



## **AGENDA & BUSINESS PAPERS**

Notice is hereby given, in accordance with the provision of the *Local Government Act 1993* that a meeting of Uralla Shire Council will be held in the Council Chambers, 32 Salisbury Street, Uralla.

## **ORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING**

### **26 May 2026**

**Commencing at 4:00 PM**

or at the conclusion of a Public Forum



#### **Statement of Ethical Obligations**

The Mayor and Councillors are bound by the Oath/ Affirmation of Office made at the start of the Council term to undertake their civic duties in the best interests of the people of Uralla Shire and to faithfully and impartially carry out the functions, powers, authorities and discretions vested in them under the *Local Government Act* or any other Act, to the best of their skill and judgement.

It is also a requirement that the Mayor and Councillors disclose conflicts of interest in relation to items listed for consideration on the Agenda or which are considered at this meeting in accordance with Council's Code of Conduct and Code of Meeting Practice.

Mick Raby

**Acting General Manager**

**AGENDA**

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- 1 OPENING & WELCOME**
- 2 PRAYER**
- 3 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**
- 4 WEBCAST INFORMATION**
- 5 APOLOGIES & APPLICATIONS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE BY COUNCILLORS**
- 6 DISCLOSURE & DECLARATION OF INTEREST/S**

## 7 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

### 7.1 Confirmation of Minutes Ordinary Meeting held 28 April 2026


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**Department:** General Manager's Office

**Prepared By:** Executive Assistant

**Authorised By:** Acting General Manager

**Reference:** UINT/26/10570

**Attachments:** 1. Minutes Meeting held 28 April 2026 

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#### RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopts the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting held 28 April 2026 as a true and correct record.

## 8 URGENT, SUPPLEMENTARY, AND LATE ITEMS OF BUSINESS (INCLUDING PETITIONS)

## 9 WRITTEN REPORTS FROM DELEGATES

### 9.1 Mayor's Activity Report for April 2026

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<b>Department:</b>	<b>General Manager's Office</b>
<b>Prepared By:</b>	<b>Executive Assistant</b>
<b>Authorised By:</b>	<b>Mayor</b>
<b>Reference:</b>	<b>UINT/26/10567</b>

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#### LINKAGE TO INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING FRAMEWORK

<b>Goal:</b>	3.	An Independent shire and well-governed community
<b>Strategy:</b>	3.1.	Informed and collaborative community leaders

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#### RECOMMENDATION

That Council receives the Mayor's Activity Report for April 2026.

#### REPORT

DATE	COMMITTEE/MEETING/EVENT	LOCATION
01 April	Culture Champions Awards – staff recognised for their outstanding efforts in demonstrating USC Core Values in their work	Uralla
01 April	Fuel Security Webinar - LGNSW	Online
07 April	Councillor Information Session - Uralla Town Centre Master Plan presented by USC & Meridian Urban	Uralla
8 April	Mayor's 2AD Radio 1134 weekly interviews	Uralla
10 April	Meeting - Justin Williamson	Bundarra
13 April	Mayor & GM Catch UP	Uralla
13 April	Ward A Candidate Information session	Uralla Central School
14 April	Councillor Information Session 2 <sup>nd</sup> Budget Workshop 2026 - 2027	Uralla
15 April	Country Mayor's Association - Teams meeting Re: Fuel	Online
16 April	Solar Farm Meeting	Uralla
20 April	Mayor & GM Catch UP	Uralla
21 April	Telstra New England Catch up	Uralla
21 April	Grace Munro Centre meeting - Application for Alteration & Additions to Aged Care Facility	Bundarra

21 April	Joint Sitting with ARIC Committee members and Councillors	Uralla
21 April	Councillor Information Session - Road Closing process for the New England Solar Farm Stage 1 development	Uralla
22 April	Mayor's 2AD Radio 1134 weekly interviews	Uralla
22 April	Leading on the Edge – Racheal Robinson	Armidale
23 April	Kentucky Public School - Youth Week attended with Cr Arnold	Kentucky
23 April	Dawn Renewables – Bundarra Renewable Energy Hub	Uralla
24 April	Kingstown Public School - Youth Week attended with Cr O'Connor	Kingstown
25 April	Anzac Day Ceremony	Uralla
28 April	Rocky River School - Youth Week attended with Cr Philp	Rocky River
28 April	Ordinary Council Meeting	Uralla
29 April	Corporate Induction with new staff	Uralla
29 April	Uralla Central School - Youth Week attended with Cr Philp & GM Toni Averay	Uralla
30 April	Bundarra Central School - Youth Week attended with Crs Arnold & Philp	Bundarra

## 10 MAYORAL MINUTE

Nil

## 11 NOTICE OF MOTION/QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE

Nil


## 12 REPORT OF COMMITTEES

### 12.1 Bundarra Community Committee - Draft Minutes of Meeting held 13 May 2026

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<b>Department:</b>	<b>Infrastructure and Development</b>
<b>Prepared By:</b>	<b>Acting Director Infrastructure &amp; Development</b>
<b>Authorised By:</b>	<b>Acting General Manager</b>
<b>Reference:</b>	UINT/26/10947

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**Attachments:** 1. DRAFT Minutes - Bundarra Community Committee - 13 May 2026 

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#### LINKAGE TO INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING FRAMEWORK

<b>Goal:</b>	1. We have an accessible inclusive and empowered community
	2. A sustainable economy that supports prosperity
	3. An Independent shire and well-governed community
<b>Strategy:</b>	1.1. A growing, community-minded shire
	1.4. Access to and equity of services
	2.3. Well serviced communities
	3.1. Informed and collaborative community leaders

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#### SUMMARY

The Bundarra Community Committee meeting was held on 13 May 2026. This report presents the draft minutes of that meeting for the information of Council.

#### RECOMMENDATION

**That Council receives the Draft Minutes of the Bundarra Community Committee Meeting held on 13 May 2026.**

#### REPORT

The Bundarra Community Committee meeting was held on 13 May 2026. The meeting was attended by Committee members, members of the community, appointed Councillors and Council staff. The Draft Minutes of that Committee meeting are attached to this report for Council's consideration.

The Committee continues to provide significant benefits to both the local Bundarra community and Council's operations.

#### CONCLUSION

The Bundarra Community Committee meeting took place at the Bundarra School of Arts Hall on 13 May 2026. The draft minutes of that meeting are attached to this report for the information of Council.

**COUNCIL IMPLICATIONS**

**Community Engagement/Communication**

Community will be informed of Council's decision and future intentions via the Bundarra Community Committee Email Distribution List.

**Policy and Regulation**

Bundarra Community Committee Terms of Reference 2025  
*Local Government Act 1993*; section 355

**Financial/Long Term Financial Plan**

N/A

**Asset Management/Asset Management Strategy**

N/A

**Workforce/Workforce Management Strategy**

N/A

**Legal and Risk Management**

N/A

**Performance Measures**

High attendance benchmarks at the monthly Committee meetings by both appointed community members and Council representatives continues.

**Project Management**





Infrastructure & Development Directorate

**12.2 Aged Care Compliance and Assurance Committee Report**


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<b>Department:</b>	<b>Group Community Services</b>
<b>Prepared By:</b>	<b>Group Manager Community Services</b>
<b>Authorised By:</b>	<b>Acting General Manager</b>
<b>Reference:</b>	UINT/26/9929

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<b>Attachments:</b>	1. Unconfirmed minutes ACCA 5 May 2026 
	2. Clinical Governance Framework - McMaugh Gardens 
	3. USC Aged Care Governance Framework 
	4. Revised Terms of Reference - ACCA 

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**LINKAGE TO INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING FRAMEWORK**

<b>Goal:</b>	3. An Independent shire and well-governed community
<b>Strategy:</b>	3.2. A strategic, accountable, and representative Council

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**SUMMARY**

On 5 May 2026, Council's Aged Care Compliance and Assurance Committee ('Committee') held its fourth and final meeting of the financial year for 2025/2026.

The unconfirmed minutes of the meeting are at **Attachment 1** to this report. The Committee's report to Council is at item 7.10 of the unconfirmed minutes.

The Committee met on 5 May 2026 and considered a range of operational, compliance and governance matters relating to Council's aged care services, including McMaugh Gardens and community care operations.

Overall, the Committee noted a strong level of compliance and service performance, supported by:

- Positive outcomes for internal and external audits;
- Effective complaint management with minimal issues raised;
- Ongoing enhancements to clinical governance; and
- Active implementation of continuous improvement initiatives.

The Committee also highlighted areas of strategic focus, including workforce planning, governance strengthening, and responding to an identified financial risk associated with Commonwealth funding arrangements under the Support at Home program for some participants that were only funded at 60% of their funding.

This report also includes the following documents for discussion and review by Council:

- Clinical Governance Framework – McMaugh Gardens: the Committee is seeking endorsement of this document by Council as the governing body of McMaugh Gardens;
- Governance for Aged Care – Uralla Shire Council Care Policy document: the Committee is seeking endorsement of this document by Council as the governing body of Council's Aged Care Services; and
- Revised Terms of Reference – Aged Care Compliance and Assurance Committee: the Committee is seeking endorsement by Council, and that it be placed on public exhibition for 28 days for comment.

**RECOMMENDATION****That Council:**

- 1. Receive and note the minutes and outcomes of the Aged Care Compliance and Assurance Committee meeting held on 5 May 2026.**
- 2. Note the strong overall performance of Council's aged care services, including:**
  - **Continued compliance with the Aged Care Quality Standards;**
  - **Positive compliance and monitoring outcomes;**
  - **Low complaints and positive consumer feedback; and**
  - **Ongoing strengthening of clinical governance arrangements.**
- 3. Note the continued implementation of key governance and quality initiatives, including:**
  - **The revised Clinical Governance Framework;**
  - **The Plan for Continuous Improvement addressing audit findings; and**
  - **Enhanced monitoring, reporting and accountability mechanisms across aged care services.**
- 4. Note the Committee's recommendation to incorporate a dedicated aged care and community care workforce strategy within Council's Workforce Strategic Plan.**
- 5. Note the updated Terms of Reference for the Aged Care Compliance and Assurance Committee and support their public exhibition prior to final adoption.**
- 6. Note the Governance for Aged Care – Uralla Shire Council Care Policy and endorse its continued operation as part of Council's aged care assurance framework.**
- 7. Acknowledge emerging financial risks associated with Commonwealth funding arrangements, including:**
  - **The reduction and lack of transparency in approved funding levels; and**
  - **The need for further clarification from the Department.**
- 8. Notes that the Committee has requested a further report on the impacts from some of the Support at Home packages having been funded only to 60%, without providing Aged Care Providers with adequate information about which packages have only been funded to this level.**
- 9. Note that ongoing progress against compliance, audit actions and continuous improvement initiatives will continue to be reported to Council through the Committee's quarterly reporting framework.**



## 13 REPORTS TO COUNCIL

### 13.1 Central Northern Regional Library Agreement

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<b>Department:</b>	<b>Group Community Services</b>
<b>Prepared By:</b>	<b>Group Manager Community Services</b>
<b>Authorised By:</b>	<b>Acting General Manager</b>
<b>Reference:</b>	UINT/26/10049

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<b>Attachments:</b>	1. Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the CNRL 7 May 26 
	2. CNRL Agreement 2026-2031 

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#### LINKAGE TO INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING FRAMEWORK

<b>Goal:</b>	1. We have an accessible inclusive and empowered community
<b>Strategy:</b>	1.1. A growing, community-minded shire
	1.4. Access to and equity of services

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#### SUMMARY

The purpose of this Report is to advise Council of the matters relating to the proposed renewal of the Central Northern Regional Library ('CNRL') Agreement.

#### RECOMMENDATION

**That Council:**

- 1. Approve the renewal of the Central Northern Regional Library Agreement 2026 for a further five-year period.**

#### REPORT

The CNRL is a resource sharing arrangement formed under section 12(1) of the *Library Act 1939 (NSW)* ('Act'). The CNRL is made up of six Councils: Gwydir Shire Council, Liverpool Plains Shire Council, Narrabri Shire Council, Tamworth Regional Council, Uralla Shire Council and Walcha Council. Tamworth Regional Council is the Executive Council for CNRL.

Being part of a regional library service has advantages for all member councils. These advantages include:

- the ability to achieve economies of scale through cost sharing and combined purchasing;
- access to wider resources including:
  - larger collections both physical and digital;
  - refreshed stock through continual stock rotation;
  - shared library management software (catalogue and circulation);
- the ability to provide equitable services for customers over wider service areas;
- the provision of shared learning programs and events for the community;
- shared and consistent policies and procedures; and
- greater capacity to employ professional staff and share expertise.

The model also encourages relationship building with regional communities and between member councils.

The CNRL Committee held an Extraordinary Meeting online on 7 May 2026 to propose renewal of the CNRL Agreement for a further period of five years.

The renewed agreement will operate from 1 July 2026 to 30 June 2031 and continues the existing model of delegating library service delivery to Tamworth Regional Council.

## **COUNCIL IMPLICATIONS**

### **Community Engagement/Communication**

This report is open to the public so that the community can understand how its library services are funded and delivered.

The CNRL Agreement also requires regular reporting to member councils, including quarterly service reports and annual reporting on service quality across each local government area.

### **Policy and Regulation**

The CNRL Agreement is made under Act. The CNRL Agreement formalises the delegation of library functions from member councils to Tamworth Regional Council under section 12(1) of the Act and requires compliance with relevant statutory obligations relating to the provision and management of public library services.

### **Financial/Long Term Financial Plan**

Council will be required to make annual contributions to the CNRL, as determined through the regional library budget prepared by Tamworth Regional Council. Last year's contribution towards the CNRL by Council was ~\$114,000. This will be increased by CPI for next year. Council has conservatively budgeted ~\$127,000 for next year's contribution, which will be adjusted downwards if required in the first QBRS report to Council next financial year when the final amount is known.

The CNRL Agreement sets out a structured annual budget process, including consultation with member councils and the CNRL Committee prior to finalisation.

The regional model supports cost efficiency through shared expenditure on staffing, collections, systems, and logistics. Costs covered include staffing, operational overheads, library resources, IT systems, and delivery services. Income sources for the regional council include member council contributions, State Library subsidies, grants, donations, and user charges.

### **Asset Management/Asset Management Strategy**

Assets acquired through the CNRL budget are owned and managed by Tamworth Regional Council, with an asset register maintained for all regional library assets.

In the event of termination, assets are distributed among member councils in proportion to their financial contributions over a defined period.

Council remains responsible for maintaining its local library facilities, including buildings, utilities, and associated infrastructure costs.

### **Workforce/Workforce Management Strategy**

Council continues to employ and manage local library staff within its local government area, including all employment-related costs.

Tamworth Regional Council employs specialist and professional staff to deliver regional services, including collection development, IT systems, logistics, and strategic planning.

This shared workforce model supports access to professional expertise that would not be sustainable individually for each member Council.

**Legal and Risk Management**

The CNRL Agreement clearly defines roles, responsibilities, and delegation arrangements, reducing ambiguity and legal risk.

Tamworth Regional Council assumes responsibility for the control and management of the regional library service, while member councils retain responsibilities for local facilities and staffing.

The CNRL Agreement includes provisions for:

- dispute resolution through arbitration processes;
- withdrawal arrangements (voluntary and forced), including allocation of costs; and
- indemnities relating to committee representation.

These provisions provide a clear framework for managing operational and governance risks.

**Performance Measures**

The CNRL Agreement requires ongoing monitoring and reporting of service performance, including:

- quarterly reports to member councils;
- annual reporting, including assessment of service quality within each council area; and
- development and implementation of a five-year strategic plan supported by annual management plans.

These measures support accountability and continuous improvement in service delivery.

**Project Management**

The renewal of the CNRL Agreement is a defined governance project coordinated through the CNRL Committee and participating councils.

Ongoing management of the regional library service includes structured planning processes such as:

- preparation of a five-year strategic plan;
- annual budgeting and service planning; and
- regular committee meetings (at least twice annually) to oversee policy and operational matters.

These processes ensure coordinated delivery of library services across the region.

**13.2 Loans as at 30 April 2026**


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**Department:** General Manager's Office  
**Prepared By:** Senior Finance Officer  
**Authorised By:** Chief Financial Officer

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**SUMMARY**

This report provides the Council with a reconciliation of borrowings as at the end of the reporting month.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**That Council notes that the total loan position as of 30 April 2026 is \$1,053,904.**

**REPORT**

This report outlines the Council's borrowing position as at end of the reporting month. As per reconciliation for borrowings as of 30 April 2026, the loan balance stood at \$1,053,904.

Interest on Loan # 190 is applied, and instalments are deducted quarterly. The next instalment is scheduled to be deducted in May.

The table below details the loan's opening balance, interest applied, instalments paid since the last report, and the closing balance at month-end.

**Uralla Shire Council Loans as at 30 April 2026**

Loan no.	Purpose	Balance as at 31-Mar-2026	Interest Applied	Instalment Paid	Balance as at 30-Apr-2026
165	MGH Property	3,455	26	751	2,729
189	Bridge Construction	89,178	637	2,650	87,165
190	Bridge construction & industrial land development	964,010			964,010
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,056,643</b>	<b>663</b>	<b>3,402</b>	<b>1,053,904</b>

**CONCLUSION**

I, Mustaq Ahammed, Chief Financial Officer hereby certify that the above borrowings have been made in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act 1993* (sections 621 to 624) and the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021* (section 230).

**13.3 Investments as at 30 April 2026**

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<b>Department:</b>	<b>General Manager's Office</b>
<b>Prepared By:</b>	<b>Senior Finance Officer</b>
<b>Authorised By:</b>	<b>Chief Financial Officer</b>

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**SUMMARY**

This report contains a summary of bank accounts, term deposits, cash management accounts, and investments in structured credit instruments.

The investments have been made in accordance with section 625 of *Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)*, section 212 of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 (NSW)*, and Council's *Investment Policy 2019*.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**That Council notes:**

- 1. The cash position as at 30 April 2026 consisting of:**
  - **cash and overnight funds of \$1,922,801**
  - **term deposits of \$21,000,000; and**
  - **total cash and term deposits of \$22,922,801 as at 30 April 2026.**
- 2. Restrictions are reconciled on a quarterly basis. As at 31 March 2026, total cash and investments were \$24,567,924 comprising \$19,008,509 in external restrictions and \$4,514,070 in internal restrictions, leaving an unrestricted balance \$1,045,345. This compares to an unrestricted cash balance of \$ 1,112,649 as at 31 December 2025.**

**REPORT**

Of the cash disclosed in this report, not all funds are available for unrestricted use by Council. A significant portion is subject to external restrictions, including developer contributions, government grants, loans, water supply and sewer services, and refundable accommodation deposits (reported as McMaugh Gardens Bond Liability).

In addition, a further component of the cash is internally restricted by Council to meet specific future commitments, such as asset renewals, remediation works, and employee leave provisions.

Council's current investment portfolio earns interest at rates ranging from 4.01% to 5.35%, with an average return of 4.50%. The Reserve Bank of Australia increased the cash rate target by 25 basis points to 4.35% at its May 2026 monetary policy meeting, following earlier increases in February and March 2026. The decision reflects the Board's assessment that inflationary pressures remain elevated, with risks to the inflation outlook still tilted to the upside. The next monetary policy decision is scheduled for 16 June 2026, which may provide further guidance on the outlook for interest rates.

The balance of available funds decreased from \$24,567,924 as at 31 March 2026 to \$22,922,801 as at 30 April 2026, reflecting an overall reduction of \$1,645,123 during the month. This movement is in line with typical General Fund cash flow patterns, with March and April historically reflecting net cash outflows. The

April movement was further influenced by large payments for road works, along with the refund of two aged care resident bonds at McMaugh Gardens.

### McMaugh Gardens Bond Liability

As per the Department of Health's prudential guidelines, Council is advised to disclose the amount of McMaugh Gardens Bond Liability in the investment report. Accordingly, McMaugh Gardens Bond Liability status as at 30 April 2026 is provided below:

Particulars	Amount
Opening Balance as at 31/03/26	6,250,000
Add: Bond received during the month	-
Less: Bond released during month	500,000
Closing Balance as at 30/04/2026	5,750,000

### Breakdown of Council's Cash and Investments as at 30 April 2026

Institution	Account	Closing Balance 30 Apr 2026
National Australia Bank	Main Account	\$152,411
National Australia Bank	Trust Account	\$31,297
Regional Australia Bank	Cash Account	\$29,641
Professional Funds (0.15% above RBA cash rate)	Cash Account	\$1,709,452
<b>Total Cash and Overnight Funds</b>		<b>\$1,922,801</b>
Term Deposits	Investments	21,000,000
<b>Total funds available as at 30 April 2026</b>		<b>\$22,922,801</b>

### Movement of Term Deposit Investments by Each Bank Since Last Report

Institution	S&P Rating	Allowable Investment Limit %	Max Investment Allowed	Opening Investments 31/03/2026	Movement during the Month	Closing Investments 30/04/2026	% of Actual Investment
National Australia Bank	A-1+	30%	6,300,000	5,200,000	-	5,200,000	24.8%
Bank of Queensland	A-2	30%	6,300,000	2,500,000	-	2,500,000	11.9%
Westpac Banking Corporation	A-1+	30%	6,300,000	5,600,000	-	5,600,000	26.7%
Commonwealth Bank	A-1+	30%	6,300,000	5,000,000	-	5,000,000	23.8%
Regional Australia Bank	BBB+	10%	2,100,000	700,000	-	700,000	3.3%
Suncorp	A-1+	30%	6,300,000	2,000,000	-	2,000,000	9.5%
<b>Total</b>				<b>21,000,000</b>	-	<b>21,000,000</b>	<b>100%</b>

## List of Term Deposits as at 30 April 2026

Name of the Bank	Term	Interest Rate	Maturity Date	Investment Amount
Bank of Queensland	8 Months	4.15%	18/05/2026	500,000
Westpac Banking Corporation	10 Months	4.12%	22/05/2026	500,000
National Australia Bank	12 Months	4.20%	25/05/2026	500,000
National Australia Bank	10 Months	4.05%	01/06/2026	600,000
Bank of Queensland	12 Months	4.10%	02/06/2026	1,000,000
Suncorp	12 Months	4.13%	12/06/2026	1,000,000
National Australia Bank	12 Months	4.05%	02/07/2026	500,000
Westpac Banking Corporation	12 Months	4.12%	22/07/2026	1,000,000
Suncorp	7 Months	4.46%	13/08/2026	1,000,000
Westpac Banking Corporation	12 Months	4.09%	25/08/2026	400,000
National Australia Bank	12 Months	4.05%	25/08/2026	400,000
Commonwealth Bank	12 Months	4.01%	02/09/2026	1,000,000
National Australia Bank	11 Months	4.25%	02/10/2026	500,000
Westpac Banking Corporation	11 Months	4.48%	03/11/2026	1,000,000
Westpac Banking Corporation	11 Months	4.45%	04/11/2026	1,000,000
Westpac Banking Corporation	11 Months	4.45%	04/11/2026	1,000,000
Commonwealth Bank	12 Months	4.35%	27/11/2026	1,000,000
Commonwealth Bank	12 Months	4.35%	27/11/2026	500,000
Regional Australia Bank	9 Months	5.35%	04/01/2027	700,000
Bank of Queensland	9 Months	5.35%	07/01/2027	1,000,000
National Australia Bank	10 Months	4.74%	13/01/2027	500,000
Commonwealth Bank	10 Months	4.78%	15/01/2027	500,000
Commonwealth Bank	12 Months	4.82%	05/02/2027	1,000,000
Commonwealth Bank	12 Months	4.82%	05/02/2027	1,000,000
National Australia Bank	10 Months	5.30%	05/03/2027	700,000
National Australia Bank	11 Months	5.15%	12/03/2027	500,000
Westpac Banking Corporation	12 Months	4.62%	18/03/2027	700,000
National Australia Bank	11 Months	5.30%	16/04/2027	1,000,000
<b>Total</b>				<b>21,000,000</b>

**CONCLUSION**

I, Mustaq Ahammed, Chief Financial Officer, hereby certify that the above investments have been made in accordance with section 625 of the *Local Government Act 1993*, section 212 of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021*, and Council's *Investment Policy 2019*.

**13.4 Monthly Finance Report for April 2026**


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**Department:** General Manager's Office**Prepared By:** Corporate Accountant**Authorised By:** Chief Financial Officer

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**LINKAGE TO INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING FRAMEWORK**

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1. Monthly Financials up to April 2026  **Attachments:****Goal:** 3. An Independent shire and well-governed community**Strategy:** 3.2. A strategic, accountable, and representative Council3.1. Informed and collaborative community leaders

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**SUMMARY**

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the Council's financial performance up to the reporting date, along with analytical comments on significant variances with the budget.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**That Council receives the attached Monthly Finance Report for April 2026.**

**REPORT**

This report provides for the information of Councillors the Income Statement and CAPEX Summary, including a breakdown by fund, for the month ending 30 April 2026.

**13.5 Third Quarterly Budget Review 2025-26 (QBR)**

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**Department:** General Manager's Office**Prepared By:** Chief Financial Officer**Authorised By:** Acting General Manager**Reference:** UINT/26/11324

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**Attachments:** 1. Third Quarterly Budget Review (QBR) Report 2025-26 

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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

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**SUMMARY**

The purpose of this report is to present to Council a review of the budget for the third quarter of the 2025/26 financial year.

**RECOMMENDATION****THAT Council:**

1. Received and notes the third quarterly budget review summary for the 2025/26 financial year; and
2. Adopts the adjustments to budget allocations.

**BACKGROUND:**

It is a statutory requirement that Council's responsible accounting officer prepares and submits a budget review statement to Council on a Quarterly basis each financial year (LGGR 2005 cl.203 (1)). Also, in compliance with the Local Government (General) Regulation, Council's responsible accounting office must include with the budget review report an opinion on the financial position of Council and any recommendations for remedial action if required. As such, the third quarterly review for the 2025/26 financial year has been prepared and attached for Council's review.

**REPORT**

This report presents the third quarterly budget review for the 2025/26 financial year and outlines the required adjustments arising from operational developments during the third quarter. Council prepares its reports in its usual format to meet community expectations and provides reports in the format recommended by the Office of Local Government.

**MAJOR ADJUSTMENTS:**

The August 2025 snowstorm continues to place pressure on Council's cash reserves, with total disaster recovery expenditure reaching \$2.03 million for that event. At this time claims for \$1.56 million of that total have been lodged with the Reconstruction Authority but are still awaiting approval and payment.

Council's road capital renewal plan for the current FY is essentially centred on the resealing of condition five (5) local roads and the surface renewal of the parking lanes and intersections along Bridge Street to coincide with TfNSW's renewal of the travelling lanes of the highway. This work is funded through the Roads to Recovery (R2R) grant program. The R2R grant program was previously paid to Council in advance. This is not

the case this year, and Council is required to forward fund the work and claim back the costs as the work is completed. This change to the R2R funding arrangements has required Council to expend \$0.947 million of own source to forward fund the planned renewal of Condition 5 roads. This amount will ultimately be claimed back from the R2R grant in future periods, however the timing gap between expenditure and repayment currently negatively distorts Council's actual financial position and increases cashflow pressures by that same amount.

As a consequence of the above, grant income from the R2R source reflects as significantly lower than planned for the current FY.

Additionally, TfNSW's cancellation of the long-awaited Bridge Street Resurfacing Project, which Council had planned to co-fund (\$1.5 million) from the R2R grant this FY, has similarly impacted expected grant revenue in the current FY by the same amount.

Accelerated replacement of aging water infrastructure has continued to reduce the Water Fund cash reserve through emergency repairs and necessary water main replacement works. Continued infrastructure failures may require significant future capital investment, potentially supported through external grants and/or borrowings. Accordingly, Council will need to develop a long-term strategic approach to renewal and replacement of water infrastructure to support the sustainability and affordability of water services. This planning work is underway.

In summary, the original 2025-26 budget forecasts an operating deficit of \$1.92 million after depreciation and before grants and contributions for capital purposes and capital expenditure. Following the final budget review for the financial year, the projected operating deficit has increased to \$6.8 million after depreciation.

The increase is mainly attributable to the financial impact of the August 2025 snowstorm, additional depreciation resulting from the most recent revaluation of transport assets, TCS funding shortfalls associated with funding reforms, resealing of condition 5 roads using Council's own funds, and unplanned additional expenditure on water network repair and maintenance works as discussed above. The major budget adjustments during the year impacting the operating result comprise:

- \$2.03 million in snowstorm-related expenses;
- \$0.70 million for water network maintenance and repairs;
- \$0.66 million relating to the TCS funding shortfall;
- \$0.95 million for local road resealing works funded by Council; and
- \$0.44 million in additional depreciation expense.

These events and associated costs were not foreseeable at the time the original 2025–26 budget was prepared.

#### **COMMENTS:**

The Council's operating result at the year-end projects a significant operating loss of \$6.85 million before capital grants and contributions, and \$4.4 million after recognising capital grants and contributions. Of this amount, approximately \$6.8 million relates to non-cash depreciation expenses. In addition, a number of projects continue to be funded from restricted reserves. As a result, Council still forecasts to maintain a marginal cash surplus at the year end. Continued follow-up with the Reconstruction Authority for reimbursement of snowstorm-related costs remains very critical to improve Council's cash position. In addition, where eligible, more local roads projects, whether operational or capital in nature, can be assigned to the Roads to Recovery program to reduce reliance on own funding and improve the Council's overall cash position.

On the other hand, the Water Fund continues to face increasing financial pressure due to ongoing failures and breaks in aging water infrastructure. Over recent years, the increasing number of reticulation failures and water main breaks has required urgent reactive repair works, resulting in significant unplanned expenditure. As a result of ongoing emergency repairs and water main replacement works, Water Fund

reserves have reduced substantially over the past two years. If the frequency of water main failures continues to increase, Council may need to undertake more extensive renewal and replacement works. These works are likely to require significant capital investment, which may not be fully achievable through the Water Fund's internal reserves alone. This may require Council to seek external funding sources, including grants and/or borrowings, which would potentially increase the long-term cost of providing water services for both Council and residents, particularly given the relatively small customer base of just nearly 1,600 water connections. Accordingly, securing substantial grant funding will be critical to supporting the long-term sustainability and affordability of water services for Uralla Shire Council.

## COUNCIL IMPLICATIONS

### Community Engagement/Communication

Report of budget reviews to the Council's ordinary meeting.

### Policy and Regulation

- *Local Government Act 1993;*
- *Local Government Regulations (General) 2005;*
- *Local Government Code of Accounting Practice and Financial Reporting;* and
- Australian Accounting Standards.

### Financial/Long Term Financial Plan

This report is a review of the annual budget up to the end of the third quarter. Changes to the budget are as outlined in the attached statements.

### Asset Management/Asset Management Strategy

N/A

### Workforce/Workforce Management Strategy

N/A

### Legal and Risk Management

Council is required by legislation (*clause 203 of the Regulations*) to prepare quarterly budget review statements for the first three quarters of each year, including an opinion by the Responsible Accounting Officer as to whether the financial position of the Council is satisfactory.

Corporate Governance – the third quarter budget review complies with legislative requirements. This risk is assessed as low.

Financial Management – the third quarter budget review in line with the original budget adopted by Council in June 2025. This risk is assessed as moderate.

### Performance Measures

The third of three required budget reviews.

### Project Management

N/A

### 13.6 Local Government Remuneration Tribunal's Determination for Mayor and Councillors Remuneration for 2026/2027

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**Department:** Group Corporate Services  
**Prepared By:** Group Manager Corporate Services  
**Authorised By:** Acting General Manager  
**Reference:** UINT/26/11288

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**Attachments:** 1. Local Government Remuneration Tribunal - 2026/2027 Determination 

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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  
 3.1. Informed and collaborative community leaders

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#### SUMMARY

Council is required under the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW) (LG Act) to fix and pay annual fees to Councillors and the Mayor in accordance with the annual determination made by the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal (the Tribunal).

The Tribunal has determined a 3.7% increase to the minimum and maximum fees for each category of council effective from 1 July 2026.

This report outlines the Tribunal's determination and seeks Council approval to adopt the 2026/27 annual fees.

#### RECOMMENDATION

**That Council approves the following annual fees for the 2026/27 year in accordance with the annual determination made by the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal:**

1. Approves the annual fee for Councillors at the maximum rate of \$14,450 effective 1 July 2026; and
2. Approves the annual fee for the Mayor at the maximum rate of \$31,510 effective 1 July 2026, making the payment to the Mayor \$31,510 + the fee adopted for Councillors; and
3. Approves the payment of the Mayoral fee to the Deputy Mayor whenever the Deputy Mayor stands in for the mayor for a period in excess of 1 week (7 days) effective 1 July 2026, and deducts this from the Mayoral allowance.

#### REPORT

The Tribunal is constituted under Chapter 9, Division 4 of the LG Act and is required to determine the categories of councils and the minimum and maximum fees payable to Councillors and Mayors.

Uralla Shire Council is classified as a General-Purpose Council – Non-Metropolitan – Rural under section 239 of the LG Act.

Sections 248 and 249 of the LG Act require Council to fix and pay annual fees within the range determined by the Tribunal. The 2026 determination provides for a 3.7% increase across all categories effective from 1 July 2026.

For Uralla Shire Council, this results in the following fee ranges:

- Councillor: \$10,920 (minimum) to \$14,450 (maximum)
- Additional Mayoral fee: \$11,620 (minimum) to \$31,510 (maximum)

The determination retains Uralla's classification within the Rural category based primarily on population size and scale of operations.

While the Tribunal acknowledged increasing governance and compliance demands across the sector, it did not amend the categorisation framework, citing legislative constraints and limited supporting evidence.

For Uralla, this results in a remuneration structure at the lowest tier despite increasing workload drivers, including Renewable Energy Zone developments, geographically dispersed communities and expanded governance requirements under the Model Code of Meeting Practice. These factors contribute to a level of complexity not fully captured by the current population-based categorisation model.

The Tribunal has indicated that a comprehensive review will be undertaken in 2027, including consideration of categories, criteria and fee structures. This will provide an opportunity for Council to make a formal submission supported by resolution.

#### **GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS**

The 2026 determination maintains the current categorisation framework, with Uralla Shire Council remaining in the Rural category.

The parameters applied within this framework continue to place primary emphasis on population size, scale and economic activity. These measures tend to favour metropolitan councils and do not adequately recognise or compensate regional and rural councillors for comparable levels of workload, including complex policy, strategic and governance responsibilities.

Submissions to the Tribunal identified sector-wide concerns regarding fee adequacy, increasing governance obligations and difficulties in attracting and retaining councillors. These challenges are particularly pronounced in rural councils, where geographic dispersion, service delivery complexity and emerging regional pressures contribute to higher workloads and more complex governance responsibilities.

The Tribunal acknowledged these concerns but did not make structural changes, noting the constraints of the current legislative framework.

The Tribunal has advised that the 2027 review will be undertaken in two stages:

1. Review of categories, criteria and fee ranges; and
2. Consideration of individual council classifications based on submissions.

Any submission to the Tribunal must be supported by a resolution of Council.

**CONCLUSION**

Having regard to the Tribunal's determination, it is recommended that Council fix the additional Mayoral fee and the fee for Councillors at the maximum amount as determined for a General-Purpose Council - Non-Metropolitan – Rural.

**COUNCIL IMPLICATIONS****Community Engagement/Communication**

- Section 239 of the LG Act requires the Tribunal to determine the categories of councils and mayoral offices at least once every 3 years. A review of categories was last carried out by the Tribunal in 2023. The Tribunal has indicated that it will undertake a fulsome structural review of the framework as part of its 2027 review and determination.
- The criterion for each category is published in Appendix 1 of the Determination and remains unchanged from 2026.

**Policy and Regulation**

Local Government Remuneration Tribunal's Determination.

Sections 241, 248 and 249 of the LG Act.

**Financial/Long Term Financial Plan**

The draft 2026/2027 budget has accounted for the proposed increase of 3.7%.

**Asset Management/Asset Management Strategy**

Not applicable

**Workforce/Workforce Management Strategy**

Not applicable

**Legal and Risk Management**

A Council cannot fix a fee higher than the maximum amount determined by the Tribunal. Further, if a Council does not fix a fee, the Council must pay the minimum fee determined by the Tribunal.

**Performance Measures**

Application of the resolved increase to Councillor and Mayoral remuneration.

**Project Management**

General Manager



**13.7 State of the Environment Report -2022-2025**


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**Department:** Infrastructure and Development  
**Prepared By:** Manager Environment & Waste  
**Authorised By:** Acting Director Infrastructure & Development  
**Reference:** UINT/26/9922

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**Attachments:**

1. State of the Environment Report for 2022-2025 \_ Clean Version 
2. State of the Environment Report for 2022-2025 \_ Track Changes Version 

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**LINKAGE TO INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING FRAMEWORK**

**Goal:** 4. Good custodianship of our natural and built environment  
**Strategy:** 4.1. Preserve, protect, and renew our beautiful natural environment

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**SUMMARY**

Council resolved at its meeting of 24 March 2023 to place the State of Environment Report 2022-2025 on public exhibition for community comments. The policy was exhibited from 27 March 2026 to 24 April 2026. No submissions were received during the exhibition period. However, there was one submission made during the Council meeting.

Council staff reviewed the submission and made amendments accordingly.

It is recommended that Council now adopts the amended State of Environment Report 2022-2025.

**RECOMMENDATION****That Council:**

1. Notes the submission received.
2. Notes the staff responses and amendments to the report related to the submissions,
3. Adopts the amended State of Environment Report 2022-2025 and
4. Authorises the General Manager to finalise the report for publication.

**REPORT**

Council resolved at its meeting of 24 March 2023 to place the State of Environment Report 2022-2025 on public exhibition for community comments. The policy was exhibited from 27 March 2026 to 24 April 2026. No submissions were received during the exhibition period. However, there was one submission made during the Council meeting.

Council staff reviewed the submission and made amendments accordingly. The table below shows council staff's responses to the issues raised in the submission.

No	Issue Raised	Council's Staff Response
1	Population figure #3 6,300 APPp426	The current population according to ABS data is 5,968 (2021 Census). This figure has been quoted in the report.

No	Issue Raised	Council's Staff Response
2	No mention of REZ in overview, threats, waste & recycling, water	Impact of the REZ has been added in the overview in s2.1. With the subsequent completion of REZ Cumulative Impact Statement and the REAP, more detailed commentary is expected in further years' reports.
3	No mention of landfilled	Landfill has been added to the report in s2.4
4	Does USC undertake Walcha Council's kerbside collection? ATTp432	Yes. USC has signed a contract with WSC to provide kerbside waste services which includes the collection and processing of the recycling materials from Walcha. Invoices are issue to WSC by USC to ensure all costs are covered.
5	Provide a full list of ecological restoration programs undertaken ATTp437	<p>The ecological restoration projects undertaken within the reporting period are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The ecological restoration of the racecourse lagoon and</li> <li>2. Koala Habitat on Public Land – Mount Mutton Bushland Reserve Restoration Project.</li> </ol> <p>The report has been amended to include these projects.</p>
6	Is Bundarra footpath in reporting period? ATTp438	One section of the footpath was completed prior to this reporting period whilst the current section will be reported in the following State of Environment Report.
7	Is it worth highlighting the significantly declining raw sewage levels? ATTp443	Yes — it is worth highlighting, particularly because it demonstrates a positive environmental and operational outcome in the sewerage section of the report. The reduction in raw sewage inflows suggests improvements in inflow and infiltration management, network efficiency, or changing climatic conditions affecting stormwater ingress. The above commentary has been added to the report.

## CONCLUSION

This report recommends that Council take note of the submission received and the staff responses to each of the issues raised. The report also recommends that Council adopts the amended the State of Environment Report 2022-2025 and subsequently authorises the General Manager to finalise the report for publication.

**COUNCIL IMPLICATIONS****Community Engagement/Communication**

Community engagement has been completed. The policy was exhibited from 27 March 2026 to 24 April 2026.

**Policy and Regulation**

The preparation of a State of the Environment Report forms part of Council's End of Term Reporting requirements under Section 428 of the Local Government Act 1993. The report must address environmental objectives through indicators and identify significant environmental impacts occurring during the council term.

**Financial/Long Term Financial Plan**

NIL

**Asset Management/Asset Management Strategy**

NIL

**Workforce/Workforce Management Strategy**

NIL

**Legal and Risk Management**

Preparation and publication of the State of the Environment Report is required under the Local Government Act 1993 as part of Council's End of Term Reporting obligations.

**Performance Measures**

The State of the Environment Report contributes to Council's End of Term Reporting under the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework and informs future environmental planning and decision making.

**Project Management**



Infrastructure and Development staff.

**13.8 Smart Water Meter Project – Deferral of Project Implementation**


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<b>Department:</b>	<b>Infrastructure and Development</b>
<b>Prepared By:</b>	<b>Group Manager Infrastructure Services</b>
<b>Authorised By:</b>	<b>Acting Director Infrastructure &amp; Development</b>
<b>Reference:</b>	UINT/26/376

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<b>Attachments:</b>	1. Uralla Shire Council Demand Management Plan 2018 
	2. Report to Council - Demand Management Plan and updated Drought Management Plan - 26 June 2018 

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**LINKAGE TO INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING FRAMEWORK**

<b>Goal:</b>	4. Good custodianship of our natural and built environment
	2. A sustainable economy that supports prosperity
<b>Strategy:</b>	4.1. Preserve, protect, and renew our beautiful natural environment
	2.3. Well serviced communities

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**SUMMARY**

This report provides Council with an update on the proposed Smart Water Meter Project and recommends that Council does not proceed with the project at this time.

Smart water meters have previously been identified as a potential future demand management initiative for Uralla Shire Council. Council's Demand Management Plan identified the rollout of smart water meters as a future initiative that could allow automatic and instantaneous water consumption readings and provide customers with online access to consumption data to better track water usage. Council also resolved in December 2019, following the Drought Management Workshop, to investigate the use of smart meters.

While the potential benefits of smart meters are acknowledged, the project is not recommended to proceed in the current financial planning period. The primary reasons are that there is no available capital expenditure budget to allocate to deliver the project and Council is awaiting the results and lessons from neighbouring councils' smart meter works, particularly Armidale Regional Council's (ARC) current digital water meter rollout.

ARC has progressed from trial to broader rollout. ARC's public project information states that digital water meters are being installed in Guyra followed by Armidale, with the intent of reducing water loss, improving leak detection, and enabling residents to monitor water use in real time. ARC has also stated that its project is funded from its Water Fund Reserve and is being delivered across the 2024–25 and 2025–26 financial years.

It is considered prudent for Uralla Shire Council to defer the project until sufficient funding is available and until further information is available from neighbouring council implementations. This will allow Council to better understand the real costs, risks, customer impacts, system integration requirements and operational benefits before committing to a full smart meter rollout and to do so in full knowledge of its broader investment requirements in water infrastructure.

**RECOMMENDATION****That Council:**

- Notes the update on the proposed Smart Water Meter Project,**

2. Notes that smart water meters have previously been identified as a potential future water demand management initiative for Council,
3. Does not proceed with the Smart Water Meter Project at this time due to:
  - (a) no available capital expenditure budget to allocate to the project; and
  - (b) Council awaiting the results, costs, risks and implementation lessons from neighbouring councils' smart meter works;
4. Receives a future report when a suitable funding source becomes available and sufficient information is available from neighbouring council smart meter implementations to support a revised business case.

## REPORT

### Background:

Smart water meters have previously been identified as a potential initiative to improve water demand management, customer information and operational efficiency across Uralla Shire Council's water supply network.

Council's Demand Management Plan identified the rollout of smart water meters as a possible future demand management initiative. The Plan noted that smart meters could allow automatic and instantaneous water consumption readings and enable customers to view their consumption data online and better track water usage.

The project also aligns with matters previously considered by Council in response to drought and water security pressures. In December 2019, Council considered recommendations from a Drought Management Workshop and resolved, among other actions, to investigate the use of smart meters. A subsequent Schedule of Actions report in December 2020 recorded the investigation of smart meters as "Underway."

The strategic intent of smart meters is generally to improve the quality and frequency of water consumption data available to both Council and customers. A smart meter network can allow more regular or automated meter reads, earlier detection of abnormal usage, improved leak alerts, better customer information, reduced manual meter reading effort, and improved data for water demand management.

However, a full smart meter rollout requires significant capital investment and ongoing operational commitment. Costs are also not limited to the meters themselves. They include installation, communications infrastructure, software, system integration, billing-system configuration, customer portal functionality, staff training, customer communication, data management, cyber security, software licensing and long-term asset renewals.

### Neighbouring Council Activity:

ARC has progressed further with smart water meters and provides a useful regional reference point.

ARC's public information states that digital water meters are being rolled out in Guyra followed by Armidale. The stated purpose of the project is to reduce water loss, improve leak detection and allow residents to monitor their own water usage in real time. ARC also states that the project is being funded by its Water Fund Reserve and will be delivered over the 2024–25 and 2025–26 financial years.

ARC's earlier trial involved 50 smart water meters across Armidale. ARC reported that the trial detected 29 leaks, including two major leaks, with a combined saving of 380 kL of water and \$1,614 for participating customers.

These results indicate that smart meters may provide benefits in leak detection, water conservation and customer awareness. However, ARC's broader rollout is still current. It is therefore appropriate for USC to wait until more information is available about the full implementation outcomes, including actual rollout costs, installation issues, customer response, communications performance, integration requirements, ongoing operational demands and realised savings.

Proposed Way Forward:

It is recommended that Council formally note that the Smart Water Meter Project will not proceed at this time.

Council officers should continue to monitor smart meter implementation by neighbouring councils, particularly ARC. Information should be gathered on procurement approach, capital cost, meter technology, communications performance, customer uptake, customer complaints, leak detection outcomes, billing integration, software costs, operational workload and realised savings.

Council should continue with existing meter replacement, leak reduction and water demand management activities where they are already funded and operationally justified. This will allow Council to continue improving the water network without committing to a full smart meter rollout. Staff are also commencing work on the development of a long term replacement and asset development program to better understand priority investment scenarios for water and wastewater over the next ten years consistent with likely funding sources and service needs. Staff will report to Council on the development and implementation of this work as it is developed.

A further report should be provided to Council if a suitable funding source becomes available or once sufficient information is available to support a revised business case.

## CONCLUSION

Smart water meters remain a potential future option for Uralla Shire Council. They may provide benefits in relation to leak detection, water conservation, customer information, billing accuracy and operational efficiency.

However, the project is not currently funded and should not proceed without an identified capital expenditure budget. It is also appropriate for Council to wait for further information from neighbouring council smart meter projects before making a final investment decision.

Deferring the project allows Council to avoid committing to unfunded capital expenditure, preserve available resources for higher-priority water infrastructure works, and develop a stronger future business case based on regional implementation experience.

## COUNCIL IMPLICATIONS

### Community Engagement/Communication

No immediate community engagement is required as the project is not proceeding at this time.

If the project is reconsidered in the future, community engagement will be important. Smart meters may raise questions from customers about installation, access to properties, billing, leak notifications, data privacy, radio frequency emissions, customer portals and responsibility for leaks after the meter. Any future project should include a clear communication plan before implementation.

**Policy and Regulation**

There are no immediate policy changes required.

If the project is reconsidered, Council may need to review policies and procedures relating to meter reading, billing, customer leak notifications, concealed leaks, access to private property, customer data, privacy, cyber security and water restriction monitoring.

**Financial/Long Term Financial Plan**

There is no available capital expenditure budget allocated to the Smart Water Meter Project.

Proceeding with the project without an identified funding source would create financial risk and may require Council to reprioritise other water capital works. Deferring the project allows Council to reconsider the project through a future budget process, grant opportunity, water fund review or Long Term Financial Plan update.

**Asset Management/Asset Management Strategy**

Smart meters may provide future asset management benefits by improving water consumption data, supporting earlier leak detection and providing better information about network performance.

However, smart meters would also become a new asset class requiring ongoing management, maintenance, renewal, software support and communications arrangements. These whole-of-life obligations should be assessed before any future rollout is proposed.

**Workforce/Workforce Management Strategy**

Deferring the project avoids placing additional implementation demands on Council staff at this time.

A future smart meter project would require staff resources for procurement, project management, installation coordination, customer communication, billing integration, software administration, data analysis and ongoing operational response to alerts.

**Legal and Risk Management**

The recommended approach reduces financial and delivery risk by not proceeding with an unfunded project. If reconsidered in the future, key risks to be assessed will include procurement risk, technology performance, network coverage, data reliability, privacy, cyber security, customer complaints, billing accuracy, vendor lock-in, contractor performance and long-term software support.

**Performance Measures**

No new performance measures are proposed at this time.

If the project is reconsidered in the future, possible performance measures may include:

- reduction in manual meter reading effort,
- reduction in estimated reads,
- number of leaks detected earlier,
- reduction in non-revenue water,
- customer portal uptake,
- reduction in customer bill shock events,
- improvement in billing accuracy,
- water savings achieved, and
- whole-of-life financial performance against the business case.

**Project Management**

The project will not proceed to implementation at this time.

Council officers will continue to monitor neighbouring council projects and may prepare a further report if new information, funding opportunities or business case evidence supports reconsideration.

### 13.9 Closure of Council Public Road – part Old Gostwyck Rd (ACEN New England Solar Project Stage 02)


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**Department:** Infrastructure and Development  
**Prepared By:** Group Manager Infrastructure Services  
**Authorised By:** Acting Director Infrastructure & Development

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#### LINKAGE TO INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING FRAMEWORK

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1. NES2\_Council Paper Road Closure Letter\_260424  **Attachments:**

<b>Goal:</b>	3. An Independent shire and well-governed community
<b>Strategy:</b>	2. A sustainable economy that supports prosperity
	3.3. An efficient and effective independent local government
	2.3. Well serviced communities

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#### SUMMARY

A request has been received from ACEN Australia to initiate the closure of a Council public (unformed/paper) road located on part Old Gostwyck Rd, as part of the New England Solar Project Stage 2.

The subject road is not formed and is understood to be unused for public access. The proposed closure is intended to facilitate the development and future operation of the solar farm within the future project footprint.

This report seeks Council's endorsement to commence the statutory process for the proposed road closure in accordance with the *Roads Act 1993 (NSW)*.

#### RECOMMENDATION

**That Council:**

1. Commences the road closure process under the *Roads Act 1993 (NSW)* for the Council public road within part Old Gostwyck Rd, with the intention that, upon closure and vesting in Council, the land be sold to the adjoining landowner/proponent;
2. Delegates authority to the General Manager to undertake all necessary actions to progress the road closure process, including public notification, consultation, and submission to Crown Lands;
3. Receives a future report following completion of the public notification process to:
  - (a) consider any submissions received;
  - (b) determine whether to proceed with the road closure; and
  - (c) consider the classification and disposal of the land, including sale to the proponent at a value not less than an independent market valuation;
4. Notes that:
  - (a) the road is not formally closed until publication in the NSW Government Gazette;
  - (b) any subsequent sale of the land is subject to the road being formally closed; and
  - (c) all costs associated with the proposed road closure process, including valuation, survey, consultants, staff and legal costs, are to be borne by the Applicant in accordance with Uralla Shire Councils currently adopted fees and charges.

**REPORT**

ACEN Australia has submitted a request to Uralla Shire Council ('Council') seeking closure of a Council public (unformed/paper) road within Old Gostwyck Road. The request forms part of the broader New England Solar Project Stage 2, which requires consolidation of land holdings and removal of redundant road reserves within the project area. The subject road is classified as a public road under the *Roads Act 1993 (NSW)*; however, it is unformed, not maintained by Council, and is not required for current public access. Any potential future strategic requirement for the road will be considered through the statutory notification and assessment process. Closure of the road would enable more efficient land use and support the delivery of regionally significant renewable energy infrastructure.

Closure of a Council public road must be undertaken in accordance with Part 4, Division 3 of the *Roads Act 1993 (NSW)*. The statutory process includes a Council resolution to commence the process, public notification for a minimum of 28 days, consultation with adjoining landowners and relevant public authorities, assessment of any submissions received, submission of an application to Crown Lands (Form CL31-30), and formal closure via publication in the NSW Government Gazette.

At this stage, Council is only being asked to commence the process, not to approve the final closure. Preliminary assessment indicates that the road is not constructed or used, does not provide critical public access, and is located within land associated with the New England Solar Project. Based on current information, the road appears to be surplus to Council's operational and strategic road network requirements. These matters will be further tested through the statutory process, including consultation with stakeholders.

The Applicant, ACEN Australia, is not the registered adjoining landowner. Accordingly, consent from the adjoining landowner will be required prior to completion of the closure process, and any subsequent land transfer arrangements will be managed separately between the Applicant and the landowner. Council's role is limited to the statutory road closure process and any subsequent disposal of land in accordance with legislative requirements.

In considering the proposal, Council must ensure that there is no loss of necessary public access, confirm that there is no future strategic requirement for the road, and ensure that any impacts to utilities and infrastructure are identified and appropriately managed. These matters will be assessed through the public notification and consultation process.

All costs associated with the road closure process will be borne by the Applicant, including public notification and advertising, valuation of the land, Crown Lands application fees, and legal and administrative costs. Council will implement appropriate cost recovery measures to ensure it is not financially disadvantaged through the process.

**CONCLUSION**

The proposed closure of part Old Gostwyck Road is considered appropriate to progress to the next stage of the statutory road closure process. The road is unformed, does not appear to be used for public access, and is located within land associated with the New England Solar Project Stage 2.

This report does not approve the final closure or disposal of the land. Rather, it seeks Council's endorsement to commence the formal process under the Roads Act 1993 (NSW), including public notification and consultation. A further report will be presented to Council following completion of that process to allow Council to consider any submissions received and determine whether to proceed.

## COUNCIL IMPLICATIONS

### Community Engagement/Communication

Community engagement will be undertaken in accordance with Section 38B of the Roads Act 1993 (NSW) and Council's Community Engagement Strategy.

This will include:

- public notification of the proposed closure
- direct notification to adjoining landowners
- consultation with relevant public authorities and utility providers

The process ensures that all stakeholders are provided the opportunity to make submissions and that Council can make an informed decision.

### Public Interest Considerations

In addition to current use, Council must also consider any potential future strategic need for the road within the broader transport network. This includes ensuring that closure does not constrain future connectivity, access, or infrastructure planning outcomes. This assessment will be undertaken as part of the statutory process.

### Policy and Regulation

The proposed road closure will be undertaken in accordance with:

- Roads Act 1993 (NSW)
- Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)
- Council's adopted policies and procedures relating to land management and asset disposal.

The process ensures compliance with statutory requirements, including public notification, Crown Lands concurrence, and gazettal.

### Financial/Long Term Financial Plan

There are no direct financial impacts on Council, subject to full cost recovery from the Applicant. All costs associated with the process will be borne by the Applicant, ensuring a cost-neutral outcome.

Should the closure proceed to completion, Council may receive revenue from the sale of the land, which will be determined based on independent valuation and managed in accordance with Council's Long Term Financial Plan.

There is an administrative time cost associated with this process and, given that USC anticipates a large number of paper road closure requests, Council is reviewing options to outsource some elements of the process to external Consultants on a full cost-recovery basis to reduce the burden on staff capacity.

### Asset Management/Asset Management Strategy

The proposed closure represents a rationalisation of Council's road asset base by removing a redundant and unutilised road reserve. This supports improved asset management outcomes by:

- reducing long-term maintenance and liability obligations
- aligning Council's asset portfolio with actual service requirements

The proposal is consistent with the principles of Council's Asset Management Strategy.

Further, prior to closure, Council will ensure that all utilities and infrastructure within the road reserve are identified and appropriately protected. This may include the creation of easements where required to ensure ongoing access and maintenance rights for service authorities.

#### **Workforce/Workforce Management Strategy**

The road closure process is resource intensive and places a material administrative and coordination burden on existing Council staff. While this report relates to a single request, Council is aware that there may be between 10 and 50 similar road closure requests over coming years associated with major renewable energy and related land use projects. Collectively, these requests have the potential to create a significant workload impact across Infrastructure & Development, governance, property, and legal support functions.

The work involved is not limited to simple administration and includes preparation of Council reports, coordination of public notification, stakeholder and agency consultation, review and management of submissions, liaison with Crown Lands, management of valuations and legal processes, and progression of subsequent disposal processes where applicable. Given the scale and repetitive nature of this emerging workload, Council is investigating opportunities to outsource some or all of the road closure process to appropriately qualified external providers in order to reduce the burden on incumbent staff and maintain business-as-usual service delivery. Any such arrangement would be subject to full cost recovery from applicants so that Council is not financially disadvantaged.

Without a structured delivery model, this volume of work has the potential to materially impact Council's ability to deliver core services and capital programs.

#### **Legal and Risk Management**

The road closure process must comply with the Roads Act 1993 (NSW) and associated legislative requirements.

Key risks include:

- potential objections from stakeholders
- impacts to public access
- unidentified utilities or infrastructure
- failure to comply with statutory process

These risks will be mitigated through:

- structured consultation and assessment
- technical review of the road and surrounding land
- adherence to legislative requirements and Council procedures

#### **Performance Measures**

The success of this process will be measured by:

- completion of statutory requirements within required timeframes
- effective stakeholder engagement and management of submissions
- achievement of a cost-neutral outcome for Council
- successful progression of the road closure process to determination

#### **Project Management**

The road closure process will be managed as a discrete administrative project within the Infrastructure & Development Directorate.


Key stages include:

- Council resolution
- public notification
- assessment of submissions
- submission to Crown Lands
- gazettal and finalisation

The process will be overseen by relevant Council officers to ensure compliance, coordination, and timely delivery.

**13.10 Major Projects and Capital Works - Infrastructure & Development**


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<b>Department:</b>	<b>Infrastructure and Development</b>
<b>Prepared By:</b>	<b>Group Manager Infrastructure Services</b>
<b>Authorised By:</b>	<b>Acting Director Infrastructure &amp; Development</b>
<b>Goal:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We have an accessible inclusive and empowered community</li> <li>2. A sustainable economy that supports prosperity</li> </ol>
<b>Attachments:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Major Projects and Capital Works - Infrastructure &amp; Development - May 2026 Report </li> </ol>
<b>Strategy:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.2. A safe, active and healthy shire</li> <li>1.4. Access to and equity of services</li> <li>2.1. An attractive environment for the business sector</li> <li>2.3. Well serviced communities</li> </ol>

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**SUMMARY**

This report provides an update on major projects and capital works being delivered by the Infrastructure and Development team. While a number of projects are progressing, the King Street and Maitland Street Roundabout project remains high risk due to contractor availability, constrained delivery timeframes, and broader industry capacity constraints.

Council is actively implementing mitigation strategies, including re-scoping works into deliverable packages, adopting alternative delivery approaches, investigating opportunities for Council to self-perform discrete components of works, and engaging with funding bodies to seek flexibility in scope and delivery timeframes. These actions are aimed at maximising delivery outcomes within the constraints of current funding and market conditions.

The Uralla Creek Catchment Project has reduced in risk following approval of a time variation extending the project completion date from 30 June 2026 to 30 June 2027. While this has materially reduced the immediate delivery risk, procurement and budget risks remain and will continue to be actively managed.

**RECOMMENDATION**

- 1. Notes the Infrastructure Works Update as at April 2026; and**
- 2. Notes that the King Street and Maitland Street Roundabout project remains high risk due to contractor availability, constrained delivery timeframes, broader industry capacity constraints, and active mitigation strategies are being implemented.**

**REPORT**

This report, presented monthly, provides a status update on the progress on Major Projects, some of which are grant funded. Current Works have been tabulated in an attachment to this Report and have been coloured in accordance with the below to easily identify the relevant risk.

- Low Risk = no colour
- Medium Risk = highlighted Yellow
- High Risk = highlighted Orange

All Projects that are medium or high risk are discussed in further detail below, including projects that were previously medium/high.

### **Network Operations Update – Road Maintenance and Vegetation Management**

Due to the ongoing dry weather conditions across the Shire, Council has implemented changes to its routine road maintenance and vegetation management programs.

Routine maintenance grading activities have been significantly reduced and will largely cease unless a sustainable water source can be identified that does not impact private landholders or downstream users. Water is critical to achieving appropriate compaction of gravel pavements during grading activities. While dry grading can be undertaken, it provides only a short-term outcome and can negatively impact the long-term condition and integrity of the road surface.

Limited grading activities are continuing on Hillview Road due to the current availability of suitable water sources; however, these opportunities are limited and are not expected to be ongoing. In response to these constraints, Council will prioritise alternative maintenance activities that are less reliant on water, including drainage improvements and heavy patching of pavement failures, particularly along key corridors such as Thunderbolts Way.

In addition, roadside vegetation slashing activities have been temporarily suspended due to increased fire risk associated with current dry conditions.

Council will continue to monitor weather conditions and water availability and will reinstate normal maintenance activities when conditions improve. In the interim, road users are advised to drive to the prevailing road conditions.

### **Uralla Creek Catchment Project (OLG Grant for AGRN1030/1034)**

The Uralla Creek Catchment Project has recently received a time variation, moving the project completion date from 30 June 2026 to 30 June 2027. This has materially reduced the immediate delivery risk associated with the previous funding deadline.

This time variation does not resolve all issues identified during the procurement process, including limited contractor availability and higher than anticipated market pricing. However, the extension provides additional time for Council to work through procurement options, engage with contractors, review project staging, and identify deliverable packages of work within the available budget.

As a result, this project is no longer deemed high risk. It is recommended that the project be monitored as a low-risk project, noting that residual procurement and budget risks remain.

### **Please note: The following information is retained from the previous report for context:**

- Market Pricing has been returned for the Procurement Package for the Civil Infrastructure and Creek Regeneration Projects. The pricing was well above (10x) the allocated budgets in accordance with the Grant Deed.
- Direct negotiations have commenced with contractors to identify smaller, deliverable packages of work from the broader projects that can be completed within the available timeframe and budget, while still achieving value for money.
- This Project remains classified as High Risk due to the disparity between market pricing and available budget, combined with the constrained delivery timeframe to 30 June 2026. To mitigate this risk, Council has commenced direct negotiations to re-scope and prioritise works into smaller,

deliverable packages; is reviewing procurement pathways to enable staged delivery; and is continuing engagement with the funding body to seek flexibility in scope, staging and/or delivery timeframe. These actions are aimed at ensuring that critical outcomes can still be achieved within funding constraints while maintaining compliance and value for money.

The currently identified **High Risk Projects** are discussed in detail below:

### **King Street and Maitland Street Roundabout Design and Construction**

The King Street and Maitland Street Roundabout project continues to form part of the Part B delivery program under the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Phase 4 funding.

There has been no material change to the project status since the previous report, with the project remaining in the construction readiness phase following completion of design and an increased funding allocation through the redistribution of funds from cancelled projects.

The Civil Management Team is continuing to seek an available contractor to complete the works, assess options for internal delivery, and advocate for a time variation from the funding body. However, given the requirement for the works to be completed by the end of the financial year, it is becoming increasingly unlikely that a suitable contractor will be secured or that self-delivery will be a viable option. Unless a time variation is approved by the funding body, the works are unlikely to be completed within the allowable grant period, and the grant will be required to be closed with works incomplete.

**Please note: Notes below are repeated from last report for context.**

The design for the roundabout is completed, positioning the project to transition into the construction phase. However, the project has been elevated to High Risk due to current market constraints and resourcing challenges. Specifically:

- The external Project Manager engaged to assist in delivery of the works has experienced significant difficulty in securing suitably qualified contractors within the required timeframe.
- Broader industry capacity constraints, including competing infrastructure programs and limited contractor availability, are impacting procurement outcomes.
- The fixed funding deadline of 30 June 2026 presents a critical constraint, with limited float available for delays in mobilisation and delivery.

To mitigate these risks, Council is actively implementing a number of measures:

- **Early Works / Self-Performance:** Council is investigating opportunities to self-perform discrete components of the works (such as site preparation, earthworks, drainage, and service relocations) to reduce the overall construction scope required to be delivered by an external contractor.
- **Program Acceleration:** Where feasible, early commencement of preparatory works will be undertaken to de-risk the critical path and maximise the likelihood of project completion within the funding timeframe.
- **Funding Body Engagement / Variation Request:** Council is proactively engaging with the funding body to seek consideration of a potential variation to the project delivery timeframe. This request is being supported by evidence of current market constraints, including limited contractor availability and procurement challenges being experienced across the sector. Early communication aims to provide transparency and position Council to secure additional time, should it be required, to ensure the project can be delivered effectively and in full.

Despite these mitigation strategies, the project remains high risk due to factors largely outside of Council's direct control, particularly contractor availability and market capacity. Council will continue to closely monitor procurement outcomes and delivery progress and will implement further mitigation measures as required to achieve project completion within the funding conditions.

The currently identified **Medium** Risk Projects are discussed in detail below:

There are currently no projects identified as Medium Risk.

**COUNCIL IMPLICATIONS****Community Engagement/Communication**

Targeted communication will be required for affected residents, road users and local businesses, particularly where project scopes are adjusted or where construction activities result in disruptions. Broader communication may also be required to manage community expectations where originally planned project outcomes are modified due to budget or delivery constraints.

Public communication will also be required to inform the community of changes to routine maintenance activities and to reinforce driver responsibility to adjust to prevailing road conditions.

**Policy and Regulation**

All procurement activities and any direct negotiations will continue to be undertaken in accordance with the NSW Local Government Act 1993 and Council's Procurement Policy.

Any variations to project scope, delivery approach or delivery timeframe will be managed to ensure compliance with relevant funding deed requirements.

**Financial/Long Term Financial Plan**

There remains a financial risk arising from the disparity between market pricing and available grant funding for some grant-funded projects, including the Uralla Creek Catchment Project. While the approved time variation has reduced the immediate delivery risk for that project, Council will continue to manage the risk that full project scopes may not be deliverable within existing funding envelopes.

There is also a broader risk that grant funding may not be fully expended within required timeframes, which may result in funding being returned or reallocated. Council is actively mitigating this risk through re-scoping, staged delivery, and engagement with funding bodies regarding potential variations.

Any increased reliance on self-performance may also introduce additional internal cost pressures and resource allocation challenges that will need to be managed within existing operational and capital budgets.

**Asset Management/Asset Management Strategy**

Where projects are delivered in a reduced or staged format, there is a risk that long-term asset outcomes may not fully align with original strategic planning objectives. This may result in the need for future upgrades or additional capital investment to achieve the intended level of service.

Notwithstanding this, delivery of priority components will still contribute to improved asset condition, safety, and serviceability outcomes.

The temporary reduction in grading and vegetation management activities may result in a short-term decline in road condition and roadside presentation. Council will seek to mitigate long-term impacts by prioritising drainage and targeted maintenance activities where feasible.

**Workforce/Workforce Management Strategy**

Internal workforce capacity remains a key constraint impacting project delivery. Increased reliance on Council staff to undertake design coordination, procurement, and potential self-performance of works may place additional pressure on existing resources and impact delivery of other operational priorities.

This reinforces the need to prioritise workloads and consider resource allocation across the broader Infrastructure portfolio.

**Legal and Risk Management**

Key risks relate to procurement outcomes, contractor availability, and the ability to deliver projects within the constraints of funding deeds. There is also a risk of non-compliance with funding conditions if projects are not delivered within required timeframes or approved scopes.

Direct negotiation with contractors is being undertaken in accordance with procurement provisions where a satisfactory result is unlikely to be achieved through traditional tender processes. Appropriate governance, probity, and documentation controls are being maintained.

Where Council undertakes self-performed works, additional controls will be implemented to manage work health and safety, delivery risk, and liability exposure.

There is also increased risk exposure associated with reduced maintenance activities, particularly in relation to road condition and fire risk. These risks will be managed through targeted maintenance, appropriate signage where required, and public communication advising road users to drive to conditions.

**Performance Measures**

Performance will be measured based on Council's ability to secure deliverable procurement outcomes, progress projects within approved or revised scopes, and achieve expenditure and delivery milestones in accordance with funding requirements.

**Project Management**

Project management is being undertaken through a combination of external project management support and internal Council resources. Delivery models are being actively adapted, including staged delivery and potential self-performance, to respond to current market conditions and improve the likelihood of achieving project outcomes.

Council will continue to monitor high-risk and previously high-risk projects through regular reporting, with further updates provided as procurement, funding body engagement and delivery planning progress.

**13.11 Register Resolutions Actions Status as at 19 May 2026**

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**Department:** General Manager's Office**Prepared By:** Executive Assistant**Authorised By:** Acting General Manager**Reference:** UINT/26/10563

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**Attachments:** 1. Resolutions Actions Status as at 20 May 2026 

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**LINKAGE TO INTEGRATED PLANNING AND REPORTING FRAMEWORK****Goal:** 3. An Independent shire and well-governed community**Strategy:** 3.1. Informed and collaborative community leaders3.2. A strategic, accountable, and representative Council

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**SUMMARY**

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with the Resolution Action Status updates.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**That Council notes the Resolution Actions Status Report as at 19 May 2026.**

**REPORT**

Following every council meeting, the resolutions of Council which require action are compiled. This document is referred to as the Resolutions Action Status Report.

The purpose of the Resolutions Action Status Report is to enable Council to monitor progress of resolutions until they are actioned.

Once resolutions have been completed, they are removed automatically from the report.

**CONCLUSION**

The Resolutions Action Status Report is presented to Council at each Ordinary/Extraordinary Meeting.

**14 CONFIDENTIAL MATTERS****RECOMMENDATION**

That Council considers the confidential report(s) listed below in a meeting closed to the public in accordance with Section 10A(2) of the *Local Government Act 1993*:

**14.1 Waste Services Update**

This matter is considered to be confidential under Section 10A(2) - d(ii) and g of the *Local Government Act 1993*, and the Council is satisfied that discussion of this matter in an open meeting would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest as it deals with information that would, if disclosed, confer a commercial advantage on a competitor of the council and advice concerning litigation, or advice as comprises a discussion of this matter, that would otherwise be privileged from production in legal proceedings on the ground of legal professional privilege.

**14.2 The Sale of Land for Unpaid Council rates**

This matter is considered to be confidential under Section 10A(2) - g of the *Local Government Act 1993*, and the Council is satisfied that discussion of this matter in an open meeting would, on balance, be contrary to the public interest as it deals with advice concerning litigation, or advice as comprises a discussion of this matter, that would otherwise be privileged from production in legal proceedings on the ground of legal professional privilege.

**15 COMMUNICATION OF COUNCIL DECISION****16 CONCLUSION OF MEETING**