

13.7 2025-2026 end of financial year Operational Plan progress report

Department:	Group Corporate Services
Prepared By:	Governance Officer
Authorised By:	Group Manager Corporate Services
Reference:	UINT/26/18786

Attachments:	1. Annexure 1: Annual Operational Plan Report 2025/2026
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LINKAGE TO INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING FRAMEWORK

Goal:	3. An Independent shire and well-governed community
Strategy:	3.2. A strategic, accountable, and representative Council
	3.3. An efficient and effective independent local government

SUMMARY

This report presents the Annual Operational Plan update as at 30 June 2026 detailing the Operational Plan actions delivered during the financial year 2025/2026. Attached is a detailed report of Operational Plan actions with staff comments for each item.

Of 187 activities under the Operational Plan, 160 were completed. Four (4) projects were cancelled or were not achievable and nine (9) projects were determined as unlikely to meet target/managing closely. 14 activities remain in progress and on target, with a view to having these completed these within the coming months (please refer to Annexure 1 for target completion dates). An explanation is included in this report for each activity that was not completed or is unlikely to meet target.

During the 2025/2026 financial year, Uralla Shire was impacted by a significant snowstorm and a severe supercell storm, both of which caused substantial damage across the Shire and placed additional pressure on Council's operations. Despite these events, and ongoing resource constraints, Council was still able to deliver the majority of actions included in the 2025/2026 Operational Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives and notes the 2025/2026 Operational Plan end of year progress report.

REPORT

Section 405 of the *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)* requires that an Operational Plan is adopted before the beginning of each year and details the activities to be engaged in by the council during the year as part of the Delivery Program covering that year.

The Delivery Program is Council's commitment to the delivery of services and implementation of principal activities over a four-year period to achieve the goals and strategies detailed in the Community Strategic Plan. It is the key accountability mechanism for Council in the delivery of the community's goals and aspirations.

The Operational Plan is a sub-set of the Delivery Program and provides details of the individual actions that will be undertaken during a financial year to achieve the Delivery Program's principal activities. Responsibility

for the delivery of Operational Plan actions is allocated to responsible officers who provide progress information.

The following graph depicts the Operational Plan actions delivered, in progress, unlikely to meet target and cancelled or not achievable in the 2025/2026 Financial Year. Approximately 86% of actions were delivered.

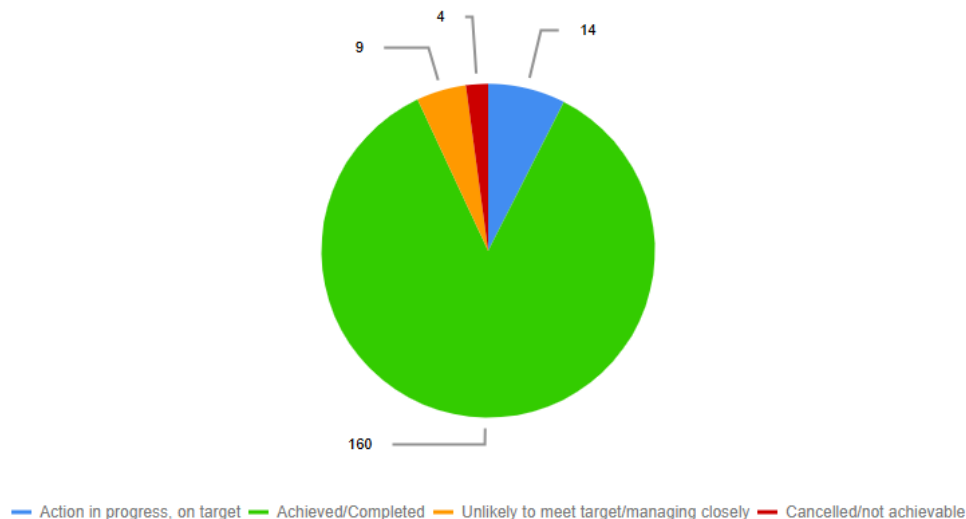


Figure 1 - Operational Plan progress as 30 June 2026

Cancelled / Not achievable

4 actions listed in the Operational Plan were cancelled. These include:

1. *Develop a Public Art Asset Management Strategy*
While a preliminary draft has been compiled progress on this action was significantly hindered as a result of resource constraints.
2. *Develop and implement the Uralla Caravan Park Business Plan*
The Business Plan is currently on hold until a Plan of Management for the land has been prepared and adopted by Council which addresses Crown ownership of a portion of the Uralla Caravan Park site.
3. *Develop and adopt Asset Management Plans*
In the 2025/2026 financial year, 2 Asset Management Plans (AMP) have been reviewed and adopted by Council along with the Asset Management Strategy. Resource constraints and competing priorities necessitated by the supercell event, snowstorm, and grant activities have impeded completion of an Aged Care and Waste AMP. Noting the competing priorities, it is envisioned that the completion of all Council AMPs will likely take a few years. In the meantime, progress is continuing on Council's water and sewer assets in terms of gaining a comprehensive knowledge of these assets.
4. *Partner with Armidale and Walcha Councils to deliver community disaster recovery education (subject to grant funding)*
While Council partnered with Armidale and Walcha Councils to pursue grant funding for community disaster recovery education, the submission was unsuccessful and the project was therefore cancelled.

Unlikely to meet / managing closely

9 actions listed in the Operational Plan were unlikely to meet target and are being managed closely. These include:

1. *Manage Lease agreement with Grace Munroe Aged Care Facility*
The Group Manager Communities has progressed this matter to the issue of formal lease agreements. The draft lease was sent 30/06/2025. To date the executed lease has not been returned to Council.
2. *Undertake maintenance grading (unsealed roads) and road surface patching program*
Council has been undertaking unsealed road maintenance grading, however, the entire network has not been completed due to lack of water availability from dry drought conditions. Additional attention is being placed on long term cleaning of drainage culverts to ensure they are functional and to protect unsealed surfaces from damage. Sealed road patching has been completed across the network and continues to be an ongoing priority due to the surface pavement fatigue.
3. *Verify stormwater drainage structures and pipe network in accordance with the Asset Management Plan for future revaluation and maintenance*
The urban stormwater drainage network has been inspected via CCTV camera. Drainage pit repairs were completed in Court Street and Duke Street. Stormwater across the network has not been fully inspected as a number of stormwater pits are buried at ground level. Ongoing work to uncover these structures will be done when equipment is available. Some drainage pipes were not inspected due to obstructions that need to be cleared under maintenance.
4. *Implement capital road upgrading program in accordance with approved funding project schedules*
Capital upgrading of Thunderbolts Way at Laura Creek has been completed. Sections of Hawthorne Drive and Gostwyck Road were also completed. Drainage culverts renewals have been completed on the next stage of grant funded work on Gostwyck Road 8 – 10km, however roadworks have been deferred due to water availability and other grant funded priorities. Gostwyck Road 8 – 10km will continue in the first part of 26/27 year.
5. *Undertake the Uralla Creek Rehabilitation and Stormwater Masterplan (subject to approval from funding body) in partnership with UNE*
The Uralla Creek Rehabilitation and Stormwater Masterplan did not proceed in 2025–26 because funding approval was not secured. Council maintained momentum by pursuing practical improvement opportunities with the re-established Uralla Rivercare Group and the University of New England (UNE), including planning with UNE's "The Big Lift" program for future volunteer riparian clean-up activities. A separate funded works package is also progressing to remove accumulated and stagnant debris, improving creek condition, amenity and water flow.
6. *Undertake a desktop scenario test of Business Continuity Plan*
In 2025/2026 financial year, USC tested the BCP on two occasions (the August snowstorm and the November supercell storm) and on both occasions the organisation responded effectively. Notwithstanding this, a formal review of the BCP is still required and is programmed for the next FY. Improvements and lessons learned from the two events in 25/26 will be incorporated into the revised BCP. At this stage, this action has not been completed due to resource constraints.

7. *Define and adopt a Corporate Risk Appetite Statement*

This action has not been completed due to resourcing constraints. The Operational Risk Register was substantially reviewed in 2025/2026 together with the identification and management of Strategic Corporate risk. Against this background, efforts have now commenced to finalise the risk appetite and tolerance statements. This will be completed by 31 October 2026.

8. *Provide annual PID training*

Programmed formal PID training was not delivered in 2025/2026 due to resource constraints. PID protections and obligations were raised in MANEX meetings, induction processes and ad hoc meetings to ensure general organisational awareness was maintained. Structured PID training for the agency head is programmed for July 2026. Structured PID training for people leaders is programmed for October 2026.

9. *Develop a Council facility security strategy*

The work to develop a facility Security Strategy is underway (and currently known critical elements have been actioned/installed – Court St amenities, Uralla Water Treatment Plant Security). The timeframe to complete will run into 26/27 FY as a consequence of resource limitations.

Operational Plan action highlights

1. *Deliver at least one Major Community Event/Programs (subject to Grant funding) that brings our community together and supports the visitor economy*

On 22 November 2025, Council hosted the Uralla Christmas Street Fair, filling the heritage town centre with free festive experiences for all ages. Created with the people of Uralla Shire, the event featured gingerbread decorating, Santa's Toy Workshop, the North Pole Post Office and a full-size Ferris wheel offering never-before-seen views over Uralla. For the first time, Council worked with Transport for NSW to close the New England Highway for the event. Despite poor weather, Uralla's community spirit shone brightly, with 45 small businesses, 22 local market stallholders, 33 community groups and 23 local performers involved. Almost 4,000 people attended, with more than half visiting from outside the Shire.



Image (above): Scenes from the Uralla Christmas Street Fair.

2. *Implement the Workforce Management Strategy*

In 2025/2026, the People and Wellbeing Team successfully finalised and implemented the Workforce Management Strategy, strengthening Council's recruitment and candidate engagement. The team

processed 804 applications for 112 vacancies and improved its capacity to respond to every candidate, supported by more targeted marketing to attract quality applicants.

3. *Undertake maintenance grading (unsealed roads) and road surface patching program*

Council maintained momentum across key infrastructure works, including parks and sports grounds, primitive camping reserves, stormwater drainage, unsealed road grading and sealed road patching. Capital works delivered important reseals on Kingstown Road, Pinegrove Road, a section of Thunderbolts Way south of Bundarra, and multiple streets across Bundarra to protect pavement condition. Major road construction also progressed with the rehabilitation of 1.7 km of Thunderbolts Way at Laura Creek near Bundarra.



Image (above): Laura Creek roadworks preparing road base and the completed project with extended guardrail.

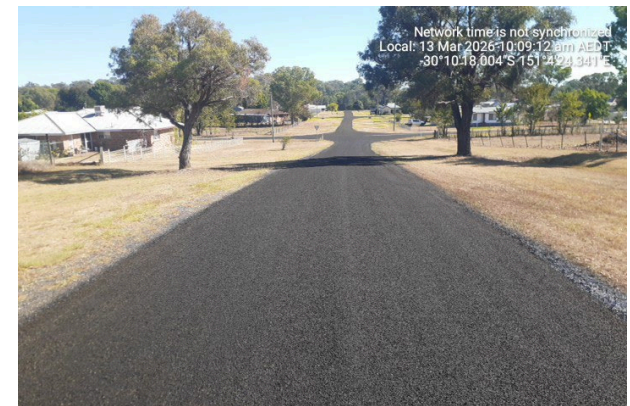
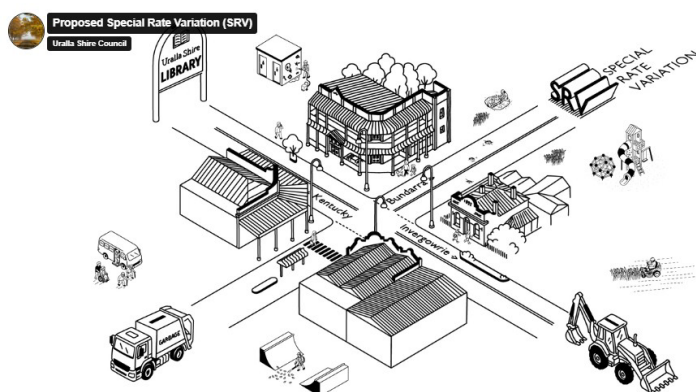


Image (above): Bitumen resealing in Bundarra

4. *Implement the Special Rate Variation Communication Plan to educate and engage with the community on the proposed Special Rate Variation*

Uralla Shire Council undertook an extensive community engagement program to ensure residents were informed and had the opportunity to provide feedback on the proposed Special Rate Variation (SRV). Community consultation included public information sessions, targeted stakeholder engagement, online and written submissions, and detailed financial information explaining Council's long-term challenges.

Feedback received helped shape Council's application and demonstrated strong community awareness of the need to maintain essential services and infrastructure. IPART acknowledged Council's consultation process as part of its assessment before approving the SRV.



Images (above): Community engagement campaign materials.

CONCLUSION

Council delivered strong progress against the 2025/2026 Operational Plan, completing approximately 86% of actions despite significant weather impacts and ongoing resource constraints.

This result reflects Council's resilience, focus and commitment to maintaining essential services, progressing priority projects and delivering outcomes for the Uralla Shire community.

COUNCIL IMPLICATIONS

Community Engagement/Communication

Operational Plan status reports are provided every six months. Council is required to prepare and exhibit an annual report within 5 months of the end of the financial year. The annual report provides the status of initiatives detailed in the Delivery Program/Operational Plan.

Policy and Regulation

The *Local Government Act 1993*.

Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) Handbook for local government in NSW.

Financial/Long Term Financial Plan

The delivery of actions in the Operational Plan is provided via Council's annual budget.

Asset Management/Asset Management Strategy

Asset Management Plans form part of the IP&R suite of documents, and form part of some of the actions in the Operational Plan.

Workforce/Workforce Management Strategy

The Workforce Plan is aligned with the Delivery Program and Operational Plan and forms part of the IP&R suite of documents.

Legal and Risk Management

Periodic reporting identifies whether strategies are working. This is an opportunity to assess any risks in relation to projects or activities.

Performance Measures

This report outlines the achievement of key actions from the Operational Plan 2025-2026.

Project Management

Governance Officer.