


Ordinary meeting business paper

Wednesday, 16 April 2025

commencing 10.00 am

Byron Shire Council, 70 Station Street, Mullumbimby NSW 2482



OPENING OF THE MEETING

- In accordance with clause 236 of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021*, attendees are advised that this Council meeting is being recorded (except for the confidential session) and will be made publicly available.
- 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.
- Mobile phones and other electronic devices are to be turned off or switched to silent mode for the duration of the meeting.

STATEMENT OF ETHICAL OBLIGATIONS

- In accordance with clause 3.23 of Council's Code of Meeting Practice, councillors are reminded of their Oath or Affirmation of Office made at or before their first meeting of the council made under section 233A of the Act, to undertake their civic duties in the best interests of the people they represent and to faithfully and impartially carry out the functions, powers, authorities and discretions vested in them under the *Local Government Act 1993* or any other Act, to the best of their ability and judgement.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- Councillors are reminded of their obligations under Council's Code of Conduct to disclose and appropriately manage conflicts of interest in matters being considered at council meetings. All declarations of conflicts of interest will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting at which the declaration was made.

APPLICATIONS TO ATTEND BY AUDIO VISUAL LINK

- In accordance with clause 5.18 and 5.19 of Council's Code of Meeting Practice, Councillors may attend and participate in meetings by audio-visual link with the approval of the Council.
- Requests by Councillors for approval to attend a meeting by audio-visual link must be made in writing to the General Manager prior to the meeting in question and provide reasons why the Councillor will be prevented from attending the meeting in person.
- Councillors attending a meeting by audio-visual link are reminded that they must ensure that no other person is within sight or hearing of the meeting at any time that the meeting is closed to the public under section 10A of the *Local Government Act 1993*.
- Note: Consistent with clause 5.44 of Council's Code of Meeting Practice, attendance by Council staff at meetings of the Council by audio-visual link shall be with the approval of the General Manager.

CLICK THE LINKS FOR:

- **CODE OF MEETING PRACTICE**
<https://rous.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Code-of-Meeting-Practice-1.pdf>
- **CODE OF CONDUCT**
<https://rous.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/Code-of-Conduct-1.pdf>

CONTACT DETAILS

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AGENDA

1. Opening of the meeting

2. Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land upon which we work, live and play – their continuing connection to the land, water, sky and community on Bundjalung Country – we pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

3. Apologies, Leave of Absence, Remote Attendance

4. Confirmation of Minutes of previous meeting

Ordinary Council meeting 19 February 2025..... 1 - 6

5. Disclosure of Interest

6. Chair's Minute

7. Matters of urgency

8. Notices of Motion, Questions with notice

8.1 Notice of Motion - Full funding of the \$150M Northern Rivers Watershed Initiative (NRWI) 7 - 8

Reports to Council

9. General Manager reports

10. Group Manager Operations reports

11. Group Manager Organisational Services

11.1 Quarterly Budget Review Statement for the quarter ending 31 March 2025 9 - 32

11.2 Draft Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework incorporating the 2025/26 Budget and Statement of Review Policy 33 - 43

11.3 Reappointment of Independent Voting Member - Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee 44 - 45

12. Group Manager Planning and Delivery reports

12.1 Direct engagement of NSW Soil Conservation Service to 46 - 48

restore Bungawalbin Levee 49 - 82

13. Group Manager Transformation and Strategy reports

14. Policies

14.1 Connection of Retail Customers to Rous Supply Network 49 - 82

14.2 Review - Debt Management and Financial Hardship policy
and Water Account Assistance policy 83 - 100

14.3 Fraud and Corruption Control Policy 101 - 104

15. Information reports (cover report) 105

15.1 Investments February 2025 106 - 113

15.2 Investments March 2025 114 - 121

15.3 Gallans Road – Project Update – 31 March 2025 122 - 126

15.4 Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee - meeting update 127 - 132

15.5 Actions / Pending 133

16. Confidential matters

17. Close of business

**MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF ROUS COUNTY COUNCIL HELD
WEDNESDAY, 19 FEBRUARY 2025 AT BALLINA SHIRE COUNCIL, 40 CHERRY
STREET, BALLINA.**

1 OPENING OF MEETING

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 Eva Ramsey, Ballina Shire Council
- Cr Elia Hauge, Byron Shire Council
- Cr Sarah Ndiaye, Byron Shire Council
- Cr Andrew Gordon, Lismore City Council
- Cr Sandra Humphrys, Richmond Valley Council

Council Officers:

- Phillip Rudd, General Manager
- Helen McNeil, Group Manager Organisational Services
- Andrew Logan, Group Manager, Planning and Delivery
- Tania Burls, Future Water Program Manager
- Jonathan Patino, Finance Manager
- Lauren Edwards, Governance and Risk Manager
- Simona Pacleanu, Executive Business Support Officer
- Robyn Waldron, Secretary

2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

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

3 APOLOGIES AND LEAVE OF ABSENCE

RESOLVED [01/25] (Cadwallader/Ramsey) That Council accept the apologies for Cr Steve Krieg, Lismore City Council.

Apologies / Leave of Absence (Resolution)		
For	Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Andrew Gordon, Cr Elia Hauge, Cr Sandra Humphrys, Cr Robert Mustow and Cr Eva Ramsey	6
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	None	0
Carried		

4 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED [02/25] (Gordon/Humphrys) That the Minutes of the ordinary meeting held 4 December 2024 be approved as presented.

Confirmation of Minutes of previous meeting (Resolution)		
For	Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Andrew Gordon, Cr Elia Hauge, Cr Sandra Humphrys, Cr Robert Mustow and Cr Eva Ramsey	6
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	None	0
Carried		

5 DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

Nil.

6 CHAIR'S MINUTE(S)

Nil.

7 MATTERS OF URGENCY

Nil.

8 NOTICES OF MOTION/QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE

- 8.1 Acknowledging correspondence from Widjabul Wia-bal and local First Nations people on the Dunoon Dam

RESOLVED [03/25] (Hauge/Mustow) That Council:

- Acknowledge that the Widjabul Wia-bal Native Title determination covers 11,700 hectares of Bundjalung Country, including the proposed Dunoon Dam site
- Acknowledge the receipt of 85 letters signed by Widjabul Wia-bal and local First Nations people, stating:-

"I am writing to make clear to you and the Rous Councillors that any plan to build a dam near Dunoon is not acceptable under any circumstances to me, to the Widjabul Wia-bal, or the broader Bundjalung Nation. The land that would be drowned contains sites which are sacred to us. For thousands of years we have lived on this land and protected it while it protects us. The land connects us to our Ancestors and provides learning grounds for future generations. There has been too much destruction of our lands and culture through ignorance. Do not further destroy our living culture. Do not construct the Dunoon Dam. Return the land to the Traditional Custodians."
- Express profound gratitude to the Widjabul Wia-bal people for their steadfast leadership and their millennia of caring for Country and Waters

4. Consider these submissions when making decisions about Rous' Future Water Strategy.

Cr Sarah Ndiaye joined the meeting at 10.11am

After speakers for (Cr. Hauge, Cr Ndiaye) and against (Cr. Cadwallader, Cr Gordon) the Notice of Motion, Cr Gordon asked that the MOTION be put. The Chair ruled to enable an opportunity for the remaining Councillors to speak to the Notice of Motion.

On being put to the vote the MOTION was LOST.

Acknowledging correspondence from Widjabul Wia-bal and local First Nations people on the Dunoon Dam (Resolution)		
For	Cr Elia Hauge and Cr Sarah Ndiaye	2
Against	Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Andrew Gordon, Cr Sandra Humphrys, Cr Robert Mustow and Cr Eva Ramsey	5
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	None	0
Lost		

9 GENERAL MANAGER REPORTS

Nil.

10 GROUP MANAGER ORGANISATIONAL SERVICES REPORTS

10.1 Code of Conduct and Code of Conduct Procedures

RESOLVED [04/25] (Cadwallader/Gordon) That Council:

1. Revoke the following:
 - (a) Code of Conduct dated 15 June 2022
 - (b) Code of Conduct Procedures dated 15 June 2022
2. Adopt the following as attached:
 - (a) Revised Code of Conduct
 - (b) Revised Code of Conduct Procedures

Code of Conduct and Code of Conduct Procedures (Resolution)		
For	Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Andrew Gordon, Cr Elia Hauge, Cr Sandra Humphrys, Cr Robert Mustow, Cr Sarah Ndiaye and Cr Eva Ramsey	7
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	None	0
Carried		

10.2 Quarterly Budget Review Statement Quarter ending 31 December 2024

RESOLVED [05/25] (Cadwallader/Ramsey) That Council note the results presented in the Quarterly Budget Review Statement as at 31 December 2024 and authorise the variations to the amounts from those previously estimated.

Quarterly Budget Review Statement Quarter ending 31 December 2024 (Resolution)		
For	Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Andrew Gordon, Cr Elia Hauge, Cr Sandra Humphrys, Cr Robert Mustow, Cr Sarah Ndiaye and Cr Eva Ramsey	7
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	None	0
Carried		

11 GROUP MANAGER PLANNING AND DELIVERY REPORTS

11.1 Transferred Retail Water Customers associated with the purchase of Marom Creek Water Treatment Plant

RESOLVED [06/25] (Humphrys/Cadwallader) That Council endorse the recommended approach and transitional fee structure, as outlined in this report, for the transfer of existing Ballina Shire Council retail customers to Council, as part of the purchase of the Marom Creek Water Treatment Plant from Ballina Shire Council.

Transferred Retail Water Customers associated with the purchase of Marom Creek Water Treatment Plant (Resolution)		
For	Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Andrew Gordon, Cr Elia Hauge, Cr Sandra Humphrys, Cr Robert Mustow, Cr Sarah Ndiaye and Cr Eva Ramsey	7
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	None	0
Carried		

12 GROUP MANAGER TRANSFORMATION AND STRATEGY REPORTS

Nil.

13 GROUP MANAGER OPERATIONS REPORTS

Nil.

14 POLICIES

14.1 Payment of expenses and provision of facilities

RESOLVED [07/25] (Gordon/Hauge) That Council:

1. Publicly exhibit the revised 'Payment of fees, expenses and provision of facilities for chairperson and councillors' policy (**Attachment 1**) for a period of 28 days.
2. Should no public submission be received, revoke the policy titled 'Payment of fees, expenses and provision of facilities for chairperson and councillors' and adopt the policy at **Attachment 1** effective as at the end date of public exhibition.
3. Should any public submission be received, consider those submissions at its next meeting in conjunction with consideration of revoking the existing policy and adopting a revised 'Payment of fees, expenses and provision of facilities for chairperson and councillors' policy.

Payment of expenses and provision of facilities (Resolution)		
For	Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Andrew Gordon, Cr Elia Hauge, Cr Sandra Humphrys, Cr Robert Mustow, Cr Sarah Ndiaye and Cr Eva Ramsey	7
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	None	0
Carried		

14.2 Cyber Security

RESOLVED [08/25] (Cadwallader/Humphrys) That Council:

1. Revoke the policy titled 'Cyber Security' dated 20 October 2021 attached to this report(**Attachment 1**); and
2. Adopt the revised policy of the same name attached to this report (**Attachment 2**).

Cyber Security (Resolution)		
For	Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Andrew Gordon, Cr Elia Hauge, Cr Sandra Humphrys, Cr Robert Mustow, Cr Sarah Ndiaye and Cr Eva Ramsey	7
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	None	0
Carried		

15 INFORMATION REPORTS (COVER REPORT)

RESOLVED [09/25] (Gordon/Cadwallader) That the following information reports be received and noted:

1. Investments – December 2024
2. Investments – January 2025

3. Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework: Delivery program | Operational plan progress update 1 July 2024 to 31 December 2024
4. Tenders awarded by the General Manager under Delegation
5. Audit Risk and Improvement Committee – meeting updates
6. Retail Customer Account assistance with debt write-off report
7. Gallans Road update – February 2025
8. Reports/Actions pending.

Information Reports (Resolution)		
For	Cr Sharon Cadwallader, Cr Andrew Gordon, Cr Elia Hauge, Cr Sandra Humphrys, Cr Robert Mustow, Cr Sarah Ndiaye and Cr Eva Ramsey	7
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	None	0
Carried		

16 CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS

Nil.

17 CLOSE OF BUSINESS

There being no further business the meeting closed at 11.10 am.



Notice of Motion

Council meeting 16 April 2025

Full funding of the \$150M Northern Rivers Watershed Initiative (NRWI)

I hereby move the following motion:

That Council write to and lobby the:

1. Hon. Janelle Saffin, MP, Minister for the North Coast;
2. Hon. Tara Moriarty, MLC, Minister for Agriculture; and,
3. Hon. Penny Sharpe, MLC, Minister for the Environment,

to fully fund the \$150M, 15-year Northern Rivers Watershed Initiative (NRWI) Program, highlighting:

- (a) the early signs of the effectiveness of the \$5M NRWI grant provided to Rous to administer on behalf of the region;
- (b) the momentum, connections and expertise that is building within the region and stakeholders; and
- (c) emphasising the devastating environmental impact of the recent blackwater event in the lower Richmond River.

Background:

The Northern Rivers Watershed Initiative (NRWI) was originally developed by Rous County Council (Rous) in February 2019 in response to community concerns with respect to river health in the Northern Rivers and the high level of interest in natural flood management techniques. The NRWI is a catchment and estuary restoration program that has been specifically devised for the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation (NRJO) footprint to address ecosystem health, water security and flood risk issues across the Tweed, Brunswick, Richmond and Evans River systems in an integrated fashion. The NRWI is based on a holistic approach to the management of water within the catchments that will utilise modern, best practice approaches in catchment modelling and natural flood mitigation to target improvements in stream bank condition and river health that also contribute to reduced flood risk within the catchments.

The NRWI is a strategy that requires large-scale investment in catchment works in upper catchment areas that restore natural hydrologic functions that deliver both improvements in stream bank condition and river health and that also contribute to reduced flood risk within the catchment. It also features the redesign and retrofitting of floodplain drainage to meet contemporary standards – this would involve minimising environmental impacts associated with floodplain drainage infrastructure (and in particular the acid discharge and blackwater risks) whilst maintaining flood mitigation levels of service.

In an update to Council provided in June 2024, it was noted that the Hon, Janelle Saffin MP secured \$5M for the implementation of a package of shovel-ready works. Some of

these works have commenced on the ground and others are in the planning phase, with all of the works to be completed by Rous and the project partners by October 2026.

The NRW is now a key regional strategy under the NRJO 'Thriving, healthy and biodiverse natural environments' theme.

Councillor Sharon Cadwallader

Date: 02 April 2025



Signature:

Staff comment:

The current \$5M will fund the delivery of NRW activities for year 1 and year 2, concluding at the end of the 2027 financial year. Securing the balance of funding for the remaining activities not yet funded under the NRW will enable a continuation of the momentum achieved with the project to date and ensure the delivery of positive outcomes for the Richmond River.

The Notice of Motion to make representations for full funding of the 15-year period of Northern Rivers Watershed Initiative is supported.

Quarterly Budget Review Statement Quarter ending 31 March 2025

Responsible Officer: Group Manager Organisational Services (Helen McNeil)

Report Contributor: Finance Manager (Jonathan Patino) & Alison O'Toole (Management Accountant)

Recommendation

That Council note the results presented in the Quarterly Budget Review Statement as at 31 March 2025 and authorise the variations to the amounts from those previously estimated.

Key points

1. Rous's Responsible Accounting Officer has reported that the projected financial position at 30 June 2025 will be satisfactory.
2. Key movements include operating revenue decreasing by \$0.6M, capital revenue increasing by \$0.8M, operating expenditure decreasing by \$1.1M, capital expenditure decreasing by \$2.0M, loan funds of \$2.0M being deferred and loan repayments reducing by \$0.4M.
3. Total cash as at 31 March 2025 is \$28.6M.

Background

The Quarterly Budget Review Statement (QBRs) is made up of a minimum of six key statements:

- (QBRs1) Statement by the Responsible Accounting Officer on Council's financial position
- (QBRs2) Budget Review Income and Expenses Statement
- (QBRs3) Budget Review Capital Budget
- (QBRs4) Budget Review Cash and Investments Position
- (QBRs5) Budget Review Contracts and Other Expenses
- (QBRs6) Budget Review Key Performance Indicators

For the information of Council, the original 2024/25 budget was adopted on 19 June 2024 as part of the 2024/25 Operational plan and the 2024/28 Delivery program.

Finance

(QBRs1) Report by Responsible Accounting Officer

The following statement is made in accordance with clause 203(2) of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021*;

"It is my opinion that the Quarterly Budget Review Statement of Rous County Council for the quarter ended 31 March 2025 indicates that Council's projected financial position at 30 June 2025 will be satisfactory at year end, having regard to the projected estimates of income and expenditure, the original budgeted income and expenditure and Council's short-term liquidity position."



Jonathan Patino
Responsible Accounting Officer

Commentary on Proposed Adjustments – March 2025 (Table 1)

The following table details proposed budget variations as compared to the original budget and quarterly adjustments. Subsequent tables summarise the changes on a reporting unit basis.

For reporting purposes, only changes over \$10,000 are individually referenced.

Operating revenue has decreased by \$0.6M, capital revenue has increased by \$0.8M, operating expenditure has decreased by \$1.1M, capital expenditure has decreased by \$2.0M, loan drawdowns of \$2.0M have been deferred and loan repayments have decreased by \$0.4M, resulting in an overall change of \$1.7M to be transferred to reserves.

Significant Adjustments

Capital Works Program

Management have taken the QBRS as an opportunity to review the capital works program, particularly the impact of carry over budgets and the resources available to complete works. This remains an important focus and is regularly reviewed.

Impact on Reserves as a Whole

The required changes this quarter will provide a substantial increase to our budgeted reserves. The overall internal reserves policy position is still forecast to be met, along with the New South Wales Treasury Corporation loan covenant requirement to hold reserves that equal 6 months of the next financial year's operating expenditure less depreciation.

(QBR2) Table 1: Summary of Proposed Changes Whole Organisation – March 2025

BUDGET ITEMS	Original Budget 2024/25	2023/24 Carryovers	September	December	March	Ref	Projected Year End Result 2024/25
			30-Sep-24	31-Dec-24	31-Mar-25		
			Quarter	Quarter	Quarter		
Operating Income							
Bulk	31,058,300	0	391,000	(327,500)	(500,000)	BW1	30,621,800
Retail	3,966,700	0	(170,800)	0	0		3,795,900
Flood	1,910,300	0	3,845,800	600,000	773,000	FM1, FM2, FM3	7,129,100
Weeds	1,632,500	0	804,800	0	0		2,437,300
Property	162,600	0	(35,700)	0	0		126,900
Fleet	123,500	0	0	0	0		123,500
TOTAL OPERATING INCOME	38,853,900	0	4,835,100	272,500	273,000		44,234,500
Operating Expenses							
Bulk	28,211,300	1,923,100	2,580,000	(1,125,900)	(920,900)	BW2, BW3, BW4, BW5, BW6, BW14, BW15, BW16	30,667,600
Retail	3,959,000	0	13,500	0	0		3,972,500
Flood	2,461,600	278,300	2,634,900	800	(139,100)	FM1, FM2, FM4, FM5	5,236,500
Weeds	1,794,400	0	968,400	2,100	0		2,764,900
Property	333,400	0	(52,100)	41,700	0		323,000
Fleet	225,300	0	(56,700)	0	0		168,600
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	36,985,000	2,201,400	6,088,000	(1,081,300)	(1,060,000)		43,133,100
OPERATING RESULT	1,868,900	(2,201,400)	(1,252,900)	1,353,800	1,333,000		1,101,400
Exclude Depreciation	8,756,500	0	0	41,700	0		8,798,200
Cash Result	10,625,400	(2,201,400)	(1,252,900)	1,395,500	1,333,000		9,899,500
Less: Capital Expense	38,305,600	6,484,600	(5,891,800)	(4,069,300)	(2,026,200)	BW7, BW8, BW9, BW10, BW11, BW12, BW13, BW17, RW1, FM3	32,802,900
Add: Loan Funds	30,000,000	0	(5,000,000)	0	(2,000,000)	BW14	23,000,000
Less: Loan Repayments	4,256,900	0	0	0	(386,400)	BW14	3,870,500
Adjustment for Grants held as Liability	0	0	0	4,024,200	0		4,024,200
Add: From/Less: (To) Reserve	1,937,100	8,686,000	361,100	(9,489,000)	(1,745,600)		(250,400)
Estimated Cash Movement	0	0	0	0	0		0

Budget Adjustments Required this Quarter

New / Existing	Description	Reporting Unit	Category	Ref	Adjustment Amount		Notes
					Current Budget (2024/25)	LTFP (2025/26-2033/34)	
Existing	Water Security Grant Funding	BULK	Operating Revenue	BW1	500,000	0	Due to changes and reprioritisations in Council's Future Water Program since grant funding was secured from the Department of Planning and Environment under the Safe and Secure Water program, it is no longer expected that all of the specific milestones will be met. Therefore, \$500,000 of the funding previously budgeted to be received in the current financial year is no longer expected to be received.
Existing	Demand Management - Behaviour Change Pilot Program	BULK	Operating Expenditure	BW2	(110,700)	110,700	This program is currently being implemented but will continue into the 2025/26 financial year, including a secondary program due to commence in July 2025. Therefore, it is requested to defer part of the budget to the 2025/26 financial year.
Existing	Demand Management - Sustainable Water Partners Program	BULK	Operating Expenditure	BW3	(103,200)	103,200	The Sustainable Water Partners Program offers rebates for water efficiency projects identified in water assessment reports. Some interested businesses have deferred capital expenditure due to cost pressures in the current financial year. However, water efficiency projects can be implemented and rebates claimed until June 2026. Therefore, it is requested to defer part of the program budget to the 2025/26 financial year to cover the cost of the rebates expected to be paid then.
Existing	Future Water Project - Richmond Area Coastal Floodplain Alluvial Groundwater Source	BULK	Operating Expenditure	BW4	(180,000)	180,000	Some of the committed work on this project is now not expected to be completed this financial year. Therefore, it is requested that \$180,000 of the approved budget be deferred to the 2025/26 financial year.
Existing	Catchment Management Plan	BULK	Operating Expenditure	BW5	(10,000)	10,000	The current budget for the Catchment Management Plan relates to consultation with our constituent councils and review of our on-site management and development control provisions for the water catchments clause. This work will continue into the next financial year. Therefore, it is requested that \$10,000 of the approved budget be deferred to the 2025/26 financial year.
Existing	Intranet Project	BULK	Operating Expenditure	BW6	(40,000)	40,000	Phase 2 of the intranet project (bringing online additional modules and implementing improvement activities) is now not expected to be completed in the current financial year. Therefore, it is requested to defer the remainder of the budget to the 2025/26 financial year.
New	Microwave Communication Mast - Knockrow Reservoir	BULK	Capital Expenditure	BW7	13,400	0	A microwave communication mast on Knockrow reservoir has been found to have a non-compliant safety issue (due to its proximity to the edge of the reservoir roof) and communication issues (due to increasing tree heights). Quotes have been sought to relocate the antenna to the centre of the reservoir roof and increase the mast height. A transfer of \$13,400 is requested from the Bulk Water reserve to complete this remediation work.

New / Existing	Description	Reporting Unit	Category	Ref	Adjustment Amount		Notes
					Current Budget (2024/25)	LTFP (2025/26-2033/34)	
Existing	Future Water Project - Woodburn Groundwater - Piping	BULK	Capital Expenditure	BW8	(100,000)	100,000	The bore work on this project has taken slightly longer than anticipated, Therefore, part of the budget for the associated piping work is required to be deferred to the 2025/26 financial year.
Existing	Future Water Project - Alstonville Groundwater	BULK	Capital Expenditure	BW9	(850,000)	850,000	Due to delays with the purchase of the Marom Creek Water Treatment Plant and related assets from Ballina Shire Council, some of the work on this project planned for the current financial year will now not take place until next financial year. Therefore, it is requested that \$850,000 of the approved budget be deferred to the 2025/26 financial year.
New	Weed Spray Unit for use by the Water Operations team in easement and property maintenance	BULK	Capital Expenditure	BW10	25,000	0	The Water Operations team requests a budget for the purchase of a weed spray unit for use in easement and property maintenance. The team currently borrows spray units from other teams, which are not always available when required. A dedicated weed spray unit will enable the team to achieve the planned maintenance programs and increase the efficiency of weed spraying operations. A transfer of \$25,000 is requested from the Bulk Water reserve for this purpose.
New	Emigrant Creek Water Treatment Plant Ultrafiltration Membrane Replacement	BULK	Capital Expenditure	BW11	26,000	0	Regular Membrane Integrity Tests completed at Emigrant Creek Water Treatment Plant earlier this financial year revealed that three of the ultrafiltration membranes in one of the trains in the water treatment process were extensively damaged beyond in-house repair capabilities. To ensure effective operation, maintenance and reliability of the water treatment plant, these membranes require replacement. A transfer of \$26,000 is requested from the Bulk Water reserve for this purpose.
New	Nightcap Water Treatment Plant Dissolved Air Flotation Filter (DAFF) Waste Valve Replacement	BULK	Capital Expenditure	BW12	60,000	0	The Dams and Treatment team at Nightcap Water Treatment Plant have experienced operational issues with the waste valves of the dissolved air flotation filters (DAFFs) (an integral part of the water treatment process) for much of the last year. Despite investigations and servicing, these issues persist. These waste valves have been operational for over 30 years and spare parts for these models have been discontinued. Therefore, it is recommended that these valves be replaced with newer models to ensure the effective operation of the DAFFs. A transfer of \$60,000 is requested from the Bulk Water reserve for this purpose.
Existing	Gallans Road - Workplace Consolidation	BULK	Capital Expenditure	BW13	(1,950,000)	1,950,000	Delays in obtaining DA approval and the construction certificate have pushed back this multi-year project. Therefore a portion of the budget can be deferred to the 2025/26 financial year.
Existing	External Borrowings	BULK	Loan Drawdowns Loan Repayments Operating Expenditure	BW14 BW14 BW14	2,000,000 (386,400) (342,500)	(2,000,000) (35,500) 35,500	Due to changes in the capital expenditure programme detailed above, a portion of the external borrowings budgeted for the current financial year will now not be required until the 2025/26 financial year. Loan repayments and interest costs have also been adjusted accordingly.

New / Existing	Description	Reporting Unit	Category	Ref	Adjustment Amount		Notes
					Current Budget (2024/25)	LTFP (2025/26-2033/34)	
Existing	Water Filling Stations	RETAIL	Capital Expenditure	RW1	(75,000)	75,000	This project, to install an additional bulk water filling station in the Lismore City Council area, has been delayed due to issues in locating an appropriate site. It is expected that this will be confirmed with Lismore City Council and work commenced before the end of this financial year, with most of the construction now to take place in the 2025/26 financial year. Therefore, it is requested to defer most of the budget to the 2025/26 financial year to cover the cost of installation.
Existing	Richmond River Bank and Riparian Condition Assessment - Coastal and Estuary Grants Program	FLOOD	Operating Revenue Operating Expenditure	FM1 FM1	67,700 (101,600)	(67,700) 101,600	The delivery dates for this project, for which funding was approved under the NSW Government's Coastal and Estuary Grants Program, have been extended. The final two milestones will be completed in the next financial year. Therefore the relevant portion of the revenue and expenditure is required to be deferred to the 2025/26 financial year.
Existing	Richmond River Tidal Inundation Assessment - Coastal and Estuary Grants Program	FLOOD	Operating Revenue Operating Expenditure	FM2 FM2	8,700 (13,000)	(8,700) 13,000	The delivery dates for this project, for which funding was approved under the NSW Government's Coastal and Estuary Grants Program, have been extended. The project will now extend into the next financial year. Therefore the relevant portion of the revenue and expenditure is required to be deferred to the 2025/26 financial year.
New	Lismore Levee Restoration DRFA Funding	FLOOD	Capital Revenue Capital Expenditure	FM3 FM3	(849,400) 849,400	0 0	State and Commonwealth DRFA funding has been approved for restoration of the Lismore Levee following the 2022 flood event. These funds will be paid to Lismore City Council, which has undertaken the restoration works on behalf of Rous. Therefore, this has a nil budget effect.
Existing	Fish Habitat (Coraki Riparian Plan)	FLOOD	Operating Expenditure	FM4	(14,500)	14,500	The remaining funds secured under DPI Fish Habitat Action grant funding for riparian works at Coraki are allocated to support an engagement plan at the site with signage and additional maintenance. Discussions are ongoing with local First Nations organisations regarding artwork and messaging. However, work at the site has been delayed due to the March 2025 flood event. It is requested that \$14,500 of the approved budget be deferred to the 2025/26 financial year to allow this work to proceed then.

New / Existing	Description	Reporting Unit	Category	Ref	Adjustment Amount		Notes
					Current Budget (2024/25)	LTFP (2025/26-2033/34)	
Existing	Budget Savings Identified Culture and Leadership Initiatives	BULK	Operating Expenditure	BW15	(110,000)	(105,600)	The large-scale Culture and Leadership initiatives are not proceeding at this time, due to the need to first develop and implement the supporting competency and salary system frameworks, as well as complete the transition to the Ballina campus. Once these foundational elements are in place, Council will revisit these initiatives in future years, with the scope and cost to be determined at that time. Therefore, the budget for the current and future financial years can be returned to the Bulk Water reserve. 0 This budget item was originally allocated for the conduct of engagement activities with First Nations communities and originally focused on delivery through the visitor information centre. This work had been repurposed to focus on similar engagement and activities associated with the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). The balance of this work can now be completed within the RAP budget allocation and, therefore, the remaining CEIC budget can be returned to the Bulk Water reserve. This section of the Woodburn Groundwater scheme is not proceeding as the proposed water treatment plant is now expected to be mobile and, based on demand forecasting, will not be needed as soon as originally thought. Therefore, the remaining budget for the current financial year and next financial year can be returned to the Bulk Water reserve. 0 This multi-year project with Southern Cross University, to design, build and operate water quality data loggers within the Richmond River Estuary, is nearing completion and is expected to come in below budget. Therefore, \$10,000 can be returned to the Flood Mitigation reserve.
	Cultural Education Information Centre	BULK	Operating Expenditure	BW16	(19,500)		
	Future Water Project - Woodburn Groundwater - Langs Hill	BULK	Capital Expenditure	BW17	(25,000)	(30,000)	
	Richmond River Water Quality Monitoring	FLOOD	Operating Expenditure	FM5	(10,000)		
Existing	Adjustments below reporting threshold	BULK	Operating Expenditure		(5,000)		0 Adjustments below the reporting threshold of \$10,000, approved by Council on 17 April 2024 (Resolution [09/24] Proposed changes to business rules for Quarterly Budget Review Statement reporting)
					(1,745,600)	1,336,000	

Bulk Water Reporting Unit

(QBR52) Income & Expenses - Bulk

	Original Budget 2024/25	2023/24 Carryovers	Approved Changes Sept Review	Approved Changes Dec Review	Recommend Changes for Council Resolution	Ref	Projected Year End Result 2024/25	Actual YTD
Operating Income								
Water Sales	23,530,800	0	0	0	0		23,530,800	17,696,100
Interest Income / Sundry	896,600	0	400,000	0	0		1,296,600	1,316,100
Property Income	23,800	0	0	0	0		23,800	16,400
Operating Grants and Contributions	757,100	0	(157,600)	72,500	(500,000)	BW1	172,000	10,000
Profit on Sale	0	0	0	0	0		0	0
Capital Income	5,850,000	0	148,600	(400,000)	0		5,598,600	1,472,300
Total Operating Income	31,058,300	0	391,000	(327,500)	(500,000)		30,621,800	20,510,900
Operating Expense								
Administration Expenses	734,000	44,800	(5,400)	3,500	0		776,900	756,200
Administration - Retail Water Cost	(1,975,500)	0	0	0	0		(1,975,500)	(1,418,600)
Finance Costs	1,956,400	0	0	0	(342,500)	BW14	1,613,900	659,400
Building/Depot Expenses	556,800	0	79,400	20,000	(13,000)		643,200	434,600
Fleet Hire Expense	671,700	0	28,200	0	0		699,900	545,500
Training & Staff	332,900	9,800	0	0	0		342,700	245,900
Insurance	418,900	0	5,000	0	0		423,900	353,900
Members Expenses	152,900	0	0	0	0		152,900	91,400
Salaries & Wages	9,691,900	0	933,800	64,400	(25,000)	BW2, BW3	10,665,100	8,516,100
Operations Purchases	8,634,700	1,868,500	1,539,000	(1,213,800)	(540,400)	BW2, BW3, BW4, BW5, BW6, BW15, BW16	10,288,000	5,610,300
Depreciation	7,036,600	0	0	0	0		7,036,600	5,229,100
Total Operating Expense	28,211,300	1,923,100	2,580,000	(1,125,900)	(920,900)		30,667,600	21,023,800
Operating Result	2,847,000	(1,923,100)	(2,189,000)	798,400	420,900		(45,800)	(512,900)
Less: Depreciation	7,036,600	0	0	0	0		7,036,600	5,229,100
Operating Result Excl. Non Cash	9,883,600	(1,923,100)	(2,189,000)	798,400	420,900		6,990,800	4,716,200
Less: Capital Expenses	37,721,900	4,786,200	(6,236,800)	(4,419,300)	(2,800,600)	BW7, BW8, BW9, BW10, BW11, BW12, BW13, BW17	29,051,400	7,164,700
Add: Loan Funds	30,000,000	0	(5,000,000)	0	(2,000,000)	BW14	23,000,000	0
Less: Loan Repayments	4,256,900	0	0	0	(386,400)	BW14	3,870,500	2,386,800
Adjustment for Grants held as Liability	0	0	0	400,000	0		400,000	0
Transfer from/(to) Reserve	2,095,200	6,709,300	952,200	(5,617,700)	(1,607,900)		2,531,100	4,835,300
Net Cash Movement	0	0	0	0	0		0	0

Impact on Bulk Water Cash Reserve

The required changes above will result in \$1,607,900 being transferred to the Bulk Water cash reserve in the 2024/25 financial year. The projected balance as at 30 June 2025 will increase to \$25,293,100 which is beyond the internal reserves policy target of 4 months operating expenditure (excluding depreciation) plus Employee Leave Entitlement Reserve plus Renewable Energy and Emissions Reduction Plan Reserve or \$8,940,200. Externally restricted cash reserves are excluded from the internal reserves policy target above, however, the total cash balance as at 30 June 2025 is forecast to be \$26,978,800.

Retail Water Reporting Unit

(QBR52) Income & Expenses - Retail

	Original Budget 2024/25	2023/24 Carryovers	Approved Changes Sept Review	Approved Changes Dec Review	Recommend Changes for Council Resolution	Ref	Projected Year End Result 2024/25	Actual YTD
Operating Income								
Water Sales	3,923,600	0	(170,800)	0	0		3,752,800	1,534,600
Interest Income / Sundry	27,800	0	0	0	0		27,800	31,100
Capital Income	15,300	0	0	0	0		15,300	0
Total Operating Income	3,966,700	0	(170,800)	0	0		3,795,900	1,565,700
Operating Expense								
Administration Expenses	2,351,400	0	0	0	0		2,351,400	1,702,900
Building/Depot Expenses	5,000	0	0	0	0		5,000	7,200
Fleet Hire Expenses	87,400	0	16,300	0	0		103,700	68,600
Salaries and Wages	668,700	0	146,200	0	0		814,900	428,500
Operations Purchases	320,000	0	(149,000)	0	0		171,000	120,200
Depreciation and Amortisation	526,500	0	0	0	0		526,500	216,800
Total Operating Expense	3,959,000	0	13,500	0	0		3,972,500	2,544,200
Operating Result	7,700	0	(184,300)	0	0		(176,600)	(978,500)
Less Depreciation	526,500	0	0	0	0		526,500	216,800
Operating Result Excl. Non Cash	534,200	0	(184,300)	0	0		349,900	(761,700)
Less: Capital Expenses	168,200	1,350,100	0	(250,000)	(75,000)	RW1	1,193,300	924,900
Transfer from/(to) Reserve	(366,000)	1,350,100	184,300	(250,000)	(75,000)		843,400	1,686,600
Net Cash Movement	0	0	0	0	0		0	0

Impact on Retail Water Cash Reserve

The required changes above will result in \$75,000 being transferred to the Retail Water cash reserve in the 2024/25 financial year. The projected balance as at 30 June 2025 will increase to \$455,600 which is short of the internal reserves policy target of 4 months operating expenditure (excluding depreciation) or \$1,148,700. This includes a planned transfer of \$1,000,000 from Bulk Water reserves to fund the smart metering/backflow project.

While the forecast cash reserve balance is significantly lower than the internal target, this is a planned outcome based on the need to allocate funds from Bulk Water to cover the costs associated with the Smart Metering and Backflow project. The Reporting Unit is positioned to meet this internal target from 2027/2028 onwards.

Flood Mitigation Reporting Unit

(QBR52) Income & Expenses - Flood

	Original Budget 2024/25	2023/24 Carryovers	Approved Changes Sept Review	Approved Changes Dec Review	Recommend Changes for Council Resolution	Ref	Projected Year End Result 2024/25	Actual YTD
Operating Income								
Grants and Contributions	1,808,500	0	3,930,400	0	(76,400)	FM1, FM2	5,662,500	3,376,400
Interest Income / Sundry	17,200	0	0	0	0		17,200	14,200
Capital Income	84,600	0	(84,600)	600,000	849,400	FM3	1,449,400	849,400
Total Operating Income	1,910,300	0	3,845,800	600,000	773,000		7,129,100	4,240,000
Operating Expense								
Administration Expenses	217,300	0	0	0	0		217,300	164,400
Building/Depot Expenses	9,900	0	0	300	0		10,200	5,500
Fleet Hire Expenses	76,000	0	0	0	0		76,000	57,000
Training & Staff	0	0	0	0	0		0	400
Insurance	6,200	0	0	0	0		6,200	6,000
Salaries and Wages	535,400	2,800	67,500	0	0		605,700	392,800
Operations Purchases	900,500	275,500	2,567,400	500	(139,100)	FM1, FM2, FM4, FM5	3,604,800	777,900
Depreciation and Amortisation	716,300	0	0	0	0		716,300	695,700
Loss on Sale	0	0	0	0	0		0	0
Total Operating Expense	2,461,600	278,300	2,634,900	800	(139,100)		5,236,500	2,099,700
Operating Result	(551,300)	(278,300)	1,210,900	599,200	912,100		1,892,600	2,140,300
Less Depreciation	716,300	0	0	0	0		716,300	695,700
Operating Result Excl. Non Cash	165,000	(278,300)	1,210,900	599,200	912,100		2,608,900	2,836,000
Less: Capital Expenses	219,500	22,000	0	600,000	849,400	FM3	1,690,900	41,000
Adjustment for Grants held as Liability	0	0	0	3,624,200	0		3,624,200	0
Transfer from/(to) Reserve	54,500	300,300	(1,210,900)	(3,623,400)	(62,700)		(4,542,200)	(2,795,000)
Net Cash Movement	0	0	0	0	0		0	0

Impact on Flood Mitigation Cash Reserve

These required changes above will result in a \$62,700 transfer to the Flood Mitigation cash reserve in the 2024/25 financial year. The projected balance as at 30 June 2025 will increase to \$1,790,300 which is beyond the internal reserves policy target of 4 months operating expenditure (excluding depreciation) or \$1,506,700. Externally restricted cash reserves are excluded from the internal reserves policy target above, however, the total cash balance as at 30 June 2025 is forecast to be \$5,338,100.

Weed Biosecurity Reporting Unit

(QBR52) Income & Expenses - Weeds

	Original Budget 2024/25	2023/24 Carryovers	Approved Changes Sept Review	Approved Changes Dec Review	Recommend Changes for Council Resolution	Ref	Projected Year End Result 2024/25	Actual YTD
Operating Income								
Grants and Contributions	1,578,600	0	804,800	0	0		2,383,400	774,200
Interest Income / Sundry	53,900	0	0	0	0		53,900	47,000
Capital Income	0	0	0	0	0		0	0
Total Operating Income	1,632,500	0	804,800	0	0		2,437,300	821,200
Operating Expense								
Administration Expenses	318,600	0	12,000	0	0		330,600	255,800
Building/Depot Expenses	19,000	0	0	1,100	0		20,100	17,800
Fleet Hire Expenses	191,600	0	93,800	0	0		285,400	155,700
Training & Staff	0	0	0	0	0		0	21,300
Salaries and Wages	1,133,900	0	654,700	0	0		1,788,600	1,094,900
Operations Purchases	99,800	0	207,900	1,000	0		308,700	218,100
Depreciation and Amortisation	31,500	0	0	0	0		31,500	28,500
Total Operating Expense	1,794,400	0	968,400	2,100	0		2,764,900	1,792,100
Operating Result	(161,900)	0	(163,600)	(2,100)	0		(327,600)	(970,900)
Less Depreciation	31,500	0	0	0	0		31,500	28,500
Operating Result Excl. Non Cash	(130,400)	0	(163,600)	(2,100)	0		(296,100)	(942,400)
Less: Capital Expenses	21,000	0	0	0	0		21,000	0
Transfer from/(to) Reserve	151,400	0	163,600	2,100	0		317,100	942,400
Net Cash Movement	0	0	0	0	0		0	0

Impact on Weed Biosecurity Cash Reserve

Nil for this quarter.

Property Reporting Unit

(QBR52) Income & Expenses - Property

	Original Budget 2024/25	2023/24 Carryovers	Approved Changes Sept Review	Approved Changes Dec Review	Recommend Changes for Council Resolution	Ref	Projected Year End Result 2024/25	Actual YTD
Operating Income								
Interest Income / Sundry	7,500	0	0	0	0		7,500	5,600
Property Income	155,100	0	(35,700)	0	0		119,400	104,200
Capital Income	0	0	0	0	0		0	0
Total Operating Income	162,600	0	(35,700)	0	0		126,900	109,800
Operating Expense								
Administration Expenses	55,900	0	0	0	0		55,900	42,000
Building/Depot Expenses	177,500	0	(40,100)	0	0		137,400	123,100
Salaries and Wages	44,200	0	0	0	0		44,200	47,600
Operations Purchases	12,000	0	(12,000)	0	0		0	1,700
Depreciation and Amortisation	43,800	0	0	41,700	0		85,500	104,900
Total Operating Expense	333,400	0	(52,100)	41,700	0		323,000	319,300
Operating Result	(170,800)	0	16,400	(41,700)	0		(196,100)	(209,500)
Less Depreciation	43,800	0	0	41,700	0		85,500	104,900
Operating Result Excl. Non Cash	(127,000)	0	16,400	0	0		(110,600)	(104,600)
Less: Capital Expenses	50,000	326,300	225,000	0	0		601,300	269,500
Transfer from/(to) Reserve	177,000	326,300	208,600	0	0		711,900	374,100
Net Cash Movement	0	0	0	0	0		0	0

Impact on Property Cash Reserve

Nil for this quarter.

Fleet Reporting Unit

(QBR52) Income & Expenses - Fleet

	Original Budget 2024/25	2023/24 Carryovers	Approved Changes Sept Review	Approved Changes Dec Review	Recommend Changes for Council Resolution	Ref	Projected Year End Result 2024/25	Actual YTD
Operating Income								
Interest Income / Sundry	123,500	0	0	0	0		123,500	100,900
Profit on Sale	0	0	0	0	0		0	0
Capital Income	0	0	0	0	0		0	0
Total Operating Income	123,500	0	0	0	0		123,500	100,900
Operating Expense								
Administration Expenses	1,500	0	0	0	0		1,500	3,400
Fleet Operations	722,500	0	0	0	0		722,500	452,300
Fleet Hire Income	(1,026,700)	0	(56,700)	0	0		(1,083,400)	(816,900)
Salaries and Wages	126,200	0	0	0	0		126,200	87,000
Operations Purchases	0	0	0	0	0		0	1,500
Depreciation and Amortisation	401,800	0	0	0	0		401,800	385,800
Loss on Sale	0	0	0	0	0		0	0
Total Operating Expense	225,300	0	(56,700)	0	0		168,600	113,100
Operating Result	(101,800)	0	56,700	0	0		(45,100)	(12,200)
Less Depreciation	401,800	0	0	0	0		401,800	385,800
Operating Result Excl. Non Cash	300,000	0	56,700	0	0		356,700	373,600
Less: Capital Expenses	125,000	0	120,000	0	0		245,000	128,300
Transfer from/(to) Reserve	(175,000)	0	63,300	0	0		(111,700)	(245,300)
Net Cash Movement	0	0	0	0	0		0	0

Impact on Fleet Cash Reserve

Nil for this quarter.

Budget Review for the Quarter Ended 31 March 2025

(QBR53) Capital Budget

	Original Budget 2024/25	2023/24 Carryovers	Approved Changes Sept Review	Approved Changes Dec Review	Recommend Changes for Council Resolution	Ref	Projected Year End Result 2024/25	Actual YTD
Capital Funding:								
Capital Grants & Contributions	550,000	149,400	0	200,000	849,400		1,748,800	72,100
Internal Restrictions								
- Renewals	5,400,200	1,256,600	(18,900)	(303,000)	124,400		6,459,300	1,714,700
- New Assets	27,055,400	5,078,600	(5,872,900)	(3,966,300)	(3,000,000)		19,294,800	5,269,300
External Restrictions								
- Infrastructure	0	0	0	0	0		0	0
Other Capital Funding Sources								
- Operating Revenue	0	0	0	0	0		0	0
- S64 Contributions	5,300,000	0	0	0	0		5,300,000	1,472,300
Income from Sale of Assets								
- Plant and Equipment	0	0	0	0	0		0	0
- Land and Buildings	0	0	0	0	0		0	0
Total Capital Funding	38,305,600	6,484,600	(5,891,800)	(4,069,300)	(2,026,200)		32,802,900	8,528,400
Capital Expenditure:								
New Assets								
- Plant and Equipment	0	0	0	0	0		0	0
- Office Equipment	2,596,800	390,700	(2,966,500)	0	0		21,000	0
- Inventory (Land)	0	309,500	225,000	0	0		534,500	269,500
- Land and Buildings	19,500,000	2,576,100	(10,000,000)	0	(1,950,000)	BW13	10,126,100	3,450,900
- Infrastructure	10,258,600	1,802,300	6,868,600	(3,966,300)	(1,050,000)	BW8, BW9, BW17, RW1	13,913,200	3,021,200
Renewals (Replacement)								
- Plant and Equipment	125,000	0	120,000	0	0		245,000	128,300
- Office Equipment	282,000	0	0	0	13,400	BW7	295,400	17,200
- Land and Buildings	50,000	16,800	336,000	0	0		402,800	338,100
- Infrastructure	5,493,200	1,389,200	(474,900)	(103,000)	960,400	BW10, BW11, BW12, FM3	7,264,900	1,303,200
Total Capital Expenditure	38,305,600	6,484,600	(5,891,800)	(4,069,300)	(2,026,200)		32,802,900	8,528,400

Impact on Capital Works Program

The required adjustments above will result in a reduction in capital works of \$2,026,200 being transferred to reserves, reducing the total capital works program for 2024/25 to \$32,802,900. As at 31 March, \$8,528,400 or 26.0% of these works have been completed, while another \$31,955,300 or 97.4% has been committed, partially for the 2025/26 financial year.

Budget Review for the Quarter Ended 31 March 2025

(QBR54) Cash & Investments

	Opening Balances 2023/24	Original Budget 2024/25	2023/24 Carryovers	Approved Changes Sept Review	Approved Changes Dec Review	Recommend Changes for Council Resolution	Projected Year End Result 2024/25
Unrestricted:							
Flood Mitigation	99,000	0	0	0	0	0	99,000
Weeds Biosecurity	25,800	0	0	0	0	0	25,800
Retail Water	100,000	0	0	0	0	0	100,000
Property	100,000	0	0	0	0	0	100,000
Fleet	50,000	0	0	0	0	0	50,000
Bulk Water	2,354,000	0	0	0	0	0	2,354,000
Total Unrestricted	2,728,800	0	0	0	0	0	2,728,800
Externally Restricted:							
Flood Grants	274,800	(190,200)	0	(84,600)	3,624,200	(76,400)	3,547,800
Weeds Grants	217,900	(217,900)	0	0	0	0	0
Weeds Other	508,000	0	0	0	0	0	508,000
Bulk Water Grants	2,668,100	(2,481,600)	0	0	400,000	(500,000)	86,500
Bulk Water Other	2,370,000	(1,327,500)	0	556,700	0	0	1,599,200
Total Externally Restricted	6,038,800	(4,217,200)	0	472,100	4,024,200	(576,400)	5,741,500
Internally Restricted:							
Flood Mitigation	422,000	135,800	(300,300)	1,295,500	(800)	139,100	1,691,300
Weeds Biosecurity	490,000	66,400	0	(163,600)	(2,100)	0	390,700
Retail Water	199,000	1,366,000	(1,350,100)	(184,300)	250,000	75,000	355,600
Property	898,000	(177,000)	(326,300)	(208,600)	0	0	186,100
Fleet	316,300	175,000	0	(63,300)	0	0	428,000
Bulk Water	23,117,800	713,900	(6,709,300)	(1,508,900)	5,217,700	2,107,900	22,939,100
Total Internally Restricted	25,443,100	2,280,100	(8,686,000)	(833,200)	5,464,800	2,322,000	25,990,800
Total Reserves	34,210,700	(1,937,100)	(8,686,000)	(361,100)	9,489,000	1,745,600	34,461,100

Investment and Cash Bank Statement

The Responsible Accounting Officer certifies that all funds including those under restriction have been invested in accordance with section 625 of the *Local Government Act 1993*, clause 212 of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021* and Council's 'Investment' policy. Council's bank statement has been reconciled up to and including 31 March 2025.

Reconciliation

The YTD cash and investment figure reconciles to the actual balances held as follows:

	\$
Cash at Bank (as per bank statements)	6,097,710
Investments on Hand	22,500,000
Reconciled Cash at Bank & Investments	28,597,710

A comparison of the actual cash and investment balance above of \$28,597,710 as at 31 March 2025 to the forecast cash and investment balance of \$34,461,100 as at 30 June 2025 indicates that, while significant spending will occur before 30 June 2025, Council is also planning to drawdown significant loan funds.

(QBR5) Contractors

Contractor	Contract Details & Purpose	Contract Value (\$) Excluding GST	Contract Date	Duration of Contract	Budgeted (Y/N)	Responsible Officer	Purchase Order
Goanna Ecological	Riparian restoration and catchment revegetation	97,310	5/02/2002	5 mths	Y	Anthony Acret	PO26965
Compass Equipment Hire Pty Ltd	Remove vegetation from Bungawalbin Levee	97,850	26/02/2025	3 mths	Y	Chrisy Clay	PO27039
Data #3 Ltd	VMware Cloud Foundation Subscription	86,032	6/03/2025	12 mths	Y	Joseph Yeadon	PO27106
Concepts of Change Pty Ltd	Residential Behaviour Change Program	99,500	20/03/2025	15 mths	Y	Andrew Logan	PO27195

Note: Minimum reporting level is 1% of estimated income from continuing operations or \$50,000 whichever is the lesser.

(QBR5) Consultancy and Legal Expenses**Definition of Consultant**

A consultant is a person or organisation engaged under contract on a temporary basis to provide recommendations or high-level specialist or professional advice to assist decision making by management. Generally, it is the advisory nature of the work that differentiates a consultant from other contractors.

Expense	Expenditure YTD \$	Budgeted (Y/N)
Consultancies	\$1,700,500	Y
Legal Fees	\$28,100	Y

Comment: All consultancies and legal expenses incurred to date are within budget allocations. All figures exclude GST.

Consultancies		
	Organisational Services - Content Manager Upgrade	7,700
	Organisational Services - Indexation of Flood Mitigation Assets	2,000
	Organisational Services - Borrowing Advisory Services	30,000
	Organisational Services - Enterprise Risk Management System	20,900
	Organisational Services - Intranet Development	8,800
	Planning & Delivery - ECWTP Strategic Review	32,100
	Planning & Delivery - Richmond River Bank and Riparian Condition Assessment	59,400
	Planning & Delivery - Flood Mitigation Strategic Review	140,200
	Future Water Project - Direct Potable Reuse Pilot Scheme	15,000
	Future Water Project - Emergency Desalination Investigation	27,300
	Future Water Project - Purified Recycled Water for Drinking Investigation	104,700
	Future Water Project - RCD Dead Storage Investigation	49,100
	Future Water Project - Wilsons River Emergency Supply Studies	20,600
	Future Water Project - Wilsons River Licence Project	144,700
	Properties & Relocation - Proposal for Pecan Nut at Gallans Road Farm	5,000
	Transformation & Strategy - Implementation of New Payroll System	58,600
	Transformation & Strategy - Digital Transformation	974,400
Legal Fees		
	Easement Matters	9,500
	Legal Services - Purchase of Woodburn Property	3,100
	Legal Services - Gallans Road	15,300
	Legal Services - Debt Matters	200

Statement of Expenses for Councillors

Councillor Expenses for the Quarter Ending 31/3/2025 (Q3)

Quarter 3	Other Expenses	Official Business of Council - Travel	Official Business of Council - Professional Development/Training	Total by Councillor (Q3)
Councillor Bruem *	0	0	0	0
Councillor Cadwallader	0	0	0	0
Councillor Gordon	0	0	0	0
Councillor Hauge	0	0	0	0
Councillor Humphrys	0	0	0	0
Councillor Krieg	0	0	0	0
Councillor Lyon *	0	0	0	0
Councillor Mustow	0	0	0	0
Councillor Ndiaye	0	0	0	0
Councillor Ramsey	0	0	0	0
Councillor Rob *	0	0	0	0
Total Per Expense Type	0	0	0	0

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total by Councillor YTD
Councillor Bruem *	0	0	0	0	0
Councillor Cadwallader	0	0	0	0	0
Councillor Gordon	2,364	0	0	0	2,364
Councillor Hauge	0	0	0		0
Councillor Humphrys	0	0	0	0	0
Councillor Krieg	0	0	0		0
Councillor Lyon *	0	0	0	0	0
Councillor Mustow	0	1,505	0	0	1,505
Councillor Ndiaye	0	0	0	0	0
Councillor Ramsey	0	0	0		0
Councillor Rob *	0	0	0	0	0
Total Per Expense Type	2,364	1,505	0	0	3,869

Budget 2024/25 FYR 35,000

Remaining budget 31,131


* Indicates an outgoing Councillor


This information is provided in accordance with paragraph 6.2 of the 'Payment of Expenses and Provision of Facilities for Chairperson and Councillors' policy.

(QBR56) Key Performance Indicators

In assessing an organisation's financial position, there are several performance indicators that can assist to easily identify whether an organisation is financially sound. These indicators and their associated benchmarks, as stipulated by Office of Local Government, are set out below:

	# Performance Indicator		Bulk	Retail	Flood	Weeds	Property	Fleet	Consolidated (Whole Organisation)	Local Government Bench Mark
1	Operating Performance	2024/25 Budget Review	(5,644,400)	(191,900)	443,200	(327,600)	(196,100)	(45,100)	(5,961,900)	Surplus
		2023/24 Actual	(3,633,400)	(160,200)	(592,400)	(674,000)	(103,000)	(87,000)	(5,250,000)	
2	Current Ratio	2024/25 Budget Review	3.29	0.80	11.53	0.76	3.99	2.70	3.12	> 1.5
		2023/24 Actual	3.93	1.41	6.25	0.87	15.63	2.17	3.69	
3	Debt Service Cover Ratio	2024/25 Budget Review	0.25	-	-	-	-	-	0.52	> 2
		2023/24 Actual	0.82	-	-	-	-	-	0.90	
4	Own Source Operating Revenue Ratio	2024/25 Budget Review	81%	100%	14%	50%	100%	100%	70%	> 60%
		2023/24 Actual	84%	100%	31%	51%	100%	100%	79%	
5	Building and Infrastructure Renewals Ratio	2024/25 Budget Review	0.82 : 1	1.17 : 1	2.36 : 1	-	0.78 : 1	-	1.01 : 1	> 1:1
		2023/24 Actual	0.36 : 1	8.29 : 1	0.28 : 1	-	1.59 : 1	-	0.69 : 1	


 Projected result meets or exceeds benchmark.


 Projected result does not meet benchmark.

(QBR6.2) Key Performance Indicators (including Capital Revenue)

An alternative set of Key Performance Indicators is provided below. This is due to capital revenue from Section 64 Developer Contribution being the second highest revenue source for Council. These indicators differ from those that are stipulated by Office of Local Government.

	# Performance Indicator		Bulk	Retail	Flood	Weeds	Property	Fleet	Consolidated (Whole Organisation)	Local Government Bench Mark
1	Operating Performance	2024/25 Budget Review	(45,800)	(176,600)	1,892,600	(327,600)	(196,100)	(45,100)	1,101,400	Surplus
		2023/24 Actual	69,000	(154,000)	801,000	(674,000)	(103,000)	(87,000)	(148,000)	
2	Current Ratio	2024/25 Budget Review	3.29	0.80	11.53	0.76	3.99	2.70	3.12	> 1.5
		2023/24 Actual	3.93	1.41	6.25	0.87	15.63	2.17	3.69	
3	Debt Service Cover Ratio	2024/25 Budget Review	1.27	-	-	-	-	-	1.81	> 2
		2023/24 Actual	1.52	-	-	-	-	-	1.85	
4	Own Source Operating Revenue Ratio	2024/25 Budget Review	98%	100%	14%	50%	100%	100%	82%	> 60%
		2023/24 Actual	95%	100%	31%	51%	100%	100%	88%	
5	Building and Infrastructure Renewals Ratio	2024/25 Budget Review	0.82 : 1	1.17 : 1	2.36 : 1	-	0.78 : 1	-	1.01 : 1	> 1:1
		2023/24 Actual	0.36 : 1	8.29 : 1	0.28 : 1	-	1.59 : 1	-	0.69 : 1	

 Projected result meets or exceeds benchmark.

 Projected result does not meet benchmark.

Key Performance Indicator Definitions

Please note that comments relate to the consolidated financial indicators.

1. Operating Result Before Capital Contributions

The operating result is the surplus or deficit that Council makes from normal operations (including depreciation) excluding expenditure on capital items. A surplus is a positive financial indicator.

2. Current Ratio Liquidity

The current ratio measures Council's ability to pay existing liabilities in the next 12 months. A ratio greater than one is a positive financial indicator.

3. Debt Service Cover Ratio

This ratio demonstrates the cost of servicing Council's annual debt obligations (loan repayments, both principal and interest) as a portion of available revenue from ordinary activities. A higher ratio is a positive financial indicator.

4. Own Source Operating Revenue Ratio

This ratio measures fiscal flexibility. It is the degree of reliance on external funding sources such as operating grants and contributions. A Council's financial flexibility improves the higher the level of its own source revenue. A higher ratio is a positive financial indicator.

5. Building and Infrastructure Renewal Ratio

This ratio indicates the rate of renewal/replacement of existing assets against the depreciation of the same category of assets. A ratio greater than one is a positive financial indicator.

Grant application information

This table provides information on grant applications that have been approved or submitted up to time of preparation of the QBRS. Any grants that may have been approved after that date or that have been applied for, will be covered in future reports. The details of new grants, including grants awaiting a determination, are provided below. A financial update on active grants has also been provided, including grant programs that cover multiple years.

Note: all totals are GST exclusive

Grant Name	Reporting Unit	Synopsis	Funding Body	Program	Project Length	Total Project Value	Grant Funding	Council Funding	Total Expenditure to Date	Balance of Approved Funds to Spend
New Grant Applications Awaiting Outcome										
Good Neighbour Program	Weeds	A strategic initiative aimed at addressing priority weed infestation on private properties adjacent to public lands, fostering collaborative efforts to enhance biosecurity and protect shared landscapes.	NSW LLS	Good neighbours program is designed to tackle priority weed infestations on private property neighbouring public lands	2024-2025	580,125	565,125	15,000		
Active Grants										
Natural Resource Management Flood Water Sustainability Project Grant	Water	Emergency Repairs Claim	Public Works Advisory	Northern Rivers March 2022 Flood/Water Sewerage Program		1,600,000	1,600,000	0	711,080	888,920
Safe & Secure Water Program 2022-2024 (SSWP479) - Tranche 3	Water	Funding for Stage 1 of Rous County Council - FWP2060. Planning, Investigation and Design Project. DPE is funding 25% of the estimated actual project costs.	DPE	Rous Water Customers Water Security Program	15 mths (31.05.24)	8,037,600	2,009,400	0	1,652,337	357,063
Local Water Utility Grants	Water	Regional Leakage Reduction Program – Local Water Utility Grants A maximum total amount of 114,025.00 (GST exclusive) payable in instalments. This is based on 25% of \$456,100.00 (total project costs). If total project costs are less than this, the payment will be adjusted accordingly.	DPIE	Regional Leakage Reduction Program	15 mths (31.05.24)	456,100	114,025	342,075	226,246	229,854
Wilsons River Tidal Pool Riparian - riparian restoration	Water	Wilson River tidal pool - riparian restoration (Leedman Property)	DPIE	2023-2024 Coast and Estuary Grants Program - Implementation Stream	3 years	55,860	27,930	27,930	16,080	-
Wilson River Reach Fish Habitat Action Grant 2023	Water	Boat Harbour Riparian Repair Project	DPIE	Fish Habitat Action Grants	12m (4.6.2025)	79,266	39,266	40,000	12,821	66,445
Wilsons River Elevated Crossing Realignment Bexhill	Water	Grant - Bexhill Mains Elevated Crossing	DRNSW	Infrastructure Betterment Fund Department of Regional NSW (NSW Betterment Programs)	18 months (30.05.2025)	2,435,000	2,435,000	-	-	2,435,000
Stage 1 - NSW Apprenticeships and Trainees Program AT100048	Water	The Program funding addresses identified workforce shortages, skill gaps and will boost critical workforce numbers. The sector is impacted by a trend for outsourcing which has caused a severe depletion of in-house trade capabilities	OLG	A fresh start for Local Government Apprentices, Trainees and Cadets - Round One / Stage 1 - NSW Apprentices and Trainees Program (1x Bus Admin 2yr Traineeship, 2x Indig Mgt parks/gardens 2 yr Traineeship, 2x Electrical 4 year apprenticeships)	1/1/2025 to 01/01/2029	740,000	740,000	TBA	8,591	731,409
Richmond River Tidal Inundation Assessment (CMP Stage 2)	Flood	A tidal inundation assessment for the entire tidal inundation reach of the Richmond River estuary -- delineated over two areas, Ballina Shire LGA as one part, and the full extent of tidal zone of the estuary (incorporating Richmond Valley and Lismore City Council LGAs) as the second part	Dept of Climate Change, Energy, the Env and Water	2023-2024 Coast and Estuary Grants Program - Planning Stream	12 mths	60,000	40,000	20,000	-	-
Richmond River Bank and Condition Assessment (CMP Stage 2)	Flood	A riverbank and riparian condition assessment that implements a comprehensive review of existing conditions in the Richmond. Outcomes of the assessment can be used to prioritise investment in future on-ground river restoration works.	Dept of Climate Change, Energy, the Env and Water	2023-2024 Coast and Estuary Grants Program - Planning Stream	18 months	390,000	260,000	130,000	59,400	-

Grant Name	Reporting Unit	Synopsis	Funding Body	Program	Project Length	Total Project Value	Grant Funding	Council Funding	Total Expenditure to Date	Balance of Approved Funds to Spend
Water Quality Monitoring 2019-22	Flood	Richmond River water quality monitoring project	DPIE	Coastal & Estuary Grants Program	36 mths	199,768	99,884	99,884	192,727	7,041
Flood Maintenance 2024-2025	Flood	Fourth year of a four year grant. Each year Council approves spending on this project in excess of the required 1:2 (funding per the agreement \$169,200).	DPIE	Floodplain Management Grants Scheme	12 mths	169,200	84,600	84,600	461,276	
Coraki Riparian Project	Flood	Richmond River coastal riparian project at Coraki	DPIE	Fish Habitat Action Grant	12 mths	112,160	40,000	72,160	78,443	33,717
Richmond and Wilsons Rivers NSW Flood Mitigation Planning	Flood	This planning project is anticipated to reduce the risk and improve resilience of the community to floods in the natural environment by conducting a comprehensive scan of strategic disaster risks and mitigation options for the Richmond River Catchment.	DISER	Preparing Australian Communities – Local Stream Program	3 years	250,000	250,000	-	251,477	(1,477)
East Coraki Riparian Project	Flood	East Coraki reserve coastal and estuary implementation program	DPI	2021-22 Coastal and Estuary Implementation Program (started 2024FY)	3 years	80,000	40,000	40,000	43,200	36,800
Improve the condition of Coraki and Woodburn Town Drains	Flood	Improve the condition of Coraki and Woodburn Town Drains	NSW Reconstruction Authority	Emergency Response Fund - Northern Rivers Recovery and Resilience Program 2022-23: NP6 Improve condition of Coraki and Woodburn town drains	12 mths (31.12.2024)	150,000	140,250	9,750	140,178	9,822
Revitalise South & East Lismore Town Drains	Flood	Improve the condition of South & East Lismore Town Drains	NSW Reconstruction Authority	Emergency Response Fund - Northern Rivers Recovery and Resilience Program 2022-23: NP7 Revitalise South and East Lismore Town Drains	12 mths (31.12.2024)	196,350	196,350	-	196,334	
Building the resilience of Bungawalbyn Bass habitat – Stage 1 (Site 6)	Flood	This grant will address bank erosion on Bungawalbyn Creek, a high conservation value waterway and valued Bass fishery	NSW DPI	Flagship Fish Habitat Rehabilitation Grants	3 years (30.06.2026)	158,000	158,000	-	-	158,000
Northern Rivers Watershed Initiative (NRWI)	Flood	The NRWI involves undertaking works in the Richmond, Evans, Brunswick and Tweed catchments to improve river health and restore natural hydrologic functioning to deliver environmental, social and economic benefits.	Department of Primary Industries & Regional Development	Northern Rivers Watershed Initiative -Election Policy Statement Funding (Rous to Manage)	24 months (starting Sept 2024)	5,000,000	5,000,000	-	216,456	-
Bungalwalbyn East Levee Immediate Reconstruction Works	Flood	Bungalwalbyn East Levee Immediate Reconstruction Works	NSW Public Works (Dept Regional NSW)	Natural Disaster Essential Public Asset Restoration Grant - NSW Severe Weather and Flooding 22 February 2022 onwards - AGRN 1012. Natural Disaster Relief Assistance (NDRA) Program	3 years	84,996	84,996	-	84,996	-
East Coraki Levee Immediate Reconstruction Works	Flood	East Coraki Levee Immediate Reconstruction Works	NSW Public Works (Dept Regional NSW)	Natural Disaster Essential Public Asset Restoration Grant - NSW Severe Weather and Flooding 22 February 2022 onwards - AGRN 1012. Natural Disaster Relief Assistance (NDRA) Program	3 years	49,327	49,327	-	49,327	-
West Ballina Levee Immediate Reconstruction Works	Flood	West Ballina Levee Immediate Reconstruction Works	NSW Public Works (Dept Regional NSW)	Natural Disaster Essential Public Asset Restoration Grant - NSW Severe Weather and Flooding 22 February 2022 onwards - AGRN 1012. Natural Disaster Relief Assistance (NDRA) Program	3 years	59,392	59,392	-	59,392	-
Bungalwalbin Levee	Flood	Bungalwalbin Levee restoration		Natural Disaster Relief Assistance (NDRA) Program		6,900,935	6,900,935	-	-	6,900,935
South Lismore Levee	Flood	South Lismore Levee restoration		Natural Disaster Relief Assistance (NDRA) Program		1,547,480	1,547,480	-	-	1,547,480
Parthenium 2024	Weeds	Surveillance, control, site maintenance of high risk properties. Distribution of educational materials.	DPI	New Weed Incursion - Parthenium Weed (Parthenium hysterophorus) Response	12 mths	35,000	27,000	8,000	10,912	24,088

Grant Name	Reporting Unit	Synopsis	Funding Body	Program	Project Length	Total Project Value	Grant Funding	Council Funding	Total Expenditure to Date	Balance of Approved Funds to Spend
Miconia 2024-2028	Weeds	Miconia surveillance and eradication	QLD Department of Agriculture & Fisheries	Miconia - The NSW component of the National Tropical Weed Eradication Program (NTWEP)	4 years	2,165,824	2,165,824	-	150,984	2,014,840
North Coast Bushfire Recovery – Delivery of – W1 Tropical Soda Apple Landholder Engagement Project in the North Coast (5 years) - YR 4 (2024FY)	Weeds	Tropical Soda Apple Landholder Engagement and Compliance Program – delivery of 210 property inspections	LLS & DPI	NSW Bushfire Recovery Stimulus	12mths	32,000	32,000	-	31,180	9,674
North Coast Bushfire Recovery – Delivery of – W1 Tropical Soda Apple Landholder Engagement Project in the North Coast (5 years) - YR 5 (2025FY)	Weeds	Tropical Soda Apple Landholder Engagement and Compliance Program – delivery of 210 property inspections	LLS & DPI	NSW Bushfire Recovery Stimulus	12mths	32,000	32,000	-	-	32,000
Tropical Soda Apple (Riparian/High Risk Pathways)	Weeds	Tropical Soda Apple - strategic and ongoing control in high-risk pathways.	LLS	Small Grants Funding	8 mths	47,750	42,750	5,000	23,364	24,386
Priority Weeds Washdown Facility	Weeds	Funding to support essential programs and treatments of new incursions of prohibited weeds - Priority weeds washdown facility	DPI	2022-2023 New Weed Incursion - Priority Weeds Washdown Facility	12mths	49,995	49,995	-	-	49,995
Frogbit 2023/24	Weeds	Expand inspections areas, treatment of Frogbit infestation and follow up treatment	DPI	New Weed Incursion - Frogbit (<i>Limnobium laevigatum</i>) Rapid Response	6 mths	50,000	40,000	10,000	35,364	14,636
Frogbit 2024/25	Weeds	Expand inspections areas, treatment of Frogbit infestation and follow up treatment	NSW DPI	Frogbit Eungella New Incursion	6 mths	22,000	20,000	2,000	-	22,000
Tropical Soda Apple High Risk Pathways 2023/24	Weeds	Next 12 months -Continue surveillance/control of the Tropical Soda apple in identified high risk pathways	DPI	Tropical Soda Apple High Risk Pathways (New incursion)	12 mths	52,000	50,000	2,000	66,646	- 14,646
Tropical Soda Apple High Risk Pathways 2024/25	Weeds	Next 12 months -Continue surveillance/control of the Tropical Soda apple in identified high risk pathways	NSW DPI	Upper Richmond River TSA High Risk Pathways	12mths	52,000	50,000	2,000	-	52,000
Weeds Action Program 2020-25 (2025)	Weeds	Funding allocated annually	DPIE	North Coast Weeds Action Program 2020-25	12 mths	642,095	642,095	-	955,692	(313,597)
Unsuccessful grant applications										
Nil										

Governance

A. Finance

Detailed throughout the report.

B. Environment

Not applicable.

C. Legal

In accordance with clause 203 of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021*, Council's financial position is satisfactory having regard to the original estimate of income and expenditure and Council's projected short-term liquidity position.

Consultation

This report was prepared in consultation with the General Manager and relevant staff.

Comment

In summary, all budget items other than those identified in the report have performed within the parameters set by Council in adopting the 2024/25 Operational Plan.

Public Exhibition: Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework (incorporating the 2025/26 Budget and Statement of Revenue policy)

Responsible Officer: Group Manager Organisational Services (Helen McNeil)

Report Contributor: Finance Manager (Jonathan Patino)

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Endorse the draft Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework (incorporating the 2025/26 Budget and Statement of Revenue policy) linked in this report, for public exhibition.
2. Note that adjustments approved at this meeting as part of the March 2025 Quarterly Budget Review Statement report will be included in the exhibited Framework.
3. Note that if public submissions are made during the public exhibition period, a report will be furnished to Council's June 2025 meeting, including staff comment on how the submissions have been considered, for Council to determine a position on endorsement of the Framework.
4. Note that if no public submissions are made during the public exhibition period, the version of the draft Framework (incorporating the 2025/26 Budget and Statement of Revenue policy) placed on public exhibition, is deemed to be adopted by Council.

Key points

1. Council's Draft Long-Term Financial Plan for 2025/26 – 2034/35 depicts improving financial performance over the 10-year period with operating results (including capital revenue) set to improve from \$5.9M to \$14.5M. This is important as it will enable Rous to fund capital works beyond 2027/28 solely from cash reserves and meet important financial benchmark ratios.
2. The 10-year capital works program totals \$205.5M with significant investment in the Future Water Program and water infrastructure assets.
3. The bulk water price for Constituent Councils will increase by 7%, while the price for retail water customers will increase by 8%. Flood Mitigation contributions will increase by 5% while other charges have generally increased by rate-peg or CPI.

Background

Draft 2025/26 Budget

This section of the report is presented with the following structure:

- Financial information on the organisation as one combined entity (consolidated).
- Financial information in respect to each Reporting Unit: Bulk Water, Retail Water, Flood Mitigation, Weed Biosecurity, Properties, and Fleet.

It is noted that the 10-year Long-Term Financial Plan (LTFP) presented in this report includes budget adjustments presented to Council as part of the March 2025 Quarterly Budget Review

Statement (see separate report). If those adjustments are not approved by Council, the LTFP will need to be revised prior to public exhibition.

The report presents financial information in a consistent format for each of the Reporting Units and the whole organisation. Detailed information is provided on each Reporting Unit in terms of assumptions on which the budget is based, including a breakdown of the main streams of income and expense for both operating and capital items.

Rous is currently providing administrative services to the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation under a fee for service arrangement.

Future Water Program and LTFP assumptions

The LTFP incorporates significant expenditure associated with the Future Water Program (FWP). This includes Council's decision from its February 2022 meeting [5/22] which continues with the basic assumptions as of the July 2021 Council resolution [39/21] but accommodates the change relating to the Dunoon Dam investigation studies.

The FWP estimates within the LTFP include expenditure to construct and run new and expanded groundwater sites. To finance these the LTFP includes external borrowings and increased bulk water charges to constituent councils (7.0% per annum for the next 3 years). Future borrowings and estimated loan rates are reflected in the LTFP.

The viability and estimated costs of the new water source solutions continues to be investigated. It is likely that core assumptions will continue to evolve as investigations continue. As a result, the LTFP includes significant assumptions in respect to future capital works which are currently 'proposals' that continue to be actively investigated. The LTFP is presented based on information available as at March 2025.

Whole Organisation

The table below details the forecast Operating Performance of the organisation together with capital movements and estimated cash reserve.

Table 1: Whole Organisation Forecast Operating Performance

Description	2026 Estimate \$	2027 Estimate \$	2028 Estimate \$	2029 Estimate \$	2030 Estimate \$	2031 Estimate \$	2032 Estimate \$	2033 Estimate \$	2034 Estimate \$	2035 Estimate \$
Operating Income	48,835,700	44,526,800	44,040,000	51,105,600	52,708,600	54,683,100	57,856,300	56,018,100	56,941,800	58,181,000
Operating Expense	42,929,800	38,275,300	39,153,000	39,493,400	40,107,400	40,637,900	41,633,300	42,198,200	42,836,100	43,646,200
Operating Result	5,905,900	6,251,500	4,887,000	11,612,200	12,601,200	14,045,200	16,223,000	13,819,900	14,105,700	14,534,800
Less: Depreciation	9,432,500	9,982,000	10,235,300	10,510,700	10,821,300	11,144,400	11,481,400	11,806,800	12,100,000	12,408,200
Operating Result Excl. Non Cash	15,338,400	16,233,500	15,122,300	22,122,900	23,422,500	25,189,600	27,704,400	25,626,700	26,205,700	26,943,000
Add: Loan Drawdown	7,000,000	10,000,000	10,000,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Less: Loan Repayment	4,735,600	4,420,200	2,669,700	2,313,800	2,422,000	2,535,600	2,654,800	2,780,100	2,911,600	3,049,700
Less: Capital Expense	33,016,600	14,907,000	17,070,700	21,249,300	20,729,600	18,498,000	23,185,100	18,598,900	18,911,300	19,295,100
Adjustment for Grants held as Liability	(4,024,200)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Net Cash Movement	(19,438,000)	6,906,300	5,381,900	(1,440,200)	270,900	4,156,000	1,864,500	4,247,700	4,382,800	4,598,200
Estimated Cash	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035
Balances \$	15,023,100	21,929,400	27,311,300	25,871,100	26,142,000	30,298,000	32,162,500	36,410,200	40,793,000	45,391,200

The outlook depicts an organisation heavily invested in capital works. The operating result includes capital revenue, with forecast deficits until 2028/29 when capital revenue is excluded. Further improvements to the operating result would need to be sourced from significant increases to the bulk water price paid by Constituent Council's and would represent a negative impact to their operations. Capital expense over the ten years is forecast to be \$205.5M supported by external borrowings of \$27M. Cash reserves remain relatively stable until 2030/31 when cash begins to grow.

The outlook for the whole organisation tends to be dominated by the Bulk Water Reporting Unit and more detailed information is provided in this section of the report.

Bulk Water

Table 2: Bulk Water Reporting Unit Forecast Operating Performance

Description	2026 Estimate \$	2027 Estimate \$	2028 Estimate \$	2029 Estimate \$	2030 Estimate \$	2031 Estimate \$	2032 Estimate \$	2033 Estimate \$	2034 Estimate \$	2035 Estimate \$
Operating Income	33,736,300	33,322,400	35,321,100	42,505,300	43,709,900	45,220,500	47,858,200	45,776,200	46,545,400	47,520,300
Operating Expense	31,887,100	29,273,500	30,513,400	31,113,000	31,363,000	31,625,900	32,271,600	32,684,700	33,130,800	33,739,900
Operating Result	1,849,200	4,048,900	4,807,700	11,392,300	12,346,900	13,594,600	15,586,600	13,091,500	13,414,600	13,780,400
Less: Depreciation	7,532,900	8,053,900	8,278,200	8,524,300	8,805,100	9,097,900	9,404,100	9,698,400	9,960,000	10,236,100
Operating Result Excl. Non Cash	9,382,100	12,102,800	13,085,900	19,916,600	21,152,000	22,692,500	24,990,700	22,789,900	23,374,600	24,016,500
Add: Loan Drawdown	7,000,000	10,000,000	10,000,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Less: Loan Repayment	4,735,600	4,420,200	2,669,700	2,313,800	2,422,000	2,535,600	2,654,800	2,780,100	2,911,600	3,049,700
Less: Capital Expense	26,735,900	11,191,100	15,952,100	20,126,300	19,114,600	17,434,000	22,057,100	17,597,900	17,597,300	18,218,100
Adjustment for Grants held as Liability	(400,000)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Net Cash Movement	(15,489,400)	6,991,500	4,464,100	(2,523,500)	(384,600)	2,722,900	278,800	2,411,900	2,865,700	2,748,700
Estimated Cash Balance \$	11,468,400	18,459,900	22,924,000	20,400,500	20,015,900	22,738,800	23,017,600	25,429,500	28,295,200	31,043,900

Overview

- The LTTP sees significant additional spending due to the FWP.
- Over the next ten years the FWP will focus on building bores at Woodburn, a groundwater treatment plant at Alstonville, the Marom Creek water treatment plant and land acquisitions for groundwater.
- The focus of the LTTP is to grow the operating surplus over the LTTP period, whilst carefully balancing the amount of borrowings Council takes and the impact of servicing those loans.
- Council has sought to contain operating costs across that timeframe, the main variability arises from salary and wage costs, chemical prices and work on projects.

Revenue

- The majority of bulk water revenue comes directly from Constituent Councils. Council has sought to provide surety to those Councils by adhering to the previously advised price path as below.

Table 3: Forecast % Increase to constituent councils' contributions for Bulk Water

Year	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	Cumulative Total
Proposed % Increase	7.0%	7.0%	7.0%	7.0%	7.0%	7.0%	7.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	70.4%

- Council's charging methodology means the allocation to each council is based on the prior year's usage.
- Water consumption decreased over the calculation period with Byron and Ballina's proportion of the weighted average charge increasing beyond the 7.0% increase.

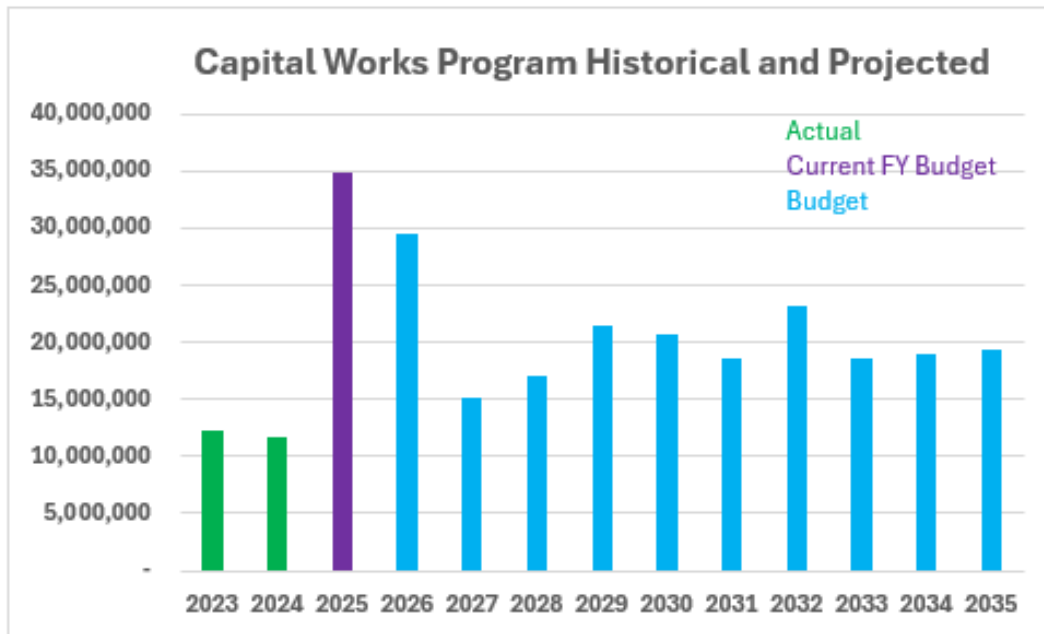
Table 4: Proposed Bulk Water Contributions Constituent Councils and Retail Water

	2024/25 \$	2025/26 \$	Movement %	Movement \$
Lismore City Council	6,873,500	7,077,500	2.97	204,000
Byron Council	6,374,300	6,943,900	8.94	569,600
Richmond Valley Council	1,483,900	1,511,000	1.83	27,100
Ballina Council	8,799,100	9,817,200	11.57	1,018,100
Rous Retail	1,975,500	1,942,100	(1.69)	(33,400)
Total	25,506,300	27,291,700	7.00	1,785,400

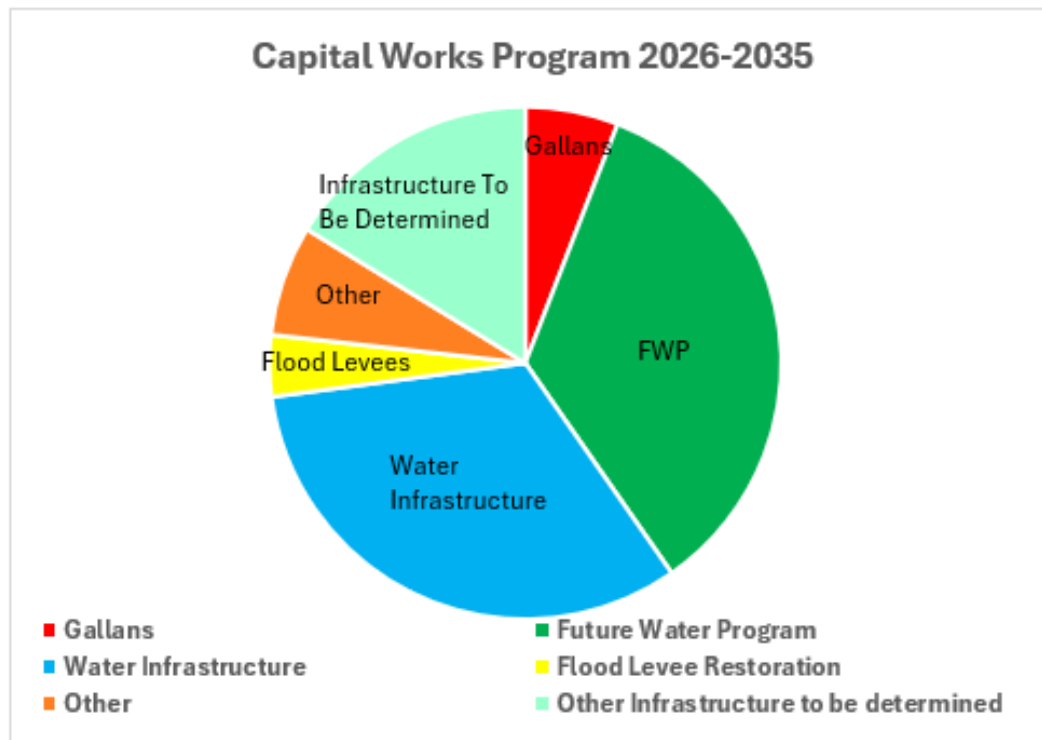
Capital Works

- FY26 capital expenditure is significantly higher than the historical average as the one-off project for Rous' new consolidated workplace premises continues as well as investment in the FWP.
- Over the next ten years the FWP capital expenditure represents a significant portion of the capital works program at \$70.6M or 34.4% of total capital works.

Graph 1: Capital Works Program Historical and Projected



Graph 2: Capital Works Program 2025-2034



Funding

- The scale of the capital works to be undertaken will result in additional borrowings of \$27.0M being required over the LTFP period.
- A balance is required between what Council can borrow to fund works and the additional costs required to repay those funds.

Table 5: Estimated Borrowings 2025/26 – 2034/35

Year	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035
Amount \$	5,000,000	10,000,000	10,000,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Estimated Rate	5.50%	5.50%	5.00%							

- Interest rates are predicted to decrease over time however it is difficult to predict exactly just what will occur and when.
- Loans have generally been calculated based on a standard principal and interest repayment over a 20 year term.

Retail Water

Table 6: Retail Water Reporting Unit Forecast Operating Performance

Description	2026 Estimate \$	2027 Estimate \$	2028 Estimate \$	2029 Estimate \$	2030 Estimate \$	2031 Estimate \$	2032 Estimate \$	2033 Estimate \$	2034 Estimate \$	2035 Estimate \$
Operating Income	4,316,600	4,589,700	4,892,300	5,232,100	5,592,300	5,981,000	6,410,000	6,562,200	6,699,800	6,867,600
Operating Expense	3,859,900	4,000,600	4,187,300	4,400,400	4,625,600	4,863,800	5,115,500	5,207,000	5,329,500	5,425,700
Operating Result	456,700	589,100	705,000	831,700	966,700	1,117,200	1,294,500	1,355,200	1,370,300	1,441,900
Less: Depreciation	306,600	311,200	315,900	320,600	325,400	330,300	335,300	340,300	345,400	350,600
Operating Result Excl. Non Cash	763,300	900,300	1,020,900	1,152,300	1,292,100	1,447,500	1,629,800	1,695,500	1,715,700	1,792,500
Less: Capital Expense	75,000	140,400	272,300	0	416,000	0	130,000	0	452,000	0
Net Cash Movement	688,300	(240,100)	748,600	1,152,300	876,100	1,447,500	1,499,800	1,695,500	1,263,700	1,792,500
Estimated Cash Balance \$	2026 1,143,900	2027 903,800	2028 1,652,400	2029 2,804,700	2030 3,680,800	2031 5,128,300	2032 6,628,100	2033 8,323,600	2034 9,587,300	2035 11,379,800

Overview

- Significant investment has occurred in the retail water business over the last year as Smart Metering and Backflow devices have been rolled out. Costs associated with those projects will be recouped through a charge.

Revenue

- Water pricing will increase by 8.0% due to the increased cost of bulk water (which is increasing by 7.0%) and the need to fund capital works including the future replacement of smart meters and backflow devices.

Table 7: Forecast Price Path for Charges to Rous Retail Customers

Year	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	Cumulative Total
Proposed % Increase	8.00%	8.00%	8.00%	8.00%	8.00%	8.00%	8.00%	2.00%	2.50%	2.50%	83.7%

Flood Mitigation

Table 8: Flood Mitigation Reporting Unit Forecast Operating Performance

Description	2026 Estimate \$	2027 Estimate \$	2028 Estimate \$	2029 Estimate \$	2030 Estimate \$	2031 Estimate \$	2032 Estimate \$	2033 Estimate \$	2034 Estimate \$	2035 Estimate \$
Operating Income	8,101,700	3,888,100	1,320,200	1,358,500	1,391,800	1,423,900	1,461,200	1,499,100	1,527,200	1,564,400
Operating Expense	4,317,200	2,254,900	1,983,600	2,018,200	2,124,100	2,113,900	2,150,000	2,161,700	2,198,900	2,271,400
Operating Result	3,784,500	1,633,200	(663,400)	(659,700)	(732,300)	(690,000)	(688,800)	(662,600)	(671,700)	(707,000)
Less: Depreciation	934,700	948,700	962,900	977,300	992,000	1,006,900	1,022,000	1,037,300	1,052,900	1,068,700
Operating Result Excl. Non Cash	4,719,200	2,581,900	299,500	317,600	259,700	316,900	333,200	374,700	381,200	361,700
Less: Capital Expense	5,412,300	2,806,100	285,000	310,000	356,000	317,000	316,000	316,000	316,000	316,000
Adjustment for Grants held as Liability	(3,624,200)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Net Cash Movement	(4,317,300)	(224,200)	14,500	7,600	(96,300)	(100)	17,200	58,700	65,200	45,700
Estimated Cash Balance \$	1,020,800	796,600	811,100	818,700	722,400	722,300	739,500	798,200	863,400	909,100

Table 9: Flood Mitigation Reporting Unit Operating Result Excluding Lismore Levee Depreciation

Description	2026 Estimate \$	2027 Estimate \$	2028 Estimate \$	2029 Estimate \$	2030 Estimate \$	2031 Estimate \$	2032 Estimate \$	2033 Estimate \$	2034 Estimate \$	2035 Estimate \$
Operating Result	3,784,500	1,633,200	(663,400)	(659,700)	(732,300)	(690,000)	(688,800)	(662,600)	(671,700)	(707,000)
Less: Lismore Levee Depreciation	403,400	409,500	415,600	421,800	428,100	434,500	441,000	447,600	454,300	461,100
Revised Operating Result	4,187,900	2,042,700	(247,800)	(237,900)	(304,200)	(255,500)	(247,800)	(215,000)	(217,400)	(245,900)

Overview

- Council's Flood Mitigation function operates on a very tight budget, based largely on a State government funding model that was designed pre-1983 and has not seen any increases (not even by CPI).
- There have been no material increases to costs, however, additionally grant funding has been sought in order to complete additional works.
- The Lismore Levee continues to be owned by Council, although the depreciation associated with these assets are not funded through financial contributions.

Revenue

- Contributions will increase by 5.0% as previously agreed with Constituent Councils to make Flood Mitigation more financially sustainable.
- These cost increases are not significant in dollar terms and are vital for this function to continue its core operations.

Table 10: Forecast Price Path for Constituent Council Flood Mitigation Contributions

Year	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	Cumulative Total
Proposed % Increase	5.0%	4.0%	4.0%	3.0%	3.0%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	36.3%

Table 11: Proposed Flood Mitigation Council Contributions 2025/26

Service Area	2024/25	2025/26	Increase
Ballina Shire Council	326,900	343,200	16,300
Lismore City Council	326,900	343,200	16,300
Richmond Valley Council	326,900	343,200	16,300
	980,700	1,029,600	48,900

Table 12: Proposed Ex-Drainage Union Council Contributions 2025/26

Service Area	2024/25	2025/26	Increase
Ballina Shire Council	43,700	45,400	1,700
Lismore City Council	43,700	45,400	1,700
Richmond Valley Council	4,200	4,400	200
	91,600	95,200	3,600

Weed Biosecurity

Table 13: Weed Biosecurity Reporting Unit Forecast Operating Performance

Description	2026 Estimate \$	2027 Estimate \$	2028 Estimate \$	2029 Estimate \$	2030 Estimate \$	2031 Estimate \$	2032 Estimate \$	2033 Estimate \$	2034 Estimate \$	2035 Estimate \$
Operating Income	2,450,200	2,465,600	2,206,100	1,702,900	1,728,700	1,765,100	1,809,300	1,848,700	1,869,500	1,911,600
Operating Expense	2,605,800	2,486,100	2,252,900	1,700,000	1,731,400	1,768,700	1,828,800	1,875,300	1,906,000	1,937,100
Operating Result	(155,600)	(20,500)	(46,800)	2,900	(2,700)	(3,600)	(19,500)	(26,600)	(36,500)	(25,500)
Less: Depreciation	31,700	32,200	32,700	33,200	33,700	34,200	34,700	35,200	35,700	36,200
Operating Result Excl. Non Cash	(123,900)	11,700	(14,100)	36,100	31,000	30,600	15,200	8,600	(800)	10,700
Less: Capital Expense	25,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Net Cash Movement	(148,900)	11,700	(14,100)	36,100	31,000	30,600	15,200	8,600	(800)	10,700
Estimated Cash Balance \$	796,600	808,300	794,200	830,300	861,300	891,900	907,100	915,700	914,900	925,600

Overview

- Council continues to deliver weed biosecurity works throughout the region, to Constituent Councils and Kyogle and Tweed Shire Councils on a fee for service arrangement. An additional service arrangement with Tweed for roadside services is in place until 2026/27.

Revenue

- Council contributions increase annually with the rate peg %. Since each Council has received an individual rate peg, the lowest increase of 3.8% has been applied.

Table 14: Forecast Price Path for Constituent Council Contributions

Year	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	Cumulative Total
Proposed % Increase	3.80%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	24.1%

Table 15: Proposed Weed Biosecurity Council Contributions

Service Area	2024/25 \$	2025/26 \$	Increase \$
Ballina Shire Council	128,700	133,600	4,900
Byron Shire Council	128,700	133,600	4,900
Lismore City Council	169,100	175,500	6,400
Richmond Valley Council	140,000	145,300	5,300
Total Contributions	566,500	588,000	
Kyogle Shire Council *	141,100	146,500	5,400
Tweed Shire Council *	193,700	201,100	7,400
Total Fees	334,800	347,600	
Total Contributions and Fees	901,300	935,600	34,300
Total % Increase			3.8%
* Indicates local government area under a fee-for-service arrangement			

Property

Table 16: Property Forecast Operating Performance

Description	2026 Estimate \$	2027 Estimate \$	2028 Estimate \$	2029 Estimate \$	2030 Estimate \$	2031 Estimate \$	2032 Estimate \$	2033 Estimate \$	2034 Estimate \$	2035 Estimate \$
Operating Income	84,900	125,200	164,100	168,300	150,800	151,700	164,700	169,800	148,200	158,400
Operating Expense	315,800	307,400	243,200	246,100	250,100	254,900	259,100	264,500	268,800	273,200
Operating Result	(230,900)	(182,200)	(79,100)	(77,800)	(99,300)	(103,200)	(94,400)	(94,700)	(120,600)	(114,800)
Less: Depreciation	102,100	103,600	105,200	106,800	108,400	110,000	111,700	113,400	115,100	116,800
Operating Result Excl. Non Cash	(128,800)	(78,600)	26,100	29,000	9,100	6,800	17,300	18,700	(5,500)	2,000
Less: Capital Expense	51,000	52,000	53,000	54,000	55,000	56,000	57,000	58,000	59,000	60,000
Net Cash Movement	(179,800)	369,400	(26,900)	(25,000)	(45,900)	(49,200)	(39,700)	(39,300)	(64,500)	(58,000)
Estimated Cash Balance \$	2026 106,300	2027 475,700	2028 448,800	2029 423,800	2030 377,900	2031 328,700	2032 289,000	2033 249,700	2034 185,200	2035 127,200

Overview

- Council no longer leases the Molesworth Street administration building, however, Council does have one commercial property in the Lismore CBD, rural residential rental properties and the Perradenya estate.

Fleet Reporting Unit

Table 17: Fleet Reporting Unit Forecast Operating Performance

Description	2026 Estimate \$	2027 Estimate \$	2028 Estimate \$	2029 Estimate \$	2030 Estimate \$	2031 Estimate \$	2032 Estimate \$	2033 Estimate \$	2034 Estimate \$	2035 Estimate \$
Operating Income	146,000	135,800	136,200	138,500	135,100	140,900	152,900	162,100	151,700	158,700
Operating Expense	(56,000)	(47,200)	(27,400)	15,700	13,200	10,700	8,300	5,000	2,100	(1,100)
Operating Result	202,000	183,000	163,600	122,800	121,900	130,200	144,600	157,100	149,600	159,800
Less: Depreciation	524,500	532,400	540,400	548,500	556,700	565,100	573,600	582,200	590,900	599,800
Operating Result Excl. Non Cash	726,500	715,400	704,000	671,300	678,600	695,300	718,200	739,300	740,500	759,600
Less: Capital Expense	717,400	717,400	508,300	759,000	788,000	691,000	625,000	627,000	487,000	701,000
Net Cash Movement	9,100	(2,000)	195,700	(87,700)	(109,400)	4,300	93,200	112,300	253,500	58,600
Estimated Cash Balance \$	2026 487,100	2027 485,100	2028 680,800	2029 593,100	2030 483,700	2031 488,000	2032 581,200	2033 693,500	2034 947,000	2035 1,005,600

Overview

- Fleet provides fit-for purpose fleet including vehicles, boats, trailers and heavy plant at an economical rental to the other Reporting Units. There are approximately 112 items within the Fleet.

Statement of Revenue Policy 2025/26

Proposed fees and charges for the 2025/26 financial year include: -

- Bulk water sales revenue – an increase of 7.0% to \$2.65 per kilolitre.
- Retail water sales – an increase of 8.0% to \$3.54 per kilolitre for water usage. The fixed facility charges will also increase by 8.0%.
- Developer charges – an increase of 2.4% to \$10,598.00 per equivalent tenement (based on the revised Development Servicing Plans that were adopted by Council in February 2023 [6/23] adjusted for CPI).
- Developer charges for Retail customers – an increase of 2.4% to \$408.00.
- Weed biosecurity contributions – an increase of 3.8% in line with rate pegging.
- Flood mitigation contributions – an increase of 5.0%.
- Ex-drainage union contributions – an increase of 3.8% in line with rate pegging.

- Backflow device annual charge – the existing fee of \$196.00 remains (this charge has not increased from last year).
- Property information certificates – current fee is \$100.00 as prescribed by section 603 of the *Local Government Act 1993* (this fee is determined by the Office of Local Government and has yet to be provided to Councils. The fee will need to be updated when the new prescribed fee for 2025 is published).
- Interest on overdue water accounts – current rate is 10.5% as prescribed by section 566(3) of the *Local Government Act 1993* (this fee is determined by the Office of Local Government and has yet to be provided to Councils. As such this may need be revised).
- Other fees have generally increased by CPI of 2.4% or less and in many cases have not been increased at all.

Governance

Consistent with requirements under the *Local Government Act 1993* and Office of Local Government Handbook and Guidelines, Council is required to review its Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework every 4 years. That review has been completed and various changes to the Framework are proposed. A copy of the draft Framework including supporting documents are linked to this report (Attachment 1-6).

Underpinning the review has been a focus on developing a streamlined and simple Framework, highlighting Rous' purpose and role in delivering public value across its core functions. Continuous improvement, change and digital transformation are also key themes.

At the core of the Framework are a set of Focus Areas and Actions:

- **Focus Area 1: Be prepared and resilient**

Action 1.1: Continue to expertly manage drinking water supply and security

Action 1.2: Work with community, business and government to deliver specialist biosecurity services

Action 1.3: Determine what a valued flood mitigation service looks like and our role in it

Action 1.4: Identify operational and strategic blind spots to inform investment in long-term resilience and short-term efficiency

- **Focus Area 2: Transform the way we work**

Action 2.1: Strengthen data driven decision-making through digital transformation and data literacy

Action 2.2: Adopt a more commercial focus to control costs and direct investment

Action 2.3: Innovate to boost efficiency, safety and environmental outcomes

Action 2.4: Drive business optimisation and value through business capability and transformation

- **Focus Area 3: Be a future focussed trusted business**

Action 3.1: Show leadership, accountability and transparency through corporate social responsibility

Action 3.2: Increase awareness of who Rous is, what we do and why we do it

Action 3.3: Consider and be open to opportunities to diversify service provision

Action 3.4: Invest in workforce culture, engagement, diversity and capability

These Focus Areas and Actions direct and inform the activities set out in the draft Delivery program | Operational plan.

‘Light touch’ review of Asset Management Strategy and Plans (element of the Resourcing Strategy)

The replacement of Rous’ asset management system is underway. As a result, given the criticality of that system to informing the Asset Management Strategy and Plans the decision was taken to defer the comprehensive review of those documents. Instead, a high-level review has occurred and an Asset Management Position Statement has been produced. Among other things, the review resulted in previously separate Fleet and Information Technology asset management practices being formalised and incorporated into the Asset Management Position Statement and earmarked for inclusion in the Strategy and Plans in the future.

A. Finance

As detailed in the report.

B. Environment

Not applicable.

C. Legal

Council has until 30 June in the year following a local government election to endorse a new Framework. Before that can occur the draft Framework (including the Long-Term Financial Plan, Budget and Statement of Revenue Policy) must be placed on public exhibition for at least 28 days. Submissions received during that time must be considered prior to Council making a decision regarding the Framework.

Consultation

As detailed in the 'Legal' section of the report.

Comment

The proposed draft Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework (incorporating the 2025/26 Budget and Statement of Revenue policy) is recommended to Council for public exhibition.

Attachments (for public exhibition)

1. [Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework 2025-2035](#)
2. [Delivery program | Operational plan 2025-2029](#)
3. [Workforce Management Strategy](#)
4. A. [Asset Management Strategy Position Statement 2025](#)
B. [ICT Asset Management Position Statement 2025](#)
C. [Fleet Asset Management Position Statement 2025](#)
5. A. [Long-Term Financial Plan 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2035 \(concise\)](#)
B. [Long-Term Financial Plan 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2035 \(detailed\)](#)
6. [Statement of Revenue policy \(Fees and Charges\)](#)

Reappointment of Independent Voting Member - Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee

Responsible Officer: Group Manager Organisational Services (Helen McNeil)

Report Contributor: Governance and Risk Manager (Lauren Edwards)

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Reappoint Andrew MacLeod as Independent Voting Member of Council's Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee for a term of four (4) years.
2. Note that if reappointed, this will be the final consecutive term that Andrew MacLeod will be eligible to serve as a member of the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee.

Key points

1. The four (4) year term of appointment for independent member of the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee, Andrew MacLeod, will conclude in April 2025.
2. Mr MacLeod is seeking reappointment for a further term and has completed a performance self-assessment in support of reappointment indicating that he continues to meet the independence and eligibility criteria required for the role.
3. Members may be appointed for two consecutive four (4) year terms.
4. The proposed reappointment is supported by the Chair of the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee and the General Manager.

Background

Council is required to have an Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee (Committee)¹ comprised of three (3) independent voting members in accordance with the '[Guidelines for Risk Management and Internal Audit for Local Government in NSW](#)' (the 'Guidelines') issued by the Office of Local Government.

Council's Committee is currently comprised of the following voting members each appointed for a four (4) year term:

1. Laurie Lefcourt – Chairperson – Commenced 2023 (Refer to the update in agenda item 15.4)
2. Andrew MacLeod – Independent Member – Commenced 2021
3. Raymond Wong - Independent Member – Commenced 2023

Voting Committee Members are permitted to serve two consecutive terms of four (4) years each.² A Committee Member who continues to meet the independence³ and eligibility⁴ criteria set out in the regulations⁵ is eligible to be reappointed.

¹ [Section 428A](#) of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

² [Section 216G](#)(3) of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021*.

³ [Section 216F](#) Ibid.

⁴ [Section 216E](#) Ibid.

⁵ Reference is to the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021*.

Andrew MacLeod's first term as an Independent Member on the Committee concludes in April 2025. Mr MacLeod is seeking reappointment for a second four (4) year term.

Reappointment of Committee Member

The Guidelines provide that Council may reappoint a Committee Member following an assessment of the Committee Member's performance and considering the views of the Committee Chair and the General Manager.⁶

A performance self-assessment has been completed by the Committee Member seeking reappointment and this has been endorsed by the Committee Chair and the General Manager.

The Committee Member has attested, within their performance self-assessment, to continuing to meet the independence and eligibility criteria required of the position holder.

Governance

A. Finance

The Committee Charter provides that the General Manager is authorised to negotiate a sitting fee payable to a voting Committee Member commensurate with the Committee Member's skills, experience and qualifications.⁷

Independent Members of the Committee are currently paid a sitting fee of \$349 and reimbursement of reasonable travel expenses incurred in attending Committee meetings.

Committee Member sitting fees and travel reimbursements are paid from a recurring annual Internal Audit budget which has sufficient funds to support the continued appointment of three (3) voting Committee Members. The Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) has also accounted for these fees and costs as ongoing expenses associated with maintaining three (3) voting Committee Members.

B. Environment

Not applicable

C. Legal

Appointment of a voting Committee Member must be made by resolution of Council.⁸

Consultation

The Committee Chair and the General Manager were consulted on the performance self-assessment of the Committee Member seeking reappointment and each subsequently provided their support for the reappointment.

Comment

Andrew MacLeod continues to meet the regulatory independence and eligibility requirements for holding a position as a voting member on the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee. Support from the Committee Chair and the General Manager for the reappointment has been provided following a performance self-assessment. The reappointment of Andrew MacLeod as Independent Voting Member on the Committee is now recommended to Council.

⁶ Pages 25-26 of the [Guidelines for Risk Management and Internal Audit for Local Government in NSW](#)

⁷ Refer to page 6 of the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee [Charter](#) adopted 21 February 2024.

⁸ [Section 216C](#)(3) of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021*.

Direct engagement of NSW Soil Conservation Service to restore Bungawalbin Levee

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

Report Contributor: Flood Mitigation Manager (Chrisy Clay)

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Endorse the direct engagement of the NSW Soil Conservation Service, as permitted under the *Local Government Act 1993*, to project manage and deliver the on-ground restoration of Bungawalbin Levee up to a value of \$6.5M (excl GST).
2. Authorise the General Manager to enter contract negotiations with the NSW Soil Conservation Service and sign the contract on behalf of Council.

Key points

1. The NSW Soil Conservation Service has been identified as a suitable provider to manage and deliver the on-ground restoration of Bungawalbin Levee. Their involvement will provide much needed resources, capacity and expertise to maximise the chances of successful, on time delivery of the restoration works.
2. The NSW Soil Conservation Service can be directly engaged, saving on time and resources. Their engagement will also increase the value for money and maximise the benefit to the local community.
3. While the NSW Soil Conservation Service can be directly engaged, the value of the engagement (up to \$6.5M) is beyond the delegation of the General Manager, and Council approval is required to negotiate and award the contract with Soil Con.

Background

Bungawalbin Levee is an earthen flood mitigation asset of Rous County Council (Rous), located between Woodburn and Coraki in the Richmond Valley Local Government Area (LGA), which was damaged in the catastrophic and major flooding in February and March 2022. Rous has been successful in obtaining \$6.9M from the Natural Disaster Relief Assistance Program (NDRA) which is part of the State and Commonwealth Government's Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) to restore Bungawalbin Levee to its pre-2022 flood condition.

The project needs to be completed by 30 June 2026, with a possible extension available to February 2027 if required.

While securing \$6.9M to restore the levee is very positive, it is beyond the capacity of Rous to successfully deliver the on-ground restoration activities in the allocated timeframe. To complete the project within the allocated timeframe, management and delivery of the on-ground restoration activities needs to be outsourced.

Benefits of directly engaging NSW Soil Conservation Service

The NSW Soil Conservation Service ('Soil Con'), which is a commercial business unit within the NSW Department of Regional NSW, has been identified as suitable provider of this work. Soil Con are well known to Rous and the mid-Richmond floodplain landowners through their recent successful delivery of the Northern Rivers Drainage Reset Program on behalf of the NSW

Reconstruction Authority. This recent work has highlighted Soil Con's ability to provide value for money and to maximise the benefit of funding for the local community. Further, Soil Con is already familiar with the Bungawalbin Levee, having completed an assessment of the levee toe/creek bank erosion in 2023. Soil Con have the expertise and capacity to deliver the required on-ground restoration of Bungawalbin Levee and can meet the allocated timeframe for completion.

As a statutory body representing the Crown, Soil Con can be directly appointed without a tender process.¹ Soil Con offers expert advice and practical solutions, and will work collaboratively with earthworks subcontractors to achieve positive outcomes for the levee asset and the nearby Bungawalbin Creek. Soil Con has proven experience in the region, and established relationships with earthworks subcontractors and materials suppliers, so that most of the grant funding will be injected into the local economy.

Scope of proposed engagement

If Council supports the recommendation to directly engage Soil Con to project manage and deliver the identified works, more detailed contract negotiations are needed once the full scope of work/restoration activities have been confirmed.

This is due to the restoration project occurring with the following gateway milestones:

1. Rous led site investigations including comprehensive surveying of the levee and geotechnical investigation – currently underway with contractors engaged.
2. Rous led repair option assessment and prioritisation, along with detailed design and repair instructions – due for completion by July 2025 by contractors.
3. Proposed NSW Soil Conservation Service led delivery of the on-ground repair as identified and detailed in Gateway 2. Up to \$6.5M may be available to undertake the necessary on-ground repairs.

The exact repairs required to restore the levee will be determined, prioritised and costed during Gateways 1 and 2, and these will form the scope of works to be delivered by Soil Con. Gateways 1 and 2 are estimated to cost \$400,000 (excl GST). These will then be approved by NSW Public Works to ensure they are eligible under the NDRA program. Eleven (11) preliminary repair sites have been identified and endorsed by NSW Public Works and these are likely to represent the types of repairs required, which Soil Con have confirmed they are capable of delivering. Endorsing the direct engagement of Soil Con now, will mean no delay in undertaking the repair and allowing the project to be completed on time.

Finance

The Natural Disaster Relief Assistance Program (NDRA) which is part of the State and Commonwealth Government's Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) will provide all required funds to complete the restoration of Bungawalbin Levee. A Tripartite Funding Agreement between NSW Reconstruction Authority, NSW Public Works and Rous has been developed which will see the allocated funds pre-paid to Council in instalments across the life of the project. This will allow Council to maintain positive cash flow for this project and mean that adequate budget is available to engage Soil Con and undertake the identified restoration activities.

Legal

Section 4B(2)(e) of the *Soil Conservation Act 1938* provides that Soil Con is a statutory body representing the Crown.

Section 55(3)(b) of the *Local Government Act 1993* provides that a council (including a county council) is not required to invite tenders before entering into a contract with a statutory body representing the Crown.

¹ [Section 55](#)(3)(b) of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

Rous has the legal authority to directly engage Soil Con without first inviting tenders, however the value of the engagement (up to \$6.5M) is beyond the delegation of the General Manager, and Council approval is required to negotiate and award the contract with Soil Con.

Consultation

Landowners and stakeholders with an interest in Bungawalbin Levee have not been consulted on this proposed engagement however it is anticipated they will be supportive and value the expertise and experience that Soil Con will bring. The proposed approach was developed through internal discussions between the relevant teams in Planning and Delivery, Operations and Governance and informed by preliminary discussions with Soil Con.

If Soil Con is engaged to deliver the restoration of Bungawalbin Levee, landowners along the levee will be advised and Rous will play a key role in the initial interactions and securing landowner access agreements.

Conclusion

The direct engagement of the NSW Soil Conservation Service to manage and deliver the on-ground restoration activities has many benefits. Their involvement with the project will provide much needed resources, capacity and expertise to maximise the chances of a successful and on time delivery of the restoration works for this important community flood asset. Their engagement will also increase the value for money and maximise the benefit to the local community. The engagement of the NSW Soil Conservation Service follows on from their successful completion of other major programs on the floodplain, which has earned them the respect of local landowners.

Local Approvals Policy – Water Supply – Retail Customers

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

Report Contributors: Water Sustainability Officer (Karin Van der Heijde) and Governance and Risk Manager (Lauren Edwards)

Recommendation

That Council:

1. Revoke the following:
 - a. Rural Consumers Policy dated 19 November 1996 (Attachment 1),
 - b. Testing Water Meters Policy dated 15 June 1994 (Attachment 2),
 - c. Backflow Prevention Policy dated 20 October 2021 (Attachment 3),
 - d. Things you need to know - water service connection with Rous County Council (Attachment 4)
 - e. Headworks charges (Attachment 5) and
2. Publicly exhibit the Local Approvals Policy – Water Supply – Retail Customers (Attachment 6) for a period of 49 days, and
 - a. Should no significant or substantial public submissions be received:
 - i. The Rural Consumers Policy, Testing Water Meters Policy, Backflow Prevention Policy Things you need to know - water service connection with Rous County Council and Headworks charges are revoked effective 16 April 2025; and
 - ii. The Local Approvals Policy – Water Supply – Retail Customers is adopted effective 16 April 2025.
 - b. Should any significant or substantial submissions be received, those submissions, and the proposal in relation to the revocations and adoption of the Local Approvals Policy – Water Supply – Retail Customers, be considered by Council at its next meeting.

Key points

1. New Local Approvals Policy – Water Supply – Retail Customers Outlines circumstances in which Rous will allow retail customers to connect directly to our supply network.
2. Supported by new Standards and Conditions of Retail Water Supply with mandatory conditions including smart meters and requirement for backflow prevention.
3. Replaces five existing documents that will be revoked.
4. Will be published on the website and invite public submissions.

Background

Council staff have been undertaking an organisation wide review of its policies and procedures. This review has included reviewing associated documents and workflows to ensure that all of Council's documents are relevant to our practices, easy to read and understand for customers and that the documents provide Council with the highest possible protections, particularly for water infrastructure.

Attachments 1 and 2 to this report are policies which are well overdue for review, and **Attachment 3** is currently due for review. **Attachment 4** is a document called “Things you need to know - water service connection with Rous County Council” and was initially prepared as an information resource for Council’s retail customers.

This document has been updated over time, but as it has not been provided to customers in accordance with s68 of the *Local Government Act 1993* (LGA) and as there is no data available about which customers connected to the Rous supply at which time, it is not considered to be binding on customers.

Attachment 5 Headworks charges is very outdated, obsolete and has been replaced by Development Servicing Plan (DSP) for Retail Water Supply 2023.

To address this, and provide modern and contemporary policies, staff have reviewed of all the documents relating to retail water connections, consolidated them and prepared the new policy which is at **Attachment 6**.

It is proposed that this policy be placed on public exhibition and adopted by Council as a local policy in accordance with s160 of the LGA.

Policies for revocation

The operative portions of the Rural Consumers Policy, Testing Water Meters Policy, and Backflow Prevention Policy have been included in the new policy, and it is recommended that these policies are suitable for revocation upon the adoption of the updated policy.

The information components of these policies and the “Things You Need to Know” document have been included in a new document *Standards and Conditions of Retail Water Supply* (**Attachment 7**).

Headworks charges has been incorporated into the Development Servicing Plans.

1. Local Approvals Policy – Water Supply – Retail Customers

The Local Approvals Policy – Water Supply – Retail Customers:

- a. Outlines circumstances in which Rous will allow retail customers to connect directly to our supply network.
- b. Updates requirements taking account of the recent installation of smart meters and backflow prevention devices to the majority of Rous’s retail customers.
- c. Rationalises existing policies and integrates them into a single policy for consistency and clarity for customers.
- d. Provides Council with an enforcement mechanism in circumstances where customers deliberately damage Council’s infrastructure, attempt to circumvent safety or water billing devices, or refuse to comply with directions from Council staff regarding water connections.

2. Standards and Conditions of Retail Water Supply

This document is relevant to all retail water service connections to Council’s supply network without exception and:

- a. Clearly highlight the legislative and regulatory requirements of providing clean, safe, drinking water that protects public health for all customers.
- b. Ensures the methods for the prevention of contamination of the drinking water within the supply network are known, implemented, and appropriate levels of backflow and cross connection preventions are applied for the protection of the supply network.

- c. Adopts the new metering guidelines developed in consultation with constituent Councils and integrated with our existing policies.
- d. Explains why all connections to the Rous supply network are properly metered to allow accurate and timely billing of costs to customers.
- e. Provides information to customers about responsibilities for the costs of connection and disconnection to the Rous supply network.
- f. Provides clear guidelines to assist Council staff in making determinations relating to protecting the potable water supply network via backflow prevention.
- g. Provides clear information to members of the public, plumbers, and other stakeholders about the connection, metering, selection and installation of backflow prevention devices and Council's role in backflow prevention.

Governance

A. Finance

Not applicable

B. Environment

Not applicable

C. Legal

Public exhibition of the policy for a period of no less than 28 days is required by s160 (2) of the LGA.

Section 160(3) requires Council to allow 42 days after the day on which the policy is exhibited to allow for any submissions to be made.

Section 160(4) requires Council to exhibit the draft local policy together with any other matter which it considers appropriate or necessary to better enable the draft local policy and its implications to be understood.

Regulation 100 (b) of the *Local Government (General) Regulation (NSW)* requires public notification for a period of 7 days of the intention to exhibit the policy.

Council staff propose to include on Council's website the following:

1. 9 April 2025 – Notice regarding intention to exhibit the policy included on Council's website
2. 16 April 2025 – Local Approvals Policy – Water Supply – Retail Customers and *Standards and Conditions of Retail Water Supply* included on Council's website, with links for feedback and comments
3. 28 May 2025 – close of exhibition period
4. 11 June 2025 – close of submission period.

Any significant or substantial submissions made will be reported to Council's 18 June 2025 meeting. If no significant or substantial submissions are made, the general manager will provide an update at the meeting, and confirm the policy is endorsed as of 16 April 2025.

Consultation

Consultation occurred with a working group of staff representatives from Planning and Delivery, Operations, and Governance who reviewed the policies and contributed to the new documents, to ensure robust and well-developed documents are available.

Comment

The above policies have been reviewed having regard to legislative and regulatory requirements, and Council objectives. The Rural Consumers Policy, Testing Water Meters Policy, Backflow Prevention Policy, Things you need to know - water service connection with Rous County Council and, Headworks charges are recommended for revocation and the Local Approvals Policy – Water Supply – Retail Customers is recommended for public exhibition.

Attachments

1. [Rural Consumers Policy](#)
2. [Testing Water Meters Policy](#)
3. [Backflow prevention Policy](#)
4. [Things you need to know - water service connection with Rous County Council](#)
5. [Headworks Charges Policy](#)
6. Local Approvals Policy – Water Supply – Retail Customers
7. Standards and Conditions of Retail Water Supply

LOCAL APPROVALS – Retail Water Supply Policy



Approved by Council: xx/xx/xxxx

This policy outlines the (1) exemptions (if any), (2) assessment criteria, and (3) other matters relating to approvals under section 68 of the *Local Government Act* for retail water supply activities.

Background

1. Rous County Council ('Rous') operates a network of trunk water mains and associated infrastructure across parts of the Northern Rivers region in order to provide water in bulk to Ballina, Byron, Lismore, and Richmond Valley Councils (collectively referred to as 'Constituent Councils') in accordance with its statutory functions under the *Local Government Act 1993* ('LG Act') and *Water Management Act 2000*.
2. In areas not serviced by water reticulation networks owned by the Constituent Councils, individual property owners and proponents of new developments ('retail customers') may make application to Rous under [section 68](#) of the LG Act for approval to connect directly to, and draw water from, its trunk water main network. Direct connection of a retail customer to a trunk water supply main is not desirable and creates challenges around managing that trunk main network, however these applications may be considered by Rous, at its discretion, provided compliance with the following can be demonstrated –
 - A. Applicable regulatory requirements,¹
 - B. Provisions of this policy, and
 - C. Principles of ecologically sustainable development (ESD).²

Application and Interpretation

3. This policy –
 - 3.1.1. Applies to retail customers required to seek, maintain, and comply with the conditions of approval from Rous for water supply activities identified in Part B of the Table in section 68 of the LG Act,
 - 3.1.2. Is made in accordance with Division 3, Part 1, Chapter 7 of the LG Act and is comprised of three parts –
 - Part 1 - Exemptions (if any) from obtaining approval from Rous,
 - Part 2 - Criteria for granting or refusing approval, and
 - Part 3 - Other matters relating to approvals such as forms, fees, objections, and enforcement.
 - 3.1.3 Will be automatically revoked at the expiration of twelve months following an ordinary Local Government election unless re-adopted by resolution of Rous's governing body within that twelve (12) month period, and
 - 3.1.4 Supplements the regulatory requirements and principles of ESD applicable to the activity requiring the approval.

¹ Refer to [Division 3, Part 2](#) and [Part 2, Schedule 1](#) of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021*.

² [Section 89](#) *Local Government Act 1993*.

Part 1 – Exemptions from obtaining approval

4. An employee of Rous acting in the course of their employment may draw water from a water supply system or standpipe without the prior approval of Rous.³

Part 2 – Criteria for assessing approval for water supply applications

5. An application for approval for water supply will be considered where the applicable regulatory requirements, principles of ESD and the criteria outlined below are met –
 - 5.1.1. The property cannot be connected to an existing reticulation network owned and operated by the relevant Constituent Council.
 - 5.1.2. The property has frontage to an existing Rous water pipeline or, the property is located in close proximity to a Rous supply main, being no further than 100m/equivalent tenement (ET) (capped at 1000m) from the proposed connection point.
 - 5.1.3. The water supply does not and will not rely on pressure from the Rous supply network for firefighting purposes.
 - 5.1.4. The network assessment of Rous's ability to service the proposed water supply connection and impact on its flows and pressures to existing bulk and other water supply demands is satisfactory.
 - 5.1.5. The water supply is subject to and meets, or is capable of meeting, the –
 - 5.1.5.1. *Standards and Conditions of Retail Water Supply* as amended; and
 - 5.1.5.2. Provisions of the relevant Development Servicing Plan (if applicable).
 - 5.1.6 The applicant of the section 68 water supply approval acknowledges and agrees to the *Standards and Conditions of Retail Water Supply*, as amended from time to time, as a condition of approval and undertakes to bring the *Standards and Conditions of Retail Water Supply* and any other condition/s of approval to the attention of any subsequent owner of the property having the benefit of the water supply approval.
6. Applications that involve subdivision, rezoning or substantial expansion of infrastructure and/or business activities on the property and has frontage or is located more than 100m/ET from the proposed connection point will be considered on case-by-case basis and may be subject to additional assessment criteria and require the approval of Rous's General Manager or governing body subject to the level of financial impact or risk to Rous.

Part 3 – Other matters

APPLICATION AND FEES

7. To apply for a water supply approval, the Water Service Application must be completed and lodged with Rous. For complex applications, the applicant may be required to provide additional information to enable assessment of the application.
8. Fees and charges are payable for water supply approvals including any works required to be undertaken. These are outlined in Rous's Revenue policy (<https://rous.nsw.gov.au/council-policies>).
9. Depending on the type of work or activity, these fees may be payable at the time of lodgement of the application form or at a later date as a condition of approval.

ASSESSMENT, OBJECTIONS, AND REVIEWS

10. Applications will be assessed within 28 days of receipt of the application (or date of receipt of any additional information required).
11. A notice will be issued following the assessment of the application confirming whether it has been approved (including any conditions of approval) or refused (the 'determination').
12. An applicant may –

³ Section 24 *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021*.

- 12.1. Object to the application of the regulations or provisions of this policy to the water supply activity the subject of their approval application if the objection is made in accordance with section 82 of the LG Act.
- 12.2. Amend or withdraw their application at any time prior to it being determined by Rous.
- 12.3. Request that Rous review its determination in respect of their application within 28 days of the date of the determination.⁴

ENFORCEMENT

13. An approval may be revoked or modified in any of the following circumstances –
 - 13.1. For any cause arising after the granting of the approval which, had it arisen before the approval was granted, would have caused Rous not to have granted the approval (or not to have granted in the same terms);
 - 13.2. For any failure to comply with a condition of the approval;
 - 13.3. If any of the circumstances outlined in section 144 of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021* are met.
 - 13.4. Rous also reserves the right to disconnect a customer from its water supply network where operational or strategic requirements dictate that water supply can no longer be provided to the property concerned. In these circumstances, Rous will consult with affected customers on the consequences of such a decision and possible alternate arrangements before making a final decision on whether to proceed with a disconnection.

Contact officer

Infrastructure Program Manager

Related documents

Policies

[Retail water customer account assistance policy](#)

[Revenue and Fees and Charges Policy](#)

Procedures

Water Service Application

Standards and Conditions of Retail Water Supply

Legislation

Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)

Local Government (General) Regulation 2021

Other

[Development Servicing Plan \(DSP\) for Retail Water Supply 2023](#)

Standard New Connection Template Letter

File No.:		Next review date: [2 years]	
Version	Purpose and description	Date adopted by Council	Resolution No.
0.1	Development of a policy governing exemptions, assessment criteria, and other requirements for retail water supply approvals.		

⁴ [Section 100](#) of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

STANDARDS AND CONDITIONS OF RETAIL WATER SUPPLY

Approved by the Rous Leadership Team: 14/01/2025

This document outlines the conditions of water supply and roles and responsibilities between Rous and the customer for the water supply connected to Rous's bulk water network.

Safety First	Together As One	Accountability	Respect Always
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Principal policy

Local Approvals Policy – Water Supply – Retail Customers

Procedure**Introduction**

The Rous bulk supply network operates differently from a typical urban water supply network of reservoirs and reticulation pipes. There can be significant pressure fluctuations and more regular disruption to supply because of normal operations, maintenance, or main breaks. A higher risk of backflow exists compared to a typical urban supply provided by a local council and water pressure for firefighting purposes cannot be guaranteed.

Paramount in managing connections to the Rous supply network is maintaining compliance with regulatory requirements and ensuring the safety of all end users and consumers by ensuring the quality and safety of the water supplied for drinking purposes. Where a customer is permitted to connect to the Rous supply network, the requirements outlined in this document are mandatory for all customers.

Purpose

These conditions apply to all retail water service connections to the Rous supply network without exception and will:

- a. Ensure compliance with the legislative and regulatory requirements of providing clean, safe, drinking water that protects public health for all customers.
- b. Ensure the methods for the prevention of contamination of the drinking water within the supply network are known, implemented, and appropriate levels of backflow and cross connection preventions are applied for the protection of the supply network.
- c. Ensure all connections to the Rous supply network are properly metered to allow accurate and timely billing of costs to customers.
- d. Provide information to customers about responsibilities for the costs of connection to the Rous supply network.
- e. Provide clear guidelines to assist Rous staff in making determinations relating to protecting the potable water supply network via backflow prevention.
- f. Provide clear information to members of the public, plumbers, and other stakeholders about the connection, metering, selection and installation of backflow prevention devices and Rous's role in backflow prevention.

Table of Contents

1. Connection	3
2. Metering	4
3. Backflow prevention	7
4. Water quality	8
5. Network management and maintenance	9
6. Fees and charges	9
7. Maintenance responsibilities	10
Definitions	11
Attachment 1 – Standard meter arrangements	15
Meter access and ownership	15
Single developments	16
Dual reticulation	17
Dual occupancies	18
Multi-unit developments	22

Mandatory conditions of connection, metering and backflow prevention

1. Connection

- 1.1. Rous is responsible for undertaking the work to provide the connection to its water supply network for section 68 water supply approvals unless the conditions of approval provide otherwise. This will involve tapping the water main at an appropriate location, connecting a service pipe, and installing it to the boundary of the property.
- 1.2. At the boundary of the property, a digital smart water meter or another approved device and backflow prevention device (as outlined separately in this document) will be installed on the service pipe by Rous. This arrangement will be known as the “supply point”.
- 1.3. Rous will install a ball valve on the customer’s side of the water meter which will serve as the isolation valve for the service. It will be the responsibility of the customer to maintain this ball valve and meet any associated costs with this maintenance.
- 1.4. Rous may provide a pressure reducing valve on the network side of the meter that is solely for protection of Rous’s assets including the water meter and backflow prevention device (where installed).
- 1.5. The customer is responsible for connecting their own network of pipes, valves, tanks, and/or any other infrastructure to convey water from the supply point at the property boundary to any location within their property where water supply or storage is required. See figure 1 for detail on the above points.
- 1.6. Any equipment connected to the supply network must be designed and operated by the customer to minimise or prevent adverse pressure and flow effects on the Rous distribution system and other supply connections on the Rous distribution system.
- 1.7. All water supply works, including connections and fittings, installed from the meter through to the property connected downstream are to be carried out by a licensed plumber to the required Australian Standard.
- 1.8. Rous makes no guarantees about pressure or flow delivered at the supply point. It is the responsibility of the customer to make their own enquiries about the pressure and flow at the supply point and whether it is suitable for the intended purpose.
- 1.9. Where pressure or flow is regarded as unsuitable for particular purposes, the customer is responsible for making design amendments or modifications to their internal supply network to provide suitable pressure, flow, or volume of water for the intended use. This includes potential pressure reducing valves to manage high pressure.
- 1.10. Any reliance on the Rous pressure reducing valve (if installed) for protection of customer side plumbing is at the sole risk of the customer. Use of Rous’s infrastructure to manage pressure (that is using the water meter isolation valve or tap to reduce flow) is prohibited and may result in, but is not limited to, disconnection or legal proceedings.
- 1.11. Water supplied to any property must not be on-sold or otherwise distributed to other properties or persons.
- 1.12. Rous acknowledges that there are legacy connections to the Rous supply network that do not meet the requirements of these conditions. Where such connections exist, Rous will assess any requirements and responsibilities on a case-by-case basis when issues arise.
- 1.13. Where legacy connections do exist, any major upgrades or building works on the property will trigger a requirement on the customer to upgrade the connection to current requirements.
- 1.14. For developments where the water reticulation main is not yet connected to the live network the developer, with Rous approval, is responsible for installing new property service connections. The service connection is to be terminated within the property boundary with a service isolation valve.
- 1.15. Separately once the main becomes live and a water meter is required, the developer/owner shall make an application under section 68 of the *Local Government Act 1993* for water service to Rous.
- 1.16. For development sites adjacent to live water reticulation mains, Rous will install the connection by initially terminating the service within the property boundary with a service isolation valve. Once a water meter is required, the builder/owner shall notify Rous to complete the installation by providing a riser and water meter. This is to minimise the likelihood of damage to the water meter during construction.

- 1.17. In general, developers, plumbers or any other entity will not be permitted to work on or connect to Rous's water reticulation mains. In the situation where developers need to connect (cut-in) new reticulation to Rous's main, Rous will permit the works to be done by the developer with Rous to undertake the network shutdown and supervise the cut-in.
- 1.18. For large developments contact Rous in the first instance.

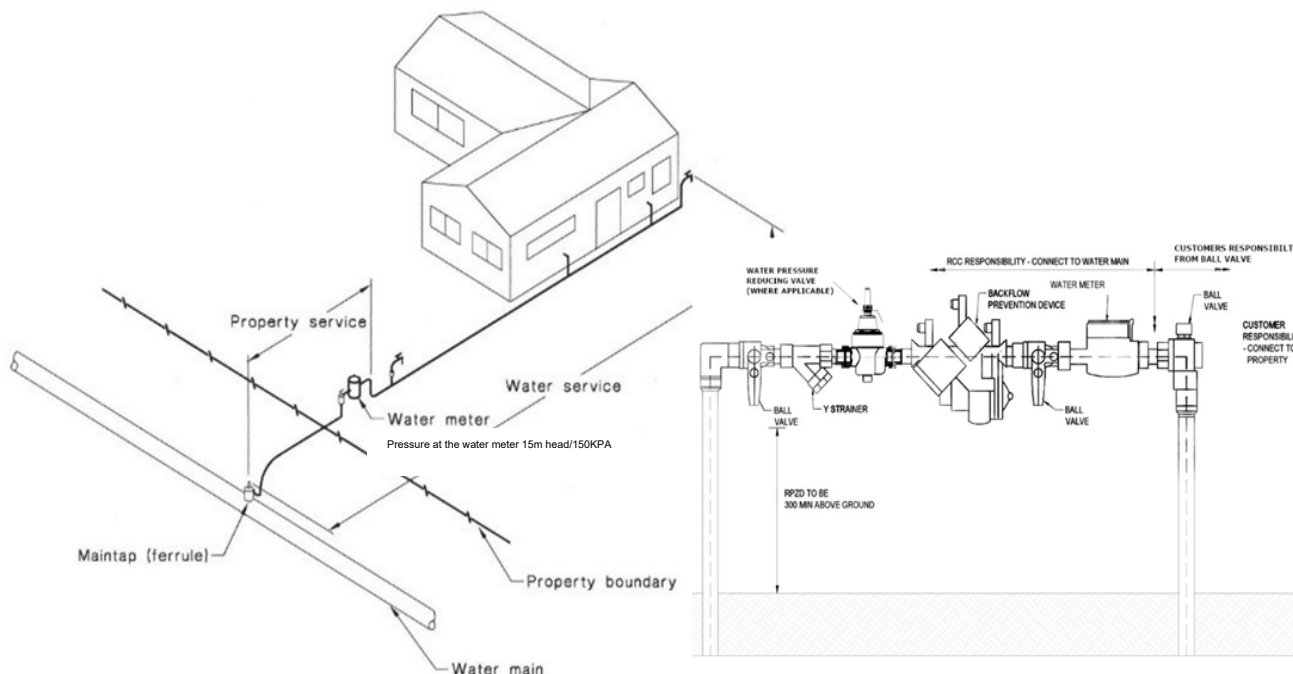


Figure 1 Example of typical connection, showing visual representation of clauses 1.1 to 1.5.

2. Metering

- 2.1. All properties connected to a potable (or recycled) supply network must be metered.
- 2.2. A separate water meter/service is required for, but not limited to residential and non-residential strata, community titles, new flats, units, cabins, villas, dual occupancy, and affordable housing projects.
- 2.3. For properties with only one dwelling or non-residential unit, a single metered water connection is required. For multi-unit (multiple occupancy) properties, all drinking and recycled water connections and separate units are to be separately metered.
- 2.4. All buildings must be designed and constructed with appropriate pipework and space for individual meters (including mixed-use developments).
- 2.5. Standard installation arrangements for various property types generally must be in accordance with Attachment 1. Approval is required from Rous for a connection arrangement that differs from the standard arrangement.
- 2.6. Meters must be readily accessible for reading, maintenance or removal and be clear of obstacles. Meters will not be permitted to be installed below ground, in locked cabinets, behind high fences, enclosed areas or confined spaces. There are to be no obstacles (such as gardens, overgrown vegetation, or other obstructions) within the vicinity of the water meter preventing safe access at any time.
- 2.7. **Master/subtract arrangement**
 - 2.10.1 If a property with three or more units has compliant plumbing, individual metering for each unit may be provided. In this scenario, a master meter at the property boundary measures the total water flow for all units, while each unit has its own subtract water meter. The sum of flow through the subtract meters must equal the total flow through the master meter.

- 2.10.2 Access charges are levied on all subtract meters. The master meter will have no access charge levied but will be used to capture leakage, common water uses or inappropriate fire hose usage.
- 2.10.3 All master meters and subtract meters will be approved by Rous and installed by a licensed plumber. All subtract meters must:
- have an individual serial number unique to that meter.
 - have a weatherproof label which states the relevant unit number.
 - conform to the required standards.
 - have the appropriate level of backflow prevention.

2.8. **New multi-level buildings**

- 2.11.1 In all new multi-level buildings, it is mandatory to design and construct buildings with pipework and designated space for individual meters.
- 2.11.2 These meters should be in a utility cupboard at an accessible location on each floor level, such as the foyer area, for reading and maintenance purposes.
- 2.11.3 The customer is responsible for ensuring Rous always has access to the meters, including any required access to the building and lifts, such as providing access keys, cards, or codes.

2.9. **Existing developments**

- 2.12.1 Individual metering for existing buildings is not mandatory. In existing buildings and multi-unit developments without subtract meters, all water use is measured by the master meter and all water use is charged to the owner (or owner's corporation). This charge is typically then apportioned by the owner to each occupier (or owners' corporation through strata levies).
- 2.12.2 Installation of individual meters in existing multi-unit developments must have appropriate plumbing to allow for individual metering. Installation of individual meters in existing strata buildings must be endorsed by the owners' corporation. All unit owners must understand the impact on their charges. Evidence of this endorsement must be provided to Rous.
- 2.12.3 Rous will review the need for individual meters in existing unmetered developments as part of the meter replacement program.
- 2.12.4 Any changes to private service lines or internal plumbing are the responsibility of the customer and will require appropriate approval from Rous.

2.10. **Vacant lots**

Rous will require vacant lots which are connected to the supply network to have a water meter installed in accordance with relevant standards.

2.11. **Private water meters**

- 2.14.1 Private water subtract meters may have been installed in existing developments to calculate water usage for each lot or occupancy. If an owner's corporation of an existing building with private meters intends to implement individual metering, new subtract meters must be installed as described in Section 2.7.
- 2.14.2 The installation of individual meters in existing developments must include appropriate plumbing to allow for individual metering. A signed letter from the owner's corporation shall accompany the application that all owners approve of Rous installing the master meter and subtract meters for all units.
- 2.14.3 Rous may also consider installing subtract meters for each dwelling, when the master meter becomes due for replacement, as per Rous's meter replacement program, to allow individual reading of meters as per the normal meter reading program (quarterly).

2.12. **Smart meters**

A digital smart meter or other approved device by Rous will be installed, enabling customers to better understand their water use by providing more detailed information, provide for more accurate billing and help with the early detection of leaks. A digital smart meter or other approved device by Rous will be installed, enabling customers to better understand their water use by providing more detailed accurate information.

2.13. Easements

- 2.16.1 A minimum 3-metre-wide easement, or such other size as determined by Rous, must be created/granted over any water main extension required on private land to service a Torrens Title or community title development.
- 2.16.2 Where legacy connections exist, the water meter may be located some distance away from the customer on a neighbouring property or road reserve. The water service beyond the meter is the sole responsibility of the customer and may not be covered by an easement or pipeline agreement.

2.14. Fire services

- 2.17.1 Fire services must be designed by a suitably qualified hydraulic consultant and certified that the design and installation complies with the relevant Australian Standards. The plumber is responsible for labelling and securing all fire services as per the relevant Australian Standards.
- 2.17.2 Fire hose reels shall be connected to a metered service.
- 2.17.3 The customer is responsible for maintaining private fire services from the meter to the property.
- 2.17.4 Where the fire service line(s) to serve the development is (are) greater in diameter than the water main diameter that the fire service line is connected to, then the water main shall be augmented to the same size or larger (as determined by Rous) at the developer's full cost.

2.15. Disconnection

Where a service or part of a service becomes disused it shall be disconnected by Rous, or a contractor approved by Rous. Only customers who are property owners and/or their representatives may apply to disconnect a water service. All costs associated with disconnection of the water service are to be borne by the applicant and paid prior to Rous undertaking disconnection works.

2.16. Relocation

- 2.19.1 Rous may at its discretion relocate a water meter into another location or pit for safety or operational reasons. In general, meter relocations are only permissible up to a distance of 600 mm. Relocations more than this may require a new connection (tapping).
- 2.19.2 The customer may also request to move a meter (e.g. to construct a fence or driveway). For a request to relocate a water service contact Rous.
- 2.19.3 The applicant is responsible for all costs to relocate the meter.

2.17. Water meter size

The size of a water meter for a single residential dwelling and vacant residential land is generally 20 mm. For other residential developments, the service/ meter sizing including master meters shall be determined as follows:

- for developments with less than 10 units, design by a licensed plumber or a qualified hydraulic consultant is required.
- for developments with more than 10 units design by a qualified hydraulic consultant is required.
- for non-residential developments, a qualified hydraulic consultant shall design the water meter and service size (if greater than 20 mm) and fire service (if applicable).

2.18. Change of property use and associated meter size

- 2.21.1 Upgrades to water meters associated with a change in use are addressed through the Section 68 application process. Rous may instruct a customer to obtain a hydraulic report for the purposes of increasing a meter size/s if Rous deems that the meter/s is/are undersized. Rous will review the hydraulic report to confirm the required meter size/s and where a larger meter/s is/are required, the applicant is responsible for costs to replace the meter/s and install a backflow device if required. Access charges will be changed to reflect the new meter size and a price on application applied for any master meters
- 2.21.2 Rous also requires a report from a suitably qualified hydraulic consultant where a customer seeks to reduce the water meter size. Where Rous accepts that the

meter size can be reduced and the current meter is 12 years or older, Rous will update the access charge and replace the meter to the assessed size as part of the meter replacement program. Where Rous accepts that the meter size can be reduced and the current meter is less than 12 years old, Rous will not immediately replace the meter to the assessed size. The access charge will be updated in Rous's rates system and the meter will be replaced as part of Rous's meter replacement program when it reaches its normal replacement age and condition.

3. Backflow prevention

Backflow prevention requirements apply to all retail water service connections to Rous's supply network without exception.

3.1 Installation

- 3.1.1 Rous requires a backflow prevention device to be installed on all retail water service connections to its bulk supply network. This will occur in accordance with the requirements of the applicable Plumbing Code of Australia, Australian Standards and such other legislation as may be relevant in the circumstances.
- 3.1.2 For water service connections up to and including 32mm, backflow prevention devices will be owned by Rous and installed integral with the meter (low hazard installation) or as a separate device before the water meter as depicted in *Figure 2* below for medium and high hazard installations.
- 3.1.3 For water service connections larger than 32mm, backflow prevention devices are required to be installed by the customer on the customer's side of the meter.

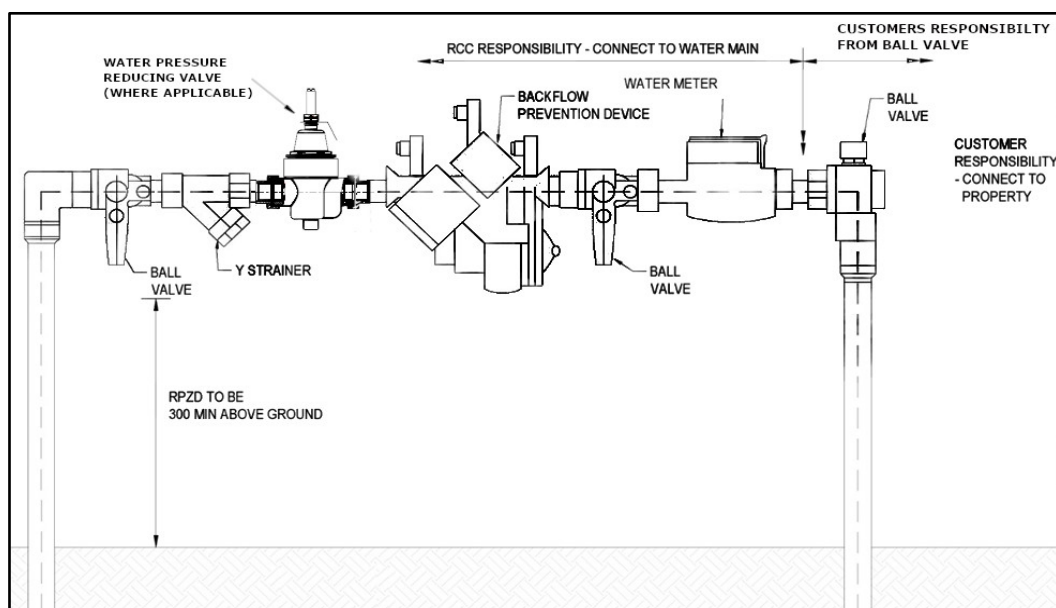


Figure 2 Typical backflow installation

3.2 Testable backflow prevention device

Properties classified with a medium to high hazard rating must have a testable backflow prevention device installed at the retail water service connection point for containment purposes or alternative solution approved by Rous, in accordance with Australian Standard 3500 Part 1: Plumbing and drainage Section 4. testable backflow prevention devices.

3.3 Non-testable backflow prevention device

Properties classified with a low hazard rating must have a non-testable backflow prevention device (as a minimum). A non-testable backflow prevention device is built into Rous supplied water meters for 20mm and 25mm water meters.

3.4 Determining hazard rating

- 3.4.1 Rous is responsible for determining the hazard rating on all connected properties.

- 3.4.2 Land Zoned 'Rural (RU1 – RU6)', 'Commercial (B1 – B8)' or 'Industrial (IN1 – IN4 & SP1 – SP3)' are, for the purpose of this document classified as medium to high hazard properties for backflow and cross contamination. These zones have been classified as medium risk of cross contamination due to the potential of hazardous chemicals, onsite sewage management systems and livestock allowed on properties due to the land zoning and must have a testable backflow prevention device installed.
- 3.4.3 All other Land Zones will be assessed using site specific information including but not limited to the specific hazards listed above. In the absence of any site-specific information, Rous will assign a hazard rating to a property in accordance with AS3500.1 based on Rous's assessment of the primary activities being undertaken on site. Rous may ask customers to certify their hazard rating periodically. If the customer has more site-specific information and requests a review of the hazard rating, then Rous will review the hazard and may determine that a different hazard rating is more appropriate and amend its records accordingly.

3.5 Annual testing

- 3.5.1 Testable backflow prevention devices up to and including 32mm will be tested annually by Rous.
- 3.5.2 Testable backflow prevention devices larger than 32mm installed on the customer's side of the meter must be tested annually by a qualified person with test certificate provided to Rous.

3.6 Cost

- 3.6.1 All costs of implementing the requirements are to be borne by customers requiring a testable backflow prevention device. This includes the cost of the device, labour charges for installation, replacement, repairs, annual testing, ongoing maintenance, and administration costs as applicable.
- 3.6.2 The recovery of the Rous owned testable backflow prevention device costs will be spread over the lifetime of the device (typically ten years) and will appear as a charge (backflow charge) on the customer's quarterly water account. The backflow charge is calculated by summing all testable backflow prevention device costs over a 10-year period and evenly allocating those costs to the customer's quarterly water account. CPI and/or other price fluctuations relating to the backflow charge are to be managed through adjustments to Rous's Revenue Policy (fees and charges) on an annual basis.

3.7 Rous responsibilities

- 3.7.1 Rous will install, maintain, service, test, repair and renew testable backflow prevention device as required up to and including 32mm in size. Devices larger than 32mm are required to be managed by the customer with Rous to undertake compliance activities as required.
- 3.7.2 Rous staff will maintain a backflow register and keep records of all property backflow hazard ratings, registration of backflow devices and annual test results.
- 3.7.3 Rous staff will provide information to customers regarding backflow, cross connections, and backflow prevention from time-to-time and upon request.

4. Water quality

- 4.1 Rous supplies water that is treated to a standard that meets the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines, including disinfecting the water to destroy any pathogenic (disease causing) organisms that may have been present in the water source.
- 4.2 Depending on where a customer is connected to the Rous supply, the water may contain fluoride. Rous will not add or remove fluoride from the supply based on individual customer preferences.
- 4.3 Rous manages and monitors water quality within the network in accordance with our Drinking Water Management System.

5. Network management and maintenance

- 5.1 Rous will undertake maintenance of its bulk supply network in accordance with its own adopted practices and service levels.
- 5.2 Where planned maintenance requires an interruption to water supply to a property, Rous will endeavour to give 7 days' notice to customers.
- 5.3 Rous will endeavour to issue SMS advice for planned water interruptions where a current mobile phone number has been provided against the water account.
- 5.4 Notice of water supply interruption will not occur for unplanned works such as pipeline breaks or emergency works.
- 5.5 Rous is not responsible for any damage caused to internal plumbing because of a water supply interruption, whether planned or unplanned.

6. Fees and charges

- 6.1 Upon connection of a property to the Rous supply network, an account will be established in the names of the customer who is a property owner.
- 6.2 Each quarter, or as otherwise determined or required, Rous will issue an account to the account holder for payment of all charges associated with the connection and/or consumption of water for that quarter. The charge for the installation of master meters will be based on a price on application and will be invoiced in addition to the total fee payable stated in the Water Services Application.
- 6.3 The applicable fees and charges for water connections are outlined in Rous's Statement of Revenue Policy (fees and charges).
- 6.4 The nominated account holder is responsible for all water use recorded through the water meter including unaccounted for water use (i.e. leaks).
- 6.5 The nominated account holder is responsible to pay the account by the nominated due date on the account.
- 6.6 Rous may disconnect or restrict the water supply to the property if an account is not paid by the due date, or arrangements for payment of the account beyond the due date are not met or made.
- 6.7 Customers experiencing difficulty or hardship in paying water accounts are to contact Rous to discuss their circumstances. Rous financial assistance programs include the Retail Water Account Assistance Policy and the Debt Management and Financial Hardship Policy.
- 6.8 **Inaccessible water meters**
Where a water meter is inaccessible for reading, Rous will send a warning letter to the customer stating that the meter is inaccessible and was unable to be read. If the meter is unable to be read the subsequent billing quarter, additional charges may apply as per Rous's fees and charges.
- 6.9 **Damaged water meters**
The customer is responsible for protection of the water meter from damage. Where Rous meters are damaged, these will be repaired by Rous and an invoice for the costs incurred will be issued to the customer. If Rous is repeatedly called out to a property to repair a damaged meter, the customer will be invoiced the cost for Rous's meter protection cage to be installed over the meter in addition to meter repair costs.

7. Maintenance responsibilities

- 7.1 **Rous's responsibilities**
 - 7.1.1. Rous is responsible for the water service from the water main up to and including the water meter [and any smart metering devices]. The water meter remains Rous's asset and Rous is responsible for the water service from the water main to the outlet of the meter (Figure 1 – typical connection).
 - 7.1.2. The master meter [and smart meter reading devices] are the property of Rous for maintenance and replacement. Some submetering meters may remain the property of the owner where prior agreement exists.
 - 7.1.3. The provisions of the *Local Government Act 1993* provide Rous with the power of entry to land required for pipeline breaks and maintenance, maintaining easements, meter reading, pipeline inspections, pipeline investigations and other necessary works. Rous will give notice to customers of an intention to enter the

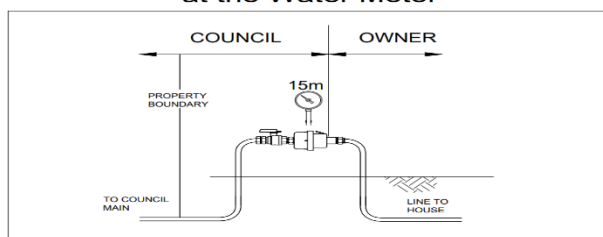
property, however, this may not occur for meter reading, or unplanned emergency works such as pipeline breaks.

- 7.1.4. Only Rous staff or approved contractors may work on Rous infrastructure. Misuse or tampering of Rous infrastructure, including meters and valves, may result in additional fees and charges.
- 7.1.5. Rous will manage its meter fleet through an ongoing meter replacement process to replace old and faulty meters.

7.1.6. **Water pressure**

- 7.1.6.1. Rous's supply network has not been designed for a specific level of fire-fighting capability. Rous endeavours to maintain a minimum pressure of 15m head /150 KPA (refer to figure 3) at the water meter during peak instantaneous demand for new (from July 2025) but not legacy connections.
- 7.1.6.2. Water supply pressures vary all the time from changes in system demand, main breaks, operational changes, and water usage within the property. Rous also undertakes pressure and leakage management programs that may result in a temporary reduction in water supply flow and pressure.
- 7.1.6.3. The customer is responsible for managing pressures on their side of the meter. This may require the installation of a pressure reducing valve to protect the customer's internal plumbing or fixtures from excessive pressures. Use of Rous's infrastructure to manage pressure (that is using the water meter isolation valve or tap to reduce flow) is prohibited and may result in disconnection or legal proceedings.
- 7.1.6.4. Rous may provide a pressure reducing valve that is solely for protection of Rous assets. Any reliance on the Rous pressure reducing valve for protection of customer side plumbing is at the sole risk of the customer.
- 7.1.6.5. The equipment connected to the supply network must be arranged and operated to minimise or prevent adverse pressure and flow effects on the distribution system and other water supply connections.

**Minimum Pressure of 15m head/150kPa
at the Water Meter**



7.2 **Customer's** 7.2.1

Figure 3: minimum pressure of 15m at the water meter

responsibilities

Customers are responsible for payment for all metered water as calculated by Rous and all other charges associated with the supply of water on or before the due date of the account. Failure to comply with Rous's policies or to pay water rates or charges may result in Rous taking action to restrict the supply of water to a premises or to disconnect the property from its supply network. Disconnection or restricting the supply of water does not affect the liability of the rateable person to pay the outstanding rates or charges. Restricting the supply of water to a premises or disconnection from Rous's supply network will be undertaken in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993* and *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021*.

- 7.2.2 Pipes and fittings between a master meter and any sub-meters are the property of the building owner. Customers are responsible for all internal pipes and fittings from the outlet (property side) of the water meter (Figure 1).
- 7.2.3 Rous has the legal right to enter property without notice for the purposes of accessing the water meter (e.g. for meter reading, testing and inspection). Customers have a responsibility to ensure Rous's meter readers have reasonable access to the water meter on their property. Customers should consider this when determining the position of plants, fences, gates, and other barriers to ensure the meter can still be accessed by Rous. Where a water meter is inaccessible for reading, Rous will send a warning letter to the customer stating that the meter is inaccessible and was unable to be read.
- 7.2.4 Any suspected meter inaccuracies must be reported to Rous by the customer as soon as practicable. Rous will consider any water billing anomalies.
- 7.2.5 Rous shall not be responsible for water leaks in private pipework, fittings, or fixtures. Any resulting costs because of excess water use or from the water leak in private property pipework, fittings, or fixtures are the customer's responsibility and shall be paid for by the customer.
- 7.2.6 The customer is responsible for protection of the water meter from damage.
- 7.2.7 It is the responsibility of the customer to ensure that their systems continue to meet the required codes and always operate effectively.

7.3 Testing of water meters

Rous will test the condition and accuracy of the water meter on the premises, if requested by an owner or occupier of the premises and on payment of a fee. If the meter is found to be inaccurate, Rous may charge for the water supplied on the basis of daily consumption equal to the average daily consumption during the corresponding meter reading period of the previous year or as the Rous and consumer may agree. A meter is taken to correctly measure the water passing through it if it registers less than 3% more or less than the correct quantity. If the meter is found to be defective, the meter will be replaced, and the meter testing charge will be reimbursed.

Definitions

Australian Standards means:

AS/NZS 3500:1, namely the current version of the Australian Standard/New Zealand Standard for Plumbing and Drainage. AS/NZS 3500:1 refers to Part 1 (Water Services) of this standard.

AS/NZS 2845:1, namely the current version of the Australian Standard/New Zealand Standard for Water Supply. AS/NZS 2845:1 refers to Part 1 (Backflow Prevention Devices) of this standard.

Backflow means the unintended reversal of flow in a water pipeline whereby water that has already passed beyond the meter assembly into the customer's pipeline system returns to the Rous's supply network.

Backflow Prevention Device means a mechanical device that will prevent the reverse flow of water from a potentially polluted source into a potable water supply network.

Community Title Complex a complex of properties that share common property, registered under a deposited plan. The common property may be vacant or have shared facilities.

Council means Rous County Council, being the organisation responsible for the supply of bulk drinking water to the Ballina, Byron, Lismore, and Richmond Valley local government areas.

Customer means the owner of the property that has a direct retail water service connection with Rous. In the instance of a body corporate or multiple owners, the Owners Corporation, or joint owners, through a letter of authority, shall be regarded as the Customer in any connection.

Cross-connection means any connection or arrangement between the potable water supply network connected to water main or any fixture, which may under certain conditions enable water unsuitable for drinking or other substances to enter the potable water supply.

Hazard Ratings (as defined in AS/NZS 3500:1) means:

- High Hazard – any condition, device, or practice which in connection with the water supply network has the potential to cause death.
- Medium Hazard – any condition, device, or practice which in connection with the water supply network could endanger death.
- Low Hazard – any condition, device, or practice that in connection with the drinking water supply network constitutes a nuisance but does not endanger health or cause injury.

Land Zone means the land zone classification as determined by Ballina, Byron, Lismore and Richmond Valley councils and their relevant Local Environmental Plans, as determined by the NSW State Government.

Legacy Connection means a connection to the Rous supply network that existed prior to these conditions of connection being implemented (from July 2025) and that does not meet the requirements herein.

Local Government Act means the Local Government Act NSW (1993) and its associated regulations and any subsequent revisions or amendments.

Master Meter the first and main meter on a property where multiple tenancies share a common connection. This type of meter must have a sub meter. All water goes through the master meter before the sub meters.

Multi-level Building any building that has 2 levels or more, but is not a house, townhouse, or terrace house.

Plumbing Code of Australia means the technical provisions for the design, construction, installation, replacement, repair, alteration, and maintenance of water services, sanitary, plumbing and drainage systems.

Potable Water means drinking quality water.

Qualified Person means a licensed plumber who has undertaken accredited backflow training from a registered training organisation in accordance with the *Plumbing and Drainage Act 2011* (NSW).

Retail Water Service Connection(s) means all water connections to Rous's supply network other than connections to another local council.

Riser the pipe that comes out of the ground to connect the meter to the private water service and Rous's water main.

Service Pipe means the pipe that connects to the Rous water main and is installed from the water main through to the boundary of the property that is to be supplied with water.

Subtract (sub meter) a water meter that is located after the master meter and measures water supplied to a connection that is downstream of the master meter. Water usage registered by the sub meter is deducted from the total water usage registered by the master meter to calculate the water usage charges for both the sub meter and the master meter. Also termed deduct meter.

Supply Point means the point at the boundary of the property being supplied with water where the water meter, ball valve and backflow prevention device are installed.

Testable Backflow Prevention Device means any backflow device that is provided with test taps for the purpose of testing its operation, and a registered break tank, or a registered air gap.

Torrens Title Lot a type of property that registered under a deposited plan. A Torrens Title Lot can have a home or a business building on it.

Valve a device that allows control of the flow of water.

Water Meter means a device installed by Rous to measure the quantity of water supplied to a customer.

Contact officer

Infrastructure Program Manager

Related documents

Policies

Local Approvals Policy – Water Supply – Retail Customer

Debt management and financial hardship Policy - [TO BE UPDATED]

Retail Water Customer Account Assistance Policy - [TO BE UPDATED]

[The Australian Drinking Water Guidelines \(2011\)](#)

[Fluoridation policy](#)

Procedures

Not applicable

Legislation

Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)

Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 (NSW)

Water Management Act 2000 (NSW)

Other

Australian Drinking Water Guidelines

Plumbing Code of Australia

File No.:		Next review date: April 2026	
Version	Purpose and description	Date approved by Council	Resolution No
1.0	Updated to clarify and standardise metering arrangements for retail customers		

Attachment 1 – Standard meter arrangements

All properties and units in a multi-unit development must be metered. A single meter for a dual occupancy development (including granny flats) is only acceptable if you do not wish to subdivide the lot or separately monitor the water use. The following diagrams show the accepted (standard) meter installation and associated water billing arrangements. These apply to residential and non-residential developments.

Where practical, adequate separation between power and water services should be provided (e.g. these services are provided on opposite sides of the property).

You must request approval from Rous if you wish to install a non-standard meter arrangement.

You must include the reason that a standard installation is not practical and a plan of the proposed installation with the *Water Service Application*.

Contact Rous for advice and requirements for meter arrangements for other types of development including multi-level developments.

Meter access and ownership

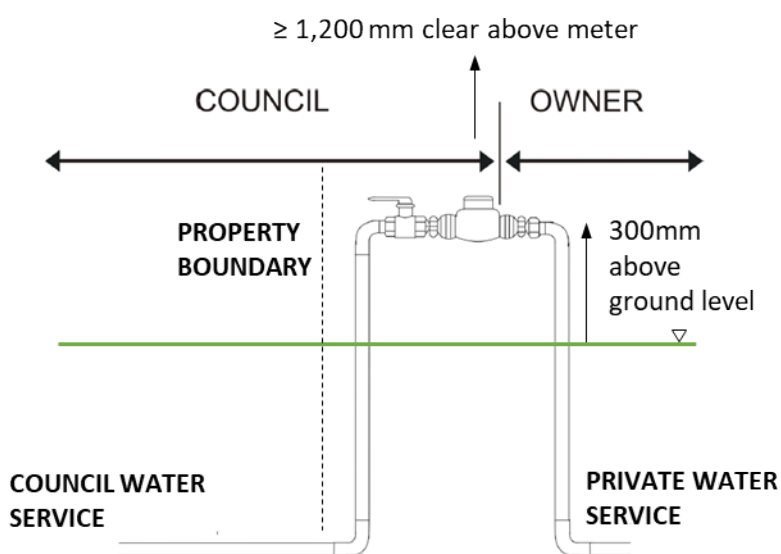


Figure 1: Meter access requirements and ownership

Single developments

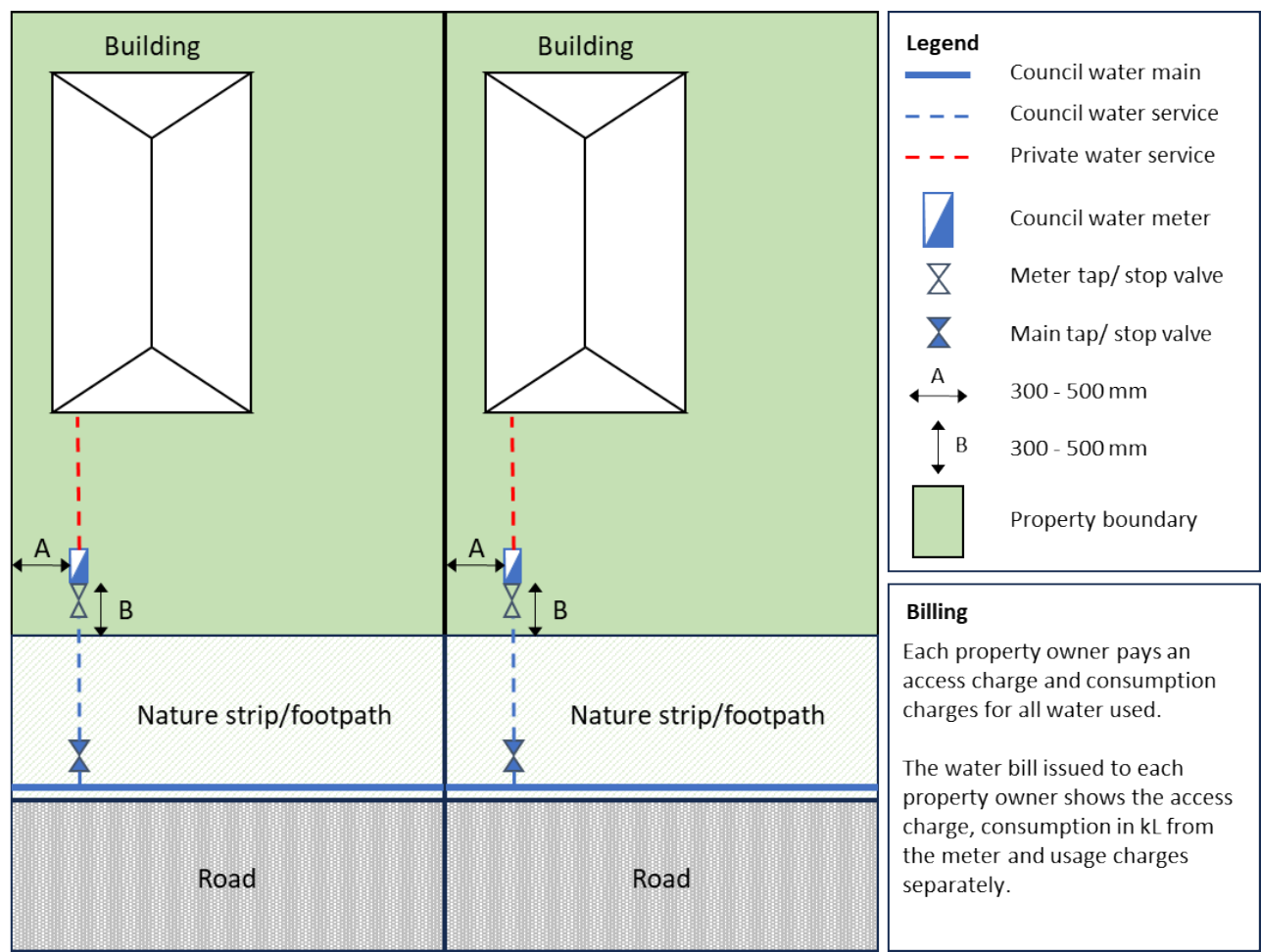


Figure 2: Standard meter arrangement: single development

Dual reticulation

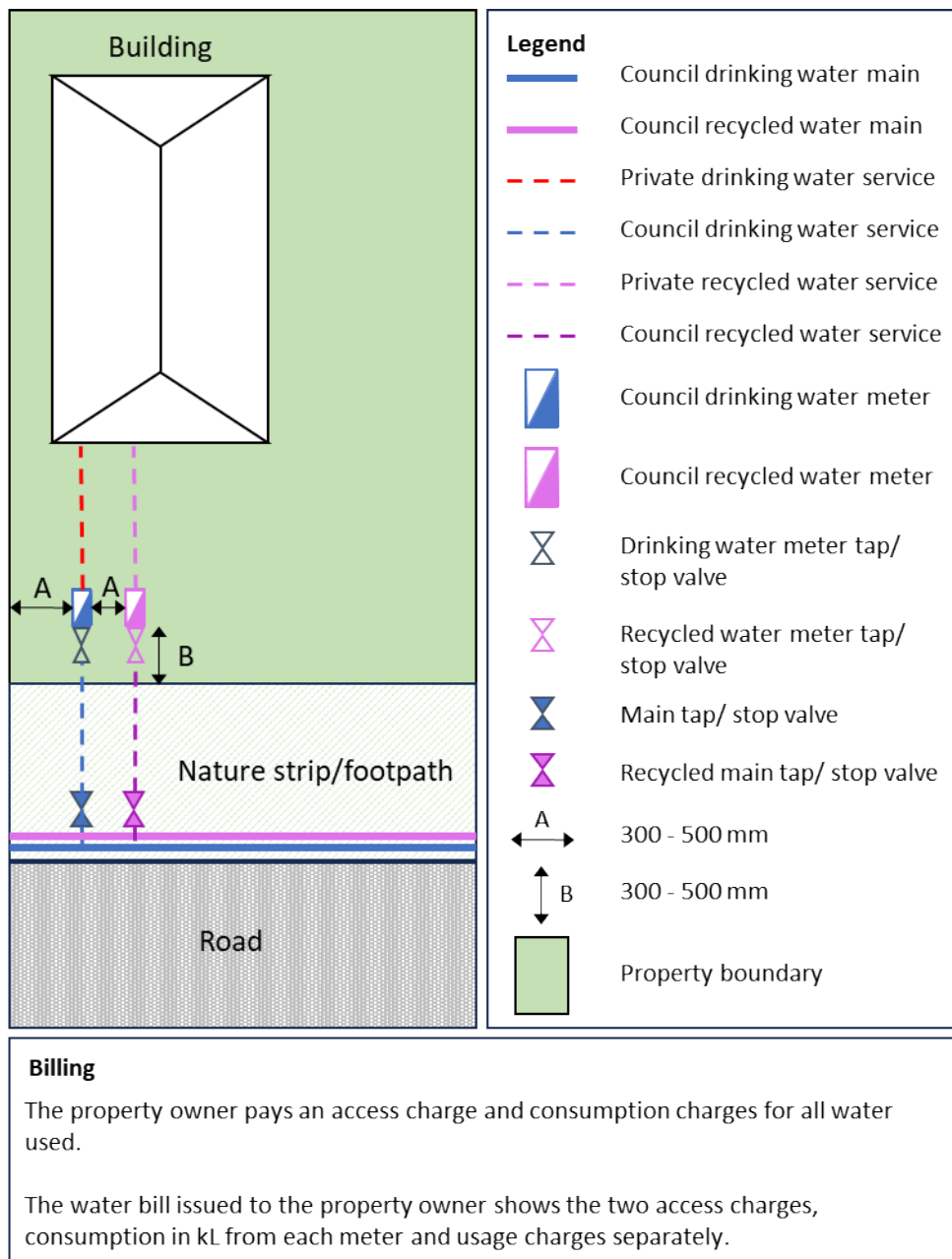


Figure 3: Standard meter arrangement: dual reticulation

Dual occupancies

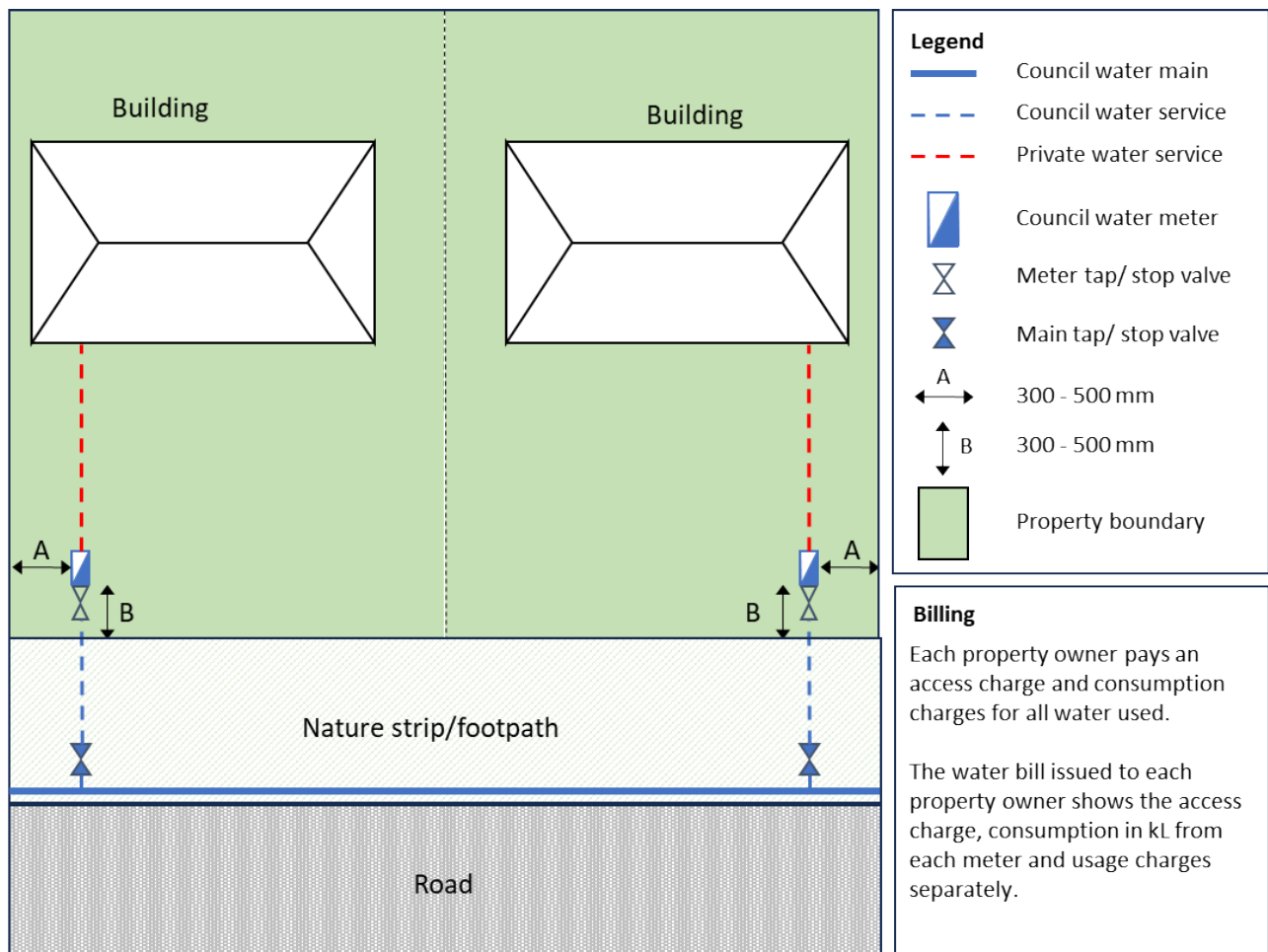


Figure 4: Standard meter arrangement: Dual occupancy subdivision (2 meters and 2 connections)

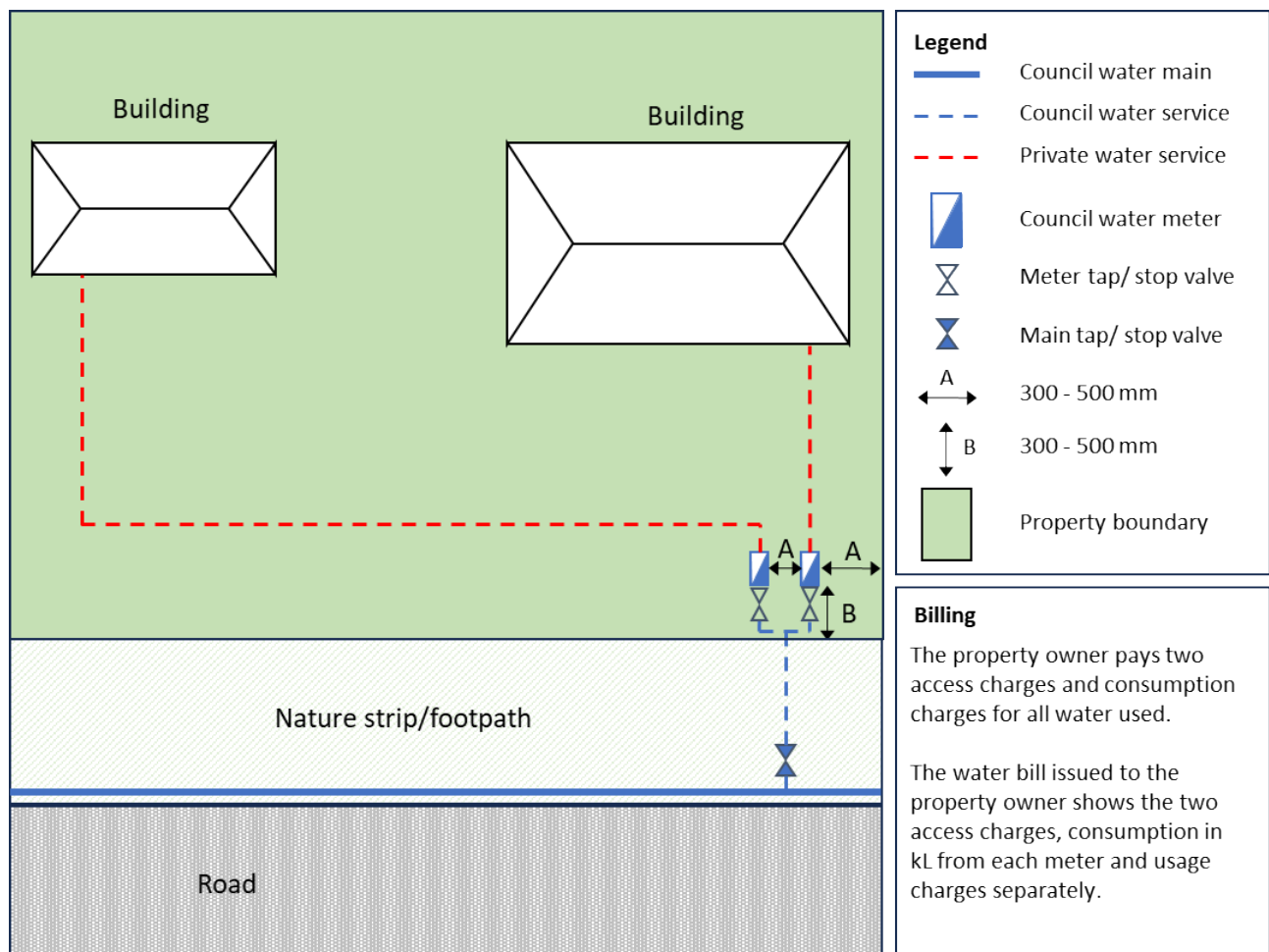


Figure 5: Standard meter arrangement: Dual occupancy with no subdivision e.g. a secondary dwelling, separate water use (2 meters and 1 connection)

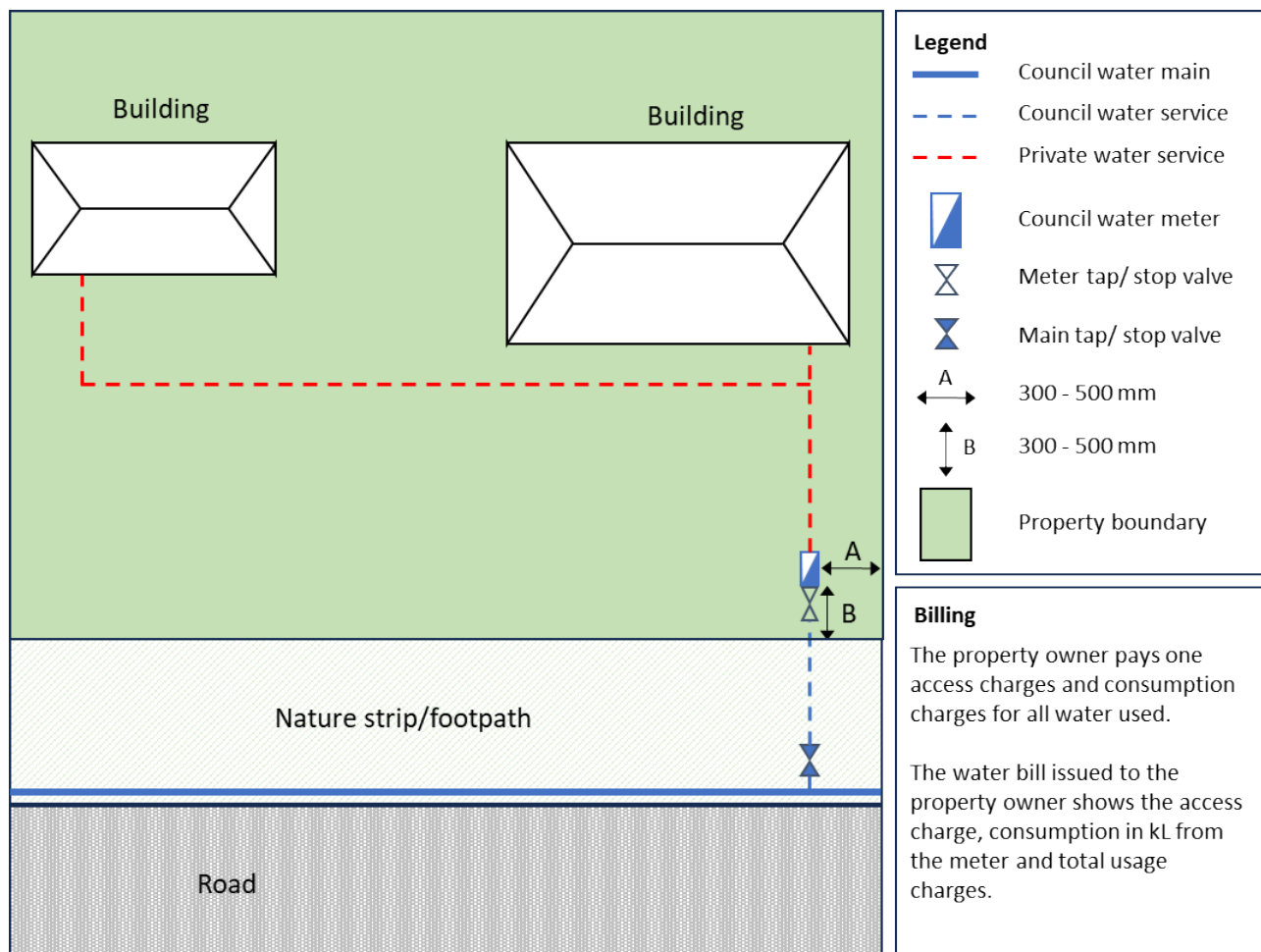


Figure 6: Standard meter arrangement: Dual occupancy with no subdivision e.g. a secondary dwelling, combined water use (1 meter and 1 connection)

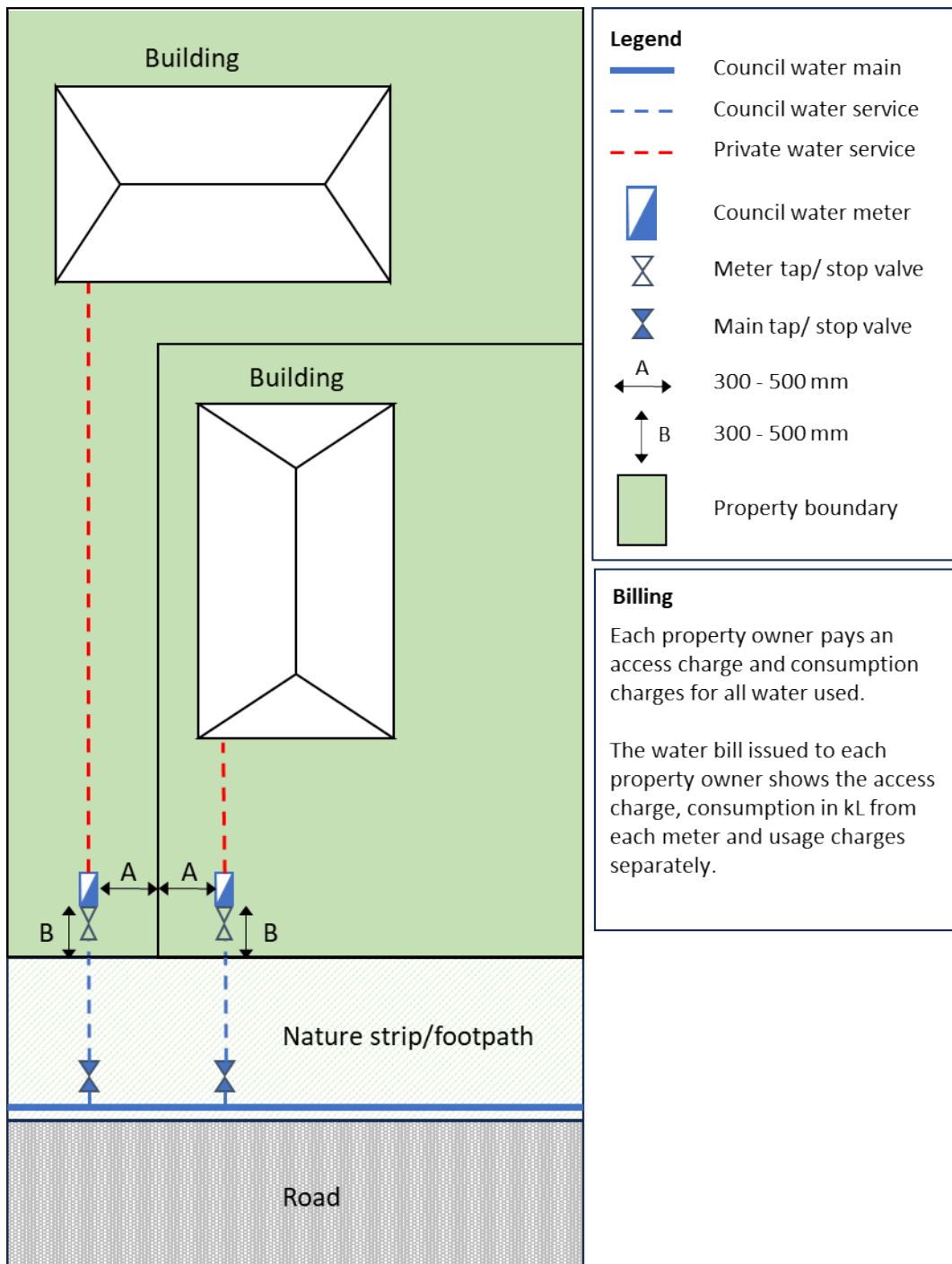


Figure 7: Standard meter arrangement: Battle-axe block (2 meters and 2 connections)

Multi-unit developments

Separate metering for each unit is to be provided either adjacent to each unit or at the street boundary connected directly to the water main via a manifold connection. All properties with common (shared) water use will require a master meter in addition to the individual (private or subtract) meters for each unit.

A water main extension is required for more than 8 lots.

Each meter must be labelled as shown in Figure 8. The label or tag must be fixed to the pipework adjacent to the meter or attached to the meter and have the unit number and meter number displayed in permanent ink.

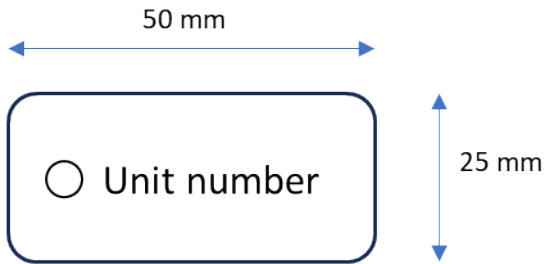


Figure 8: Label requirements for multiple meters

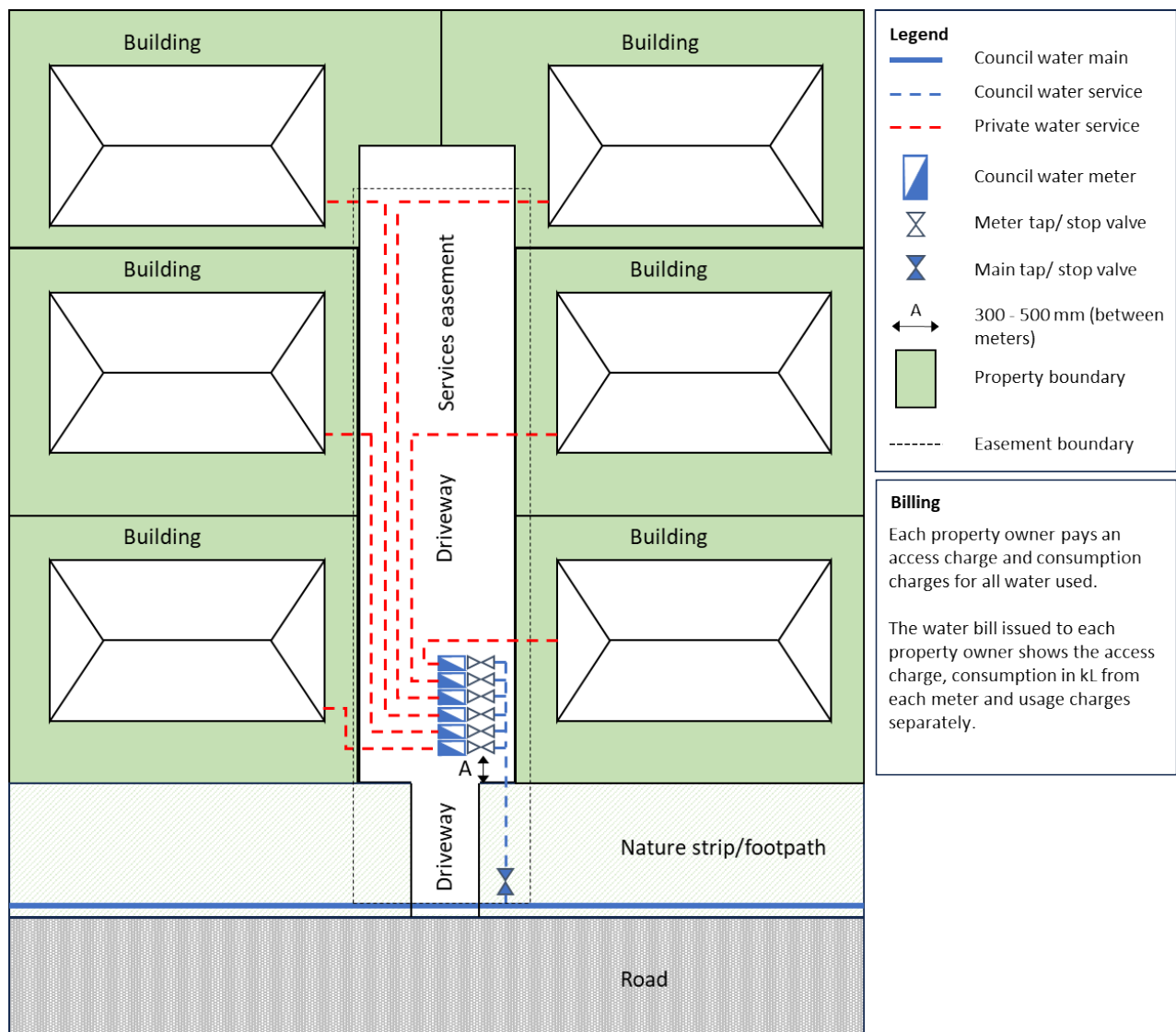


Figure 9: Standard meter arrangement: 3 – 8 lots with cul-de-sac right-of-way and services easement (1 meter for each connection)

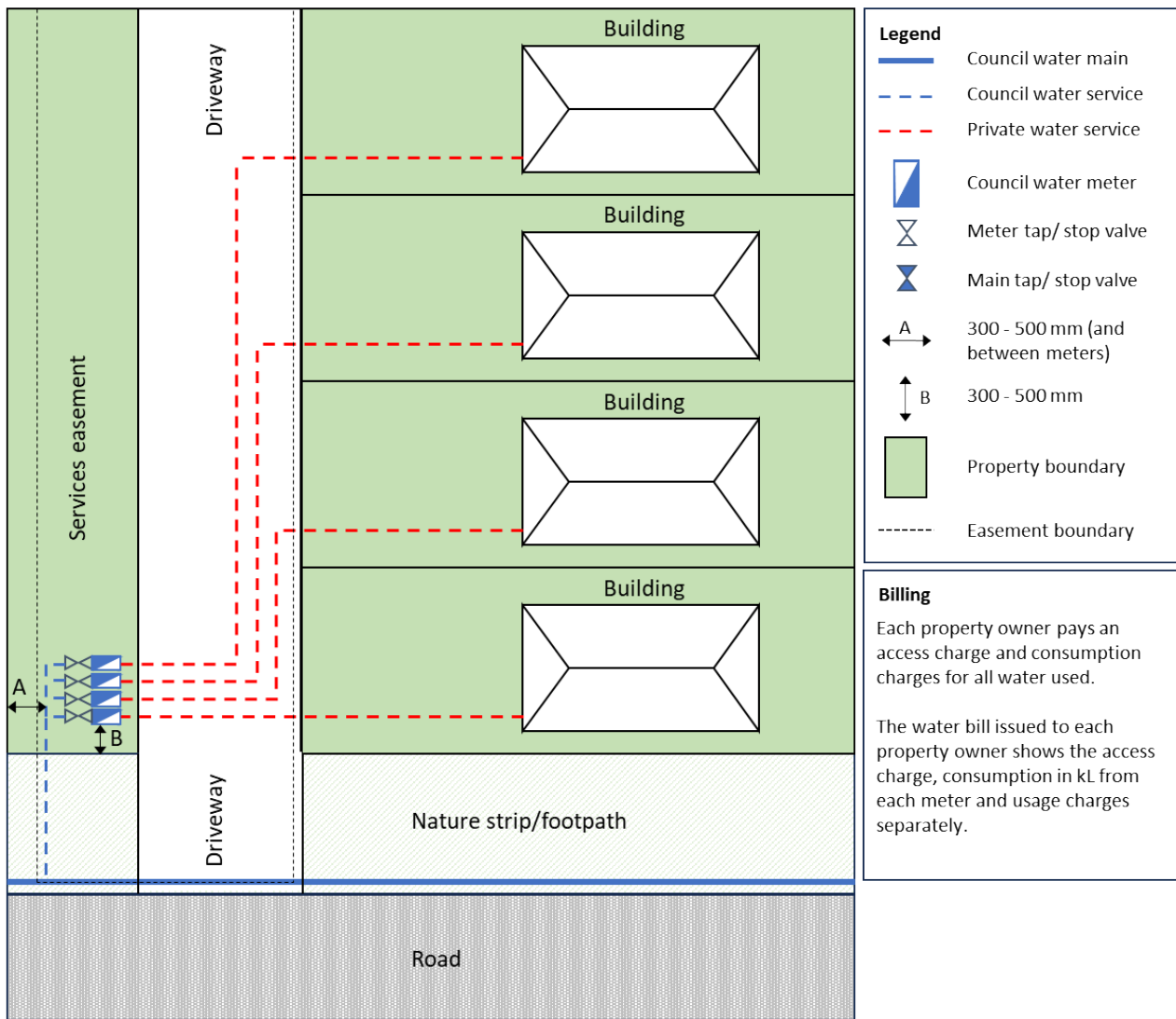


Figure 10: Standard meter arrangement: 3 – 8 lots with straight right-of-way and services easement (1 meter for each connection)

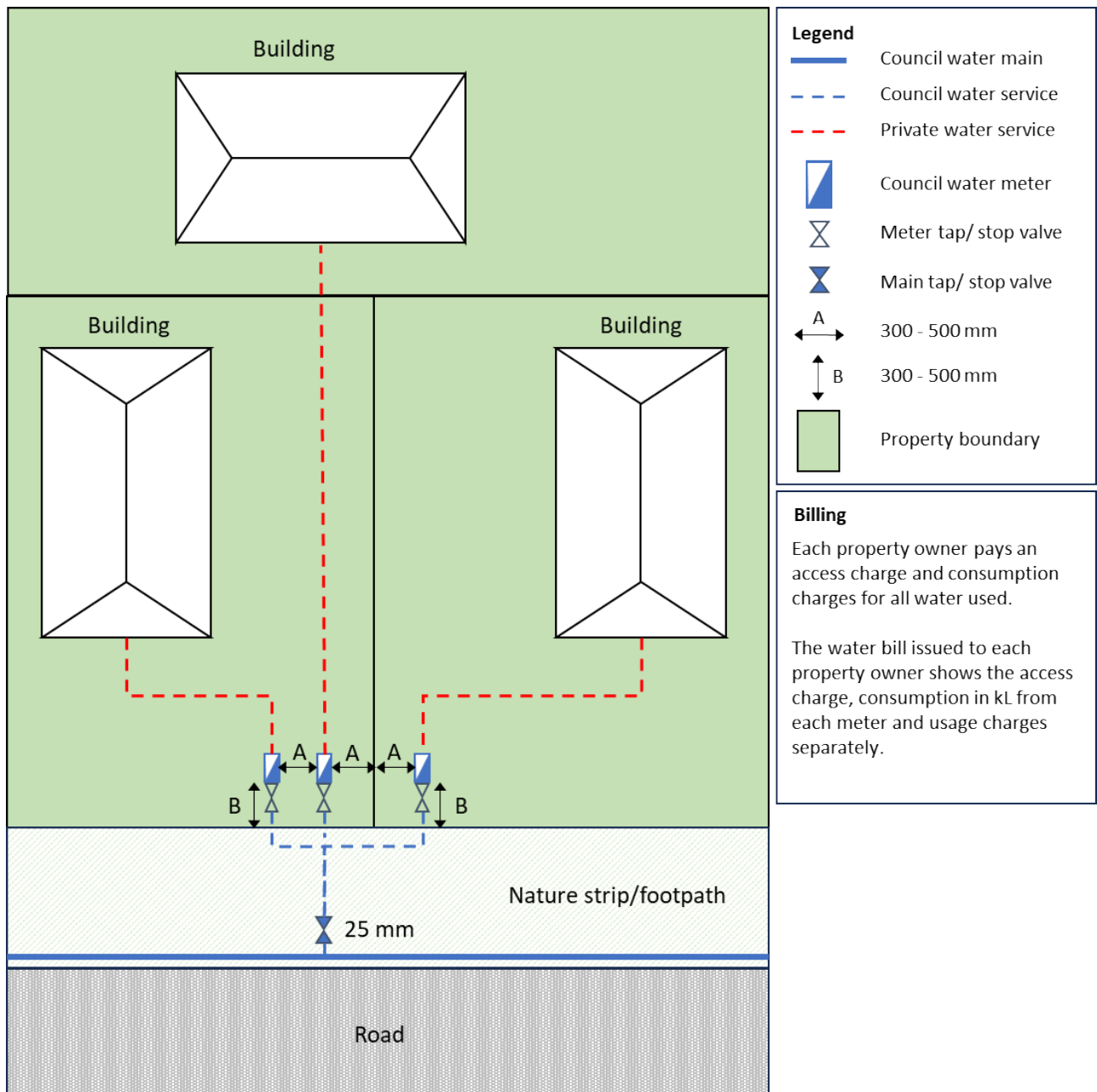


Figure 11: Standard meter arrangement: 3 lots with 3 meters and 1 connection

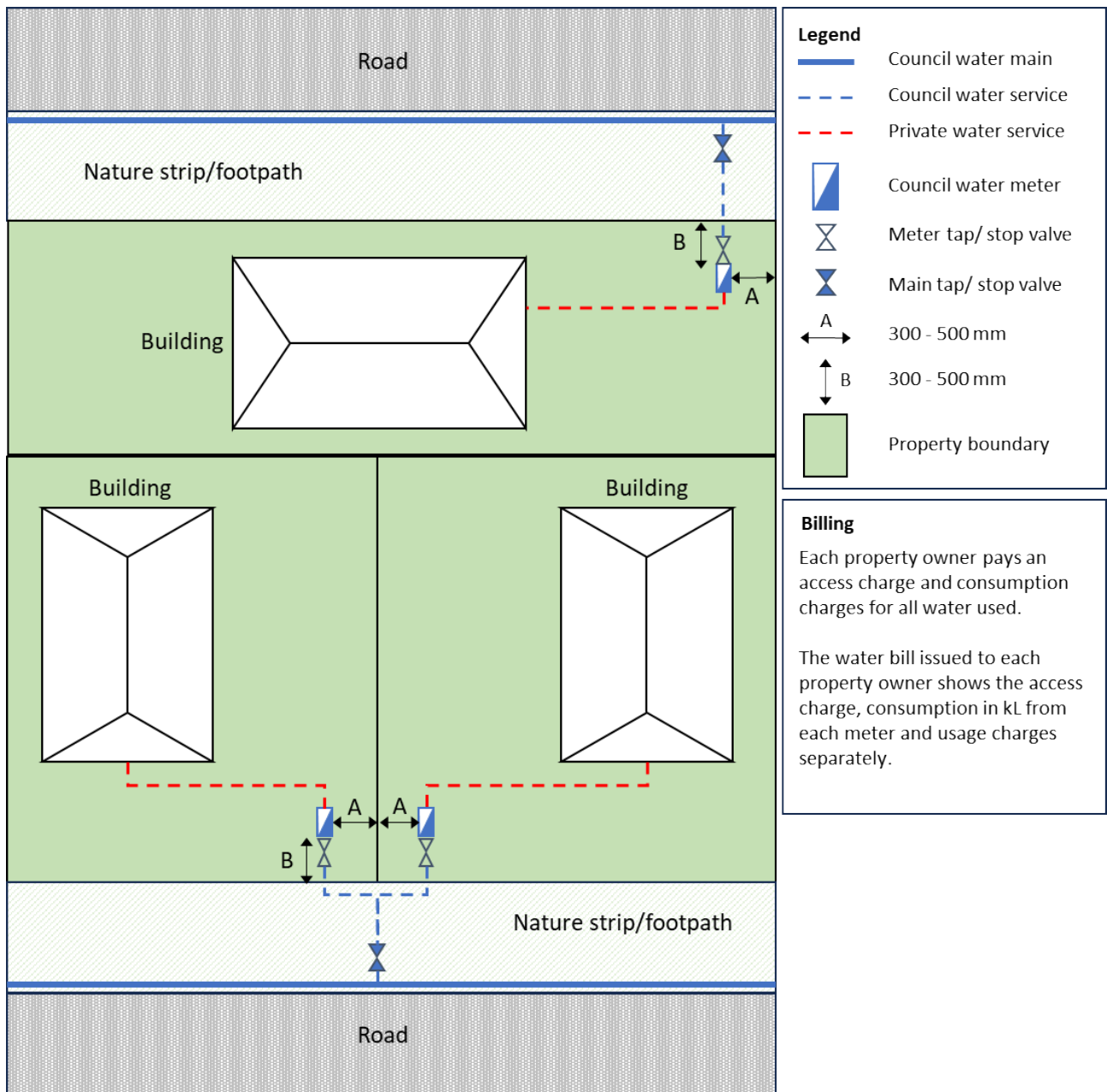


Figure 12: Standard meter arrangement: 3 lots with 3 meters and 2 connections

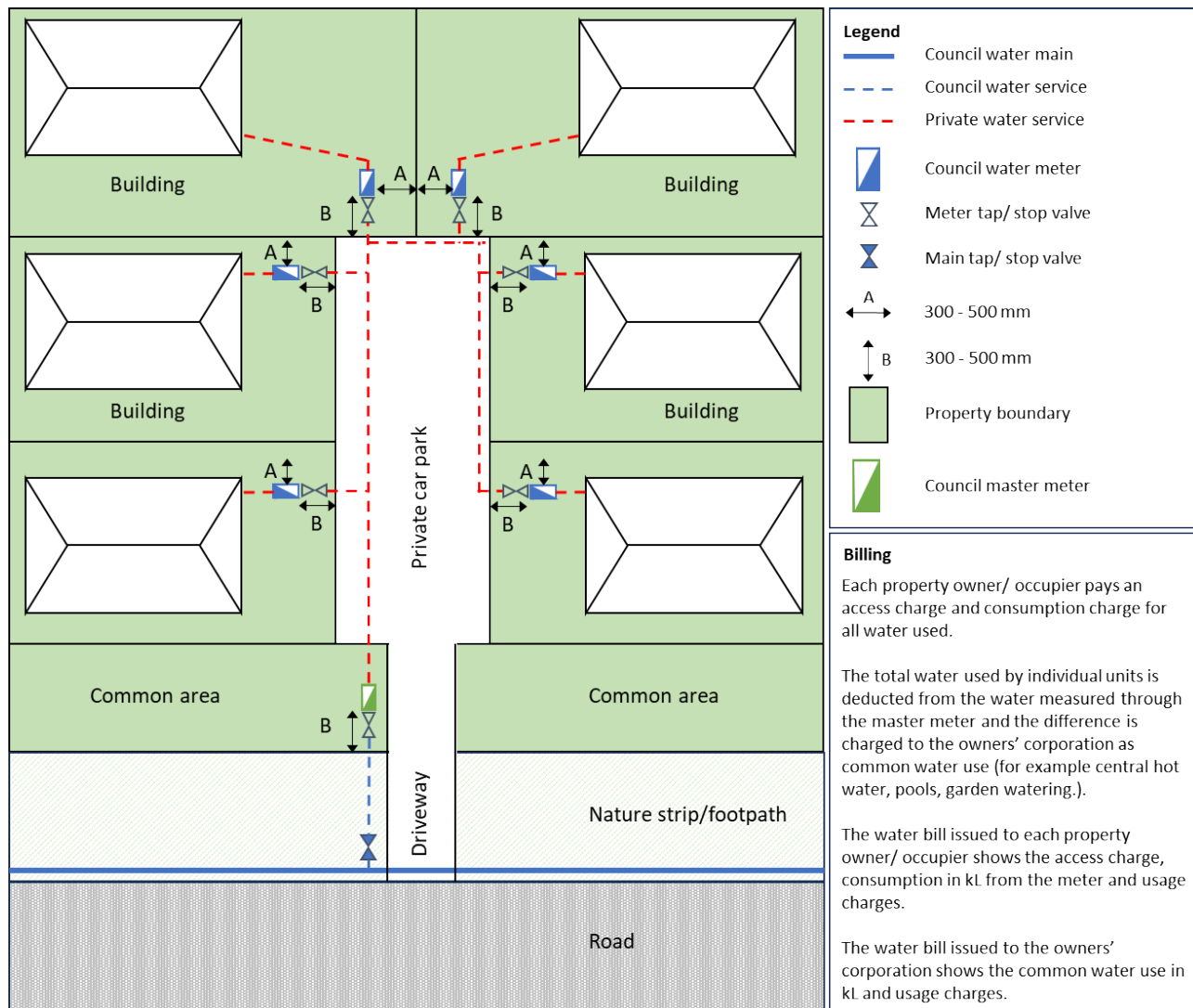


Figure 13: Standard meter arrangement: 4 or more lots (strata complex)

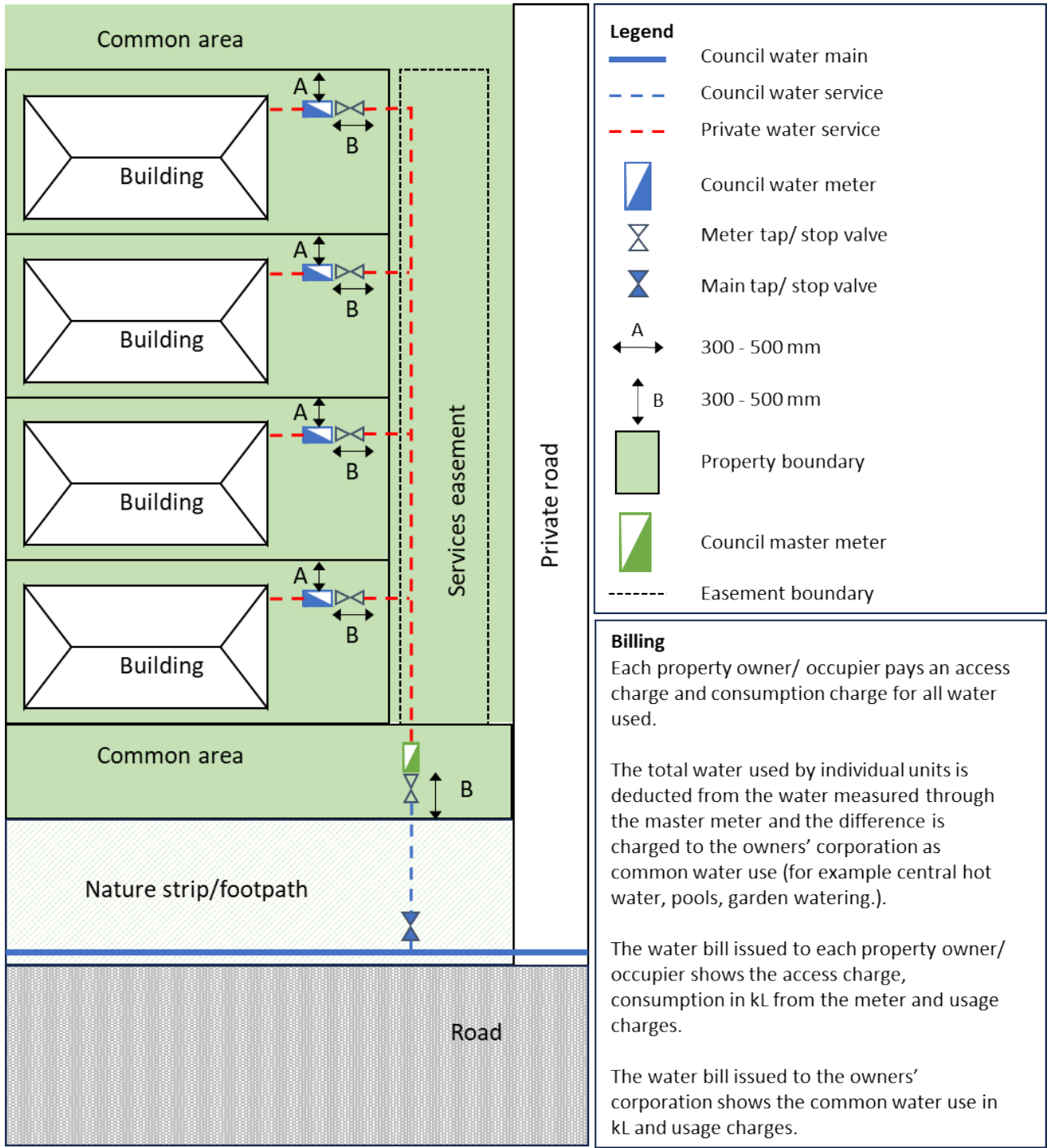


Figure 14: Standard meter arrangement: 4 or more lots (community title)

Policy review - Water Account Assistance policy (revised) and Debt Management and Financial Hardship policy (revised)

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

Report Contributors: Finance Manager (Jonathan Patino)

Recommendation

That Council publicly exhibit the revised draft Water Account Assistance policy (Attachment 1) and the revised draft Debt Management and Financial Hardship policy (Attachment 2) for a period of 28 days, and:

(a) Should no public submissions be received:

- i. The Retail Water Customer Account Assistance policy dated 19 June 2024 and the Debt Management and Financial Hardship policy dated 17 August 2022 are revoked, and any policies revived as a result of the revocation, effective 16 April 2025; and
- ii. The revised Water Account Assistance policy, revised Debt Management and Financial Hardship policy are adopted effective 16 April 2025.

(b) Should any public submissions be received, those submissions, and the proposal in relation to the revocation and adoption of the Water Account Assistance policy and the Debt Management and Financial Hardship policy be considered by Council at its next meeting.

Key points

1. The Retail Water Customer Account Assistance policy has been reviewed and renamed to the Water Account Assistance policy (WAA policy).
2. It is proposed that new concessions be added to the WAA policy for (a) new Rous customers resulting from the acquisition of the Marom Creek Water Treatment Plant, (b) for low-income or small not-for profit customers liable for the backflow device charge and (c) for community halls.
3. Concessions for concealed or undetected water leaks have been updated to operate under a sunset clause to 31 December 2025 before ending.
4. The Debt Management and Financial Hardship policy has been revised to simplify the wording, provide important information for customers and better reflect current processes.

Background

Council's policies are continually reviewed for suitability and currency to promote and deliver continuous improvement and ensure legislative compliance. The policies outlined below were reviewed as part of the ordinary review cycle or due to legislative triggers.

1. Water Account Assistance policy – proposed for exhibition

The WAA policy (Attachment 1) operates predominantly as an annual program of financial assistance offered by Council to its eligible retail water customers who incur high water usage due to an undetected leak or natural disaster. This policy has been reviewed as part of a regular review cycle and remains compliant with legislative requirements and Council objectives. It is

recommended that Council approve the public exhibition of the policy. If no submissions are received, it is proposed that the policy be deemed to be adopted as at 16 April 2025, being the Council meeting at which it was considered. If submissions are received, the policy and submissions will be reported to the next scheduled Council meeting for consideration.

Summary of key changes:

- A revised Backflow Policy [52/21] was adopted in 2021. Devices were rolled out in 2024 in conjunction with the smart meter project.
- Council adopted a Backflow Device Management Charge of \$196/annum (2024/25) to take effect from March 2025.
- It is proposed that Council's Water Account Assistance policy make provision for financial assistance for low-income customers and not-for profit organisations whereby the Backflow Device Management Charge may be reduced to 75% of the standard annual charge.
- There are approximately 220 customers currently receiving the pensioner concession rebate. Using this figure as a guide to potential eligible customers indicates that the annual financial assistance amount could be approximately \$11,000.
- It is also proposed to include a provision in the policy for community halls that have historically received a 50% reduction from the standard annual charge for their Water Facility Charge and Backflow Device Management Charge. Historically these customers have received a reduced Water Facility Charge of 50%. These discounted charges formed part of various policies over the years culminating in their introduction into the Fees and Charges policy in 2019 after the former Rebates to community organisations policy was revoked. Unfortunately, an administration error meant that this section was omitted from the Fees and Charges from 2021/22 onwards. The omission was discovered as part of this policy review. It is proposed to include these discounted charges as a concession to be consistent with other concessions offered to customers.

2. Debt Management and Financial Hardship policy – proposed for exhibition

The revised Debt Management and Financial Hardship policy (Attachment 3) outlines Council's approach to addressing customers who may be experiencing financial hardship, the recovery options for collecting outstanding debts and the circumstances where a write-off of fees and charges may be approved. This policy has been reviewed as part of a regular review cycle (noting that this was due to occur in August 2024) and remains compliant with legislative requirements and Council objectives. It is recommended that Council approve the public exhibition of the policy. If no submissions are received, it is proposed that the policy be deemed to be adopted as at 16 April 2025, being the Council meeting at which it was considered. If submissions are received, the policy and submissions will be reported to the next scheduled Council meeting for consideration.

Summary of key changes:

- Remove definitions section and make minor non-substantive edits throughout the policy including summarising content.
- Update content to remove references to or provisions associated with the former Richmond Water Laboratories.
- Delete sections duplicating content from other policies and instead cross-reference those policies.

Governance

A. Finance

A recurring, annual budget allocation for the WAA program is adopted by Council as part of its Operational Plan/Annual Budget each year. This has been increased to \$45,000 to accommodate the changes above and will be reviewed annually. Water charges that are written off are reported to Council bi-annually.

B. Environment

Not applicable.

C. Legal

For transparency and to promote the objectives of section 356 of the *Local Government Act 1993*, it is recommended that these policies be subject to public exhibition for a period of 28 days.

Consultation

The review of the policies outlined in this report was undertaken in consultation with relevant staff from the Governance, Finance and Planning and Delivery departments.

Comment

In summary, the revised policies are recommended for public exhibition and adoption as outlined in the report.

Attachment

1. Revised Water Account Assistance Policy (for **adoption**)
2. [Retail Water Customer Account Assistance Policy](#) (for **revocation**)
3. Revised Debt Management and Financial Hardship Policy (for **adoption**)
4. [Debt Management and Financial Hardship Policy dated 17 August 2022](#) (for **revocation**)

Policy



Debt management and financial hardship

Approved by Council: xx/xx/xxxx

To establish a fair and equitable approach to the recovery of debt, the assessment of financial hardship and outline the circumstances when debt can be considered for write-off.

Safety

Teamwork

Accountability

Respect

Background

Council's main functions are providing bulk water supply, weed biosecurity and flood mitigation services to the community. Council also operates a network of retail water filling stations and direct retail water service connections. Council is also engaged to provide weed biosecurity services outside of the local area under fee for service arrangements.

Most customers pay their accounts when they fall due. The *Local Government Act 1993* ('the Act') requires Council to be diligent in the collection and management of public funds, while also making provision for financial assistance to customers experiencing genuine financial hardship.

Policy statement

Council is committed to the efficient and effective collection of overdue monies and the fair and equitable treatment of customers.

Council will achieve this by:

- having regard to the Office of Local Government Debt Management and Hardship Guidelines
- providing a timely and cost-effective process for debt collection;
- ensuring Council staff are trained in appropriate debt recovery, hardship and write-off procedures;
- maintaining fair and respectful dealings with customers and applying the principles of integrity and confidentiality;
- providing financial assistance options consistent with the provisions of the Act; and
- complying with applicable legislative requirements in relation to the recovery of debt.

Financial hardship

Customer financial hardship will be assessed on an individual basis. Retail water customers experiencing financial hardship will need to make application to access financial assistance. Other customers facing financial hardship will need to contact Council in writing to advise of the nature of their financial hardship with details of proposed payment arrangements.

In all cases, a payment arrangement will be offered to assist in repayment of accounts. A payment arrangement will generally only be offered for a period of up to 12-months although this will be review on a case-by-case basis. If a payment arrangement is not entered into then interest will be

applied to the outstanding balance at the rate prescribed in Council's Statement of Revenue (Fees and Charges) Policy.

(Note: Interest on overdue water charges (section 566(3) Local Government Act 1993) - the maximum rate of interest payable on overdue rates and charges for the period 1 July to 30 June is determined by the Minister for Local Government will be charged).

In addition to a payment arrangement:

- Customers with a direct retail water service connection with Council may be eligible for assistance under the Water Account Assistance Policy and Guidelines.
- Customers who have procured products or services from Council and have been charged a fee may apply for the fee to be reduced or waived in accordance with section 610E of the Act.

Recovery action

When a customer fails to pay monies owed in full or contact Council to enter into a payment arrangement by the due date of a water account or tax invoice, a reminder notice/letter will be issued. Interest will apply to water accounts in accordance with section 566(3) of the Act.

If by the due date specified on the reminder notice/letter the customer does not pay the monies owed in full or fails to contact Council to enter into a payment arrangement the matter will be referred to an external debt recovery agency. In addition, applicable credit accounts and access to products/services will be suspended.

It is the responsibility of the customer to communicate with Council and to ensure that Council's contact details including daytime telephone number, email and postal address are correct.

Where a payment arrangement is in place and a second default occurs, the matter will be referred to an external debt recovery agency.

Recovery action may include:

- Letter of Demand
- Statement of Liquidated Claim
- Default Judgement
- Examinations Summons
- Writ of Execution
- Service of a rent order where the property is tenanted
- Garnishee
- Charge against the land (via the issuing of a caveat)

All legal costs incurred in debt recovery activities will be charged against the account of which the debt is owed.

Recovery action will continue until such time as the outstanding debt, including all legal costs incurred by Council are paid in full, or a mutually agreeable payment arrangement is made with Council to pay the outstanding amount, including legal costs, as per this policy.

Council reserves the right to:

- cease offering credit and call in payment in advance of any further supply of product/service where a credit account has been suspended due to recovery action, including instances where the debt has been repaid in full including all legal costs.

- restrict or disconnect water supply to customers with a direct retail water service connection.

Write-offs

Council is limited by legislation in relation to discounts and write offs. Part 5, Division 3 of *The Local Government (General) Regulation 2021* is available [here](#) and sets out the limited circumstances and options where write offs and other account options are available.

The fact that a charge or debt is written off under clause 131 or 213 of the Regulation does not prevent Council from taking legal proceedings to recover the amount.

A write-off register will be maintained, and an information summary report will be submitted to Council on a bi-annual basis.

Informal dispute resolution

Where a customer owes a debt to Council and disputes the amount charged or outstanding, the customer is required to put the dispute in writing, stating reasons they believe the account to be incorrect. Council will investigate the complaint to determine if the dispute can be resolved informally and shall respond to the dispute in writing in a timely manner.

Council's Feedback and Complaints Handling Policy or the office of the NSW Ombudsman should be referred to for guidance on complaints.

If a customer is actively participating in a dispute resolution process, has made a request for financial hardship that has not yet been determined, or is complying with a payment arrangement made with Council in good faith, debt recovery proceedings and interest charges will be suspended.

Customers are encouraged to access support services to help resolve legal or financial issues and/or negotiate arrangements to manage debt. Community legal centres and financial counsellors provide a mix of social, financial and paralegal advice and advocacy on debt issues.

Support services

Customers suffering financial hardship or require legal support, may find the following organisations of assistance:

- ASIC's Moneysmart: www.moneysmart.gov.au
- Legal Aid NSW: www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au Telephone: (02) 6885 4233
- Community Legal Centres NSW: www.clcnsw.org.au Telephone: 1300 888 529
- Centrelink: www.centrelink.gov.au Telephone: 13 63 57
- National Debt Hotline operated by Financial Counsellors Association of NSW: www.fcan.com.au Telephone: 1800 007 007

Contact officer

Finance Manager

Related documents

Policies

Retail Water Supply (Local Approvals Policy)

Water Account Assistance Policy

Privacy policy

Procedures

Debt Management Procedure

Restrictor Procedure

Legislation

Local Government Act 1993

Local Government (General) Regulation 2021

Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998

Other

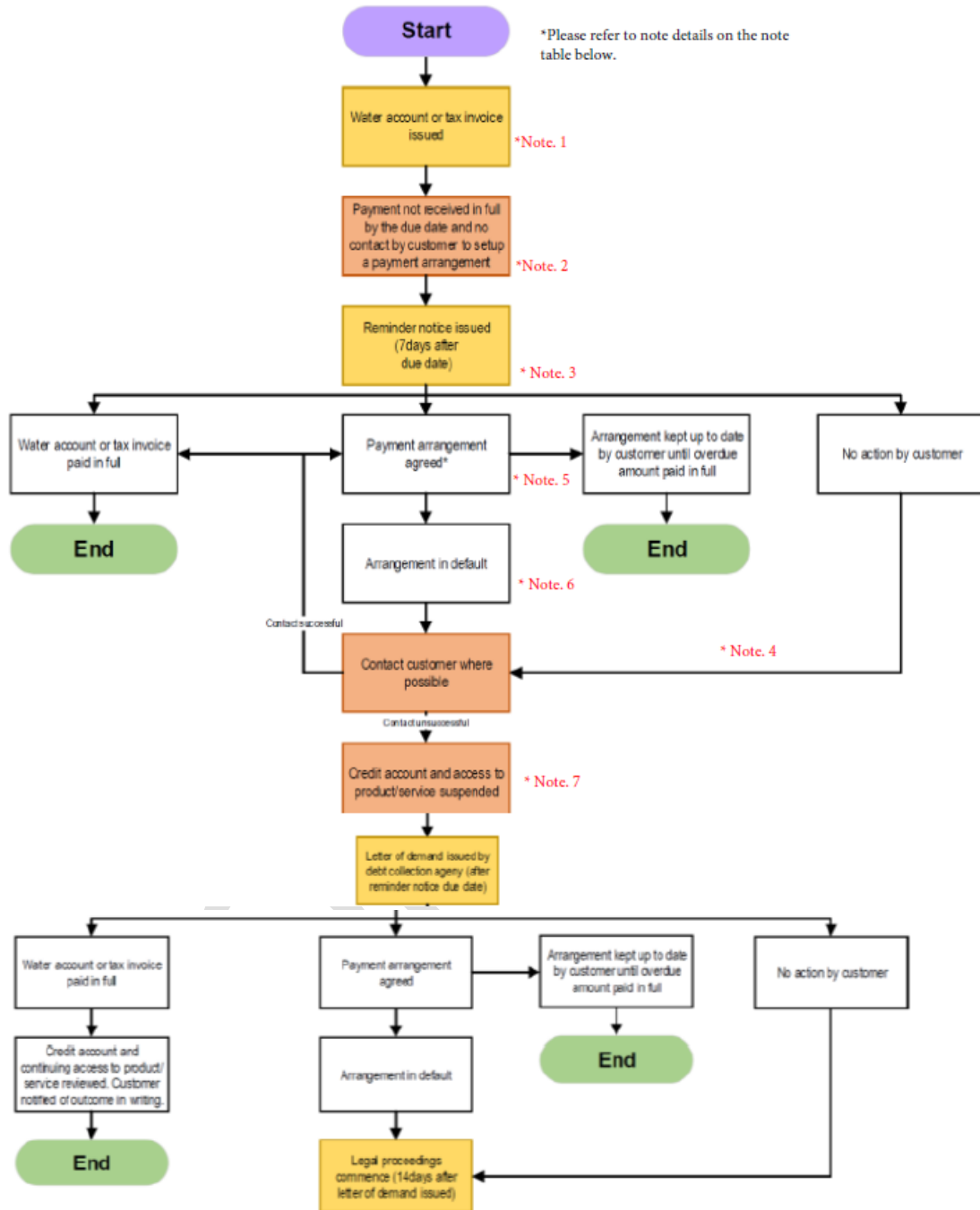
Debt recovery flowchart

NSW Office of Local Government Debt Management and Hardship Guidelines

Retail Water Customer Account Assistance Guidelines

Office use only	CM no. XXXX	Next review date: [2 years]	
Version	Purpose and description	Date adopted by Council	Resolution no.
1.0		21/04/2020	16/20
2.0	FOR PUBLIC EXHIBIT – Revised to remove reference to value of debts that may only be approved by Council resolution. Power to write-off debts below this threshold captured in the delegation issued to the General Manager.	17/08/2022	50/22
2.1	Revised policy deemed adopted following period of 28 days public exhibit during which no submissions were received	17/08/2022	50/22
3.0	Amended financial hardship application instructions, removal of account assistance details contained in Water Account Assistance policy and update legal references under write-offs.	[DRAFT]	[DRAFT]

Debt recovery flowchart



A customer is:

1. Property owner with a direct water service connection with Council, or
2. An individual, business, company or government entity who've procured products or services from Council or RML.

*Where a customer defaults on a payment arrangement for a second time, matter to be referred to debt collection agent

Notes Table

Note. 1	Quarterly water accounts are issued in August, November, February and May. All tax invoices are on 30 days terms
Note. 2	Interest is applicable 1 st day after due date.
Note. 3	For retail water account customers, reminder/Notices of Intent to restrict (Final reminder)/Restrictor notice issued 8 days after each escalation notice due date.
Note. 4	For retail water account customers, a letter within 7 days after the Restrictor Notice due date will be issued advising customers that Rous will proceed to restrictor installation within 14 days if no payment agreement is made with the customers. Other customers will be followed up within 30 days, if no agreement is made, debt recovery action commences.
Note. 5	No interest is charged while there is a payment plan in place.
Note. 6	Scheduled payments are not made by scheduled due dates will be followed up within 14 days after due dates. For retail water account customers, if no response is received, proceed to note 4 restrictor installation procedure. Other customers will be followed up within 30 days, if no agreement is made, debt recovery action commences.
Note. 7	For retail water customers, restrictor installation proceeds if no action by customer within 14 days after receiving the restrictor notice. Water disconnection and debt recovery action proceeds if no action by customer 14 days after receiving the water restrictor is installed.

Policy



Water Account Assistance

Approved by Council: [DATE]

To provide a framework with uniform and transparent rules for eligibility, assessment and determination of requests for water account assistance having regard to the principles of fairness, integrity and confidentiality.

Safety

Teamwork

Accountability

Respect

Background

Rous County Council (Council) recognises that there are circumstances where our retail water customers may have difficulty paying their water account. The objective of this Policy is to ensure uniform and transparent rules for providing assistance to customers for the payment of their water account.

This policy does not apply to recipients of bulk water or commercial use water from Council.¹

Policy statement

The *Local Government Act 1993* allows Council to provide account assistance to its customers. Council has determined that it will voluntarily offer the following account assistance to its eligible retail water customers:²

- Payment arrangements, including payment extensions (section 564);
- Writing off or reducing interest (section 564 and 567);
- Extension of pensioner concession to avoid hardship (section 577);
- Granting of financial assistance due to a concealed or undetected water leak or for the use of water dependent medical equipment (section 356);
- Granting of financial assistance due to a natural disaster event (section 356);
- Abandonment of pensioner rates and charges due to a concealed or undetected water leak (section 582);
- Granting of financial assistance for low-income households or registered not-for-profit organisations who are charged a backflow device management charge to avoid hardship (section 356); and
- Temporary granting of financial assistance for customers affected by the transfer of the Marom Creek Water Treatment Plant (section 356).

1. Payment arrangements, including payment extensions

- 1.1. It is Council's practice to provide customers with payment arrangements and/or extensions of due dates in the first instance. Any proposed departure from that position to utilise other forms of applicable assistance outlined in this Policy will be considered on its merits on a case-by-case basis.

2. Writing off or reducing interest

- 2.1. There are two circumstances in which Council will write off or reduce interest:

¹ For example, constituent councils and commercial water carters.

² References to sections are a reference to that section within the *Local Government Act 1993* unless otherwise stated.

- 2.1.1. Where the customer is compliant with a payment arrangement; and
- 2.1.2. Where the payment of accrued interest would cause the customer hardship.

3. Extension of pensioner concession to avoid hardship

- 3.1. Where Council considers it appropriate in the circumstances to avoid hardship, Council may extend the prescribed annual pensioner concession rebate to an individual living with a pensioner who would otherwise be ineligible.

4. Granting of financial assistance – concealed or undetected water leak

- 4.1. Council has determined that a customer may be eligible for financial assistance due to a concealed or undetected water leak if:

- 4.1.1. The customer is solely or jointly liable for the water charges; and
- 4.1.2. The recorded consumption for the quarter in which the leak occurred is in excess of 500kL; and
- 4.1.3. The leak was above 200% of the daily average usage for the previous four (4) quarters; and
- 4.1.4. The leak was repaired in accordance with the relevant Standards; and
- 4.1.5. A licensed plumber has completed Council's 'Water Use Audit Report' and returned to Council.

- 4.2. The financial assistance that may be provided is calculated as follows:

$[(\text{Recorded consumption for the period}) \text{ less } 500\text{kL base consumption amount}] \times 75\%$

- 4.3. This assistance is only available to customers once per property, per ownership.

- 4.4. Council will not accept an application more than 60 days after the original due date of the water account that relates to the period of the concealed or undetected leak.

- 4.5. Property owner contact details will be forwarded to Council's Demand Management section who may contact the property owner about water saving initiatives.

- 4.6. Council will not apply this policy where there is no available budget.

<p>4.7 The granting of financial assistance for concealed or undetected water leaks as per Clause 4 above will remain available until close of business 19 December 2025. Applications for financial assistance received after this time and date will not be considered, regardless of the date or period during which the leak occurred or was detected.</p>

5. Granting of financial assistance – water dependent medical equipment

- 5.1. Council may provide a rebate of up to 200kL per rating year to customers who require the use of home-based haemodialysis or other water dependent health care equipment.
- 5.2. This assistance is available to customers for the duration of the use of home-based haemodialysis or other water dependent health care equipment, provided that this is confirmed by a registered medical practitioner every rating year.

6. Granting of financial assistance – Natural disaster event

- 6.1. Council may, in its discretion, agree to financial relief in the form of adjusting water charges where a Natural Disaster (as declared by the Federal Government) could reasonably be considered to have contributed to an excess water use reading/charge.
- 6.2. Financial relief will be assessed based on a historical water consumption comparison. Water charges will be adjusted to reflect the customers usual water usage for that

period.

- 6.3. Council staff will identify properties impacted by a natural disaster event and will apply 5.2 to determine eligibility.

7. **Abandonment of pensioner rates and charges – concealed or undetected water leak**

- 7.1. Council has determined that a customer may be eligible for financial assistance due to a concealed or undetected water leak if:

- 7.1.1. The property is the customer's sole or principal place of living; and
- 7.1.2. The customer is solely or jointly liable for the water charges; and
- 7.1.3. The recorded consumption for the quarter in which the leak occurred is in excess of the base consumption (kL) threshold for pensioners, calculated as follows:

Age pension amount (\$): single, including maximum pension supplement and energy supplement (per week)	x	=	base consumption (kL) threshold for pensioners
National minimum wage amount (\$) (per week)	500kL		

and

- 7.1.4. The leak was above 200% of the daily average usage for the previous four (4) quarters; and
- 7.1.5. The leak was repaired in accordance with the relevant Standards; and
- 7.1.6. A licensed plumber has completed Council's 'Water Use Audit Report' and returned to Council.

- 7.2. The financial assistance that may be provided is calculated as follows:

$[(\text{Recorded consumption for the period}) \text{ less the base consumption threshold for pensioners amount}] \times 75\%$
--

- 7.3. This assistance is only available to customers once per property, per ownership.
- 7.4. Council will not accept an application more than 60 days after the original due date of the water account that relates to the period of the concealed or undetected leak.
- 7.5. Property owner contact details will be forwarded to Council's Demand Management section who may contact the property owner about water saving initiatives.
- 7.6. Council will not apply this policy where there is no available budget.

The granting of financial assistance for concealed or undetected water leaks as per Clause 7 above will remain available until close of business 19 December 2025. Applications for financial assistance received after this time and date will not be considered, regardless of the date or period during which the leak occurred or was detected.

8. **Granting of financial assistance – Low-income households and not-for-profit organisations**

- 8.1. Council has determined that a customer may be eligible for financial assistance to avoid hardship, if –
- 8.1.1. The customer is solely or jointly liable for the Backflow Device Management Charge and holds a current Commonwealth Government issued –
 - 8.1.1.1. Low Income Health Care Card; or
 - 8.1.1.2. Seniors Health Care Card.

8.1.2. The customer is a not-for-profit organisation –

- 8.1.2.1. Solely liable for the Backflow Device Management Charge;
- 8.1.2.2. Registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC);
- 8.1.2.3. With an annual gross income of $\leq \$50,000^3$ as evidenced in its financial reports registered with the ACNC.⁴

8.2. Customers eligible for the financial assistance will have their Backflow Device Management Charge reduced to 75% of the standard annual charge.

8.3. This assistance is only available to eligible customers upon application once per year, per property and cannot be applied in conjunction with the assistance under clause 9.

8.4. Council will only accept an application that is lodged during the current financial year. No retrospective applications will be accepted.

8.5. Council will not apply this policy where there is no available budget.

9. Temporary granting of financial assistance – Customers affected by the transfer of the Marom Creek Water Treatment Plant (MCWTP)

9.1. Council has determined that a customer is eligible for financial assistance to avoid hardship if they were solely or jointly liable for the water account connected to a property identified in Table 1 of Appendix 1 (Eligible Property) as at the date of the transfer in ownership of MCWTP from Ballina Shire Council to Rous County Council (Transfer Date).

9.2. An Eligible Property will become ineligible if its ownership (registered proprietor/s) changes after the Transfer Date.

9.3. The financial assistance will be automatically applied to the water usage charges and Backflow Device Management Charge of the Eligible Property for a period of four (4) years from the Transfer Date.⁵

9.4. The financial assistance will be calculated and applied as follows –

	Financial Year				
	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Water Consumption Charge					
Forecast Consumption Charge (\$/KL)	3.28	3.54	3.82	4.13	4.46
Proposed Transition charge to transitioned customers (\$/KL)	2.82	3.16	3.54	3.97	4.46
Reduction Rate for eligible customers (\$/KL)	-0.46	-0.38	-0.28	-0.16	0
Backflow Device Management Charge \$196 per annum (23/24)					
Transition charge to new customers (Indexed in line with charge changes)	0	49	98	147	196
Reduction amount for eligible customers (\$/KL)	-196	-147	-98	-49	0

³ Meets the ACNC classification of extra small.

⁴ If the customer's ACNC reporting is not up-to-date and accessible via the ACNC website, the application for financial assistance may be refused.

⁵ Fixed charges (other than the Backflow Device Management Charge) are not eligible for this financial assistance.

10. Granting of financial assistance – Community halls and organisations

- 10.1. A legacy financial assistance arrangement is in place to assist the community organisations listed in Table 1 of Appendix 2 (Eligible Organisations) avoid hardship.
- 10.2. Eligible Organisations will have their retail water facility charge and their Backflow Device Management Charge reduced to 50% of the standard annual charges, respectively.
- 10.3. This assistance is not available to –
- 10.3.1. New customers, or
 - 10.3.2. Eligible Organisations should –
 - 10.3.2.1. A change in control or ownership of the organisation or the property occur,
 - 10.3.2.2. It cease operations, or
 - 10.3.2.3. Should the primary purpose of the organisation change so as to no longer provide a community benefit (determined in the absolute discretion of Council).
- 10.4. Council will not apply this policy where there is no available budget. The assistance does not operate in conjunction with the assistance within this policy under clauses 8 or 9..

Contact officer

Finance Manager.

Related documents

Policies

[Pensioner Concession](#) Guidelines

[Privacy Management](#)

Debt Management and Financial Hardship - [TO BE UPDATED]

Legislation

Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009.

Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002.

Local Government Act 1993.

Local Government (General) Regulation 2021.

Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998.

Social Security Act 1991.

Veterans' Entitlement Act 1986.

Other

Retail Water Customers' Account Assistance application form - [TO BE UPDATED]

Retail Water Customers' Account Assistance Guidelines - [TO BE UPDATED]

Water Use Audit Report - [TO BE UPDATED]

Office use only	File no.: 172/13	Next review date: 1 year	
Version	Purpose and description	Date adopted by Council	Resolution no.
1.0		18/03/2015	
2.0		06/05/2015	
3.0		19/09/2018	88/18
4.0	Amended to include provision for excess water charges connected to a natural disaster	17/08/2022	50/22
5.0	FOR PUBLIC EXHIBITION - Revised policy deemed adopted following 28 days public exhibit during which no submissions were received.	19/06/2024	30/24

6.0	Amended to incorporate financial assistance for low-income households and not-for-profits and customers affected by the transfer of Marom Creek Water Treatment Plant. Sunset clause added for concealed or undetected water leak assistance.	01/04/2025	
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APPENDIX 1

Table 1 – List of Eligible Properties

Meter number	Address	Lot and DP
20W080284	172 Whites Lane	Lot: 22 DP: 786478
20W069956	114 Whites Lane	Lot: 1 DP: 570717
19X000867	108 Whites Lane	Lot: 4 DP: 788808
10W110091	92 Weis Lane	Lot: 1 DP: 918318
21W095589	64 Weis Lane	Lot: 1 DP: 703863
20W069862	85 Weis Lane	Lot: 1 DP: 604877
01W361358	67 Weis Lane	Lot: 2 DP: 618554
19X005019	59 Weis Lane	Lot: 3 DP: 604877
ABG1905490	50 Weis Lane	Lot: 2 DP: 1180774
16X002363	608 Ellis Road	Lot: 3 DP: 709376
09W020100	112 Whites Lane	Lot: 1 DP: 593926
18X000748	64 Weis Lane	Lot: 1 DP: 703863
20W075116	218 Lindendale Road	Lot: 2 DP: 249666
05W882612	226 Lindendale Road	Lot: 3 DP: 249666
07W102621	232 Lindendale Road	Lot: 4 DP: 249666
07W102645	235 Lindendale Road	Lot: 5 DP: 249666
04W722926	174 Lindendale Road	Lot: 3 DP: 548987
16W034397	176 Lindendale Road	Lot: 21 DP: 1017622
20X003962	162 Lindendale Road	Lot: 41 DP: 714042
14X002619	151 Lindendale Road	Lot: 1 DP: 709643
20W075112	163 Lindendale Road	Lot: 2 DP: 709643
20W075240	124 Lindendale Road	Lot: 1 DP: 552711
13W082507	143 Lindendale Road	Lot: 4 DP: 552711
20W075114	138 Lindendale Road	Lot: 3 DP: 552711
20W075002	99 Lindendale Road	Lot: 21 DP: 793805
20W075087	107 Lindendale Road	Lot: 22 DP: 793805
20W075115	125 Lindendale Road	Lot: 23 DP: 793805
20W074980	112 Lindendale Road	Lot: 3 DP: 252220
19W002256	98 Lindendale Road	Lot: 4 DP: 252220
16W034398	17 Lindendale Road	Lot: 1 DP: 202693
04W722925	13 Lindendale Road	Lot: 21 DP: 633733
99A024091	1243 Bruxner Highway	Lot: 237 DP: 755745
99A023767	1243 Bruxner Highway	Lot: 237 DP: 755745
07W065202	223 Lindendale Road	Lot: 1 DP: 249666
20X005295	185 Lindendale Road	Lot: 1 DP: 593963
20W075113	150 Lindendale Road	Lot: 42 DP: 714042
06W978895	1185 Bruxner Highway	Lot: 22 DP: 633733
20W069955	46 Lindendale Road	Lot: 237 DP: 755745
09W004251	25 Chesworth Lane	Lot: 76 DP: 755745
08W028173	32 Chesworth Lane	Lot: 3 DP: 878025
20W075085	60 Chesworth Lane	Lot: 2 DP: 557685
03W567874	91 Weis Lane	Lot: 1 1 DP: 1174149

16W091997	76 Chesworth Lane	Lot: 5 DP: 565409
20W075137	74 Chesworth Lane	Lot: 3 DP: 565409
04W722870	94 Chesworth Lane	Lot: 1 DP: 566987
13X005851	66 Chesworth Lane	Lot: 4 DP: 565409
19D001082	134 Chesworth Lane	Lot: 4 DP: 566987
20W075104	111 Chesworth Lane	Lot: 77 DP: 755745
20W075083	62 Chesworth Lane	Lot: 1 DP: 549448
18W011462	25 Chesworth Lane	Lot: 2 DP: 878025
05W882555	104 Norman Jones Lane	Lot: 2 DP: 771060
10W066492	Bruxner Highway	Lot: 24 DP: 1059476

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APPENDIX 2

Table 1 – List of Eligible Organisations

Water Meter Id	Property Number	Property Address	Name	Facility Charge Water Tariff
RW1300492-1	11831-10000-0	216 Balraith Lane, Ewingsdale	Cape Byron Rudolf Steiner School	Halls/Reserves 40mm
SM2300177-2	10355-10000-8	500 Eureka Road, Eureka	Eureka Public Hall	Halls/Reserves 20mm
SM2300173-5	1.0369-10000-2	450 Eureka Road, Eureka	Eureka Recreation Ground – Crown Land	Halls/Reserves 20mm
SM2300167-7	10187-10000-2	24A Bridge Street, Wyrallah	Wyrallah Hall Association	Halls/Reserves 20mm
SM2300161-9	11417-10000-2	35 Atfield Street, South Gundurimba	Gundurimba Flood Refuge Reserve	Halls/Reserves 20mm
SM2300150-8	12092-10000-2	556 Corndale Road, Corndale	Corndale Hall	Halls/Reserves 20mm
SM23001495	11782-10000-9	13 and 15 Old Pacific Highway, Newrybar	Ballina Shire Council	
SM2300075-1	10812-10000-5	47 Coleman Street, Bexhill	Bexhill Public Hall	Halls/Reserves 20mm
SM2300038-5	12001-10000-2	Lot 1 George Street, Tintenbar	Tintenbar School Of Arts	Halls/Reserves 20mm

Policy: Fraud and Corruption Control

Responsible Officer: Group Manager Organisational Services (Helen McNeil)

Report Contributor: Group Manager Organisational Services (Helen McNeil)

Recommendation

That Council adopt the policy titled 'Fraud and Corruption Control' dated 22 October 2019 attached to this report (with minor amendments) and in doing so revoke the previous policy and any policies revived as a result of that revocation (**Attachment 2**).

Key points

1. A review has been completed of the 'Fraud and Corruption Control' policy adopted by Council in 2019.
2. Apart from minor changes, the policy remains relevant.
3. The policy will be reviewed again later in 2025 in conjunction with Phase Two of the Enterprise Risk Management Program.

Background

Council's 'Fraud and Corruption Control' policy was adopted on 22 October 2019 (Attachment 1) and was due for review as part of Council's regular policy review program.

The review found that the policy was current and relevant, subject to some minor and non-substantive amendments.

All proposed amendments to the policy have been made as a 'tracked change' for ease of reference (Attachment 2).

Governance

Section 428A of the *Local Government Act 1993* provides that fraud control is within the scope and remit of Council's Audit Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC).

At its November 2023 meeting, ARIC was furnished with the results of a staff survey on Fraud Control along with an action plan for implementing improvements. The fraud controls across Rous were subsequently reviewed and the 2023 survey was reissued in 2024 for validation purposes. The results of the survey were consistent with and validated earlier findings.

Informed by the survey results various actions are underway to further strengthen fraud control measures including:

- **Review Current Fraud Controls:** assessment of current controls against industry standards.
- **Internal Awareness Program Development:** collaboration with Rous's Communications and People and Culture teams to design a staff awareness program. This program will be integrated into current initiatives to minimise change overload while strengthening fraud prevention efforts.

Activities will be incorporated into Phase Two of the Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) Program, ensuring that improvements are aligned with the broader program objectives. This will include reassessing the role and purpose of a Fraud and Corruption Control Plan.

Phase One, concluding in March 2025, established a compliant risk management framework and internal audit function under the NSW Guidelines for Risk Management and Internal Audit in Local Government. From July 2025, councils and joint organisations must attest to compliance in their annual reports, requiring them to establish or share an Audit Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC).

Phase Two of the ERM Program will commence in April 2025.

- **Finance**

Not applicable.

- **Legal**

Various legislation exists regulating and governing fraud and corruption. That legislation has been considered as part of the policy review.

Consultation

The revised policy has been updated in consultation with the Governance and Risk Manager and the Risk and Assurance Specialist.

Conclusion

Following the review of the 'Fraud and Corruption Control' policy it is proposed that the draft policy with the same name attached to this report (**Attachment 2**) be adopted.

Attachment

1. [Fraud and Corruption Control policy dated 22 October 2019](#) (for **revocation**)
2. Proposed Fraud and Corruption Control policy (for **adoption**)

Fraud and Corruption Control Policy



Approved by Council: 22/10/2019 [date to be update if adopted]

To establish Council's commitment to minimising exposure to fraud and corruption risks.

Background

Rous County Council (Council) is entrusted to manage its assets, people and resources in a responsible, ethical and efficient manner.

This Policy is a statement of commitment confirming that Council will implement and maintain appropriate systems, strategies and processes to minimise the opportunity for and occurrence of fraud and/or corruption.

For the purpose of this Policy, corrupt conduct has the meaning given to it by the *Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988*:

- (a) any conduct of any person (whether or not a public official) that adversely affects, or that could adversely affect, either directly or indirectly, the honest or impartial exercise of official functions by any public official, any group or body of public officials or any public authority, or
- (b) any conduct of a public official that constitutes or involves the dishonest or partial exercise of any of his or her official functions, or
- (c) any conduct of a public official or former public official that constitutes or involves a breach of public trust, or
- (d) any conduct of a public official or former public official that involves the misuse of information or material that he or she has acquired in the course of his or her official functions, whether or not for his or her benefit or for the benefit of any other person.

Corrupt conduct is, among other things, also any conduct of any person (whether or not a public official) that adversely affects, or that could adversely affect, either directly or indirectly, the exercise of official functions by any public official, any group or body of public officials or any public authority and which could involve a range of matters including but not limited to fraud. It also includes conduct that impairs, or that could impair, public confidence in public administration, for example, collusive tendering.

Policy statement

Council is committed to upholding the highest standard of ethical and accountable conduct within its operations and will not tolerate fraudulent or corrupt conduct by any Council official, including Councillors, staff, contractors, volunteers and delegates.

To achieve this, Council will ensure the:

- Development and maintenance of a positive ethical culture supported by appropriate policies, procedures and strategies that prevent fraudulent and corrupt behaviour,
- Implementation of fraud and corruption prevention and mitigation processes and strategies in day-to-day operations as part of the overarching Enterprise Risk Management Framework including a Fraud and Corruption Control Plan governing how fraud and corruption risks will be managed,
- Regular review of fraud and corruption risk assessments to identify circumstances in which fraud and corruption could occur,
- Use of formal and consistent procedures for the investigation of allegations of corrupt and fraudulent behaviour,

- Maintenance of processes and procedures that encourage all business dealings with all persons with whom business is conducted including tenderers, suppliers, consultants and contractors are conducted in an impartial manner,
- Ongoing education and training of all Council staff, officers and elected members in relation to their obligations in combating dishonest and fraudulent behaviour including awareness of the avenues available for reporting alleged misconduct.

Contact officer

General Manager

Related documents**Policies**

Public Interest Disclosures

Risk Management

Procedures[Code of Conduct](#)[Enterprise Risks Management Framework](#)

Gifts, Benefits and Bribes procedure

Legislation*Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988**Local Government Act 1993**Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994***Other**[Audit Risk and Improvement Committee](#)[Australian Risk Management Standard AS ISO 31000:2018](#)[Guidelines for Risk Management and Internal Audit for Local Government in NSW](#)

Independent Commission against Corruption (ICAC) resources - various

~~[Rous County Council Code of Conduct](#)~~~~[Rous County Council Fraud and Corruption Control Plan](#)~~

File No.:		Next review date: 4 years	
Version	Purpose and description	Date adopted by Council	Resolution No.
2.0	To replace the 'Fraud Control policy' and establish Council's commitment to minimising exposure to fraud and corruption risks through a new policy.	22/10/2019	82/19
3.0	Scheduled review and update	[DRAFT]	[DRAFT]

Information reports

Recommendation

That Council receive and note the following reports:

1. Investments – March 2025
2. Investments – April 2025
3. Gallans Road update – 31 March 2025
4. Audit Risk and Improvement Committee – meeting updates
5. Actions / Pending

Key points

The Code of Meeting Practice provides that Council may, at any time, resolve to adopt multiple items of business included under the 'Information Reports' item of a meeting agenda. Before this can occur, the Chair must list the items of business and invite Councillors to indicate if they intend to vote against the recommendation or wish to speak on an item/s. Council is not permitted to resolve to adopt an item of business that a Councillor has identified as being one that they intend to vote against or to speak on.

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.

Investments - February 2025

Responsible Officer: Group Manager Organisational Services

Report Contributors: Finance Manager (Jonathan Patino) & Financial Accountant (Vicky Scott)

Recommendation

That Council receive and note the Investments for February 2025.

Key points

1. Total cash held as investments as at February 2025 total \$28,750,332.
2. The weighted average rate of return was 4.35%, while Councils benchmark was 4.21%.
3. The Reserve Bank of Australia reduced the cash rate by 25 basis points to 4.10%.
4. Council held \$4,500,000 or 15.65% of the investment portfolio with institutions that do not support the fossil fuel industry.

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 28 February 2025.

Finance Report

BANK ACCOUNT SUMMARY	TOTAL
Cheque Account Balance	\$280,298
Weel Account Balance – Cuscal Ltd (Pre-paid Corporate Cards)	\$40,706
TOTAL	\$321,004

INVESTMENT SUMMARY	TOTAL
Business Online Saver Account Balance	\$6,250,332
Term Deposits with Institutions not supporting the Fossil Fuel Industry <i>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 C4 - Attachment C).</i>	\$4,500,000 15.65% of current holdings
Other Term Deposits	\$18,000,000
Total Funds Invested <i>Excluding Cheque Account and Weel Balance</i>	\$28,750,332

OTHER INVESTMENT INFORMATION	TOTAL
Interest Earned <i>Interest earned compared to the original budget is \$265,062 above the pro-rata budget. (Refer: Attachment A).</i>	\$103,704
Weighted Average Return <i>This represents a decrease of 15 basis points compared from the January 2025 result (4.50%) and is 14 basis points above Council's benchmark (the average 90-day BBSW rate of 4.21%) (Refer: Graph C2 - Attachment C).</i>	4.35%
RBA Cash Rate	4.10%
The 90-day average bank bill swap rate (BBSW)	4.21%

At the RBA's 18 February 2025 meeting the board decided to lower the cash rate by 25 basis points to 4.10%. This decision aligns with market expectations and reflects the RBA's cautious approach amid global economic uncertainties.

This rate cut aimed to address moderating inflation, with underlying inflation easing to 3.2% in the December quarter. However, the RBA remains vigilant, noting that while some inflationary pressures have eased, upside risks persist, particularly from a tight labour market. The RBA expressed concerns over potential adverse effects on global economic activity and domestic inflation. Looking ahead, economists anticipate potential rate cuts later in the year, contingent on upcoming employment and inflation data.

Governance

A. Finance

Council has an existing term deposit of \$1.5M with Judo Bank which has a credit rating of BBB. Council's investment policy has a maximum limit for investments with individual entities (institutions) according to the credit rating. Investments rated BBB have a maximum single entity exposure of 5% of the total portfolio. At present the investment with Judo Bank accounts for 5.22% of the portfolio due to a reduction in the overall portfolio balance (\$28.8M at 28 February 2025 compared to \$31.1M at 31 October 2024). When the investment was made in October 2024, it represented 4.81% of the total portfolio at the time.

Council's investment policy (see below) foreshadows that occasional non-conformances with investment limits and thresholds will occur. The purpose of highlighting this to Council is for transparency.

While the policy includes an objective to realign the portfolio within three months, given the investment is due to mature in April 2025, it is proposed that Finance staff will redeem the term deposit upon maturity and realign the portfolio at that time.

13. Threshold breaches

- 13.1 This policy imposes limits and thresholds in relation to the acquisition and holding of investments. However, due to changes in the amount of Council's investment portfolio over time, situations may occur where these limitations or thresholds are breached.
- 13.2 Where limitations or thresholds are breached due to a change in the overall size of the total investment portfolio, or a possible change in ratings of the financial institutions, the following process will apply:
 - i). Immediate forced sale of the investments in breach of the limits or thresholds will not be required unless, in the General Manager's opinion, such sale is necessary to protect the value of the overall investment portfolio.
 - ii). Immediate freeze on acquisitions of new investments in the relevant category, until the portfolio can be effectively managed back to align with the requirements of this policy.
 - iii). The objective will be to manage the portfolio back in accordance with the policy limits, within three months from the date the portfolio first exceeds the limit or threshold.

B. Environment

Not applicable

C. 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.

Consultation

Not applicable

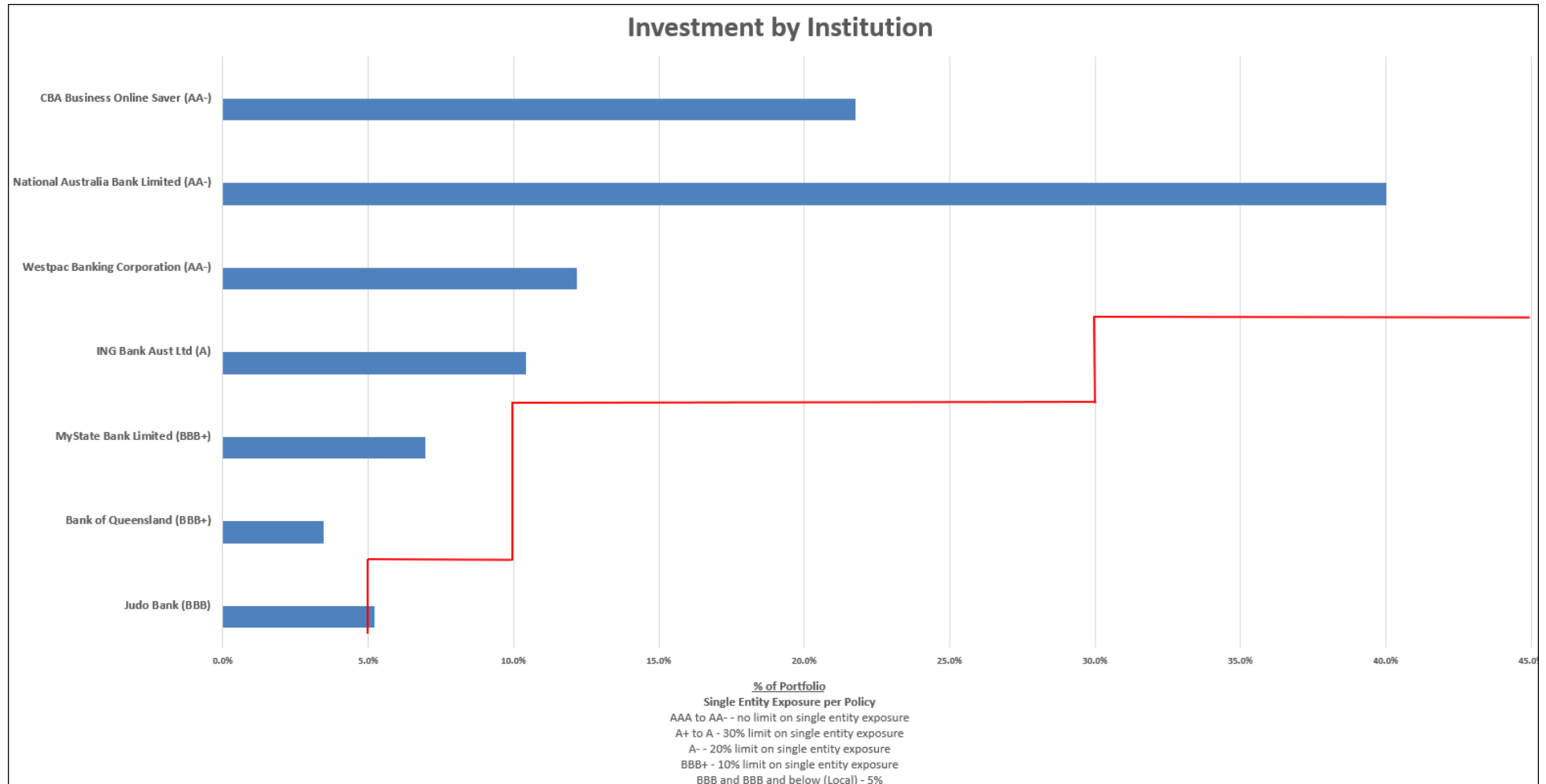
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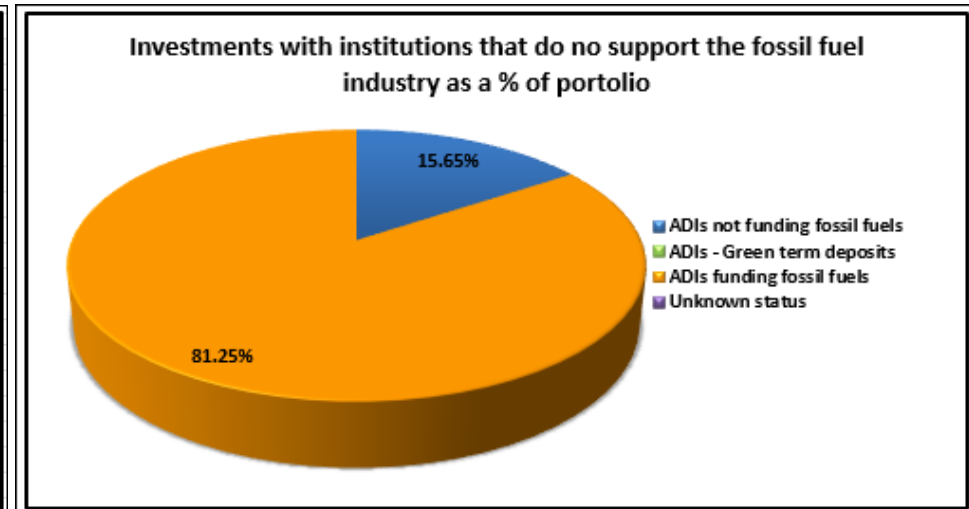
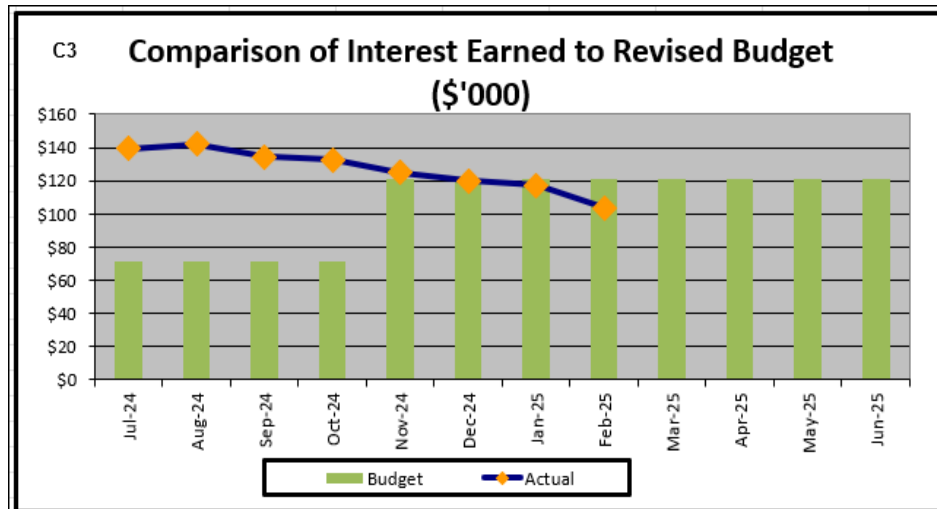
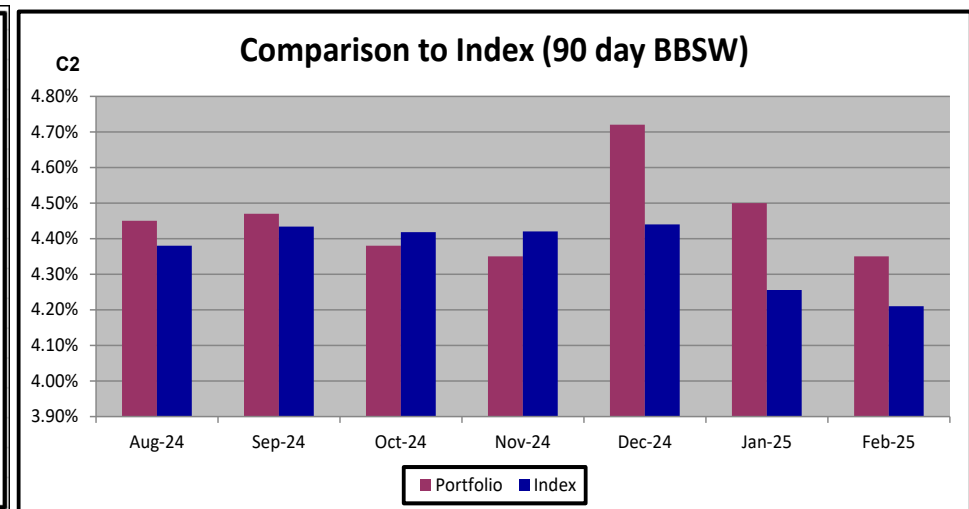
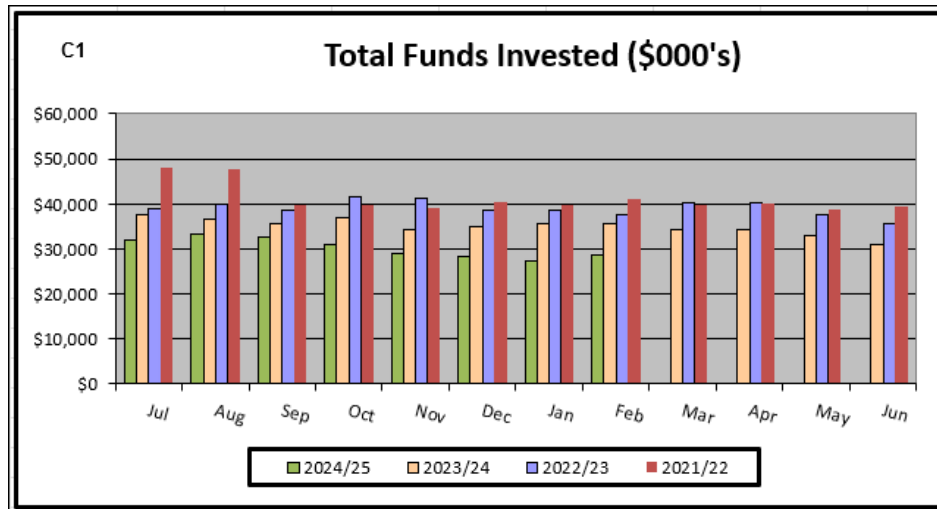
A report on investments is required to be submitted to Council. As at 28 February 2025, investments total \$28,750,332 and the average rate of return is estimated at 4.35%.

Attachments

1. Investment analysis
2. Investment by Institution
3. Total funds invested - comparisons
4. Summary of indebtedness

Investment Analysis										
Funds Invested With	S & P Local Long Term Rating	Product Name	Not Fossil Fuel ADIs	Lodgement Date	Maturity Date	% of Portfolio	28 Feb Balance	Rate of Return	Monthly Interest	Year-to-Date Interest
CBA Business Online Saver	AA-	CBA-BOS	No	At call		21.74	6,250,331.78	1.95	16,903.29	165,252.86
ING Bank Aust Ltd	A	TD	No	25/6/2024	1/7/2025	3.48	1,000,000.00	5.25	4,027.40	34,952.05
ING Bank Aust Ltd	A	TD	No	2/7/2024	8/7/2025	6.96	2,000,000.00	5.43	8,330.96	72,003.29
National Australia Bank Limited	AA-	TD	No	17/9/2024	1/4/2025	5.22	1,500,000.00	4.97	5,718.90	33,700.68
National Australia Bank Limited	AA-	TD	No	17/9/2024	23/9/2025	3.48	1,000,000.00	4.87	3,735.89	22,015.07
National Australia Bank Limited	AA-	TD	No	24/9/2024	15/4/2025	5.22	1,500,000.00	4.97	5,718.90	32,270.96
Judo Bank	BBB	TD	Yes	15/10/2024	22/4/2025	5.22	1,500,000.00	5.05	5,810.96	28,432.19
National Australia Bank Limited	AA-	TD	No	22/10/2024	29/4/2025	3.48	1,000,000.00	5.02	3,850.96	17,879.45
National Australia Bank Limited	AA-	TD	No	29/10/2024	6/3/2025	5.22	1,500,000.00	4.97	5,718.90	25,122.33
National Australia Bank Limited	AA-	TD	No	5/11/2024	13/5/2025	6.96	2,000,000.00	5.02	7,701.92	31,907.95
Westpac Banking Corporation	AA-	TD	No	3/12/2024	11/3/2025	5.22	1,500,000.00	4.95	5,695.89	17,901.37
MyState Bank Limited	BBB+	TD	Yes	17/12/2024	17/6/2025	6.96	2,000,000.00	5.12	7,855.34	20,760.55
National Australia Bank Limited	AA-	TD	No	18/12/2024	25/3/2025	5.22	1,500,000.00	5.02	5,776.44	15,060.00
National Australia Bank Limited	AA-	TD	No	14/1/2025	20/5/2025	5.22	1,500,000.00	4.92	5,661.37	9,300.82
Bank of Queensland	BBB+	TD	Yes	21/1/2025	24/6/2025	3.48	1,000,000.00	4.90	3,758.90	5,235.62
Westpac Banking Corporation	AA-	TD	No	18/2/2025	19/8/2025	6.96	2,000,000.00	4.70	2,575.34	2,575.34
MATURED TDs									4,862.47	460,835.07
						100.00	28,750,331.78	4.35	103,703.84	995,205.60
Total Investment Holdings						100.00	28,750,331.78		103,703.84	995,205.60
									Total YTD Interest	995,205.60
Deposits with Australian Deposit-taking institutions (ADI) are Government.								Budget Interest @ 28 February 2025		772,333.35
Guaranteed for balances totalling up to \$250,000 per customer, per institution.								Budget variance		222,872.25





Information	Loan #2	Loan #3	Loan #4	Loan #5	Loan #6	Loan #7	Loan #8	Total
Institution	CBA	CBA	Dexia	NAB	NAB	Tcorp	Westpac	
Total Loan Funding	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 10,000,000	\$ 10,000,000	\$ 10,000,000	\$ 10,000,000	\$ 13,500,000	\$ 30,000,000	\$ 86,500,000
Loan Facility Drawdown	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000
Date Obtained	31-May-05	31-May-06	21-Feb-07	31-May-07	25-Sep-07	7-Jun-21	18-Oct-24	
Term (Years)	20	20	20	20	20	20	20*	
Interest Rate	6.25%	6.37%	6.40%	6.74%	6.85%	2.68%	5.39%	
Line Fee Interest Rate	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.40%	
Date Due	31-May-25	31-May-26	21-Feb-27	31-May-27	25-Sep-27	7-Jun-41	TBD*	
Annual Commitment	\$ 264,921	\$ 891,595	\$ 893,507	\$ 917,390	\$ 925,933	\$ 876,390	TBD*	\$ 4,769,735
Principal Repaid LTD	\$ 2,871,543	\$ 8,743,274	\$ 8,346,604	\$ 7,903,083	\$ 7,517,163	\$ 1,875,107	\$ -	\$ 37,256,774
Interest Incurred LTD	\$ 2,294,410	\$ 7,751,237	\$ 7,739,240	\$ 8,151,235	\$ 8,223,692	\$ 1,192,258	\$ 30,035	\$ 35,382,107
Principal Outstanding	\$ 128,457	\$ 1,256,727	\$ 1,653,396	\$ 2,096,917	\$ 2,482,838	\$ 11,624,893	\$ 50,000	\$ 19,293,227
Interest Outstanding	\$ 4,003	\$ 80,666	\$ 133,920	\$ 217,255	\$ 306,850	\$ 2,835,546	TBD*	\$ 3,578,241
<p>* Loan 8 is due to be repaid over a 20 year period once fully drawdown. The interest rate above applies to the principal amount drawdown, while the line fee applies to the approved loan funding of \$30M. Interest is repaid on a quarterly basis. Due to the structure of this loan facility, the annual commitment and total interest outstanding are not known at this time.</p>								

Investments - March 2025

Responsible Officer: Group Manager Organisational Services

Report Contributor: Finance Manager (Jonathan Patino) & Financial Accountant (Vicky Scott)

Recommendation

That Council receive and note the Investments for March 2025.

Key points

1. Total cash held as investments as at March 2025 total \$28,327,235.
2. The weighted average rate of return was 4.34%, while Council's benchmark was 4.12%.
3. The Reserve Bank of Australia maintained the cash rate at 4.10%.
4. Council held \$4,500,000 or 15.89% of the investment portfolio with institutions that do not support the fossil fuel industry.

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 March 2025.

Finance Report

BANK ACCOUNT SUMMARY	TOTAL
Cheque Account Balance	\$229,769
Weel Account Balance – Cuscal Ltd (Pre-paid Corporate Cards)	\$41,172
TOTAL	\$270,941

INVESTMENT SUMMARY	TOTAL
Business Online Saver Account Balance	\$5,827,235
Term Deposits with Institutions not supporting the Fossil Fuel Industry <i>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 C4 - Attachment C).</i>	\$4,500,000 15.89% of current holdings
Other Term Deposits	\$18,000,000
Total Funds Invested <i>Excluding Cheque Account and Weel Balance</i>	\$28,327,235

OTHER INVESTMENT INFORMATION	TOTAL
Interest Earned <i>Interest earned compared to the original budget is \$219,095.20 above the pro-rata budget. (Refer: Attachment A).</i>	\$116,554
Weighted Average Return <i>This represents a decrease of 1 basis points compared from the February 2025 result (4.35%) and is 23 basis points above Council's benchmark (the average 90-day BBSW rate of 4.12%) (Refer: Graph C2 - Attachment C).</i>	4.34%
RBA Cash Rate	4.10%
The 90-day average bank bill swap rate (BBSW)	4.12%

At the RBA's 18 February 2025 meeting the board decided to lower the cash rate by 25 basis points to 4.10%. This decision aligns with market expectations and reflects the RBA's cautious approach amid global economic uncertainties.

This rate cut aimed to address moderating inflation, with underlying inflation easing to 3.2% in the December quarter. However, the RBA remains vigilant, noting that while some inflationary pressures have eased, upside risks persist, particularly from a tight labour market. The RBA expressed concerns over potential adverse effects on global economic activity and domestic inflation. Looking ahead, economists anticipate potential rate cuts later in the year, contingent on upcoming employment and inflation data.

Governance

A. Finance

Council has an existing term deposit of \$1.5M with Judo Bank which has a credit rating of BBB. Council's investment policy has a maximum limit for investments with individual entities (institutions) according to the credit rating. Investments rated BBB have a maximum single entity exposure of 5% of the total portfolio. At present the investment with Judo Bank accounts for 6.66% of the portfolio due to a reduction in the overall portfolio balance (\$28.3M at 31 March 2025 compared to \$31.1M at 31 October 2024). When the investment was made in October 2024, it represented 4.81% of the total portfolio at the time.

Council's investment policy (see below) foreshadows that occasional non-conformances with investment limits and thresholds will occur. The purpose of highlighting this to Council is for transparency.

While the policy includes an objective to realign the portfolio within three months, given the investment is due to mature in April 2025, it is proposed that Finance staff will redeem the term deposit upon maturity and realign the portfolio at that time.

13. Threshold breaches

- 13.1 This policy imposes limits and thresholds in relation to the acquisition and holding of investments. However, due to changes in the amount of Council's investment portfolio over time, situations may occur where these limitations or thresholds are breached.
- 13.2 Where limitations or thresholds are breached due to a change in the overall size of the total investment portfolio, or a possible change in ratings of the financial institutions, the following process will apply:
 - i). Immediate forced sale of the investments in breach of the limits or thresholds will not be required unless, in the General Manager's opinion, such sale is necessary to protect the value of the overall investment portfolio.
 - ii). Immediate freeze on acquisitions of new investments in the relevant category, until the portfolio can be effectively managed back to align with the requirements of this policy.
 - iii). The objective will be to manage the portfolio back in accordance with the policy limits, within three months from the date the portfolio first exceeds the limit or threshold.

B. Environment

Not applicable

C. 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.

Consultation

Not applicable

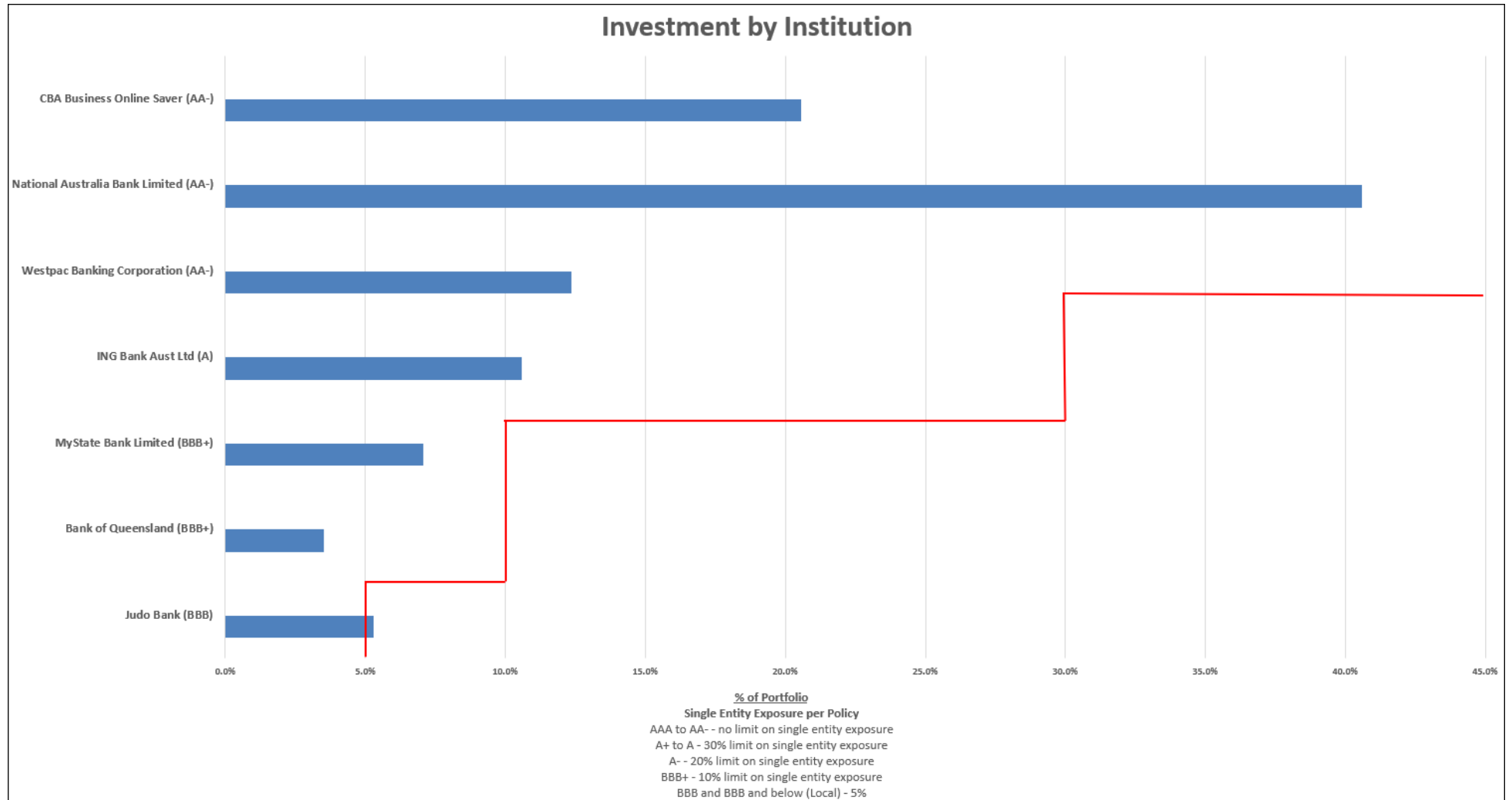
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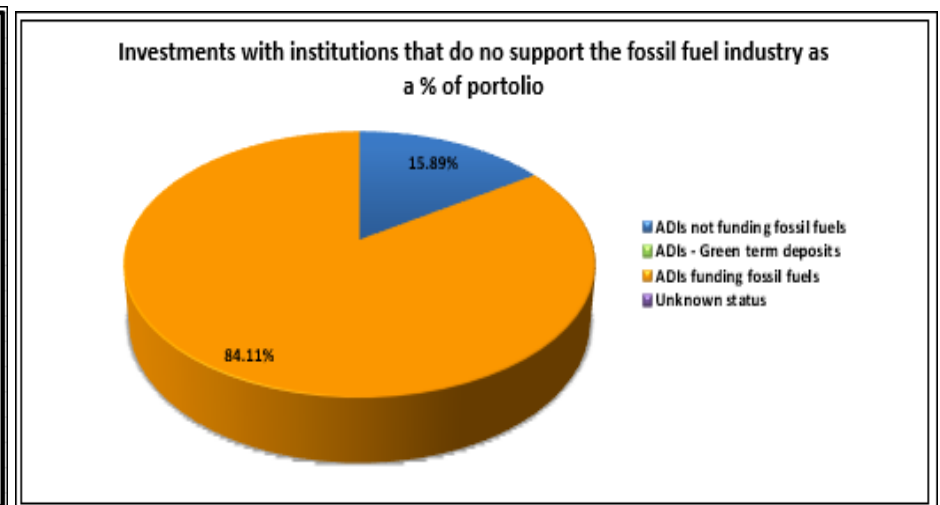
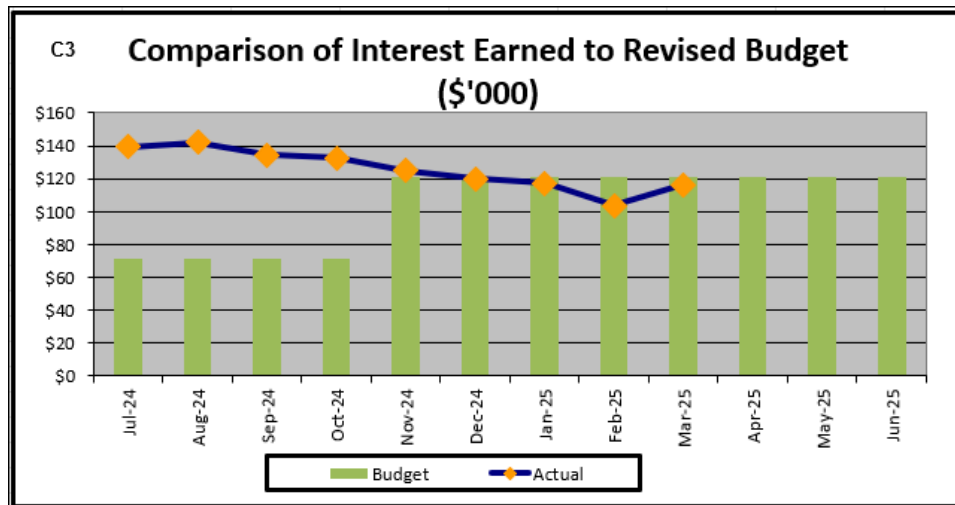
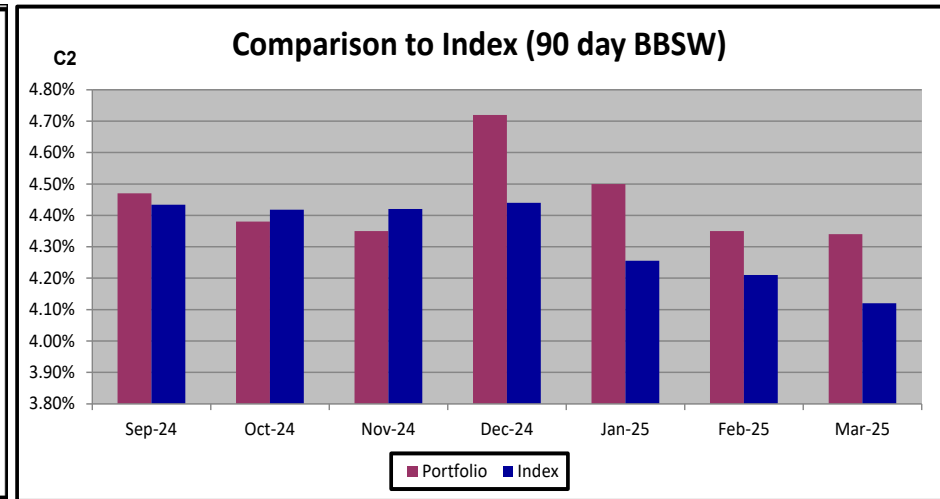
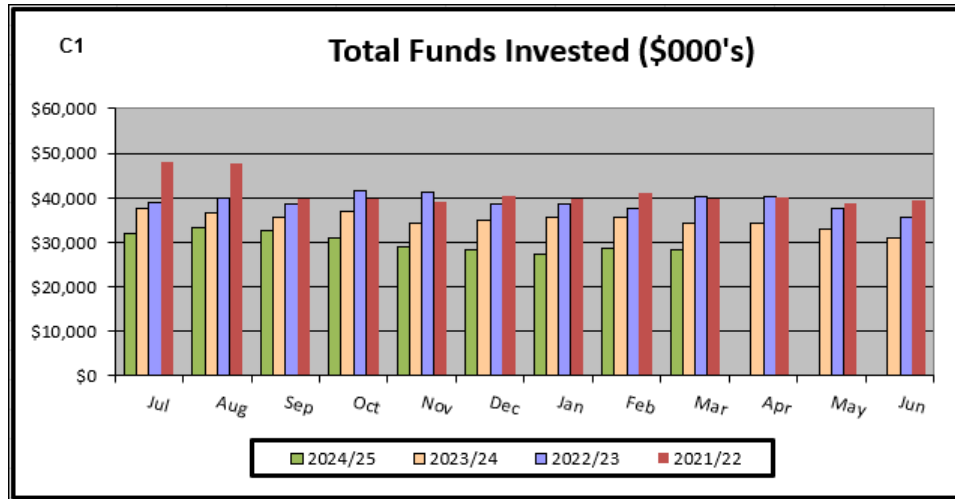
A report on investments is required to be submitted to Council. As at 31 March 2025, investments total \$28,327,235 and the average rate of return is estimated at 4.34%.

Attachments

1. Investment analysis
2. Investment by Institution
3. Total funds invested - comparisons
4. Summary of indebtedness

Investment Analysis											
Funds Invested With	TD Number	S & P Local Long Term Rating	Product Name	Not Fossil Fuel ADIs	Lodgement Date	Maturity Date	% of Portfolio	31 March Balance	Rate of Return	Monthly Interest	Year-to-Date Interest
CBA Business Online Saver		AA-	CBA-BOS	No	At call		20.57	5,827,235.07	1.95	21,333.07	186,585.93
ING Bank Aust Ltd	TD720	A	TD	No	25/6/2024	1/7/2025	3.53	1,000,000.00	5.25	4,458.90	39,410.95
ING Bank Aust Ltd	TD723	A	TD	No	2/7/2024	8/7/2025	7.06	2,000,000.00	5.43	9,223.56	81,226.85
National Australia Bank Limited	TD727	AA-	TD	No	17/9/2024	1/4/2025	5.30	1,500,000.00	4.97	6,331.64	40,032.32
National Australia Bank Limited	TD728	AA-	TD	No	17/9/2024	23/9/2025	3.53	1,000,000.00	4.87	4,136.16	26,151.23
National Australia Bank Limited	TD729	AA-	TD	No	24/9/2024	15/4/2025	5.30	1,500,000.00	4.97	6,331.64	38,602.60
Judo Bank	TD730	BBB	TD	Yes	15/10/2024	22/4/2025	5.30	1,500,000.00	5.05	6,433.56	34,865.75
National Australia Bank Limited	TD731	AA-	TD	No	22/10/2024	29/4/2025	3.53	1,000,000.00	5.02	4,263.56	22,143.01
National Australia Bank Limited	TD733	AA-	TD	No	5/11/2024	13/5/2025	7.06	2,000,000.00	5.02	8,527.12	40,435.07
MyState Bank Limited	TD736	BBB+	TD	Yes	17/12/2024	17/6/2025	7.06	2,000,000.00	5.12	8,696.99	29,457.54
National Australia Bank Limited	TD738	AA-	TD	No	14/1/2025	20/5/2025	5.30	1,500,000.00	4.92	6,267.94	15,568.76
Bank of Queensland	TD739	BBB+	TD	Yes	21/1/2025	24/6/2025	3.53	1,000,000.00	4.90	4,161.64	9,397.26
Westpac Banking Corporation	TD740	AA-	TD	No	18/2/2025	19/8/2025	7.06	2,000,000.00	4.70	7,983.56	10,558.90
National Australia Bank Limited	TD741	AA-	TD	No	6/3/2025	5/8/2025	5.30	1,500,000.00	4.67	4,797.96	4,797.96
Westpac Banking Corporation	TD742	AA-	TD	No	11/3/2025	26/8/2025	5.30	1,500,000.00	4.65	3,821.92	3,821.92
National Australia Bank Limited	TD743	AA-	TD	No	25/3/2025	9/9/2025	5.30	1,500,000.00	4.72	1,163.84	1,163.84
MATURED TDs										8,620.68	528,750.32
							100.00	28,327,235.07	4.34	116,553.74	1,112,970.21
Total Investment Holdings							100.00	28,327,235.07		116,553.74	1,112,970.21
										Total YTD Interest	1,112,970.21
Deposits with Australian Deposit-taking institutions (ADI) are Government.										Budget Interest @ 31 March 2025	893,875.02
Guaranteed for balances totalling up to \$250,000 per customer, per institution.											219,095.20





Information	Loan #2	Loan #3	Loan #4	Loan #5	Loan #6	Loan #7	Loan #8	Total
Institution	CBA	CBA	Dexia	NAB	NAB	Tcorp	Westpac	
Total Loan Funding	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 10,000,000	\$ 10,000,000	\$ 10,000,000	\$ 10,000,000	\$ 13,500,000	\$ 30,000,000	\$ 86,500,000
Loan Facility Drawdown	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$ 50,000	\$ 50,000
Date Obtained	31-May-05	31-May-06	21-Feb-07	31-May-07	25-Sep-07	7-Jun-21	18-Oct-24	
Term (Years)	20	20	20	20	20	20	20*	
Interest Rate	6.25%	6.37%	6.40%	6.74%	6.85%	2.68%	5.39%	
Line Fee Interest Rate	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.40%	
Date Due	31-May-25	31-May-26	21-Feb-27	31-May-27	25-Sep-27	7-Jun-41	TBD*	
Annual Commitment	\$ 264,921	\$ 891,595	\$ 893,507	\$ 917,390	\$ 925,933	\$ 876,390	TBD*	\$ 4,769,735
Principal Repaid LTD	\$ 2,871,543	\$ 8,743,274	\$ 8,346,604	\$ 7,903,083	\$ 7,895,759	\$ 1,875,107	\$ -	\$ 37,635,369
Interest Incurred LTD	\$ 2,294,410	\$ 7,751,237	\$ 7,739,240	\$ 8,151,235	\$ 8,308,063	\$ 1,192,258	\$ 30,035	\$ 35,466,478
Principal Outstanding	\$ 128,457	\$ 1,256,727	\$ 1,653,396	\$ 2,096,917	\$ 2,104,242	\$ 11,624,893	\$ 50,000	\$ 18,914,632
Interest Outstanding	\$ 4,003	\$ 80,666	\$ 133,920	\$ 217,255	\$ 222,479	\$ 2,835,546	TBD*	\$ 3,493,870
<p>* Loan 8 is due to be repaid over a 20 year period once fully drawndown. The interest rate above applies to the principal amount drawndown, while the line fee applies to the approved loan funding of \$30M. Interest is repaid on a quarterly basis. Due to the the structure of this loan facility, the annual committment and total interest outstanding are not known at this time.</p>								

Gallans Road – Project Update – as at March 2025

Responsible Officer: General Manager (Phillip Rudd)

Report Contributor: Project Manager – Relocation and Properties (Guy Bezrouchko)

Recommendation

That Council receive and the note the report.

Key points

1. Project update in accordance with Section 23A Capital Expenditure Guidelines
2. Design documentation “Issued for Construction”
3. Construction Certificate 1 Early Works issued on 26 February 2025

Background

Council resolved to acquire the Gallans Road Property to consolidate workplaces as set out in the confidential report presented on 16 June 2021.

Since that original decision, Council has considered two further reports which have specifically addressed matters of procurement and budget allocation.

Additionally, the resolution included that Council receive quarterly project updates as per the project probity plan and Section 23A Capital Expenditure guidelines.

This report is prepared in accordance with the Section 23A Capital Expenditure guidelines as at 31 March 2025.

Project Update - March 2025

Reporting Requirements – Capital Expenditure Guidelines

The Probity Plan identifies Rous’ reporting requirements for the project and are identified in the Office of Local Government Capital Expenditure Guidelines, Section 12.

These reporting requirements are:

a) *Quarterly reporting to the council on the progress of the project.*

Rous, Alder and project consultants have continued to progress the project consistent with the DA approval, the construction contract and regulatory certification.

Key achievements this quarter are: -

- Design documentation has been “Issued for Construction”.
- Construction certificate #1 – ‘Early works’ was issued 26 February 2025.
 - Construction activity has commenced with progress achieved on the critical path for Building A retaining wall, Area C2 bulk earthworks, Building A re-roof and Building B roof modifications.

- Construction certificate #2 is being finalised with some minor adjustments needed for construction materials to Building C (fleet storage shed) to comply with bushfire regulations.
- Tropical cyclone Alfred impacted work on site which resulted in a 6-day delay. The revised date for practical completion is 3 March 2026.

b) Quarterly reporting to the council on the costs and budget variances regarding the project.

In October 2023 Council approved a total budget of \$24,886,300 to complete Gallans Road total project.

This budget allocation accounts for all costs from 1 July 2023 onwards:

	Approved budget (adjusted)	Actual expenditure 1/7/23..30/6/24	Actual expenditure 1/7/24..28/02/25	Committed (via PO or Sal)	Budget remaining 31/3/25
Building A & B, Area C and Carparking	20,773,800	199,338	2,956,621	17,617,900	0
Furniture, Fixtures and fittings	788,100	10,434	0	777,700	0
BSC - Fees and contributions	500,000	34,468	197,376	19,880	248,200
Electricity Upgrade	750,000	0	0	0	750,000
Project Management - internal costs	300,000	107,687	92,045	100,300	0
Project Management - external costs	357,400	243,728	113,688	0	0
Private certifier, QS, Town Planner, Architect, Legal, Electrical advice, PMO, Terania, OCM	915,400	715,436	89,929	83,738	26,300
Contingency - Other, Vacate Gallans Road	501,600	107,892	0	0	393,700
	24,886,300	1,418,983	3,449,659	18,599,518	1,418,200

Approved variations to the contract amount:

Variation	Description	Amount \$
	Contract amount	21,072,584
# 2	Include toilet Area C shed	15,814
# 3	Building A – Fire System	2,310
# 4	Additional asphalt – Area C – DA condition	51,700
# 5	Time lapse cameras	19,899
# 6	Various design changes	(3,424)
# 7	Building A - topping slab	178,117
# 8	Building B – Floor finishes	43,392
# 9	Building B – Gable roof modifications	20,000
# 10	Extension of Time - delays	150,000
# 11	Building A – Toilet and shower partitions	11,527
		21,561,919

- c) *Any issue that may have an adverse impact on the project (this may include monetary and non-monetary inputs and outcomes).*

There are no major issues at this time which will unduly affect the project.

- d) *Reporting capital works projects in council's annual report.*

To be complied with.

Finance

Project expenditure is within the allocated budget.

Legal

Nil.

Consultation

Not applicable.

Conclusion

This report has been prepared in compliance with Section 23A Capital Expenditure guidelines. The project has progressed through the design and regulatory phases and is now following the construction program.







Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee – Meeting Update

Responsible Officer: Group Manager Organisational Services (Helen McNeil)

Report Contributor: Governance and Risk Manager (Lauren Edwards)

Recommendation

That Council receive and note the:

- (a) Attached minutes from the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee meeting held on 24 March 2025, and
- (b) Resignation of the Committee Chair and approach to seeking a replacement for the position.

Key points

1. The Committee Chair tendered their written resignation on 18 February 2025 and chaired their final Committee meeting on 24 March 2025.
2. An Expression of Interest process will be conducted to fill the vacancy in the position of Committee Chair.
3. The May 2025 Committee meeting has been rescheduled to June 2025 to ensure a quorum of voting Committee members is achieved.
4. The Committee received updates at its meeting on 24 March 2025 in relation to:
 - (a) Internal and external audit recommendations,
 - (b) Risk management activities,
 - (c) Financial management matters,
 - (d) Compliance activities,
 - (e) Health, safety and environment trends, and
 - (f) Strategic planning and improvement activities.

Background

The Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee ('Committee') met on 24 March 2025. A copy of the meeting minutes are attached ([Attachment 1](#)).

Key Messages

1. Financial Management

The Committee received and noted the following:

- The Quarterly Budget Review Statement report furnished to Council's February 2025 meeting applicable for the quarter ending 31 December 2024; and
- The investment report furnished to Council's February 2025 meeting applicable for the month of 31 January 2025; and
- The draft '*Quarterly Budget Review Statement Guidelines for Local Government*' published by the Office of Local Government and circulated for consultation under cover of circular 25-04 on 6 March 2025.

The Annual Engagement Plan issued by the Audit Office of NSW ('AO') for the year ending 30 June 2025 was presented to the Committee by representatives from the AO.

2. Risk Management

An update on the progress of phase one of the Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) review was provided to the Committee, including the implementation of the new ERM Information System for assessing, recording and reporting on enterprise risks. The update also confirmed there had been no change to the ratings of the General Manager's top enterprise risks since the last update to the Committee.

A brief overview of the commencement and scope for phase 2 of the ERM review, which will commence in April 2025 and include a review of fraud and corruption control documentation and activities, was also provided to the Committee.

3. Compliance

An overview of legislative compliance and reporting activities, and the findings of the regular internal procurement compliance reviews, was received by the Committee with no concerns noted.

The Committee had a general discussion in relation to the decentralised compliance model currently being adopted and made a recommendation to review and propose a way forward for enhanced compliance monitoring and reporting.

4. Health Safety and Environment (HSE)

A comparative analysis of workplace HSE trends and performance for the periods 1 October 2023 – 31 January 2024 and 1 October 2024 – 31 January 2025 was provided to the Committee.

The analysis revealed a generally positive result in HSE performance. In particular, the increase in inspections and event reporting indicates that employees are placing a high value on early hazard identification and mitigation strategies. Several areas were identified for monitoring of event trends, including (1) Animal/Insect/Plant-Related Injuries, (2) Chemicals & Other Substances, and (3) Vehicle and Equipment.

5. Audit

The Committee received its regular update on staff progress implementing improvement recommendations arising from internal, external, and in-house service audits across the practice areas of ICT, information management, safety, procurement, and emergency management.

During the period January – March 2025, six (6) internal audit and one (1) external audit recommendations were implemented and closed out by staff.

The Committee noted project management as the next area scheduled for review under the 2022-2025 Internal Audit Plan and that the timing for this audit is yet to be confirmed but is expected to occur April - May 2025.

6. Improvement

A copy of the report on performance against delivery of actions under the Delivery Program/Operational Plan presented to the 19 February 2025 Council meeting was furnished to the Committee.

General discussion in relation to the development of a four (4) year Committee strategic plan and the market testing activity proposed for engaging an internal audit service provider for the next four (4) years was had by the Committee in addition to a status update on the Committee's outstanding actions register.

7. Resignation of the Committee Chair

After careful consideration and in consultation with management, the Committee Chair decided to resign from their position in writing on 18 February 2025, with effect from the conclusion of the March 2025 Committee meeting. This decision was made for personal reasons unrelated to the Committee. At the conclusion of the meeting the General Manager and staff noted the valuable work and service the Chair provided to Council during their tenure in the position.

The Expression of Interest (EOI) process used previously, most recently in 2023, to fill the role of Committee Chair will be utilised with a view to presenting Council with a preferred candidate for appointment at its ordinary meeting in June 2025.

A quorum for a Committee meeting will be achieved if a majority of the voting Committee members (i.e. two (2)) are present. To ensure a quorum can be achieved given the vacancy in the position of Chair and other planned/approved periods of leave amongst the remaining voting Committee members, the May 2025 Committee meeting has been rescheduled to 16 June 2025 subject to venue availability.

Consultation

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

Attachment

1. Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee meeting minutes 24 March 2025.

**MINUTES OF ROUS COUNTY COUNCIL AUDIT RISK AND IMPROVEMENT
COMMITTEE HELD MONDAY, 24 MARCH 2025 AT INVERCAULD HOUSE - 163
INVERCAULD ROAD, GOONELLABAH**

1 Meeting opening

The Chair opened the meeting at 11.02am.

In attendance:

Voting Committee

- Laurie Lefcourt, Audit Risk and Improvement Committee (Chair)
- Andrew MacLeod, Independent member
- Raymond Wong, Independent member – Via Teams

Rous County Council

- Phillip Rudd, General Manager
- Helen McNeil, Group Manager Organisational Services
- Jonathan Patino, Finance Manager
- Lauren Edwards, Governance and Risk Manager
- Robyn Waldron, Secretary
- Simona Pacleanu, Secretary

Other attendees

- Min Lee, Audit Office of NSW - Via Teams
- Luis Garcia, Audit Office of NSW - Via Teams

Absent

- Cr Elia Hauge, Byron Shire Council (Non-voting Councillor member 'primary')

Action: Management to clarify attendance arrangements with Councillor members.

2 Acknowledgement of Country

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

3 Apologies and Leave of Absence

- Geoff Ward, Group Manager Transformation and Strategy
- Cr Sarah Ndiaye, Byron Shire Council (Non-voting Councillor member 'alternate')

4 Minutes of previous meeting

Minutes of the meeting held 25 November 2024 were noted as presented.

5 Disclosure of Interest

Nil.

6 Audit

RESOLVED (Wong/MacLeod) 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.

Audit (Resolution)		
For	Laurie Lefcourt, Andrew MacLeod and Raymond Wong	3
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	None	0
Carried		

11:05am - The order of business was amended to bring forward the presentation by the Audit Office of NSW on the Annual Engagement Plan contained at item 7.4 of the agenda.

7 Risk

RESOLVED (MacLeod /Wong) That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee receive and note the information contained in this report on:

1. Compliance and Internal Controls:
 - 1.1 Corporate compliance audits, non-compliance incidents and trends and improvement initiatives;
 - 1.2 Health, Safety, and Environment matters;
 - 1.3 Legislative compliance,
2. Risk Management;
3. Fraud and Corruption Control; and
4. Financial Management.

Action: The Committee requested that Management report back at a future meeting regarding a position on compliance and assurance monitoring (beyond specific areas such as procurement).

Risk (Resolution)		
For	Laurie Lefcourt, Andrew MacLeod and Raymond Wong	3
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	None	0
Carried		

Min Lee and Luis Garica from the Audit Office of NSW left meeting at 11:10am

8 Improvement

RESOLVED (Wong/MacLeod) That the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee receive and note the information contained in this report on:

1. Rous' performance against delivery of the actions in the Delivery program | Operational Plan for the period 1 July 2024 to 31 December 2024;
2. The 4-year Committee strategic plan including performance KPI; and
3. The status of actions pending from previous meetings.

Improvement (Resolution)		
For	Laurie Lefcourt, Andrew MacLeod and Raymond Wong	3
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	None	0
Carried		

9 Confirmation of Minutes

Audit Risk and Improvement Committee meeting minutes 24 March 2025

RESOLVED (MacLeod/Wong) That the minutes of the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee of 24 March 2025 be accepted as presented.

Confirmation of Minutes (Resolution)		
For	Laurie Lefcourt, Andrew MacLeod and Raymond Wong	3
Against	None	0
Abstain	None	0
Conflict of Interests	None	0
Absent	None	0
Carried		

10 Next meeting: 16 June 2025

Location: Invercauld House, 163 Invercauld Road, Lismore NSW 2480

Noted: Laurie Lefcourt, the current Chair, will be stepping down from the role and as previously minuted, Andrew MacLeod will be unavailable to attend the next meeting. To ensure a quorum, the next meeting may be tentatively rescheduled to 16 June 2025.

11 Close of business

There being no further business the meeting closed at 12:26pm.

Reports / Actions Pending

Responsible Officer: General Manager (Phillip Rudd)

Recommendation

That Council receive and note the report as presented.

Background

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

COUNCIL MEETING 13-12-2023	
Report	Proposed Dunoon Dam - acquisition of properties
	<i>Responsible Officer: Group Manager Planning and Delivery (Andrew Logan)</i>
Resolution	<p>(Breum/Cadwallader) that Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To reconfirm its prior position in relation to acquisition of land in the Proposed Dunoon Dam area as shown in the Attachment 1 and land of strategic interest to the Future Water Strategy 2060. 2. The terms of such acquisition are to be in accordance with Council's current 'Land Management' policy, Item 4 (Attachment 2), namely: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Acquisition to be upon offer of sale by existing landowner. b. Meets the proposed operational need or strategic objective of the future water strategy 2060. c. Such acquisition costs to be calculated with due consideration to market and strategic value.
STATUS	June 2024: An update to Council regarding strategic land purchases for the Future Water Strategy 2060 will be provided at the July 2025 Council workshop.
Report	Update on interim arrangements for Lismore Levee Scheme
	<i>Responsible Officer: Group Manager Planning and Delivery (Andrew Logan)</i>
Resolution	<p>(Rob/Cadwallader) that Council in addition to previous resolutions on the matter:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Receive and note this update. 2. Authorise the General Manager to approve access to the Lismore Levee Scheme assets by Lismore City Council (LCC) for the purposes of progressing new asset construction and renewal and upgrade work under the Northern Rivers Recovery and Resilience Program(NRRRP), subject to LCC's written confirmation that they will assume ownership of the new, upgraded and renewed assets.
STATUS	December 2024: an update was presented at December 2024 meeting with a further update before end of July 2025.