

Operational Plan 2022-2023

Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the importance of tradition, history and culture to Aboriginal people including the existence of unknown stories held by First Nations Peoples. As an organisation that works with water and land, we acknowledge and value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sustainability practices in land and culture and acknowledge our responsibility to work together with the Traditional Custodians of land and waterways areas managed by Rous County Council.

We acknowledge this relationship and deeply value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditional laws, knowledge and lessons about places and sustainability. Through our reconciliation activities, we aim to restore ecological, cultural, and social values that are unique to our region.

Foreword

On behalf of Rous County Council, I am pleased to present our Operational plan for 2022-2023.

This Operational plan describes the actions Council will undertake in the 2022-23 financial year towards meeting the commitments of the Delivery program. The Delivery program is our Council's commitment about what will be delivered during this Council term to achieve the strategic objectives established in our Business Activity Strategic Plan.

This Operational plan will be resourced through the annual Budget and Statement of Revenue Policy (available on Council's website).

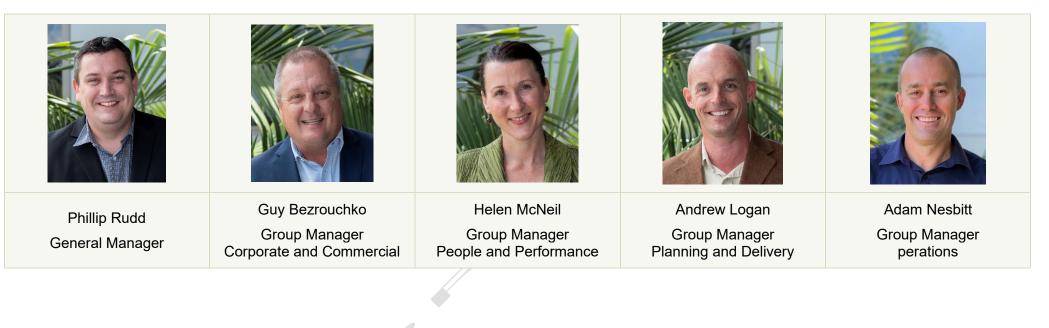
2022-23 will see Council and the region we serve focusing on recovery and rebuilding following the significant flood events that affected our region in early 2022. While this context shapes our focus and demands our attention, we will continue to deliver our core functions of bulk water supply, weed biosecurity and flood mitigation to support our local communities.

2022-23 will see Rous take a significant step forward in its evolution since being formed in 2016. Council will consolidate its administrative and several depot sites to a single site at Gallans Road, Ballina. This consolidation will enable business efficiencies and service improvements and bring our staff team together under one roof for the first time.

We look forward to continuing to deliver quality services to our communities across the region during 2022-23.

Phillip Rudd General Manager

Our leadership team



How will the Operational plan be realised?

See our:

- Annual Budget and Statement of Revenue PolicyResourcing Strategy: 2022-2032.

These documents (and reporting of their progress and Rous's performance) can be found on Council's website: www.rous.nsw.gov.au

Version	Purpose and description	Date adopted by Council	Resolution no.
0.1	Draft Delivery Program 2022-2025 endorsed at 11 May 2022 Council meeting for public consultation.	/	

A new annual Operational plan will be prepared to commence at the beginning of each new financial year.

You can contact us:

by phone: (02) 6623 3800

by email: <u>council@rous.nsw.gov.au</u>

or by visiting our office: Level 4, 218-232 Molesworth Street, Lismore NSW 2480

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Our mission

Partner with our constituent councils to provide quality services that support a sustainable and productive region.

Our vision

Thrive and evolve as a valued regional service provider.

Our values

Staff developed and adopted a set of values that we use as a guide for how we act and behave:

- Safety safety first 24/7
- **Teamwork** one team, one purpose
- Accountability own it, solve it, achieve it
- **Respect** be honest, be fair.

About us

Rous is a county council created under the *Local Government Act 1993*, with three core functions that it undertakes for the local councils of the areas within which it operates (known as constituent councils).

Bulk water supply

- Regional water supply authority providing water in bulk to the council areas of Ballina (excluding Wardell), Byron (excluding Mullumbimby), Lismore (excluding Nimbin), and Richmond Valley (excluding land to the west of Coraki).
- Regional supply network includes approximately 40,100 connections within the reticulation areas of these constituent councils, and around 2,030 retail connections to the Rous trunk main system. A population of over 100,000 is serviced by this water supply system with the actual area of operations being approximately 3,000km².
- Principal water supply source is Rocky Creek Dam, situated 25 kilometres north of Lismore near the village of Dunoon.

Weed biosecurity

- Local Control Authority responsible for administering the *Biosecurity Act 2015*, working with landholders and the community throughout the region to address weed biosecurity matters.
- Undertake a wide range of activities to combat the spread of targeted weeds across the local government areas of Ballina, Byron, Lismore and Richmond Valley (including on behalf of Kyogle and Tweed Shire as part of a fee for service arrangement).

Flood mitigation

- Flood Mitigation Authority operating across the Ballina, Lismore and Richmond Valley local government areas.
- Responsible for the construction and replacement of a range of flood mitigation infrastructure, mostly in rural areas, including the routine maintenance of canals and floodgates and related natural resource management activities.

What else do we do?

We have some commercial property interests as well as owning and operating a water laboratory in Lismore (Richmond Water Laboratories).

Introduction

This Operational plan details the activities and actions Rous will undertake during this financial year to achieve our Delivery program commitments. The Operational plan identifies the programs, projects, capital works and other activities we will delivery this year within our annual budget.

The Plan is underpinned by the social justice principles of access, equity, participation and rights – ensuring fairness in all that we do.

The themes and direction established in our Business Activity Strategic Plan and Delivery program flow through to this Operational plan:

	Business Activity Strategic Plan: A snapshot				
Theme	Theme What does it mean? What does it look like?				
1. Sustainable delivery	 Sustainable service provision in relation to water supply, flood mitigation and weeds management. Financial sustainability of the organisation (including in relation to its workforce and asset management responsibilities). Environmental sustainability in relation to Council's operations. Planning for and responding to climate change impacts in the environment. 				
2. External relationships	 Relationships Rous has with constituent councils, customers and the broader Northern Rivers community, State and Commonwealth government. Opportunities for partnerships and collaboration to achieve desired outcomes for our customers and community more effectively and efficiently. 				
3. Our people	 Our workforce – ensuring we have the right people with the right skills in the right place to achieve our objectives within a Values-based culture. Creating a working environment and a workplace culture where our people value their work and feel valued by the organisation and its customers. 				
4. Leadership and innovation	 Our role as a regional leader. How we conduct ourselves as an organisation. How we use technology and apply innovation to be more effective and efficient. 				

Where are we now?

The table below provides a summary of the operating environment for Rous County Council in 2021/22, as well as identifying some of the key challenges and opportunities facing Council that the Delivery program and this Operational plan help to address, contributing to the achievement of our strategic objectives.

1. Sustainable delivery	 We are seeing climate change impacts, including increases in weed infestations, sea level rises affecting the performance of our flood mitigation assets, and more extreme flood and drought events. Opportunity to clarify Rous's role in relation to flood mitigation in the context of our relationship with others. The region's growth will continue to impose pressure on Council's infrastructure. Opportunities for simplifying and streamlining organisational processes and governance in an increasingly regulated sector. Risk to water availability if Rous is unable to supply enough water to a growing population (increasing water restrictions may result). Effective identification and mitigation of uncertainty to ensure Rous can meet its objectives.
2. External relationships	 Low level of community awareness and understanding about Rous's role and services. Opportunity to enhance partnerships with constituent councils to complement each other's work (e.g., through joint planning, stakeholder engagement, resource sharing). Rous has differing and fragmented roles across its operational footprint. Opportunity to lead and deliver targeted engagement and education outcomes.
3. Our people	 Attraction, retention and succession planning challenges. Pressure of increased training requirements. Adequacy and appropriateness of facilities for a growing organisation. Promote a safety culture supported by effective, efficient and practical safe systems of work.
4. Leadership and innovation	 Opportunity to move from just a service provider function to take on more of a regional leadership role for those matters relating to our core business. There is no centralised funded authority that oversees the health of the Richmond River system. A revised best practice framework is being developed for water in NSW. State Government policy lags contemporary approaches to water, and State Government planning does not always align with local strategic planning.

Our Operational plan

- Where do we want to be at the end of this financial year? (our financial year goals).
- How will we get there? (our projects, programs, actions and budget considerations).
- How we will know we are on track? (a measure or indicator that provides a way of assessing whether our projects, programs and actions are effective).

1. Sustainable delivery

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

Ref	Delivery objectives	2022-23 actions	Measures	Targets	Who	
1.1	A healthy environment					
1.1.1 Environmentally responsible procurement.	responsible	Develop a procurement strategy and review existing policy to focus on waste minimisation and environmental impact.	Revised strategy and policy adopted.	By June 2023.	Governance and Risk Manager.	
		Review local supplier relationships and resourcing of specialist procurement arrangements.		By June 2023.	Governance and Risk Manager.	
	1.1.2 Sustainable river system health through natural resource management.	Undertake scheduled 2022-23 actions of the Catchment and Coastal Zone Management plans.	% of scheduled actions completed.	At least 90%.	Catchment and Cultural Awareness Manager.	
		Continue to deliver the Active Floodgate Management Program – highlighting the expected	 (i) All required training of landowner volunteers completed. 	By June 2023.	Floodplain Officer.	
		improvement to water quality.	(ii) All required plans reviewed and updated.	By June 2023.	Floodplain Officer.	
1.1.3	Enhance the region's biosecurity through combatting the spread of targeted weeds.	Deliver scheduled 2022-23 actions of the Weed Action Plan.	% of scheduled actions completed.	At least 95%.	Weed Biosecurity and Bush Regeneration Manager.	

Ref	Delivery objectives	2022-23 actions	Measures	Targets	Who
		Liaise with constituent councils about possible Rous role in fee for service weed control in local parks, reserves and roadsides.	Explore opportunities, cost options and discuss with constituents.	By June 2023.	Weed Biosecurity and Bush Regeneration Manager.
1.2	Responding to climate	change			
1.2.1	Achieve carbon neutrality.	Prepare Renewable Energy and Emissions Reduction Plan.	Plan development phase completed.	By June 2023.	Strategic Planning Engineer.
		Install solar panels at Nightcap Water Treatment Plant.	Panels installed and operational.	By June 2023.	Group Manager Operations.
		Plant trees to contribute to offsetting our carbon emissions.	# of trees planted.	Subject to Plan outcomes.	Catchment and Cultural Awareness Manager. Weed Biosecurity and Bush Regeneration Manager.
1.2.2	2.2 We are prepared and able to respond to climate change impacts.	Collate and analyse data to inform the Strategic Review of Flood Mitigation.	Collation and analysis complete.	By June 2023.	Strategic Planning Engineer.
		Review and identify the challenges to reducing the natural resource impact of flood mitigation assets in a changing climate.	Discussion paper prepared.	By June 2023.	Floodplain Officer.
1.3	Water security, quality	and sustainable consumption			
1.3.1	Short-term (to 2040) water supply demands	Undertake scheduled 2022-23 actions of the Future Water Project.	% of scheduled actions completed.	At least 90%.	Future Water Program Manager.
	are able to be met.	Administer residential rainwater tank rebates.	# of rebates processed.	Report by occurrence.	Water Sustainability Officer.
		Monitor water quality to ensure compliance with Australian Drinking Water Standards.	# of occasions of non- compliance.	Zero.	Dams and Treatment Manager. Operations Engineering Manager.

Ref	Delivery objectives	2022-23 actions	Measures	Targets	Who
		Prepare and implement a Future Water stakeholder engagement strategy.	Engagement strategy endorsed by Leadership Team and ready for implementation.	December 2022.	Future Water Program Manager.
		Prepare and implement a project plan for the planning and investigations of a groundwater scheme at Tyagarah.	Plan drafted for internal consultation.	By June 2023.	Future Water Program Manager.
1.3.2	Source options to meet long-term (beyond 2040) water supply demands are better understood.	Undertake further investigations of Stage 3 source options to support future decision making.	Study commenced in accordance with project plans.	By June 2023.	Future Water Program Manager.
1.3.3	Our water supply is valued and used responsibly.	Undertake scheduled 2022-23 actions for the Regional Demand Management Plan.	% of scheduled actions completed.	At least 90%.	Water Sustainability Officer.
		Design a behaviour-change pilot program to understand community attitudes to responsible water use.	Consultant engaged and initial program designed.	By June 2023.	Water Sustainability Officer.
		Implement the Water Loss Management Plan.	% of scheduled 2022-23 actions completed.	At least 90%.	Infrastructure Program Manager.
		Continue implementation of smart metering and backflow prevention program for retail customers.	Contractors engaged and on ground works commenced.	By March 2023.	Smart Metering Project Manager.
1.3.4	The region's water supply capacity is enhanced.	Identify a preferred location and concept for a purified recycled water plant.	Preferred location identified with an associated concept.	June 2023.	Recycled Water Project Manager.

Ref	Delivery objectives	2022-23 actions	Measures	Targets	Who
1.4	A sustainable Council				
1.4.1	Our resources are planned, prioritised and implemented to ensure Rous's sustainability.	Undertake scheduled actions within the 2022-23 Resourcing Strategy (financial, asset and human resources).	% of scheduled actions completed.	At least 90%.	Finance Manager (financial actions). Asset Management Systems Officer (asset actions). People and Culture Manager (human resources actions).
		Deliver the 2022-23 Capital Works program.	% of program completed.	At least 80%	Infrastructure Program Manager.
			% of spending achieved.	At least 80% of funds committed or spent.	Dams and Treatment Engineering Manager. Operations Engineering Manager.
1.4.2	Rous's revenue stream is strengthened.	Prepare Development Servicing Plan for Bulk Water Supply, including a review of water charges.	Plan adopted.	By December 2022.	Planning and Development Engineer.
		Update the Business Plan for Richmond Water Laboratories.	Plan completed and endorsed.	By December 2022.	Richmond Water Laboratories Business Manager.
1.4.3	A positive risk management culture is embedded and	Review the currency and operability of Emergency Response plans following recent major flood events.	Review complete.	By June 2023.	Enterprise Risk Coordinator.
	sustained.	Update Council's Risk Management Plan and review the Risk Register to respond to outcomes of recent major flood events.	Plan and Register updated.	By June 2023.	Enterprise Risk Coordinator.
1.4.4	Ongoing service reviews, audits and	Complete prioritised service reviews based on recommended focus areas	# of service reviews completed.	At least 1.	Governance and Risk Manager.

Ref	Delivery objectives	2022-23 actions	Measures	Targets	Who
	business improvements achieve enhanced organisational outcomes.	identified by Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee.	% of review recommendations implemented.	At least 50% within 12 months of date of recommendation.	
	outcomes.	Embed a business process management framework to drive	Process taxonomy completed with clear ownership.	By mid 2023.	Innovation and Change Team Leader.
			Key process improvement opportunities identified.	By end 2023.	Innovation and Change Team Leader.
		Participate in Performance Audits conducted by the NSW Audit Office.	# of audits participated in.	Report by occurrence and outcomes.	Finance Manager.
		Review and align all proactive operational maintenance plans for water and flood assets as part of ongoing improvements to service.	All operational maintenance plans reviewed, updated and implemented.	By June 2023.	Operations Engineering Manager. Dams and Treatment Engineering Manager.

2. External relationships

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

Ref	Delivery objectives	2022-23 actions	Measures	Targets	Who
2.1	Strong and mutually re				
2.1.1	Effective collaboration and communication with our constituent councils.	Undertake a survey with our constituent councils to best understand points of engagement for planning, collaboration and delivery.	Survey completed.	By March 2023.	Customer and Communications Manager.
2.2	People across our regi	on understand the work that we do			
2.2.1	Communities across our region are kept informed of Rous's	Develop and implement a Communications and Engagement Strategy.	Strategy adopted.	By August 2022.	Customer and Communications Manager.
	work and have opportunities to engage with us.		% of scheduled actions completed.	At least 90%.	Customer and Communications Manager.
		Identify target businesses for the Sustainable Water Partnership pilot program.	Spread across target groups.	At least 2 target groups.	Water Sustainability Officer.
		Provide opportunities for engagement through face-to-face activities, social media, website and customer service offerings.	Increase in social media followers.	At least 200.	Customer and Communications Manager.

Ref	Delivery objectives	2022-23 actions	Measures	Targets	Who
		Monitor Rous website to ensure content complies with WCAG level AA standards.	Compliance.	/100%.	Customer and Communications Manager.
		Provide timely and accurate information using appropriate media.	Number of media releases. Number of social media posts.	No target. Report by occurrence.	Customer and Communications Manager.
		Support Rous projects and activities through the development and implementation of communication and marketing campaigns.	Number of projects and activities supported.	No target. Report by occurrence.	Customer and Communications Manager.
2.3	Our working relationsh	ips with political, regulatory and indus	try stakeholders are effective a	nd achieve results	
2.3.1	Our positive working relationships support the achievement of regional outcomes.	Pursue funding opportunities that support agreed regional objectives where delivery is primarily Rous's responsibility.	\$ value of funding received.	At least \$100,000.	General Manager.
		Actively participate in the Northern Rivers Joint Organisation.	% of scheduled meetings attended.	100%	General Manager.
2.3.2	Water consuming businesses and industry are engaged to promote sustainable water consumption.	Undertake scheduled 2022-23 actions of the Regional Demand Management Plan.	% of scheduled Rous's actions completed.	At least 90%.	Water Sustainability Officer.
2.3.3	Local Aboriginal history and culture is respected, and we positively engage with our First Nations communities.	Review and update Rous's Reconciliation Action Plan.	Review completed and revised RAP adopted.	By June 2023.	Catchment and Cultural Awareness Manager.

Ref	Delivery objectives	2022-23 actions	Measures	Targets	Who
2.3.4	Local community groups are positively engaged to support the achievement of shared objectives.	Undertake scheduled 2022-23 actions of the Communications and Engagement Strategy.	% of scheduled actions completed.	At least 90%.	Customer and Communications Manager.
2.3.5	Regional collaboration informs policy and innovative approaches to priority issues.	Actively contribute to the Weeds and Pest Advisory Committees as part of our flood and water policy contribution.	# of meetings participated in.	At least 90%.	Weed Biosecurity and Bush Regeneration Manager.
			Nature of outcomes achieved.	Report by occurrence.	Weed Biosecurity and Bush Regeneration Manager.
		Collaborate with State and other agencies including Health, Local Land Services, Dept of Primary Industries and Water Services Association of Australia.	Nature of collaboration outcomes.	Report by occurrence.	Weed Biosecurity and Bush Regeneration Manager. Dams and Treatment Engineering Manager.

Our people 3.

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

Ref	Delivery objectives	2022-23 actions	Measures	Targets	Who
3.1	Our future workforce re				
3.1.1	We know our workforce and skills requirements to achieve our Delivery Program commitments.	Review and redesign recruitment strategies and techniques to target hard-to-recruit roles.	Recruitment strategy designed and implemented.	By 31 March 2023.	People and Culture Manager.
3.2	Innovative solutions are applied to addressing skills gaps				
3.2.1	Specialist and hard-to- recruit skills are available to Rous when needed.	Implement Workforce Management Plan actions related to filling hard-to- recruit roles.	% of positions advertised and filled following recruitment process.	At least 90%.	People and Culture Manager.
		Complete staff skills and interests inventory through annual performance appraisal process.	Inventory completed.	By 31 January 2023.	People and Culture Manager.
		In collaboration with constituent councils, identify and implement talent sharing opportunities.	# of talent sharing solutions achieved.	Report by occurrence.	People and Culture Manager.
3.3	Leaders at all levels				
3.3.1	Our leaders and emerging leaders are provided with development opportunities.	Implement leadership development actions of the Workforce Management Plan.	% of scheduled actions completed.	At least 90%.	People and Culture Manager.

Ref	Delivery objectives	2022-23 actions	Measures	Targets	Who
3.4	We are recognised as a				
3.4.1	Our staff are proud to work for Rous.	Recognise and celebrate achievements and staff contributions through regular staff communications.	% of staff who report being proud to work for Rous.	At least 90%.	Customer and Communications Manager.
3.4.2	accessible, inclusive and safe. Review the V Environment Implement C	Undertake the scheduled 2022-23 actions of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan.	% of scheduled actions completed	At least 90%	People and Culture Manager
		Review the Work Health Safety and Environment Management System.	Review completed.	By December 2022.	Health Safety and Environment Coordinator.
		Implement Council's Health Safety and Environment policy and systems.	Employee days lost.	0 lost time injuries.	Health Safety and Environment Coordinator.
			Incident and hazard reporting.	Upward trend.	Health Safety and Environment Coordinator.
			% of Vault modules implemented.	(i) 100%	Health Safety and
				(ii) No paper-based business processes.	Environment Coordinator.

4. Leadership and innovation

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

Ref	Delivery objectives	2022-23 actions	Measures	Targets	Who
4.1	Be recognised for leade				
4.1.1	Embed reconciliation in Rous's culture through its people and partners.	Undertake scheduled 2022-23 actions of the Reconciliation Action Plan.	% of scheduled actions completed.	At least 90%.	Catchment and Cultural Awareness Manager.
4.1.2	Demonstrate effective leadership through the delivery of our commitments and reporting on our progress and results.	Prepare an annual Operational plan, Budget and Annual Report to demonstrate Council's progress in achieving its Delivery program commitments.	2023-24 Operational plan and Budget adopted.	By June 2023.	Group Manager People and Performance. Finance Business Partner.
			2021-22 Annual Report published.	By 30 November 2022.	Customer and Communications Manager.
		Report on Service Level Agreement implementation and performance.	Reports provided to constituent councils.	6-monthly.	Group Manager Operations.
4.2	Effective use of techno				
4.2.1	Our business systems and data support us to achieve organisational results.	Undertake scheduled 2022-23 actions of the Information and Communications Technology Plan.	% of scheduled actions completed.	At least 90%.	ICT Manager.
		Introduce a streamlined timesheet process for 70hr per fortnight staff.	Time spent on timesheet preparation.	At least 50% reduction in time spent by staff.	People and Culture Manager.

Ref	Delivery objectives	2022-23 actions	Measures	Targets	Who
4.2.2	Finding and promoting opportunities for technology alignment and compatibility across our region's councils.	Establish a joint Technology Register with constituent councils to support achievement of procurement savings and efficiencies.	Register in place.	By June 2023.	ICT Manager. Dams and Treatment Engineering Manager.
4.3	We embrace innovation				
4.3.1	Successful consolidation of Rous administration and depots to achieve business improvements and optimisation.	Finalise consolidation plan and commence relocation to Gallans Road site.	Staff relocation commenced.	By September 2022.	Relocation Coordinator.
4.3.2	Continuous improvement in our delivery of a bulk water supply.	Review and update all operational maintenance plans for bulk water assets.	Number of scheduled actions completed .	All maintenance plans reviewed and updated.	Group Manager Operations.
4.3.3	Proactive contribution as part of a regional response to flood mitigation.	Actively participate and respond to formal inquiries and other studies into the regional floods of 2022.	Responses provided to public inquiries and where invited for non-public inquiries.	At every opportunity.	Group Manager Planning and Delivery.
		Progress discussions with Lismore City Council regarding the long-term arrangements for the Lismore Levee.	Revised draft MOU available for discussion.	By June 2023.	General Manager.