Emigrant Creek Dam.
Renewable Energy and Emissions Reduction Plan (P-REERP)	3,300	Underway	The project scope for the Renewable Energy and Emissions Reduction Plan has been extended to include consideration of Rous's bush regeneration planting areas. Any remaining funds are required to be carried forward to complete this work in the 2023/24 FYR.
Demand Forecast (P-FWP2060)	41,400	Intentionally deferred	The demand forecast RFQ has been prepared, however has been delayed to the 2023/24 FYR to meet workload demands of staff.
Drought Management Review (P-DROUGHT REVIEW)	19,800	Underway	A consultant has now been appointed and this work has commenced and will carry over into the 2023/24 FYR. These funds will be required to be carried forward to cover this existing commitment.
Dunoon Dam Investigations (P-FWP2060 DDI)	70,700	Not started but required	The commencement of the cultural heritage and biodiversity assessments has been delayed by staffing constraints and an enhanced consultation model that now includes the Reconciliation Action Plan Advisory Group. Cost estimates indicate the need for these funds to be carried over to the 2023/24 FYR, when this work will be undertaken.
Emergency Desalination Investigations (P-FWP2060 EDI)	60,000	Underway	The RFQ has now been completed and the successful consultant appointed. The work commenced in July 2023 so these funds will be required to support this work in in the 2023/24 FYR.
Indirect Potable Reuse Water Investigations (P-FWP2060 IPR)	86,600	Underway	This multi-year project is continuing into the 2023/24 FYR. The residual funds from the 2022/23 FYR budget are committed for assessments being undertaken by Tyr Group, which will be completed in the 2023/24 FYR.
Engineering Document Management System (P-EDMS)	10,000	Committed	These funds are required to be carried forward and further develop the EDMS Database.
Grant - Fish Habitat Action (Coraki Riparian Project) (GC-FISH HABITAT)	42,300	Grant restricted	RCC has successfully secured DPI Fish Habitat Action Grant funding for riparian works at Coraki. A Site Action Plan has been prepared for the riparian area north and south of Coraki village. Our project partners were all severely impacted by the February and March 2022 floods. Formal agreements have been established with stakeholders allowing commencement in the 2022/23 FYR. Carry forward of the remaining funds to the 2023/24 FYR is required to allow us to meet our commitments to this grant agreement with NSW Fisheries and to allow the contract for these works to be completed.
Grant - Richmond River Water Quality Monitoring (GC-WQM)	29,700	Grant restricted	SCU have been engaged in a multi-year contract to design, build and operate water quality data loggers within the Richmond River Estuary. The data loggers suffered extensive damage during the 2022 floods and require major repair/replacement. SCU has installed lower-specification temporary data loggers as an interim step whilst replacement is being considered as part of insurance claims. The project has been extended by 2 years due to these delays. Funds are required to be carried forward to allow ongoing data collection as part of the extended SCU contract.
Strategic Flood Review (GC-PACL STRATEGIC FL)	50,000	Grant restricted	This project extends over several financial years. Unspent budget from the 2022/23 FYR is required to be carried forward to allow completion of work in the 2023/24 FYR.
Grant - Early Needs Weed Management Project (GC-ENWMP)	59,000	Grant restricted	The first year of the Early Needs Weeds Management Project resulted in some excellent achievements with regards to community engagement and the development and distribution of extension materials. The major difficulty in the first year of the project has been access to flood impacted areas and availability of qualified weed control contractors. As on ground conditions improve, we will need these carryover funds to employ contractors to complete on-ground weed control works.

Operating Project Name	Total (\$) 2023/2024	Status	Comments
Grant - Miconia Project (GC-MICONIA)	54,500	Grant restricted	Achieving the required on-ground works for the Miconia project proved challenging because access to all project sites was impacted by the 2022 floods. As conditions improved throughout the year, teams were able to recommence on-ground works. Carryover funds will be required to continue the project and to complete project targets.
Total Operating Budget to be Carried Forward	1,289,000		

Table 12: Capital Budgets to be Carried Forward

Capital Project Name	Total (\$) 2023/2024	Status	Comments
Rural Properties Roof (CE-RURAL PROP)	29,000	Committed	The required replacement of the roof at 287 Frasers Road is being managed by Council's property managers. Quotes have been sought and a roofing contractor was engaged in March 2023, with the work initially expected to be completed before the end of the 2022/23 FYR. This has been delayed however due to the contractor's availability and it is now required to carry forward the \$29,000 budget to complete the process early in the 2023/24 FYR..
Rocky Creek Dam Drainage Channel (CE-RCD DRAIN)	12,000	Underway	This project to install a diversion drain at Rocky Creek Dam to redirect water run-off prior to the crest of the dam is ongoing and will be finished in the 2023/24 FYR.
NCWTP Wastewater (CE-NCWTP WASTE)	58,300	Committed	Work on the waste plant daff chain and associated fittings is carrying over to 2023/24 FYR as the chain and components have a long lead time, being sea-freighted from Germany. The expected delivery to site is July 2023. Funds will also be used to progress design options for sludge storage and handling upgrades at Nightcap WTP. Quotes were sought from consultants in May 2023 to undertake an options investigation but submissions received did not represent value for money. Therefore, carryover funds will instead be used to undertake investigations using internal staff.
Two Way Radio Upgrade (CE-TWO WAY RADIOS)	70,000	Underway	This work to extend coverage of Rous' Digital Mobile Radio system is carrying over to the 2023/24 FYR as the contractor was waiting for components to arrive. Components have arrived and work is currently being executed and is due for completion early in the 2023/24 FYR.
Water Loss Implementation Program (CE-FWP WLI)	23,500	Underway with supply chain issues	While much of the planning and procurement for this program was carried out as scheduled in the 2022/23 FYR, there was a delay in receiving St Helena 525mm Flowmeter due to factory supply issues and because this meter is not a standard lay length and required purpose-sizing for manufacture. Funds are required to be carried forward for expected delivery and invoicing early in the 2023/24 FYR.
Bulk Meter Replacement Program (CE-BULK)	3,900	Committed	This project allocates funds to replace bulk meters to meet NSW Government metering requirements. The remaining funds from the 2022/23 FYR budget are required to be carried forward to cover an outstanding order for Lansons Trading to install a telemetry device.
Nightcap WTP Bulk Chemical Storage Upgrade (CE-CHEM FARM)	136,100	Not started but required	Preliminary design of the Nightcap WTP Bulk Chemical Storage Upgrade was unable to be completed within the 2022/23 FYR due to re-allocation of key project resources to flood recovery works which were considered higher priority. The design work is now scheduled to be completed before the end of the 2023 calendar year with procurement activities to commence in early 2024 and construction works planned to commence in the 2024/25 FYR.
Coraki 225 - Mains Renewal (CE-CORAKI225)	20,000	Not started but required	In addition to an assessment of options to determine the preferred approach to replace, relocate or abandon a deteriorated water main north of Wyrallah, further modelling and review work was undertaken with regard to the long-term water supply strategy for the area. A carryover of funds is required to complete this options assessment in July/August 2023, finalise the options investigations and progress into the detail design stage.
NCWTP Stairs and Corrosion Repairs (CE-NCWTP STAIRS)	125,000	Committed	There are two separate portions to this project at NCWTP. The first, new stairs and walkways in the pipe gallery, has experienced manufacturing delays (hot dip galvanizing), with completion and invoicing now expected early in the 2023/24 FYR. The second, specialised pipework corrosion repairs, has been delayed due to the availability of the contractor involved. Therefore, the budget needs to be carried forward for project completion in the 2023/24 FYR.
ECWTP BAC Media Replacement and Repainting (CE-ECWTP BAC)	127,300	Underway	Works to replace media, install air scour modifications and repaint the internals of the ECWTP BAC tanks have been progressing well and have been managed using a combination of sub-contractors and internal labour. Commencement of works was delayed until winter to avoid having the treatment plant offline during high demand summer period. Further delays have been experienced on the job including late changes to painting specifications, tanks out of level and general limited availability of contractors. Works are expected to be finalised by the end of August 2023.
Ross St 375 Upgrade (CE-ROSS ST 375)	98,700	Underway	Water main replacement works were originally planned to be completed in June 2023, however due to long lead times on pipe and fittings and contractor availability works are now planned for July 2023.
Reservoir Defect Repairs (CE-RESERVOIR)	23,300	Committed	A specialist contractor has inspected the St Helena reservoir, however has yet to provide pricing to complete minor roof repairs due to their limited availability. Staff are investigating alternative options.
St Helena 600/525 Elevated Main Corrosion Repairs (CE-ST HELENA600/525)	169,900	Underway	Final corrosion repair works were delayed due to weather and other commitments of the contractor. Remaining funds are required to be carried forward to cover remaining works now expected to be finalised in July.

Capital Project Name	Total (\$) 2023/2024	Status	Comments
FWP - Alstonville Groundwater (CE-FWP ALSTON)	45,800	Committed	This work is continuing into the 2023/24 FYR and the remaining budget is required to be carried forward to cover committed orders for design work being undertaken by Planit Consulting and Ingen Consulting engineers for both the Alstonville and Woodburn groundwater schemes.
Woodburn Existing Bores (CE-FWP WEB)	104,500	Committed	This work is ongoing into the 2023/24 FYR and funds are required to be carried forward to cover committed orders for additional engineering support, which has been sourced from Planit Consulting and Ingen Consulting to assist in the design work and in overseeing the on-ground works.
Woodburn New Bores (CE-FWP WNB)	156,500	Committed	This work is ongoing into the 2023/24 FYR and funds are required to be carried forward to cover committed orders for additional engineering support, which has been sourced from Planit Consulting and Ingen Consulting to assist in the design work and in overseeing the on-ground works.
Instrument Replacements at Emigrant Creek WTP (CE-INSTRUMENTS EC)	9,700	Committed with supply chain issues	As part of the 5 yearly Drinking Water Management System review, it was recommended that individual turbidity analysers be installed to the 3x UF membrane skids. The turbidity analysers have been on backorder for some months and will be installed in the 2023/24 FYR.
Instrument Replacements at Nightcap WTP (CE-INSTRUMENTS NC)	25,700	Not started but required	Remaining funds will be used to undertake further work to validate performance of the ozone system to be able to claim health based target log reduction values as outlined in the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines.
Main Electrical Switchboard Upgrade Project at Nightcap WTP (CE-NCWTP PLC SB)	36,300	Carry forward and reassess in Sep QBRs based on resourcing	This is a multi-year project. The contract has been awarded for structural aluminium work. Further work under this project includes construction of access platforms, a new switchroom, control upgrades for DAF saturators and supply and installation of electrical switchboards. Carryover funds will be combined with other budgeted funds for the 2023/24 FYR.
Purchase and Code Update for RTU Upgrades (CE-TELEMETRY)	19,800	Committed with supply chain issues	This is a staged replacement program to upgrade the RTU controllers to the latest model to ensure ongoing operation of the telemetry system. The new 474 RTU's are still on backorder. Remaining funds will be used for undertaking site installation and commissioning.
Lismore 900 Erosion Repairs (CE-LISMORE 900)	70,000	Underway	These urgent works were identified late in the 2022/23 FYR and a scope of works and contractor engagements are being completed with a view to complete the works in August 2023
St Helena 600 Augmentation (CE-ST HELENA600 S2)	807,000	Committed	This multi-year project is almost completed with some available funds required to complete works including; \$317,000 required to complete contract, \$240,000 withholding for completion amount, \$250,000 for easement matters, consultant engineer, restoration and revegetation projects.
Reticulation Mains - Grace Road (CE-RETIC GRACE)	342,200	Committed	Tenders closed in June 2023 and the contract was awarded in July. Funds are required to be carried forward and combined with funding in the 2023/24 FYR to deliver the project.
Reticulation Mains - Richmond Hill (CE-RETIC RH)	539,800	Committed	A contract for the pipeline construction in Richmond Hill has been awarded to Ledonne, however the commencement of works was delayed due to limited contractor availability attending to other Rous priority works. Works have now commenced on-site and funds will need to be carried forward to continue this project in the 2023/24 FYR.
Smart Metering (CE-S-METERS)	142,200	Committed	This is a planned multi-year project. The contract was awarded in the 2022/23 FYR and on-ground works for smart metering rollout have commenced. The unspent budget is required to be carried forward to allow management and completion of the contract in the 2023/24 FYR.
Reinstatement of Lismore Levee following 2022 Flood Events. (GC-LISMORE LEVEE)	1,300,000	Committed	This budget is for the cost of work to reinstate the Lismore Levee by Lismore City Council to be recovered through Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements. Claim to be submitted in July 2023. Note: the budget represents the expenditure on this project only. Matching funding of \$1.3M will be received prior to payment and will be reflected in the next budget update once an agreement is signed.
Flood Mitigation Assets (CE-FMI LG) (CE-FMI FG MR) (CE-FMI LI HM) (CE-FMI UNPLAN)	68,000	Not started but required	Unspent funds in several Flood Mitigation Infrastructure budgets are required to be carried forward to cover existing purchase commitments for several projects, including Lifting Gear and Levee Maintenance. RCC has engaged a contractor for the complex and lengthy maintenance of lifting gear. Removing this major piece of infrastructure from the floodgate structure can only occur at the driest time of year so that there is little impact on the structure's flood mitigation function. Completion is expected in early August 2023. The Bungawalbyn Levee sustained significant damage in the 2022 flood event and RCC has engaged contractors to undertake assessments of bank stability which are required to access external funding for bank stabilisation works through NSW Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements.
Total Capital Budget to be Carried Forward	4,564,500		

Finance

All approved carryover requests will be added to Council's Long-Term Financial Plan.

Legal

In accordance with section [211](#) of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021* (NSW), money cannot be expended unless Council has first approved the expenditure and the budget. Council approval is therefore sought for the proposed carryover works.

Consultation

The carryover information contained in this report was obtained through submissions from staff across the organisation.

Conclusion

The Preliminary 2022/23 End of Financial Year Summary report has been prepared to indicate the financial results, subject to any further adjustments. The resulting transfers to and from reserve and proposed carryover works are included, it is recommended that Council approve the preliminary financial results, transfers to and from reserve and carryovers.

Retail Water Bad Debt Write-off

Responsible Officer: Group Manager Corporate and Commercial (Geoff Ward)

Recommendation

That Council, in accordance with its 'Debt Management and Financial Hardship' policy, approve the write-off of one (1) retail water billing customer's account (10451-10000-1) of \$ 5,759.01 for Mr MJ Hammer. The recommendation is made due to the difficulty and costs of recovering the full amount.

Background

As per Council resolution [50/22], Council resolved on 17 August 2022 to fix the amount above which debts may be written off only by resolution of Council at \$5,000 (inc. GST). Debts approved for write-off by Council staff are done under delegation and in accordance with sections 131 or 213 of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021*.

The below debt write-off request is over \$5,000 and therefore requires Council approval to proceed.

Retail water billing customer debt write-off

A number of factors have contributed to this request for a retail water billing customer debt write-off.

- This customer has a long history of disputes over multiple issues for the last decade with Council. Multiple attempts were made to resolve the issues but with no success. Debt recovery procedures were commenced in September 2022 as the last resort. With the customer currently residing overseas, our debt collection agency advised that it would be costly and unlikely they would be able to serve the required court documents to the customer which means the balance owing is unlikely to be recovered.
- Upon receiving the correspondence from the debt collection agency, the customer offered a payment of \$2,000 to clear the account (account balance \$10,759.01 in September 2022). The debt collection agency recommended Council to counteroffer \$5,000 due to his residence outside of Australia. The Group Manager Corporate and Commercial approved the counteroffer option and the customer accepted the counteroffer.
- This customer has since paid \$2,500 and agreed to pay the balance of \$2,500 by 31 December 2023. They have also set up a payment plan to pay charges that have occurred since the debt recovery procedure began in September 2022 totalling \$1,428.62. They have adhered to the payment schedule to date. They have also agreed to pay any new accounts in full by the due date as part of the condition of the payment arrangement.
- We recommend \$5,759.01 of the original balance be written off due to the difficulty and costs of recovering the full amount.

Legal

The proposal has been assessed against the write-off criteria under clause 131 of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021* and it satisfies the requirements of that provision. Under section 131 (4)(d) General Manager believes on reasonable grounds it is not cost effective to seek recovery.

Finance

Rous does not encounter many instances where debt write-off is required through active debtor management or through water meter malfunction. This write-off is immaterial to Council's long term financial plan.

Conclusion

It is recommended that Council approve the write-off of \$ 5,759.01 (Retail water billing customer).

Proposed change to ownership - Lismore Levee Scheme

Responsible Officer: Group Manager Planning and Delivery (Andrew Logan)

Recommendation that Council:

1. Acknowledges that the devastating and widespread impact of the 2022 Floods has highlighted the importance of local government partnering and working cooperatively for the benefit of the community.
2. Note that Lismore City Council has been successful in independently securing grant funding under the Northern Rivers Recovery and Resilience Program for upgrade and improvement works to the Lismore Levee Scheme and that Lismore is seeking to engage with Rous regarding consent to undertake those works.
3. Recognising that the historic role of Rous in urban flood mitigation has changed and having regard to the Lismore Levee Scheme asset renewal, replacement and upgrade works independently completed and planned by Lismore City Council, resolve to transfer the Lismore Levee Scheme to Lismore City Council and enable centralised control, ownership, operation and maintenance by that Council as the local government entity serving the community directly benefited by the Scheme.
4. Invite the Lismore City Council Mayor and General Manager to meet with the Rous Chair and General Manager to negotiate and agree next steps.
5. Confirms its commitment to work with Lismore City Council to ensure no delay to any planned upgrade and improvement works for the Lismore Levee Scheme.
6. Write to relevant funding bodies to request financial assistance to effect the transfer of the Lismore Levee Scheme to ensure no cost is borne by either Lismore City Council or Rous.
7. Revoke point 1(b) of resolution [84/22] arising from Council's meeting of 14 December 2022.
8. Authorise the General Manager to effect all necessary actions associated with and ancillary to the implementation of this resolution of Council.
9. Receive a further update before December 2023.

Background

A report was furnished to Council's 19 April 2023 meeting with an update on plans to progress discussions with the General Manager of Lismore City Council regarding solutions to effectively manage risk associated with the Lismore Levee Scheme. The intention was to confirm a position on the treatment of matters such as asset renewal and strategic planning having regard to:

- (i) Charging methodology and basis
- (ii) Adherence to Australian accounting standards
- (iii) Asset renewal and strategic planning
- (iv) The existing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the former Richmond River County Council and Lismore City Council
- (v) Service Level Agreement
- (vi) Formal conferral and acceptance of delegation
- (vii) Disaster funding arrangements.

The target was to have an agreed position determined no later than 31 March 2023 to inform budget processes and for a report to be provided to Council's April 2023 meeting.

In April 2023 a letter was sent to the General Manager of LCC proposing a workshop in June 2023, to be attended by relevant staff and General Managers from across both organisations. The timing of commencement of the new General Manager at LCC has resulted in the workshop not yet being held. Instead both General Managers met in mid-July 2023 and discussed the history of the Lismore Levee Scheme in terms of engineering/assets, finance and governance. The urgency, priority and need to clearly resolve the long-term responsibility for the Scheme was discussed. One of the outcomes of that meeting was agreement on the need to jointly develop an Asset Management Plan to inform future discussions.

The need for a formal position to be adopted on the Lismore Levee Scheme has been accelerated by the announcement in February 2023 of almost \$30M in funding to LCC under the Federal Government's *Northern Rivers Resilience Initiative (NRRRI)*. The NRRRI was recently renamed to the *Northern Rivers Recovery and Resilience Program (NRRRP)*.

The projects nominated by LCC and identified for funding include:

- (i) Combined upgrades to increase capacity and resilience of the Lismore Levee Scheme pumps and pump stations (7 projects¹) - \$22,563,809
- (ii) Electrify/install communications and control instruments (SCADA) to replace the tractor pump to remove stormwater from the CBD - \$2,620,651
- (iii) Fibre connect all flood pump stations - \$1,310,326
- (iv) Mechanical trash racks at all 3 major pump station inlets to reduce the risk of rubbish and debris causing damage to pumps - \$3,275,814

This is a significant investment in the Lismore Levee Scheme, almost matching the replacement cost of \$33M (June 2022) for the existing scheme assets.

The need for resolution has been further highlighted following a request from the LCC General Manager in late July 2023, seeking permission from Rous to undertake the NRRRP funded works on the Lismore Levee Scheme. The planned works represent a great outcome for the community and a significant improvement in the resilience of the Lismore Levee Scheme, as it approaches its 20 year completion anniversary.

Comment

With the renewal of most of the Lismore Levee Scheme's electrical and mechanical assets following the 2022 flood, and the significant upgrades proposed under the NRRRP, it is prudent to progress and conclude a position with LCC on the future ownership of the Lismore Levee Scheme. With multiple assets being new and other works planned, the timing is ideal to finalise this matter and ensure that control, ownership, operation and maintenance is centralised with Lismore City Council.

It is important to note that Rous has the option and legal authority to withhold consent to LCC's request to undertake the NRRRP works on the Lismore Levee Scheme. This course of action is undesirable and would result in a poor outcome for the community. As such, it is Rous' preferred position to engage directly with LCC to progress to a final and conclusive outcome with respect to ownership of the Lismore Levee Scheme.

Finance

Not applicable

¹ These 7 projects include levee scheme and sewer pump stations.

Legal

Refer to [14 December 2022 council meeting agenda](#) item 11.1 - 'Strategic option and management of risk: flood mitigation' report. Council resolved as follows in relation to that report [84/22]:

1. *Endorse the following actions to be taken concurrently:*

(a) Progress action 1.2.2 of the Delivery Program, being a strategic review of flood mitigation function, incorporating data arising from 2022 flood events, and report back with recommendations in relation to Rous's future role in the region; and

(b) Authorise the General Manager to negotiate an interim solution to effectively manage risk associated with Rous's function and operation in urban flood mitigation with respect to the Lismore Levee Scheme (to have effect pending finalisation of (1a)).

2. *Reaffirm action 1.2.2 of the Delivery Program and endorse writing to Ballina Shire Council, Lismore City Council and Richmond Valley Council to advise of the strategic review of Flood Mitigation and that it is expected to be completed by June 2024.*

The resolution operates such that Point 1(b) comes into effect once Point 1(a) is finalised.

Given the timing of the announcement of the NRRRP funding it is proposed that Point 1(b) is no longer appropriate as time is of the essence to reach an outcome on the issue of future ownership of the Lismore Levees Scheme. As a result, it is proposed that Council revoke Point 1(b) of resolution [84/22].

Conclusion

With additional funding granted to LCC to undertake upgrade and improvement works on the Lismore Levee Scheme, Rous has been approach by LCC regarding consent. It is recommended that time is of the essence in securing a commitment from LCC on the future ownership of the Lismore Levee Scheme.

Lumley Park Bore Retrieval

Responsible Officer: Group Manager Planning and Delivery (Andrew Logan)

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Receive and note this report.
2. Provide an exemption as per Section 55(3)(i) of the *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)* to carry out services valued at over \$250,000 without going to tender because of the bespoke nature of the work and the extremely limited supplier options.
3. Endorse the continuing engagement of ACS Equip Pty Ltd to a maximum amount of \$415,000 (incl GST), as they have a unique set of skills and equipment required to execute the completion of this task with the Lumley Park Bore.

Background

As part of ongoing works for establishing the proposed Alstonville Groundwater Scheme, the four existing bore sites at Converys Lane (RCC), Lumley Park (RCC), Ellis Rd (Ballina Shire Council) and Lindendale Road (BSC) required internal camera inspections, cleaning of the bore casings /screens and pumping capacity tests as all of the bores had not been in operation for a number of years.

Original Engagement – Bore investigations and cleaning

ACS Equip Pty Ltd (Gundagai) were approached to assist Council, as a recommended contractor by our hydro-geologists Jacobs, who have assisted Council for many years with groundwater investigation works. Three drilling companies were approached to quote for these works – with ACS Equip Pty Ltd being the only contractor that submitted a quotation to carry out the required works.

The original engagement with ACS Equip Pty Ltd (PO 20807) was for \$100,848.88 (incl GST), for work at bores located at Converys Lane, Lumley Park, Ellis Road and Lindendale Road. Under Council's Procurement Procedure, for a project of this value, three quotes are required to be received. In accordance with the Procurement Procedure, a Procurement Exception was approved in February 2023 for this work, based on the unique skills and equipment that ACS Equip Pty Ltd possessed to undertake the work.

ACS Equip Pty Ltd successfully completed the planned work at Converys Lane, Ellis Road and Lindendale Road, before moving to Lumley Park.

The pump within the Lumley Park bore could not be retrieved or lifted out from the bore casing due to the flexible piping material (Well Master) breaking continually in the lifting operation. This lay flat type material normally has a lifting capacity of 5 to 7 tonne. The Lumley Park production bore was established in 1987 with records indicating it has a total depth of 82m, with a Standing Water Level (SWL) at 60m depth with a yield of ~14 L/s, with a reasonably good raw water quality. It is thought that due to the bore's age, the tensile strength of the Well Master piping has diminished, plus the overall installation of piping, cables and conduits has congested the bore casing, which has led to the pump retrieval issue.

Anticipating that the work at Lumley Park would extend, the original PO 20807 was invoiced for the three completed sites (Converys Lane, Ellis Road, Lindendale Road) for an amount of \$77,552.20 (incl GST).

Subsequent engagement – Bore retrieval

Council sought further advice again from Jacobs, who recommended the need for a specialist “Fishing and Retrieval” contractor. Again, ACS Equip Pty Ltd were recommended as being the best contractor with the capability to undertake this task in eastern Australia. It is noted that other than having worked together on previous projects over the last 15 years, there is no evidence of anything other than a professional working relationship between Jacobs and ACS Equip Pty Ltd. No Procurement Exception was sought for this second engagement with ACS Equip Pty Ltd.

The only other contractor in the industry with similar capability and equipment being Aged Developments, is located in Western Australia.

Council entered into the engagement for the pump retrieval works with ACS Equip Pty Ltd, based on an expected four (4) days on-site, in mid-February 2023, under PO 21089 for a value of \$33,146.08 (incl GST). However, it was evident that more days were needed to remove all the deleterious materials – piping, conduits, electrical and control cables that had collapsed down within the bore casing situated on top of the pump unit.

All of the collapsed accumulated materials has to be removed before ACS Equip Pty Ltd can gain access to the top of the bore pump which is presently sitting at 47m below the surface.

During their time on-site, ACS Equip Pty Ltd have continually pursued a variety of techniques to retrieve the material and pump in the bore, including manufacturing their own tools to work within a constricted and low visibility environment within the bore.

To date ACS Equip Pty Ltd have been on site for a total of 31 days on a number of occasions since February 2023, until works were stopped on 4 July 2023. At this time, attachment to the top of the bore pump to allow its removal has not been gained. The cost to date for this work under PO 21089 is \$248,746.08 (incl GST).

Next Steps – Bore retrieval

Following this pause in the works, staff have:

- Sought opinions from local and other specialists regarding the situation, and opportunities or techniques to increase the chances of success.
- Reviewed all available bore construction documents available through Rous and the NSW Government.

It has now been determined that the best available option is to invest a maximum of 7 more days at a total cost of \$53,900 (incl GST), in attempting to retrieve the pump from the bore.

If this is unsuccessful, then the only two remaining options are to abandon the bore or push the pump down the borehole, preferably to the borehole bottom at 82m. Pushing the pump down the borehole, to a depth would then enable the installation of a new pump above the level of the old pump, within the standing water level. The risk in pushing the pump down the bore is that it becomes stuck in the bore, before it reaches the bottom of the bore hole, which will result in the bore needing to be abandoned.

An additional allowance of 4 days at a total cost of \$32,567.48 (incl GST) has been made for this activity to push the pump down the bore hole, if the retrieval is unsuccessful.

If ACS Equip Pty Ltd continue with the pump recovery works, the next technique will likely involve drilling into the top of the pump, effectively destroying it. Assuming they are successful in the pump removal, Rous will need to purchase a new bore pump. Whilst this is not ideal, ultimately a new pump would have been needed to be purchased, because the existing pump is not suitable to pump to the higher elevation of Russellton Industrial Estate.

The continuation of these works to remove the pump from the bore, has been focused on avoiding having to abandon the bore hole at Lumley Park, which will require significant additional costs if needing to be reconstructed.

In the first instance, these costs would be associated with plugging the casing off for the existing bore. Following on from that, are the costs, time and risks associated with the permitting, investigation and construction of a new bore hole on site, if this is possible.

The estimate for a new bore located at Lumley Park is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 – Cost estimate for a new bore near Lumley Park

Item	Description	Estimated cost
1	Hydrogeological Consultant, tendering, drilling supervision, detailed bore design, pump testing and data analysis and reporting.	\$100,000
2	Initial REF and planning works	\$30,000
3	Tendering and engagement of drilling contractor	\$270,000
4	Application of WAL licence matters	\$10,000
5	RCC Project Management	\$20,000
6	Contingency amount (~20%)	\$80,000
7	Total	\$ 510,000

The above budget estimate does not include a new bore pump (required to pump the water up to higher elevation at Russellton Industrial Estate) and electrical costs, which are expected to be required for both the existing bore and any new bore located at Lumley Park, as part of the Alstonville Groundwater scheme.

NSW Government Regulations mean that if a 'replacement' bore is sunk more than 20m away from the existing bore, it is considered a new bore, with the requirement to commence from the start with the permitting process.

Finance

Within the 2022/23 budget, \$550,000 was available under the Alstonville Groundwater scheme item, of which \$504,200 was expended or committed during the FY. Of this amount, \$45,800 has been recommended for carry forward into the 23/24 budget. Within the 23/24 budget, there is \$2,705,000 available under the Alstonville Groundwater scheme item. It is expected that the combined budget of \$2,750,800 for 23/24 is adequate to allow the completion of this work as planned and incur the total potential additional costs of \$86,467.48 as shown below in Table 2.

This will be funded from the current FY23-24 budget and is not anticipated to adversely affect the capacity to undertake other works.

Table 2 – ACS Equip Pty Ltd costs to date and to complete – all bores

Item	Description	Cost (incl GST)
1	Initial engagement for internal CCTV inspections, cleaning of the bore casings /screens and pumping capacity tests for Converys Lane, Ellis Road, Lindendale Road and Lumley Park bores	\$77,552.50
2	Costs for Pump Retrieval Works to Date	\$248,746.08
3	Additional Pump Retrieval Days	\$ 53,900
4	Additional Days to Push Pump Down Bore	\$ 32,567.48
	Total potential costs for ACS Equip Pty Ltd engagement	\$412,766.06

Legal

Under section 55 of the *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)* a tender is required for a contract to carry out services for councils valued over \$250,000 (incl GST) unless “*where, because of extenuating circumstances, remoteness of locality or the unavailability of competitive or reliable tenderers, councils decide by resolution (which states the reasons for the decision) that a satisfactory result would not be achieved by inviting tenders*”¹.

Support is requested for the continuation of the above stated works by ACS Equip Pty Ltd due to the bespoke nature of the work and the extremely limited supplier options.

ACS Equip Pty Ltd has been identified as having a unique set of skills and equipment required in order to execute the completion of this task with the Lumley Park Bore. The only other supplier who has been identified as having the required equipment and skills to complete the job is located in Western Australia.

Consultation

Consultation has been undertaken with multiple specialists throughout the process regarding the hydro-geology, geology and logistical aspects of the work. This consultation has included the Senior Hydrogeologist at the Department of Planning and Environment regarding the original records for the Lumley Park Bore and related pump tests that were undertaken.

This consultation concluded that the current bore location is critical, as he informed us that bores located within metres of the current bore hole did not yield the same flow and showed different geological features. Further consultation with the principal hydrogeologist at Jacobs regarding the options has also confirmed the risks associated with having to establish a new bore.

Conclusion

After a significant investment into retrieving the pump from the Lumley Park groundwater bore, it is recommended that a further, relatively small investment of funding, be approved to maximise the opportunity to allow future use of the bore.

The Lumley Park bore has historically shown sound performance and good quality water, and with the challenges relating to sinking a new bore (significant cost, protracted timeframe and the unpredictability of water quality/quantity), further work by ACS Equip Pty Ltd to remove\move the pump is considered the best option.

Council’s endorsement is sought for incurring additional expenditure and continuing its engagement of ACS Equip Pty Ltd to complete the bore retrieval work without requiring tenders to be invited from alternative suppliers to complete the work.

¹ Section 55 (3)(i) *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)*

Information reports

Responsible Officer: General Manager and Group Managers

Recommendation

That the following information reports be received and noted:

1. Investments – July 2023
2. Water production and consumption – July 2023
3. Retail Water Customer Account Assistance
4. Debt write-off information summary
5. Overview - Local Government NSW Water Conference 26-28 June 2023
6. Audit Risk and Improvement Committee – meeting update
7. Delivery program update: 1 April 2023 to 30 June 2023
8. Tenders awarded by the General Manager under Delegation
9. Annual Report: Rous Regional Demand Management Plan 2023-2024
10. Reports/actions pending

Background

Copies of the abovementioned reports are attached for information.

Consultation

The reports have been prepared in consultation with the General Manager, relevant Group Managers and staff.

Attachments

1. Information reports 1-10

Investments - July 2023

Responsible Officer: Finance Manager (Jonathan Patino)

Recommendation

That Council receive and note the Investments for July 2023.

Background

Clause 212 of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021* ('Regulation') and Council's 'Investments' policy require that a report detailing Council's investments be provided. This report has been prepared as at 31 July 2023.

Finance Report

The RBA cash rate is 4.1%

At the RBA's 4th July 2023 meeting it was decided that the cash rate would remain at 4.1%. The Australian economy is experiencing a period of below-trend growth and this is expected to continue for a while. A significant source of uncertainty continues to be the outlook for household consumption. The combination of higher interest rates and cost-of-living pressures is leading to a substantial slowing in household spending. While housing prices are rising again and some households have substantial savings buffers, others are experiencing a painful squeeze on their finances.

Growth in the Australian economy has slowed and conditions in the labour market have eased, although they remain very tight. Firms report that labour shortages have lessened, yet job vacancies and advertisements are still at very high levels. Labour force participation is at a record high and the unemployment rate remains close to a 50-year low. Wages growth has picked up in response to the tight labour market and high inflation.

The 90-day average bank bill swap rate (BBSW) is 4.26%.

Total funds invested is \$37,628,593

This includes term investments and cheque account balance.

Weighted Average Return is 4.21%

This represents an increase of 13 basis point compared from the June 2023 result (4.08%) and is 5 basis points below Council's benchmark (the average 90-day BBSW rate of 4.26%) (Refer: Graph D2 - Attachment D).

Interest earned is \$147,526

Interest earned compared to the original budget is \$49,284 above the pro-rata budget. (Refer: Attachment A).

Cheque account balance is \$453,892

'Weel' Credit Card account balance is \$17,941

This is a bank account with Cuscal Limited and is used to hold funds for a prepaid credit card app that is now in use by all corporate card holders at Rous.

Ethical holdings is \$4,269,070 (11.96% of current holdings)

The assessment of Ethical Financial Institutions is undertaken using www.marketforces.org.au which is an affiliate project of the Friends of the Earth Australia (Refer: Graph D4 - Attachment D).

Legal

In accordance with section 212(1)(b) of the Regulation, the Responsible Accounting Officer (currently the Finance Manager) certifies the investments identified in this report have been made in accordance with section 625 of the *Local Government Act 1993*, section 212 of the Regulation, and the provisions of Council's 'Investments' policy.

Conclusion

A report on investments is required to be submitted to Council. As at 31 July 2023, investments total \$37,628,593 and the average rate of return is estimated at 4.21%.

Attachments

- A. Investment analysis
- B. Investment by type
- C. Investment by Institution
- D. Total funds invested - comparisons
- E. Summary of indebtedness

Investment analysis report

Attachment A

Funds Invested With	S & P Local Long Term Rating	Product Name	Ethical ADIs	Lodgement Date	Maturity Date	% of Portfolio	31 July 23 Balance	Rate of Return	Monthly Interest	Year-to-Date Interest
CBA Business Online Saver	AA-	CBA-BOS	No	At call		18.94	7,128,593.49	1.95	26,549.34	26,549.34
Bank of Queensland	BBB+	TD	Yes	2/8/2022	1/8/2023	1.33	500,000.00	3.85	1,634.93	1,634.93
Westpac Banking Corporation	AA-	TD	No	23/8/2022	23/8/2023	5.32	2,000,000.00	4.13	7,015.34	7,015.34
AMP Bank	BBB	TD	No	13/9/2022	13/9/2023	1.33	500,000.00	4.30	1,826.03	1,826.03
AMP Bank	BBB	TD	No	20/9/2022	19/9/2023	2.66	1,000,000.00	4.50	3,821.92	3,821.92
MyState Bank Limited	BBB+	TD	Yes	27/9/2022	26/9/2023	1.33	500,000.00	4.62	1,961.92	1,961.92
Westpac Banking Corporation	AA-	TD	No	11/10/2022	10/10/2023	2.66	1,000,000.00	4.30	3,652.05	3,652.05
Commonwealth Bank of Australia	AA-	TD	No	18/10/2022	17/10/2023	2.66	1,000,000.00	4.42	3,753.97	3,753.97
Westpac Banking Corporation	AA-	TD	No	25/10/2022	24/10/2023	1.33	500,000.00	4.57	1,940.68	1,940.68
National Australia Bank Limited	AA-	TD	No	10/11/2022	14/11/2023	1.33	500,000.00	4.42	1,876.99	1,876.99
Commonwealth Bank of Australia	AA-	TD	No	22/11/2022	21/11/2023	2.66	1,000,000.00	4.52	3,838.90	3,838.90
Westpac Banking Corporation	AA-	TD	No	29/11/2022	28/11/2023	3.99	1,500,000.00	4.39	5,592.74	5,592.74
Westpac Banking Corporation	AA-	TD	No	6/12/2022	5/12/2023	2.66	1,000,000.00	4.29	3,643.56	3,643.56
ING Bank Aust Ltd	A	TD	No	8/3/2023	12/3/2024	2.66	1,000,000.00	4.98	4,229.59	4,229.59
Westpac Banking Corporation	AA-	TD	No	8/3/2023	12/9/2023	2.66	1,000,000.00	4.56	3,872.88	3,872.88
Macquarie Bank Limited	A+	TD	No	22/3/2023	19/3/2024	2.66	1,000,000.00	4.69	3,983.29	3,983.29
ING Bank Aust Ltd	A	TD	No	28/3/2023	26/3/2024	2.66	1,000,000.00	4.60	3,906.85	3,906.85
ING Bank Aust Ltd	A	TD	No	4/4/2023	2/4/2024	5.32	2,000,000.00	4.68	7,949.59	7,949.59
Bank of Queensland	BBB+	TD	Yes	19/4/2023	24/10/2023	2.66	1,000,000.00	4.70	3,991.78	3,991.78
National Australia Bank Limited	AA-	TD	No	2/5/2023	6/2/2024	5.32	2,000,000.00	4.53	7,694.79	7,694.79
MyState Bank Limited	BBB+	TD	Yes	2/5/2023	31/10/2023	2.66	1,000,000.00	4.82	4,093.70	4,093.70
National Australia Bank Limited	AA-	TD	No	10/5/2023	23/1/2024	5.32	2,000,000.00	4.70	7,983.56	7,983.56
National Australia Bank Limited	AA-	TD	No	23/5/2023	27/2/2024	2.66	1,000,000.00	4.83	4,102.19	4,102.19
Bank of Queensland	BBB+	TD	Yes	6/6/2023	5/3/2024	3.99	1,500,000.00	5.15	6,560.96	6,560.96
ING Bank Aust Ltd	A	TD	No	27/6/2023	25/6/2024	2.66	1,000,000.00	5.62	4,773.15	4,773.15
ING Bank Aust Ltd	A	TD	No	4/7/2023	2/7/2024	7.97	3,000,000.00	5.67	13,048.77	13,048.77
National Australia Bank	AA-	TD	N/A	26/7/2023	7/5/2024	2.66	1,000,000.00	5.43	892.60	892.60
MATURED TDs									3,333.70	3,333.70

	100.00	37,628,593.49	4.21	147,525.78	147,525.78
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Total Investment Holdings

100.00	37,628,593.49	147,525.78	147,525.78
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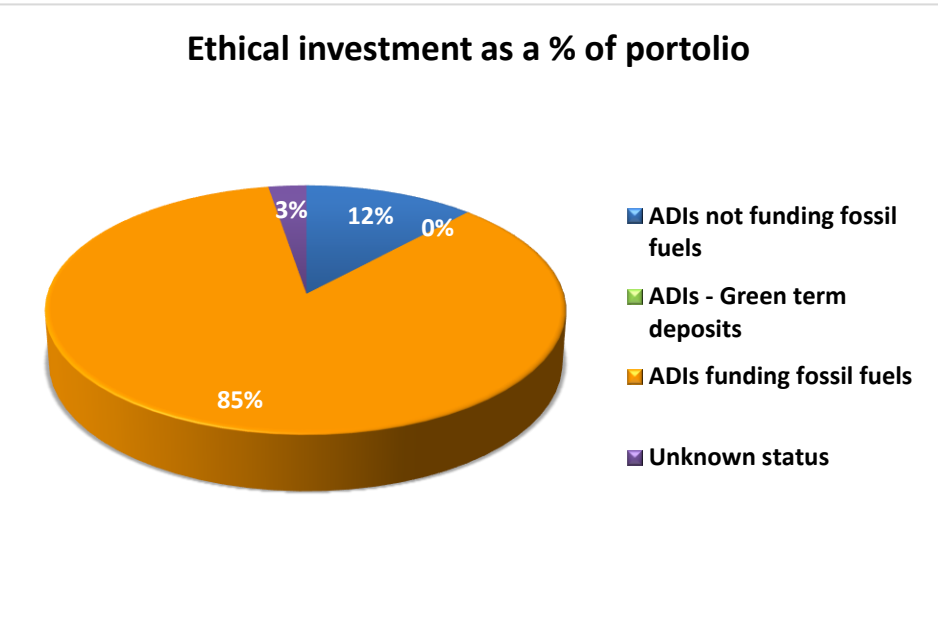
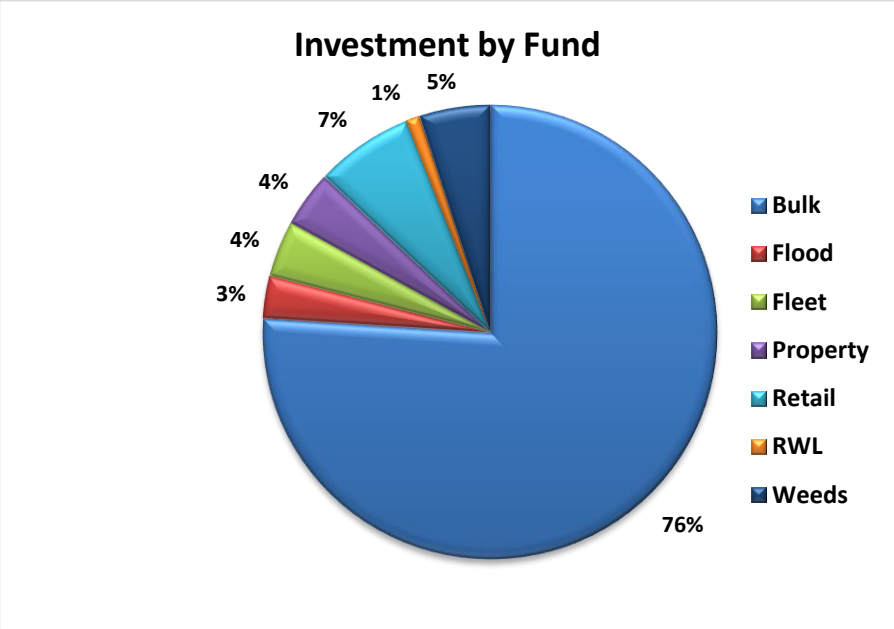
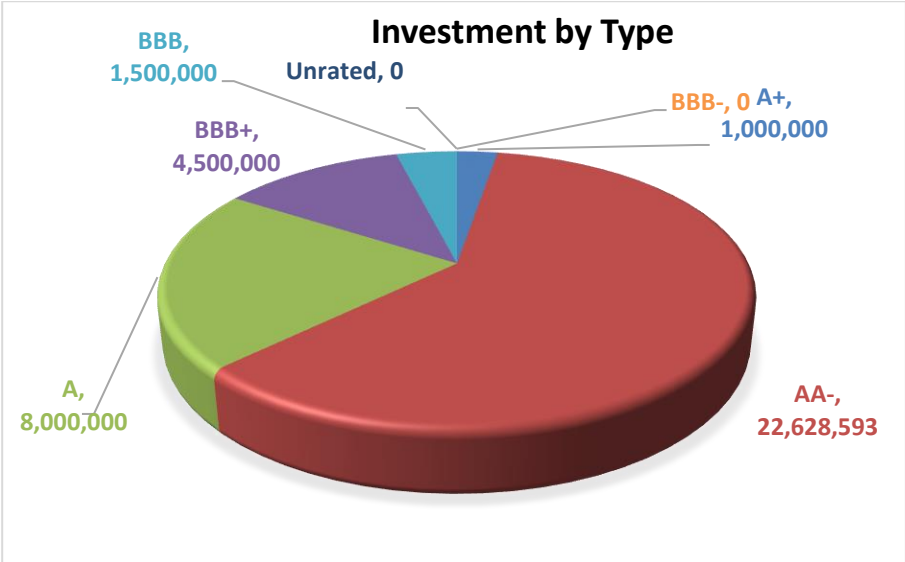
Total YTD Interest **147,525.78**

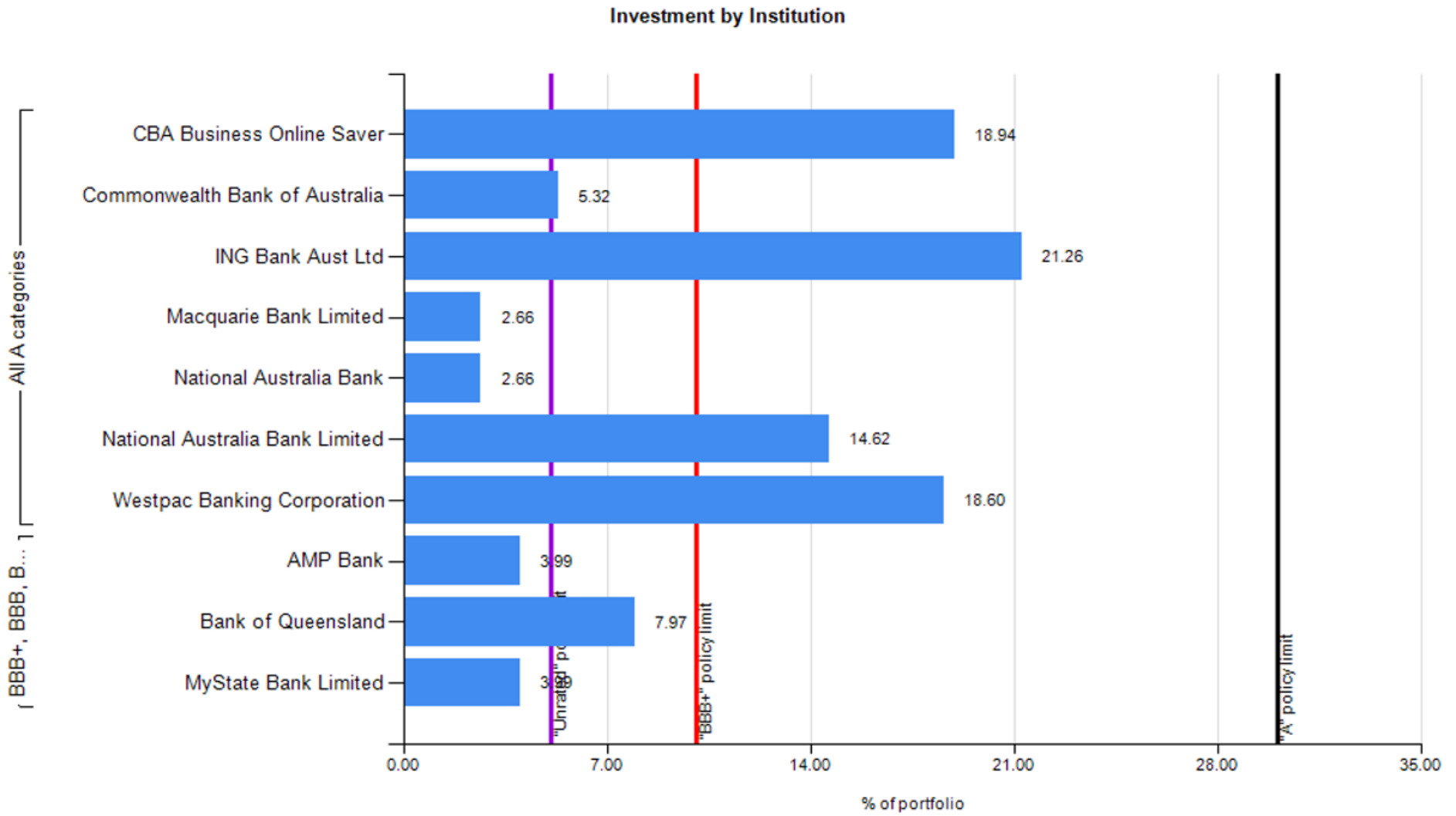
Budget Interest @ 31 July 2023 **98,241.67**

Budget variance **49,284.11**

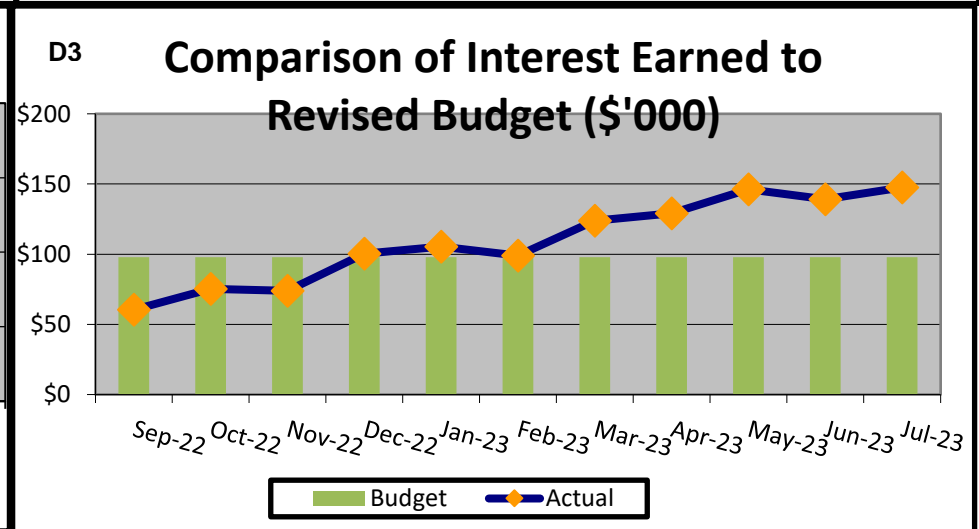
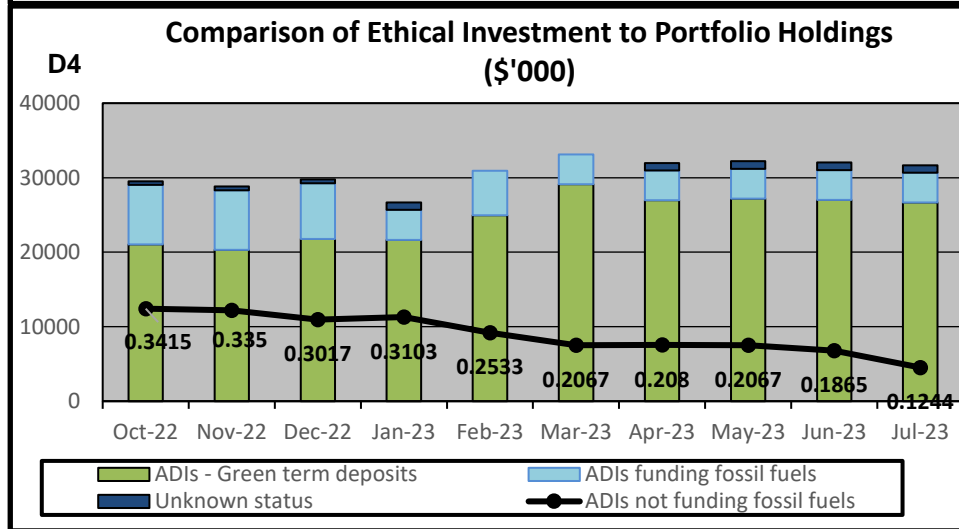
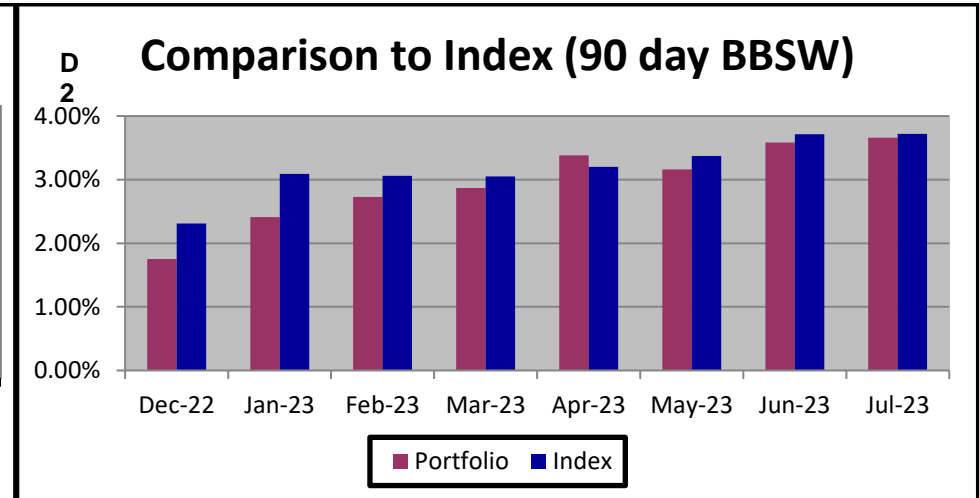
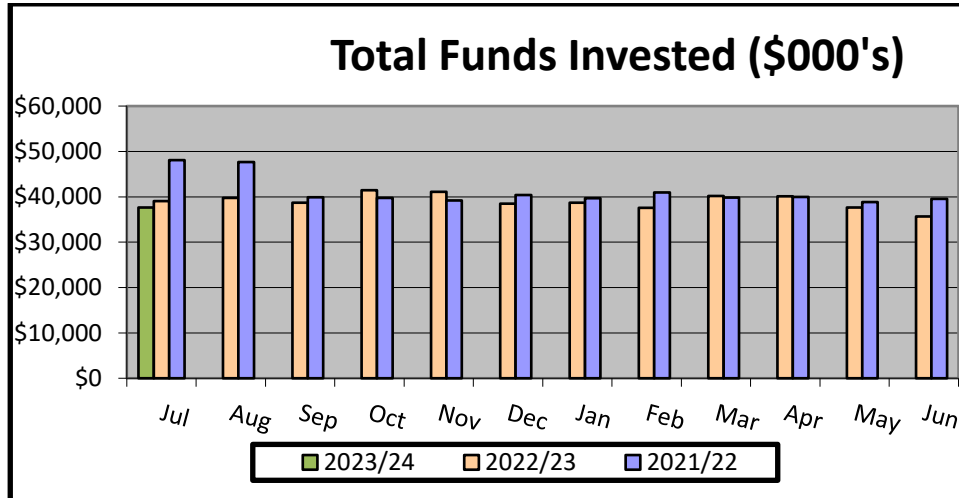
Deposits with Australian Deposit-taking institutions (ADI) are Government.

Guaranteed for balances totalling up to \$250,000 per customer, per institution.





Note: Institutions shown with "*" and in red are in breach of council policy.



Summary of indebtedness

Information	Loan #1	Loan #2	Loan #3	Loan #4	Loan #5	Loan #6	Loan #7	Total
Institution	CBA	CBA	CBA	Dexia	NAB	NAB	Tcorp	
Principal Borrowed	2,000,000	3,000,000	10,000,000	10,000,000	10,000,000	10,000,000	13,500,000	58,500,000
Date Obtained	9-Jun-04	31-May-05	31-May-06	21-Feb-07	31-May-07	25-Sep-07	7-Jun-21	
Term (Years)	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	
Interest Rate	6.82%	6.25%	6.37%	6.40%	6.74%	6.85%	2.68%	
Date Due	10-Jun-24	31-May-25	31-May-26	21-Feb-27	31-May-27	25-Sep-27	7-Jun-41	
Annual Commitment	184,785	264,921	891,595	893,507	917,390	925,933	876,390	4,954,520
Principal Repaid LTD	1,824,326	2,509,141	7,599,814	7,237,651	6,814,624	6,457,066	1,050,052	33,492,675
Interest Incurred LTD	1,686,591	2,259,431	7,557,303	7,507,706	7,863,610	7,894,890	702,728	35,472,258
Principal Outstanding	175,674	490,859	2,400,186	2,762,349	3,185,376	3,542,935	12,449,948	25,007,326
Interest Outstanding	9,111	38,983	274,600	365,454	504,880	635,653	3,325,076	5,153,756

Water production and consumption - July 2023

Responsible Officer: Group Manager Operations (Adam Nesbitt)

Recommendation

That the report be received and noted.

Background

The table below is the July 2023 bulk water sales to the constituent councils in kilolitres compared to the corresponding July sales for 2022 and 2021.

Council	Jul 2021 (kL)	Jul 2022 (kL)	Jul 2023 (kL)	% of Total Sales
Ballina Shire Council	291,977	280,661	303,534	36.97%
Byron Shire Council	171,109	178,812	220,110	26.81%
Lismore City Council	245,070	222,022	244,908	29.83%
Richmond Valley Council	50,189	41,241	52,492	6.39%
Total monthly consumption by constituent councils	758,345	722,736	821,044	

Water usage - all constituent councils

Figure 1 shows the combined monthly bulk water consumption and rainfall at Rocky Creek Dam for the previous two years.

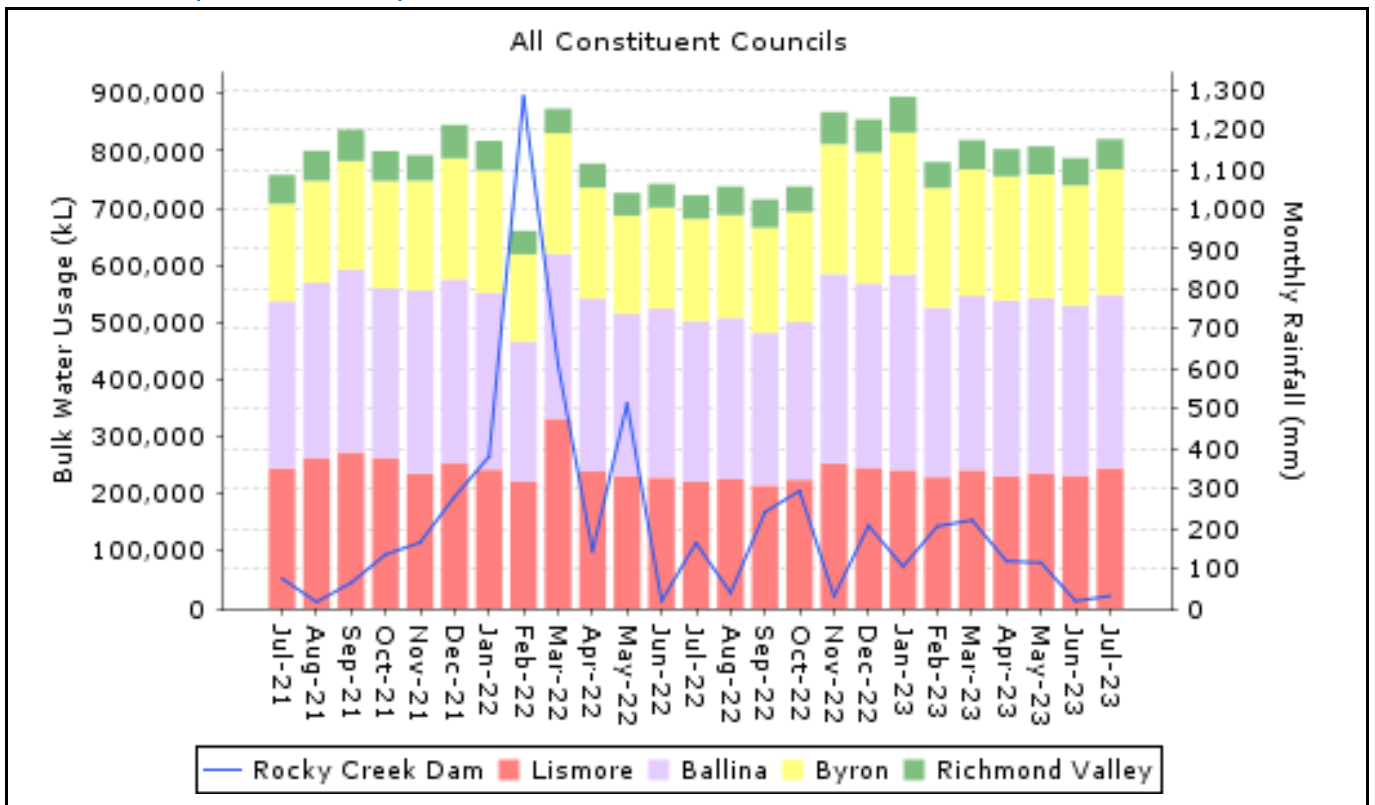


Figure 1: Total monthly consumption by constituent council and rainfall.

Figure 2 shows the total bulk water sales for the financial year to date compared with the previous two years.

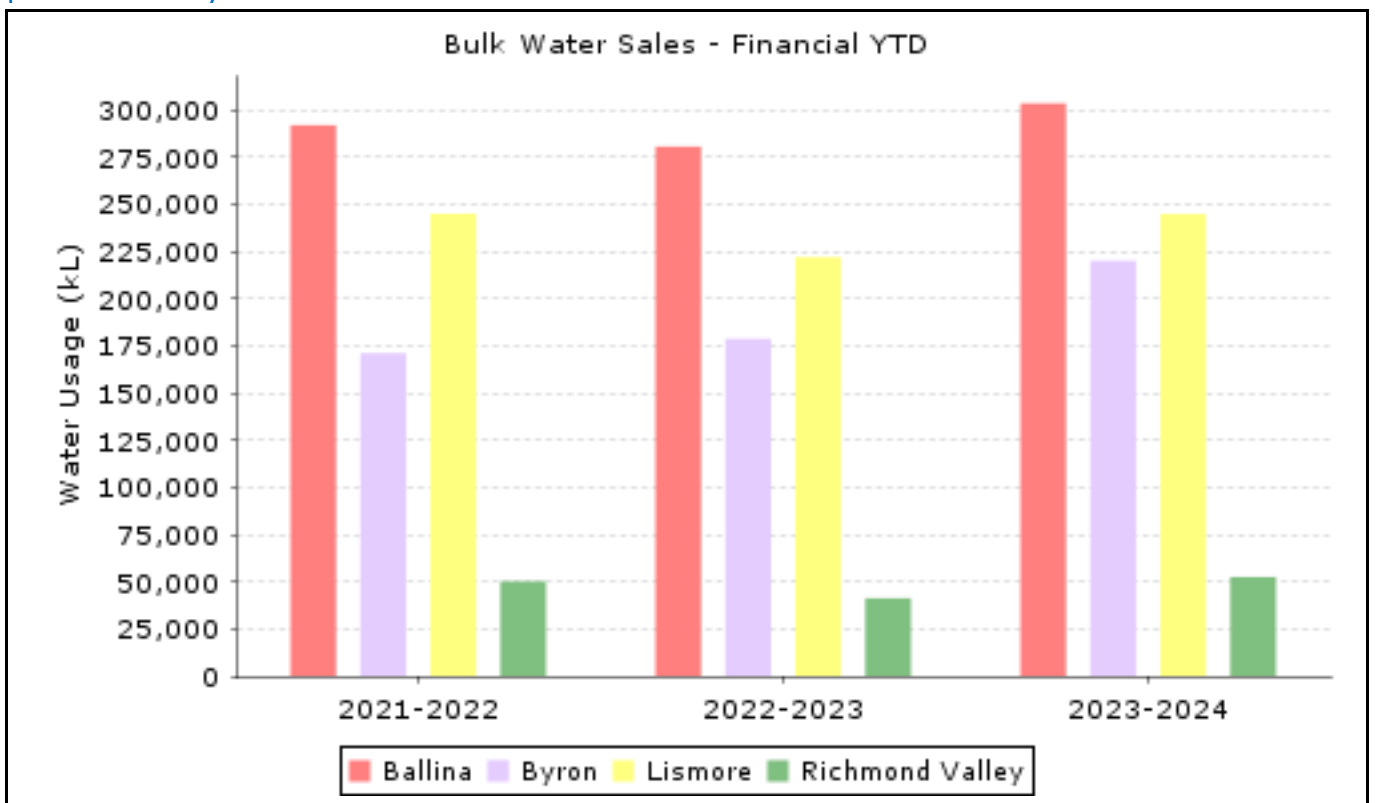


Figure 2: Bulk water sales by constituent council - 1 July to 31 July

Figure 3 and 4 shows the total usage of individual commercial water fill stations for the financial year to date compared with the previous two years.

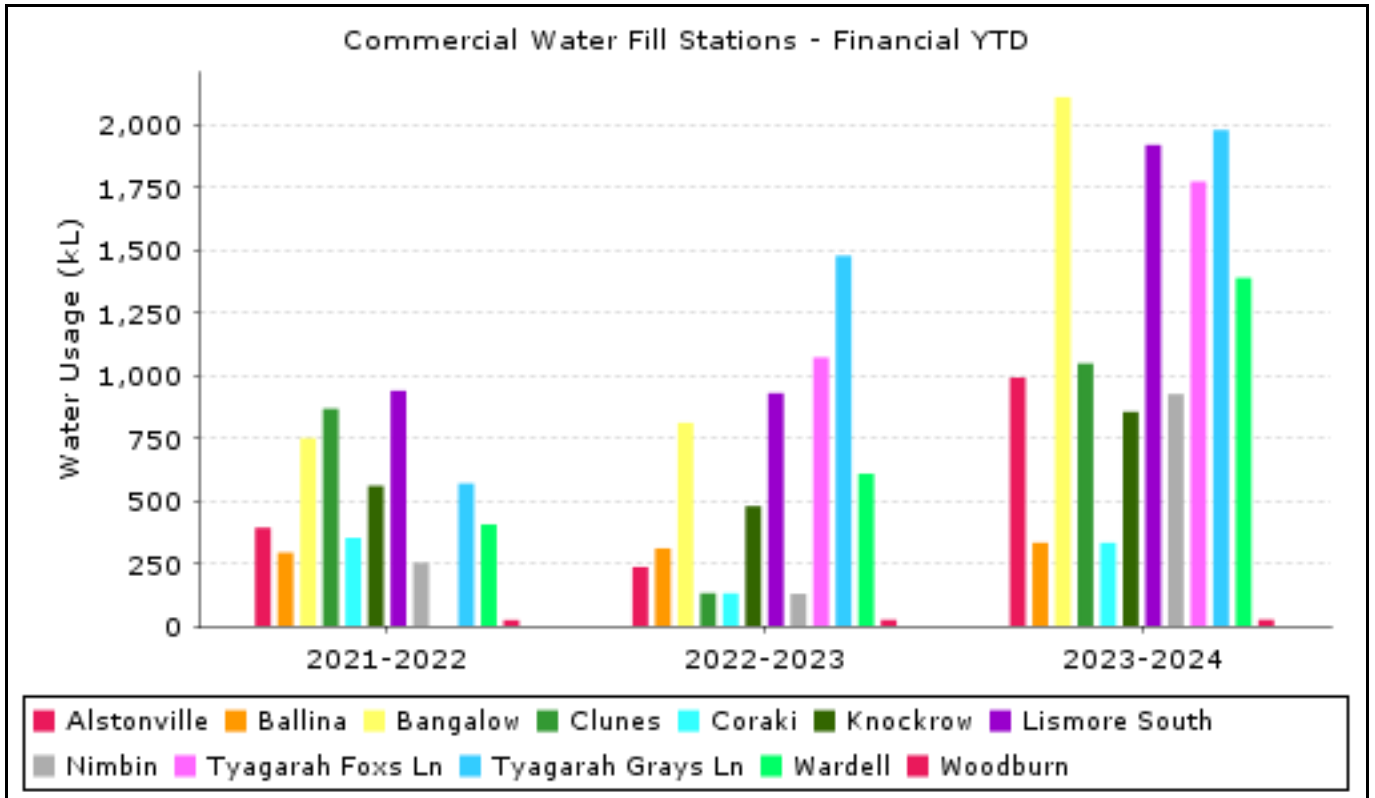


Figure 3: Comparison of commercial water fill stations total consumption 1 July to 31 July

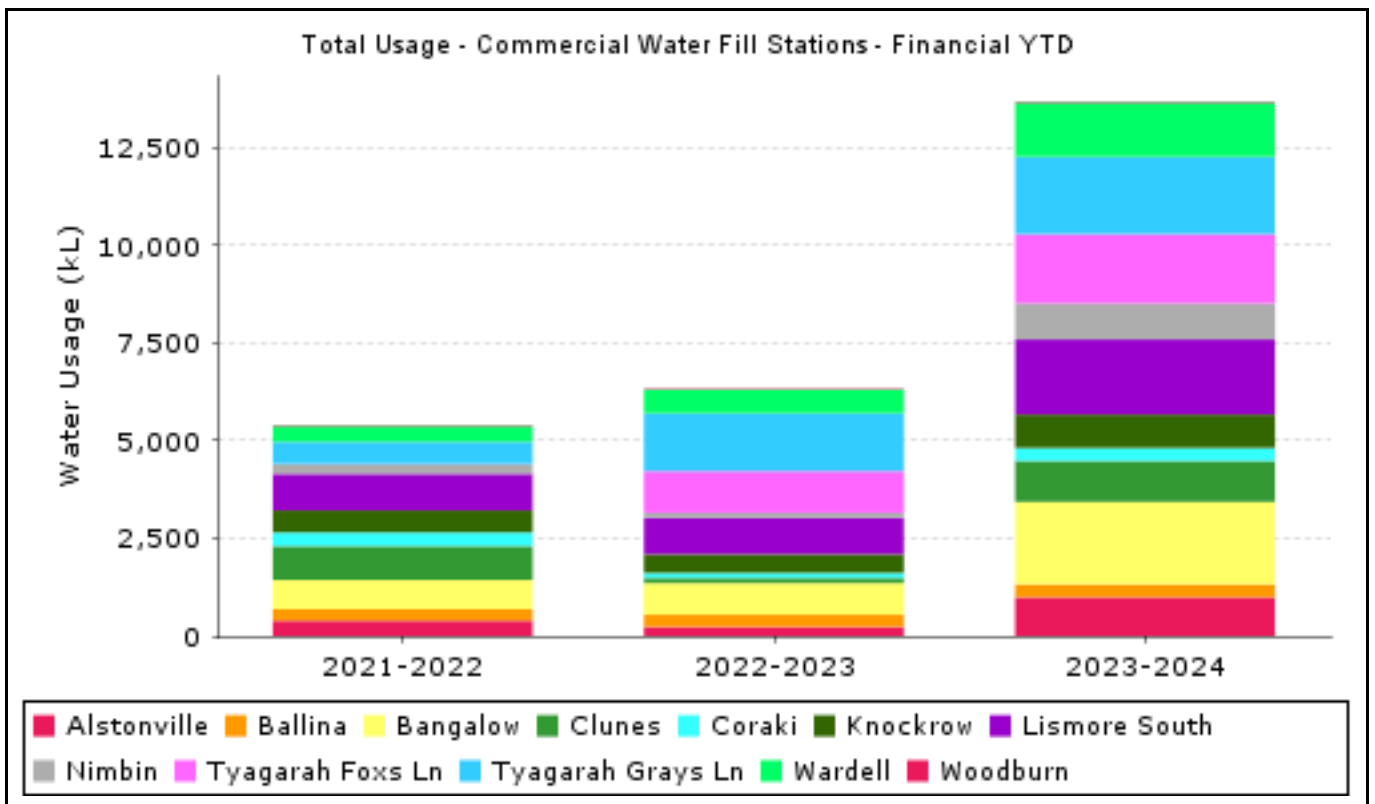


Figure 4: Total usage of commercial water fill stations - 1 July to 31 July

Figure 5 shows the combined water fill station monthly consumption for the previous two years. Rainfall data is from the rain gauge at Rocky Creek Dam.

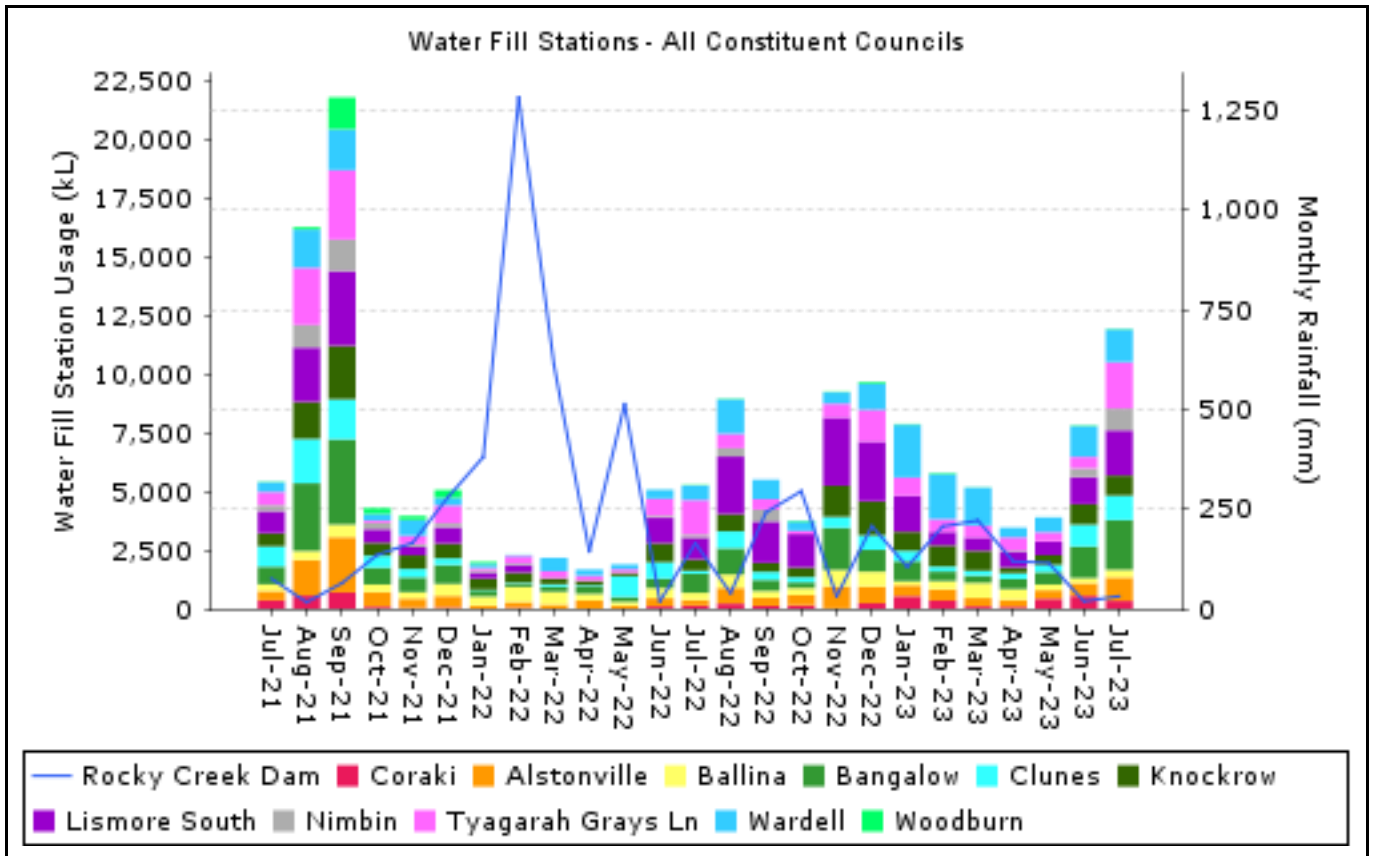


Figure 5: Total monthly consumption for commercial water fill stations and rainfall

Source Contribution

Rocky Creek Dam capacity as of 31 July 2023 was 94.1%
 Emigrant Creek Dam capacity as of 31 July 2023 was 102.8%

Source	July 2023 (kL)		Cumulative total 2023-2024 (kL)	
Rocky Creek Dam	915,067	100.00%	915,067	100.00%
Wilson River	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Emigrant Creek Dam	3	0.00%	3	0.00%
Coastal Sands	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
	915,070		915,070	

Rocky Creek Dam

Figure 6 show Rocky Creek dam current water level and compares to previous years when levels reached lowest recorded dam level. Rainfall data is for the current financial year only.

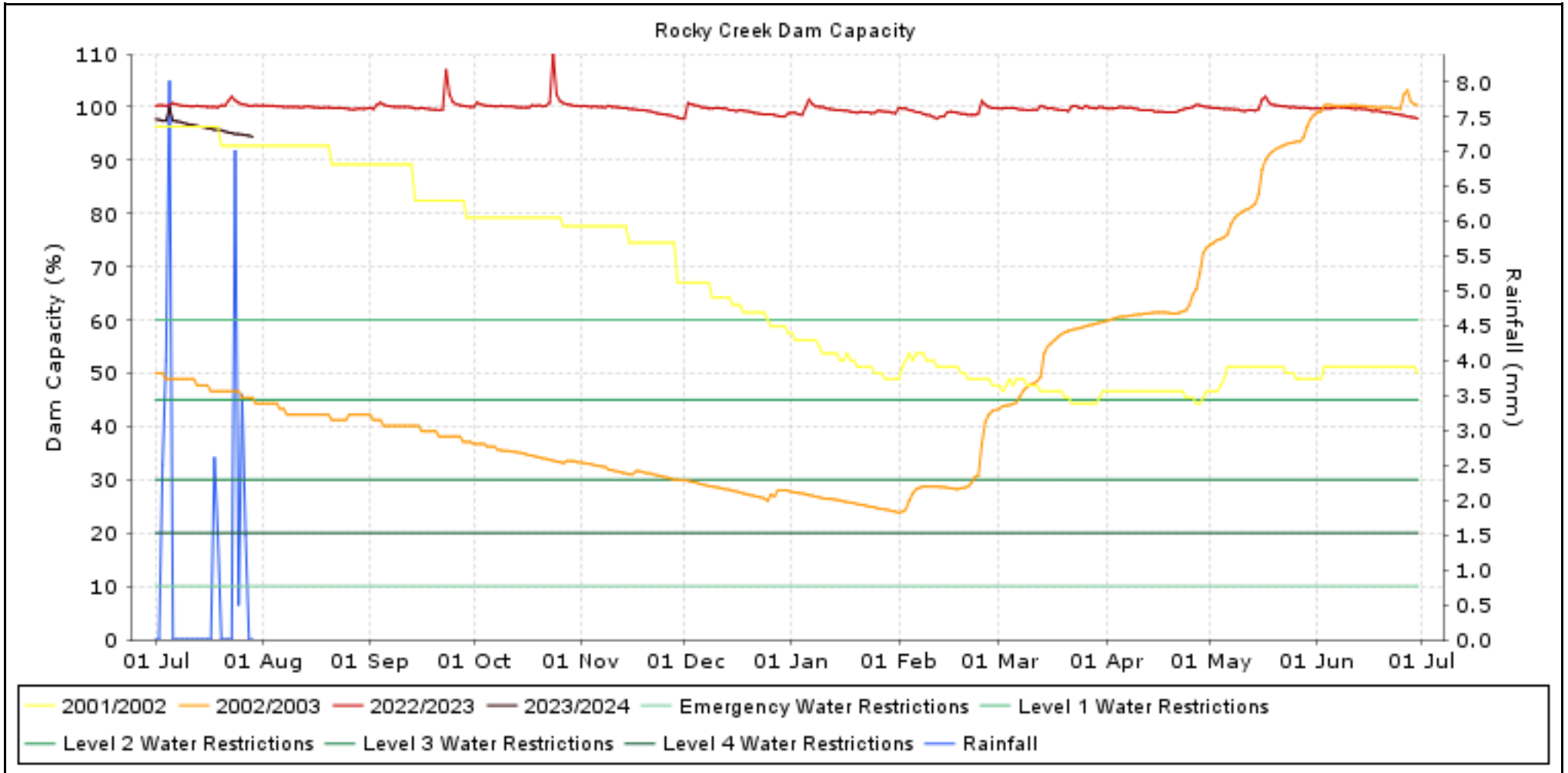


Figure 6: Rocky Creek Dam capacity and rainfall

Emigrant Creek Dam

Figure 7 show Emigrant Creek dam current water level and compares to previous two years. Rainfall data is for the current financial year only.

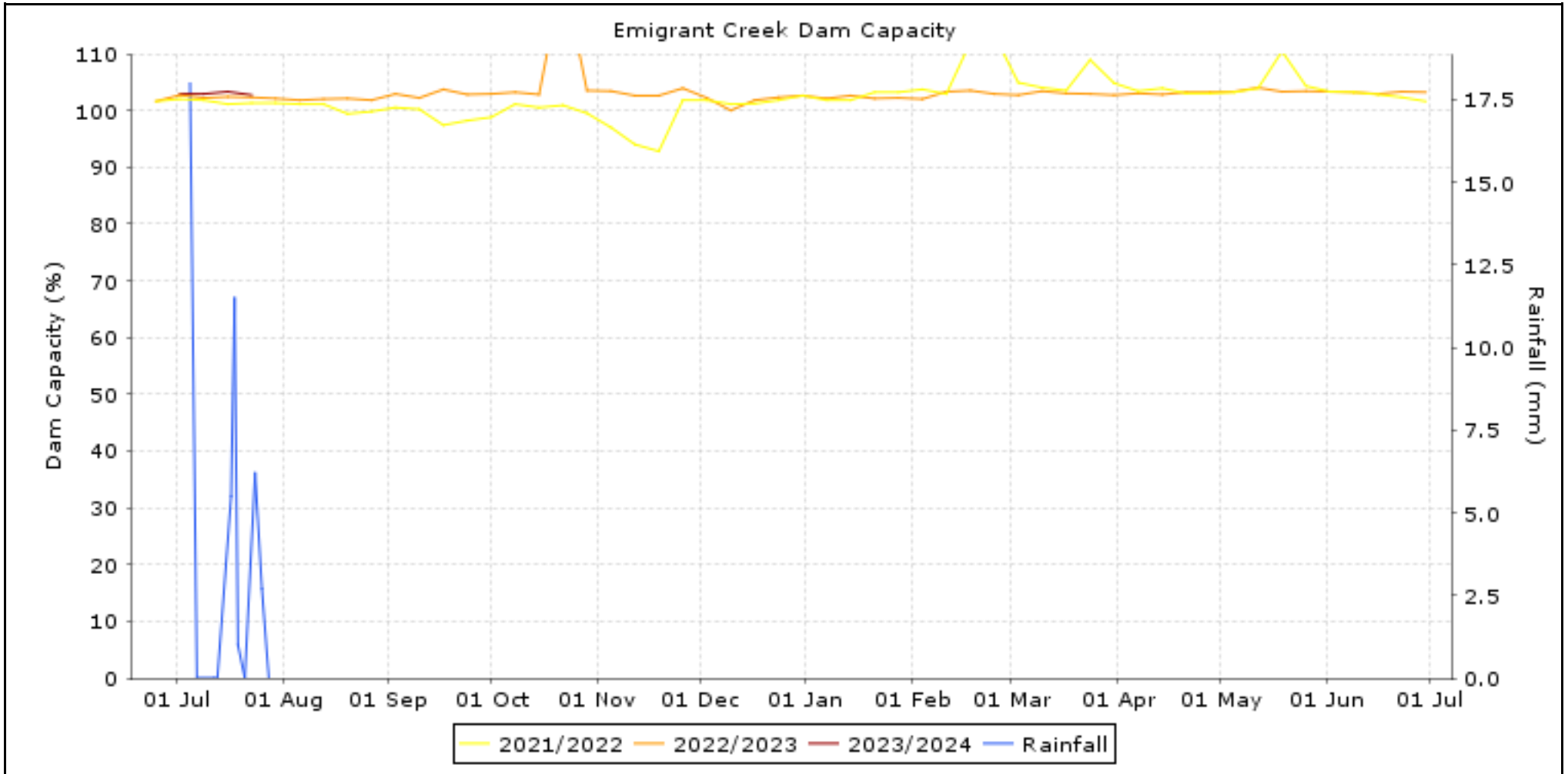


Figure 7: Emigrant Creek Dam capacity and rainfall

Monthly consumption by constituents - Ballina Shire Council

Figure 8 shows the monthly consumption for Ballina Shire Council area for the previous two years. Rainfall data is from the Bureau of Meteorology rainfall station Ballina Airport.

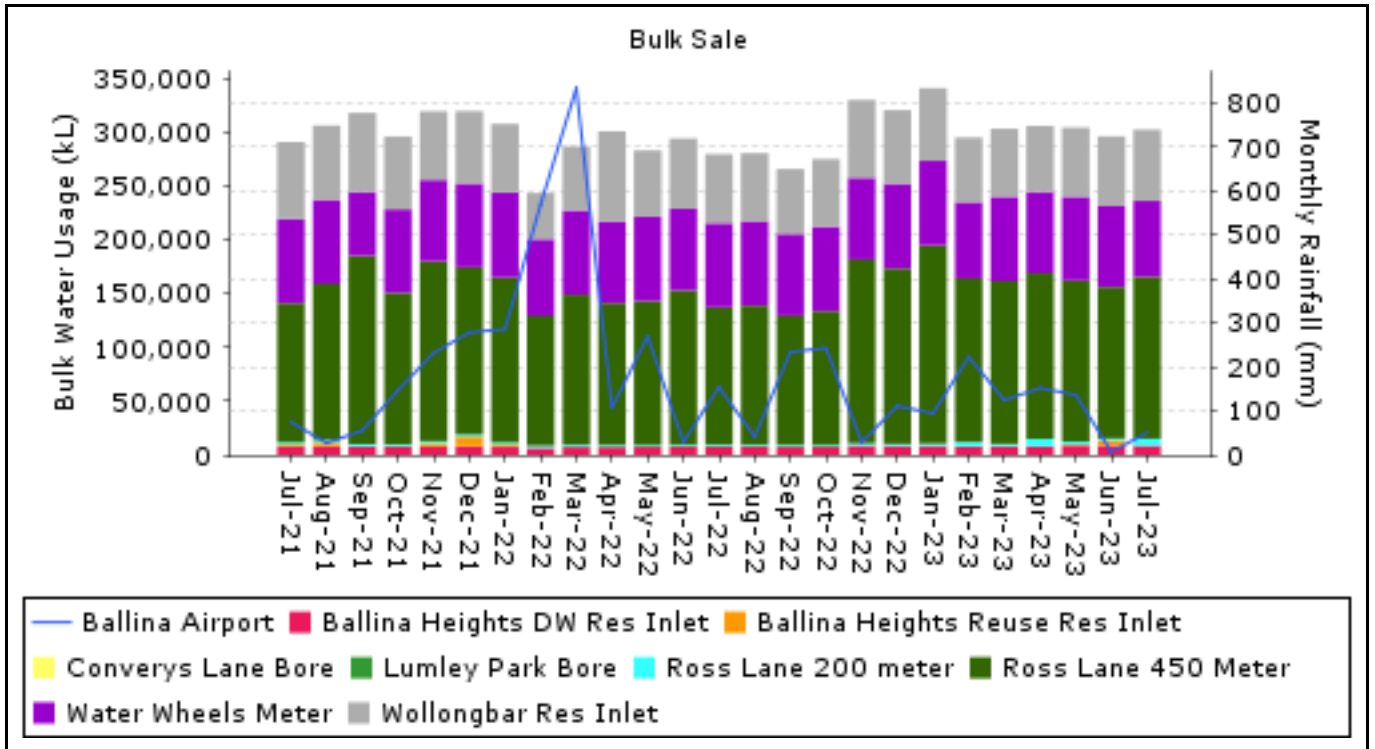


Figure 8: Monthly consumption and rainfall - Ballina Shire Council.

Figure 9 shows the monthly consumption for water fill stations for Ballina Shire Council and the rainfall for the previous two years.

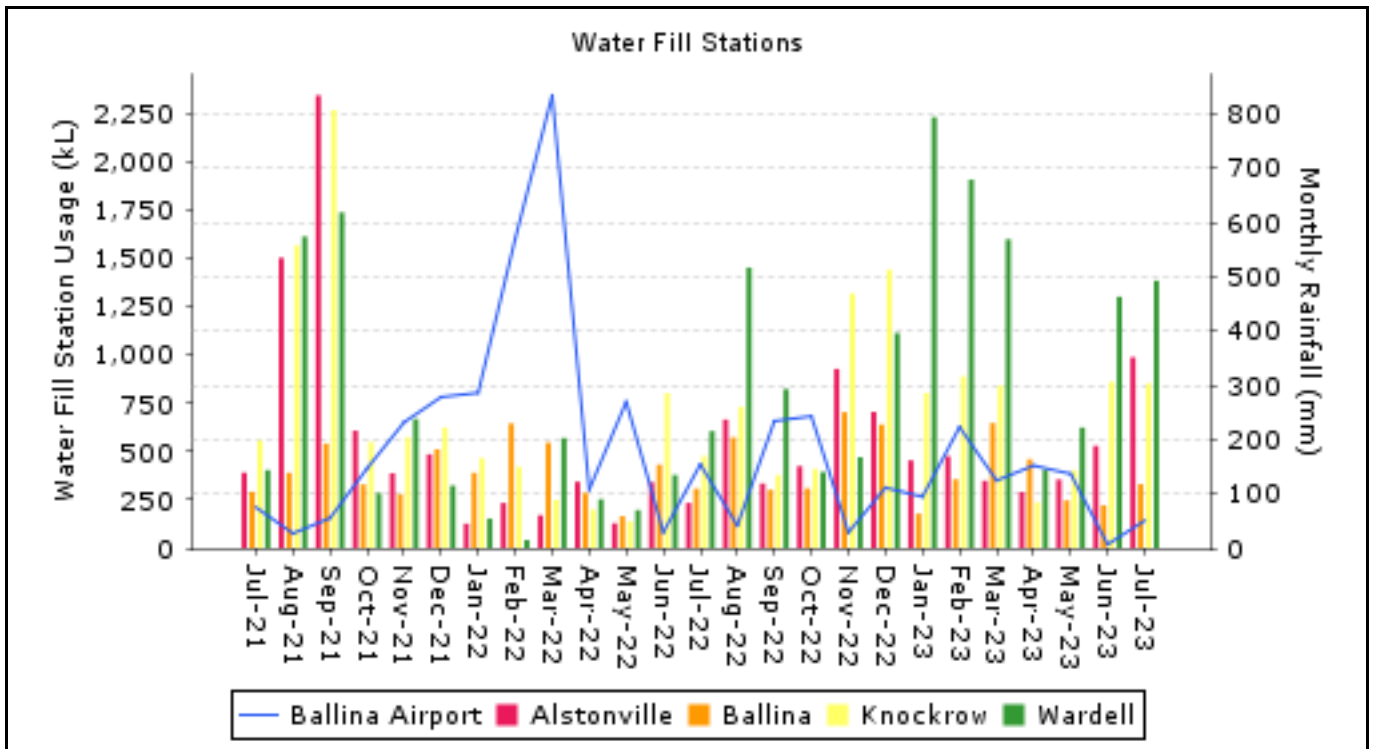


Figure 9: Monthly consumption commercial water fill station and rainfall.

Figure 10 shows the total usage of individual commercial water fill stations for the financial year to date compared with the previous two years.

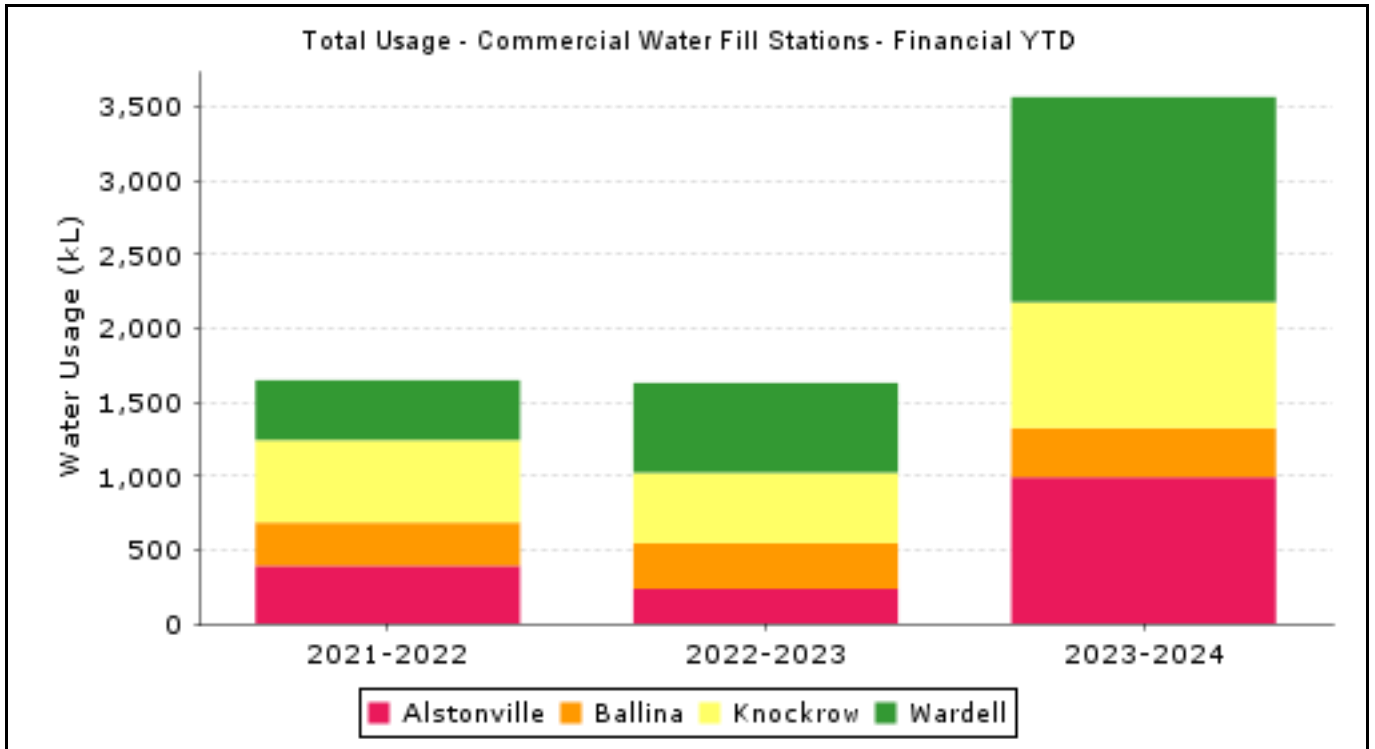


Figure 10: Total usage of commercial water fill stations. 1 July to 31 July

Monthly consumption by constituents - Byron Shire Council

Figure 11 shows the monthly consumption for Byron Shire Council area for the previous two years. Rainfall data is from the Bureau of Meteorology rainfall station Cape Byron.

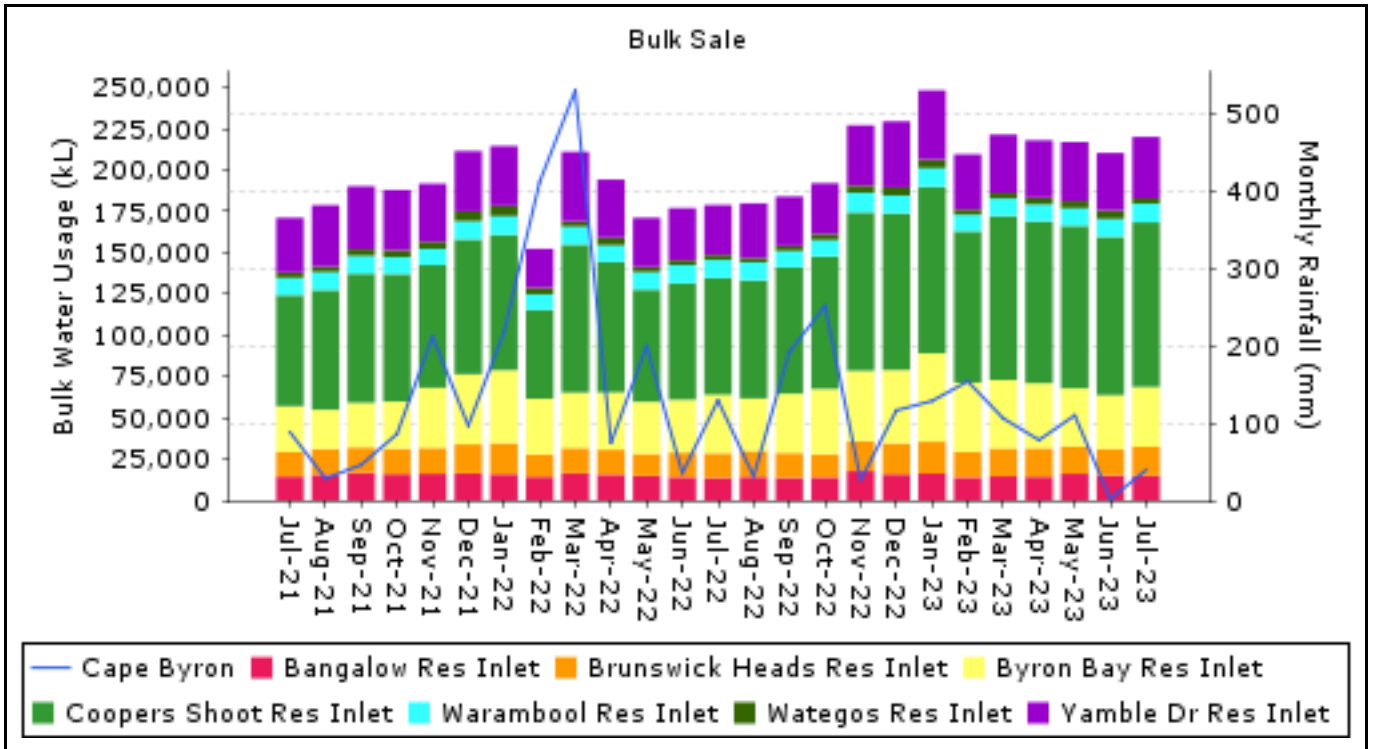


Figure 11: Monthly consumption and rainfall - Byron Shire Council.

Figure 12 shows the monthly consumption for water fill stations for Byron Shire Council and the rainfall for the previous two years.

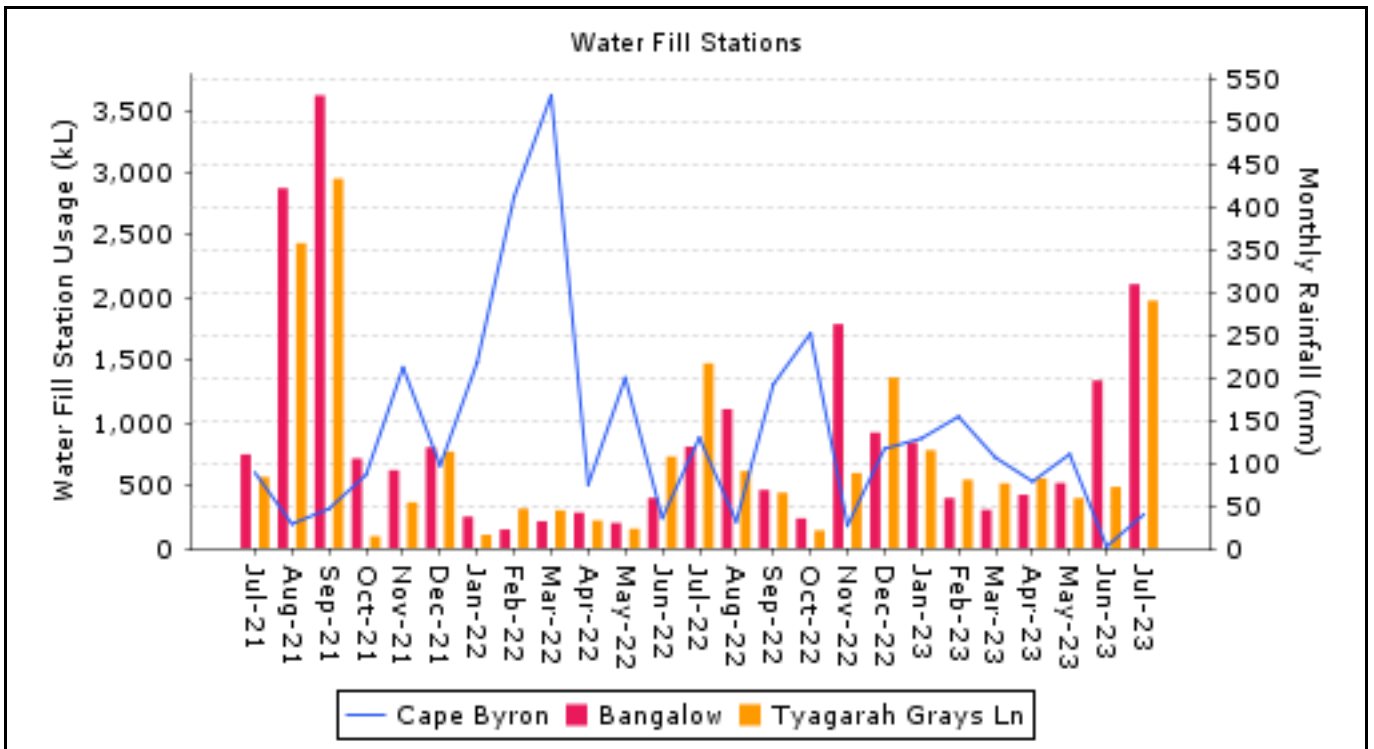


Figure 12: Monthly consumption commercial water fill station and rainfall.

Figure 13 shows the total usage of individual commercial water fill stations for the financial year to date compared with the previous two years.

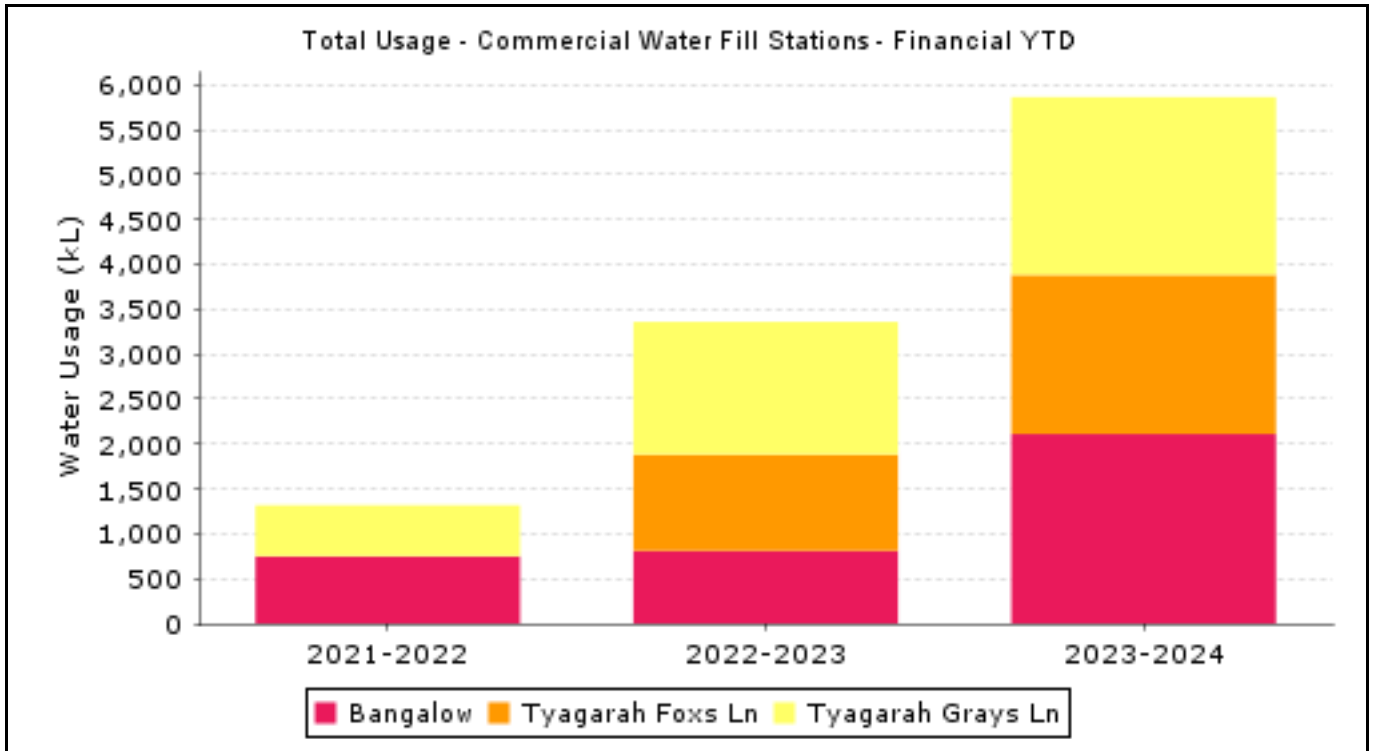


Figure 13: Total usage of commercial water fill stations. 1 July to 31 July

Monthly consumption by constituents - Lismore City Council

Figure 14 shows the monthly consumption for Lismore City Council area for the previous two years. Rainfall data is from the Bureau of Meteorology rainfall station Lismore Airport.

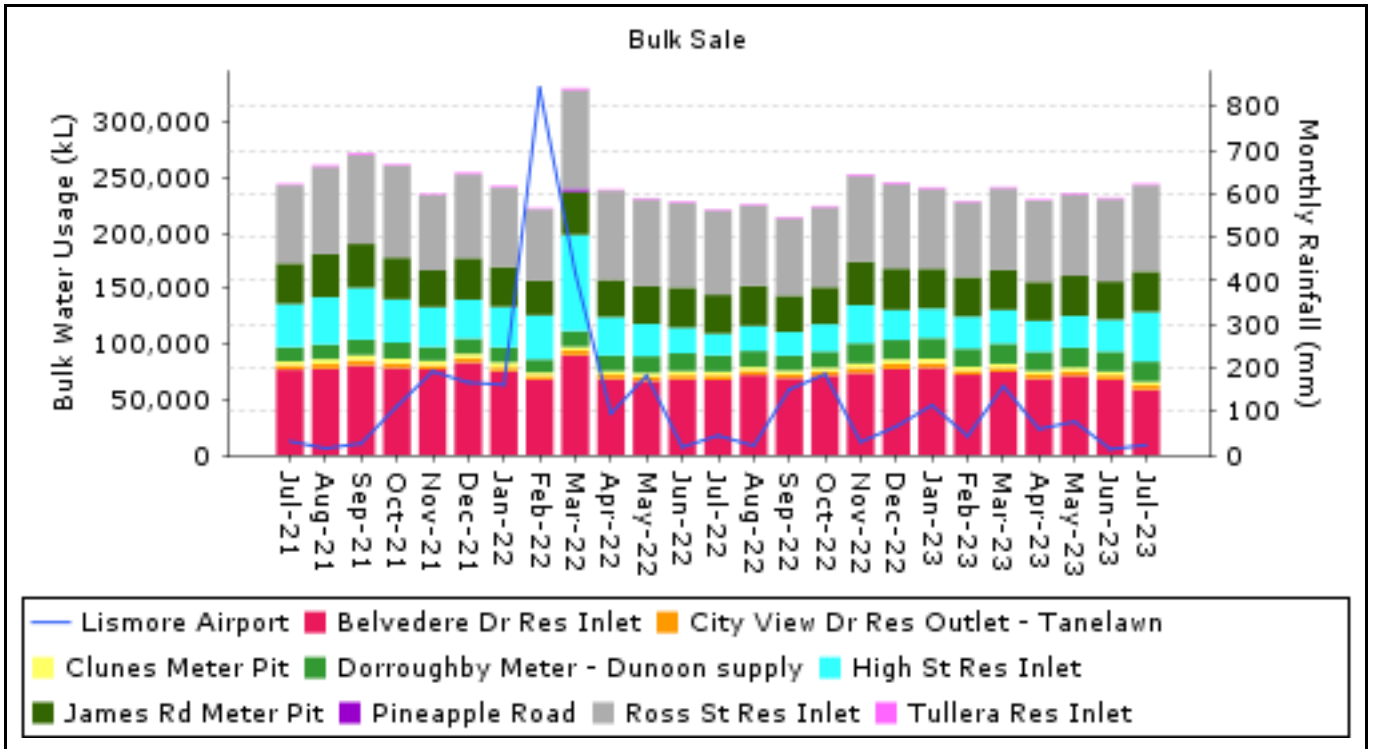


Figure 14: Monthly consumption and rainfall - Lismore City Council.

Figure 15 shows the monthly consumption for water fill stations for Lismore City Council and the rainfall for the previous two years.

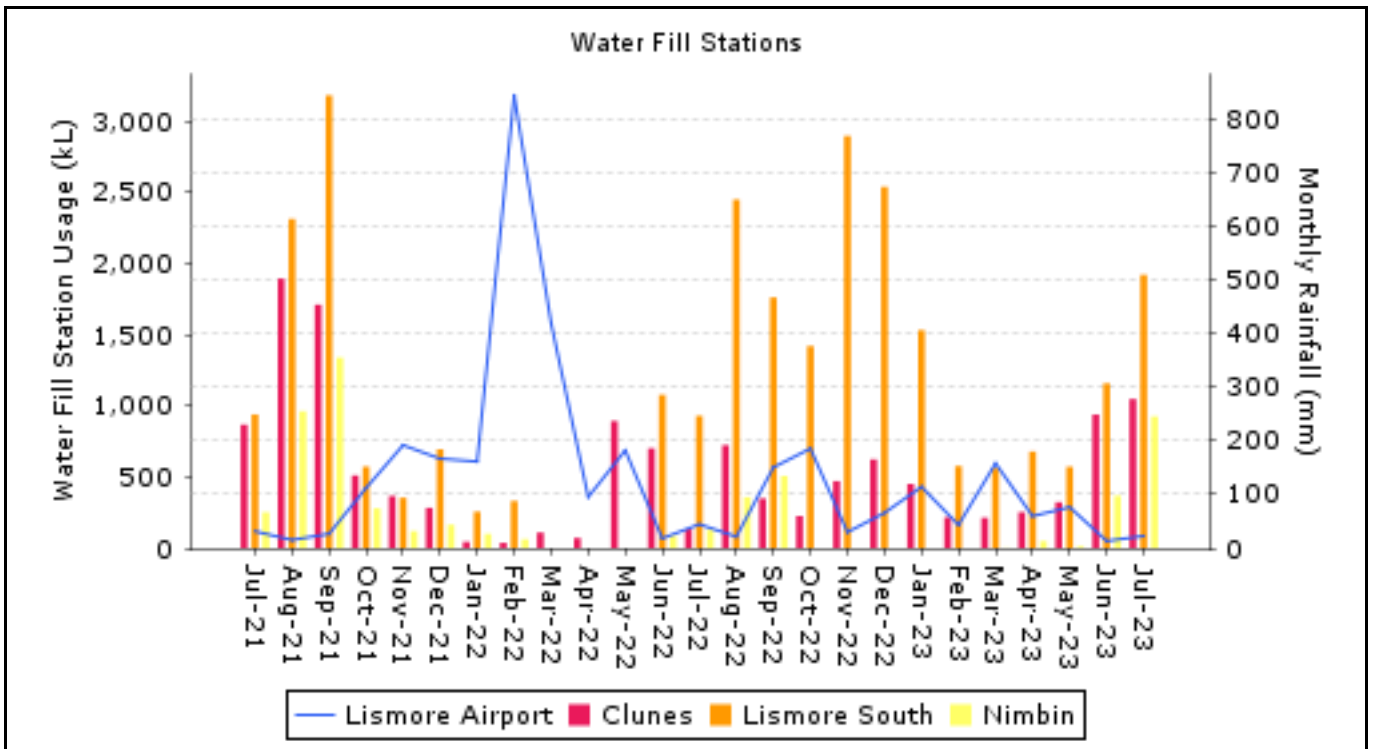


Figure 15: Monthly consumption commercial water fill station and rainfall.

Figure 16 shows the total usage of individual commercial water fill stations for the financial year to date compared with the previous two years.

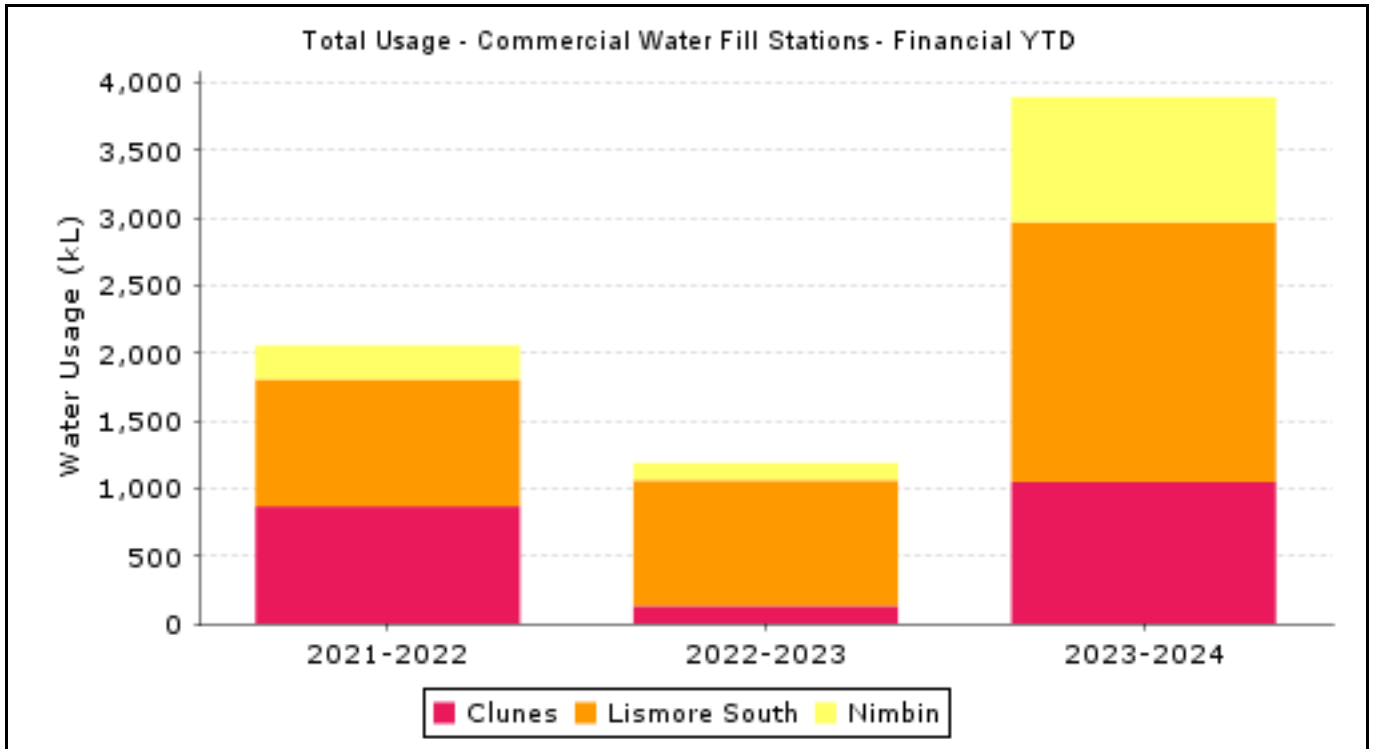


Figure 16: Total usage of commercial water fill stations. 1 July to 31 July

Monthly consumption by constituents - Richmond Valley Council

Figure 17 shows the monthly consumption for Richmond Valley Council area for the previous two years. Rainfall data is from the Bureau of Meteorology rainfall station Evans Head.

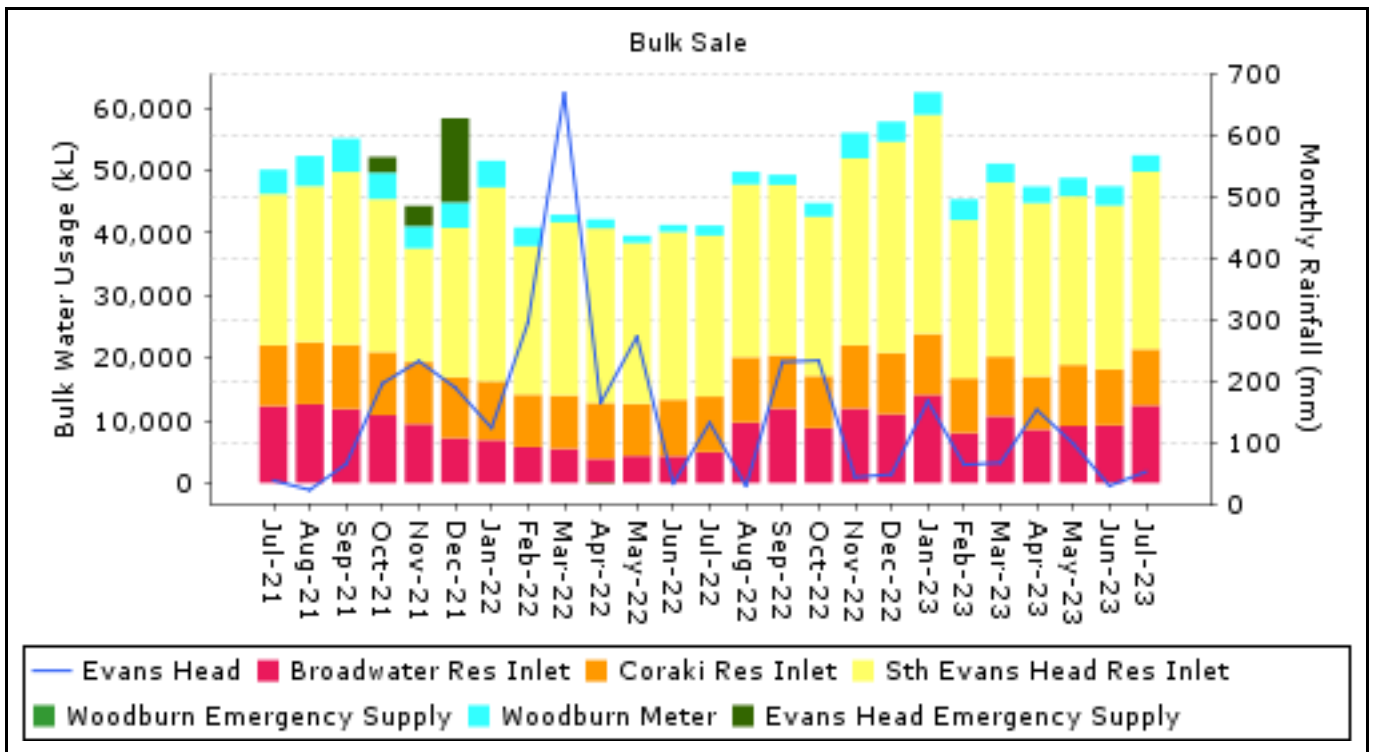


Figure 17: Monthly consumption and rainfall - Richmond Valley Council.

Figure 18 shows the monthly consumption for water fill stations for Richmond Valley Council and the rainfall for the previous two years.

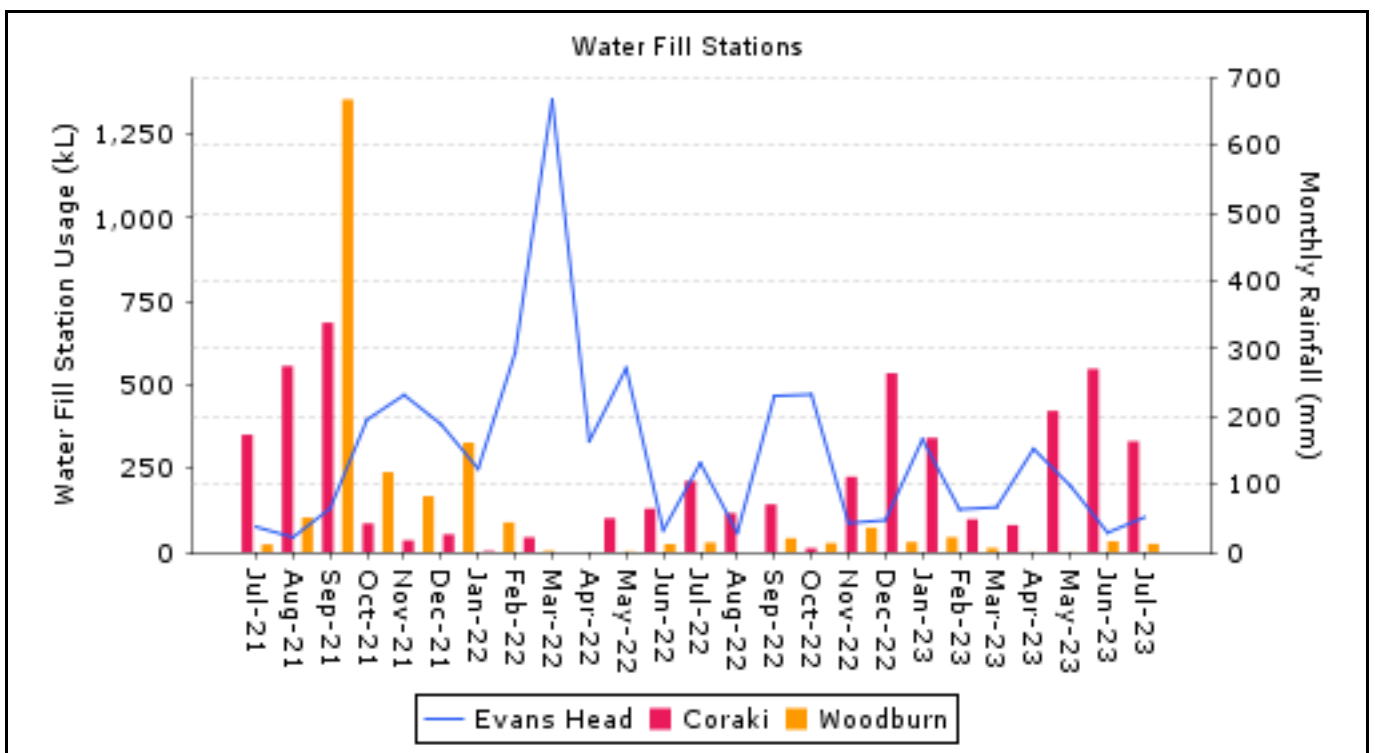


Figure 18: Monthly consumption commercial water fill station and rainfall.

Figure 19 shows the total usage of individual commercial water fill stations for the financial year to date compared with the previous two years.

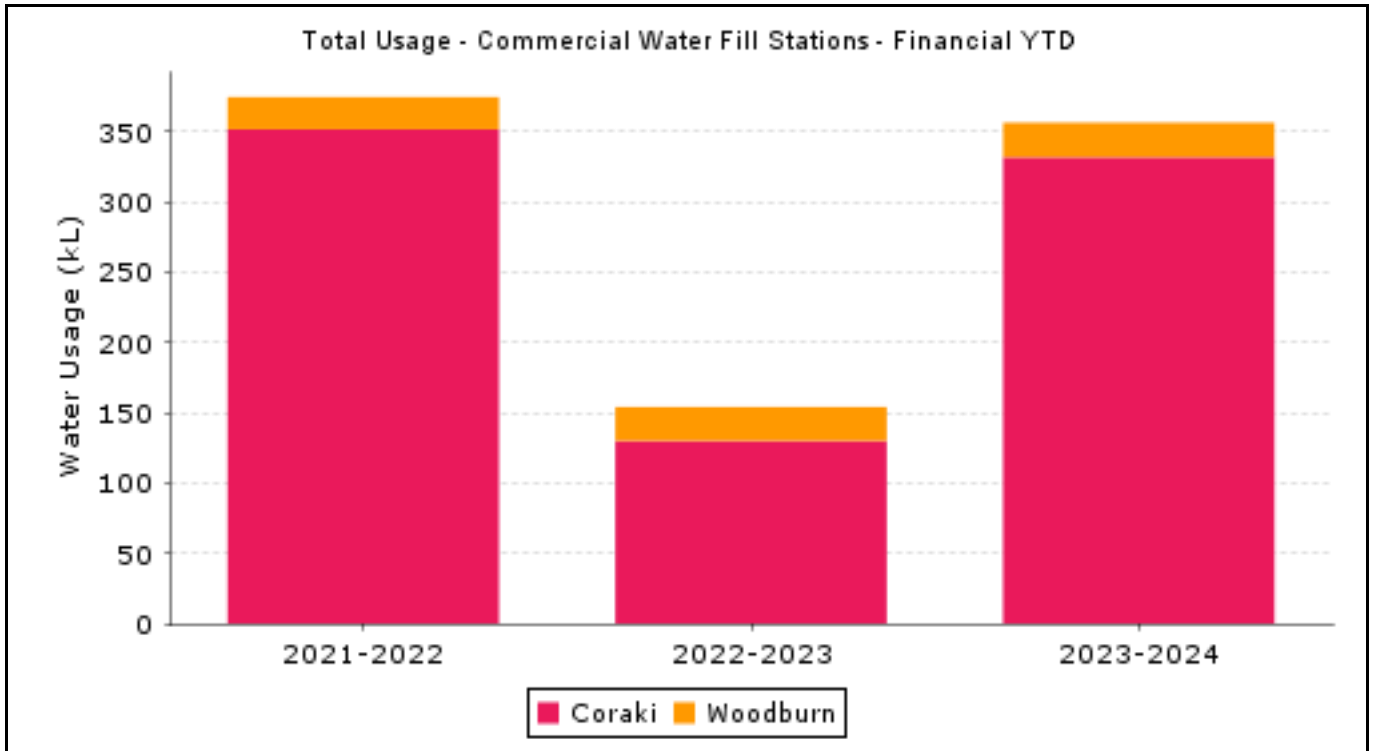


Figure 19: Total usage of commercial water fill stations. 1 July to 31 July

Retail Water Customer Account Assistance

Responsible Officer: Group Manager Corporate and Commercial (Geoff Ward)

Recommendation

That Council receive and note the Retail Water Customer Assistance listed in Table 1 of this report, approved by the General Manager, in the six-month period January to June 2023.

Background 5

Two applications for financial assistance, in accordance with section 356 (1) under Council's 'Retail Water Customer Account Assistance' policy, were received in the six-month period January to June 2023. Details of the applications are set out below.

Table 1

Account	Application received	Nature of leak	Original water charges due	S356 financial assistance to be approved	Adjusted water charges due after approval
10421-11000-7	24-Apr-23	Joint between pipes split, causing an underground leak. Joint was replaced.	\$12,671.44	\$8,396.46	\$4,274.98
10309-10000-5	4-May-23	Multiple leaks due to ageing pipe. Difficulty locating due to being underground. Consequently, the whole pipe was replaced to ensure all leaks were repaired.	\$7,196.48	\$4,294.08	\$2,904.40
10068-11000-5	5-May-23	Leak found on underground tee joint and pipe on the inlet of the meter.	\$4,159.20	\$2,010.72	\$2,148.48
12091-10000-3	5-May-23	An underground fitting split. Fitting has been replaced.	\$7,748.96	\$4,703.04	\$3,045.92
Total			\$31,778.08	\$19,404.30	\$12,373.78

Please note: Above applications (x4) were approved at Council's meeting June 2023

Account	Date application received	Nature of leak	Original water charges due	S356 financial assistance to be approved	Adjusted water charges due after approval
10547-11000-6	29-Jun-23	Underground water pipe fitting was damaged by tree roots causing a leak. The water pipe joint was replaced.	\$3,730.36	\$1,689.09	\$2,041.27
10226-10000-5	29-Jun-23	Underground poly pipe from the meter to the house was damaged by tree roots in four locations. Poly pipe was replaced.	\$3,435.24	\$1,469.70	\$1,965.54
Total			\$7,165.60	\$3,158.79	\$4,006.81

Finance

The 2022/23 financial year budget allocation for applications made in accordance with the 'Retail Water Customer Account Assistance' policy is \$50,000.

Budget Table S356 / S582		
2022/23 financial year revised budget	\$50,000.00	Number of applications
S356 assistance approved financial year to date	\$43,478.68	11
S582 assistance approved financial year to date	\$ 0.00	-
S582 assistance approved since last approval	\$ 0.00	-
Proposed S356 assistance approval	\$3,158.79	2
Proposed S582 assistance approval	\$ 0.00	-
Budget remaining 2022/23 financial year	\$3,362.53	-

Legal

Section 356 of the *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)* allows Council to 'contribute money or otherwise grant financial assistance'. Section 377(1A) allows Council to delegate to the General Manager authority to grant financial assistance provided it is (a) part of a specified program (b) included in the Operational Plan (c) the program budget does not exceed 5% of Council's income for that year, and (d) the program applies to all persons uniformly.

Conclusion

The total value of section 356 financial assistance equates to \$ 3,158.79 by application of Council's 'Retail Water Customer Account Assistance' policy. It is proposed that Council receive and note the financial assistance that was approved by the General Manager in the six-month period January to June 2023.

Debt write-off information summary

Responsible Officer: Group Manager Corporate and Commercial (Geoff Ward)

Recommendation

That Council receive and note the debt write-off information summary with debts written-off totalling \$ 5,766.65 for the period 1 January 2023 to 30 June 2023.

Background

Council's 'Debt Management and Financial Hardship' policy provides that a summary of debts written-off by the General Manager under delegation be provided to Council on a bi-annual basis.

As per Council's 'Revenue' policy:

- All debts above \$5,000.00 (ex-GST) may be written off only by resolution of Council.
- Council has delegated to the General Manager the power to write-off debts equal to or below the \$5,000.00 threshold.

The General Manager has sub-delegated the authority to write-off of debts equal to or below \$1,000.00 to the Group Manager Corporate and Commercial and the Finance Manager.

- Debts written off equal to or below \$ 5,000

Debts approved for write-off by Council staff were done so under delegation and in accordance with clauses 131 or 213 of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021*.

Debts approved for write-off during the period 1 January 2023 to 30 June 2023 are tabled below:

Table 1:

Customer type	Ref. number	Write-off amount	Background	Reason	Approved by
The Tenant	C0129	\$4,058.20	Tenant advised that they were not informed of the usability of the premises, therefore they were not obligated to pay the invoice. GM emailed to advise that tenant had informed Rous that they would not be returning to the premises in May 2022, hence it was not necessary for Rous to inform them of the usability of the premises. Rous accepted 1 month's rental payment including GST \$ 4,464.02 as final settlement.	Debt not lawfully recoverable.	General Manager
Retail water account	10655	30.36	The customer advised that they were over charged by \$30.36 for the facility charge for 25 mm instead of 20 mm about 20 years ago. Records are available in Propertywise from 2011 and locating records prior to 2011 is not cost effective, considering the allegedly over-charged amount is only \$30.36. it was recommended to be written off.	Attempts to recover debt not cost effective.	Finance Manager

Customer type	Ref. number	Write-off amount	Background	Reason	Approved by
Retail water account	11216	\$837.80	The customer had a leak but could not turn the tap off at the meter to stop the leak while waiting for the plumber. Rous staff were on site replacing the tap on the same day when customer notified Council of the leak. Due to the failure of Rous' infrastructure in this instance, it was recommended to waive 50% of usage charge \$837.80	Debt not lawfully recoverable due to malfunction of infrastructure.	Finance Manager
Retail water account	11541	840.29	A cyble unit is the device attached to the water meter. It collects water usage data by the pulsing of water. It appears that this cyble unit was not collecting the correct usage data resulting in incorrect data being transmitted to the handheld remote reading device. As a result the customer has not been billed correctly, essentially being undercharged due to the data transmission failure. The customer was contacted regarding high consumption for the March 2023 meter read. The usage was checked manually against the actual meter read and showed a significant increase from the previous quarter. The customer confirmed that there was no leak and they weren't expecting the high usage. From the cyble unit data, Rous has concluded that the unit had failed and recommend that a credit adjustment be made based on the actual historical usage data.	Debt not lawfully recoverable due to malfunction of infrastructure.	Group Manager Corporate and Commercial
	Total	\$5,766.65			

Debts written off above \$ 5,000

No debts were approved for write-off by Council resolution during the period 1 January 2023 to 30 June 2023.

Finance

Charges written off during the period 1 January 2023 to 30 June 2023 total \$ 5,766.65 and this amount will be included in Council's Annual Report.

Legal

Clause 131(6) of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021* requires the General Manager to inform Council of any amounts written off under delegated authority.

Conclusion

Charges totalling \$ 5,766.65 were written-off under Council resolution and delegated authority pursuant to clauses 131 or 213 of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021*. The next debt write-off information summary report will be included in the February 2024 business paper.

Overview of Local Government NSW Water Conference 26–28 June 2023 - Parkes NSW

Responsible Officer: General Manager (Phillip Rudd)

Recommendation

That the report be received and noted.

Information

Rous County Council participated in this year's Water Conference which was held in Parkes NSW and represented by:-

- The Chair - Cr Robert Mustow
- Councillors - Sandra Humphrys and Big Rob
- Phillip Rudd - General Manager
- Tom Lloyd - Dams and Treatment Engineering Manager
- Rhys Oates - Dams and Treatment Assistant Team Leader

Below is a snippet of the jammed packed event.

Monday – proved to be a relaxing way to start off with registrations and a welcoming reception from Scott Phillips, Chief Executive from Local Government (LG NSW), Cr Ken Keith OAM, Mayor of Parkes Shire Council and a message from premier sponsor – Dr Annalisa Contos, Principal, Atom Consulting.

An early night was in order to recover from the travel and prepare for Tuesday's full agenda.

Tuesday – commenced at 9:00am with an introduction and overview of the day from the MC, Geoff Brailey and Welcome of Country by Geoff Anderson (Parkes Wiradjuri Language Group Coordinator) representing the Wiradjuri people.

The participants were then welcomed and addressed by the Mayor of Parkes - Cr Ken Keith OAM, Scott Phillips - Chief Executive LG NSW, Tanya Plibersek MP – Minister for the Environment and Water (pre-recorded) and Rose Jackson MLC – Minister for Water (Pre-recorded).

At approximately 9:45am a presentation was received from Graham Attenborough who stepped in for Amanda Jones, Deputy Secretary for the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) as she was unwell. This department is responsible for water security and managing NSW water resources, including surface and groundwater management. DPE assists local water utilities through planning, policy and regulation to ensure quality water services are provided throughout NSW.

Following on from DPE's presentation a panel discussion was held addressing the challenges of providing quality water supply to rural and remote communities. The Panel consisted of:

- Vince Keogh - Manager Aboriginal Communities Water and Sewerage Program (DPE),
- Sandy Leask - Senior Policy Adviser, NSW Health Water Unit,
- Leslie Jarvis - Senior Policy Adviser, NSW Health Water Unit,
- Danielle Francis - Manager, Policy and Strategy, Water Services Association, and
- Geoffrey Veneris - Production and Services Manager, Goldenfields Water.

After an overview from GHD, participants moved off to their selected Streams of interest.

Following is information indicating the different Streams.

Rous County Council was involved in **Stream 3** whereby Tom Lloyd and Rhys Oates presented 'Maintaining Water and Sewer Services During a Major Flood'. They did Rous proud with an excellent presentation on how drinking water was managed and delivered amid the recent flood events.



Tom Lloyd - Dams and Treatment Engineering Manager



Rhys Oates – Dams and Treatment Assistant Leader

Joining the session were Mitchell Stace - Manager Water Project Delivery and Chenxi Zeng – Manager of Water Management and Treatment Mid Coast Council who discussed the delivery of sewer services in a separate flooding event.

After lunch, we were treated to a tour where Parkes Shire Council showcased its state-of-the-art infrastructure, including Water Treatment Plant, Wastewater Treatment Plant, Recycled Water Treatment Plant, and the Akuna Road Wetlands, rehabilitated maturation ponds that are now a thriving wetland system supporting a diverse range of native flora and fauna.

The day topped off by an enjoyable dinner sponsored by NSW Water Directorate and the presentation of the **Sam Samra Award 2023** to which (unbeknown to us) Rous was shortlisted as a finalist. This annual Award was established in 2017 as a memorial and acknowledgement of the late Sam Samra's long-term contribution, passion and dedication to the water industry. It is co-sponsored by Local Government NSW, the NSW Water Directorate and the Department of Industry - Water. Shoalhaven Water took out the award for this year.

The evening event cannot go without having guest speakers and John Sarkissian OAM did not disappoint with "The Dish and the Moon". The entertainment was, to say the least, spectacular with Elvis (aka Paul Fenech) entering the building and strutting his talent.

Wednesday – with a few tired feet and eyes from the night before, the day's program did not slow down.

We kicked off at 9:00am with an overview of the day then a Panel Discussion on 'A Work Force for the Future'. This discussion was centred around Local Water Utilities are experiencing a skills shortage crisis nation-wide. Measures to address the crisis by increasing skills and capacity are desperately required to reduce risk, support job growth and ensure safe and reliable water and sewerage services for NSW communities. This session will explore short to long term strategies. On the Panel were:-

- Grant Leslie - Director, Balmoral Group
- David Kirby - General Manager, Brewarrina Shire Council

- Melissa Wortman - Senior Adviser Skills, Training and Workforce Development, DPE
- Danielle Francis - Manager, Policy and Strategy, Water Services Association of Australia.

Professor Stuart Khan, Civil and Environmental Engineering, University of New South Wales (UNSW) provided insights to lessons learnt from some of recent years experiences in managing water during extreme events including droughts, fires and floods to enable improved future resilience.

After morning tea break, another panel discussion took place and this time, the topic was “Dammed if you do, dammed if you don’t”. Exploring the pros and cons of dam infrastructure for water supply and flood mitigation, versus the impact dams have on surrounding land, ecosystems, and local communities.

Before lunch, we participated three more sessions:-

- **Cybersecurity issues facing local water utilities** - Natasha Steele, Manager Vulnerability Management Centre, Cyber Security NSW and Andrew Crakanthorp, Chief Executive Officer, Riverina Water County Council

The increasing threat of cyber-attacks on government infrastructure, including local water utilities, poses a substantial risk to councils. This presentation will highlight the work being done by Cyber Security NSW through the sector wide 2021 NSW Cyber Security Strategy and its implications for local water utilities. This session will also include a real-world experience of a ransomware incident experienced by Riverina Water, lessons learned, and measures implemented to safeguard their operations.

- **Climate variability and change in NSW** - Matt Coulton, General Manager Agriculture and Water Bureau of Meteorology

The Bureau of Meteorology is best placed to support councils in establishing resilient infrastructure and communities in the face of increasing climate volatility.

- **Town Water Risk Reduction Program** - Jane Shepherd, Director, Local Water Utilities, Department of Planning and Environment

Phase 2 The NSW Government has invested \$32.8 million to provide greater support for councils and Local Water Utilities. The Department of Planning and Environment will outline a suite of new initiatives that will form Phase 2 of the Town Water Risk Reduction Program.

We enjoyed an hour break for lunch, then into the homeward stretch of the conference with:-

- **Panel Discussion – Collaborative approach to water management** - Corinne Cheeseman, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Water Association - George Wall, Managing Director, Water Industry Operators Association of Australia - Andrew Francis, Director Infrastructure, Parkes Shire Council

This session will explore the benefits of alliances and collaborations between local water utilities and peak bodies, the private sector and government agencies to address challenges and opportunities.

- **Net Zero Councils - Sewage and Water Treatment Efficiency Toolkit** - Lisa Miller, Senior Project Officer, Office of Energy and Climate Change

The Sustainable Councils program has been working to develop Net Zero targets for regional councils in NSW and help them develop plans and strategies for their journey to Net Zero. Working in collaboration with technical experts, Sewage Treatment Plants (STP) and Water Treatment Plants (WTP) have been identified as high energy users for Councils and in need of specific guidance within their Net Zero journey. This presentation will outline the components of a Net Zero Guide with a toolkit and business case template for STP's and WTPs.

- **Water as an economic driver – Parkes Shire Council** - Cr Ken Keith OAM, Mayor - Kent Boyd PSM, General Manager - Andrew Francis, Director Infrastructure Parkes Shire Council

Parkes Special Activation Precinct, an initiative identified as part of the NSW Government's 20-year Economic Vision for Regional NSW, provides a unique challenge for council, to provide both town water for residents and to secure water to attract business and investors, support local industries and fuel economic development. This presentation will outline how water has become an economic driver for council.

Wrap up and close of conference took place around 3:50pm with next year's conference being held at Goulburn 2024.

Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee - meeting update

Responsible Officer: Group Manager People and Performance (Helen McNeil)

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Receive and note the:
 - a) Attached minutes from the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee meeting of 24 July 2023; and
 - b) Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee performance report for the period 2022-2023.
2. Acknowledge the valuable contribution to Council made by Brian Wilkinson over several years in his capacity as Chairperson of the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee.

Background

The Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee ('Committee') met on 24 July 2023. A copy of the minutes of the meeting are provided at [Attachment 1](#).

At the July meeting, two (2) new Committee members were welcomed – Laurie Lefcourt (incoming Committee Chair) and Raymond Wong (incoming Independent Member).

The Committee meeting was held at Rocky Creek Dam, and attended by Council's Chair (Cr Mustow), to mark the conclusion of the term of the outgoing Committee Chair, Brian Wilkinson, and thank him for his service on the Committee.

This final Committee meeting chaired by Mr Wilkinson provided an opportunity for the two (2) new Committee members to observe and to facilitate a smooth handover to the incoming Committee Chair, Ms Lefcourt.

The next scheduled Committee meeting is in October 2023 for the purpose of considering Council's financial statements and will be the first Committee meeting chaired by Ms Lefcourt.

For the remainder of the calendar year, the Committee will be comprised of the following four (4) voting members:

1. Laurie Lefcourt – Committee Chair (term expiring 2027)
2. Andrew MacLeod – Independent Member (term expiring 2025)
3. Raymond Wong – Independent Member (term expiring 2027)
4. Cr Big Rob – Councillor Member (term expiring February 2024)

Under the ['Risk Management and internal audit guidelines for local government in NSW'](#) (the 'Guidelines') issued by the Office of Local Government, only a non-voting (i.e. observer) Councillor Member will be permissible on a council's Committee which must be comprised of a minimum of three (3) independent members (inclusive of the Chair) from 1 July 2024.

The current Committee Charter will be updated to reflect the requirements of the new Guidelines in the latter half of this year and presented to Council for adoption at its December 2023 ordinary meeting.

As the final and first Committee meetings in a calendar year occur in November and March, respectively, this approach will allow the term of the current Councillor Member to conclude naturally.

Key messages

1. Chair's report – Committee Performance Review 2022-2023

The 2022-2023 Committee Performance Report was endorsed by the Committee and is presented to Council at this meeting by the Committee Chair (via video link) - see [Attachment 2](#).

2. Financial Management

The Committee received and noted the information presented in the Financial Management - July 2023 report regarding:

- The draft Delivery program / Operational plan and 2023/24 Budget adopted at Council's June 2023 meeting applicable for 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024.
- NSW Audit Office – Interim Audit – Management Letter.
- The presentation format of the draft Financial Statements (to 31 May 2023) for year ending 30 June 2023.
- Revaluation of land and building infrastructure.
- The Investment report furnished to Council's June 2023 meeting applicable for the month of June 2023.
- NSW Treasury Corporation (TCorp) loan obligations.
- New South Wales Auditor-General's Financial Audit Report on Local Government.
- New South Wales Auditor-General's Performance Audit Report – Financial Management and Governance in MidCoast Council.

3. Dam Safety Management System Audit

The Committee was provided with information on an audit of Council's compliance with the *Dam Safety Act 2015* (NSW) and the *Dam Safety Regulation 2019* (NSW) conducted by Dam Safety NSW ('DSNSW') on 2 March 2023.

The audit focussed on the dam safety documentation Council uses to manage the safety of its dams (Rocky Creek Dam and Emigrant Creek Dam), covering:

- Dam operation and maintenance and related processes
- Dam emergency preparedness process as an integrated part of the emergency planning process
- Dam safety management process and related risk management and assurance processes

The Audit Report issued by DSNSW on 7 June 2023 identified nine (9) non-compliances and eleven (11) improvement recommendations assessed by staff as minor in nature.

Progress towards completing these actions will be reported to, and overseen by, the Committee on a quarterly basis.

4. Risk and compliance

The Committee was provided with information on current market conditions with respect to insurance and local government sector risks being faced nationally and by States/Territories.

The top 5 local government sector risks faced by councils in NSW are reported as:

1. Financial sustainability;
2. Cyber security;
3. Disaster / Catastrophic events;
4. Business continuity planning; and
5. Infrastructure and assets.

Confirmation of insurance renewals for FY2023/24 was also provided to the Committee. The variance (approximates) in insurance premiums compared to last year (FY2022/23) is summarised in the below table:

Public Liability/Professional Indemnity	↑	7.5%
Crime	↑	14.5%
Property	↑	16.4%
Councillors and Officers Liability	↑	7.5%
Motor vehicle	↑	8.7%
Personal accident	↑	8.4%

5. Health Safety and Environment

The Committee considered reporting performance and insights relating to health and safety matters over the period May – June 2023.

A plan for addressing self-identified improvement actions targeted at uplifting the reporting and safety culture within the organisation was also outlined.

6. Audit

The Committee received an update on staff's progress towards implementing improvement recommendations made by Council's external auditors and internal auditors across the areas of work, health and safety, asset management, procurement, and ICT general controls since the last update to the Committee in February 2023.

During the period May – July 2023, nine (9) audit recommendations were completed and closed out and thirteen (13) internal audit recommendations remain outstanding. Of these 13 outstanding recommendations, one (1) is rated a 'High' risk with the remainder rated 'Moderate - Low' risk.

7. Other Matters

The Committee was provided with a summary of the report dated 25 May 2023 released by the NSW Audit Office on the effectiveness of the Office of Local Government in the regulation and monitoring of local government.

Publication link: [Audit Office of NSW – Regulation and monitoring of local government 25 May 2023.](#)

Consultation

This report was prepared in consultation with the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee Chairperson.

Conclusion

This report provides a summary of the key messages from the 24 July 2023 Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee meeting.

Attachments

1. Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee meeting minutes 24 July 2023
2. Committee Performance Review - period 2022-2023

MINUTES OF ROUS COUNTY COUNCIL AUDIT RISK AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE HELD MONDAY, 24 JULY 2023 AT ROCKY CREEK DAM

The Chair opened the meeting at 10.22 am.

In attendance:

Voting Committee:

- Brian Wilkinson, Independent Member (Chair)
- Andrew MacLeod, Independent member
- Cr Big Rob, Rous Councillor

Rous staff:

- Phillip Rudd, General Manager
- Helen McNeil, Group Manager People and Performance
- Andrew Logan, Group Manager Planning and Delivery
- Geoff Ward, Group Manager Corporate and Commercial
- Lauren Edwards, Governance and Risk Manager
- Jonathan Patino, Finance Manager
- Michael Wells, Strategic Planning Engineer

Other attendees:

- Laurie Lefcourt (new ARIC Chair)
- Raymond Wong (new Independent member)

Apologies

- Richard Watkinson, Thomas Noble and Russell

1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Council showed its respect and acknowledged the Traditional Custodians of the Land, of Elders past and present, on which this meeting took place.

2 MEETING OPENING

Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

3 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held 22 May 2023 were confirmed at the previous meeting. Copy provided to the meeting for information only.

4 DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

Nil.

5 APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Richard Watkinson (TNR)

6 SCHEDULE OF REPORTING

Noted as presented.

7 REPORTS

7.1 Committee performance review 2022-2023

RECOMMENDED (Rob/MacLeod) that the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee Performance Review – period 2022-2023 be received and endorsed.

7.2 Financial Management

RECOMMENDED (Rob/MacLeod) that the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee receive and note the information presented in the Financial Management Report – July 2023 regarding:

1. The draft Delivery program / Operational plan and 2023/24 Budget adopted at Council's June 2023 meeting applicable for 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024.
2. Interim Audit – Management Letter
3. The presentation format of the draft Financial Statements (to 31 May 2023) for year ending 30 June 2023.
4. Revaluation of land and building infrastructure.
5. The Investment report furnished to Council's June 2023 meeting applicable for the month of June 2023.
6. NSW Treasury Corporation (TCorp) loan obligations
7. New South Wales Auditor-General's Financial Audit Report on Local Government.
8. New South Wales Auditor-General's Performance Audit Report – Financial Management and Governance in MidCoast Council.

7.3 Dam Safety Management System Update and Audit

RECOMMENDED (MacLeod/Rob) that the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee receive and note the report on the implementation and audit of Council's Dam Safety Management System and that further reporting on the progress of implementing the recommendations is provided to the Committee.

7.4 Risk and Compliance

RECOMMENDED (Rob/MacLeod) that the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee receive and note the information presented in the report regarding risk management practices and activities.

7.5 Health Safety and Environment

RECOMMENDED (Rob/MacLeod) that the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee receive and note the information presented in this report regarding Health Safety and Environment systems, compliance and reviews.

7.6 Audit

RECOMMENDED (MacLeod/Rob) that the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee receive and note the information presented in this report on progress against actions arising from:

1. Internal audits.
2. External audits.
3. In-house audits

7.7 Other matters

RECOMMENDED (Wilkinson/MacLeod) that the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee receive and note the information contained in this report.

8 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES 24 JULY 2023

Audit Risk and Improvement Committee meeting minutes 24 July 2023

RECOMMENDED (Wilkinson/MacLeod) that the minutes of the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee of 24 July 2023 be accepted as presented.

9 NEXT MEETING: 16 October 2023 (Financial Statements)

10 CLOSE OF BUSINESS

There being no further business the meeting closed at 11.34 am.

Committee Performance Review 2022-2023

PREPARED BY: BRIAN WILKINSON

(Independent Member - Chair: Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee)

Recommendation

That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee Performance Review – period 2022-2023 be received and endorsed.

Purpose

To provide information in relation to the performance and role/activities of the Rous County Council Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee.

Background

The Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee Charter provides that:

The Chairperson of the Committee and General Manager will initiate a review of the performance of the Committee at least once every two years. The review will be conducted on a self-assessment basis (unless otherwise determined by the Chairperson of the Committee or Council), with appropriate input from management and any other relevant stakeholders, as determined by the Chairperson of the Committee.

It has become practice over the past two years for a report on the Committee Performance Review to be prepared annually in order to ensure currency of information and to provide ongoing communication to the elected Council on the operations of the Committee.

Over recent years the Office of Local Government NSW have been progressing Guidelines that will update and change the roles and reporting of Audit Risk and Improvement Committees. This Committee Performance report has been prepared to progress towards what is anticipated to be future Committee Reporting requirements, to meet the provisions of the Committee's Charter and to provide information on the role and activities of the Committee from July 2022 to June 2023.

Governance

The purpose, role and conduct of the Committee is guided by the Rous County Council Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee Charter and Internal Audit Charter.

The Rous County Council Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee Charter includes the following purpose for the Committee:

The role of the Committee is to report to Rous County Council and provide appropriate advice and recommendations on matters identified by this Charter. The Committee is independent and therefore operates independently of Council management.

The Committee has a legislated duty to keep under review the following aspects of Council's operations:

1. Compliance
2. Risk management
3. Fraud control
4. Financial management
5. Governance
6. Implementation of the strategic plan, delivery program and strategies

7. Service reviews
8. Collection of performance measurement by Council
9. Any other matters prescribed by regulations made under the Local Government Act 1993.

During the period July 2022- June 2023 the Committee met five times. The Committee Members (Brian Wilkinson, Andrew MacLeod, and Councillor Big Rob) have attended/participated in all meetings either in person or via remote technology. In that regard, the Committee acknowledges the efforts and arrangements made by Council staff to ensure meetings continued on schedule and contained information relevant to the role of the Committee.

The Committee's activities and governance processes have continued to be strongly supported by the Executive Team and staff at Rous County Council. It is acknowledged by the Committee that the ongoing impacts of Covid and Flood Event challenges have influenced staff resourcing and the capacity of the organisation to progress all Committee activities; however, the Committee has been satisfied with the quantity and quality of reporting provided to the Committee during this reporting period.

Given the scope of "items" the Committee is required to cover, a "Schedule of Reporting" has been utilised to guide the various meeting agendas, content and report timing throughout the year. A copy of the schedule is provided as part of each meeting agenda and has resulted in regular reporting on required items; in that regard the Committee was pleased with the content and presentation of reports. It was also appreciated that there was consistent attendance and involvement of staff at Committee Meetings.

The Internal and External Audit Programs of Council have had appropriate reporting and links to the Committee role and meeting agendas. The current Committee Charter and Internal Audit Charter have been appropriate and supportive of the Committee role. (These are subject of review to transition to the recent Audit Risk Improvement Committee guidelines released via the Office of Local Government).

The following comments and information provide the views of the Committee in relation to the operations of Council:

Information and reporting has been provided to the Committee in respect of Compliance Monitoring and Reporting. e.g. the policy and delegation reviews, the annual Code of Conduct Statistics, and information relating to Section 355 Committees (particularly in regard to the volunteer floodgate operator program). The Committee also received information on the new requirements for the Dam Safety Act/ Regulations, the Emergency Evacuation planning for the Gallens Road site and the Fire Safety compliance review undertaken. The Committee has been informed of actions taken relating to compliance requirements for the new term of Council.

Regular reporting has been provided on Enterprise Risk Management; this has included information on the Risk Register and Risk Management Framework. Whilst the finalisation of a fully operative risk management framework is still to be completed due to staff resourcing issues, the Committee is confident that there is commitment to the utilisation and understanding of risk management in the organisation. Work Health and Safety has also been the subject of reporting to the Committee. This included information on insurance claims and trends; Health and Safety Environment updates; Work Health and Safety updates; and information relating to emergency responses and business continuity planning.

Council has responded to External Audit reports and NSW Audit Office Reports in relation to Fraud Control. The Committee has received information on actions being taken by staff on Fraud Control, including checklists, awareness and improved business systems. The Committee has also been informed in relation to ICT planning and statistics relating to cyber incidents.

During the 2022-23 financial year the Committee has received reports and presentations relating to the Financial Management processes of the Council. The External Auditors have engaged closely with the Committee in respect to annual financial statements, Management Letters and the Annual Audit Engagement Plan. In addition, the Committee has been kept informed via agenda items on budget preparation, quarterly budget reviews, and investment processes. As part of the External Audit Management Letters, there are recommended actions to improve Council's approach to various processes. The implementation of those actions is kept under review by the Committee. It was pleasing that the Committee was provided with information on the Loan restructure assessment, various revaluation processes, the impact of the Floods on infrastructure and works programs, the TCorp Loan Investment issue, and the Retail Water Bad Debt write off.

As with all local government organisations, the Governance processes at Rous County Council are diverse and are subject to ongoing action. The Committee has received regular reports and information on governance practices and improvements, including: Policy, Procedure and delegation reviews/ Internal Audit Reports and Actions/Section 355 Committees/Code of Conduct statistics/ Code of Meeting Practice and the progress of the ICT Business Plan and the Digital Transformation Strategy. During the 2022-23 financial year the Committee received reports and monitored progress on the following internal audit items: Work Health and Safety, Asset Management, Procure to Pay and the IT General Controls.

An integral part of Local Government operations is the Strategic Planning processes and the actions taken to implement strategies. The Implementation of the Strategic Plan, Delivery Program and Strategies at Rous County Council is supported by comprehensive and understandable documentation. The Committee has received reports and presentations relating to those processes e.g. the IPR Framework, progression of the Delivery and Operational Plans. The Committee received reporting on the Flood Debrief report undertaken internally and actions taken in that regard.

During the reporting period the Committee received comprehensive information in relation to the Service Review relating to the Organisation Structure review of the Richmond Water Laboratories, the Corporate Systems Review (including Digital Transformation) as well as updates on the proposed "relocation".

The collection of performance management data by Council has been reported to the Committee (and the community) via the Annual Report and the Strategic Plan, Delivery Program and Operational Plan processes. The Annual Report provided information on Council's performance in delivering actions outlined in the IPR Framework.

In addition to the above, the Committee has been kept informed of Other Matters relevant to the role of ARIC and Council's operations. This has included the Annual Internal Audit Plan, Internal Audit reports, Reports and Publications from the Independent Commission Against Corruption, Information and Privacy Commission of NSW, Performance Audits and Local Government Reports from The Audit Office of NSW. The Committee has been kept aware of developments in relation to the Audit Risk and Improvement guidelines and the Industrial Relations Commission issue.

The Internal Audit Program of Council is undertaken via a third party and is monitored closely by the Committee; in that respect the Committee has had input to the annual audit plan (based around identified risks of the Council and the Local Government industry), receives and considers reports from the internal auditor and also monitors progress made on recommendations in Internal Audit Reports. The scope of the Internal Audit Program can reach across the various operations of Council i.e. Compliance, Governance, Financial Management, Fraud Control, Risk management and Strategic Planning. Reference has been made earlier in this report to the items covered through Internal Audit by the Committee. The Internal Audit Program of Council is considered appropriate at this time; however, it should be noted that going forward there will be pressures via the new Guidelines and ARIC responsibilities that will likely require increased internal audit resources/ funding.

Delivery program update 1 April 2023 to 30 June 2023

Responsible Officer: General Manager (Phillip Rudd)

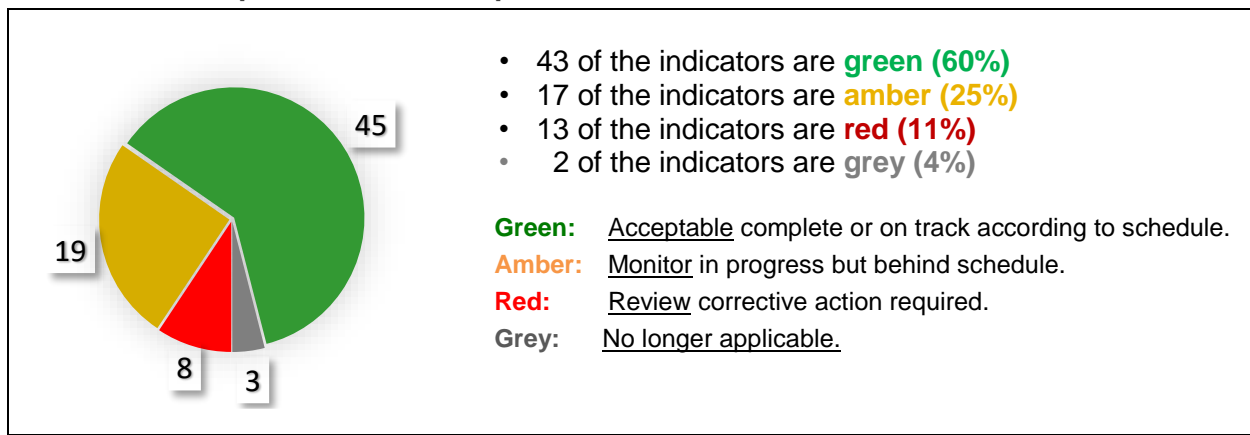
Recommendation

That Council receive and note this report and attachment regarding performance against delivery of the actions of the Delivery program for the period 01 April 2023 to 30 June 2023 (Y1 – Q4).

Background

This report relates to and provides information about Council's achievement of the performance targets in the Integrated Planning and Reporting Delivery program for Y1 – Q4.

• Overview of performance – 1 April 2023 to 30 June 2023



Refer to the Attachment for a traffic light indicator performance report based on exception reporting.

Legal

In accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993*, the General Manager must ensure that regular reports (at least every six months) are provided to Council outlining progress against delivery of the activities detailed in the Delivery program.

Consultation

This report and the information in the attachment has been compiled in consultation with management and staff.

Conclusion

This report provides an update on the status of the actions delivered between 1 April 2023 to 30 June 2023 (Y1 - Q4).

Attachment:

1. Performance against delivery of actions 1 April 2023 to 30 June 2023 (Y1 - Q4).

IP&R Operational Plan Reporting period: Quarter 4 - 1 April 2023 to 30 June 2023

Sustainable delivery

Our priorities include:

- Contributing to the protection and enhancement of our region's environment and natural resources.
- Taking steps to strengthen our response to climate change impacts and reducing our carbon emissions.
- Planning for future demands as our region's population grows.
- Sustainably using our available resources.
- Sound business planning and ongoing improvement.

Objectives:

- 1.1 A healthy environment.
- 1.2 Responding to climate change.
- 1.3 Water security, quality and sustainable consumption.
- 1.4 A sustainable Council.



Legend:

Green: Acceptable. Complete or on track according to schedule.

Amber: Monitor. In progress but behind schedule.

Red: Review. Corrective action required.

Grey: Not required however, comment included.

**NO 'COMMENTS' REQUIRED
IF GREEN**

Delivery objectives	2022-2023 Actions	What is being measured	Target	Responsibility	Comment Q1 - FINAL	Comment Q2 - FINAL	Comment Q3 - FINAL	Comment Q4 - UPDATE	STATUS
1.1.1 Environmentally responsible procurement.	1.1.1.1 Develop a procurement strategy and review existing policy to focus on waste minimisation and environmental impact.	Revised strategy and policy adopted.	By June 2023	GRM					●
	1.1.1.2 Review local supplier relationships and resourcing of specialist procurement arrangements.		By June 2023	GRM		Some planning has been undertaken into establishing local supplier panels for services such as mowing, fire safety etc. Specialist procurement arrangements are currently being established for projects such as Future Water.	As per Q2 update.	Some Project (FWP) and Engineering panels have been established. Establishment of local supplier panels is an ongoing BAU action.	●
1.1.2 Sustainable river system health through natural resource management.	1.1.2.1 Undertake scheduled 2022-23 actions of the Catchment and Coastal Zone Management plans.	% of scheduled actions completed.	At least 90%	CCAM					●
	1.1.2.2 Continue to deliver the Active Floodgate Management Program highlighting the expected improvement to water quality.	All required training of landowner volunteers completed.	By June 2023	FO			Continuing impacts from the floods in 2022 particularly with engaging with landowners.		●
		All required plans reviewed and updated.	By June 2023	FO			Continuing impacts from the floods in 2022 particularly with engaging with landowners.		●
1.1.3 Enhance the region's biosecurity through combatting the spread of targeted weeds.	1.1.3.1 Deliver scheduled 2022-23 actions of the Weed Action Plan.	% of scheduled actions completed.	At least 95%	WBRRM					●
	1.1.3.2 Liaise with constituent councils about possible Rous role in fee for service weed control in local parks, reserves and roadsides.	Explore opportunities, cost options and discuss with constituents.	By June 2023	WBRRM			Still to occur	Meeting organised for September 2023 with constituent councils to discuss. Meeting has been arranged with Kyogle Council re Service Level Agreement.	●
									●
1.2.1 Achieve carbon neutrality.	1.2.1.1 Prepare Renewable Energy and Emissions Reduction Plan.	Plan development phase completed.	By June 2023	SPE	Item not included in 22/23 budget. Report to be provided to Feb 23 Council meeting after seeking quotes, with request for budget allocation.			The Renewable Energy and Emissions Reduction Plan has been prepared and will be presented to a Council workshop on 20 September 2023.	●
	1.2.1.2 Install solar panels at Nightcap Water Treatment Plant.	Panels installed and operational.	By June 2023	GMO	Contract has been awarded - designs complete		Completed.		●
	1.2.1.3 Plant trees to contribute to offsetting our carbon emissions.	# of trees planted.	Subject to Plan outcomes	CCAM WBRRM			On-ground works for River Reach Plans are underway.	A total of 7,000 trees have been planted in 2022/23 through the Wilsons River and Emigrant Creek River Reach Plans (RCC Catchment Management Plan) and the Coraki Riparian Project (Coastal Zone Management Plan).	●
1.2.2 We are prepared and able to respond to climate change impacts.	1.2.2.1 Collate and analyse data to inform the Strategic Review of Flood Mitigation.	Collation and analysis complete.	By June 2023	GMPD	Limited progress on collation of data.	Proposing to work with CSIRO on synergies between projects.	Working with CSIRO on synergies between projects, with resultant delay in progress.	Work is underway with CSIRO to gather and analyse data.	●
	1.2.2.2 Review and identify the challenges to reducing the natural resource impact of flood mitigation assets in a changing climate.	Discussion paper prepared.	By June 2023	FO					●
1.3.1 Short-term (to 2040) water supply demands are able to be met.	1.3.1.1 Undertake scheduled 2022-23 actions of the Future Water Project.	% of scheduled actions completed.	At least 90%	FWPM		Some planning, investigation and design activities delayed. Awaiting outcome of state government grant funding to support these activities.	Council has been successful in obtaining SSWP grant funding for the implementation of the FWP. Some actions where deferred until this funding was confirmed.	The Target has not been achieved. There have been significant changes in the understanding of how core elements of this target will be delivered. In the second quarter of the 2022/23 financial year, the Ballina Shire Council's Marom Creek water supply was reconsidered for inclusion into the Alstonville Groundwater Supply Scheme. Council has secured land for a new water treatment plant at Alstonville. This land requires further land development activities to take place before the land can be released for sale. This is expected to be completed in the first half of 2024. At the same time Council was successful in securing funding from the Safe and Secure Water Partnership program. Progression of core actions were suspended, and only recommenced after a funding agreement was executed. Any works undertaken prior to this time would result in their ineligibility for funding. Significant flood damage has occurred to existing infrastructure at the Woodburn Groundwater Treatment Plant site. Council has been successful in obtaining flood recovery funding for this damaged infrastructure. The delivery of the reinstatement works to damaged infrastructure is being led by the NSW Public Works Advisory. Given the significant amount of damage to public infrastructure as a result of the 2022 floods, these reinstatement works are progressing slower than expected.	●
	1.3.1.2 Administer residential rainwater tank rebates.	# of rebates processed.	Report by occurrence	WSO				32 rebates processed this financial year to end of March 2023.	●
	1.3.1.3 Monitor water quality to ensure compliance with Australian Drinking Water Standards.	# of occasions of non-compliance.	Zero	DTM OEM	Comment for LT only: Green selected as no ADGW Health Exceedances. However, there were the following ADWG aesthetic exceedances 2 high pH exceedances at Cumbalum consumer, 10 low DO exceedances and 1 high exceedance for Iron at James Road Meter Pit.			No ADWG health exceedances. Some minor SLA exceptions for low chlorine.	●
	1.3.1.4 Prepare and implement a Future Water stakeholder engagement strategy.	Engagement strategy endorsed by Leadership Team and ready for implementation.	December 2022	FWPM		In progress. Expected to be completed in Feb 2023.	Minor delays incurred due to resourcing. Expected to be completed in June 2023.	The target has not been achieved. The strategy has been reviewed by the new FWPM in conjunction with the Communications Manager. An amended strategy will be shared with key stakeholders for endorsement in Q1 FY24 which dovetails into the broader RCC communication strategy to achieve greater alignment. The amended strategy will also capitalise on the appointment of a communications and engagement resource in the FW team as well as focussing more on engaging with Traditional owners in support of the RCC statement of commitment.	●
	1.3.1.5 Prepare and implement a project plan for the planning and investigations of a groundwater scheme at Tyagarah.	Plan drafted for internal consultation.	By June 2023	FWPM		Delayed commencement. Awaiting outcome of state government grant funding to support planning, investigation and design.	Commencement of this project has been deferred to July 2023, due to actions associated with the potential transfer of the Marom Creek WTP.		●

What we will do in Y3: 2019/20

1.3.2 Source options to meet long-term (beyond 2040) water supply demands are better understood.	1.3.2.1 Undertake further investigations of Stage 3 source options to support future decision making	Study commenced in accordance with project plans	By June 2023	FWPM	PRW Stage 3 Investigation tender evaluation completed - on track to begin prior to June 2023.	Delayed commencement. Awaiting outcome of state government grant funding to support planning, investigation and design.	Council has been successful in obtaining SSWP grant funding. The project has now commenced and is expected to be completed by June 2024	This target has not been achieved - note that Drought management actions are not included in this and there is change in advice	●
1.3.3 Our water supply is valued and used responsibly.	1.3.3.1 Undertake scheduled 2022-23 actions for the Regional Demand Management Plan.	% of scheduled actions completed.	At least 90%	WSO	New Demand Mgt Plan adopted at Oct 22 Council meeting.	In progress. Some program areas are on track whereas others have experienced delays due to shifting stakeholder priorities following Covid and floods. This work is ongoing.	All actions underway at varying stages of progress. Unlikely to achieve 90% of scheduled actions due to flood impacts and resourcing.	Actions underway, 75%	●
	1.3.3.2 Design a behaviour-change pilot program to understand community attitudes to responsible water use.	Consultant engaged and initial program designed.	By June 2023	WSO	New Demand Mgt Plan adopted at Oct 22 Council meeting.	Delayed commencement due to late start date and resourcing. Extension recommended to June 2024.	Pilot program development to be deferred to 2023-24 financial year.	Preliminary actions underway	●
	1.3.3.3 Implement the Water Loss Management Plan.	% of scheduled 2022-23 actions completed.	At least 90%	IPM	Implementation plan underway and not expected to implement 90% of ground works.	Due to current long lead times on metering and monitoring equipment, 90% of field installations will not be able to be completed this financial year, however are expected to be completed early in 2023/24.	On track to purchase water loss monitoring equipment, however due to lead times will not be installed this financial year.		●
	1.3.3.4 Continue implementation of smart metering and backflow prevention program for retail customers.	Contractors engaged and on ground works commenced.	By March 2023	SMPM					
1.3.4 The region's water supply capacity is enhanced.	1.3.4.1 Identify a preferred location and concept for a purified recycled water plant.	Preferred location identified with an associated concept.	June 2023	RWPM	Concept designs started - working on costings. Preliminary location to be selected with review after completion of Stage 3 PRW Investigations.				●
1.4.1 Our resources are planned, prioritised and implemented to ensure Rous's sustainability	1.4.1.1 Undertake scheduled actions within the 2022-23 Resourcing Strategy (financial, asset and human resources).	% of scheduled actions completed.	At least 90%	FM AMSO PCM	Financial actions are underway but behind schedule, particularly the capital works schedule. To be reassessed upon Council's adoption of the September Quarter QBRS.	LTFP on track.	Financial actions are underway but behind schedule, particularly the capital works schedule. Significant changes have been proposed in the March Quarter QBRS pending adoption by Council. 80% of asset management strategies priorities implemented	Financial actions are underway but behind schedule, particularly the capital works schedule despite significant changes via QBRS. 64% of capital works have been completed. 80% of asset management strategies priorities implemented.	●
	1.4.1.2 Deliver the 2022-23 Capital Works program.	% of program completed.	At least 80%	IPM FWPM PMRP ICTM DTEM OEM	Project implementation in progress at various stages. Mostly in initiation phase.	Flood Mitigation capital projects delayed due to ongoing flood disaster repairs.	Not expected to complete 80% of planned projects due to resourcing related to flood disaster repairs and project cost increases.	Did not complete 80% of planned projects due to resourcing related to flood disaster repairs and project cost increases. Estimate is approximately 60% completion with several carry forward projects due for completion in first quarter of 2023/24.	●
		% of spending achieved.	At least 80% of funds committed or spent.		IPM FWPM PMRP ICTM DTEM OEM	Project implementation in progress at various stages. Mostly in initiation phase.	Flood Mitigation capital projects delayed due to ongoing flood disaster repairs.	Capital Works Program budget (excluding FWP, Gallans, IT and Perradenya) currently at 70% committed or expended and expected to achieve over 80% committal or expenditure by EOFY. Capital Works Program as a whole currently at 40% expenditure. DTEM budgets on track to be 80% committed by EOFY, with exception of Nightcap switchboard upgrade due to need to retender.	
1.4.2 Rous's revenue stream is strengthened.	1.4.2.1 Prepare Development Servicing Plan for Bulk Water Supply, including a review of water charges.	Plan adopted.	By December 2022	PDE	Completion delayed due to other higher priorities for Council workshop. Report due to Council in December 2022 after November 2022 workshop. Decision has also been made to delay implementation to 1 July 2023.	Draft DSP currently on public exhibition and will be seeking formal adoption in February 2023.	Completed.		●
	1.4.2.2 Update the Business Plan for Richmond Water Laboratories.	Plan completed and endorsed.	By December 2022	RWLBM		RWL has ceased operations			●
1.4.3 A positive risk management culture is embedded and sustained.	1.4.3.1 Review the currency and operability of Emergency Response plans following recent major flood events.	Review complete.	By June 2023	ERC		Due the ERC position becoming vacant, this activity will need to be reviewed and potentially carried over into Y2 of the Delivery Program.	As per Q2 update - the GRM will undertake to complete this action during the remainder of the FY year.	A review of the existing suite of documents constituting the emergency management framework has been completed, however modest updates have not yet been completed.	●
	1.4.3.2 Update Council's Risk Management Plan and review the Risk Register to respond to outcomes of recent major flood events.	Plan and Register closed.	By June 2023	ERC		Due the ERC position becoming vacant, this activity will need to be reviewed and potentially carried over into Y2 of the Delivery Program.	As per Q2 update - this action will be carried over into Y2 of the Delivery Program and different resourcing strategies utilised to ensure the action is completed.	Due to continued staff resourcing limitations, this action will be rolled over into the 2023/24 Operational Plan for action. However, progress against implementing improvement actions identified in the Organisational Debrief Report prepared following the 2022 flood events is being tracked and overseen by the ARIC.	●

What we will do in Y3: 2019/20

1.4.4 Ongoing service reviews, audits and business improvements achieve enhanced organisational outcomes.	1.4.4.1 Complete prioritised service reviews based on recommended focus areas identified by Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee.	# of service reviews completed. % of review recommendations implemented.	At least 1 At least 50% within 12 months of date of recommendation	GRM GRM						● ●
	1.4.1.2 Embed a business process management framework to drive continuous improvement.	Process taxonomy completed with clear ownership. Key process improvement opportunities identified.	By mid 2023 By end 2023	ICTL ICTL						● ●
	1.4.4.3 Participate in Performance Audits conducted by the NSW Audit Office.	# of audits participated in.	Report by occurrence and outcomes	FM	No audits participated in to date, and no requests to participate received.	No audits participated in to date, and no requests to participate received.	No audits participated in to date, and no requests to participate received.	No audits participated in to date, and no requests to participate received.		●
	1.4.4.4 Review and align all proactive operational maintenance plans for water and flood assets as part of ongoing improvements to service.	All operational maintenance plans reviewed, updated and implemented.	By June 2023	OEM DTEM	Plans reviewed and currently being updated.		D&T team have not been able to make progress on this item due to current maintenance scheduling and reporting limitations of Confirm. An alternative maintenance system is needed to be able to monitor and view maintenance schedules.	Dams and Treatment team have not been able to make progress on this item due to current maintenance scheduling and reporting limitations of Confirm. An alternative maintenance system is needed to be able to monitor and view maintenance schedules.		●

External relationships

Our priorities include:

- Building community understanding of the breadth of functions and results that Council delivers across the region.
- Being well positioned to respond to the diversity of our communities' needs and aspirations.
- Ensuring we proactively and positively engage with our constituent councils so that they understand and support our future direction.
- Maintaining strong relationships with others to promote positive business, environment and community outcomes.
- Being well positioned to win State Government funding opportunities.
- Sound business planning and ongoing improvement.

Objectives:

- 2.1 Strong and mutually respectful relationships with our constituent councils.
- 2.2 People across our region understand the work that we do.
- 2.3 Our working relationships with political, regulatory and industry stakeholders are effective and achieve results.

Delivery objectives	2022-2023 Actions	What is being measured	Target	Responsibility	Comment Q1 - FINAL	Comment Q2 - FINAL	Comment Q3 - FINAL	Comment Q4 - UPDATE	STATUS
2.1.1 Effective collaboration and communication with our constituent councils.	2.1.1.1 Undertake a survey with our constituent councils to best understand points of engagement for planning, collaboration and delivery.	Survey completed.	By March 2023	CCM			A face to face networking event was held with each of the constituent council's communications and customer service teams in lieu of conducting a survey. The aim of the event was to better inform each of these teams in understanding the role of Rous across the region and identify opportunities for collaboration.		●
2.2.1 Communities across our region are kept informed of Rous's work and have opportunities to engage with us.	2.2.1.1 Develop and implement a Communications and Engagement Strategy.	Strategy adopted. % of scheduled actions completed.	By August 2022 At least 90%	CCM CCM					● ●
	2.2.1.2 Identify target businesses for the Sustainable Water Partnership pilot program.	Spread across target groups.	At least 2 target groups	WSO	New Demand Mgt Plan adopted at Oct 22 Council meeting.				●
	2.2.1.3 Provide opportunities for engagement through face-to-face activities, social media, website and customer service offerings.	Increase in social media followers.	At least 200	CCM			An increase in followers to Facebook of 251 and 29 for Instagram during the quarter.		●
	2.2.1.4 Monitor Rous website to ensure content complies with WCAG level AA standards.	Compliance.	100%	CCM					●
	2.2.1.5 Provide timely and accurate information using appropriate media.	Number of media releases. Number of social media posts.	No target Report by occurrence	CCM			1 media release, 111 social media posts across		●
	2.2.1.6 Support Rous projects and activities through the development and implementation of communication and marketing campaigns.	Number of projects and activities supported.	No target Report by	CCM			Smart Meter, FWP & Renewable Energy projects		●
2.3.1 Our positive working relationships support the achievement of regional outcomes.	2.3.1.1 Pursue funding opportunities that support agreed regional objectives where delivery is primarily Rous's responsibility.	\$ value of funding received.	At least \$100,000	GM					●
	2.3.1.2 Actively participate in the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation.	% of scheduled meetings attended.	100%	GM					●
2.3.2 Water consuming businesses and industry are engaged to promote sustainable water consumption.	2.3.2.1 Undertake scheduled 2022-23 actions of the Regional Demand Management Plan.	% of scheduled Rous's actions completed.	At least 90%	WSO	New Demand Mgt Plan adopted at Oct 22 Council meeting.		All actions underway at varying stages of progress. Unlikely to achieve 90% of scheduled actions due to flood impacts and resourcing.	75% underway	●
2.3.3 Local Aboriginal history and culture is respected, and we positively engage with our First Nations communities.	2.3.3.1 Review and update Rous's Reconciliation Action Plan.	Review completed and revised RAP adopted.	By June 2023	CCAM			Focus during 2022/23 has been on consolidation of membership on RAPAG and implementation. Review of the RAP has been listed as an action in the 2023/24 Operational Plan.		●
2.3.4 Local community groups are positively engaged to	2.3.4.1 Undertake scheduled 2022-23 actions of the Communications	% of scheduled actions completed.	At least 90%	CCM					●
2.3.5 Regional collaboration informs policy and innovative approaches to priority issues.	2.3.5.1 Actively contribute to the Weeds and Pest Advisory Committees as part of our flood and water policy contribution.	# of meetings participated in. Nature of outcomes achieved.	At least 90% Report by occurrence	WBBERM WBBERM	GM participates in this forum ?				● ●
	2.3.5.2 Collaborate with State and other agencies including Health, Local Land Services, Dept of Primary Industries and Water Services Association of Australia.	Nature of collaboration outcomes.	Report by occurrence	WBBERM DTEM	DTEM attending WSAA water quality network meeting Nov 22. Discussions have been held with NSW Health and DPI regarding Nightcap WTP strategic review outcomes.		NSW Health and DPI have been involved in 5 yearly DWMS review risk workshops and site visits and the FWP recycled water regulator workshops		●

Our people

Our priorities include:

- Forecasting future workforce skill needs.
- Being an employer our employees are proud to work for.
- Creating opportunities for our staff to learn and develop skills that are needed for achieving our organisational objectives.

Objectives:

- 3.1 Our future workforce requirements are confirmed.
- 3.2 Innovative solutions are applied to addressing skills gaps.
- 3.3 Leaders at all levels.
- 3.4 We are recognised as an employer of choice.



Delivery objectives	2022-2023 Actions	What is being measured	Target	Responsibility	Comment Q1 - FINAL	Comment Q2 - FINAL	Comment Q3 - FINAL	Comment Q4 - UPDATE	STATUS	
3.1.1 We know our workforce and skills requirements to achieve our Delivery Program commitments.	3.1.1.1 Review and redesign recruitment strategies and techniques to target hard-to-recruit roles.	Recruitment strategy designed and implemented.	By 31 March 2023	PCM		Talent acquisition training completed 11-01-2023 for P&C team. Still more recruitment strategies to implement.	Further talent acquisition training completed by P&C team on 22-03-2023. New recruitment templates and documents, and Recruitment Procedure still to be updated.	A talent strategy is to be delivered as an element of the Branding Marketing strategy (a separate project being coordinated through the Customer and Communications' team). On track for delivery in Q1 of 2023/24.	●	
3.2.1 Specialist and hard-to-recruit skills are available to Rous when needed.	3.2.1.1 Implement Workforce Management Plan actions related to filling hard-to-recruit roles.	% of positions advertised and filled following recruitment process.	At least 90%	PCM		Target on the way to be met.	Target being met.		●	
	3.2.1.2 Complete staff skills and interests inventory through annual performance appraisal process.	Inventory completed.	By 31 January 2023	PCM	Annual Performance check ins and training scheduled	Annual Performance Check-ins completed. Inventory to be completed Jan 2024		Information to be gathered as part of the Performance check-in process and inventory completed in January 2024.	●	
	3.2.1.3 In collaboration with constituent councils, identify and implement talent sharing opportunities.	In collaboration with constituent councils, identify and implement talent sharing opportunities.	Report by occurrence		PCM		To be removed. Councils are struggling to find talent.			●
3.3.1 Our leaders and emerging leaders are provided with development opportunities.	3.3.1.1 Implement leadership development actions of the Workforce Management Plan.	% of scheduled actions completed.	At least 90%	PCM	Diploma of Leadership and Management offered to leaders. 13 have commenced training.				●	
3.4.1 Our staff are proud to work for Rous.	3.4.1.1 Recognise and celebrate achievements and staff contributions through regular staff communications.	% of staff who report being proud to work for Rous.	At least 90%	CCM					●	
3.4.2 Our workplace is accessible, inclusive and safe.	3.4.2.1 Develop new Disability Inclusion Action Plan.	Plan finalised and approved.	30 June 2023	PCM		Target moved to 31 December 2023		Disability and inclusion elements are routinely factored into project planning where appropriate incl. for workplace design as part of the Gallans Road project. Timing for the development a new Disability Inclusion Action Plan will be revisited in the new financial year.	●	
	3.4.2.2 Review the Work Health and Safety Management System.	Review completed.	By December 2022	HSEC	In progress.			This has not been achieved, work is ongoing with HSE Coordinator acting in the Operations Engineering Manager role has impacted the completion of the review, review to be complete by end of 2023.	●	
	3.4.2.3 Implement Council's Health Safety and Environment policy and systems.	Employee days lost.	0 lost time injuries		HSEC				Target not met with 2 LTI's recorded in the reporting period, reviewing and evaluating the existing safety measures and procedures in place and determining if they are adequate to prevent similar incidents in the future are the focus of the HSE Team.	●
			Incident and hazard reporting.	Upward trend	HSEC					●
			% of Vault modules implemented.	100%	HSEC				A significant amount of Vault modules are now in place, in the Vault system. Ongoing. 60% complete.	●
	No paper-based business processes			HSEC			Pre-starts, Safe Work Instructions and Safe Work Method Statements are now in a digital format, readily available to staff, ongoing work to minimise and simplify these documents is underway. Further works are currently being undertaken to digitise the bulk of HSE documents.	●		

Leadership and innovation

Our priorities include:

- Confirming our role as a regional leader.
- Expanding Rous's role in the region to provide a more consistent and cohesive service delivery model on behalf of our constituent councils.
- Exploring new technologies and approaches to addressing regional issues where Council may contribute to the solution.
- Responding proactively to a changing regulatory environment.

Objectives:

- 4.1 Be recognised for leadership in what we do.
- 4.2 Effective use of technology supports the achievement of organisational objectives.
- 4.3 We embrace innovation and continually improve the way we do business.



Delivery objectives	2022-2023 Actions	What is being measured	Target	Responsibility	Comment Q1 - FINAL	Comment Q2 - FINAL	Comment Q3 - FINAL	Comment Q4 - UPDATE	STATUS
4.1.1 Embed reconciliation in Rous's culture through its	4.1.1.1 Undertake scheduled 2022-23 actions of the Reconciliation	% of scheduled actions completed.	At least 90%	CCAM					●
4.1.2 Demonstrate effective leadership through the delivery of our commitments and reporting on our progress and results.	4.1.2.1 Prepare an annual Operational Plan, Budget and Annual Report to demonstrate Council's progress in achieving its Delivery Program commitments.	2023-24 Operational Plan and Budget adopted.	By June 2023	GMPP FBP		On track.	Drafted for presentation to Council at the April 2023 meeting for public exhibition.		●
	4.1.2.2 Report on Service Level Agreement implementation and performance.	2021-22 Annual Report published.	By 30 November 2022	CCM					●
4.2.1 Our business systems and data support us to achieve organisational results.	4.2.1.1 Undertake scheduled 2022-23 actions of the Information and Communications Technology Plan.	Reports provided to constituent councils.	6-monthly	GMO	New SLA report card based on revised SLA content will be complete by end of October.				●
	4.2.1.2 Introduce a streamlined timesheet process for 70hr per fortnight staff.	% of scheduled actions completed.	At least 90%	ICTM	No ICT 2022-23 plan. ICT are progressing initiatives to schedule.	ICT are progressing initiatives to schedule	ICT are progressing initiatives to schedule		●
4.2.2 Finding and promoting opportunities for technology alignment and compatibility across our region's councils.	4.2.2.1 Establish a joint Technology Register with constituent councils to support achievement of procurement savings and efficiencies.	Time spent on timesheet preparation.	At least 50% reduction in time spent by staff	PCM				New timesheet not yet in production. Aim for early 2023/24.	●
	4.2.2.2 Establish a joint Technology Register with constituent councils to support achievement of procurement savings and efficiencies.	Register in place.	By June 2023	ICTM DTEM	In progress. DTEM in discussion with PWA regarding telemetry/SCADA standards	In progress. ICT Register has been populated in conjunction with constituents	No further progress with PWA for telemetry/SCADA. Have been in discussions with SAFEgroup to develop the joint register.		●
4.3.1 Successful consolidation of Rous administration and depots to achieve business improvements and optimisation.	4.3.1.1 Finalise consolidation plan and commence relocation to Gallans Road site.	Staff relocation commenced.	By September 2022	PMRP		Operational staff are operating from Gallans Road.	Relocation project has been refined to acknowledge change in circumstances resultant from the 2022 floods. Key outcomes for 2023 are DA approved for "Change of Use" and site and building plans finalised and contractors appointed for construction 2024.		●
4.3.2 Continuous improvement in our delivery of a bulk water supply.	4.3.2.1 Review and update all operational maintenance plans for bulk water assets.	Number of scheduled actions completed.	All maintenance plans reviewed and updated.	GMO	All operations schedules have been collected and saved in CM - Preliminary review complete - detailed reviews scheduled for 1st Quarter of 2022				●
4.3.3 Proactive contribution as part of a regional response to flood mitigation.	4.3.3.1 Actively participate and respond to formal inquiries and other studies into the regional floods of 2022.	Responses provided to public inquiries and where invited for non-public inquiries.	At every opportunity	GMPD					●
	4.3.3.2 Progress discussions with Lismore City Council regarding the long-term arrangements for the Lismore Levee.	Revised draft MOU available for discussion.	By June 2023	GM			Progress has been delayed with the appointment of a new GM at LCC. Letter requesting a workshop with LCC staff sent in April 2023. Discussions and actions for the resolution of Lismore Levee will continue into 23/24.	Discussions have occurred with Lismore City Council and negotiations are continuing.	●

Tenders awarded by the General Manager under delegated authority

Responsible Officer: General Manager (Phillip Rudd)

Recommendation

That Council receive and note the information provided in this report on tenders accepted and contracts awarded by the General Manager under delegated authority during the period 2022/23.

Background

In August 2022, Council resolved [48/22] to modify the General Manager's delegation ([Attachment 1](#)) to authorise the position holder to accept and award tenders and contracts valued up to \$1,000,000.00.

A report summarising the details of tenders/contracts awarded using this delegation is to be furnished to the next available Council meeting. Due to an administrative oversight this requirement has not been met to date and the information provided in this report, therefore, encompasses the entire 2022/23 financial year.

Tenders/Contracts awarded under delegation by the General Manager

The tenders and contracts identified in [Attachment 2](#) were accepted and/or awarded by the General Manager under delegation during the period 1 July 2022 to 31 July 2023.

Finance

In accordance with clause 2(ii) of the Council issued delegation dated 17 August 2022, all expenditure or tenders/contracts approved by the General Manager must have a Council approved budget allocation available.

Legal

In accordance with clause 2(ii) of the Council issued delegation dated 17 August 2022, only those tenders/contracts that comply with the applicable legislative tendering requirements may be approved by the General Manager.

Conclusion

The General Manager approved the award of the tenders/contracts identified in [Attachment 1](#) in accordance with the conditions of delegation dated 17 August 2022.

Attachments

1. [Council issued delegation to the General Manager dated 17 August 2022](#) (via website link)
2. Table of Tenders/Contracts awarded between 1 July 2022 – 31 July 2023.

Tenders and/or Contracts awarded by the General Manager under Delegation in 2022/23FY

Tender/Contract	Start date	Initial Value (incl GST)	Revised Value (incl GST)	Variations (\$)	Contractor's name	Category
Emigrant Creek Dam - Risk Rating Assessment and Safety Review	17/11/22	\$235,200.00	\$356,200.00	\$121,000.00	Stantec Australia Pty Ltd	Consult, Engineering and Project Mgmt
RH100DN - Richmond Hill water main replacement	20/03/23	\$824,244.00	\$829,225.35	\$ 4,981.35	Ledonne Constructions Pty Ltd	Construction
Purified Recycled Water for Drinking Investigations	31/03/23	\$321,656.27	-	-	Tyr Group Pty Ltd	Consult, Engineering and Project Mgmt
Future Water Project Planning Investigations and Design ('PID') supplier panel	01/04/23	\$1,000,000.00	-	-	GHD; BECA Hunter H2o	Consult, Engineering and Project Mgmt
Nightcap WTP Filter Walkway and Saturator Access	29/05/23	\$314,237.00	-	-	Advanced Concrete Engineering Pty Ltd (ACE)	Construction
Grace Road 100DN Water Main Upgrade	06/07/23	\$ 452,146.00	-	-	CLH Plumbing Pty Ltd	Construction

Rous Regional Demand Management Plan 2023-2024: Annual report

Responsible Officer: Group Manager Planning and Delivery (Andrew Logan)

Recommendation

That Council receive and note the progress of demand management deliverables for the 2022-2023 financial year including budget expenditure.

Background

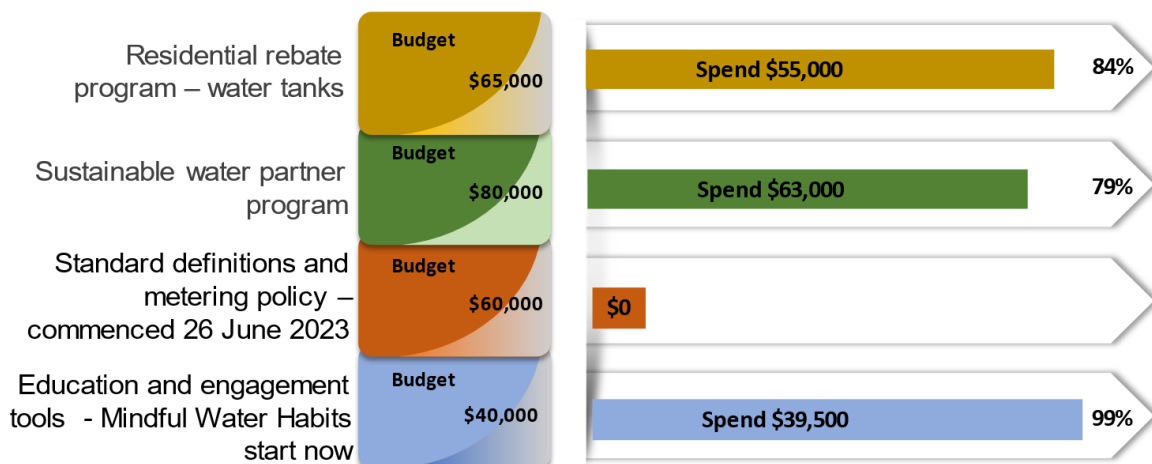
The Rous Regional Demand Management Plan: 2023-2026 (RDMP) was approved by Council on October 19, 2022 (Council Resolution 70/22). While significant progress has been made on the 2022/2023 actions in the plan, the start of the plan was delayed by 4 months. The delay was caused by the February 2022 floods and the ongoing impacts of Covid 19. Recruitment and onboarding of two new staff have further contributed to delayed actions. A highlight for this year was the successful launch of the social media campaign 'Mindful Water Habits start now'. The aim was to raise awareness amongst Rous's target audience of the importance of water conservation, simultaneously driving mindful water consumption using emotive story telling.

The new Regional Water Education Officer started in late January and is focusing engagement efforts on schools, taking advantage of the existing links to water education identified within the NSW curriculum. The catchment activity model trailer has been used to increase public recognition and water awareness by appearing at four community-based events and several school incursions involving over 350 students. Bookings are set to continue into the next financial year and further resources and feedback tools are being developed.

Progress has gained momentum with several other projects underway including the standard definitions and metering policy for Rous and the constituent councils. Hydrosphere Consulting has been engaged and has commenced on this body of work which will be finalised by December 2023. This policy development will improve consistency of connection types and detailed reporting enabling more targeted demand management initiatives and regional collaboration. The sustainable water partnership pilot program is underway with up to 15 on-site water assessments to be undertaken in the first quarter of 2023/2024.

The following is a snapshot of progress for actions for the first eight months of the RDMP .

Budget/Expenditure 2022/2023



Deferred programs starting 2023-2024



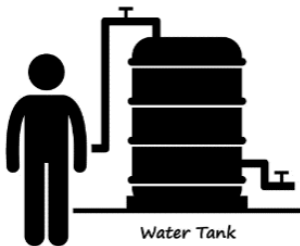
- ◆ Behaviour change pilot program (\$40K)
- ◆ Sustainable water partner program Pilot (\$20K)
- ◆ Feasibility of education facility (\$20K).

Sustainable water partner program 2022/2023

- ◆ Finalised Cape Byron Power and Broadwater Sugar Mill project
- ◆ Completed recycled water projects to Byron Bay Bowling Club and the Habitat Complex
- ◆ Media and business subscriptions.



Residential water tank rebate 2022/2023



% Applications by LGA

Byron 15.4%
Ballina 17.3%
Richmond 17.3%
Lismore 50%

- ◆ 379,042L total tank volume
- ◆ 46 total approved applications
- ◆ 20 internal toilet connections
- ◆ 20 laundry connections

Education/Engagement

1. Catchment Activity Model Trailer

- ◆ Presented to over 350 school children from different local schools
- ◆ Pre and post knowledge assessments showed an increase in understanding on issues including pollution in our waterways and erosion
- ◆ Appeared at four community events: Primex, Banyula Farms for Sustainable Agriculture, Landcare Riverfest and Living Lab Northern Rivers
- ◆ Feedback stated "Great presentation. Wonderful resources. Clear and concise explanations".



2. Demand management social media



- ◆ Facebook: 34 posts, highest views 672 likes 15, average 206 views
- ◆ Instagram: 31posts, highest views 65 likes 16 average views 39.4
- ◆ Posts included videos, links, product, and event advertisement promoting sustainable water practices and catchment health.

3. 'Mindful Water Habits start now' campaign

- ◆ Reached 138,848 people with a 4.9 frequency achieving 681K impressions
- ◆ Achieved 82,600 15 second views (thruplays) and 190,200 video views
- ◆ 6000 link clicks to download the educational eBook
- ◆ The older age ranges of 55-64 and 65+ showed the most interest across the whole campaign
- ◆ Women in the 65+ age range were the most engaged video watchers and people most likely to click through to the eBook.



4. Water Night 2022



- ◆ The campaign resulted in a 26% increase in water literacy
- ◆ Advertising ran through September to November 2022
- ◆ Facebook: 10 posts averaging 600 views, 6 likes each
- ◆ Instagram 10 posts averaging 53 views each
- ◆ Articles in the Echo and on the Rous County Council website
- ◆ Morning tea hosted by Rous with live conferencing
- ◆ 10 trees planted for every household registered.

Smart metering and backflow prevention

- ◆ Smart metering to be installed on all Rous water supply customers (>2100 connections)
- ◆ Lead contractor Nucleus 3 Pty Ltd
- ◆ Practical completion February 2024
- ◆ Telstra Cumulocity “IoT Device Management” will link all the smart meters / loggers into the NB-IoT wireless network and provide the initial landing place for data
- ◆ Customers can access their meter data via a web portal and/or a mobile (Apple or Google) App
- ◆ Customers will be in a position to better monitor leakages.



Water loss management program



- ◆ Active leak detection program – fully funded by NSW DPIE - surveyed 140km of water pipes. The leaks identified and repaired and reduced our water loss by approximately 38 million litres per annum, equivalent to 32 olympic swimming pools or 12% of Council’s non-revenue water. Leaks were also identified on customer service lines equating to 42 million litres per annum. Customers were notified of the leaks.
- ◆ Purchase and installation of 6 additional flow meters for system monitoring to improve the speed and accuracy of finding and repairing leaks
- ◆ Successfully obtained additional \$114,000 funding from NSW DPIE to roll out advanced pressure management and water network monitoring technology
- ◆ Repaired and replaced several aged and leaking water mains including a 300mm pipeline supplying Byron and a 375mm pipeline that supplies Lismore Heights.

Water supply pricing

- ◆ Rous County Council is currently discussing with the constituent councils the option of moving to a consumption-based pricing model which will provide significantly increased incentive for the constituent councils to reduce water loss and save water.



One page advertisement in the Byron Echo Sustainability Pull Out 25 May 2023

Install a tank & save

up to **\$2,170** rebate for a rainwater tank*

*Terms and conditions apply

rous.nsw.gov.au



SECURING A SUSTAINABLE WATER SUPPLY FOR THE FUTURE OF THE NORTHERN RIVERS

Since the 1950s, Rous County Council has supplied councils and customers across the Northern Rivers with a safe and reliable supply of water. From drinking to farming or running a business, a dependable supply of water supports our region's enviable lifestyle. The primary water source servicing most of the community is Rocky Creek Dam upstream of Lismore. We are privileged that its catchment area is the pristine Nightcap National Park on Widjabul Wia-bal country, delivering excellent water quality for the Nightcap Water Treatment Plant to do its job. Emigrant Creek Dam supplies Ballina and Lennox Head, and we also manage the Wilsons River and groundwater sources that bolster supply during extended periods of dry weather.

Securing a sustainable supply of water for the future is a strong focus for Rous. The combination of a growing population and a changing climate is placing unsustainable pressure on our existing water sources. To face these challenges, we need to take an 'all options on the table' planning approach and investigate all the options that are available to us. Our method is holistic and includes water saving initiatives, expanding the capacity of our current supply sources, and providing new water sources.

Many in our community are mindful about how they use water, saving it where they can, and we are pleased to support this conservation through rebates for residential water tanks. However, these actions alone are not enough to guarantee a reliable supply into the future, especially in extended dry periods like El Nino. A resilient and sustainable supply of water may involve one or a combination of different options including water saving measures, groundwater, surface water, purified recycled water and desalination. Diversifying the range of rainfall independent water sources may also offer increased resilience to drought.

Every day, every member of our community depends on water. It takes a strong commitment to long-term planning to safeguard a sustainable supply now and well into the future.

LOCAL BUSINESSES PARTNER WITH ROUS COUNTY COUNCIL TO REDUCE WATER USE



Cape Byron Power

Local businesses have been taking direct action to reduce their water use by joining Rous's Sustainable Water Partner Program. One such company to team up with Rous is Cape Byron Power. For more than two years Cape Byron Power has monitored its water consumption and developed projects that optimise its town water use. The project has achieved significant milestones, including the installation of new sub-meters and automated smart water meters, which has helped isolate different operations and provide accurate real-time data on water consumption.

Cape Byron Power's Co-Generation Operations Manager, Todd Andrews, said smart metering is now indispensable for its ability to monitor any unusual water usage. "Water is an essential part of operations at Cape Byron Power. Water efficiency and optimisation is not only important for our environment, but it makes sound business sense. Smart metering is an invaluable tool for Cape Byron Power to instantly respond to any unusual spikes in water use. The data that smart metering technology provides means we can efficiently monitor our water consumption and investigate and respond to any abnormalities in a timely manner. It has also allowed for the identification and implementation of projects that reduce demand on our precious drinking water supply," Mr Andrews said.

Are you a local business? Benefit from reduced water use now. Connect through the Qr Code for more information.



THINK TANK!

Looking for ways to save water? Think rainwater tank!

Join thousands of locals who have installed a rainwater tank and saved money through Rous County Council's rainwater tank rebate program. Rebates of up to \$2,170* are available for installing a rainwater tank as well as connecting your rainwater tank to internal fixtures like toilets and washing machines. Installing a rainwater tank and harvesting rainwater is a great way of saving money on water bills and it also helps to reduce the demand on our drinking water supply. The rebate program applies to residents connected to the town water supply in the council areas of Ballina, Byron, Lismore and Richmond Valley.



*Terms and conditions apply.

Rebates of up to \$2,170*

Rous County Council, the bulk water supplier to our region, offers rainwater tank rebates in partnership with Ballina Shire Council, Byron Shire Council, Lismore City Council and Richmond Valley Council to assist residents to save water.

Purchase and installation – for at least one outdoor use	Rebate amount*
2,000 litres to 4,499 litre capacity tank	\$200
4,500 litres to 8,999 litres capacity tank	\$800
9,000 litres and above capacity tank	\$1,000
Additional rebates available to connect tank internally	Rebate amount*
Toilets	\$620
Washing machine	\$550

* Terms and conditions apply. Visit rous.nsw.gov.au

In partnership with



Reports/actions pending

Responsible Officer: Rous General Manager (Phillip Rudd)

Recommendation

That the report be received and noted.

Background

Following is a list of pending resolutions with individual comments provided on current position and expected completion date.

COUNCIL MEETING	COUNCIL RESOLUTION
11/12/19	Report: Perradenya cycleway
	RESOLVED A future report be provided to Council.
STATUS	<p>IN PROGRESS: Workshop presented at September 2020 workshop. Report to Council scheduled for April 2021.</p> <p>DEFERRED: Deferred to new term of Council subject to adoption of the FWP2060 and incorporation into the Long-Term Financial Plan. Target December 2021 — June 2022.</p> <p>UPDATE: February 2022 — June 2022.</p> <p>UPDATE: Council site visit and workshop scheduled September 2022.</p> <p>UPDATE: Staff are working with town planning consultants and preparing a report for Council.</p>

COUNCIL MEETING	COUNCIL RESOLUTION
11/12/19	Richmond River Cane Growers' Association submission: Review of Tuckombil Canal fixed weir (Letters 118585 / 53238)
STATUS	<p>IN PROGRESS: Staff engaged with RVC staff around their grant application for a Study to update their Richmond River Flood Model (2010). Their grant was successful, and they have commenced procurement of a modelling consultant. Rous has contributed \$10,000 towards the project. One secondary goal for their Study is to consolidate these models along the mid to lower Richmond, including the Evans River Model, the W2B Pacific Highway Upgrades and collect high resolution flood modelling information around the Tuckombil Canal/ upstream.</p> <p>The updated model information will contribute to a future Rous led options study for the Tuckombil Canal. The Cane Growers' Association was advised in April 2020 of the intentions with regards to Richmond Valley Council, and will be updated during December 2020 with the latest information.</p> <p>UPDATE: The work by Richmond Valley Council to update their flood model is progressing well, with modelling expected to be completed within the first quarter of the 21/22 FY. RCC's requirements for the flood modelling around the Tuckombil Canal are expected to be met and reported back during the same period.</p> <p>UPDATE: Council staff received an update on the project from the consultants in early September 2021. The model development is nearing its conclusion and work will commence on modelling scenarios soon.</p>

UPDATE: Richmond Valley Council (RVC) staff have advised that the consultants have finalised the flood model and are now in the reporting phase. A draft Study report will go to RVC in the first quarter of 2022.

When the flood model is finalised, Rous will be able to consider the results and how a review of the Tuckombil Canal fixed weir would be financed.

UPDATE: The February 2022 floods since the last update have meant that the flood model finalisation and reporting to Richmond Valley Council (RVC) have been delayed. A new date for its finalisation is not yet available from RVC. Once the flood model is finalised, Rous will be able to consider the results and how a review of the Tuckombil Canal fixed weir would be financed.

UPDATE: The RVC flood model continues to be finalised following the floods. In the meantime, Rous staff continue to discuss the scope of work and funding options, whilst keeping stakeholders informed.

Confidential matters

Responsible Officer: General Manager (Phillip Rudd)

Recommendation

That Council move into Closed Council to consider the following matters and the meeting be closed to members of the public and press based on the grounds detailed below:

Report

Perradenya Estate – update report

Grounds for closure

Section 10A(2):

(g) advice concerning litigation, or advice that would otherwise be privileged from production in legal proceedings on the ground of legal professional privilege.

Section 10A, Local Government Act, 1993:

A Council may close to the public only so much of its meeting as comprises the receipt or discussion of any of the following:

Section 10A(2):

- (a). personnel matters concerning particular individuals (other than councillors),
- (b). the personal hardship of any resident or ratepayer,
- (c). information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a person with whom the Council is conducting (or proposes to conduct) business,
- (d). commercial information of a confidential nature that would, if disclosed:
 - (i). prejudice the commercial position of the person who supplied it, or
 - (ii). confer a commercial advantage on a competitor of the Council, or
 - (iii). reveal a trade secret,
- (e). information that would, if disclosed, prejudice the maintenance of law,
- (f). matters affecting the security of the council, councillors, council staff or council property,
- (g). advice concerning litigation, or advice that would otherwise be privileged from production in legal proceedings on the ground of legal professional privilege,
- (h). information concerning the nature and location of a place or an item of Aboriginal significance on community land.

Section 10A(4):

Council may allow members of the public to make representations to or at a meeting before any part of the meeting is closed to the public, as to whether that part of the meeting should be closed.