



AGENDA

Ordinary Meeting of Council

24 March 2020

**ORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL
TO BE HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, MORUYA**

ON TUESDAY 24 MARCH 2020

COMMENCING AT 11.00AM

AGENDA

(Proceedings of this meeting will be recorded as per Eurobodalla Shire Council's Code of Meeting Practice)

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| 1. WELCOME | |
| 2. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY | |
| 3. APOLOGIES | |
| Nil | |
| 2. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING | |
| 2.1 Ordinary Meeting held on 10 March 2020 | |
| 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST OF MATTERS ON THE AGENDA | |
| (Declarations also to be made prior to discussions on each item) | |
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**DR CATHERINE DALE
GENERAL MANAGER**

QON20/001

RECLASSIFICATION OF LAND

S017-T00008

Responsible Officer: Anthony Mayne - Councillor

Attachments: Nil

The following question on notice was received from Councillor Anthony Mayne:

Question

Could Council staff please advise which blocks of land were reclassified from community to operational land in 2012 and which of these blocks are currently proposed for sale both now and in the future.

When land, such as the recent 3 lot subdivision of 13A Sunshine Bay Road, Sunshine Bay (DA 593/19) is deemed “surplus to community needs”, what does “surplus to community needs” mean and what process is followed to reach such a conclusion.

Response

Management Response – “Surplus to Community needs”

Properties go through an extensive process before they are deemed surplus to needs and considered for sale. For those properties listed here, this began in 2010 with the Recreation and Open Space Strategy prior to the lengthy process to reclassify them in 2012.

The process followed in the identification of properties that could fund actions from the Recreation and Open Space Strategy 2010 (ROSS 2010) included but was not limited to, consideration of:

- the overall provision of open space for the entire Eurobodalla Shire,
- the size and shape of particular sites,
- any evidence of community use,
- the provision and quality of recreation and community facilities,
- whether a site also had other uses such as environmental, storm water, drainage,
- the proximity, characteristics and nature of alternative sources of open space

This ROSS 2010 confirmed that the subject sites had low community usage and value, were restricted in size and were in close proximity to alternative sites.

The lots proposed to be reclassified in the ROSS 2010 had areas ranging from 140m² to 9.69Ha with a total area of 25.92Ha. In terms of the areas above, the reclassification would reduce the area zoned open space by about 0.94%. At that time, Council controlled 2762ha of community land and crown land for a population of approximately 38 000 people, so it was considered that an abundance of open space land would remain available to residents following the process.

The process for the reclassification of properties involved preparing an initial planning proposal to reclassify community land to operational land.

From the ROSS 2010 and further research, Council identified 57 parcels where it considered:

- There was low current public use
- There was low potential for public use

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S017-T0008

- There were more appropriate open spaces in close proximity to address anticipated public needs

As part of the reclassification process a public hearing was held on Thursday 19 April 2012 and chaired by an independent chair. The purpose of the public hearing was to consider public submissions to the proposed reclassification of lands and to establish an independent review and assessment of the proposal. Neighbours of land proposed for reclassification were also written to about the proposal.

From the public hearing, the independent chair provided a report (*Report of the Public Hearing of 19 April 2012 into the Proposal by Eurobodalla Shire Council to Reclassify 57 Parcels of Community Land*) that recommended either support, support with conditions or no support for the reclassification of specific parcels. As a result of the public hearing report, the planning proposal removed 13 parcels from the original proposal to reclassify 57 parcels of community land, revising the planning proposal to reclassify 44 parcels.

The planning proposal was then approved by NSW Department of Planning and the Eurobodalla Local Environmental Plan 2012 was amended to reflect the changes in the reclassification of 44 land parcels from community to operational land.

Management Response – Summary of community engagement and Council resolutions

Council was briefed on the draft ROSS 2010 at a workshop on 23 February 2010 and provided a copy of the draft document on 12 March 2010.

Council adopted the draft ROSS 2010 for the purpose of public exhibition at the Development and Natural Resources Committee Meeting of 13 April 2010, [Report WP10/11](#).

It was exhibited for six weeks from 19 April to 28 May 2010, and other engagement activities, including focus groups, drop in sessions and mailouts were undertaken concurrently. Information provided included detailed maps illustrating land and assets for investigation for disposal or acquisition.

Council received 181 submissions to the draft ROSS 2010, and a further 20 late submissions. A collated database of submissions was supplied to Councillors on 10 June 2010 and then workshopped, along with staff recommendations, on 22 June 2010.

The final draft ROSS 2010 was considered by Council on 3 August 2010, [Report PS10/18](#), and adopted, [Minute No PSM10/30](#).

The planning proposal to reclassify the lands identified in the ROSS was publicly exhibited from the 27 Feb - 10 April 2012 (42 days) and a public hearing was held on 19 April 2012.

Councillors went on a visit to various land parcels to be reclassified on the 19 June 2012.

As a result of the public exhibition, the planning proposal was amended from reclassifying 57 lots to 44 lots, as detailed in the Council report.

The planning proposal was adopted at Council meeting on 24 July 2012.

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In open session at its Ordinary meeting on 15 February 2015, Council resolved to sell a number of the lots reclassified in 2015. After further consideration, a number of properties that were reclassified were removed from the list to be authorised for sale.

Management Response – Properties reclassified and for sale / sold

All land from the ROSS that was reclassified is proposed for sale – that was the purpose of the reclassification.

The following table shows the blocks of land reclassified in 2012 that are proposed for sale, with the final column noting those already sold or proposed for sale now.

	Lot and DP	Address	Suburb	Sold or for sale now
3	Lot 56 DP 708346	Edward Road	Batehaven	
4	Lot 23 DP 787496	3a Merriman Place	Bodalla	
5	Lot 58 DP 739830	34a Iluka Street	Broulee	Yes
6	Lot 38 DP 718667	Train Street	Broulee	Yes
8	Lot 693 DP 249461	Penguin Place	Catalina	
10	Lot 66 DP 261646	Mummaga Lake Drive	Dalmeny	Yes
11	Lot 13 DP 785266	White Sands Place	Denhams Beach	Yes
12	Lot 88 DP 803087	Lewana Close	Lilli Pilli	
13	Lot 41 DP 1061842	Bunderra Circuit	Lilli Pilli	
14	Lot 246 DP 569875	Maloneys Drive	Maloneys Beach	Yes
15	Lot 14 DP 701609	Maloneys Drive	Maloneys Beach	Yes
16	Lot 1156 DP 529665	587 George Bass Drive	Malua Bay	
17	Lot 17 DP 264212	Cnr Pollwombra & Shelley Road	Moruya	Yes
18	Lot 11 DP 771497	Jeffery Place	Moruya	Yes
19	Lot 11 DP 809702	1a Panorama Parade	Moruya	Yes
21	Lot 51 DP 771497	9-7 Pioneer Avenue	Moruya	Yes
22	Lot 91 DP 631493	North Head Drive	Moruya	
23	Lot 18 DP 264212	Shelley Road	Moruya	Yes
24	Lot 36 DP 264448	Maclean Place	Moruya	Yes
25	DP 26279	Preddeys Wharf Road	Moruya Heads	
27	Lot 21 DP 825840	2 Chisholm Place	Narooma	Yes
28	Lot 2 DP 244134	Penthouse Place	North Batemans Bay	
39	Lot 173 DP 262910	Hume Road	Sunshine Bay	Yes
31	Lot 9 DP 774356	Sunshine Bay Road	Sunshine Bay	Yes
33	Lot 3 DP 622389	Beach Road	Surf Beach	Yes
34	Lot 14 DP 30365	Bayview Street	Surf Beach	Yes
35	Lot 47 DP 262947	32 Eric Fenning Drive	Surf Beach	
36	Lot 852 DP 214160	The Vista	Surf Side	

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37	Lot 851 DP 214160	The Vista	Surf Side	
38	Lot 853 DP 214160	The Vista	Surf Side	
39	Lot 850 DP 214160	The Vista	Surf Side	
40	Lot 277 DP 218664	Tuross Boulevard	Tuross Head	Yes
41	Lot L DP 362231	95 Trafalgar Road	Tuross Head	
42	Lot 101 DP 1001026	Museum Place	Batemans Bay	
43	Lot 1 DP 327858	Bumbo Road	Bodalla	
44	Lot 1 DP 1144366	17 Imlay Street	Broulee	
46	Lot 127 DP 1068529	13a Litchfield Crescent	Long Beach	
48	Lot 95 DP 631493	North Head Drive	Moruya	
49	Lot 3 DP 631315	Queen Street	Moruya	
50	Lot 102 DP 710162	Queen Street	Moruya	
51	Lot 94 DP 631493	North Head Drive	Moruya	
52	Lot 55 DP 1075538	42 Shelley Road	Moruya	
53	Lot 90 DP 713637	Rose Street	Moruya	
57	Lot 9 DP 776904	Brighton Street	Tuross Head	Yes

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the response to the question regarding reclassification of land raised by Councillor Anthony Mayne be received and noted.

GMR20/006 DISASTER RECOVERY UPDATE

**SO08-T00007,
SO12-T00025**

Responsible Officer: Dr Catherine Dale - General Manager

Attachments: 1. Infrastructure damage assessment report [↓](#)

Outcome: Protected and Valued Natural Environment

Focus Area: 3.1 Respond to our changing environment and build resilience to natural hazards

Delivery Program Link: 3.1.3 Collaborate with agencies and emergency services to support coordinated emergency management

Operational Plan Link: 3.1.3.3 Support emergency services agencies in planning and responding to natural and man made disasters

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 11 February 2020, Council received a report relating to the recent bushfires which included a detailed report on the Emergency Response and the Recovery process to date. That report highlighted the work of the many agencies, community organisations, individuals and Council staff who worked tirelessly and often at their own personal risk, to keep our community safe. The previous report also outlined the structure of the Recovery Committees and the various programs and activities that had been undertaken to commence the Recovery process; noting that this process will take many years.

In early February, between 200 and 400mm of rain fell in Eurobodalla. This rain was a welcome relief and eased conditions for firefighters and on 7 February 2020, the Clyde Mountain and Currowan fires were declared out. At 16 March 2020 there is no active fire in Eurobodalla.

This report provides Council and the community with an update on the Recovery phase and the work that has been undertaken to date. It has been written to reflect the Australian Institute of Disaster Resilience Principles and is divided into four sections; Social Environment, Built Environment, Natural Environment and Economic Environment.

It should be recognised that the Recovery Phase involves a whole community, government, business associations, private entities and not-for-profit organisational response. This report will focus on the activities where there has been a direct Council involvement or facilitation role. There are many other programs that community and business groups are conducting, and these activities are integral to a holistic approach to community lead recovery.

There are numerous funding grants from the NSW and Australian Governments and not-for-profit and private organisations that are available for individuals and businesses directly impacted by the bushfires. This report will not address these sources or the other support mechanisms that may be available from various trusts and private organisations.

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**SO08-T00007,
SO12-T00025**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT:

1. This report be received and noted.
2. The ongoing support of the NSW and Australian Governments, and the many community, private and not-for-profit groups be acknowledged.

BACKGROUND

At its meeting on 11 February 2020, Council considered a report on the overview of the bushfire emergency response and recovery. At this time, Eurobodalla was still in the Emergency response phase and had commenced the Recovery phase. That report provided a high-level summary of the fire disaster and some of the activities and strategies that had been implemented to assist in the coordination to rebuild, restore and rehabilitate the social, built, economic and natural environment for the Eurobodalla community.

In total the Currowan, Clyde Mountain and Badja fires have burnt over 397,789 hectares of land and caused significant impact to Eurobodalla. Within Eurobodalla more than 271,000 hectares of our 343,000 hectares or 79% of our Shire has been directly fire impacted.

Building Impact Assessment has found the following confirmed property losses:

- 501 homes destroyed
- 80 facilities destroyed
- 859 outbuildings destroyed
- 274 houses damaged
- 49 facilities damaged
- 297 outbuildings damaged.

Council staff in collaboration with Office of Emergency Management (OEM) arranged the opening and resourcing of the Disaster Recovery Centre in Batemans Bay. The service opened on 15 January 2020 and operated 7 days per week, 9am -5pm weekdays and 10am to 4pm weekends until Sunday 8 March 2020. From Monday 9 March the opening hours have been changed to 10am to 4pm Monday to Saturday.

The centre provides a comprehensive range of services to assist our community during this challenging time. There are a number of government and non-government agencies, with approximately 20 service providers available to assist affected community members.

Key actions implemented by Council during the early recovery phase to support the community include:

- Coordination of outreach sessions.
- Assistance with Building Impact Assessments.
- Tasking Australian Defence Force personnel.
- Support with set up of Headspace.

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- Set up of recovery webpages on Council's website to provide a 24/7 source of truth for residents seeking recovery support – www.esc.nsw.gov.au/recovery.
- Working with media and using Council's communication platforms to provide information and interview opportunities to ensure the community is aware of recovery support.
- Worked with the Bushfire Housing Assistance Response Team (NSW Dept. of Communities and Justice) and non-government agencies and charities to identify housing opportunities and solutions, with the aim of addressing identified housing needs and gaps as a result of the bushfires.
- Advocacy for essential needs, including attendance at regional recovery meetings and meetings with Australian and NSW Government Ministers, relevant NSW authorities and companies, and appointed recovery personnel about immediate and future community needs to aid the recovery process.

CONSIDERATIONS

Social Environment

Batemans Bay Recovery Centre and Narooma Assistance Point

The Batemans Bay Recovery Centre (the Centre) has operated seven days per week since the 15 January 2020, with 4438 households registered (as at 13/3/20). The Centre has operated from 9am to 5pm weekdays and 10am to 4pm weekends and public holidays.

The Centre has supported the community, with over 20 service providers and agencies in attendance on any given day, a crèche for childminding and mental health teams on hand to provide advice and referrals, as required. Staff have set up a quiet room for registrations to assist residents who require additional support, as well as providing a range of information leaflets and resources to support people attending the Centre.

Council has received a number of thank you letters in relation to Centre staff, reflecting the high level of care and sensitivity the Council registration team are providing. In addition, the team has advocated to ensure key agencies and service providers remain at the Centre, and worked with welfare and other agencies to ensure our community receive all of the support (financial, social and emotional) that the Recovery Centre services can provide.

The Narooma Assistance Point opened on 12 February 2020, from 10am to 4pm Monday to Saturday. Since opening 1329 households have registered (as at 13/3/20).

The two services combined have registered 5767 Eurobodalla households, with Batemans Bay identified as the busiest Recovery Centre currently operating in the state.

Council is offering free transport to the recovery centre and assistance point to local residents, including those with mobility needs, to assist people affected by the bushfire to access services and supports. Residents can ring 4474 1040 to arrange this service.

Community Outreach support

Council has provided the following outreach activities, in the form of information 'pop up' points, community catch-ups and community meetings at a range of locations in the shire,

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reflecting the type of session people from those communities have requested during preliminary discussions and planning, under a community led approach.

Date	Location	Type of Activity	Number attending
24/01/2020	Mogo	Pop up information	20
24/01/2020	Malua Bay	Pop up information	15
29/01/2020	Bodalla	Pop up information	90
31/01/2020	Mogo	Pop up information	30
19/02/2020	Mogo	Pop up information	15
19/02/2020	Mogo	Community catch-up	20
20/02/2020	Nerrigundah	Community meeting	100
25/02/2020	Nerrigundah	Onsite clean-up meeting	6
26/02/2020	Mogo	Community Meeting	50
29/02/2020	Nelligen	Pop up information and BBQ	50
4/03/2020	Mogo	Community meeting	25
7/03/2020	Jerremadra	Community meeting and BBQ	40
11/03/2020	Mogo	Community meeting	10

The meetings and pop up information sessions are tailored to meet the needs of the specific community or locality in the first instance, with over 470 community members attending to date. Follow up meetings are arranged to meet specific needs and Council is working with agencies and services, such as Laing O'Rourke (clean up contractor), NSW Public Works Authority, Service NSW, Australian Red Cross, mental health services, NSW Disaster Welfare, BlazeAid and Rural Resilience to organise representatives to attend subsequent meetings to address particular concerns and issues as they arise.

Further outreach activities are planned in key locations around the shire in the coming weeks, including Malua Bay and Rosedale.

Community activities

Council's Youth Services has facilitated connection between local high schools and Headspace (Youth Mental Health Service), to support wellbeing in school settings. Headspace visited several schools to discuss possible recovery activities and support, both short and long term.

Two forums have been held in February with Youth workers and service providers in the shire, and with young people, to develop up ideas and identify issues in preparation for a youth and community recovery planning session to be held in March.

State Memorial service

A state memorial service was held on Sunday 23 February 2020 to pay tribute to the 19 civilians and six firefighters who were killed during the unprecedented bushfire season in New South Wales. It was open to the public and attended by the Prime Minister, NSW Premier and NSW RFS Commissioner. The Member for Bega, the Hon. Andrew Constance MP, honoured the three lives lost in Eurobodalla. Council was represented at this service.

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Built Environment

While the emergency response was still underway, Council Environmental Health Officers and Planners assisted the Rural Fire Service in the field by undertaking the first round of building impact assessments. This early involvement and assistance enabled this work to be completed earlier than would have occurred otherwise, providing early indications of the impact of the fire. As this information was obtained, Council officers reviewed files providing data to the Public Works Advisory (PWA) around the age of buildings that were destroyed. This assisted greatly in the identification of sites that potentially contained asbestos, enabling the testing and treatment of these sites to be prioritised by PWA. Council Environmental Health Officers assisted PWA with the second round of building impact assessments to enable this work to be completed more quickly.

Council has advocated from a very early stage in the recovery process for changes to NSW Government policy and regulation to facilitate temporary accommodation on bushfire impacted properties, to provide for temporary storage, for pop up shops, and to make demolition of bushfire destroyed or damaged properties exempt development (other than heritage listed properties). The NSW Government has introduced changes to address all of these issues. Council has also advocated for the Biodiversity Conservation Act to be switched off to facilitate the rebuilding of homes destroyed by fire and specifically to enable the establishment of compliant asset protection zones. This issue is still being considered by the NSW Government.

Council provided staff at the recovery centre during the first weeks of operation, specifically to assist with enquiries related to the rebuilding process. This service was also provided at Council's office in Moruya where those services are now concentrated. Council has established a team of planners and support staff who are focussing on enquiries related to the rebuilding process, along with the processing of associated applications. As part of this service Council is providing BAL certificates for bushfire impacted sites free of charge. These measures have been taken to provide a high level of dedicated service to property owners who have been impacted by bushfire and wherever possible to fast track the determination of applications related to the rebuild process. A number of applications have already been approved to enable rebuilding to commence.

Council has started investigating ways to facilitate the rebuild process in areas where due to the size and density of lots, and the existence of native vegetation, it may be difficult for property owners to achieve compliance with bushfire management requirements when rebuilding. An example of such an area is North Rosedale. In such situations Council is considering a precinct approach to developing solutions, through working with landowners and RFS. To assist in this process Council is exploring offers of pro bono support from consultants. This will minimise the cost to landowners and Council if it can be achieved.

Council has also taken up offers of staff from other councils to assist Council in dealing with the assessment of development applications. This has included planners from Inner West and Canterbury Bankstown Councils coming to work in the Eurobodalla. Council is extremely appreciative of this and other support provided.

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The NSW Government fees associated with development applications (BASIX Certificate and Planning Reform Fund) have been waived for rebuilding bushfire affected properties. Council has also been advocating that the NSW Government waive the Long Service Levy for such properties. Pleasingly a recent media release has confirmed that the NSW Government is looking at regulation change to achieve this outcome.

The bushfires have unfortunately damaged two and destroyed 10 local heritage items. Council has been documenting the impacts on the items, working with Heritage NSW and local heritage/historical groups. We have also been engaging with our Heritage Advisor and working with Laing O'Rourke and PWA to facilitate the necessary approvals to enable the clean-up of the destroyed sites.

Two of Councils three waste management facilities (Surf Beach and Moruya) were significantly impacted by fire while the third (Brou) had to be closed for safety reasons for a period of time due to the proximity of fire to the site. Council undertook works to first extinguish the fires at these sites and to then make them safe. Significant work was undertaken at Surfbeach to get the site open to the public while works continue to repair the liner on the new cell. Moruya transfer station currently remains closed to the public with final works being undertaken to enable the site to be reopened to the public.

During the fire normal waste collection services were interrupted. Council worked with our contractors Suez to provide catch-up and additional services as soon as it was safe to do so. We also liaised with other commercial operators to provide them with access to waste management facilities so as they could service their commercial clients. This was especially important in assisting businesses that needed to dispose of soiled stock. Council has also provided additional green waste collection services and has been receiving domestic trailer ute loads of bushfire impacted waste and green waste for free.

The Eurobodalla Local Government Area (LGA) has unfortunately been the most significantly impacted and subsequently has the largest volume of bushfire related waste, with more than 20% of the bushfire waste across the state coming from our LGA. Council has been working closely with the NSW Government to develop a strategy for the management and disposal of this waste that importantly does not adversely impact our communities ability to manage its waste during and post bushfire clean-up. These negotiations have been successful and are in the process of being finalised. Under the agreed strategy additional resources will be required at our waste management facilities to enable the volumes of waste to be received and managed at the sites. Due to the significant increase in the number of heavy vehicles accessing the sites during the clean-up there are likely to be longer than normal wait times for customers at our sites.

The NSW Government has appointed Laing O'Rourke to undertake the government funded clean-up. Council has been working with Laing O'Rourke and its sub-contractors to receive waste from clean-up sites as part of a trial to better understand the waste volumes and operational issues that will need to be addressed as part of the clean-up process. Impacted residents are encouraged to register through Service NSW at <https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/register-opt-nsw-bushfire-clean>.

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A local sub-committee has been formed under the Eurobodalla Recovery Committee with representation from agencies and local farmers. The sub-committee has developed a plan to address various issues relating to people in rural areas.

The widespread rainfall is assisting many farmers with some even being able to bale hay and/or store silage for the winter.

i) Housing

Council is actively advocating for improved funding to farmers who have lost their homes to assist with housing. A proposal was submitted to Government for funding to assist with the provision of permanent sheds which would allow temporary on farm accommodation whilst the rebuilding of homes took pace. The sheds would then provide an on-going benefit on-farm of replacing lost sheds.

This option offered the advantages of:

- a) Temporary housing with a permanent on-going benefit.
- b) An injection into local shed manufacturers (across other LGAs as well)
- c) Ability to rapidly deploy this temporary accommodation
- d) Local employment in provision of slabs, shed erection and ancillary facilities
- e) Easily adaptable to other LGAs

We are advised that Minderoo is still exploring this option.

In the meantime, the NSW Government signed a deal with Minderoo to provide 100 housing pods out of South Australia. These come in the form of an adapted shipping container. Council has made passed on this offer via the Eurobodalla Farmers network and in face to face meetings. The decisions as to who gets a pod rests with the NSW Government and Minderoo. Council will make available all requests for housing pods from Minderoo on a confidential basis. In the meantime, face to face discussions with farmers indicates that some are proceeding with the shed option as their preferred option, sourcing their own funding in the face of numerous other challenges.

ii) Fencing

Blazeaid have established a camp at the Moruya Showground and are actively working across Eurobodalla to assist rural landowners with fencing.

Blazeaid have indicated they may be here throughout 2020 depending on the extent of work to be undertaken. Local volunteers with respected farming knowledge and skills are supporting the efforts of Blazeaid.

Blazeaid propose to set up an outreach camp at Belowra RFS shed due to the distances involved.

Blazeaid also ran a joint dinner for farmers and volunteers on 13 March 2020 at Moruya showground. This event brought people together allowing shared stories and support to be offered. This was a moving and inspiration night with the Australian spirit and resilience on display.

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Minderoo has agreed to fund fencing kits for use by farmers at Council's request. Volunteers have now been secured to run a fencing tool 'library service' and purchases through local sources are expected to be made in the coming weeks.

iii) Stock

The rebuilding of herds remains a significant challenge for farmers.

iv) Pest control

Discussions with NPWS indicate that additional pest control is being pro-actively undertaken including aerial shooting of deer, pigs, wild dogs and other feral animals. This is a positive step to ensure the protection of remaining wildlife.

Local Land Services (LLS) is also undertaking similar activities focussed on assisting farmers.

v) Weeds

The drought conditions, devastating fire, widespread use of fodder brought in from other areas of Australia, and now good rainfall, has created a need to remain vigilant on weed management. The sub-committee includes LLS and Council's team with education campaigns proposed to be run by LLS to better inform and assist farmers.

vi) Sediment control measures

LLS have undertaken some works near estuaries to decrease sediment run-off with a specific focus on the oyster industry.

Infrastructure

The NSW Government has in place funding arrangements for the clean-up and recovery works associated with transport infrastructure. Other Council infrastructure needs to be funded through Council's own resources and/or insurance claims (where applicable such as buildings).

Council has requested the NSW Government to:

- Fund day labour costs associated of Council's work with the fire response effort under the Section 44 declaration
- Extend the time period for clean-up to 180 days instead of the 21 days (as this limited time is unrealistic for the scale of this event)
- Fund the cost of day labour for Council Operational staff used to undertake clean-up after the Section 44 'make safe' work is complete
- Fund the cost of day labour for Council Operational staff associated with recovery of transport infrastructure

Advice received from the Office of Emergency Management is this would be a decision for Cabinet. This issue has therefore been raised with the local member for Bega Andrew Constance MP, the Deputy Premier John Barilaro MP and the Minister for Local Government Shelley Hancock MP to advocate on behalf of local ratepayers.

In the meantime, as far as is practicable, arrangements have been made to utilise contractors and/or the provisions for use of temporary, or staff back-filled by other temporary staff or

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contractors, to undertake works to ensure Council is funded through the natural disaster funding arrangements.

i) Transport

The damage to Council's local roads and bridges is extensive and includes:

a) Road network

Approximately 490km of local Council roads were within the impacted fire zone.

The majority of the network has been inspected with the exception of:

- Old Bolaro Mountain Road (4wd section)
- Brou Lake Road
- Buckenbowra pump station road
- Rats Head Road
- Nerrigundah Quarry Road

There is also 37km of inspected roads with fire impact hazardous trees still to be removed.

There is another 60km where trees have been felled and clean-up is still required to remove fallen trees.

The whole of the fire impacted network still has numerous stumps and tidy up work to be completed to ensure the roads can be maintained going forward. This includes works such as restoration of table drain work (which has already commenced).

Council is also liaising with our neighbouring LGAs with respect to opening interconnecting routes such as Araluen Road and the access through to Cooma via Woila Creek.

b) Bridges

Eighteen timber bridges, including Rosedale footbridge were either damaged or destroyed in the fire event.

Four Gums bridge Belowra Road has been replaced with large concrete pipes.

A contractor has been engaged to complete the construction of box culverts at Pigeon Gully Bridge Araluen Road on the border with Queanbeyan Palerang Regional Council and has commenced work. Transport for NSW (T4NSW) have provided the box culverts for this project.

Quotations are being obtained for a Transport for NSW crew to complete the replacement of Murphys bridge on Eurobodalla Road.

Box culverts have already been acquired for Old Tomakin Road bridge, Mogo and Comans Road bridge Nerrigundah. Quotations have been called from contractors to undertake this work.

Negotiations are underway with the T4NSW and OEM to approve funding a temporary Council bridge crew to undertake repairs to the following timber bridges:

- Kennys Bridge Araluen Road

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- McGregors Creek bridge Araluen Road
- Cheese Factory bridge Eurobodalla Road
- Sinclairs bridge Eurobodalla
- Gulph Creek bridge Nerrigundah Mountain Road
- Clarkson bridge Wagonga Scenic Drive
- Rosedale footbridge

Solutions with a preference to replace structures in concrete are being investigated for:

- Sitter Ditch bridge Belowra Road
- Belimbla Creek bridge Belowra Road
- Belowra bridge Belowra Road
- Reedy Creek bridge Eurobodalla Road
- Peach Tree bridge Eurobodalla Road
- Old Bolaro Mountain Road bridge

ii) Water and Sewer

Council sustained damage to water and sewer infrastructure including:

- a) Loss of sheds at the Deep Creek Dam water pump station
- b) Damage to the building and controls for the Deep Creek Dam aerator
- c) Mobile equipment at Batemans Bay STP
- d) Damage to sewer pods on private lots at Rosedale
- e) Tuross River bores

Repairs have been completed or are in the process of being arranged. The shed at Deep Creek Dam will not be replaced.

The sewer pods at Rosedale will only be replaced once the rebuilding plans for dwellings are submitted. This cost rests with Council.

iii) Buildings (other than Botanic Gardens)

The Batemans Bay SES shed near Batemans Bay Depot was destroyed in the fire.

Council is obligated under the emergency management arrangements to provide the SES with a suitable facility. Discussions have commenced with the SES about locating the replacement facility on the Surf Beach employment lands, near the NSW Ambulance. This option will be explored including the likely cost over and above the insurance payment. Discussions will also involve the RFS who need to relocate from Pleasurelea Drive, Sunshine Bay to a new site.

The final solution will be dependent on available Government funding and agreement of all parties.

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A building was also lost at the RFS training facility at Jeremadra. It is not proposed to replace this building which may release funds to support other emergency response/resilience facilities. Additional damage included two septic tanks, minor damage to another roof and fences.

iv) Council controlled reserves – fire affected trees

There is approximately 20km of urban bush interface directly impacted by the fire. Initial inspections indicate there may be a significant number of fire affected trees contained within these reserves immediately adjacent to residential areas.

Council included treatment of fire affected trees within the 'make safe' plan submitted to the Rural Fire Service under the Section 44 Declaration. Council is awaiting confirmation these works will be funded through the Section 44 payments.

New systems have been established to track all inspections, identified fire affected hazardous trees and the treatment of these trees.

Council's Tree Inspector is responding to Customer Service Requests and additional work is being undertaken to explain the scale of the event and likely delay in treating trees.

An additional arborist has been secured through the generosity of Wollongong City Council and additional requests submitted to Councils within Sydney.

v) Regional Botanic Garden

The Garden suffered extensive fire damage during the New Year's Eve fire, impacting the access bridges, playground, toilets, sensory gardens, amphitheatre, pathways, dwelling, storage containers and equipment, retaining walls and the like. There was extensive damage to the gardens with numerous fire affected hazardous trees throughout the site.

The new central building, herbarium and office building survived intact, as did the main car parks.

Recovery efforts are focussed on the having the central section of the garden re-opened as soon as practicable. This will include the visitor centre, play space and all abilities walk.

To date site clean-up has been undertaken in the central areas. The ADF assisted with the reconstruction of retaining walls and clean-up following a request by Council.

Approximately 50 large fire affected trees will be removed along with debris from damaged and destroyed structures. Tools for the gardens, the tractor and three small vehicles are in the process of being replaced.

The aim is to re-open the central section of the Garden for Easter, subject to being able to make the site safe. This will be facilitated with the construction of a temporary scaffold bridge.

Natural Environment

The natural environment has been severely impacted by the bushfires with over 79% of the Shire impacted inclusive of 90% of National Parks and Forestry areas.

The scope of issues and considerations being undertaken by council is presented in the table below. Council has been working with multiple land managers, agencies and organisations in considering and addressing these issues including: Batemans Marine Park, Department of

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Planning, Infrastructure & Environment, Environment Protection Authority Fisheries, Food Authority, Forestry Corporation, Landcare, Local Aboriginal Land Council, Local Land Services, National Parks, NSW Health, Oyster Growers, WIRES and Council.

SCOPE	CONSIDERATIONS
Water Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estuarine • Catchments • Near shore oceanic • Algal blooms • Fish Kills
Soil and water management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rehabilitation and control works • Erosion control • Sedimentation • Ash
Vegetation Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Firebreaks, windrows • Roadside vegetation and burnt trees • Use of green waste • Rootballs, logs • Revegetation priorities
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threatened Species • Endangered Ecological Communities • Impact Assessment • Wildlife • Monitoring • Weeds and Feral animals
Town water supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water Supply protection
Environmental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stock burial • Asbestos – not house related • On-site sewage management systems • Recreational water quality • Ash in water tanks advice • Waste, rubbish etc

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Wildlife Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Euthanizing & burial• Rehabilitation• Rescue
Environmental Recovery Programs / Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rehabilitation• Communications• Volunteerism

Council worked with local oyster growers and Local Land Services to establish some erosion and sediment control in critical parts of the Clyde River catchment.

Immediate actions have occurred and include rescue, rehabilitation and euthanizing and burial of wildlife and stock where appropriate. The set-up of feed stations for wildlife along with monitoring occurred during the food shortages. Most stations are currently not required and Council has supported WIRES and community in the programs to date.

Other immediate actions included advice and/or media releases on water tanks and private water supplies, impacts of ash, water quality impacts, bushfire debris on beaches, helping with wildlife management, fish kills and regrowth after bushfires.

Council undertakes an estuary water quality monitoring program for the six main estuaries in Eurobodalla: Clyde, Tomaga and Moruya Rivers, Coila Lake, Tuross River and Wagonga Inlet. Samples are collected from the six estuaries monthly and analysis of enterococci and chlorophyll-a (three estuaries per year). Due to impacts to water quality following the bushfire disaster, Council has extended its analysis of Chlorophyll-a to all six estuaries as it is an indicator of degraded water quality.

The annual Beach Watch Monitoring Program between November and March reports weekly on recreational water quality. Consideration of extending this program through April 2020 is underway.

Opportunities for the sharing of water quality data with various NSW Government agencies to determine how we can better coordinate current and ongoing efforts within Eurobodalla is underway.

Council is seeking funding from the NSW Government's Bushfire Affected Coastal Waterways Program, which will assist with immediate and longer-term measures to protect water quality and coastal ecosystems, which can in-turn impact on the estuary environment and local industries such as tourism and aquaculture, as well as recreational water use.

A joint submission with Bega Valley Shire Council and Shoalhaven City Council aims to identify and prioritise bushfire impacts on a catchment basis and then appropriate sediment and erosion controls and work programs. This project will assist with strategic on-ground works, funding dependent, to restore landscapes across the south east region of NSW.

Council has been working closely with WIRES and Landcare volunteers on bushfire recovery. This has included supporting volunteer wildlife rescue, feeding and recovery efforts,

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coordinating a nest box program for native fauna and monitoring the post-fire recovery of the landscape, including botanical monitoring of various plant communities to assess the recovery.

Council is seeking funding from a variety of grants for items such as: sediment and erosion control works; feral animal and weed control; Landcare projects; rehabilitation, revegetation; nest boxes; and monitoring and evaluation. Council is also working with other organisations that have offered fully subsidised revegetation and volunteer crews to assist with the recovery of the natural environment and with the Ripper Drone Alliance, funded by Westpac and WIRES, to map and monitor sites and invasive species.

Economic Environment

In response to the highway closures caused by bush fires in December 2019, Council surveyed business to gain an understanding of the impact on our local economy. This assisted in informing early discussions with representatives from both the Australian and NSW Governments. Subsequent to council opening its survey the NSW Government opened a small business survey to collect data on the impact of the fires on business. Council actively encouraged local businesses to complete the survey to increase the understanding of Government of the economic impacts of the fires. The results of this survey have further informed our understanding of the impact on small business and assisted with advocacy on behalf of the business community.

Council increased the frequency of business and tourism newsletters over the fire and recovery periods to keep business informed of Council activities, available support and services, marketing activities and other relevant information. Personal contact was also increased along with increased service of customer enquiries and support via phone and more frequent meetings with the Presidents of our local business chambers was undertaken and programmed into the future. Council also worked with event organisers around postponing, rescheduling and supporting events both existing and proposed over the fire period and in response to the fire. During the fire period we worked with event operators to ensure contingency plans were in place to ensure participant safety. Council was also able to work with organisers of a surf boat carnival being held in Mollymook to be relocated to Long Beach due to adverse surf conditions. This was well received by the event organisers, participants and community.

Council's tourism marketing throughout the fire period and following has been flexible, authentic and realistic to ensure not only the safety of the visitors and residents but to ensure visitor's expectations were realistic. Council has been working on and implementing a number of marketing campaigns as part of the recovery including a Instagram campaign into Canberra to support visitation over the Canberra Day long weekend a Visiting Friends and Relatives Campaign which will be launched late March/Early April. We are also partnering with Wotif to leverage off the announcement that Batemans Bay was 4th in the top 10 destinations. To support our marketing we have engaged photographers to update our image library so that we authentic imagery.

Council has worked with Government agencies, Business Council of Australia and other groups to support, coordinate and promote a range of activities including:

- The approval of and establishment of a pop-up mall for eight fire impacted businesses in Mogo along with temporary accommodation for the Mogo LALC

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- Fly-in squad business turnaround forums and vouchers
- Business Connect, Service NSW Concierge, and Small Biz Bus services
- Facebook Australia workshops
- Birdsnest Retail Recovery Tour
- Promotion of food producers to Head chefs at Parliament House and Government House
- Training (20 packages) for RSA/RCG food handling to assist in addressing skill shortages
- Facilitating filming permits for: Netflix US filming doco, BBC TV filming of Mogo, Grand Design, The Voice, Sky News – Paul Murray, the Today Show and Sunrise.

Council has worked with local industry and attended the Illawarra Caravan Trade Show promoting the Eurobodalla. We have also worked with media including Today Show, Sunrise, and Good Food Guide facilitating connections with local product to assist in promoting the Eurobodalla.

Work has also been undertaken on a range of projects to assist with longer term recovery through product development, including:

- Mogo Adventure Trails Hub Masterplan
- Observation point and Coastal Headland Walking Trail
- Short walks and food trail
- Review of Scenic Drives
- Working with regional partners on Capital coast Walk and Great South Coast Drive.

Community and Stakeholder Engagement

Council uses its communications platforms to share important recovery information with the community, with the focus on providing media-friendly content to ensure the broadest possible reach. Content covers a range of information, from specifics about recovery centre operations, to stories about bush regeneration, and the practical assistance Council is providing to the community. 31 recovery-related media releases have been distributed since 17 January, and 30 Facebook posts. Promotion of community outreach activities (detailed at Social Environment) is tailored to the communities impacted.

Council's recovery webpages – www.esc.nsw.gov.au/recovery - collect the range of recovery information in one convenient place for the community. Topics include financial assistance, NSW clean-up program, Blaze Aid, rebuilding and repairing (including a list of Eurobodalla's building design professionals), waste services, legal services, and looking after your mental health. There are many resources on offer and we test them before adding to our site to make sure they work for residents. Resources are updated daily.

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CONCLUSION

This report outlines the key issues relating to the Eurobodalla Recovery phase. It has provided a summary of the recovery activities to date. This is the second report regarding the Emergency response and recovery and ensures that the Council is kept informed of our progress as our community rebuilds.

Eurobodalla Shire Council
Interim Fire Damage Report 2019/20
14 February 2020

There were approximately 273 roads affected by the fires, including damaged bridges, signage, guide posts, protective fencing and dangerous trees that need to be removed from the road or cut down and removed; damage to pavements sealed and unsealed resulting from plant movement during recovery; as well as damage to drainage eg. North Moruya industrial area by clearing efforts. There is also a significant job in clearing the table drains of vegetation and debris along these roads.

Council has also suffered damage to other assets such as the Botanic Gardens and the Batemans Bay Depot.

Bridges:

Council has identified 26 fire affected bridges; and of those 19 requiring either complete rebuild and/or new components.

Photos of bridges can be found in appendix A.

Bridge	Road	Locality	Structure	Works Required
Bridge Completely destroyed				
Pigeon Gully Bridge	Araluen Road	Mericumbene	Timber Bridge	Complete rebuild.
Belimbla Bridge	Belowra Road	Nerrigundah	Timber Bridge	Complete rebuild.
Belowra Bridge	Belowra Road	Belowra	Timber Bridge	Complete rebuild.
Four Gums Bridge	Belowra Road	Belowra	Timber Bridge	Complete rebuild.
Sitters Ditch Bridge	Belowra Road	Belowra	Timber Bridge	Complete rebuild.
Comans Bridge	Comans Road	Nerrigundah	Timber Bridge	Complete rebuild.
Murphy Bridge	Eurobodalla Road	Cadgee	Composite Bridge	Complete rebuild.
Peach Tree Bridge	Eurobodalla Road	Eurobodalla	Timber Bridge	Complete rebuild.
Reedy Creek Bridge	Eurobodalla Road	Eurobodalla	Timber Bridge	Complete rebuild.
Old Bolaro Mnt Rd Bridge	Old Bolaro Road	Buckenbowra	Timber Bridge	Complete rebuild.
Old Mogo Zoo Bridge	Tomakin Road	Mogo	Timber Bridge	Complete rebuild.
Bridge Partially Destroyed				
Kennys Creek Bridge	Araluen Road	Deua River Valley	Timber Bridge	Replace damaged components
McGregors Creek Bridge	Araluen Road	Deua River Valley	Timber Bridge	Replace damaged components
Cheese Factory Bridge	Eurobodalla Road	Eurobodalla	Timber Bridge	Replace damaged components

Sinclairs Bridge	Eurobodalla Road	Nerrigundah	Timber Bridge	Replace damaged components
Gulph Creek Bridge	Nerrigundah Mtn Road	Nerrigundah	Timber Bridge	Replace damaged components
Clarksons Bridge	Wagonga Scenic Drive	Narooma	Timber Bridge	Replace damaged components
Rosedale Footbridge	Rosedale Pde	Rosedale	Timber Bridge	Replace damaged components
Bridge Signage or Guardrail Destroyed				
Cadgee Bridge	Eurobodalla Road	Eurobodalla	Concrete	Replace Signage
Old Hall Bridge (Culvert)	Eurobodalla Road	Eurobodalla	Concrete	Replace Guardrail and Signage
Umbrella Creek Bridge	Eurobodalla Road	Eurobodalla	Concrete	Replace Signage
Underpass Bridge (Culvert)	Eurobodalla Road	Eurobodalla	Concrete	Replace Signage
Gulph Creek Causeway	Eurobodalla Road	Eurobodalla	Concrete	Replace Signage
Salt Water Creek (Rosedale)	George Bass Drive	Rosedale	Concrete	Replace Guardrail
Barretts Creek	Araluen Road	Deua River Valley	Concrete	Replace Guardrail
Culvert at 2509	Araluen Road	Deua River Valley	Concrete	Replace Guardrail



Sitters Ditch Bridge (Belowra Road)

Guide Posts, Street Signs and Guardrail:

It has been identified that guide posts were impacted by fire on most affected roads, and are currently being collated on Asset Edge Recover application. Council have so far identified 102 signs that require replacement and have been captured in 'Recover'.

So far Council have identified 13 instances of fire damaged Guard Rail. Guard rail affected areas consist of:

- Dunns Creek Road x2
- Araluen Road x 2
- Tallgums Way x1
- Miller Avenue x1
- George Bass Drive x4
- Crosby Drive x1
- Yowanu Road x1
- Worthy Drive x1



Fire damaged sign on intersection of Dunns creek road and Ridge road



Crosby Drive, fire damaged tree fell on guardrail

Culverts and Stormwater pipes:

So far there have been two identified buried pipes that have been partly or wholly destroyed. There are several pipe inlets along George Bass Drive that have fire damage. There is also a small rock wall – bank protection that has been damaged, pictured in appendix B.



Complete pipe collapse due to fire damage along Reedy Creek Road

Fire damaged tree vegetation on roads:

On the affected roads Council have been required to remove several thousands of trees. These are trees that fell over onto the road or the side of the road during the event and after, as well as trees deemed dangerous which require cutting down and removal. These trees are severely fire damaged, hollowed out, and currently still falling as they are no longer sound.



Traveling north on Yowani rd (Rosedale) with thick tree vegetation on road



Reedy creek road, tree vegetation on road

Water

Deep Creek Dam



Roof to the tower has come away from the structure, suspected to have been blown off. Damage to the aeration system is currently



600mm flow meter on the pumping line to the NWTP has been impacted by fire and requires replacement.



Colourbond shed at Deep Creek Dam has been destroyed. No Council assets are believed to have been stored in the shed at the time of the fires.

Tuross Bores



Fire impacted on the 5 bores and associated electrical equipment. Extent of damage is still being assessed.

Waste Water-



Two trailers and a pontoon mixer were destroyed at the sewerage treatment plant at Surf Beach. One was W&S Goodwin pump, the other was a tool trailer.



Two trailers and a pontoon mixer were destroyed at the sewerage treatment plant at Surf Beach. One was W&S Goodwin pump, the other was a tool trailer.

Rosedale Pressure Sewer system

Rosedale (North & South) was heavily impacted by fire. North Rosedale properties have not been accessed due to the risk to staff and it is assumed that the 50 units (Boundary kit, control panel & pump pods) have been destroyed.

South Rosedale has approximately 16 pump units, 23 control panels and 12 boundary kits that require replacement.



Example of destroyed pod & pump



Example of destroyed control panel



Example of damaged boundary kit

Batemans Bay Depot and RFS Depot:

The two Batemans RFS sheds were destroyed as well as a shed within the Batemans Bay Depot.



RFS Sheds



RFS Sheds



Shed in Batemans Bay Depot

Botanic Gardens:

The Eurobodalla Botanic Gardens had extensive fire damage to footbridges, timber structures such as bird shelters, playground equipment, timber signage, greenhouses, ect.



Entrance to Botanic Gardens from Princes Highway



Example of burnt signage



Fire damage to tool sheds – loss of all tools



Destroyed footbridge



Damage to wooden structures such as bird shelters, green houses and playground equipment

Deep Creek Dam Viewing Platform:

The viewing platform at Deep Creek Dam has extensive fire damage.



Appendix A

Bridges:

Kennys Creek Bridge



Pigeon Gully Bridge



Belimbla Bridge



Belowra Bridge



Four Gums Bridge



Sitters Ditch Bridge



Comans Bridge



Cheese Factory Bridge



Murphy Bridge



View from southern abutment



View from northern abutment



View from northern abutment

Peach Tree Bridge



Reedy Creek Bridge



Sinclair's Bridge



Gulph Creek Bridge



Johnsons Crossings Causeway



Old Mogo Zoo Bridge





Appendix B

Guide Posts, Signs, and Guardrail photos:



Fire damaged 50km/h sign on Buckenbowra road (Buckenbowra)



Fire damaged 'Giveaway' sign along Araluen Road



Train street intersection with George bass drive (Broulee)



Fire damaged Guide posts along Dunns creek road (Tomakin)



Fire damaged guide posts on both sides of Burri road (Malua bay)



The River Road (Currowan), damaged guide posts extending 700m



Yowani Road (Rosedale) guard rail damaged



Fire Damaged guard rail along George Bass Drive



Guardrail damaged from falling tree along Dunns Creek Road



Protective Fence damaged from falling tree along Tallgums way (Surf Beach)

Fire damaged tree vegetation photos:



Waincourt road, dangerous trees neighbouring the road



George Bass Drive, culvert fire damage



Hanns road, overhanging fire damaged tree along road side



Waincourt Road, fire effected tree line neighbouring roadside making the road unsafe



Nerrigundah Mountain Road, fire effected trees

GMR20/007 SUBMISSION TO THE NSW GOVERNMENT INQUIRY INTO 2019-20 BUSHFIRES S008-T00025

Responsible Officer: Dr Catherine Dale - General Manager

Attachments: 1. Submission [↓](#)

Outcome: Protected and Valued Natural Environment

Focus Area: 3.1 Respond to our changing environment and build resilience to natural hazards

Delivery Program Link: 3.1.3 Collaborate with agencies and emergency services to support coordinated emergency management

Operational Plan Link: 3.1.3.1 Advocate for the strategic review of emergency services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to present the draft submission to the NSW Government independent inquiry into the 2019-20 bushfire season.

The extreme fire event experienced across Eurobodalla over the 2019-20 summer caused unprecedented damage to the natural and built environment, burning approximately 80% of the Eurobodalla LGA, and sadly cost three lives.

It is inevitable that bushfires will again be experienced within Eurobodalla in the future.

The NSW Government inquiry aims to review the response to this event and related matters to gain insights into how to improve the resilience of our community and the environment in the future.

Many of the issues under review require more detailed research by the NSW Government to ensure an evidenced based approach.

There were a number of significant challenges outlined throughout this submission, which if addressed, will make responding to such an emergency more effective. As it was, the phrase 'adapt, invent and overcome', reflected the many collective challenges that were resolved through the combined efforts of so many to respond to this disastrous fire event and keep our community safe.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council endorse the submission to the NSW Government Inquiry into the 2019-20 bushfires.

BACKGROUND

The Eurobodalla community has been significantly impacted by the bushfires since the Currowan Fire started on 26 November 2019. Since then further extreme conditions on Tuesday 31 December, Saturday 4 January, Friday 10 January, Thursday 23 January, Friday 31 January and Saturday 1 February 2020 saw heavy fire impact or heat conditions in our towns and villages, as well as rural areas.

The Currowan, Clyde Mountain and Badja fires have burnt over 397,789 hectares of land and caused significant impact to Eurobodalla. Within Eurobodalla more than 271,000 hectares of our 343,000 hectares or 79% of our Shire has been directly fire impacted.

GMR20/007 SUBMISSION TO THE NSW GOVERNMENT INQUIRY INTO 2019-20 BUSHFIRES S008-T00025

Impacts from these extraordinary fires within Eurobodalla include:

- the sad and tragic loss of three lives, one each at Belowra, Nerrigundah and Bodalla rural areas
- large numbers of stock and native fauna
- loss of more than two thousand buildings (outlined in more detail below)
- substantial damage to public infrastructure (roads, bridges, water, sewer, waste, public buildings and facilities, electricity and telecommunications infrastructure)
- significant impacts on business and tourism due to the disruption to the peak visitor period
- extended closures of the primary transport and access routes into and out of Eurobodalla with both the Kings Highway and Princes Highway impacted
- significant adverse health impacts, particularly the mental health of our community
- more than 96,000 hectares or 90.5% of our State forests burnt
- more than 127,000 hectares or 90.6% of our National Parks burnt

Building Impact Assessment has found the following confirmed property losses:

- 501 homes destroyed
- 80 facilities destroyed
- 859 outbuildings destroyed
- 274 houses damaged
- 49 facilities damaged
- 297 outbuildings damaged.

CONSIDERATIONS

The Inquiry is to consider, and report to the Premier on, the following matters:

1. The causes of, and factors contributing to, the frequency, intensity, timing and location of, bushfires in NSW in the 2019-20 bushfire season, including consideration of any role of weather, drought, climate change, fuel loads and human activity.
2. The preparation and planning by agencies, government, other entities and the community for bushfires in NSW, including current laws, practices and strategies, and building standards and their application and effect.
3. Responses to bushfires, particularly measures to control the spread of the fires and to protect life, property and the environment, including:
 - immediate management, including the issuing of public warnings

GMR20/007 SUBMISSION TO THE NSW GOVERNMENT INQUIRY INTO 2019-20 BUSHFIRES S008-T00025

- resourcing, coordination and deployment
 - equipment and communication systems.
4. Any other matters that the inquiry deems appropriate in relation to bushfires.
- And to make recommendations arising from the Inquiry as considered appropriate, including on:
- 5. Preparation and planning for future bushfire threats and risks.
 - 6. Land use planning and management and building standards, including appropriate clearing and other hazard reduction, zoning, and any appropriate use of indigenous practices.
 - 7. Appropriate action to adapt to future bushfire risks to communities and ecosystems.
 - 8. Emergency responses to bushfires, including overall human and capital resourcing.
 - 9. Coordination and collaboration by the NSW Government with the Australian Government, other state and territory governments and local governments.
 - 10. Safety of first responders.
 - 11. Public communication and advice systems and strategies.

Council's submission responds to all matters listed in the terms of reference.

Community and Stakeholder Engagement

The Inquiry welcomes submissions from bushfire-affected residents, emergency and support personnel, organisations and the general public.

Everyone is encouraged to share their experience and tell their story to inform the Inquiry's work.

The deadline for submissions is 27 March 2020, but this can be extended for those directly affected by the fires. Submissions can be uploaded at <https://www.nsw.gov.au/improving-nsw/projects-and-initiatives/make-a-submission-to-the-bushfire-inquiry/>

The Inquiry will also be travelling to bushfire affected communities to meet with and hear directly from people who have been affected. The Inquiry will inform local communities ahead of all visits to ensure it reaches as many people as possible. The scheduled for community visits is also being posted at <https://www.nsw.gov.au/improving-nsw/projects-and-initiatives/make-a-submission-to-the-bushfire-inquiry/>

GMR20/007 SUBMISSION TO THE NSW GOVERNMENT INQUIRY INTO 2019-20 BUSHFIRES S008-T00025

CONCLUSION

A submission has been prepared in response to the NSW Government Inquiry into the 2019-20 bushfire season. Each point of the terms of reference has been addressed in this submission. A copy of the submission is attached to this report.

Eurobodalla Shire Council Submission to the NSW Government Inquiry - 2019-20 Bushfires

Executive Summary

The extreme fire event experienced across Eurobodalla over the 2019-20 summer caused unprecedented damage to the natural and built environment, burning approximately 80% of the Eurobodalla LGA, and sadly cost three lives.

It is inevitable that bushfires will again be experienced within Eurobodalla in the future.

The NSW Government inquiry aims to review the response to this event and related matters to gain insights into how to improve the resilience of our community and the environment in the future.

Many of the issues under review require more detailed research by the NSW Government to ensure an evidenced based approach.

There were a number of significant challenges outlined throughout this submission, which if addressed, will make responding to such an emergency so much easier. As it was, the Eurobodalla LEMO coined the phrase during this event to 'adapt, invent and overcome', to reflect the many collective challenges resolved through the collective efforts of so many to respond to this disastrous campaign fire event and keep our community safe.

The key recommendations we believe the NSW Government should act upon are listed below with further detail provided through this submission:

- i) the NSW Government should fund, build and maintain the proposed Eurobodalla Regional Integrated Emergency Services Precinct in Moruya as a matter of priority with a purpose- built Emergency Operations Centre
- ii) the NSW Government review regulation and policy to facilitate improvements to dwellings that were constructed prior to the introduction of bushfire management and construction standards including the introduction of compliant asset protection zones and improvements to the construction standards of the dwelling to make them more resilient.
- iii) the NSW Government should fund the NSW Rural Fire Service to deliver additional education to assist our community to become increasingly resilient to bushfire events through appropriate building construction, property preparation and bushfire survival planning
- iv) the NSW Government should provide greater certainty for landowners wishing to establish appropriate asset protection zones to existing dwellings (or rebuilt dwellings lost in these fires) within their own property without the need for expensive environmental studies or biodiversity offsets
- v) appropriate management of fuel loads in the landscape needs to occur taking a non-tenure approach, coordinated through bushfire risk management plans and

committees. This should include a review of potential use and benefits from low intensity burning techniques used historically by the Indigenous communities.

- vi) The NSW Government should ensure there continues to be a well-resourced and capable emergency response capability in each local area well supported by emergency management structures at a local, regional, State and Australian Government level
- vii) the NSW Government change the response funding arrangements to ensure Councils are funded for the day labour costs associated with deploying Council staff engaged in the emergency response under Section 44 declarations and other declared emergencies.
- viii) the NSW and Australian Government change the funding arrangements to ensure Councils are funded for the day labour costs associated with clean-up and rebuilding of transport and other related infrastructure without the need to sign-up to the proposed new disaster funding arrangements.
- ix) the NSW Government should review the arrangements for evacuation centres including the training of additional local NSW Government personnel who work within the EOC and evacuation centres. Catering arrangements should also be reviewed.
- x) NSW Government fund recommended improvements to the resilience and preparedness of Council owned buildings used as evacuation centres
- xi) critical infrastructure resilience strategies should be identified, funded and implemented for all major infrastructure with additional financial support from the NSW and Australian Governments including:
 - a. telecommunications systems such as towers and associated facilities (which impacts emergency response communications, mobile phone services, ABC and commercial radio, television)
 - b. power supply to the whole of Eurobodalla LGA and to critical infrastructure sites
 - c. the arterial transport network including highways and major regional roads
 - d. water and sewerage systems including additional Government funding for the proposed Eurobodalla Southern Water Storage
 - e. hospitals
 - f. schools
 - g. emergency operations and evacuation centres

ATTACHMENT 1 SUBMISSION

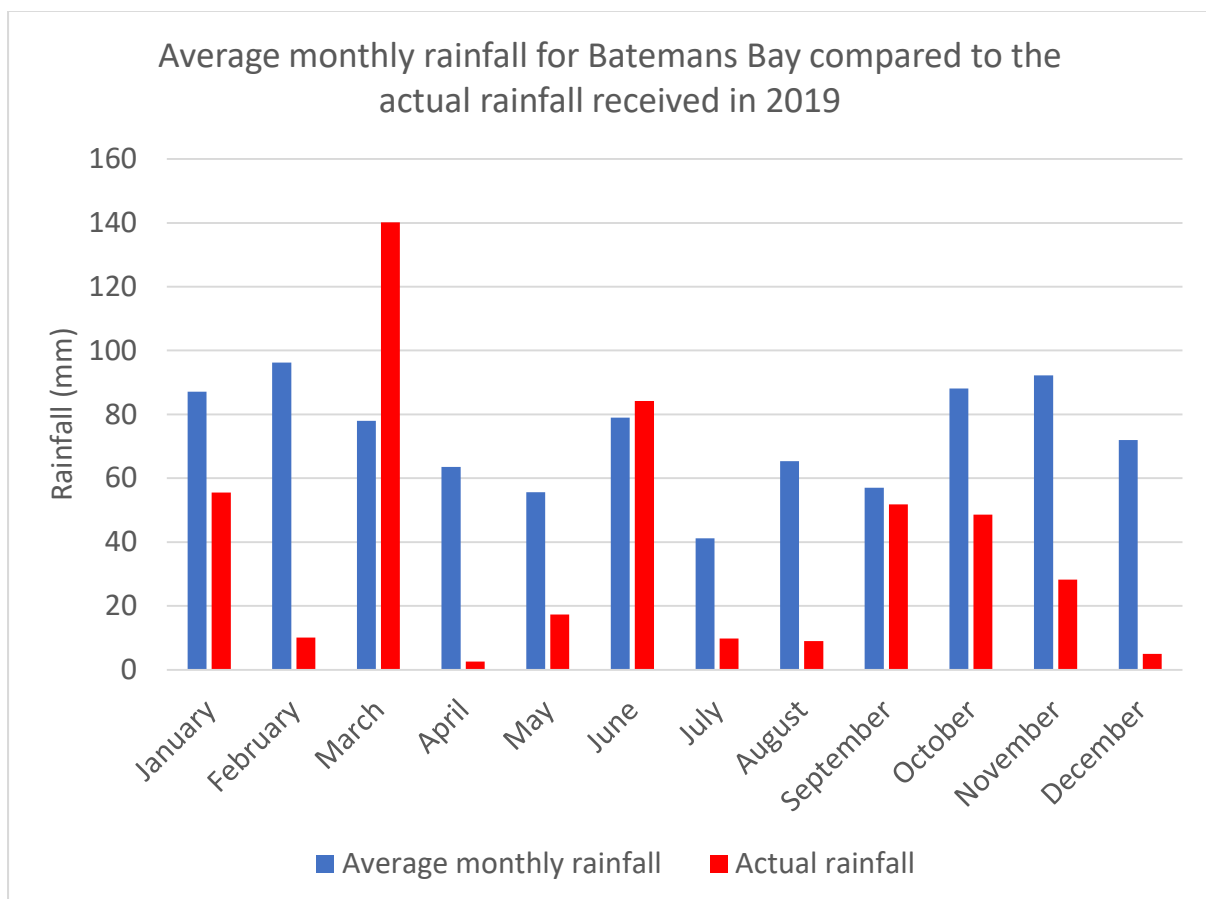
- xii) additional regulations should be implemented to require improved business continuity (in particular alternate power supply) for critical private businesses including:
 - a. all fuel service stations
 - b. major food retailers
 - c. aged care providers

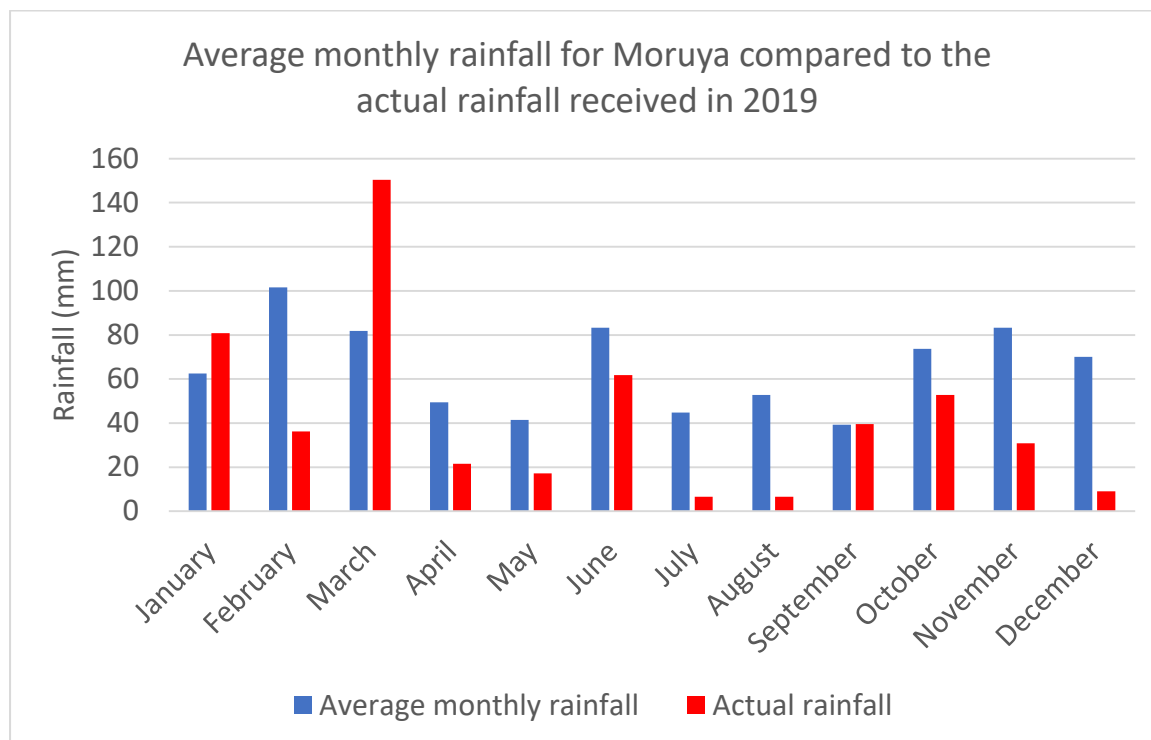
1. The causes of, and factors contributing to, the frequency, intensity, timing and location of bushfires in NSW in the 2019-20 bushfire season, including consideration of any role weather, drought, climate change, fuel loads and human activity.

The 2019-20 fires burnt approximately 80% of the Eurobodalla landmass including 90% of National Parks and State Forests with devastating consequences to life, property, community well-being and the economic viability of Eurobodalla businesses.

Detailed information on the weather and soil moisture conditions leading up to and during this event will be made available from the Bureau of Meteorology and RFS to the inquiry.

Advice indicates that the three-year period leading into the 2019-20 summer was the driest on record in NSW. The following graphs show the rainfall in 2019 compared to the average rainfall for Batemans Bay and Moruya. This demonstrates the extremely dry winter leading up to and during the fire event.





The inquiry will likely find that the fires impacting the Eurobodalla started from lightning strikes, with the exception being the Araluen Road fire. This latter fire is the subject of criminal charges against the individual involved which is a matter for the NSW Police and the courts.

The inquiry should also research the history of fire along the NSW coast using information from previous events to gain further insight into fire behaviour, rather than just relying on the information from this single event. This should include reference to available information from previous research and reports (e.g. Bushfire History of the South Coast Study Area J.A. Duggin CSIRO July 1976). A review of the 1994 fire should also provide further insights, noting many of the properties lost in this event were built after that fire event.

The inquiry should also look to the future. It is recommended that the NSW and Australian Government fund research by an appropriate university and/or agency, to track the build-up of fuel loadings over the next five-year period. The Eurobodalla landscape offers a very good test case with the variation in fire intensity offering a 'live research laboratory'. This information could then be added to existing intelligence fed into the Eurobodalla bushfire risk management plan.

There are many who believe that more regular hazard reduction burning is the answer, and this will be a factor. However, we need only look to history to understand this is a complex issue, as this extract from the above paper demonstrates in describing the 1968 bushfires.

*'The cause of the Clyde fire was possibly lightning strikes in the upper reaches of the Clyde River. The fire broke out around Pidgeon House Creek on 26 October 1968 and moved quickly under the influence of hot and dry, north-westerly winds. The fire front split in two on reaching cleared country and passed to the north of Milton and to the south of Ulladulla. Both fronts eventually burnt to the coast. **This fire burnt over the same country as the Pigeon House fire of 1964-65. The fact that this area was able to carry a second fire in less than 4 years was the result of prolific generation and growth of fire weeds and Acacia spp. after the earlier fire.***

Similarly, the 2019-20 bushfires in Eurobodalla raced through recent hazard reduction burns as a crown fire in the prevailing conditions on New Year's Eve. The area the subject of a previous hazard reduction burn along the Princes Highway south of Batemans Bay, re-burnt intensely on the morning of 31 December 2019.

Research of the information held by the Rural Fire Service will show that severe drought conditions, high night-time temperatures, high winds and very low humidity of less than 10% played a significant role in the extreme fire behaviour over the proceeding night and the morning of New Year's Eve 2019.

In rural areas, expansive cleared agricultural lands and bush also burnt with extreme intensity resulting in the loss of three lives, numerous stock and wildlife, homes, sheds, machinery, fencing and pasture. The remoteness of these areas, the need to direct resources to the areas to support the greatest number of people and the risk to fire fighters, meant that the provision of on-the-ground fire-fighting support in these areas was limited. The decision of these residents to stay and defend their property, sadly cost them their lives.

Council has been advocating to Government to fund, build and maintain a purpose built regional integrated emergency services precinct in Moruya with a purpose-built emergency operation centre. The Eurobodalla Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) for this fire event was operated from the Moruya RSL Hall. The EOC is a make-shift arrangement only made effective by the collective efforts and commitment of those people operating out of the facility.

It is now well accepted that a co-located facility with the appropriate technologies and support systems, is best practice.

2. The preparation and planning by agencies, government, other entities and the community for bushfires in NSW, including current laws, practices and strategies, and building standards and their application and effect.

The NSW Rural Fire Service has carriage for planning for bushfire in NSW. A local bushfire risk management plan is prepared for each local government area (LGA), in our case under the Eurobodalla Bushfire Risk Management Committee (EBRMC). This plan is reviewed and signed off by the NSW Bushfire Coordinating Committee.

The Eurobodalla Bushfire Risk Management Plan (EBRMP) was endorsed by the Eurobodalla Bushfire Management Committee on 17 October 2019 for submission to the NSW Bushfire Coordinating Committee. The plan is yet to be signed off by the NSW Bushfire Coordinating Committee. However, the previous EBRMP 2011 remains in place.

The EBRMC takes a non-tenure approach to bushfire planning with appropriate representation from all government agencies, Council and the community. This includes representation from Local Aboriginal Lands Councils.

The EBRMC is an appropriate mechanism for considering bushfire planning using a non-tenure approach. The Rural Fires Act 1989 already contains powers for the RFS to require any landowner, including Government landowners, to take appropriate action to mitigate fire risk on their property.

The undertaking of bushfire hazard reduction burning across tenures should be further investigated in more detail by the EBRMC and NSW Bushfire Coordinating Committee. Bushfire hazard reduction burning remains a valuable tool in managing fuel loads in the landscape. The NSW Bushfire Coordinating Committee should also be resourced to investigate the applicability of low intensity burns used historically by Indigenous communities.

3. Responses to bushfires, particularly measures to control the spread of the fires and to protect life, property and the environment, including:

- **Immediate management, including issuing public warnings**
- **Resourcing, coordination and deployment**
- **Equipment and communication systems**

The multi-agency response to the 2019-20 bushfires was extraordinary in its scale and effort. Those involved showed great courage, skill and commitment to protecting our community, and we are deeply appreciative of their efforts in helping to save our community.

Despite this, sadly three lives were lost in remote rural areas of the bushfire in southern sector of the Eurobodalla, where the parties decided to stay and defend their properties.

However, there is little doubt that the combined efforts of the Incident Management Team, Emergency Operations Centre, the local media and of our community, saved countless lives that would have otherwise been lost in this bushfire event.

The Eurobodalla bushfires burnt through the most populated areas of Eurobodalla destroying hundreds of homes, other buildings and businesses overnight and through the following day. Despite this, no lives were lost, or people seriously injured in the path of this devastating northern fire. This included keeping our fire fighters and the many other agencies and Council teams safe in responding to the firestorm to help protect our community and keep it operational.

The change in public messaging to put life over property is acknowledged as being an influencing factor in this respect.

RFS Incident Management Team (IMT)

The RFS response was outstanding, and the efforts of professional staff and the many volunteers and out of area crews, including those from other States and overseas, are truly appreciated.

Our Council would also like to recognise the amazing contributions of the other parties involved in the IMT including:

- i) NSW Forestry
- ii) National Parks and Wildlife Service
- iii) NSW Police
- iv) Eurobodalla Shire Council staff
- v) Local plant and equipment contractors
- vi) NSW Fire & Rescue
- vii) Victorian Country Fire Association
- viii) Overseas fire fighters from Canada and USA
- ix) Air support teams
- x) Volunteer community groups and businesses supporting catering

The role that Forestry NSW plays in frontline containment, emergency response and clean-up work deserve special praise. The skilled and committed personnel, well trained and experienced from continuously working in bush environments and associated forestry equipment, proved invaluable to the efforts help our community in this event.

The Eurobodalla bushfire was initially managed through the Shoalhaven IMT to address the Currawan bushfire with the majority of impacts occurring in the Shoalhaven LGA. An RFS forward command was established in Eurobodalla for this fire to work with the Eurobodalla Emergency Operations Centre and appropriate communications established with the Shoalhaven IMT and EOC. A Section 44 declaration was in place to cover the fire-fighting response down to the Deua River at Moruya.

At the same time, the Black Range Fire was burning near Braidwood in the Queanbeyan Palerang Regional LGA. Appropriate communications were in place to manage the impacts of this fire across LGA boundaries, in this case, mainly relating to potential impacts on the interconnecting Kings Highway and Araluen Road.

On 26 December 2019, additional fires started in the southern areas of the Eurobodalla and in the Snowy Monaro Regional LGA (the Badja Fire). This resulted in the establishment of a

separate Incident Management Team based in Moruya to manage both the Eurobodalla and Bega Valley bushfires on 30 December 2019 with the Section 44 declaration extended to cover the respective areas.

The Far South Coast Management Team managed the Eurobodalla and Bega Valley fires thereafter until they were declared contained. The Section 44 declaration was lifted at 1800hours on 4 March 2020. During this period additional bad fire days were experienced in early December, Tuesday 31 December, Saturday 4 January, Friday 10 January, Thursday 23 January, Friday 31 January and Saturday 1 February 2020.

The loss of power and telecommunications (phone, ABC radio and television) resulted in difficulty communicating with segments of the community for specific periods of time. It is evident that the general population is now dependent on these forms of communication. Every effort should therefore be made to improve the resilience of telecommunication systems. At the same time, on-going education should be undertaken to ensure people are more self-reliant, particularly in preparing well in advance and making early decisions to act.

The RFS IMT had capable Media Officers in place with primary responsibility for communication with the community regarding the fire and firefighting activities. This was supplemented by the extensive communications coming from a State level, via the Fires Near Me App, phone texts, through the work of the Eurobodalla EOC (including on-line and communications manually distributed across the Shire by Council Rangers and the NSW Police), by local print and radio media, national television and a series of specific public meetings (supported by the RFS, Police, Council and EOC teams).

a) RFS IMT Media Officers

These roles are essential at a local level as it provides local knowledge expected and needed by the community.

It can be challenging balancing consistent State-wide messages and those specific messages required at a local level. Both are needed.

In our view, greater delegation should be provided to the local IMT Media Officer and the Incident Controller to ensure timely messaging is shared with the community and EOC.

b) Fires Near Me App

This App provided a good level of information on the presence of fires within Eurobodalla and the current level of threat level to specific areas. This was extremely helpful for all involved, particularly as alert levels increased or changed.

Some in the community seemed to have an over-reliance on the map and an expectation this would be continuously updated to show a live status. This is an unrealistic expectation given the mapping is dependent on having appropriate information from aerial line scans and/or in-field observations. It may be more appropriate to tweak referencing on the map to better reflect the time of the update.

Other feedback indicated some people wanted more specific information to their particular property location. One challenge in using the App is the information is aimed at where people are likely to be impacted. Where practicable, it is important to look at ways to reduce anxiety in areas unlikely to be impacted. This is challenging given the very nature fire risks pose.

c) Regional Awareness

Regional awareness is critical in public communication in an event with a scale across multiple LGAs. This was demonstrated when media was released from Shoalhaven IMT inviting people to return to the South Coast on 10 January. At this same time, Far South Coast IMT and Eurobodalla EOC were still actively discouraging people from coming to Batemans Bay through to Narooma due to on-going fire activity and the high risks to the community in Eurobodalla. The reference to the South Coast should have been changed to reflect the specific areas where it was safe to return.

Eurobodalla Emergency Operations Centre

The Eurobodalla EOC supported the Shoalhaven IMT and the Far South Coast IMT throughout the Eurobodalla fires. The EOC was at alert level from 26 November 2019 and formally moved to active on 1 December 2019. The EOC moved from fire to flood emergency on 10 February 2020 without fully standing down. The flood event was also subsequently formally declared a natural disaster.

The EOC is a multi-agency team activated to support combat agencies in a major emergency. In the case of bushfire, the combat agency is the RFS. In the case of flood, the combat agency is the SES.

The EOC is led by the Local Emergency Operations Controller (LEOCON) supported by the Local Emergency Management Officer (LEMO). The local chief Inspector of NSW Police is the primary LEOCON for Eurobodalla, with Council staff performing the role of the LEMO. Other replacement personnel assisted from local and out of area resources to allow rotation.

Each key agency provided a Liaison Officer within the EOC on an as needs basis. The Eurobodalla EOC included representation from:

- i) NSW Police (LEOCON, Police)
- ii) Council (LEMO, Engineering, Media, Administrative & IT Support)
- iii) Rural Fire Service
- iv) State Emergency Services
- v) NSW Ambulance
- vi) NSW Health

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- vii) Transport for NSW
- viii) Essential Energy
- ix) NSW Local Lands Services
- x) NSW Department of Primary Industries
- xi) NSW Community and Justice
- xii) Australian Defence Force

Other bodies working remotely with the EOC included the local media, NSW Maritime, Volunteer Rescue Association, Surf Clubs, Anglicare, Red Cross and Salvation Army.

Due to the sheer scale of the fires across NSW, the RFS were unable to provide a full-time RFS Liaison Officer in the Eurobodalla Emergency Operations Centre for the duration of the fire, except on a few days. Consequently, alternate successful measures were implemented to ensure adequate communication between the IMT and EOC teams including:

- Provision of a NSW Police Liaison Officer within the IMT for direct liaison back to the Local Emergency Operations Controller
- Regular visits to the IMT for briefings by the LEOCON and/or LEMO, and/or by the RFS to the Eurobodalla EOC
- Joint teleconferences
- Joint public presentations/meetings, including on New Year's Eve at Hanging Rock in Batemans Bay (with appropriate use of mainstream and social media)
- Provision of a Media Officer within the EOC to liaise with the RFS Media Officer (noting the RFS Media was responsible for public messaging on the fire itself)

This is quite common in actual disasters and the emergency management arrangements provide flexibility to adapt to the resources at hand. Nonetheless, not being co-located made the processes of coordination more difficult, despite available technologies.

The Eurobodalla EOC reported regularly to, and was supported by, the Regional Emergency Operations Centre and ultimately the State EOC.

The efforts of the Eurobodalla EOC and Council team assisting were extraordinary. The EOC operated in a united and committed team environment. These efforts contributed significantly to keeping our community safe, providing for evacuees, assisting vulnerable people, communicating with the community on matters within the EOC's remit and assisting with the response to restore services to the community.

The efforts of the EOC included overcoming the challenges of no power, no highway access and no access to fuel, to evacuate tens of thousands of people from Eurobodalla within a 48

hour period was exceptional and a critical step in protecting visitors and allowing available resources to be directed to supporting the resident population.

The NSW Police and State Emergency Services undertook extensive door knocking in remote and rural areas in advance of fire days. The Volunteer Rescue Association also assisted on one occasion but was unable to resource further assistance. These face to face activities supplemented the advice provided by the RFS IMT and RFS media team using agreed written messaging. These visits assisted to identify additional vulnerable people, encouraging earlier action by the parties involved as well as providing additional information about evacuation arrangements for people and animals.

The current arrangements regarding telecommunications relies on Telcos reporting through to the State EOC level. This was problematic and limited information to the Eurobodalla EOC or IMT regarding the impact of fire on telecommunications. In turn this resulted in challenges in informing the community about the impact and anticipated likely timing of restoration of services across Eurobodalla. The effectiveness of these arrangements appears to be limited by the amount of resource allocated to provide specific advice back to a regional and local level, where it is critical. Improved arrangements that require a TelcoFAC to better service local and regional EOCs is essential.

Council has taken the initiative to meet with major Telcos since the event to discuss communication and preparedness and resilience of telecommunications facilities.

Council's teams undertook numerous activities to assist in the response including fire containment strategies and response work (eg provision of fire breaks in Forestry lands, tree falling and clearing to secure road access, provision of refuelling critical non-Council infrastructure and the like). The NSW Government funding arrangements under the Section 44 declaration do not cover the day labour costs of Council Operational teams. This is an unfair and completely unsatisfactory funding arrangements.

The NSW Government change the response funding arrangements to ensure Councils are funded for the day labour costs associated with deploying Council staff engaged in the emergency response under Section 44 declarations and other declared emergencies.

Council is often able to divert resources to respond quickly and reduce the time to recover the community, at the expense of other programs using day labour Operational team. These efforts should also be funded to undertake clean-up after the disaster and recovery of transport and other infrastructure without the need to sign-up to the proposed new disaster funding arrangements.

Prior to the start of the fire event, Council increased its own ability for Operational teams to be linked to the Council radio system. This proved crucial and became a main source of communication for a period for Council's transport, water and sewer, workshop and electrical teams. Nonetheless, coordination of essential Council activities relied on Coordinators going to individual staff homes to arrange activities due to the lack of phone services in some instances.

The efforts of Council teams to operate the water and sewer system without power for an extended period was extraordinary. This proved critical to ensure water was available for firefighting activities and residents.

Evacuation Centres

The EOC also coordinated the establishment and de-establishment of evacuation centres in Batemans Bay, Moruya and Narooma based on the fire predictions from the RFS.

Key messaging directing evacuees to family and friends in the first instance was successful in re-directing some people to take respite in safer locations without impacting the evacuation centres, demonstrating support and self-reliance within our community

The operation of the evacuation centres was coordinated by the NSW Department of Community and Justice with volunteer agencies including the Salvation Army, Anglicare and Red Cross performing their respective roles under the existing emergency management arrangements.

Numerous evacuees were relocated into temporary accommodation. This was easier once the many visitors were evacuated from Eurobodalla freeing up available accommodation.

The fires across NSW resulted in unprecedented numbers of evacuation centres in simultaneous operation in fire impacted communities. This did stretch available NSW Government resources.

At the same time, the New Year's Eve fires resulted in unprecedented numbers of people being evacuated to the available centres and along other available coastal reserves and areas. The limited resources available from the Department of Community and Justice on New Year's Eve, meant that Council staff volunteered to supplement the resources at short notice, allowing opening of all three evacuation centres to the community.

During this period, local service clubs, surf lifesaving clubs, Councillors and members of the community also undertook to assist at a time of great community need. The role of the clubs was invaluable in helping keep our community safe and deserve special recognition. These clubs included:

- Batemans Bay Soldiers Club
- Batemans Bay Surf Lifesaving Club
- Tomakin Social Club
- Moruya Golf Club
- Moruya Bowling Club
- Tuross Head Country Club
- Club Narooma

- Narooma Golf Club
- Narooma Surf Lifesaving Club

Subsequently the fire events in early January 2020 saw up to nine and half thousand people register through the three evacuation centres. This included people evacuating from Bermagui (Bega Valley LGA). Many more made use of public reserves, golf courses and clubs.

There were also periods where closure of highway access resulted an inability to open the Narooma evacuation centre. In this case, alternate arrangements were made with the support of Club Narooma to look after a number of residents overnight. Council contacted to the Club Secretary Manager personally to thank the club for their support of the community.

On one occasion an aged care facility relocated patients unnecessarily creating additional challenges in managing aged patients in the Batemans Bay University of Wollongong.

Despite the many challenges in dealing with such extraordinary numbers of evacuees, and although this was a time of anxiety and inconvenience for the community, the primary objective moving the population away from the fire front and keeping them safe for a short period, was successfully achieved.

It is important to remember that the arrangements in place are intended to keep people safe and to manage the expectations of the community in the difficult circumstances prevailing at that time. This was perhaps best summed up by the Manager of the Moruya Evacuation Centre when addressing the many hundreds of people at a briefing where it was highlighted that 'this is a life boat situation – we are not on a cruise ship'.

That said, there are many lessons to be learnt from this event. Already the NSW Department of Community and Justice is reviewing the additional resourcing and training needed to support future events with an emphasis on training additional local personnel and investigating improved catering arrangements. This training should include dealing with cultural sensitives and instances where carers drop vulnerable people at evacuation centres during emergencies with no support.

The fact that people remained well in these circumstances was predominately due to the volunteers that 'stepped up'. With no power, limited toilets and showers, no bedding, extreme temperatures and significant overcrowding, it is very fortunate and a credit to those people who took control of the situation that a severe outbreak of illness did not eventuate.

Council is pursuing grant funding under the NSW ClubGrants program to improve the resilience and functionality of Council's facilities utilised as evacuation centres in times of need.

Council has received some community feedback that the purpose of Neighbourhood Safer Places (NSPs) is still not well understood by the community.

Similarly, despite messaging to the contrary, some people chose to go to the Bodalla club late in the piece only to find the club was closed. This highlights the need for people to improve their bushfire survival plan and make decisions to leave earlier, particular when telecommunications are compromised. The RFS should consider additional community education in this respect to help improve the self-reliance of the community.

Local Land Services (LLS) had responsibility for managing animals dislocated due to fire in this event on behalf of the NSW Department of Primary Industries. The Moruya showground and saleyards were both made available. Many people took horses into a self-care arrangement at the showground.

Additional arrangements had to be implemented during the event to manage smaller animals such as pigs and goats. Both the Moruya High School and Batemans Bay High School provided invaluable assistance by making their sites available to assist house animals and we are grateful for their help.

During the event, public messaging was adjusted to encourage people with animals to allow additional time to prepare and relocate animals to a safer location. Unfortunately, this was not practical in remote rural areas and numerous farm stock were burnt in the fire. This resulted in direct stock losses and a need to put stock down post the fire event.

Similar impacts were felt on the wildlife population, with direct losses and actions required to humanely put down wildlife.

On a brighter note, local vets, Mogo Zoo and WIRES volunteers cared for and assisted in the recovery of injured wildlife. This was aided by the work of the ADF who assisted constructed a new roof to provide an animal wildlife shelter at Mogo Zoo.

Lessons learnt from this response are already informing the review being undertaken by LLS to improve animal care in future events.

Eurobodalla EOC Facility

The Eurobodalla EOC was established in make-shift arrangements at the Moruya RSL Hall. The facility was progressively adapted as the fire event progressed and the threat increased. This facility is not designed for the intended purpose. It is a credit to the committed EOC personnel that they were able to function at such a high level within this facility.

The separation from the RFS IMT made coordination more difficult. It is now well accepted that a co-located facility with the appropriate technologies, facilities and supports systems, is best practice.

Council has been advocating to Government to fund, build and maintain a purpose built regional integrated emergency services precinct in Moruya with a purpose-built emergency operation centre. This was the subject of a multi-agency review and recommendation by Lt

Gen Ken Gillespie AC, DSC, CSM to the Premier of NSW in 2018 to proceed with a new State-owned facility in Moruya. This recommendation was supported by then Ministers Constance, Hazzard and Grant.

It is acknowledged that the existing facilities within Moruya for the RFS, Ambulance and Fire & Rescue are all in need of upgrade or replacement. Moruya is the agreed location for a regional emergency services facility.

Council urges the NSW and Australian Governments to urgently fund a modern State owned Regional Integrated Emergency Services facility in Moruya with a purpose-built Emergency Operation Centre co-located with the NSW RFS, SES, Fire & Rescue and Ambulance.

4. Any other matters that the inquiry deems appropriate in relation to bushfires

The EOC coordinated numerous additional activities to ensure the community was cared for during the event. This identified areas where improved preparedness and resilience by various parties would have mitigated significant impediments to both the fire fighting and community support activities.

Some of these include:

i) Telecommunication systems including Government radio networks, ABC radio, television, NBN, Council radio networks

Many of the critical telecommunications sites have multiple providers at one facility.

In this fire event, Council's team led work to prepare Wandera Mountain towers in the face of the on-coming fire. Whilst damage still occurred, the main tower was saved allowing services to be switched from onto the residual tower. Council also assisted in the establishment of generator power and supplied fuel to generators throughout.

It is recommended that the inquiry review and make recommendations on the:

- a) responsibility for preparedness of each telecommunications site (ie vegetation management at each site, access)
- b) minimum design, construction and maintenance requirements of telecommunications facilities to ensure a greater resilience to bushfire (and other natural disasters)
- c) improved provision of information under the emergency response arrangements to local EOCs and IMTs on the location, impacts of damaged infrastructure on service to the community and response arrangements to restore damage from natural disasters
- d) alternate more resilient power systems be provided to telecommunications sites

ii) Electricity Power Supply to Eurobodalla

The efforts of Essential Energy teams during and after this fire event were extraordinary. A Liaison Officer was provided within the Eurobodalla EOC which proved essential for

coordination of a wide range of activities and prioritisation of response efforts. This coordination through the EOC was aided by the intelligence gathered from the RFS IMT and Council's own ground crews.

The 2019-20 fires caused major periods of power losses across Eurobodalla, even during the early phases of the fire within the Shoalhaven LGA.

The power supply to Eurobodalla is limited to the primary feeders from the north (two 132kV lines). This meant that once this northern supply system was compromised, there were major impacts to the community and telecommunications (including ABC radio and Government radio networks).

Some of the impacts on the power supply were due to 'flash overs', with the high voltage power supply understandably unable to be switched back on until the entire supply lines were verified as being sound. This verification proved challenging as the power lines remained in active fire grounds and/or encased in heavy smoke (making aerial surveillance impracticable at times).

Critical power supply infrastructure was identified early by Essential Energy, the IMT and EOC, and additional measures put in place to mitigate the risk of losing that infrastructure (eg critical sub-stations). These were not tested as the fire did not get to these sites.

The fire also destroyed hundreds of power poles and brought down lines. Timber power poles were particularly vulnerable and when they burnt, they presented both a significant risk (burning pole and wires down).

Similarly, underground power supplies were burnt at key above ground locations and back underground. This proved difficult to re-instate quickly.

Essential Energy did identify key facilities and prioritised work to restore power for the greatest good. This work took account of the safety of their own personnel and critical service requests provided through the EOC.

Essential Energy also secured numerous temporary generators in a range of sizes to support critical infrastructure, the evacuation centres and individual property owners. This was assisted by direct conversations by our local member Andrew Constance MP who secured large generators from AusGrid.

Essential Energy is already investigating alternate and back-up systems to critical infrastructure and remote areas.

Essential Energy should be further requested to:

- a) Investigate ways to make the power supply system into Eurobodalla more resilient, ideally with built in redundancy of supply to Eurobodalla
- b) Investigate more resilient power pole arrangements on priority lines (eg metal poles such as those within the Araluen valley which survived the fire)

- c) Investigate alternate and back-up systems to critical telecommunication infrastructure

The NSW and Australian Governments should consider additional grant funding to support the efforts of Essential Energy to make the power supply system more resilient and/or provide remote power supply systems.

iii) Water and sewer

The efforts of Council teams to operate the water and sewer system without power for an extended period was extraordinary. This proved critical to ensuring water was available for firefighting activities and to residents.

This was ultimately assisted by Essential Energy who collaborated to provide critical generators for power and ultimately to reinstate power to key sites.

Council has generators to support the water and sewer systems. However, the extent and duration of the power outage in this event, stretched resources.

Council has already commenced a review of its own generator capacity with a view to acquiring additional units to better support critical elements of our water and sewer systems during such events.

Council's water supply was solely dependent on the Northern Water Treatment Plant and Deep Creek Dam during the firestorm. Council's main water pump stations at Deep Creek Dam and the Deua River, and the Northern Water Treatment Plant, all came under direct threat, with the fire burning through the entire Deep Creek Dam catchment and over the Northern Water Treatment Plant. The fire ultimately was stopped at Araluen Road, not reaching the Deua River water pump station.

Advance preparations assisted to protect this critical infrastructure, with only minor damage sustained.

Due to high demand by residents seeking to protect their properties, and operating without power supply, Council was forced to pump untreated water from a pool in the Deua River into the southern half of the Eurobodalla supply system to keep up with the volume of water needed. The public were informed, a boil water notice was introduced, and additional water testing undertaken.

This event did highlight the vulnerability of the water supply during drought conditions with only a single supply source servicing the entire Shire population and fire fighting activities.

Council is building a second water storage, the Eurobodalla Southern Water Supply Storage, behind Bodalla. The construction of this second facility will provide additional resilience in such fire events and allow easier management of water across the Shire wide supply system.

Council has funded and completed the design and approvals phase of this \$105m project and secured \$25.612m from the NSW Government. Council continues to advocate to both

the NSW and Australian Governments for additional funding to make this project viable. Meanwhile preliminary works on the new Tuross River water pump station commenced in March 2020.

Additional Government funding for this critical water infrastructure project is required to secure the water supply, provide additional water for farmers and the environment, and provide a high valued injection of funding to support the Eurobodalla recovery.

iv) Arterial transport network including highways and major regional roads

The Princes Highway and Kings Highway were impacted by both active fire and the associated smoke, and by fire affected hazardous trees and other infrastructure damage.

Similar impacts were experienced on Council's road network with regional roads (eg George Bass Drive) and major local distributor roads closed for period during the fire event.

The efforts of Transport for NSW and Council's roads teams in managing road closures, in assessing, prioritising and re-opening key roads to reconnect the community were remarkable in difficult circumstances.

For instance, the Princes Highway and George Bass Drive routes were assessed on New Year's Eve by Council as the fire was still burning and decisions made to activate North Head Drive, George Bass Drive, Coronation Drive and Beach Road that same day. This Council owned coastal route would ultimately be used to evacuate tens of thousands of visitors and some residents from Eurobodalla in the coming days after extensive efforts to remove hazardous trees prior to re-opening the Princes Highway.

As the fire moves south along the highway, Transport for NSW brought out of area crews to support local resources and made extensive efforts to re-open the fire affected highway network as soon as it was safe to do so. They also adapted the Live Traffic website and App to map key local roads (such as Araluen Road) during the event to ensure this information was publicly available. Transport for NSW were challenged by the sheer number of queries to these sites and are understood to be reviewing how to make this system even better.

Similar impacts from the fire were felt on the local road network with hundreds of kilometres of road impacted, thousands of fire impacted trees, loss of timber bridges and other infrastructure. The efforts to restore access by a few private individuals, Forestry NSW and Council's own crews were exceptional and critical to firefighting efforts, to access residents and to provide essential food and water to people and animals.

The tree work undertaken on both the Kings Highway and key local roads prior to the fires, made restoration of access after the fires significantly easier. It also made it easier to use the highway as a key fire break to undertake back-burning operations with increased safety for everyone involved. Although these tree works had previously been undertaken to improve road safety, they were ultimately of significant benefit in reducing risk to first responders and Council/T4NSW's tree crews.

Council and T4NSW worked closely together to share available resources, including out of area contract teams, to achieve the best outcomes for the most people. These arrangements took account of the active fire ground and the need to restore essential access for fuel and food deliveries, with Council making a significant contribution to removal of hazardous trees along the Kings Highway.

The communication between Transport for NSW, Council, the NSW Police through the EOC arrangements was exceptional.

v) Privately owned facilities

The loss of power and impacts of the fire on local residents who staff key private facilities created major challenges in responding to the fire.

a) Fuel service stations

The loss of power, and closure of the highway network, effectively meant there was no ability to obtain fuel for firefighting or for the community.

The EOC identified one service station in each town and worked closely with the service station owners, Councils electrical team, Essential Energy and local contractors to re-wire the service stations and hook up generators to enable fuel to be provided. Once operational, this did create challenges with traffic management with the subsequent rush to buy fuel. However, this proved manageable, with these temporary power supply arrangements, ultimately proving vital to the evacuation of 10's of thousands of people out of Eurobodalla, and the refuelling of firefighting equipment.

During the period we were without fuel supply, arrangements were made with local fuel carriers to re-distribute fuel loads to supply fire fighting equipment. Local bus company, Marshalls Bus & Coach also made available existing stocks of fuel. Council had also pre-planned to keep all equipment full of fuel in case of emergency power loss, and arrangements were made to re-direct some of this fuel to firefighting efforts and to support generators to critical infrastructure.

The efforts of Council's Workshop Coordinator and his team during this event were simply amazing including adapting all sorts of equipment to store and distribute fuel to areas of high need. This even included adapting a sewer pod to become a temporary fuel storage unit.

At a critical time, Council's collaboration provided over 7,000litres of fuel directly to the firefighting efforts at Gundry oval. Over 6,200litres of diesel was used by fire fighters on that first day.

Throughout the duration of the fires, Council's workshop team secured and delivered over 120,000 litres of fuel for firefighting and refuelling of generators to support telecommunications, the hospital, evacuation centres, the emergency operations centre and critical water and sewer infrastructure.

The Eurobodalla EOC worked collaboratively with the Shoalhaven IMT and EOC, local fuel carriers Keiran Kay, and the NSW Police, well into the night, to get fuel tankers through to Port Kembla through the active fire ground on the Princes Highway, and back to refuel both Eurobodalla and Bega Valley service stations. The drivers of these carriers deserve high praise for their efforts in ensuring there was fuel for aircraft, ground crews and the general public, whilst their own homes were coming under increasing threat from the Border fire.

Of course, many of these challenges can be avoided by ensuring all service stations are mandatorily required to provide an in-built capability of switching to an alternate power source in the event of power outages. For larger service stations, this should include a requirement to have that alternate power source (eg a generator and/or solar/battery back-up system) on-site.

These simple measures would have allowed access by the public to fuel stored in these service stations. The Government should, if required, regulate to require this to be implemented.

Eurobodalla Shire Council has already met with the Executive General Manager of Caltex Australia and discussed these issues. Caltex have indicated a willingness to review its arrangements, particularly for the regional centre of Batemans Bay.

Council also thanked Caltex for the efforts of their team to stay open in periods where staff were defending their own properties and of such high peak demands due to the circumstances. Similar efforts were provided by local service station operators in Moruya and Narooma.

b) Major food retailers

With the highway closed to the north, south and west, and no power, provision of food supplies became a critical issue.

Major retailers were challenged by the loss of power and an inability to staff their shops.

These retailers did adapt and showed incredible generosity offering food free to support evacuation centres rather than see it spoil.

Nevertheless, it is clear that provisions to ensure alternate power sources are readily available in times of power loss, is essential.

The NSW Government should work with all major retailers to ensure this is rectified.

c) Aged Care Providers

Aged care providers already have a requirement to ensure they have strong plans in place to enable residents to stay in place. The coordination of the activities relating to aged care facilities during emergencies is handled by the NSW Department of Health Liaison Officer.

During the height of the event, some patients were moved to other facilities by agreement between parties.

Only in one case, were patients moved despite advice to remain in place. This did lead to challenges in catering for these high care patients at a facility not designed for this purpose (ie at the University of Wollongong). The UOW staff are to be congratulated for their efforts in assisting in this situation.

It is important going forward that the NSW Government ensure, as far as possible, that aged care facilities have robust plan that enable patients to 'stay in place'.

The NSW Government should work with the Australian Government to review the changing landscape of age care and ensure suitable arrangements are in place to care for aged and vulnerable people within our community. This will become a more significant issue with the ageing population.

5. Preparation and planning for bushfire threats and risks

See above.

The existing arrangements for preparing and planning for bushfire threats and risks are adequate. The lessons learnt from the Eurobodalla fires should be fed into the next review of the Eurobodalla Bushfire Risk Management Plan led by the Eurobodalla Bushfire Risk Management Committee.

It is further recommended that the NSW and Australian Governments fund more specific research:

- i) on bushfire behaviour specific to the Eurobodalla context as a result of this extraordinary event and known bushfire history
- ii) on the build-up of fuel loads in the environment in coming years following this intense burn
- iii) on the likely short- and long-term impacts of the changing climate on bushfire frequency and behaviour

6. Land use planning and management and building standards, including appropriate clearing and other hazard reduction, zoning, and any appropriate use of Indigenous practises

The extent of bushfire impact on property was closely related to the proximity of the bushland. In Eurobodalla, this bushland environment is more prevalent in the rural landscape. Where the bushland environment continues through the urban footprint (such as North Rosedale), the fire impacts were higher than other areas.

Anecdotally, a greater number of homes lost to the bushfire in the Eurobodalla were constructed prior to the current planning considerations and construction standards related to managing bushfire risk. However more specific research is required to formally examine the specific outcomes in the Eurobodalla and other bushfires in this respect.

For older homes in rural areas, many would have been constructed prior to the introduction of bushfire construction and management standards. The asset protection zone (APZ) may not reflect the lower standard of building construction in relation to bushfire protection. There needs to be a simpler and more cost-effective process to encourage provision of improved APZs on these properties. In particular, there appears to be a need to relax environmental and biodiversity conservation considerations and controls to allow improved protection to homes without undue cost to the landowner. These arrangements should also apply to dwellings being rebuilt post the fire.

If these changes are not made, the current situation will prevail, which is often cost prohibitive as a result of the environmental and biodiversity conservation assessment and offset requirements.

In addition, the objectives of the relevant legislation and policy related to the protection of biodiversity and the management of bushfire risk are currently in direct conflict. There needs to be a clearer priority given to the management of bushfire risk, once the broader strategic direction is to allow development in certain locations. This places the need for governments to have a more rigorous and strategic position on biodiversity protection and management at a regional scale and having less of a reliance on site by site assessments through the development assessment process. Linked to this there needs to be greater consideration to mechanisms to support landowners in the management of biodiversity, especially where governments make the decision for the benefit of the broader community that the protection of biodiversity over private lands has a higher value than achieving any development outcome.

There is also an opportunity to educate the community on works that can be undertaken to buildings that were constructed prior to the introduction of bushfire construction standards, especially to assist in protection against ember attack. Many of these opportunities are able to be undertaken at relatively minor cost such as leaf/gutter guard, metal gauze on windows, covering of air vents and minor openings with metal gauze etc.

There is anecdotal evidence that through ember attack, landscaping adjacent to dwellings may have contributed to their loss. There needs to be an examination of the contributing factor of landscaping in terms of its location and species type. Further there needs to be better information and education of the public around landscaping, management thereof, and general requirements and priorities for bushfire preparedness.

7. Appropriate action to adapt to future bushfire risks to communities and ecosystems

One of the primary reasons for the loss of dwelling is ember attack. Refer to the comments above regarding improvements to existing dwellings to make them more resilient to bushfire threat from ember attack.

Eurobodalla looks after approximately 115km of urban bushfire interface. Already members within the community are seeking Council to widen the asset protection zones and remove additional vegetation from the environment. This work is currently covered under the

bushfire guidelines. The NSW Government may wish to review these guidelines based on research and scientific advice.

Many in the community believe a more frequent regime of fire hazard reduction burning is key to reducing the overall risk to communities. Some believe the introduction of techniques used by Indigenous communities may assist in this protection. What is evidenced in this fire event, is that recent hazard reduction burns did little to change the behaviour of the New Year's Eve fire as this was a full crowning fire with spotting kilometres ahead of the main fire front. These hazard reduction burns may have improved benefit in less severe conditions, however further research is recommended.

High value ecosystems and the future management of the environmental assets requires community consultation along with scientific research and advice related to ecosystems management. The impacts of bushfire frequency and intensity on the potential impacts on both the communities and ecosystems is essential.

Where there are high value ecosystems that are susceptible to bush fire, this needs to be considered in the management of those and surrounding lands to minimise the risk of loss or detrimental impact on the values of those lands and associated species. Additionally, the Australian and NSW Governments who have and impose on land managers the broader legislative and policy environments that require these areas and species to be protected and managed sustainably on behalf of the broader community, need to ensure that the appropriate resources are provided to manage and rehabilitate these lands be they in public or private ownership.

It has been reported that up to one third of people are not insured. This needs to be confirmed and there needs to be an examination of the reasons why people do not have insurance and actions taken to address the reasons in order to increase the rate of insurance.

The lack of insurance places increased pressure on governments, not for profit groups and the broader community to provide financial support to those impacted by natural disasters. The support provided to those not insured is often well publicised resulting in many questioning why they pay for insurance.

8. Emergency response to bushfires, including overall human and capital resourcing

Refer recommendation and commentary above. Specifically note the need for a State owned regional integrated emergency services precinct in Moruya.

There is little doubt that the response in Eurobodalla was significantly aided by the presence of a highly skilled and experienced Forestry NSW workforce resulting from the local timber industry. This resource was diverted from business as usual to undertake major works in effecting containment and frontline firefighting activities.

9. Coordination and collaboration by the NSW Government with the Australian Government, other state and territory governments and local government

The scale of this fire event was unprecedented, at least in European history, with bushfires across extensive areas of the east coast and other areas of Australia.

Despite this, the RFS was able to call on resources from Victoria, Queensland, Canada and America under the current arrangements.

Anecdotally the fire event has resulted in increased inquiry into becoming an RFS volunteer. For this to be implemented, provision of appropriate on-going training and resources is essential to attract and retain volunteers.

It was evident that having one fire controller across two Shires, proved more problematic than when the Incident Controller was working in Eurobodalla. In high risk coastal areas such as Eurobodalla, consideration should be given to reinstating a fire controller in each of Eurobodalla and Bega Valley Shire Council areas.

The deployment of the Australian Defence Force assisted many aspects of the response in non-firefighting activities. This included provision of emergency supplies to remote areas for people and stock, provision of a logistic centre for donated goods, clean-up and opening accesses (within the skillset limitations noting felling fire affected trees is a specialist area), provision of additional medical support (not utilised), assessment of sea rescue options for coastal areas, provision of a ship to enact this option (ultimately not required in Eurobodalla), assistance with building an animal welfare shelter at Mogo Zoo. There is little doubt that the presence of the ADF also lifted the morale of the teams involved in the response as well as the community.

10. Safety of first responders

Sadly, the response to the 2019-20 fires resulted in the loss of RFS volunteers in other areas of the State, highlighting the real danger of protecting the public.

Every element of this review should have in mind the safety of those who will need to defend life and property in the future, from planning development to training and resourcing of frontline fire fighters.

11. Public communication and advice systems and strategies

Refer 3 above.

The education of the community by the NSW Rural Fire Service needs to be on-going and in advance of as well as during the fire season.

Certainly, the change in messaging in recent years appears to have engendered greater preparedness of people to leave their homes for a safer location rather than stay and defend. This almost certainly saved many lives in the Eurobodalla fires.

That said, anecdotally there were many stories of people still making last minute decisions to leave when the risk was high.

Additionally, advice about fires saw last minute property protection activities across the Shire creating many challenges and demonstrating that despite record dry conditions and high fire threat, many had left clearing and preparing their property to after there was a fire in the area.

The RFS should continue to work on key messages and provision of information to the community, including running more sessions on individual private property protection and bushfire survival planning. The RFS may achieve greater attendance by working with local community groups such as progress associations, Rotary, Lions and other community groups.

PSR20/002 DONATION OF DEVELOPMENT FEE

81.2292.D

Responsible Officer: Lindsay Usher - Director, Planning and Sustainability Services

Attachments: Nil

Focus Area: Productive Communities

Delivery Program Link: P1.1 Facilitate growth and development of our business community

Operational Plan Link: P1.1.1 Strengthen partnerships between council and the business community

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides details relating to an application for a refund of Development Application (DA) fees, Construction Certificate (CC) fees and Contributions to a non-profit charitable organisation.

On 28 November 2019 Council received an application from Eurobodalla Education and Therapy Services Limited (Muddy Puddles) for reimbursement of all its development fees associated with the approval and erection of the building.

The fees were paid in relation to Development Application 363/17, Construction Certificate and contributions related to the community facility built at Melaleuca Crescent, Catalina.

Council's Code of Practice – Reimbursement – DA Fees only permits the refund of the Development Application (DA) fee.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT a donation be made to Eurobodalla Education and Therapy Services Limited to the value of \$2,126.00, being the assessment fee for Development Application 363/17, in accordance with Council's Code of Practice – Reimbursement – DA Fees.

BACKGROUND

Muddy Puddles lodged a Development Application 363/17 for the construction of a new community facility at Melaleuca Crescent, Catalina. Eurobodalla Education and Therapy Services Ltd. is a not for profit charitable organization and provide services for children with disabilities.

PSR20/002 DONATION OF DEVELOPMENT FEE

81.2292.D

CONSIDERATIONS

Policy

Item 6 of Council's Code of Practice – Reimbursement – DA Fees allows for a refund of the development application fees paid by non-profit, voluntary/community groups.

On 28 November 2019 Council received an application from Community Life Batemans Bay Inc. for reimbursement of its fees associated with the development equaling \$52,149.36.

The fee breakdown includes;

• Legal fees	\$2,500.00
• DA fees	\$2,055.00
• Consent advertising	\$68.00
• NSW Planning Levy	\$704.00
• DA advertising fees	\$444.00
• DA Modification fee	\$71.00
• Fire pressure test enquiry	\$232.00
• Construction Certificate fee	\$481.00
• Compliance inspections	\$520.00
• Construction Certificate fee	\$3,519.00
• Long Service Levy	\$2,772.00
• Notice of works plumbing	\$99.00
• Building inspection fee	\$156.00
• Plumbing inspection fees	\$792.00
• Building inspection fees	\$792.00
• Sewer headworks	\$15,967.50
• Water headworks	\$18,345.00
• Section 94 Contribution	\$1,191.45
• Water meter	\$1,140.41
• Construction Certificate Modification fee	\$300.00
Total	\$52,149.36

Council has been consistent with its process of managing the reimbursement of DA fees, such as the request from Eurobodalla Education and Therapy Services Ltd, and in accordance with the Code of Practice, only the DA fee will be reimbursed.

PSR20/002 DONATION OF DEVELOPMENT FEE

81.2292.D

Financial

Council's Code of Practice – Reimbursement – DA fees allows for a 100% refund for the Development Application portion of the fees as a donation to a non-profit, voluntary/ community organisation. In this instance, this portion equates to a donation back to Eurobodalla Education and Therapy Services Ltd of \$2,126.00.

The reimbursement of contributions and certification fees is outside of Council's adopted position.

Firstly, Council does not ordinarily reimburse these fees as they are used to pay for facilities throughout the shire and therefore a budget allocation would need to be made to the reimbursement with a commensurate reduction in the budget for other works and services.

Secondly, building certification is a competitive market and Council is not the only provider of this service. Providing for a reimbursement of fees associated with this service could be seen as anti-competitive.

Finally, some of the fees are NSW Government fees such as the Long Service Levy and the NSW Planning levy. Council does not receive these funds, rather it collects them on behalf of the NSW Government; therefore Council is not in the position to reimburse.

CONCLUSION

In accordance with Council's Code of Practice – Reimbursement – DA Fees it is recommended that a donation of \$2,126.00 being the relevant Development Application fee, be made to Eurobodalla Education and Therapy Services Ltd.

IR20/002 LOCAL TRAFFIC COMMITTEE NO 6 FOR 2019-20

E16.0002

Responsible Officer: Warren Sharpe OAM - Director Infrastructure Services
Attachments: Nil
Outcome: Connected and Accessible Places
Focus Area: 7.1 Work in partnership to provide an integrated transport network
Delivery Program Link: 7.1.2 Provide a safe efficient and integrated transport network
Operational Plan Link: 7.1.2.5 Coordinate the Local Traffic Committee

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Local Traffic Committee is primarily a technical review committee. It advises Council on traffic control matters that relate to prescribed traffic control devices or traffic control facilities for which Council has delegated authority.

The minutes of the Eurobodalla Local Traffic Committee meeting are included in this report for Councillors' review. The main issues covered at the Eurobodalla Local Traffic Committee meeting, held 6 February 2020, are as follows:

- Linemarking – Durras Lake Boat Ramp Carpark, South Durras
- Special Event Application – Batemans Bay Triathlon, based in Tomakin
- Traffic Management and Control Plans – Paul Murray Live Our Town, Sky News in Flora Crescent Batemans Bay
- Special Event Application – Tilba Easter Festival.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT:

1. The minutes of the Eurobodalla Local Traffic Committee Meeting No 5 for 2019-20 be received and noted.
2. That Council Plan No. 5147 Set A Sheet 7 detailing line marking including for Accessible Parking associated with South Durras lake boat ramp carpark upgrade be approved.

BACKGROUND

The Eurobodalla Local Traffic Committee Meeting No 6 for 2019-20 was held on 6 February 2020. The meeting was attended by Jesse Fogg (Transport for NSW, RMS) via phone, Senior Constable Dave Smart (NSW Police), Danielle Brice (representative for the Hon Andrew Constance MP), Dave Hunter (Traffic Coordinator), Sarah Hullam (Elite Energy – Bay Triathlon), Mallee Smith and Matt Cormick (minute takers).

IR20/002 LOCAL TRAFFIC COMMITTEE NO 6 FOR 2019-20

E16.0002

APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Anthony Mayne (Chair) and Kate McDougall (Road Safety Officer). The meeting was chaired by Dave Hunter (Traffic Coordinator) in Councillor Anthony Mayne's absence.

DEPUTATIONS

Sarah Hallam (Elite Energy organiser). Sarah attended to discuss some amendments to traffic management associated with the Batemans Bay Triathlon event. At the last event in 2018, there was no general access from Broulee to the businesses at the Moorings / IGA precinct, Tomakin.

After the 2018 event, the IGA supermarket manager and owner put to Council that they were most concerned with the loss of business and would object to a future event that closed the road to patrons from the Broulee and Mossy Point suburbs.

The committee agreed that general access from both Broulee and Tomakin should be included to the Moorings / IGA precinct.

The organiser was given feedback that after the last event in 2018 some individuals and groups relayed to Council that consultation was inadequate. The Committee was given an assurance that this will improve, including ensuring a letterbox drop will be undertaken to all residences from Tomakin to Broulee and airport buildings and businesses.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Eurobodalla Local Traffic Committee Meeting No 5 for 2018-19 held on 12 December 2019 were confirmed and accepted.

OUTSTANDING ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

There were no outstanding items requiring additional attention.

ROAD TRANSPORT (SAFETY AND TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT) ACT FOR DETERMINATION

2020.RT.015 Line marking - Durras Lake Boat Ramp Carpark, South Durras

Council has recently upgraded the South Durras lake boat ramp and carpark, including the installation of kerb and gutter, bitumen seal, line marking and an accessible toilet block and adjoining accessible parking space.

This work was jointly funded by the NSW Government 'Boating Now' program and Council.

Council Plan No 5147 Set A Sheet 7 detailing the line marking associated with the South Durras lake boat ramp upgrade was reviewed by the Committee.

Recommendation:

That Council Plan No. 5147 Set A Sheet 7 detailing line marking including for Accessible Parking associated with South Durras lake boat ramp carpark upgrade be approved.

INFORMAL ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

2020.SE.005 Special Event Application – Batemans Bay Triathlon, based in Tomakin

IR20/002 LOCAL TRAFFIC COMMITTEE NO 6 FOR 2019-20

E16.0002

Council has received a special event application with associated traffic management documents for the Batemans Bay Triathlon to be conducted on George Bass Drive and North Head Drive, between Tomakin and Moruya and on local roads within Tomakin Village, on Saturday 28 March 2020.

This is a Class 2 event and will be based at Tomakin Sports and Social Club.

The 'Batemans Bay Triathlon Festival' triathlon festival is a one day event, consisting of 4 triathlon distances:

- o Super Sprint – 300m Swim, 10km Bike and 2km Run
- o Sprint – 600 Swim, 20km Bike and 5km Run
- o Standard – 1.5km Swim, 40km Bike and 10km Run
- o Ultimate – 2km Swim, 60km Bike and 20km Run.

The transition and finish line will be located on the grassed area behind Tomakin Sports and Social Club. The bike course takes athletes along George Bass Drive to North Head Drive and through Tomakin Village. The run course takes athletes through Tomakin Village. The swim course is in the Tomaga River.

The following road closures are requested on Saturday 28 March 2020:

1. George Bass Drive, controlled access (emergency and official vehicles exempt with resident vehicles and adjoining business patrons allowed when safe to do so), from Sunpatch Parade Tomakin to Train Street Broulee, from 8.30am to 1.30pm
2. George Bass Drive, road closed – controlled access (emergency and official vehicles exempt), from Train Street Broulee to Broulee Road from 8.30am to 1.30pm
3. George Bass Drive and North Head Drive, controlled access (emergency and official vehicles exempt with residents and airport patrons allowed when safe to do so), from Broulee Road Broulee to a turnaround point 700m east of Princes Hwy Moruya from 8.30am to 1.30pm.

This event with a similar route was undertaken in 2018. After the event, feedback was received from some individuals and groups that consultation was inadequate. This was discussed at the meeting at the deputation.

The major change to the event this year is that business patrons' vehicles will be allowed, when safe to do so, to access the IGA supermarket and other adjoining businesses from Broulee and Mossy Point suburbs. The route will be via Annetts Parade, Mossy Point and Train Street Broulee.

To reduce the risk caused by this additional traffic, the northern turnaround point on George Bass Drive for the longer events will be shifted to the Broulee Road intersection. Additionally, the southern turnaround point will be shifted further south along North Head Drive. This southern turnaround point will be 700m east of Princes Hwy Moruya, which is similar to the previous triathlons held between 2014 and 2016.

Traffic Management and Control Plans were reviewed by the Committee.

IR20/002 LOCAL TRAFFIC COMMITTEE NO 6 FOR 2019-20

E16.0002

Recommendation:

That the Traffic Management and Control Plans for the Batemans Bay Triathlon, to be conducted along George Bass Drive and North Head Drive and within Tomakin Village on Saturday 28 March 2020 be approved.

2020.SE.006 Special Event Application – Traffic Management and Control Plans, Paul Murray Live Our Town, Sky News, in Flora Crescent Batemans Bay

In 2019, Paul Murray LIVE Our Town saw its Sky News host Paul Murray visit 10 regional locations across Australia, celebrating the uniqueness of each town while hearing from residents about the triumphs and challenges facing Australia's heartland.

The inaugural tour kicked off in February 2019, in partnership with Harvey Norman and the Country Women's Association. The combined efforts raised a total of \$424,000 which was allocated where it was needed most in each region - chronic drought relief, bushfire recovery, domestic aid, mental health workshops, support for local sporting clubs, remote education support services and Indigenous health services.

Harvey Norman Batemans Bay will be hosting the 2020 tour in Batemans Bay with a fundraising auction in store from Thursday 13 February to Wednesday 19 February. On the Wednesday it is proposed to close a section of Flora Crescent, from Orient Street to the roundabout adjoining the Soldiers club, from 8.30am to 4.30pm.

The adjoining businesses have been consulted and no objections received.

Traffic Management and Control Plans were reviewed by the Committee.

Recommendation:

That the Traffic Management and Control Plans for the Paul Murray LIVE Our Town media event, to be conducted on a section of Flora Crescent, from Orient Street to the roundabout adjoining the Soldiers Club on Wednesday 19 February 2020 be approved.

2020.SE.007 Special Event Application - Tilba Easter Festival

A special event application has been received for the 2020 Tilba Easter Festival to be conducted in Central Tilba on Saturday 11 April.

This is a Class 2 event that is conducted by the Tilba Festival Committee (sub-committee of Tilba Chamber of Commerce) and consists of stalls and activities set up using the length of Bate Street in Central Tilba.

The Traffic Management and Control Plans are based upon measures put in place during previous years that were conducted successfully. The length of Bate Street through Central Tilba will be closed to traffic during the event. A length of Corkhill Drive between the villages of Central Tilba and Tilba Tilba will become one-way southbound. A shuttle bus will be provided to transport people between parking areas and the event area.

The Traffic Management and Control Plans were reviewed by the Committee.

Recommendation:

That the Traffic Management and Control Plans for the 2020 Tilba Easter Festival, to be conducted at Central Tilba on Saturday 11 April 2020 be approved.

IR20/002 LOCAL TRAFFIC COMMITTEE NO 6 FOR 2019-20

E16.0002

GENERAL BUSINESS

The representative for the Hon Andrew Constance MP relayed her experience as a volunteer RFS officer during the recent unprecedented bush fire event and how the community of paid and volunteer workers from so many organisations came together. These people were described as remarkable and the Committee thanks everyone for their efforts.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Eurobodalla Local Traffic Committee will be held on Thursday 5 March 2020 in Council's Committee Room commencing at 9am.

CCS20/009 INVESTMENTS MADE AS AT 29 FEBRUARY 2020

**S011-T00006,
S012-T00025**

Responsible Officer: Amanda Jones - Acting Director Corporate and Commercial Services

Attachments: Nil

Outcome: Innovative and Proactive Leadership

Focus Area: 9.2 Ensure financial sustainability and support the organisation in achieving efficient ongoing operations

Delivery Program Link: 9.2.4 Responsibly manage Council's finances and maintain Fit for the Future status

Operational Plan Link: 9.2.4.3 Provide financial management and reporting

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to:

- certify that Council's investments in financial instruments have been made in accordance with legal and policy requirements
- provide information and details of investments
- raise other matters relevant to investing.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the certification that the investments as at 29 February 2020, made in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993*, Council's Investment Policy and the provision of Clause 1 (Reg. 212) of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005*, be received.

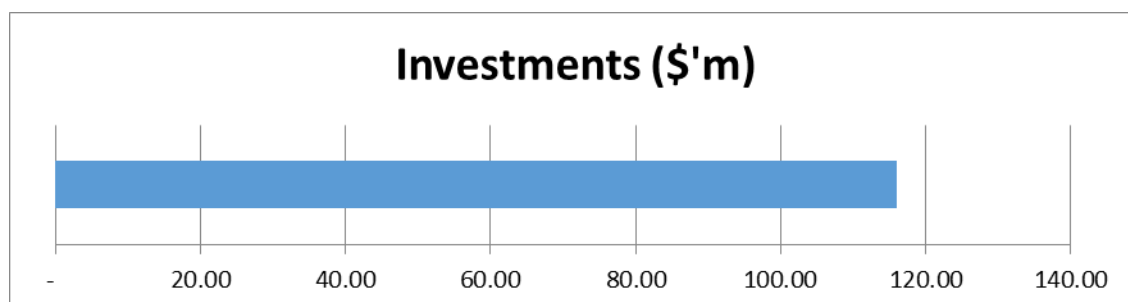
CONSIDERATIONS

Policy

The portfolio is compliant with Council's Investment Policy adopted by Council on 31 July 2018 (Minute 18/182).

Financial

Council investing overall



CCS20/009 INVESTMENTS MADE AS AT 29 FEBRUARY 2020

**S011-T00006,
S012-T00025**

Council has 100% (\$116.0m) invested in Bank Deposits. The Bank Deposits are held in banks rated A or greater, or covered by the AAA rated Government Guarantee, except for \$29.50m invested in banks rated below A, and in the 'some limited risk' category of the policy.

The decrease in the investment portfolio (\$1m) is because funds were returned from Bankwest because they are no longer taking term deposits. This money will be invested during March 2020.

The 'some limited risk' category is now restricted to BBB+ rating institutions which allows up to 30% of all investments. Currently there is 25.43% invested in BBB+. Investment in Government Guaranteed Deposits is \$1.50m and represents 1.29% of the portfolio.

There are \$47m (40.52%) of funds invested in claimed fossil fuel free institutions.

The weighted average return for all investments for the month is 1.59%, which is above the Council policy benchmark of Bank Bill Swap rate (BBSW) + 0.25% (1.14%).

Summary investment information

The following table summarises investment categories and balances at month end.

CATEGORY	(\$)
At Call Deposit	5,000,000
Term Deposits	109,500,000
Term Deposits Government Guaranteed	1,500,000
	116,000,000
<i>Weighted average interest %:</i>	1.59%
<i>Average 90 day BBSW + 0.25%</i>	1.14%

Policy and liquidity risk

The Investment Policy is divided into two risk categories of credit risk (risk of ultimately not being able to redeem funds) and liquidity risk (risk of loss due to the need to redeem funds earlier than the investment term). Our investments comply with the risk policy as shown in the following table.

CCS20/009 INVESTMENTS MADE AS AT 29 FEBRUARY 2020

**S011-T00006,
S012-T00025**

Policy risk	Low liquidity risk %	Total % of investments	Policy risk % (max holdings)
Remote risk	1.29	1.29	100.00
Near risk free	73.28	73.28	100.00
Some limited risk (BBB+)	25.43	25.43	30.00
Grand total	100.00	100.00	

The unrestricted current ratio is the amount of unrestricted current assets compared to each dollar of current liability. The Office of Local Government suggests a minimum 1.5:1, and the audited unrestricted current ratio as at 30 June 2019 is 1.96:1. Council therefore has approximately \$1.96 of current assets for each \$1 of current liabilities.

CONCLUSION

Pursuant to provision of Clause 1 (Reg. 212) of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005*, I hereby certify that these investments have been made in accordance with *the Local Government Act 1993* and related Regulations.

CCS20/010 AUDIT, RISK AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT S004-T00048

Responsible Officer: Amanda Jones - Acting Director Corporate and Commercial Services
Attachments: Nil
Outcome: Innovative and Proactive Leadership
Focus Area: 9.2 Ensure financial sustainability and support the organisation in achieving efficient ongoing operations
Delivery Program Link: 9.2.4 Responsibly manage Council's finances and maintain Fit for the Future status
Operational Plan Link: 9.2.4.1 Develop a financial strategy

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC), an advisory committee of Council, is recommended under the *NSW Premier & Cabinet Internal Audit Guidelines* to report to the Council, at least annually, on its oversight role of the internal audit function. This report is presented to advise Council on the activities and matters that the ARIC has been reviewing over the last 12 months.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee annual report be received and noted.

BACKGROUND

The ARIC plays a pivotal role, and has done since 2008 in the governance framework, providing Council with independent oversight and monitoring of Council's audit processes, including the internal control activities.

The ARIC achieves its independence by having a majority of independent members external to Council and its operations. This includes three independent members, myself as the Chair, Ms Sharlene Cohen, and most recently the newest independent member, David Anderson. Clr Lindsay Brown and Clr Phil Constable represent Council on the ARIC.

The ARIC meets four times a year with extra meetings scheduled as required. A review of documents and financial issues is carried out between scheduled meetings when necessary.

In October 2016 the role of the NSW Audit Office under the *Local Government Amendment (Governance and Planning) Act 2016* (the Act) came into effect. The Act gave the Auditor-General of NSW the mandate to audit NSW local councils from 1 July 2016. To limit unnecessary disruption, the NSW Audit Office contracted many of the existing audit firms to continue working under the oversight of the Auditor-General.

The Auditor-General engaged Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu (Deloitte) to provide audit and/or assurance services to Eurobodalla Shire Council for 2018/19 financial year. Deloitte has nine councils in its portfolio including Kiama and Goulburn. The Auditor General remains responsible for the audit(s), their performance and for issuing the Independent Auditor's Reports. The Audit Office oversee Deloitte's planning and execution of the audits.

The NSW Audit Office participates in the regular ARIC meetings and is listed as a standard agenda item. The Annual Engagement Plan for the financial year ending 30 June 2019 from the

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NSW Audit Office was provided to the ARIC at the meeting of 22 May 2019 and set out the key issues and audit approach regarding the audit of the financial statements of the Council.

CONSIDERATIONS

During the past year, the ARIC has reviewed and/or monitored a number of regular (standard agenda items) and one off issues such as:

- Draft 2017-18 Financial Statements referred for audit
- Delivery Program/Operational Plan (DP/OP) – 2017-21, 2019-20
- NSW Audit Office – Management letter for Year Ending 30 June 2018, and the Annual Engagement Plan for the Financial Year ending 30 June 2019
- Provision of Internal Auditor services.
- Batemans Bay Beach Resort – monitoring financial and occupancy trends
- Oversight of the Special Rate Variation (SRV) and Fit for the Future (FFF) frameworks
- Corporate Business System implementation
- Investment Reports
- ICAC and other external bodies reports/matters
- Internal audit progress reports.
- Batemans Bay Regional Aquatic, Arts and Leisure Centre progress
- Bodalla Sewer progress
- Use of pesticides
- Fire suppressant findings
- Staff turnover
- Vehicle and workshop costs
- Sale of Moruya Racecourse.

Internal audits

An Internal Audit Plan listing internal audits to be carried out annually is provided by Inconsult, the internal auditor. The list is reviewed and often rearranged based on the priority the ARIC might place on particular functions.

Recommendations from the internal audit reports are prioritised as Extreme, High, Medium or Low and reviewed by the ARIC and Executive Leadership Team (ELT). Actions to comply with the recommendations are then implemented by staff. All actions are given a timeframe for completion and where timeframes cannot be achieved, a revised timeframe is considered. Progress on all internal audit recommendations is monitored by the ARIC.

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To assure the ARIC that the scope of internal audits are covering areas of concern, a copy of each draft internal audit engagement letter for upcoming audits is provided to the ARIC for review before the final audit engagement plan is provided.

Four internal audits, Governance, Public and Environmental Health, Holiday Parks, and Accounts Payable were completed by Inconsult this past financial year (2018/19), and the recently completed Capital Works internal audit has also been provided to the ARIC.

Best practice audit standards are applied by Inconsult in auditing the activities undertaken in the daily operation of Council's financial management and processes. The audits allow the ARIC to review the activities and monitor the implementation of the recommendations provided. Any extreme recommendations are dealt with immediately and high, medium and low recommendations are generally completed within allocated time frames.

Inconsult has been selected from the LG Professional Services panel of internal auditors to continue in the role of Internal Auditor to Council until after the next council election in 2020.

The results of the internal audits already carried out across the organisation have provided assurance to the ARIC and to Council that checks and balances are in place and have reinforced the adherence to procedures and policies. The next round of audits will continue to add to that assurance.

Special Rate Variation (SRV)

The ARIC continue to monitor the progress of the SRV. 2018-19 is the fourth year of the SRV program and the total spend for the financial year came out at approximately \$6.6M.

Corporate Management System

e-connect is the project to implement the new Corporate Business System provided by TechnologyOne. The Project Manager provides regular updates to the ARIC detailing risks and the mitigation of those risks, and the project performance against cost.

Phase 1 went live at the end of October 2017. Phase 3 Property and Rating and Receipting went live on 1 July 2019. The implementation date for Phase 2 is currently being determined.

Phase 2 of the e-connect project comprises the introduction of mobile asset maintenance management across all of Infrastructure Services. This aspect of the e-connect project is of a lower priority than the replacement of the Customer Service Request (CSR) system and in order to avoid contention for limited business resources Phase 2 will commence after implementation of the replacement of the CSR system.

The system will ultimately provide wider access to council services for the community and improve business processes and effectiveness for staff enabling continual improvement and service excellence.

Batemans Bay Beach Resort and Holiday Parks

The ARIC is regularly updated on the progress of the Batemans Bay Beach Resort (BBBR) and a steady profit is being realised which is a very positive outcome.

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Approvals to operate are ongoing at our campgrounds and updates are provided to the ARIC. A long term plan, in conjunction with the Asset Management Plan is being progressed for the facilities. This will look strategically at the operation and expected outcomes of our holiday parks and provide future guidance in how we operate the businesses.

Terms of Reference

To continue to provide independent oversight and monitoring of council processes and internal control activities the ARIC Terms of Reference (TOR) is regularly reviewed. The Office of Local Government is currently reviewing Audit Committee guidelines. Once these guidelines are released, a review of the current TOR will be undertaken and a report will be prepared for Council to consider any recommendations.

CONCLUSION

It is considered the presence of the ARIC adds value to Council and strengthens a culture of sound financial governance that is increasingly transparent and accountable.

Each member of the ARIC contributes to the continual improvement of Council processes from within and represents the community by playing a pivotal role in the management of Council's financial requirements and expectations.

Mr Mark Barraclough, Chair of the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee would like to take this opportunity to thank his fellow members for their continued contribution to the roles they have undertaken, and I recommend that this annual report tabled by the Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee Chair be received and noted.

CAR20/001 YOUTH GRANTS

S003-T00047

Responsible Officer: Kathy Arthur - Director Community, Arts and Recreation Services

Attachments: 1. Confidential - Youth Grants attachment

Outcome: Strong Communities, Desirable Lifestyle

Focus Area: 1.4 Ensure activities, facilities and services meet changing community needs

Delivery Program Link: 1.4.1 Plan for and provide opportunities, services and activities for youth

Operational Plan Link: 1.4.1.3 Coordinate the Youth Grant Program

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an outline regarding the recommended allocation of grant funds under Council's Youth Grants Program for the financial year 2019-20.

A total of \$5000 was available in 2019-20 for Youth grants.

Six (6) applications were received, requesting \$2750 in funding. Of the total funding pool of \$5000 a total of \$2250 in funding is recommended, as per the confidential attachment.

Applications included a diverse range of projects including those that focused on leadership, training, arts and recreation activities. One project targeted social inclusion with activities specifically for LGBTIQ+ young people.

The confidential attachment lists applicants recommended for this year's funding round.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT:

1. Council approve the recommendations detailed in the confidential attachment, awarding Youth grants to 5 local groups/organisations for the 2019-20 financial year.
2. Council approve the re-allocation of residual funds in the amount of \$2750 to projects that were identified in the Youth in Recovery forums.

BACKGROUND

In 2017 Council revised its community donations policy, providing an opportunity for a wide range of groups in the shire to be considered for local initiative support funds.

The Youth Grants Program aims to provide support for young people in the Eurobodalla. Applicants must be community groups, service providers and not-for-profit organisations with the primary objective of supporting young people.

Each applicant must demonstrate that the grant will achieve at least one of the following outcomes:

- Encourages people in the wider community to be socially engaged with young people
- Provides an opportunity for young people to be engaged in educational and cultural activities and/or personal growth and development
- Develops a new skill in young people

CAR20/001 YOUTH GRANTS

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- Builds the capacity of youth through leadership and training opportunities
- Develops employment and pathway opportunities for young people to work.

The total grant amount available for the 2019-20 Youth Grants Program is \$5000.

CONSIDERATIONS

A total of six (6) applications were received, with five (5) applicants complying with grant selection criteria requirements. The total amount requested for the 2019-20 financial year was \$2250 as per the confidential attachment.

To be eligible for a Youth grant, applicants must be a Eurobodalla based and not-for-profit community group or able to prove that they are a bona fide Eurobodalla based community group or a service with the primary objective of supporting young people; they can contribute some financial support or volunteer labour to the activity; they can show that they have adequate insurance coverage for the activity and does not have any outstanding debts to council.

Each applicant must demonstrate that the grant will be used positively to engage the wider community and support young people in the Eurobodalla.

A sub-committee has reviewed applications in line with the grant criteria and present a summary and recommendations in this briefing.

One application was not recommended for funding, as it does not meet eligibility guidelines.

Social Impact

Eurobodalla Shire Council recognises that young people are an integral part of our community. Our youth provide energy, vitality, creativity and optimism which are essential elements of community wellbeing. Many of our youth leave the area to pursue careers and study interests once they finish school, but a determining factor for young people deciding to return is the contribution they perceive they can make to their communities. Therefore, it is essential that as a community we value, engage and support our young people to enable them to develop their identity and independence to reach their full potential and provide them with experiences which encourage them to return.

Council's youth grants demonstrate a commitment from Council to work in partnership with young people, youth service providers and government organisations to improve opportunities and services for young people.

Economic Development Employment Potential

Youth grants provide Community and not-for-profit groups much needed funds to support the development of projects and activities that engage with young people to provide them with experiences and opportunities to develop their potential.

Financial

Council has a budget of \$5000 for grants to support the activities of community groups, schools and/or non-profit organisations in celebrating Youth. The combined total of applications recommended by the sub-committee for funding is \$2250.

CAR20/001 YOUTH GRANTS

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Community and Stakeholder Engagement

We have informed the community of the Youth grants through providing information on Council's website; advertisements in the community noticeboard; Online News; distributing information and applications directly via email mailing lists, consulting with the Council's Youth committee and distributing media releases.

Council staff held two forums in February 2020, one with local youth service providers and schools and one with young people living in the Eurobodalla. Workshops were held to gather information to determine the local issues and aspirations to support recovery of each group. Feedback gathered will assist services, community and young people to prioritise and target needs to collaborate in a range of recovery actions.

Results of the forum are published on Council's youth service webpage.

The low number of responses to the offer of youth grants at this time may indicate that the community is not quite ready as a result of the bushfire season. However, as we move forward with the current consultations and action planning with the youth sector stakeholders, actions and activities that will emerge will require resourcing in the near future.

CONCLUSION

In line with the directions of social, cultural and management planning processes, it has been identified that working in collaboration with local not-for-groups to promote and initiate community focused activities for youth has valuable outcomes.

A total of \$5000 is available in 2019-20 for Youth grants. Six (6) applications were received, with five (5) recommended for a total of \$2250 in funding to support youth programs and activities.

As recent consultations with youth and the youth sector have begun to indicate support required for young people, the grant panel ask Council to consider allocating the residual amount of \$2750 to Recovery projects that support outcomes of the Youth in Recovery action plans currently being developed.

15. DEALING WITH MATTERS IN CLOSED SESSION

In accordance with Section 10A(2) of the Local Government Act 1993, Council can exclude members of the public from the meeting and go into Closed Session to consider confidential matters, if those matters involve:

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

and Council considers that discussion of the material in open session would be contrary to the public interest.

In accordance with Section 10A(4) of the Local Government Act 1993 the Chairperson will invite members of the public to make verbal representations to the Council on whether the meeting should be closed to consider confidential matters.

EUROBODALLA SHIRE COUNCIL

ETHICAL DECISION MAKING AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

A GUIDING CHECKLIST FOR COUNCILLORS, OFFICERS AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEES

ETHICAL DECISION MAKING

- Is the decision or conduct legal?
- Is it consistent with Government policy, Council's objectives and Code of Conduct?
- What will the outcome be for you, your colleagues, the Council, anyone else?
- Does it raise a conflict of interest?
- Do you stand to gain personally at public expense?
- Can the decision be justified in terms of public interest?
- Would it withstand public scrutiny?

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

A conflict of interest is a clash between private interest and public duty. There are two types of conflict: Pecuniary – regulated by the *Local Government Act* and Department of Local Government; and Non-Pecuniary – regulated by Codes of Conduct and policy, ICAC, Ombudsman, Department of Local Government (advice only).

THE TEST FOR CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- Is it likely I could be influenced by personal interest in carrying out my public duty?
- Would a fair and reasonable person believe I could be so influenced?
- Conflict of interest is closely tied to the layperson's definition of "corruption" – using public office for private gain.
- Important to consider public perceptions of whether you have a conflict of interest.

IDENTIFYING PROBLEMS

- 1st** Do I have private interests affected by a matter I am officially involved in?
- 2nd** Is my official role one of influence or perceived influence over the matter?
- 3rd** Do my private interests conflict with my official role?

Whilst seeking advice is generally useful, the ultimate decision rests with the person concerned.

AGENCY ADVICE

Officers of the following agencies are available during office hours to discuss the obligations placed on Councillors, Officers and Community Committee members by various pieces of legislation, regulation and Codes.

CONTACT	PHONE	EMAIL	WEBSITE
Eurobodalla Shire Council Public Officer	4474-1000	council@eurocoast.nsw.gov.au	www.esc.nsw.gov.au
ICAC	8281 5999	icac@icac.nsw.gov.au	www.icac.nsw.gov.au
Local Government Department	4428 4100	dlg@dlg.nsw.gov.au	www.dlg.nsw.gov.au
NSW Ombudsman	8286 1000 Toll Free 1800 451 524	nswombo@ombo.nsw.gov.au	www.ombo.nsw.gov.au

Reports to Committee are presented generally by 'exception' - that is, only those items that do not comply with legislation or policy, or are the subject of objection, are discussed in a report.

Reports address areas of business risk to assist decision making. Those areas include legal, policy, environment, asset, economic, strategic and financial.

Reports may also include key planning or assessment phrases such as:

Setback Council's planning controls establish preferred standards of setback (eg 7.5m front; 1m side and rear);

Envelope taking into account the slope of a lot, defines the width and height of a building with preferred standard of 8.5m high;

Footprint the percentage of a lot taken up by a building on a site plan.

Acronym	Meaning	Description
ACR	Australian Capital Region	The political and strategic grouping of the ACT government and 17 adjacent councils.
AEP	Annual Exceedance Probability	For floods expressed as a % eg 1% = 1:100 year event. The NSW Flood Guidelines nominate types of development and controls.
AHD	Australian Height Datum	Floor levels for buildings set to remain at or above flood level (expressed as 'freeboard').
APZ	Asset Protection Zone	Area to be cleared and maintained around habitable buildings in bushfire prone areas.
AS	Australian Standard	Standards set by national body as minimum construction, service, system, planning or design requirements.

Acronym	Meaning	Description
BCA	Building Code of Australia	Prescribes minimum standards or performance base for building construction.
CAMP	Companion Animal Management Plan	Required by state law, plan nominating management of dogs and cats and areas for access for the exercise of dogs (eg beaches and reserves).
CC	Construction Certificate	Floor plans approved by council or private certifier in compliance with development conditions and BCA.
COPW	Condition of Public Works Report	Required by state law to define the condition of infrastructure assets, the cost to upgrade to defined standards, the current costs of maintenance and desired levels of maintenance.
CP	Cultural Plan	A cultural plan enables identification of cultural assets, identity and needs as well as providing a framework to develop cultural initiatives to increase opportunities for residents.
CSR	Complaint and Service Request	Requests received from public by phone, letter, email or Councillor to attend to certain works (eg pothole) or complain of certain service or offence (eg dogs barking).
DA	Development Application	Required by state law to assess suitability and impacts of a proposed development.
DAP	Disability Action Plan	Council plan outlining proposed works and services to upgrade facilities to progressively meet Disability Discrimination Act.
DCP	Development Control Plan	Local planning policy defining the characteristics sought in residential, commercial land.
DECCW	Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (formerly EPA, NPWS, DEC)	State agencies (former Environment Protection and National Parks), DNR managing state lands and natural resources and regulating council activity or advising on development applications.
DWE	Department of Water and Energy	State agency managing funding and approvals for town and country water and sewer services and State energy requirements.
DoP	Department of Planning	State agency managing state lands and regulating council activity or advising on development applications or strategic planning.
DLG	Department of Local Government	State agency responsible for regulating local government.
DoL	Department of Lands	State agency managing state lands and advising on development applications or crown land management.
DoC	Department of Commerce	State agency (formerly Public Works) managing state public water, sewer and buildings infrastructure and advising/supervising on council infrastructure construction.

Acronym	Meaning	Description
DoH	Department of Health	State agency responsible for oversight of health care (community and hospital) programs. Also responsible for public warning of reportable health risks.
DOTAR	Department of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development and Local Government	Federal agency incorporating infrastructure, transport system, and assisting regions and local government.
EBP	Eurobodalla Bike Plan	Strategic Plan identifying priorities and localities for cycleways in the Shire.
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement	Required for designated and state developments researching and recommending solutions to social, economic and environmental impacts.
EMP	Estuary Management Plan	Community based plan, following scientific research of hydrology and hydraulics, recommending actions to preserve or enhance social, economic and environmental attributes of estuary
EMS	Environmental Management System	Plans prepared by council (such as waste management and strategic planning) around AS14000.
EOI	Expressions of Interest	Often called in advance of selecting tenders to ascertain capacity and cost of private sector performing tasks or projects on behalf of council.
EP&A	Environment Planning & Assessment Act	State law defining types of development on private and public lands, the assessment criteria and consent authorities.
ESC	Eurobodalla Shire Council	
ESD	Ecologically Sustainable Development	Global initiative recommending balance of social, economic and environmental values in accord with 7 ESD principles.
ESS	Eurobodalla Settlement Strategy	Council strategy prepared with assistance of government to identify best uses and re-uses of urban lands, the appropriate siting of private and public investment (eg institutions, employment areas or high density residential) based on current and planned infrastructure and land capacity.
ET	Equivalent Tenement	Basis of calculation of demand or impact of a single dwelling on water and sewer system.
FAG	Financial Assistance Grant	Federal general purpose grant direct to local government based on population and other 'disability' factors.

Acronym	Meaning	Description
FSR	Floor Space Ratio	A measure of bulk and scale, it is a calculation of the extent a building floor area takes up of an allotment.
GIS	Geographic Information System	Computer generated spatial mapping of land and attributes such as infrastructure, slope, zoning.
IPART	Independent Pricing & Regulatory Tribunal	State body that reviews statutory or government business regulatory frameworks and pricing levels.
IPWEA	Institute Public Works Engineers Australia	Professional association.
IWCMS	Integrated Water Cycle Management Strategy (or Plan)	Council plan identifying risk and social, economic and environmental benefit of proposed augmentation to water, sewer and stormwater systems.
IWMS	Integrated Waste Management (Minimisation) Strategy	Council plan identifying risk and social, economic and environmental benefit of proposed augmentation of waste (solids, effluent, contaminated, liquid trade waste).
LEP	Local Environment Plan	The statutory planning instrument defining the zones and objectives of urban and rural areas.
LGAct	Local Government Act	State law defining the role of Mayor, Councillors, staff, financing, approvals etc.
LGMA	Local Government Managers Australia	Professional association.
LGNSW	Local Government NSW	Representative advisory and advocacy group for councils in NSW.
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding	Agreement in principle between parties (eg council and agency) to achieve defined outcomes.
NPWS	National Parks & Wildlife Service	Now merged into DECCW.
NRM	Natural Resource Management	
NVC	Native Vegetation Act 2003	State law defining means of protection of threatened legislation and approval processes to clear land.
OC	Occupation Certificate	Issued by council or private certifier that building is safe to occupy and in compliance with development conditions and BCA.
OSMS	On site sewage management system	Includes septic tanks, aerated systems, biocycles etc.
PCA	Principal Certifying Authority	The person or organisation appointed by applicant to inspect and certify structures.

Acronym	Meaning	Description
PIA	Planning Institute of Australia	Professional association.
POEO	Protection of the Environment Operations Act	State law outlining standards for emissions and discharges and penalties for pollution.
PoM	Plan of Management (usually for community land)	Council plan nominating type of uses for community land and range of facilities progressively to be provided on land.
PPP	Public Private Partnerships	
PTS	Public Transport Strategy	Council strategy to initiate mechanisms to promote and facilitate public transport (bus, taxi, community transport, cycles) in design of subdivisions, developments and council works.
REF	Review of Environmental Factors	Council examination of risk and social, economic and environmental benefit of proposed works, assessed against state planning, environment and safety laws.
REP	Regional Environment Planning Policy	Outlines compulsory state planning objectives to be observed in development assessment and strategic planning.
RFS	Rural Fire Service	State agency responsible for providing equipment and training for volunteer firefighter brigades, and the assessment and approval of developments in bushfire prone lands.
RLF	Regional Leaders Forum	The group of mayors and general managers representing the councils in the ACR.
RMS	Roads & Maritime Service	State agency responsible for funding, construction and maintenance of state roads, the approval of council works on arterial roads and development applications.
S64	S64 Contributions Plan	Developer contributions plan to enable, with council and state funds, the augmentation of water, sewer and stormwater infrastructure.
S94 S94A	S94 Contributions Plan S94A Contributions Plan Levy Plan	Developer contributions to enable construction of public infrastructure and facilities such as roads, reserves, carparks, amenities etc.
SCG	Southern Councils Group	Political and strategic grouping of councils along the NSW south coast from Wollongong to the border, lobbying government for assistance (eg highways) and resourcing sharing initiatives.
SCRS	South Coast Regional Strategy	Regional Strategy prepared by DoP for ESC, BVSC and part SCC to guide new LEPs.

Acronym	Meaning	Description
SEA	Strategic Environment Assessment	Spatial assessment of environmental constraints of land considered in design and assessment of subdivision and infrastructure. Scientific research behind assessment of capacity of land and waterways in rural residential and urban expansion lands to sustain human settlement.
SEPP	State Environmental Planning Policy	Outlines compulsory state planning objectives.
SNSWLHD	Southern NSW Local Health Districts	State board commissioned with oversight of health care in Highlands, Monaro and Far South Coast.
SoER	State of the Environment Report	Required by state law, the comprehensive assessment (every four years) of the condition and the pressures on the social, economic and environmental features of the Shire and appropriate responses to address or preserve those issues.
SP	Social Plan	Required by state law, the comprehensive assessment (every four years) of the condition and the pressures on the social framework of the community, their services and facilities and economic interactions.
.....SP	Structure Plan	Plan promoting landuses and siting of infrastructure and facilities in towns (eg, BBSP – Batemans Bay Structure Plan).
SRCMA	Southern Rivers Catchment Management Authority	State agency commissioned with assessment and monitoring of health and qualities of catchments from Wollongong to the border, and determine directions and priorities for public and private investment or assistance with grants.
STP	Sewer Treatment Plant	Primary, secondary and part tertiary treatment of sewage collected from sewers before discharge into EPA approved water ways or irrigation onto land.
TAMS	Total Asset Management System	Computer aided system recording condition and maintenance profiles of infrastructure and building assets.
TBL	Triple Bottom Line	Commercial term coined to encourage business to consider and disclose social and environmental risk, benefit and costs in the conduct of business to guide investors as to the long term sustainability and ethics of a business. Taken up by Council to record the basis of prioritisation, the review of condition, the monitor of progress and the financial disclosure of preventative or maintenance investment in council based social and environmental activities.
ToR	Terms of Reference	
TSC	Threatened Species Conservation Act 1995	State law governing the protection of nominated species and relevant assessment and development controls.

Acronym	Meaning	Description
WCF	Water Cycle Fund	Combination of water, sewer and stormwater activities and their financing arrangements.
WSUD	Water Sensitive Urban Design	Principle behind the IWCMS and council development codes requiring new developments to reduce demand and waste on water resources through contemporary subdivision and building design.