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# Rous Regional Demand Management Plan 2023-2026

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

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## Recommendation

That Council:

- 1) Endorses the draft Rous Regional Demand Management Plan (2023-2026) attached to this report, for public exhibition for the period 22 August to 9 September 2022 .
- 2) If public submissions are made during the public exhibition period, a report be furnished to Council's October 2022 meeting, including staff comment on how the submissions have been considered, for Council to determine a position on endorsement of the Plan.
- 3) If no public submissions are made during the public exhibition period, the version of the draft Rous Regional Demand Management Plan (2023-2026) placed on public exhibition, is deemed to be adopted by Council.
- 4) Note that constituent councils will be advised in writing once the draft Regional Demand Management Plan is on public exhibition.

## Background

The draft Regional Demand Management Plan (RDMP) describes the water supply demand management initiatives to be implemented by Rous County Council (RCC) over the next four years (2023 - 2026). This RDMP builds on the initiatives and successes of demand management actions implemented by RCC since 1995 and aims to continue to deliver comprehensive and effective water conservation programs throughout the Rous supply footprint.

The draft Rous Regional Demand Management Plan (2023-2026) was prepared alongside a separate background document, '*RDMP review and Update - Background Information and Recommended Plan Components*'. The draft Plan includes the proposed demand management actions and budgets for the next four-year term and the background information document provides context to the inclusions and exclusions of the Plan.

The draft Plan proposes a suite of actions that reflect outcomes of the following activities undertaken as part of the Plan's development:

- Consultation and feedback from Rous and constituent councils staff including individual meetings and a workshop involving all organisations.
- Review of the current Regional Demand Management Plan 2019-2022, implementation progress and history – successes, challenges, and opportunities.
- Investigation of best practice demand management initiatives of other water utilities across the east coast.
- Current indicators of demand and losses.
- Investigation of behaviour change applications in demand management.
- Presentation and discussions at the July 2022 Rous County Council Workshop.

The Plan and proposed actions are centred on a voluntary behaviour change approach where our community indicates what they need to be more water efficient and what information and support (and in what forms) will be most helpful to make meaningful change. In essence, helping people to help themselves to bring about change to an aspect of water use that has bothered them - change is achieved when people take actions not because they are consciously trying to reduce water use, but because those actions add convenience to their daily routine.

A copy of the draft Plan and background document is attached for review and consideration by Council.

## **Actions of the draft Regional Demand Management Plan 2023-2026**

The new RDMP includes the following actions:

### *Residential customer programs.*

- New behaviour change pilot incorporating an intensive program focused on residual water use and customer needs.
- Residential Rainwater Tank Rebate Program.

### *Non-Residential customer programs.*

- Expanding the Sustainable Water Partner Program to include both top-order water consuming businesses as well as small to medium businesses.

### *Data collection, monitoring and reporting.*

- Establishing the feasibility of standardising connection types.
- Developing a standard metering policy.

### *Education and engagement.*

- Customer engagement and education programs including a Regional Education Officer position.
- Ongoing communications program including water efficiency messaging through traditional, web and digital media platforms.
- Design of a public water efficiency education space at the Gallans Road site.

### *Monitoring and evaluation.*

- Focus placed on regular communications with the Regional Water Supply Liaison Committee and sharing learnings from each council.
- Sharing of lessons learned for programs and projects led by each individual Council including Water Loss Management Programs and smart-metering investigations, pilots and implementation.

## **Finance / budget**

The budget in the RDMP (2023-2026) is shown in the following table.

Tasks, budget (excl. existing resources) and timing	Year 1: 2023	Year 2: 2024	Year 3: 2025	Year 4: 2026
<b>Residential customer programs</b>				
RES1 - Behaviour change pilot program	\$40,000	\$100,000	\$50,000	\$20,000
RES2 - Residential rebate/incentive program	\$65,000	\$50,000	\$30,000	\$20,000
<b>Non-residential customer programs</b>				
NRES1 - Sustainable water partner program (existing)	\$80,000	-	-	-
NRES2 – Sustainable water partner program pilot program	\$20,000	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$150,000
NRES3 - Audit of council facilities and operations	-	-	\$75,000	-
<b>Data collection, monitoring and reporting</b>				
DMR1 - Standard definitions of connection types	\$35,000	-	-	-
DMR2 - Standard metering policy	\$25,000	-	-	-
DMR3 - Reporting of customer data and consumption	-	-	\$20,000	\$20,000
<b>Education and engagement</b>				
EDU1 - Education and engagement tools	\$40,000	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$35,000
EDU2 - Regional education officer	\$30,000	\$135,000	\$135,000	\$135,000
EDU3 - Education facility	\$20,000	-	-	-
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$355,000</b>	<b>\$470,000</b>	<b>\$495,000</b>	<b>\$380,000</b>

This budget was adopted by Council at the June 2022 Council meeting.

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## Consultation

The draft RDMP and supporting document was prepared following stakeholder consultation and engagement. The next stage of this engagement process is to seek feedback from the broader community by taking the Plan to public exhibition.

## Conclusion

It is recommended that Council review the Rous Regional Demand Management Plan (2023-2026) and background document, '*RDMP review and Update - Background Information and Recommended Plan Components*' and support both documents going to public exhibition between 22 August – 9 September 2022.

Any feedback following this public exhibition period will be recorded and considered for inclusion in the draft Plan prior to the final draft being presented to Council at the October 2022 meeting.

## Attachments

1. Rous Regional Demand Management Plan: 2023-2026
2. Regional Demand Management Plan Review and Update, Background Information and recommended Plan Components (**available via website:** <https://rous.nsw.gov.au/business-papers-and-meeting-minutes>)