



End of Term Report
2021

End of Term Report 2021

Introduction

The End of Term Report provides an update on Uralla Shire Council's progress towards achieving its aspirations set in the Community Strategic Plan. This report is a requirement under the *Local Government Act 1993*, and forms part of Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Framework. The End of Term Report is defined by the NSW Premier & Cabinet Division of Local Government as a 'report on Council's achievements in implementing the Community Strategic Plan over the previous four years'. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Council's term has been extended by a further 15 months.

How do we work to meet the goals set in the Community Strategic Plan?

Council's four year Delivery Program and one year Operational Plan identify the major projects, programs and services and work towards delivering the goals set in the Community Strategic Plan. These documents form part of a suite of strategic documents that outline the priorities and actions to meet the Community Vision.

Community Strategic Plan – What the Community wants

This document provides the vision as to where the people of Uralla Shire want to be in 2027. It outlines the key outcomes and strategies which form the basis of our planning. The document is reviewed at the start of each new Council term.

Delivery Program – How Council proposes to deliver

This document is a four year outlook (usually the length of Council's term). It establishes major projects and performance measures outlining how Council will address and measure progress towards the strategies contained in the Community Strategic Plan. It allocates high level resources to achieve the projects over a four year period. Council is required to report back to its community on a six-monthly basis. The document is updated annually in conjunction with the yearly Operational Plan.

Operational Plan - What Council proposes to do

The Operational Plan is a one year outlook, it includes actions Council will undertake in the financial year to address the Delivery Program projects. It includes a one year capital works program and allocates resources necessary to achieve the actions in the financial year. Council reports quarterly to its community on the status of the Operational Plan.

Resourcing Strategy

The Strategy includes:

- a ten year Long Term Financial Plan,
- a four year Workforce Management Plan
- an Asset Management Framework

The Strategy contains information on the time, funding, assets and people required by Council to progress the projects within the Delivery Program and move towards achieving our community outcomes. This document is also reviewed at the beginning of the new term of Council.

Annual Report

Council is required to report annually to the Office of Local Government. Annual reports contain statutory reporting requirements, including: the achievement of actions and Key Performance Indicators identified in the four year delivery program, a summary of Council's audited financial performance, contributions and grants awarded and details of overseas visits on official Council business by the Mayor and Councillors.

How do we know if we have succeeded?

Council relies on information and feedback. The Organisation has recently reviewed service levels and program delivery in a number of areas resulting in some data sources being collected. Other indicators rely on Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data collected every five years and benchmarking with other Councils. This information is used to report back to the Community on a quarterly basis.

1. A Proud, Unique and Inviting Community

Uralla has shown itself to be a resilient community having survived bushfires, drought, and arsenic contamination in its water reticulation during the term.

The School of Arts building in Bundarra has been upgraded and is used as a centre for the community in Bundarra, with classes and social gatherings taking place there.

Additional grant funding was secured to support upgrades at wide range of community operated facilities across the Shire.

2. A Safe, Active and Healthy Shire

Our community services are provided by Tablelands Community Support, Tablelands Community Transport and McMaugh Gardens. These organisations continue to deliver non-profit transportation, in-home and in-facility care and respite to many Uralla shire residents and to others within the region as well.



1 Bundarra Multi-Purpose Courts

During this term of Council, the Uralla Sporting Complex was upgraded and included the resurfacing of the tennis courts, new chainwire fencing around the courts, the provision of drinking water fountain and bbqs, and upgraded kitchen facilities in the clubhouse. The Uralla Swimming Pool was upgraded and included internal and external rendering and painting of the building (including a mural on the front of the building painted by students from Uralla Central School), new shade sails, picnic tables, bbq and drinking water fountain, and the construction of a new disabled amenities block, upgrading of the carpark with the provision of dedicated disabled parking. New change room facilities have been constructed at the Bundarra Sport and Recreation Club, and this community also has new

multipurpose courts including the construction of a new skate park and installation of exercise equipment.

A number of playgrounds have been upgraded including:

- Alma Park
- Hampden Park
- Porter Park
- BMX Track
- Kentucky Playground
- Barry Munday Reserve, Invergowrie (ongoing)

Council is a NSW Rural Doctors Network Bush Bursaries and Country Women's Association Scholarship sponsor; Placements for doctors are coordinated by Council. The New England Joint Association has been actively lobbying for increased health practitioners to the region.

Council has a Food Premise Inspection Program with 34 premises inspected on an annual basis. The primary goal for inspections is ensure high standards for food preparation and service. The inspection is Council's main tool for detecting issues and providing advice to the establishment owners.

3. A Diverse and Creative Culture

Our libraries have delivered a variety of programs and services that have kept our community engaged. Programs include storytelling, school holiday craft, film night and book club. The Library in Uralla also has wall space for local artists to exhibit their work.



2 Library Storytime in honor of NAIDOC Week

NAIDOC week is celebrated each year; storytelling and live entertainment from local indigenous groups have taken place. Visitors from pre-school and staff have been invited to participate in the activities that have been organised in the Uralla library.

Seniors week

Our seniors have had the opportunity to attend the "Tech Savvy Seniors" programs as part of the Seniors Week. The programs were tailored to be socially and culturally inclusive. Unfortunately the Public Health Orders during the

pandemic had a negative effect on attendance numbers. In addition to programs aimed at the seniors within our community, the Mayor also hosts a Seniors Morning Tea.

Youth week

In conjunction with the Uralla Neighbourhood Centre a family fun day was organised in 2021 for Youth Week. A varied holiday program is targeted at ages 8-18 and includes craft, STEM programs and movies. Council's Mayor hosted a youth forum each year.

Council has supported a number of local festivals including the Thunderbolt's Festival and the Uralla Lanterns Festival. Citizenship Ceremonies take place on Australia Day each year.

4. Access To and Equity of Services

Council adopted its Disability Inclusion Action Plan in 2017. This framework sets up the key strategies and actions to be delivered by Council in its commitment to disability access and inclusion within the Local Government Area. It guides Council operations in relation to disability access and inclusion, and focuses on improved outcomes for all community members. Highlights include:

- Aspects of the Development Application process, such as provision of individualised advice
- Development of social procurement framework to facilitate employment opportunities for local people with disability
- Provision of disability and community transport services

In 2018-2019 Council purchased a 12 seat Mercedes bus with a wheelchair hoist to expand on Council's services provided through Aged and Community Care. This bus is used by McMaugh Gardens, Tablelands Community Support and Tablelands Community Transport; this has helped Council meet its target outputs for Tablelands Community Transport and positive feedback has been received from residents and clients.

The Uralla swimming pool now has a new accessible amenity block and a family changing room as well as additional accessible carparks.

5. An Attractive Environment for Business, Tourism and Industry

Council adopted a Local Planning Strategy. The Strategy guides the future growth and development of the Shire, identifying local priorities and informing the Local Environmental Plans (LEP).

Council partnered with New England High Country for annual tourism promotions. In addition to this a travel writer was engaged to promote the region; a short video of the shire and what the region offers can be found on Council's website.

6. Growing and Diversified Employment, Education and Tourism Opportunities

The Uralla Visitor Information Centre upgrade was undertaken in 2020-2021. An interactive map was developed to highlight businesses including accommodation, food, education and tourist attractions across the Shire.

Council partnered with State Government in preparing for disasters. A number of tools and resources have been uploaded to Council's website to help businesses become disaster ready. A Business Connect Program has also been implemented, this is a free mobile advisory service for small businesses. A local advisor can meet with owners of small businesses to discuss needs and offer advice with respect to managing cash flow, planning next steps and accessing financial support schemes.

Council has reduced its median Development Application processing time down to 8 days; the median determination time across all NSW Councils in 2019 (the most recent published figures) was 40 days.

Council is well placed for any future growth with around 45 years' worth of residential land stock available based on the twenty year trend to 2021. This is a credit to the strategic

planning that was undertaken by Council over the past decade. The first Developer Forum was facilitated by Council staff; the forum provided an opportunity for those in the industry to receive advice and updates on matters pertaining to development.

All certificates relating to building and planning must now be submitted through the NSW Planning Portal. A dedicated workstation has been set up in the foyer of Council's administration building for anyone without home internet access who would like to submit a Development Application (DA).

Council encourages anyone who is looking to build, to make use of Council's free pre-DA meeting service. These meetings provide information on what is permissible, what documentation is required, where to source the documentation and what specialist services you will need. There has also been an increase in building certification services which are now available on both Monday and Wednesday.

7. A Safe and Efficient Network of Arterial Roads

The Mihi and Munsies timber bridges were replaced with concrete deck and steel railings in 2018. The highlight in 2019-2020 was securing funding for Tolleys Gully Bridge via the Growing Local Economies program and the Hawthorne Drive Stage 1 upgrade under the Fixing Local Roads program.

Our urban areas, our sealed roads and our unsealed roads have been maintained as planned. New pedestrian and bike paths have been built along Maitland Street and Plane Avenue in Uralla, Invergowrie Road, Invergowrie and Oliver and Bendemeer Street in Bundarra. Environmental services have been provided to rehabilitate our road sides and high conservation value sites.

Significant road upgrades included:

- Bingara Road – unsealed to sealed
- Bundarra Road, Invergowrie
- Harriet Gully Road - unsealed to sealed
- Corey Road – unsealed to sealed
- Old Gostwyck Road – unsealed to sealed
- Retreat Road – some partial sealing
- Mount Mitchell Road – unsealed to sealed
- Hill Street - reseal
- Maitland Street – reseal



3 Hawthorne Drive, Arding

8. Communities that are Well Serviced with Essential Infrastructure

One of the highlights of this term was constructing the Bundarra Sewerage Scheme. This scheme was first proposed in November 1989 when Public Works identified there was a need to implement a sewer scheme for Bundarra to address potential health, environmental and aesthetic issues associated with septic and other on-site effluent disposal systems. Planning for this project commenced in 2016 with construction starting in 2021 and completion expected in early 2022.

The Bundarra School of Arts Hall, Uralla Memorial Hall, Kentucky Memorial Hall and Uralla Visitor Information Centre were refurbished during this term of Council.

Public amenity upgrade in Hampden Park, Uralla and the Uralla Sports Complex. Key public space upgrades at the Uralla sporting complex with additional seating portable grandstands, basketball and netball courts, new canteen facilities.

New BBQ facilities and picnic settings have been constructed throughout the shire.

New public car parking at the Uralla Swimming Pool and kerb and channel in King Street Uralla.

9. Preserve, Protect and Renew our Beautiful Natural Environment

Throughout 2016-2021 Council continued to work on improving our environment by providing plans and actions to safeguard Uralla Shire's roadside bushland whilst safer roads are developed, allowing remnant vegetation to be preserved. Several successful pest animal control programs were delivered to reduce the impact of rabbits and foxes on public lands. Our volunteer program assisted in the maintenance of parks, gardens and open spaces.



4 Volunteer Bush Regeneration Group

10. Healthy balance between Development and Environment

Post Covid-19, regional NSW has seen a sharp increase in the level of domestic based tourism, higher demand for access to functional green space in addition to an increase in the number of people leaving the city centres in exchange for rural lifestyles. Council has developed a draft Open Space Strategy which is ready to proceed to final public exhibition. This document is expected to be presented to the November 2021 Council meeting for consideration. This Strategy is an opportunity to assess the existing condition of Council's open space assets and to identify how these assets can be

strengthened to better serve the community, promote tourism attract people to reside in the Shire and develop a plan for future development of Council's open space.

Natural disaster preparedness has been further developed:

- Adopted an Adverse Events Plan in 2021
- Business continuity planning implemented effectively during the water elevated arsenic event and the COVID19 pandemic
- Applied for funding for portable generators

11. Reuse, Recycle and Reduce Wastage

Council continued to operate all waste services and achieved savings by switching to a new contractor for kerbside collection. Over 740 tonnes of kerbside recycling was received and sorted at the Uralla Materials Recovery Facility. Approximately 1,800 tonnes of general waste was received for burial at the landfill. A specialised 32 tonne compactor was purchased to increase density of the buried waste and thus extend life of the landfill. Council continued to participate in Northern Inland Regional Waste activities to encourage better practice in waste management in the community.

Recycling sold/exported off site:

- 568 tonnes of steel
- 42 tonnes of glass
- 75 tonnes of e-Waste
- 32 tonnes of batteries
- 1718 plastic drums under DrumMuster
- 208 bales of carboard
- 434 bales of Aluminium
- 311 bales of plastic bottles

12. Secure, Sustainable and Environmentally Sound Water-Cycle Infrastructure and Services

Council completed its filter repairs and upgrade works at the Uralla Water Treatment Plant and this has made a marked improvement to the functionality of the Uralla town water supply; Council is in a better position and is prepared to address any increased levels of arsenic contamination should this occur during future periods of drought.

A program of hydrant flushing and repairs has commenced.

13. A Strong, Accountable and Representative Council

Council commenced audio casting its meetings in December 2019. Archived audio recordings of Council meetings are available via Council's website. Following a review of the Code of Meeting Practice, Council workshops are now open to the public.

In 2016 Council recognised that an increasingly large portion of the community obtained its information from social media and in that year Council established a Facebook page which has now become an integral element of our Engagement Strategy. The Communications Officer works to further enable the community's voice to be heard regarding Council activities, services and facilities. Council has expanded its engagement program to increase community awareness and understanding of decisions and gain insight into community opinion through newsletters, social media, workshops, information sessions and Listening Posts.



The Audit Risk and Improvement Committee was appointed in 2018. The objective of the Committee is to provide professional independent advice and assistance to the Uralla Shire Council (Council) to improve its operations and functions, ensure compliance to legislation, manage risk and be accountable for its external responsibilities.

An Internal Auditor was appointed in 2019. The purpose of the Uralla Shire Council's internal audit function is to provide independent, objective assurance and consulting services designed to add value and improve Uralla Shire Council's operations. The mission of internal audit is to enhance and protect organisational value by providing risk-based and objective assurance, advice, and insight. The internal audit function helps Uralla Shire Council accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of governance, risk management and control processes.

A Communications Officer was resourced from 2017 to enable communications and community engagement services in support of all Council activities and Council decision making.

14. An Effective and Efficient Organisation

Commencing 2017 Council resourced a full-time Risk Management and Safety Officer and significant development of the safety system is in progress. A new Enterprise Risk Management Framework, Policy and Register was commenced in 2020. Uralla Shire Council was awarded overall winner of the Regional, Rural and County Councils as well as winner of the Enterprise Risk Category for 'Improving Risk Culture' in the Statewide Mutual Risk Management Excellence Awards in 2021. A Pandemic Business Continuity Plan has been drafted to meet the risks Council faced in 2020 and 2021.

The Coordinator of Governance and Risk had carriage of the Governance Improvement Program. This program has been implemented; a number of new policies have been adopted by Council and 18 redundant policies have been repealed this year. New software was implemented to report on the Operational Plan and Delivery Program.

15. Deliver the Goals and Strategies of the Community Strategic Plan

State Level and Local Partnerships

The New England Joint Organisation of Councils consists of seven member Councils and an associate Council. The key focus areas of the organisation are: sustainable economic growth, educated, healthy and connected communities and investment in critical infrastructure.

The New England Weeds Authority is a Local Control Authority that manages invasive weeds under the Biosecurity Act 2015. Uralla Shire forms part of the area of operation.

Northern Inland Regional Waste is a regional waste group that focuses on sustainable waste management and resource recovery.

Uralla Shire Council is joined with the Central Northern Regional Library (CNRL). The CNRL provides a collection of print, audio-visual and electronic resources as well as access to downloadable e-resources.

Council and Senior Staff Leadership Team During the Term

The following Councillors served during the term:

Popularly elected Mayor: Cr Michael Pearce 2016-2021

- Cr Robert Bell 2016-2021 (Deputy Mayor 2016-2017)
- Cr Robert Crouch 2016-2021 (Deputy Mayor 2018-2020; Sept 2021-Dec 2021)
- Cr Mark Dusting 2016 -2021
- Cr Natasha Ledger 2016-2021
- Cr Tom O'Connor 2019-2021
- Cr Levi Sampson 2016 -2021
- Cr Isabel Strutt 2016 -2021 (Deputy Mayor 2017-2018; 2020-2021)
- Cr Tara Toomey 2016-2021
- Cr Kevin Ward 2016-2018

Cr Ward passed away in February 2019. He served the Uralla Council for 14 years. He was known for his strong convictions, his dedication to local governance and his love for his community. Cr Ward resigned from his position on Council in November 2018 due to ill health. He had the following to say about the community at the time:

It's a very kind and caring community Uralla, people take care of their neighbours and that's struck me over the years - everyone is interested in the welfare of the community and there's no shortage of people interested in trying to improve the town."

Council wishes to particularly thank its staff, volunteers and contractors who are the heart of our work and have succeeded to deliver the most important services that our community needs and uses. We are proud of the results we have been able to achieve and we would like to acknowledge the efforts of Council's workforce, led by the General Managers (Andrew Hopkins to 2019, David Aber [Interim July 2019 – Feb 2020], Scott Phillips [Interim Feb – Jul 2020]; Kate Jessep [current]), in contributing to the organisation's success.

