



For the People
Balonne
Shire Council

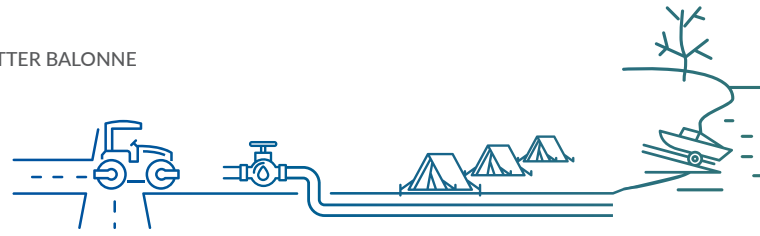
ANNUAL REPORT

2023-24



Building a Better Balonne





St George Beautification Project

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This year's annual report represents the 2023-24 financial year and the activities, challenges and major achievements completed within our council and community.

This is one of the primary accountability tools in council's governance framework. It provides non-financial and financial information which the community and our stakeholders can use to assess council's performance against its goals and objectives. The *Local Government Act 2009* and the *Local Government Regulation 2012* advise councils on what is required in their annual reports each financial year.

The 2023-24 year marks the first year of the term for councillors serving from 2024 to 2028.

The report is structured around the key strategic goals of 'Our Plan, Our Future: Balonne Shire Council Corporate Plan 2022 - 2027' and council's values:

- Our customers - the centre of everything we do, we aim to get things done with speed, conviction and agility
- Our people - we value teamwork and interdependence, we value each other and seek benefit from diverse people and perspectives
- Our reputation - our most valuable asset, we act honestly and consistently in our behaviours, actions and decisions.

We welcome feedback from our community and key stakeholders on this report and on our performance throughout the year.

To provide feedback please contact Council on (07) 4620 8888 or email council@balonne.qld.gov.au.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Balonne Shire Council acknowledges Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; and to Elders past and present.

The six main Indigenous Peoples in the shire are:

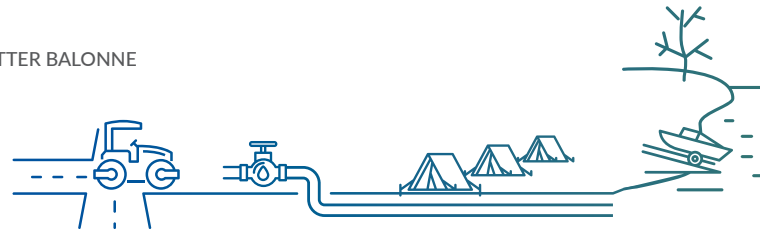
- Bigambul People
- Gamilaraay People
- Gungari People
- Kooma People
- Mandandanji People
- Yuwaalaraay/Euahlayi People



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WELCOME FROM THE MAYOR

On behalf of Balonne Shire Council, I am pleased to present the 2023-2024 Annual Report. This year was a huge effort by the entire council team to deliver a record budget of over \$108M in infrastructure and upgrades, which is even more remarkable given council's limited annual rates income of around \$11M.

For a council of our modest resources to deliver such a monumental budget certainly took a combination of innovative strategies and practical financial management to successfully leverage grant funding in executing this record level of infrastructure project delivery.

The vast majority of funding for this year was clearly focussed on upgrading our road network at a cost of \$65M, with \$50M of that funding on flood recovery works to fix the damage to our road network infrastructure from floods that occurred in previous years.

Our cross-border collaboration with Moree Plains Shire Council, two state governments and the Australian Government continued this year with the ongoing delivery of the Mungindi Water Security Project, which will secure water supply for the township. This year also ushered in a new boat ramp at Mungindi on the Queensland side of the border and funded by the New South Wales Government – a remarkable achievement in itself.

We also secured significant grant funding for initiatives that enhanced the aesthetic appeal of our shire. From the revitalisation of the St George CBD to the Dirranbandi Rail and River Precinct and the St George River Boardwalk, we are transforming our urban spaces into vibrant hubs that foster a sense of pride and community spirit. These beautification projects not only create inviting spaces for our residents but also attract visitors and stimulate local businesses.

We are now better equipped to mitigate the impact of natural disasters and safeguard the wellbeing of our residents following the implementation of innovative technologies, including flood water mapping to support our network of flood monitoring cameras.

To drive economic development, we continued a range of grant funded initiatives aimed at supporting and attracting new businesses with our Business Improvement Programs and Business Mentoring Programs. By investing in infrastructure, providing incentives, and facilitating partnerships, we are creating an environment that nurtures economic growth, job creation, and long term prosperity for our region.

We know that tourism plays a vital role in our local economy, and we have undertaken a range of initiatives that promote Balonne Shire as a premier destination. From developing new tourism infrastructure like the McGeever Campgrounds in Thallon, to marketing our unique cultural and natural attractions with the innovative 'You'll be Hooked' campaign, we are actively enticing visitors to explore our region and experience the warm hospitality for which we are renowned.

The election in March 2024 brought change to council. I take this opportunity to acknowledge our outgoing councillors, Rod Avery, Alex Benn and Adam Osborne. Our new councillors, Andrew Dries, Michaela Christensen and Jason Southern hit the ground running with the budget listed as a top priority of the new term.

I would like to acknowledge the extraordinary contribution of our outgoing Chief Executive Officer Matthew Magin. Matthew first came to Balonne in November 2016 and left council in August 2024, to return to the Burdekin Shire.

Matthew's tireless efforts have been instrumental in delivering countless



outstanding milestones, outcomes and achievements. It is difficult to name every successful initiative that Matthew has helped to deliver. Some of the standout projects delivered under Matthew's astute leadership include the Country Universities Centre, Wild Dog Exclusion Fencing, Digital Connectivity, the Library Hub and the St George Aquatic Centre. The successful management of hundreds of millions of dollars in contract works with the Department of Transport and Main Roads is also a testament to Matthew's experience and management.

On behalf of council, I thank Matthew for his outstanding and tireless service to the Balonne Shire. We wish him all the very best into the future. The appointment of a new CEO will take place during the 2024-2025 financial year and an interim CEO, Graeme Kanofski, is keeping council delivering for residents as this appointment process is finalised.

I am immensely proud of the dedication and hard work of our council members and staff who have diligently pursued numerous ambitious projects over the course of this financial year. Their unwavering commitment and innovative approaches have allowed us to achieve remarkable outcomes for the benefit of our residents and region.

Together, we will continue to shape the future of Balonne Shire and create a thriving community that we can all be proud to call home.

Mayor Samantha O'Toole



MESSAGE FROM THE INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Annual reports by their very nature are a reflective document looking back at the achievements of the past 12 months to see how, as an organisation, we have performed against our corporate plan, operational plan, and budget.

As the current Interim Chief Executive Officer, it is clear this council has a consistent history of punching above its weight and delivering for the residents of Balonne Shire.

For example, it is certainly not the core business of council to be a driving force in the delivery of tertiary education, vocational education and training, but the Country Universities Centre Balonne is without doubt the envy of many a region throughout our state and nation. With enrolments to date passing 300 this year, CUC Balonne is a testament to council's efforts to support residents above and beyond its everyday role.

For such a small council to have delivered an ambitious suite of projects over 10 times its annual rates income is an extraordinary effort and one that deserves reflection.

With 7 communities spread across 31,000 square kilometres and over 3,000 kilometres of roads in our shire, the importance and necessity for the ongoing upgrade of our road network cannot be overstated. This financial year saw council well and truly deliver on this front with an upgrade of the road network beyond mere maintenance that saw large sections of roads like Whyenbah Road upgraded to sealed roadway and a range of betterment

projects delivered. Improvements like this are vital for areas like ours with a reliance on heavy agricultural traffic.

As a newcomer to the shire, it is clear from the visual amenity around our communities that council has been delivering an immense amount of work to modernise urban amenities in line with the vibrancy this shire deserves.

Although this year delivered an abundance of funding from both the state and federal governments, the forward years are shaping as more of a financial challenge for all councils. It is imperative that as a council we take a proactive approach to these funding challenges and start to focus on embedding efficiencies into our operating practices now, as dealing with the things we can control, will make it easier to deal with the things we cannot control.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the council's previous CEO, Matthew Magin, who delivered an outstanding list of achievements for the shire during his 8-year tenure. Matthew's efforts have clearly left this council and shire in better shape than what it was before his time and is a testament to his leadership and expertise.

I commend this report to residents as a succinct overview of a year that delivered a record amount of infrastructure and initiatives for the Balonne Shire community.

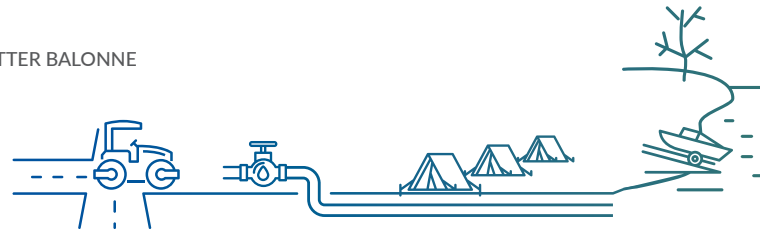
Graeme Kanofski
Interim Chief Executive Officer



“

...to have delivered an ambitious suite of projects over 10 times its annual rates income is an extraordinary effort...

”



OUR PLAN, OUR FUTURE

The Corporate Plan sets the strategic direction for 2022-27 across five foundation areas, community, economy, environment, infrastructure and planning and governance.

The following community priority areas have been developed in consultation with focus groups across the shire and are listed in no order of priority. Council's role may vary from advocating, monitoring or playing a direct role in strategies to improve these key priority areas:

- Retention and attraction of people, new businesses and industries
- Increasing base level services and needs
- Community liveability and wellbeing
- Indigenous engagement
- Digital connectivity.



KEY FOUNDATION AREAS

The 2022 – 2027 Corporate Plan is based on five (5) Foundations:



COMMUNITY



ECONOMY



ENVIRONMENT



INFRASTRUCTURE
& PLANNING



GOVERNANCE



AWARDS

Balonne Shire Council (BSC) were the proud recipients of numerous prestigious awards in the 2023-2024 financial year, including:

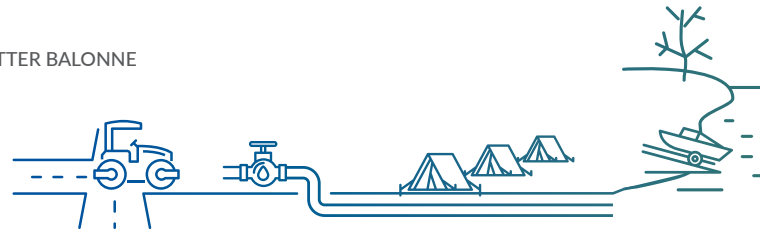
- **Local Government Managers Australia (LGMA) Sustainability Award** – Wild Dog Exclusion Fencing May 2024
- **Shaping Communities Finalist at LGMA Queensland Awards** for Excellence for the Balonne Business Improvement Scheme.
- **Regional Member of the Year** at the Queensland Small Business Friendly Awards

CELEBRATING ACHIEVEMENTS

Projects that have been completed in the past financial year achieving the vision of the 2022-27 Corporate Plan include:

- Dirranbandi Rail & River Precinct
- Jakelwar Goodooga Road
- Whyenbah Road
- Beardmore Dam amenities
- Bollon amenities





OUR SHIRE

The Balonne Shire is located in Queensland, approximately 500km inland from Brisbane, resting on the New South Wales border. The Balonne Shire is bounded by the Maranoa Regional Council area in the north, the Western Downs Regional Council area and the Goondiwindi Regional Council area in the east, and the Paroo Shire in the west.

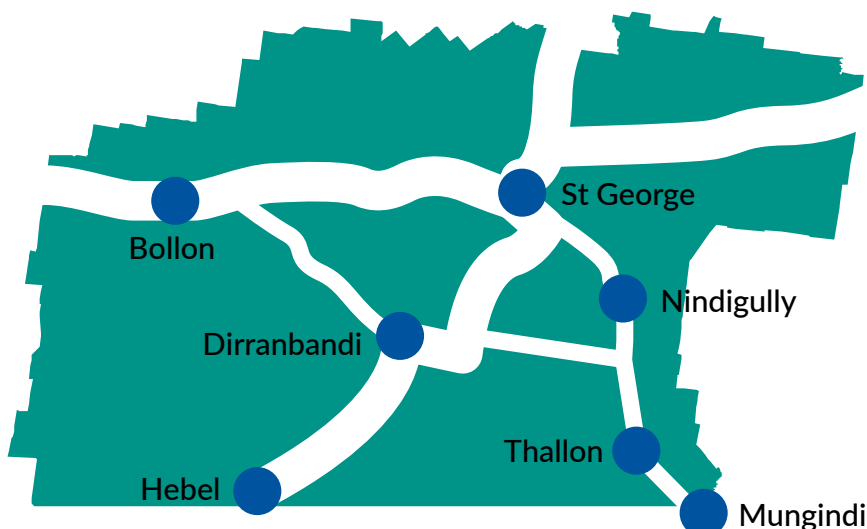
The Shire covers an area of 31,152km² and has a resident population of 4,362 persons (2022) with a population density of 0.14 persons/km².

The local government area comprises seven communities, St George, Thallon, Dirranbandi, Bollon, Nindigully, Mungindi and Hebel. St George is the hub of the shire and is centrally located at the intersection of 6 highways, ensuring strong transport links and a constant flow of goods and visitors into the region. St George also has an airport which is serviced with regular Rex Airlines flights.

Traditionally, the shire's economy has been built around the agriculture sector, led by cotton, grain, sheep and cattle production. We are currently experiencing exciting growth in the tourism industry, as well as the horticulture sector (including large broccoli, carrot, garlic and grape enterprises). Businesses within the shire engage an estimated 700 transient contractors and workers across a range of sectors, particularly the agricultural industry.

The Visitor Information Centre (VIC) recorded a total of 16,189 visitors in 2023-24. Typically, the VIC report their visitor numbers according to the calendar year, with a total of 16,573 visitors at the end of 2023, making this the highest visitor numbers recorded at the VIC.

The Balonne Shire boasts a unique and relaxed lifestyle, strong community values and diverse natural landscapes. All towns in the shire are uniquely situated on waterways, which provide water for our nationally significant agricultural industries and create an abundance of recreation activities for residents and visitors to enjoy, including boating, fishing, swimming, walking and camping.



STATISTICS

\$493m
Gross Regional Product

4345
Population

2217
Local jobs

2250
Employed residents

922
Local businesses

Largest industry: Agriculture,
Forestry and Fishing

8th
amongst Queensland local
government areas in agricultural
production and output

2.4%
Unemployment rate

(Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics and National Institute of Economic and Industry Research)



OUR PURPOSE

Our team has worked tirelessly to collectively deliver essential services to our communities, in addition to providing numerous facilities and activities that improve the liveability and sustainability of our shire. We are proud of our team's collective achievements and commitment to serving current and future residents and visitors.

Essential services

We provide essential services, road maintenance and upgrades, water and sewerage infrastructure, recreation and community facilities and a range of community services.

The shire has a network of 3019km sealed and unsealed roads which are managed and maintained by council.

Council manages the bore and river water supplies to all 7 towns in the shire. Council provides its water supply in accordance with its Drinking Water Quality Management Plan.

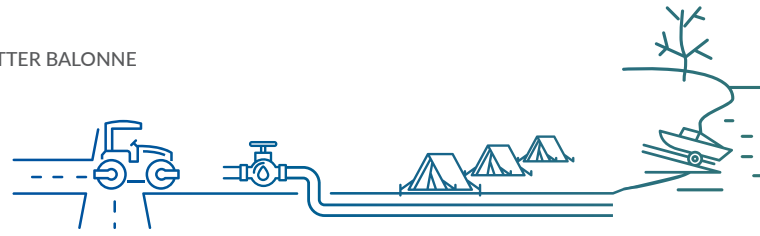
We deliver domestic kerbside waste collection services, maintain 5 landfill sites and 1 transfer station site.



Our team deliver environmental health, local laws and compliance services, such as food inspections, and animal control. We take a proactive approach to managing stock routes, biosecurity and feral animal management.

Council provide and maintain a range of facilities for residents and visitors of all ages, including parks and playgrounds, sporting grounds and facilities, showgrounds and community halls.





Supporting economic, social and environmental wellbeing

Council's Tourism team have delivered a range of successful tourism initiatives, events, programs, tours and trails. They have also successfully managed council's Tourism and Events Grant program.

Our Community team coordinate and deliver a range of popular community events and programs. They assist community groups through the Regional Arts Development Fund (RADF) and council's Community Grants program. They have achieved remarkable success in further developing our youth and youth engagement partnerships.

Council's support of education opportunities in the shire has been highly effective. Country University Centre (CUC) Balonne had 176 students registered during 2023-24 and had supported a total of 301 students since opening, by the end of the financial year. These figures far exceed initial targets and expectations. A review of education in the shire will continue to build on

improving wellbeing and opportunities for students from childcare through to higher education.

We are constantly striving to develop stronger Indigenous relationships with recognition of native title, Indigenous Land Use Agreements, cultural burning and consultation on a broad range of topics.

Economic development continues to be an important initiative for council to help individuals and businesses explore new and innovative ways to conduct business in our shire.

Council's role in improving digital connectivity across the shire supports business, students and individuals to stay connected.

Advocacy and regional partnerships

Council plays an important advocacy role on behalf of our communities. We are actively involved in several regional advocacy groups. More information about council's advocacy work in 2023-24 can be found on page 10.





OUR ELECTED MEMBERS

Our elected members represent the interests of the shire as a whole and share responsibility for participating in various user groups, progress associations and committees.

Council meetings are held every month with a number of standing and advisory committees reporting to council. Councillors participate in briefing workshops and project groups to monitor progress of the diverse range of projects and initiatives managed by council.

During 2023-24 BSC held local government elections for the 2024-2028 term. Mayor Samantha O'Toole was re-elected unopposed. Councillor Bill Winks was appointed the Deputy Mayor following the 2024 election. Councillors Rod Avery, Alex Benn and did not run for



re-election in the 2024 election, while Councillor Adam Osborne was not re-elected in the 2024 election.

We welcomed three new Councillors

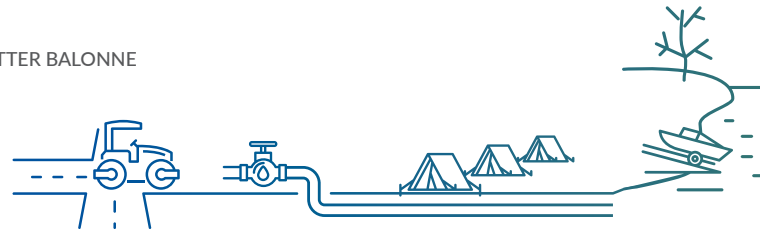
following the 2024 election. Councillors Michaela Christensen, Andrew Dries and Jason Southern are currently serving their first term at BSC.



Mayor Samantha O'Toole

First elected as a councillor in 2016, Cr O'Toole was first elected Mayor in 2020, she was then re-elected unopposed as Mayor in 2024.

The mayor is the ex-officio of all committees and the chair of all council meetings. Other duties include Chair of numerous committees including the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG), the LDMG Community Recovery, Audit and Risk Committee, Community Safety Group, Indigenous Advisory Committee, Economic Development Advisory Committee, Agriculture Water and Environment, Assets Standing Committee, Local Housing Action Plan (LHAP) Advisory Group, South West Regional Waste Group. She is a member of several committees including the Youth Advisory Committee and the CUC Balonne Committee. Mayor O'Toole chairs several external committees and regional organisations such as the South West Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils (SWQROC) and the Darling Downs and South West Queensland Council of Mayors. She is also a member of the Queensland Great Artesian Basin Advisory Committee and the Murray-Darling Association. She is a Director on the Board of the Local Government Mutual Service.



Cr Bill Winks, Deputy Mayor

First elected as a councillor in 2020, Councillor Winks is now in his second term as a councillor. Cr Winks was appointed as Deputy Mayor following the 2024 election.

Cr Winks represents the townships of Bollon and Hebel. He is Chair of the Work Camp Advisory Committee, the Youth Advisory Committee, the Dirranbandi, Bollon, Hebel and St George Showgrounds User Groups. He is a member of the Indigenous Advisory Committee, the Airport and Industrial Land Development Working Group, the Assets Standing Committee, the Equine and Events Centre Project Working Group. Cr Winks is also a member of external committees and organisations including the Great Artesian Basin Stakeholder Advisory Committee and SWQROC.



Cr Robyn Fuhrmeister OAM

First elected as a councillor in 1996, Cr Fuhrmeister is the Deputy Chair of the LDMG.

Cr Fuhrmeister represents the townships of Thallon, Nindigully and Mungindi. She is Chair of the Dirranbandi Multi Sports User Group, the Multicultural Committee, Rowden Park Users Group, the Parks and Gardens Standing Committee, the RADF Reference Panel and the Tourism Operators meeting. She is also a member of the Dirranbandi Swimming Pool Advisory Committee, the Audit and Risk Committee and the Adventure Way and Great Inland Way Working Groups. Cr Fuhrmeister is a member of the Murray Darling Association (MDA).



Cr Scott Scriven

First elected as a councillor in 2016, and then re-elected as a councillor in 2020 and 2024, this is the third term for Cr Scriven.

Cr Scriven represents the township of Dirranbandi. He is the Chair of the Airport and Industrial Land Development Group, the Equine and Events Centre Project Working Group, the Plant Standing Committee, the Service Delivery Review Working Group and the Wild Dog Barrier Fence Advisory Group and Review Taskforce. He is a member of the Dirranbandi Multi Sports User Group, the Rowden Park Users Group, the Agriculture, Water and Environment committee, the Assets Standing Committee, the Biosecurity Advisory Committee and the Waste Advisory Group.



Cr Michaela Christensen

First elected as a councillor in the 2024 election, this is Cr Christensen's first term as a councillor.

Cr Christensen represents the town of Mungindi, Thallon and Nindigully. She is the Chair of the Information Communication and Technology Standing Committee and member of the Community Safety Group, the Economic Development Advisory Group, the Primary Health Care Working Group, the Parks and Gardens Standing Committee, the Adventure Way and Great Inland Way Working Groups, the RADF Reference Panel and the Tourism Operators meeting. Cr Christensen is also a member of the Border Region Organisation of Councils.



Cr Andrew Dries

First elected as a councillor in the 2024 election, this is Cr Dries' first term as a councillor.

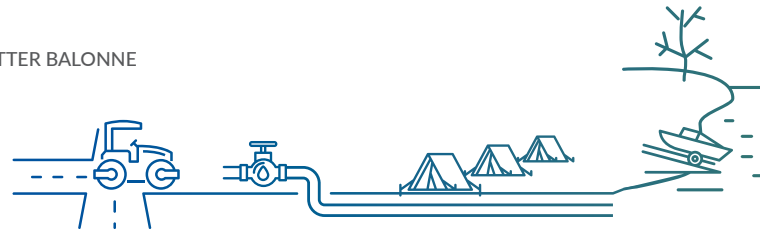
Cr Dries represents the town of Bollon, Thallon and Nindigully. He is the Chair of the Waste Advisory Group and the external St George Chamber of Commerce. Cr Dries is a member of the Work Camp Advisory Group, the Economic Development Advisory Committee, the Primary Health Care Working Group, the Assets Standing Committee, the Plant Standing Committee, the Locust Oversight Group and the Stock Route Management Working Group.



Cr Jason Southern

First elected as a councillor in the 2024 election, this is Cr Southern's first term as a councillor.

Cr Southern is the Chair of the Biosecurity Advisory Committee. He is also a member of the Bollon, Dirranbandi, St George and Hebel Showgrounds User Groups, the Work Camp Advisory Group, the Information Communications and Technology Standing Committee, the Airport and Industrial Land Development Working Group, the Equine and Events Centre Project Working Group, the LHAP Advisory Group and the Plant Standing Committee.



We take this opportunity to thank our outgoing councillors at the end of the 2020-24 term.



Cr Rod Avery

First elected as a councillor to serve from 2012 to 2016, Councillor Avery was then re-elected as a councillor in 2020, this was the second term for Cr Avery.

Cr Avery represented the townships of Dirranbandi and Mungindi. He was the Chair of the BAC. He was a member of the Assets Standing Committee, the Airport Working Group and the South West Regional Waste Group.



Cr Alex Benn

Elected unopposed and sworn in as a councillor on 10 November 2022.

Cr Benn represented the townships of Thallon and Nindigully. He was the Chair of the Multicultural Committee, the Youth Advisory Committee (Youth Council), the Economic Development Advisory Committee, as well as the Information Communications and Technology Standing Committee. He was a member of the Business Mentoring Group, the Learning Opportunities Advisory Committee, the Workforce Development Group, the Airport and Industrial Land Development Working Group, the Local Water Security Advisory Group, the Plant Standing Committee and the Tourism Operators meeting.



Cr Adam Osborne

Elected by nomination and sworn in as a councillor on 27 April 2023.

Cr Osborne represented the township of Dirranbandi and was the Chair of the Community Safety Group. He was a member of the Indigenous Advisory Committee, the Bollon Showgrounds User Group, the Dirranbandi Showgrounds User Group, the Hebel Showgrounds User Group, the Multicultural Committee, the Work Camp Advisory Group, the Learning Opportunities Advisory Committee, the Information Communications Technology Standing Committee, the LHAP Advisory Group and the BAC.



ADVOCATING ON BEHALF OF OUR COMMUNITIES

Council plays an important advocacy role on behalf of our communities and is actively involved in several regional advocacy groups.

The benefit of taking a collaborative regional approach is that we can present a unified approach and a stronger voice when we present common issues and proposed solutions to state and federal governments. We speak out on a range of issues that impact our collective residents, businesses and different industry sectors.

We are actively involved in several regional advocacy groups, including;

- Western Queensland Alliance of Councils (WQAC)
- Southwest Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils (SWQROC)

- Border Regional Organisation of Councils (BROC)
- Darling Downs and South West Queensland Council of Mayors
- MDA and related community groups
- Toowoomba and Surat Basin Enterprise (TSBE)
- Outback Queensland Tourism Association

Mayor O'Toole is the Chair of the SWQROC and has attended several deputations to state and federal ministers in that capacity.

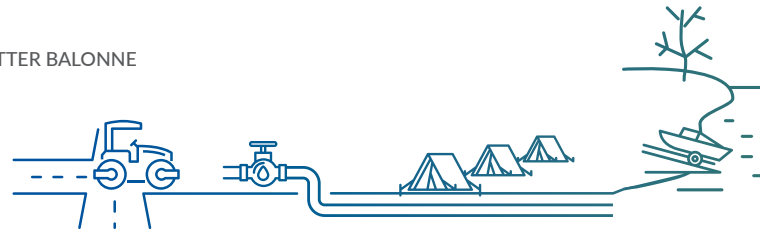
Council continues to play an active role in advocating for improved health, education, early childhood and aged care services across the shire. The mayor attended 12 key Murray-Darling meetings in 2022-23, including various

board, community committee and subcommittee meetings.

The report from the review of learning opportunities in our shire, funded by council, generated a number of meetings with Education Queensland and a range of other stakeholders, aiming to improve learning opportunities for all ages across our shire. Among other outcomes, this resulted in the establishment of the Agriculture, Water and Environment Centre of Excellence at the St George State High School. Council continues to work with the communities of Mungindi and Dirranbandi to tackle a lack of early childhood education and kindergarten options for those communities.

Council continues to play an active role in advocating for improved health and aged care services and regularly meets with the South West Hospital Health Service.





OUR PEOPLE



Our senior leadership group

The Senior Leadership Group is comprised of the CEO and 3 directors who each oversee core functions of the organisation.

Following the resignation of the Balonne Shire Council's Chief Executive Officer Matthew Magin in August 2024, council appointed Graeme Kanofski as the Interim Chief Executive Officer, whilst a recruitment process is undertaken for a permanent CEO.



Matthew Magin, Chief Executive Officer 2016-2024

Matthew was appointed Chief Executive Officer in November 2016 and resigned in August 2024. He has an extensive background in stakeholder engagement, government relations, economic development and the retail industry. Matthew represented council at a wide range of regional and community meetings.

BIGGEST CHALLENGES IN 2023-24

The elections in March 2024 resulted in a caretaker period from January to April limiting council's ability to make decisions.



Michelle Clarke, Director Finance and Corporate Services

Michelle joined Council in October 2016 and was officially appointed as Director Finance and Corporate Services in February 2017. Michelle holds a Bachelor of Law and Administration, a Graduate Certificate in Business (Professional Accounting) and a Graduate Diploma in Applied Risk Management and Corporate Governance. Michelle is a Fellow of LGMA and the Governance Institute of Australia. She is also a Justice of the Peace. Michelle represents Council at the Dirranbandi Progress Association meetings.

BIGGEST CHALLENGE IN 2023-24

Handing down the budget was the biggest challenge for 2023-24 during local government elections, inducting new councillors and experiencing a high turnover of staff in the finance team.



Digby Whyte, Director Community and Environmental Services

Digby joined our team in September 2018 and oversees town planning, waste management, environmental health, biosecurity, stock route management, natural and cultural heritage, local laws, community and cultural programs, libraries and digital connectivity. Digby was previously the Chief Executive of World Urban Parks/ International Federation of Park and Recreation Administration, following a parks and recreation career with local, state and national agencies. He holds a director's degree in recreation and park administration (Indiana), a master's degree in public policy (Massey), and a company director's diploma (AICD). He is a Fellow of the New Zealand Recreation Association and Chair of the World Parks Academy. Digby supports Bollon and Hebel community association meetings.

BIGGEST CHALLENGES IN 2023-24

The Department of Community and Environmental Service's biggest challenges in 2023-24 were:

- the 2024 BSC Planning Scheme
- improving planning compliance and building services
- planning and funding waste management
- cultural burning stock routes
- seeking grant funding for community and environmental programs.

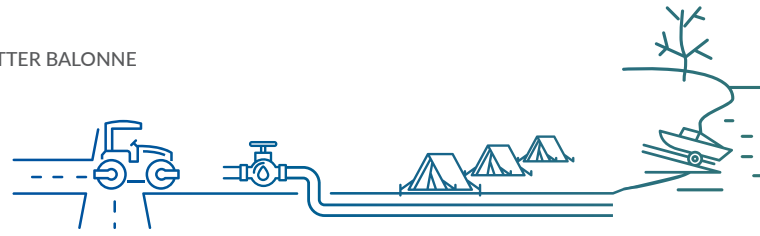


Chris Whitaker, Director Infrastructure Services

Commencing in February 2023, Chris was engaged as Director Infrastructure Services, to lead the infrastructure team and oversee the broad range of infrastructure projects council is currently delivering. Chris brings a wealth of local government experience, with over 16 years' experience leading regional council infrastructure teams, most recently with Southern Downs Regional Council and Banana Shire Council. Chris holds a Bachelor of Civil Engineering and has highly developed expertise delivering road maintenance and construction projects. Chris represents council at the Thallon Progress Association meetings and attends Showground User Groups meetings.

BIGGEST CHALLENGES IN 2023-24

Supply chain issues improved this year with lead times for major plant almost halving to around 9 months or better. Local quarries were able to meet the high demand for quarry products, a direct result of the large quantity of flood damaged restoration works approved by the Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA). The biggest challenge remaining with the infrastructure department is the retention and attraction of professional and technical staff and the shortage of good quality rental houses.



OUR TEAM



Council's mission is to invest in people, ignite ideas, meet our challenges, and grow prosperity. At Balonne we value:

- Each other
- Diverse teams and perspectives
- A safe and healthy work environment
- Mutual trust, respect, and integrity.

Our Workforce Plan is in the third year of its implementation. The plan is about building an engaged, skilled and evolving workforce to meet our community's future needs. We recognise that our employees are our most valuable asset, and they are a major factor in contributing to a positive public image. We therefore develop our staff by encouraging personal and professional growth.

We completed an employee survey in 2023-2024 with an overall satisfaction rate of 83%, representing a 27% increase from 2021. A pulse check of our Mental Health Strategy showed a significant increase in positive staff perceptions compared to 2021. Awareness of the

available psychological support also improved. The reports indicated a clear cultural shift towards prioritising mental health and an overall high satisfaction of staff.

Our Mental Health Implementation Team continues to meet with representatives from across the organisation, with Michelle Clarke acting as Chair and sponsor from the Senior Leadership Group.

The Be Kinder initiative was coordinated by the Mental Health Implementation Team in June 2024 with a BBQ for the community and staff.

Current team:

- Michelle Clarke (Chair)
- Kyra Passman
- Dylan Sherriff
- John Goodall
- Melanie Mills
- Sheree Starr
- Alex Miller

Previous team members were Ron Petterson and Alan Greenhalgh.

Council provides abundant opportunities to work on a diverse range of projects. We value teamwork and often establish multi-disciplinary teams to oversee and support each other when delivering a major project.

We take this opportunity to thank all our employees, contractors and elected members for their work, contribution and commitment to our shire in 2023-24.

The following employees, with over 5 years' service, were farewelled during 2023-24. We wish them all the best in their future endeavours.

EMPLOYEE	YEARS OF SERVICE
Michael Regan	14
Justin Beckmann	12
Fiona Macleod	7



LONG SERVICE

Council acknowledged its long service employees at a Christmas function in December 2023.

	YEARS OF SERVICE:	EMPLOYEE:	ANNIVERSARY DATE:
Bronze Medallion	15 years	Lindsay Flick	24/11/2023
Bronze Medallion	15 years	Jason Parkes	25/11/2023

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

DEPARTMENT	MALE		FEMALE		TOTAL		
	Full Time	PT/ Casual	Full Time	PT/ Casual	Full Time	PT/ Casual	Total
Community and Environmental Services	6	1	10	8	16	9	25
Finance and Corporate Services	3	0	15	6	18	6	24
Infrastructure Services	52	0	8	0	60	0	60
Office of the CEO	2	0	3	5	5	5	10
Total	63	1	36	19	99	20	119

Our expected behaviours

To ensure employees are aware of, and adhere to, the expected standards or workplace behaviour and performance, council's Code of Conduct is promoted through council's general induction program, toolbox talks and formal training.

The expectations contained within the Code of Conduct are based upon the ethical principles outlined in the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*, specifically:

- Integrity and impartiality
- Promoting the public good
- Commitment to the system of government
- Accountability and transparency.

<https://www.balonne.qld.gov.au/downloads/file/1493/code-of-conduct-for-employees>

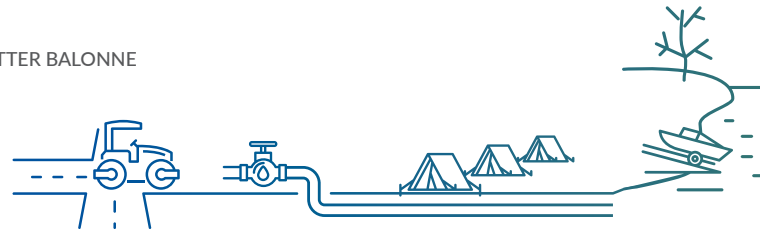
Developing our people

Council has improved the management and recording of training with a comprehensive training register, as well as a qualifications and licence record. This will be further enhanced with the introduction of Skytrust.

We actively encourage our employees to undertake study and enhance their knowledge and skills. As part of the training guidelines, council contributes to the financial cost of approved courses.

More information on training completed and developing our people is in the Governance section on page 74.





Equal Employment Opportunity

Council is committed to the implementation of, and adherence to, equal employment opportunity principles in all facets of our operations. We treat our employees and employment applicants fairly when making decisions on selection and promotion. These decisions are made on factors such as skills, qualifications, abilities and aptitude. Council works with an external provider to ensure independence and merit selection in our recruitment practices for senior roles. Council's Human Rights Policy applies to its workforce and customers. The Workforce Plan promotes diversity in the workforce.

Our Traineeships

As part of our commitment to developing employees, Council has several current trainees:

- One horticulture trainee (Braith Rogers)
- One business trainee (Emily Jeffrey)
- One school-based trainee, completing a Certificate III in Business (Emalie Hams)

All staff meetings

Council held 2 staff breakfasts in 2023-24. Our staff breakfasts are a great opportunity for our entire workforce to get together with elected members. It improves communication, information sharing and provides a forum to promote staff initiatives. Our councillors and

senior leadership group cook and serve breakfast.

We start every week with our Monday morning water cooler chat. This provides an opportunity for all staff to get an update of the week that was and what is coming up in the weeks ahead. The sessions are recorded, and the recordings are available to all staff.

A weekly wrap staff newsletter is circulated to all staff. This is an effective platform to share announcements, provide updates on key projects and celebrate achievements.

Keeping our people safe at work

The safety of our employees, contractors, volunteers and members





of the public is our priority. Council recognises the importance of developing and maintaining healthy and safe working conditions in all workplaces, and the importance of keeping the work health safety practices in these workplaces under constant review.

Council has implemented a comprehensive Safety Management System across all council workplaces. The system is regularly assessed using the Australian National Self Insurer Audit Tool to determine compliance and effectiveness. The assessment in February 2024 found continued improvement in the performance and effectiveness of the Safety Management System which is also reflected in the continued gradual reduction of safety related incidents.

Additionally, council maintains certification for ISO 45001 WHS Safety Management System Standard for the Road Construction and Maintenance section of Infrastructure Services department.

This certification is mandated by Transport and Main Roads (TMR) as a condition of receiving funding for construction and maintenance of state roads.

Over the past financial year, council engaged the services of Feddersen Consulting Group to advise and assist in maintaining its safety performance, with positive results achieved.

More on workplace health and safety initiatives can be found in the Governance section on page 74.

Looking after our people

Council offers 3 Employee Assistance Programs (Assure Programs, Changing Ways Psychology and Mates in Construction). All staff and their immediate family members can access any of these free and confidential programs which provide professional and accredited counselling and support services.

We now have 9 trained volunteer employees who can identify colleagues in need of support, help keep someone safe in a crisis and connect them to professional help.

May is Domestic and Family Violence Awareness Month. Councillors remembered victims of domestic violence at a special ceremony at the May council meeting. Council acknowledges that domestic and family violence has no boundary lines and affects all ages, genders and races. Council stands united and strong to show that the prevention of domestic and family violence is everyone's responsibility.

Celebrating our volunteers

We take this opportunity to thank our volunteers who give up their time to support our VIC and libraries.

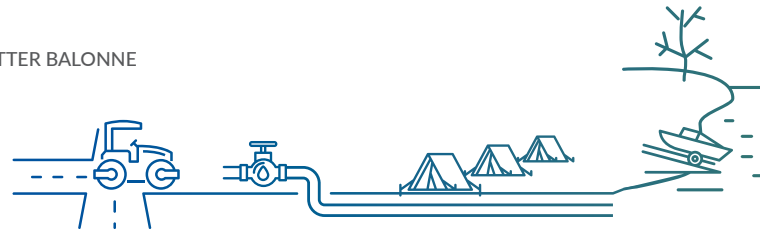
Our VIC currently has 5 registered volunteers who provide valuable assistance during peak tourist season and when staff are on leave. Their duties range from customer service to pricing merchandise and other general duties, ensuring daily operations are effective and efficient. Our library volunteers help return books to shelves and other library activities.

Council is incredibly grateful to all our valuable volunteers, who dedicate so much of their time.

The VIC and our libraries are always looking for additional volunteers and run regular recruitment campaigns throughout the year. If you are interested in sharing your knowledge of the shire with visitors, or assisting at one of our libraries, please contact us on (07) 4620 8888.

Once again, we thank all our volunteers who help provide invaluable services to our visitors and residents.





OUR PERFORMANCE

The Operational Plan 2023-24 forms the basis of our quarterly performance reporting. These reports include progress on the implementation of our Corporate and Operational plans and financial reporting of budget performance. Council's Corporate Plan 2022-2027 is available on Council's website.

 <https://www.balonne.qld.gov.au/downloads/file/1459/corporate-plan-2022-2027>

The primary tool for external accountability is the annual report. This document is prepared annually and contains detailed financial and non-financial information about council's activities and performance. Members of the community and interested stakeholders can use this document to assess how successful council has been in achieving the strategic goals and objectives outlined in the corporate and operational plans.

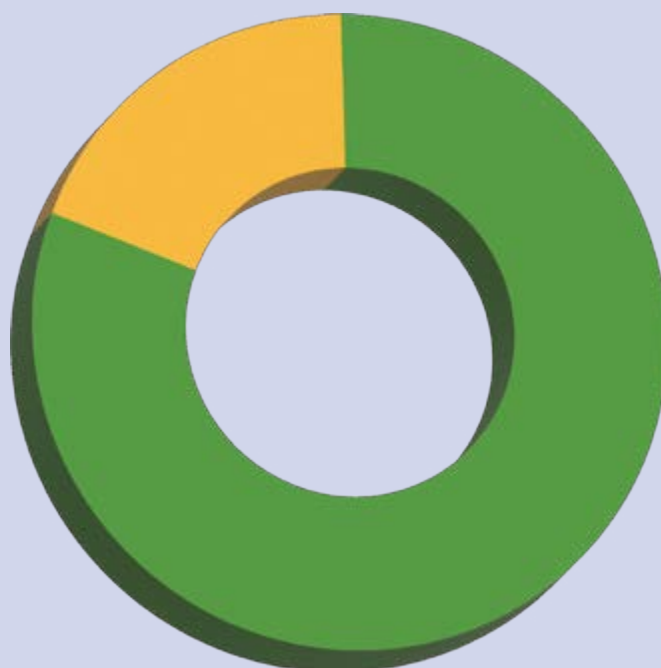







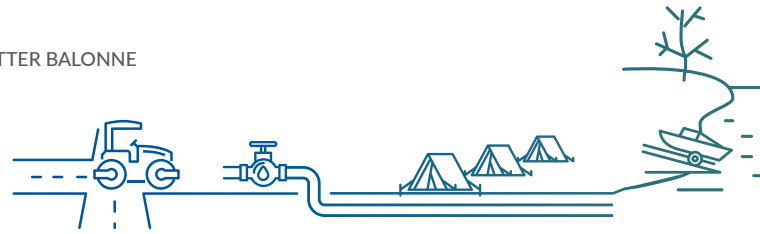
COMMUNITY

Welcoming, safe and thriving communities where cultural diversity, traditions and the arts are celebrated, and quality education is accessible.

16 actions were included in the operational plan for Community



-  = 13 Actions achieved target 90% on target and /or complete
-  = 3 actions achieved between 70% - 90% of action target
-  = 0 actions achieved less than 70% action target



1.1 ACTIVE AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Receiving community feedback is an important part of the decision-making process at council. During the 2023-24 financial year, council actively engaged with our communities and sought feedback on several significant projects, issues and events, including:

- St George Sustainable GP practice
- Rowden Park masterplan
- Balonne workforce survey
- St George water supply scheme
- Proposed amendments to Balonne Planning Scheme 2019



1.2 COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND SPACES TO CONNECT, ENGAGE AND LEARN

Library activities in 2023-24

Our libraries added 225 new members across our branches and loaned almost 13,000 items during 2023-24.

Online resources continue to rise in popularity, with more members using the Queensland Libraries app to search the catalogue, manage their account and renew or reserve library items.

Friendly rivalry between each of our libraries continued through our school holiday programs and challenges. Craft activities remained popular and maintained their position as the top-ranking activity for children and their families. Our smaller libraries continue to draw large numbers of community members to their holiday activity sessions.

School groups, kindergarten and daycare groups continued to visit our libraries, participating in First 5 Forever sessions, reward days, online author and book week gatherings. Staff have particularly



embraced delivering First 5 activities to our littlest visitors and their families.

During the year, St George Library hosted several unique events including:

- A visit from local First Nations author and illustrator Gregg Dreise, which included visits to all schools in the shire
- A book launch for Clare Fletcher's second novel, Love Match
- Success in gaining hosting rights to the inaugural Storyfest South West children's writers festival
- The Queensland State Library Who's Your Mob? workshop
- The Australian Library and Information Association's 40 years of Medicare display (in St George and Dirranbandi).

We continued to strengthen existing relationships with community groups and worked towards establishing new relationships and partnerships. Meeting spaces remained in high demand for health and wellbeing professionals,

community and business groups and local students.

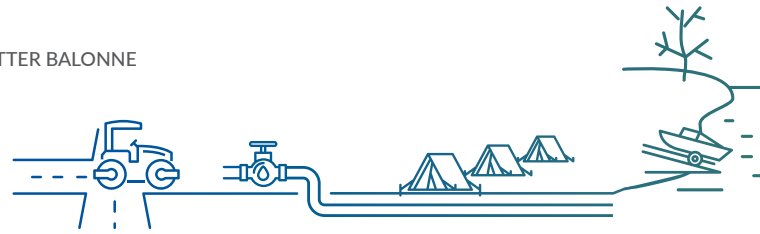
Throughout the year, library staff have had the opportunity to participate in training including:

- A staff training day at Dirranbandi
- Online training offered by the Queensland State Library covering First 5 Forever, First Nations resources and young people's resources
- In-person workshops for Rural Libraries Queensland and Who's Your Mob?

Country University Centres

CUC Balonne is an independent, community driven initiative that is supported by a national network and strong community partnerships.

BSC continues to be an invaluable partner and the current achievements of CUC Balonne would not have been possible without this support.



Since opening in 2021, CUC Balonne has supported 311 individual students pursuing tertiary studies. This far exceeds the 38 students initially predicted for the first 3 years of operation.

Approximately 100 placement students have received support from the centres situated in both St George and Dirranbandi.

More than 60 local students have successfully completed and graduated from a range of university degrees and Vocational & Educational Training (VET) courses. The first formal graduation ceremony was held at the end of 2023 with 7 local graduates sharing their success with family and friends.

Key statistics for the CUC Balonne, as at the first semester of 2024 include:

- Supporting 103 students, enrolled in 34 different institutions
- 64 new registrations
- 58% of students are the first in their family to enrol in tertiary education
- 37% of students were studying in health-related fields
- 20% in education
- 9% in community services (including psychology and social work)

- 10% of students identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

CUC Balonne is 1 of 2 Country Universities Centres that is funded for a First Nations officer. For NAIDOC week, the centre published 7 student success stories from local First Nations students. This was recognised and commended at a local and national level.

Additionally, through the Eastern Australia Regional University Centre Partnership (EARUCP), CUC Balonne is increasingly working with school-aged students to raise aspirations, increase career and study opportunities and link students with industry. While individuals clearly benefit from these services, so too will the broader community as we build a locally grown skilled and professional workforce.

The extensive work of the CUC Balonne would not be possible without the generous in-kind support of BSC raising funds for resources and travel bursaries via the annual Mayoral Ball.

As partnerships with organisations and industry grow, the CUC Balonne is continuing to build and realise the aspirations of our community through the power of education and training.



Engaging with community through user groups

Council is dedicated to fostering a vibrant and healthy community by nurturing both physical and mental wellbeing. In collaboration with various community groups and organisations, we strive to meet, support, and enhance the ongoing needs of our residents, both now and in the future.

Our commitment spans across sports, the arts, and mental health support and training programs. By partnering with numerous community groups throughout the shire, we ensure that our facilities are well maintained and continuously plan for future improvements.



1.3 ACTIVE AND HEALTHY LIFESTYLES, INCLUDING POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Throughout the 2023-24 year, council has made significant strides in promoting mental health and wellbeing within the Balonne Shire community.

Promoting Mental Health Initiatives

Council has actively engaged in promoting positive mental health throughout the shire by collaborating with key organisations to implement nationally recognised programs.

In partnership with the Fly High Billie program and after consulting with key stakeholders at each school within the Balonne Shire, council expanded the B-kinder initiative. This initiative is aimed at fostering empathy and compassion in children and adults to reduce mental health issues, bullying, and suicide. Engagement across the shire

included gifting colourful cards with positive affirmations, hand-written and anonymously shared by school students, educators, council staff and some local businesses. The initiative culminated in a community BBQ breakfast attended by work groups, sports clubs and tourists.

Council's commitment to promoting mental health and wellbeing throughout the community is evidenced by these initiatives and ongoing efforts to ensure everyone has access to the support they need.

How Work Camp helps our community

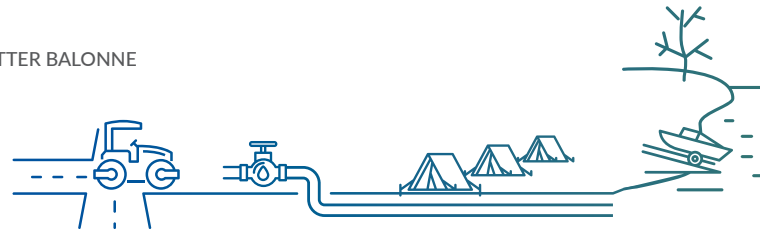
Council partners with Queensland Corrective Services to operate the Work Camp sites in Dirranbandi and St George. The programs run on a fortnightly rotation of low-risk

inmates who provide valuable one-off and ongoing services to non-profit community groups. Services offered can vary depending on the scope of abilities for inmates but typically involve grounds maintenance, labour, painting, repair work, setting up and packing down events. Many inmates are given the opportunity to build their skillsets which enables them to prepare for life after serving their sentences.

As many of our non-profit community groups struggle to find willing volunteers, the assistance provided through this program helps keep our non-profit community groups alive.

Council acknowledges that the assistance and support of Work Camp to our community is greatly appreciated, and the benefit and value of this support cannot be underestimated.





In 2023-24 Work Camp helped the following groups:

ST GEORGE WORK CAMP:

Balonne Shire Council	Balonne River Cutters	Care Balonne Assoc Inc
St George Bowls Club	St George Catholic Church	St George Clay Target Club
St George Fire Station	St George Fruit & Veg Growers	St George Heritage Centre
St George In the Box Boxing Club	St George Jockey Club	St George Men's Shed
St George Pony Club	St George Rotary Club	St George SES – SW Area Controller
St George Show grounds	St George P&A	Thallon Progress Association
Warrawee - Churches of Christ	QCWA St George	

DIRRANBANDI WORK CAMP:

Balonne Shire Council	QCS Dirranbandi	Nindigully Transfer Station
Dirranbandi Progress Assoc	Dirranbandi P&A Assoc	Care Balonne
QCWA Thallon Daymar	Thallon QCWA	Hebel State School
Hebel Library	Thallon Library	

1.4 SAFE AND WELCOMING COMMUNITIES

Balonne Shire Youth Council

The inaugural Youth Council commenced in November 2021 and is still going strong, completing some major projects for the 2023-24 year and setting some ambitious goals for the year ahead. They are guided by Mayor Samantha O’Toole and Deputy Mayor Councillor Bill Winks.

Youth Council was the driving force behind the new basketball court at Rowden Park, which was celebrated with an official opening in November 2023, featuring a highlight game between BSC and the Queensland Police Service.

The Youth Council utilises The Hub Maker Space in the St George Library as their meeting space on a regular basis.





We would also like to acknowledge the contributions of all sponsors and presenters that made this event possible, including CUC Balonne and Maranoa, Southern Queensland Rural Health, Goondir Health, Gateway to Training, Construction Skills Queensland, University of Southern Queensland (USQ), The Yoga Partnership, as well as our speakers on the Pathways Panel.

Careers and Jobs Expo

The 2024 Career and Job Expo, St George & Surrounds, was held for the third year running in May. The event was open to the public, job seekers and school students and welcomed an estimated 325 attendees, including 245 students.

Visitors had the opportunity to engage with a terrific array of 38 stallholders, from a diverse range of industries including agriculture, horticulture, STEM industries, universities, aviation, machinery, health and volunteer organisations.

Youth Summit 2024 – Empower, Lead, Inspire

The third annual Youth Summit was held in March 2024 at the Balonne Shire Cultural Centre, with an overarching theme of building individual and community resilience, with a focus on strengthening community resilience through youth engagement.

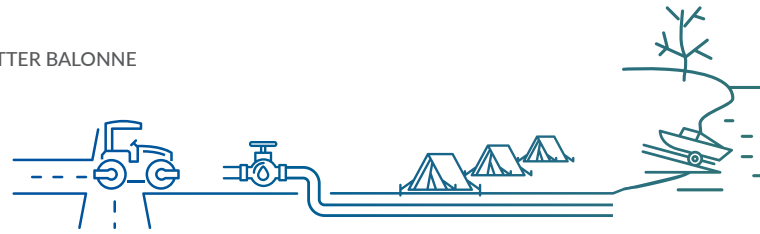
A total of 90 students registered from 4 schools, including Dirranbandi, Mungindi, St George and Cunnamulla. Initial invitations included students from years 9 to 12, however selected students from years 7 and 8 were also included, at the request of 2 schools.

The program included 2 keynote speakers, Victor Steffensen and Renee Wootten. Victor Steffensen is an Indigenous writer, filmmaker, musician and consultant who spoke about applying traditional knowledge values in a contemporary context through creative, practical and artistic projects. Renee Wootten is a proud Tharawal woman and an enthusiastic aerospace engineer and commercial pilot. Renee shared her life journey with the key message that resilience coupled with support leads to success.

Students also attended workshop sessions covering exercise physiology, career mapping, yoga, a pathways panel of successful young local people, nursing and midwifery, music therapy, cultural capabilities, self-reliance, getting work-ready and construction.

The event received very positive feedback from students, teachers, and the broader community.





Celebrating Australia Day 2024

The Balonne Australia Day Awards showcase and recognise local citizens and groups who have made outstanding contributions to our community. The nominees were spread across a broad range of categories including sports, the arts and community advocacy, all sharing an unparalleled ability to make a difference to our community as strong leaders.

This year's Australia Day event included a community breakfast, Acknowledgement of Country, award ceremony, citizenship ceremony and concluded with a morning tea.

We would like to extend congratulations to all 32 deserving nominees and winners of the Balonne Australia Day Awards for 2024.

Australia Day 2024 Award Winners

Citizen of the Year	Mark Bartlem
Young Citizen of the Year	Phoebe Olive
Volunteer of the Year	Jacque Hemming
Community Event of the Year	Thallon Pub Choir
Cultural Award	Nia Hadenfeldt
Community Group of the Year	Hebel Rodeo Association Inc.
Senior Sports Award	Tom Perkins
Junior Sports Award	Rhyder Hooper
Sports Administrator Achievement	Justin Schultz



Celebrating our Newest Australians

Council held Citizenship Ceremonies in August 2023 and January 2024 to officially welcome 3 new Australian citizens. Council is proud to officially acknowledge and welcome new Australians who reside in our shire and agrees with the democratic belief that all Australians are expected to treat each other with dignity and respect, regardless of their race, country of origin, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, age, disability, heritage, culture, politics, wealth or religion.

Australian values are based on freedom, respect, fairness and equality of opportunity which are central to our community remaining a secure, prosperous and peaceful place to live.

Citizenship ceremonies for 2023-2024:

August 2023:

Aron Froese
Trevor Rayner

January 2024:

Seren Kuhanandan



1.5 VIBRANT CREATIVE ARTS, LOCAL HISTORY CELEBRATION



Artistic and cultural project funding

Council manages several funding programs that support arts and cultural projects to enhance community connectedness, improve skill sets and provide educational opportunities. The programs are funded by council and the state government and include the Community Grants program, the Multicultural Development Fund and RADF. Funded projects in 2023-24 included:

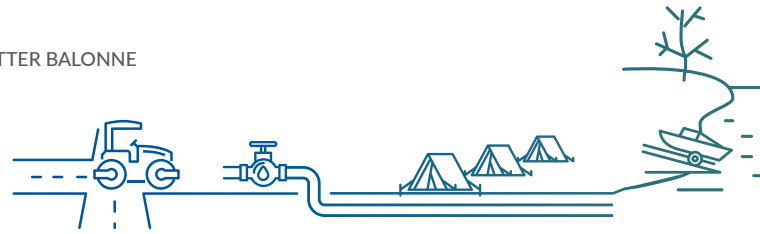
- Blue Lures Program (Community Grant)
- Bollon and Thallon Christmas Trees (Community Grant)
- Day Out in Dirran (Free Concert by the Australian Army Band in Dirranbandi)
- The Afternoon Celebrating the Arts (RADF)

Regional Arts Development Fund

A total of 11 RADF applications, totalling \$28,710 in funding, were received and approved by Council in 2023-24.

PROJECT NAME	APPLICANT	\$ APPROVAL AMOUNT
Round 1		
The Balonne Sessions	Montville Lane	\$2,500.00
A Bee Story	ARC Circus	\$2,500.00
Round 2		
I Will Always Love You	Opera Eagles Nest	\$2,500.00
Fractured Fairytales	RAVA Productions	\$2,500.00
The Afternoon Celebrating the Arts	Hadenfeldt Music & Dance	\$2,400.00
Round 3		
Wire Sculpture Workshop	Dirranbandi Arts Council	\$1,810.00
Snowy and the Seven Cool Dudes	Jally Entertainment	\$2,500.00
Circus Performance Workshop	Dirranbandi State School P & C	\$1,500.00
Circus Performance Workshop	Bollon State School P & C	\$1,500.00
TOTAL		\$28,710.00





Commemorating our Service Men and Women

On Anzac Day each year council joins our communities to remember all Australians who have served and died in all wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations. It is an opportunity for our communities to come together, reflect, remember and appreciate the sacrifices of those who have served, or are serving, our country.

Balonne Shire councillors attended dawn services in Bollon, Dirranbandi, St George and Thallon in commemoration of the sacrifice of those Australian and New Zealand military personnel who have died or were injured during wartime.

On Remembrance Day a service organised by the St George RSL sub-branch was well attended on the banks of the Balonne River.

It is important that we remember the sacrifice of all Australians who have died in conflicts, particularly the high number of men and women from the southwest Queensland region.

Saluting their Service

To connect the community with heroes of the past, BSC commissioned 3 touch screen kiosks with funding from the Australian Government's Saluting Their Service Commemorative Program. The kiosks are located at the St George Library, the St George Visitor Information Centre and the Dirranbandi Rural Transaction Centre.

The kiosks alphabetically displays names of local service men and women. Community members can also search for service members by using the interactive keyboard displayed on the kiosk screen. Once community members select a service member, the kiosk displays the service person's history and a QR code linked to the national archives for further information.

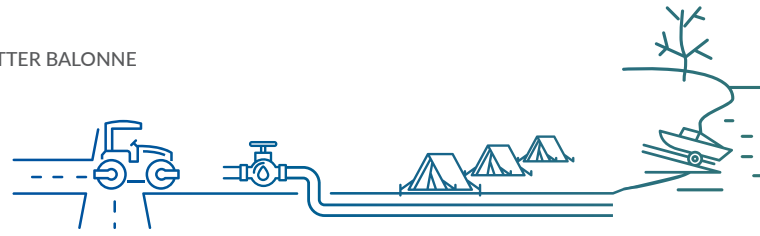




Community Grants: sponsorship and donations program

During the 2023-24 financial year, council approved a total of \$45,714.66 in sponsorship and donations. Council also sponsored a traffic management grant for 2 community organisation events. Following is a complete list of applicants, projects and funding.

PROJECT NAME	APPLICANT	\$ APPROVAL AMOUNT
Balonne River Cutting Futurity	Balonne River Cutters	\$2,500.00
Bollon Christmas Tree	Bollon QCWA	\$2,500.00
Blue Lures Program	Queensland Police Service Blue Light Assoc	\$2,500.00
St George Christmas Carnival	Care Balonne	\$2,500.00
Year 6 Camp	St Patrick's P & F Assoc	\$2,500.00
Defibrillator	Thallon Progress Assoc Inc	\$2,471.73
Dirranbandi Show	Dirranbandi P & A Assoc	\$2,500.00
Thallon Christmas Tree	Thallon Progress Assoc Inc	\$2,450.00
Ambulance – Bollon Polocrosse	Bollon Polocrosse	\$2,500.00
U/35kg and U/45kg Representative Carnivals	Balonne-Barwon Junior Rugby League	\$2,500.00
Back to Bollon Day	Bollon Community Group	\$2,500.00
St George Show	St George P & A Assoc	\$2,500.00
Annual Awards Dinner	St George Cotton Growers' Assoc	\$400.00
150th State School Anniversary	St George State School P & C	\$770.68
Hebel Gymkhana	Hebel Rodeo Assoc	\$2,500.00
Mungindi Show	Mungindi Show Society	\$2,500.00
Basketball Program	Queensland Police Service Blue Light Assoc	\$250.00
Annual Dinner	St George Bridge Group	\$500.00
St Patrick's Fete	St Patrick's P & F Assoc	\$500.00
Boxing Program - Dirranbandi	PCYC Roma	\$500.00
Zone 4 U10's & U12's Carnival	St George Junior Rugby League	\$2,000.00
Club Polos	In the Box Boxing	\$500.00
Year 12 Award Dinner	St George State High School	\$200.00
ANZAC Day March	St George RSL Sub-branch	\$2,326.00
Quick Shears	Australian Hotel	\$500.00
Face Painter – Reunion Markets	Borewater and Banter	\$400.00
Christmas Carols in the Park	Kings Church	\$1,196.25
Battle on the Balonne	St George Tri Club	\$2,500.00
	TOTAL	\$45,714.66



1.6 CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Celebrating Multicultural Initiatives

Council was successful in securing Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) funding from Multicultural Affairs Queensland to complete a community integration project. The project aimed to create a more welcoming Balonne Shire for people visiting or working in the region, originally from a non-English speaking country.

Council hosted several workshops and events aimed at welcoming and embracing new residents, workers and visitors, these events and workshops brought established and new residents together and provided opportunities to socialise and network.



1.7 DISASTER MANAGEMENT, RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE

The Balonne Shire LDMG was active for 58 days in 2023-24 due to flood events in the Condamine Balonne River Basin Systems, the Moonie River and the Border Rivers (MacIntyre/Weir) Basin.

The LDMG held 14 meetings in 2023-24, 3 ordinary meetings and 11 extraordinary meetings.

In 2023-24 council's Emergency Dashboard had 339 subscribers, 151 new users and user engagement in excess of 47,000.

Community resilience and recovery in Balonne

In February 2023, we welcomed our Community Resilience and Recovery Officer (CRRO). This position was made possible through the support of the Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts, and in conjunction with the Queensland Recovery Authority.

Disaster management and recovery training has been a focal point for this project, including facilitating vital community-driven projects and workshops following natural disasters.

During the 2023-24 financial year, several community engagement initiatives have significantly contributed to capacity building and skill enhancement within the community, including:

- First aid and CPR training courses equipping residents with essential life-saving skills.
- The Inspired Creative Projects workshop empowering not-for-

profit organisations and businesses to enhance their resilience against challenges.

- Big Skies and Dragonflies event offering a creative art workshop, emphasising the theme of confronting adversity to expedite recovery.
- Grant writing workshop refining participants' grant writing acumen, a crucial skill during disaster scenarios.
- Get Ready Day which attracted approximately 250 attendees and featured emergency demonstrations and tutorials on navigating the Balonne Shire Disaster Dashboard.
- The Farming Business Resilience & Flood Mapping Workshop facilitated by the Queensland Farmers Federation, assisting farmers in reviewing or initiating disaster preparedness plans.



- QCWA regional conference attended by approximately 100 regional QCWA members from across southwest Queensland, emphasising the impacts flooding has on agricultural industries and what strategies need to be undertaken to hasten post disaster recovery.
- Are you Boggled Mate? workshop for first responders, focusing on mental health challenges they face during and after disasters and connecting them with appropriate mental health services.
- Volunteer Week event acknowledging and celebrating the work of local volunteers during natural disaster events. Following the event, both SES and RFS have increased their volunteer numbers.
- Cool Kids First Aid youth education training course specifically structured for children between the ages of 5 and 13, focusing on fundamentals of first aid awareness, including how to engage with emergency services



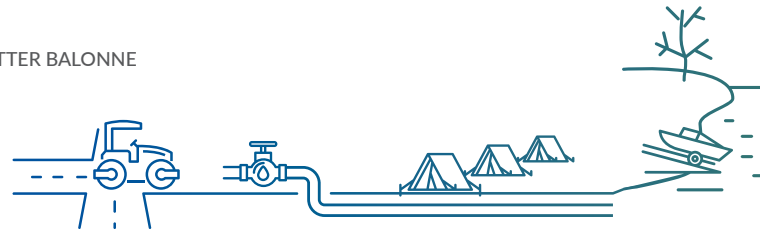
on the telephone and basic first aid techniques. This was run across the whole shire, with 85 children undertaking the training.

- Be Kinder Day aimed at connecting communities, empowering individuals to inspire positive change in

challenging times, pre and post natural events. Through this initiative, we strengthened resilience and enhanced people's wellbeing.

The term for the Community Recovery and Resilience Officer has been extended until December 2024.

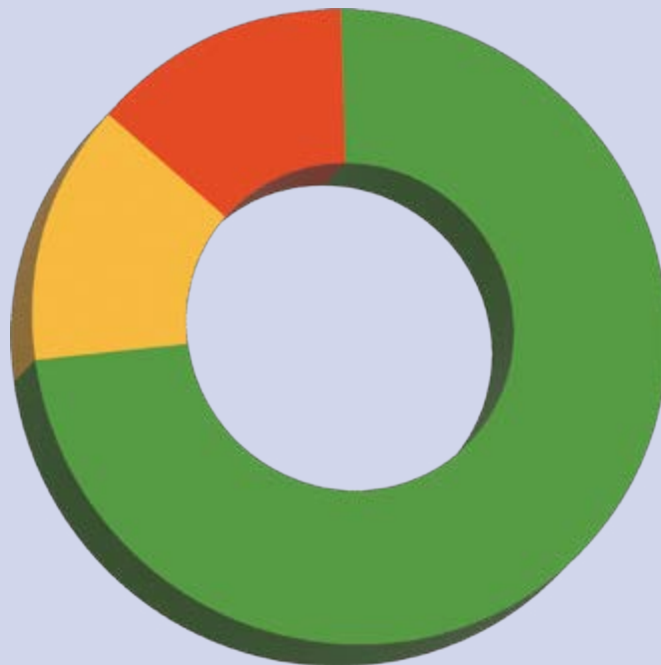







ECONOMY

Building sustainable enterprises and strong economic growth through investment and reinvestment and support for all businesses to thrive.

30 actions were included in the operational plan for Economy.



-  = 11 Actions achieved target 90% on target and /or complete
-  = 2 actions achieved between 70% - 90% of action target
-  = 2 actions achieved less than 70% action target



Balonne Shire's economy in 2023-24 continued to perform very well. The Gross Regional Product (GRP) for the year was estimated at \$493m, supporting 2217 jobs across 922 registered businesses in the shire.

Gross Value Product (GVP), calculated by agricultural yield and commodity prices, was \$619m down 22% from the previous record financial year (\$794m), however Balonne still ranked eighth amongst Queensland councils in agricultural production.

The unemployment rate at the end of the 23-24 financial year for Balonne was 2.4%, significantly lower than the Queensland and national average of 4.1%.

Other key 2023-24 economic indicators from projects council have been involved with include:

- Exclusion Fencing – estimated at \$42m in on-farm investment and 116 new jobs created
- Business Improvement Scheme - \$1.26m in projects (52) and \$613k in local spend, supporting 20.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) roles
- Business Mentoring Programs – 38 businesses and more than \$400k in value realised
- Workforce Development – supporting the placement of 74 FTE roles
- Funding successfully secured - \$440,000 with expected flow-on benefits from the projects.

The year 2023 marked a record high for visitor numbers, driven largely by our successful tourism campaigns, particularly the standout St George Region: You'll be Hooked campaign. These efforts significantly boosted regional tourism, setting new benchmarks for the shire.

Priority projects and actions for the year included:

- Delivering the Balonne 2023-27 Economic Development Strategy
- Completing the Balonne Business Improvement Program
- Promoting and delivering several major events
- Delivering the Balonne Business Mentoring Programs to support small businesses and agribusinesses
- Supporting local businesses and agribusinesses exploring opportunities to diversify and expand
- Agribusiness projects including quantifying the economic and social impacts of exclusion fencing projects
- Delivering the Workforce Development Program
- Supporting the development of 7 major projects and existing inward investment enquiries including the facilitation of renewable energy and opportunities workshops across the shire
- Supporting the Local Housing Action Plan committee and current and proposed housing initiatives across the shire
- Grant submissions to assist in funding various economic and workforce development programs
- Partnering with peak industry groups, government agencies and regional economic development to advocate for and deliver regional projects.

Council received \$440,000 grant funding in the 2023-24 financial year for economic development and tourism initiatives, including:

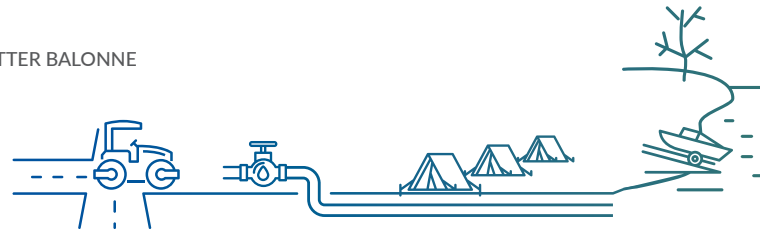
- \$200,000 funding from the Queensland Government's Regional Economic Futures Fund to fund business cases and commercial viability

of a local green hydrogen anhydrous ammonia facility

- \$165,000 funding from the Queensland Government's Growing Workforce Participation Fund for council's Workforce Development Officer
- \$36,000 funding from the Community Recovery Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) Programme for Pub Choir Thallon
- \$20,000 funding from the Queensland Government's Tourism Industry Resilience Grant for the Balonne Shire Tourism Business Mentoring Program
- \$19,500 funding from the Australian and Queensland Government's DRFA Programme for the One Ton Post Conservation Management Plan.

Further support from economic development across major council and community projects included economic modelling for 13 projects, business case development and economic output monitoring.

Council's Economic Development department was the recipient of a major state award, the 2024 Regional Member of the Year for the Queensland Government's Small Business Friendly Program. Council won the award for supporting small and agribusinesses in areas such as business training, procurement and workforce development.



2.1 DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY FOR BUSINESS GROWTH AND CONNECTEDNESS



BSC is committed to working with its key stakeholders on the support, development and enhancement of digital connectivity services to the shire's communities and residents. Council has been active in engaging with NBN and telecommunications operators to roll out broadband and fixed wireless services, leading to community benefits including:

- Improved health and medication support
- Improved agribusiness operational efficiency through agricultural technology
- Ecommerce economic opportunities for small businesses
- Improved career pathways and opportunities for current and future residents
- Attracting new residents to the region and supporting new business start-ups
- Instilling business confidence and reinvestment
- Attracting trades and business services and potential inward investment to the shire.

Council is delivering the 2023-27 Economic Development Strategy which includes the 2023-27 Digital Connectivity Strategy. In addition to

investment in digital infrastructure, council has been exploring how the shire could benefit from improved digital connectivity, including ecommerce development, agtech, telehealth, education and training and extended reality (XR) and artificial intelligence.

Expansion of fast internet and mobile accessibility

BSC is committed to working with key stakeholders on the support, development and enhancement of digital connectivity services shire-wide.

Cross-border fixed wireless towers, funded by the NSW Cross-Border Commissioner, were under construction by FSG in Balonne, Moree Plains and Gwydir to connect these 3 local governments, as well as Goondiwindi, across the Queensland-NSW border. In addition to extending fast internet coverage, the towers are intended to provide a valuable link between the Brisbane and Sydney NBN link, allowing fixed wireless services in western Queensland to continue even if the Brisbane NBN link goes down.

FSG also completed towers between St George and Bollon and made fixed

wireless available. This was part of a federal government project that will also see mobile services offered along this route.

Across the shire, Telstra upgraded entirely to 4-5G mobile services, while leaving 3G switched on until October 2024. This too improved connectivity for towns like Bollon that had been solely on 3G. Coverage is expected to be the same as for 3G, but with greater speed and data.

The NBN has prepared a shovel-ready grant application to extend fibre to the premises within St George. Currently there are a range of NBN service levels with gaps covered by fixed wireless.

Across more remote landholdings beyond the reach of NBN, fixed wireless and mobile services, landholders have seen an uptake in StarLink low orbit satellite services.

Council will continue to identify key digital connectivity projects, eliminate black spots and advocate for further public and private digital connectivity investment.





2.2 SUPPORT FOR THE AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY AND AGRIBUSINESS SECTORS

Agriculture is the key industry for the Balonne Shire, accounting for 33% (734) of the total workforce and generating more than 60% of the shire's economic output. Estimated Gross Regional Product (GRP) for the 2023-24 year was \$493M. Gross Value Product (GVP), calculated by agricultural yield and commodity prices, was \$619m. While this was down 22% from the previous record financial year (\$794m), Balonne still ranked 8th amongst Queensland local government areas in agricultural production.

The new 2023-27 Balonne Shire Economic Development Strategy identifies livestock, cotton and grain and horticulture as 3 of the shire's 5 pillar industries. Agriculture also plays a major role in the shire's other 2 pillar industries, tourism and events and emerging industries.

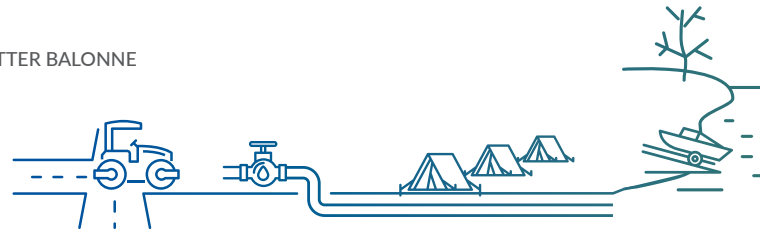
Council continues to support the economic development and growth of agriculture in our shire and remains committed to assisting the industry to identify gaps and opportunities where council can work with key stakeholders and partners to achieve outcomes.

Business Mentoring

The current round of council's mentoring program has supported 8 agricultural businesses and 6 businesses that directly support the sector. A total of 323 hours of advisory services, valued at over \$60,000 has been invested in the sector through the program. Mentoring support included ecommerce, on-farm operations and efficiencies, finance, marketing, strategic planning, ag tech adoption and implementation, research and development, prototype development, human resources, succession planning and business continuity.

For these businesses, 8 were successful in securing additional project funding to assist with their operations. Projects funded included robotic monitoring, industry specific assets, on-farm assets, weigh scales and load bars, ecommerce assets and professional services. The total amount of funding allocated to these projects was \$13,900, with co-contributions. Total project costs were \$31,300, with approximately one third of this spent with Balonne businesses.

Workshops facilitated with direct relevance to the agricultural sector included Xero workshops (4), digital media (4) and grant writing (4). Additional workshops outside the mentoring program included 4 workshops on renewable and alternative energy and economic development opportunities for the Balonne agricultural industry.



Exclusion Fencing

The agricultural industries in the Balonne Shire have faced significant economic challenges over the last 15 years including extended drought conditions, commodity price fluctuations, wild dog and other pest animals impacting livestock and cropping enterprises. This has had a combined negative impact on agricultural jobs, creating a downward spiral in smaller communities.

In other areas of agricultural significance across Queensland, exclusion fencing has been effective in controlling pest animals and giving primary producers greater flexibility in relation to enterprise selection.

Council's support of the exclusion fencing program is helping to ensure the ongoing viability of primary producers in our shire and creating an opportunity for increased employment in agriculture and in the gross value of production in the region.

The main objectives of the exclusion fencing projects are:

- Reduced predation by wild dogs and pigs for livestock enterprises, resulting in less stock losses, improved weaning rates and reduced livestock stress
- Better control over total grazing pressure on pastures, enabling better pasture planning, improved environmental outcomes with better ground cover and improved habitat for small fauna
- Reduced crop losses due to better control of native and feral animals
- Investment in new capital projects and plant and equipment on properties due to improved control over farm businesses
- Increased employment in the region with more small livestock and more viable businesses.

Council has partnered with landholders and both the Queensland and Australian Governments in facilitating and delivering 5 exclusion fencing funded programs.

At the end of the 2023-24 financial year, more than 2000km of fencing had been constructed covering over 70% of the shire. The value of funding, with council's involvement, is \$14.5M, increasing to a total of 23.9M with landholder co-contributions included.

A key component of monitoring the economic and social impacts of the program includes surveying participating landholders every 2 years to track and quantify outcomes. A second Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement report was conducted in mid-2023. Forty-five landholders participated in this exercise, representing 87 properties across the shire. The estimated income generated per annum is \$31.4M, with \$42m invested on properties since the programs' inception. It is further estimated that an additional 116 jobs were created from the fencing programs.

Feedback from the landholders involved in the fencing programs has been extremely positive. Council has been able to utilise this data to support the investment in exclusion fencing and to attract further inward investment in the agricultural supply and value-added chains.

Other initiatives supporting agriculture:

- Working with local producers and graziers on local on-farm expansion and diversification
- Working with partners and landholders, producers and graziers on farm resilience plans
- Regional partnerships advancing agricultural technology and investing in technologies
- Digital connectivity and partnerships delivering improved connectivity and infrastructure requirements (road and rail)
- Supporting webinars, forums and field events for landholders, producers and graziers
- Supporting the St George State High School with the Agriculture, Water and Environment (AWE) Program including



3 student immersion programs, profiling 11 participating producers, strategic planning, introductions of key stakeholders and marketing collateral

- Supporting 14 agricultural businesses in the 2023-24 Balonne Business Mentoring Programs
- Advocating on behalf of industry regarding key issues including infrastructure and the Murray-Darling Basin Plan
- Opportunities into the development of microgrid, renewable and alternative energy
- Securing \$200,000 funding from Regional Economic Future Fund (REFF) to fund business cases and commercial viability of a local green hydrogen anhydrous ammonia facility
- Workforce development including regional and overseas migration programs and evolving and emerging career opportunities in agriculture
- Thallon Industrial and Intermodal Precinct proposal for consideration under the Australian Government's Regional Precincts and Partnership Program
- Engaging with key stakeholders on building export capability in the region and supply chain development.



2.3 ATTRACT AND FACILITATE INVESTMENT AND LOCAL RE-INVESTMENT

A key component for economic growth in the shire is attracting new investment and encouraging reinvestment by capitalising and building on its strengths. Identifying, supporting and attracting new and emerging industries will help to diversify the local economy and reduce the shire's reliance on agriculture sectors.

The 2023-27 Balonne Shire Economic Development Strategy identifies 5 key pillar industries as a plan and pathway to attract inward investment and encourage business reinvestment, expansion and diversification within the shire. The 5 pillars are:

- grain, cotton and pulses
- livestock
- horticulture
- tourism and events
- emerging industries.

Council have actively promoted the shire at targeted trade and investment events including the Regional Economic Development Forum in Warwick, SEGRA 2023 in Toowoomba, the Trade and Investment Queensland forum in Toowoomba, the Maranoa Ag and Innovation Forum and various investment forums in Brisbane.

Council also welcomed inbound visits from key investment enablers including the St George Chinese Community Memorial Committee, the Queensland Small Business Commissioner, the Queensland Chief Entrepreneur and the Australia Day Ambassador.

During the 2023-24 year, council directly contributed to 2 new developments in the region, creating 6.5 new full-time equivalent (FTE) positions. Council facilitated 74 investment meetings with potential investors and investment enablers including Trade and Investment Queensland, Austrade and site selection professionals. A total of 80.5 FTE positions were facilitated in conjunction with the workforce development program. There was a total of 35 new business enquiries in the year, 24 inward investment and 11 local enquiries.

Other major projects completed in the year included the expansion and development at the St George Hospital, the Goondir Health and Wellbeing Centre and the Harmony Centre.

Over the year, there were several businesses that changed hands, notably in the hospitality and tourism sectors, demonstrating the strength of the local

economy, tourism sector and flow on impacts from the Balonne Business Improvement Program.

Revisions to the planning scheme have been made to stimulate and attract further investment in the form of development incentives.

The Balonne Business Improvement Program (52 projects) generated \$1.26M in visual improvement and energy efficiency projects. It is estimated that 20.5 direct and 4.7 indirect FTE jobs were supported during the project.

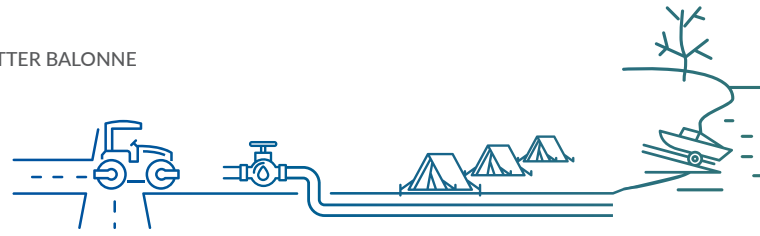
Capitalising on opportunities in renewable and alternative energy, council was involved in more than \$358,000 in commercial solar projects through the Business Improvement Program, resulting in \$88,000 in energy savings in the first year.

On-farm expansion and diversification resulted in \$42M in on-farm investment as a direct result of past investments in exclusion fencing programs.

Council has continued to work with housing stakeholders to identify key industrial and residential land for both commercial and new housing development and with the education and training sector to develop the local workforce.

Major infrastructure projects, funded through various government agencies, are being delivered with the aim of attracting and enabling flow on investment and employment opportunities from these projects. Working with key partners, current and proposed infrastructure projects include roads, digital connectivity improvement, St George Aerodrome expansion, education and training facilities, housing, public facilities, childcare and aged care, sport and recreational facilities and health and medical services and facilities.





2.4 BUSINESS SUPPORT AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



Council has a strong commitment to supporting and growing the capability of its local businesses, identifying business opportunities, facilitating programs to assist small business, identify challenges to growth and encouraging more local businesses to prosper by participating in local and regional procurement opportunities.

Small Business Friendly Program

Since becoming a member of the Queensland Government's Small Business Friendly (SBF) Program through the Office of the Small Business Commissioner, council has been active in adhering to the Charter to support the 925 small businesses based in the Balonne Shire. The Charter sets out the guidelines and objectives of the program, which include supporting small businesses through business growth, diversification and procurement.

Council has also been supporting local businesses to build competitiveness, capability and capacity with local governments, major projects and primary contractors through mentoring programs, facilitating small business and agribusiness support and training workshops, as well as the business improvement and workforce

development programs. Council also encourages and supports local businesses in procuring goods and services for council.

Council hosted procurement events for local businesses to assist with registering on two major procurement platforms, VendorPanel and Local Buy.

The Queensland Small Business Commissioner visited the Balonne Shire in August 2023, meeting with council and several businesses to gain an understanding of issues small businesses in the shire are experiencing.

Business Mentoring Programs

Building on past success, council is currently delivering a fourth round of business mentoring for 50 businesses directly and indirectly impacted by flood events and recovery. This program has been funded by the Queensland Government's DRFA and the Queensland Government's Department of Sport and Tourism grant for Tourism Industry Resilience.

Participating businesses came from a range of industries including hospitality and tourism, agriculture and horticulture, professional services, retail, services, not-for-profit and construction. A total

of 931 hours of mentoring services were allocated to the businesses through advisory services provided by 20 mentors.

Council facilitated 23 workshops in customer service, Xero training, digital media, grant writing and film making and reels, with a total of 178 participants attending the workshops.

Over \$35,000 in project funding was approved to 20 business diversification projects. As at 30 June 2024, 15 projects have been completed with \$14,000 spent in the shire and an additional \$3,000 spent locally for workshops.

Council continues to monitor the impact of previous business mentoring programs. A total of 148 businesses have participated in the business mentoring programs over the past 4 years, benefitting from over 3400 of mentoring hours, \$185,000 in project funding and over \$260,000 in direct local expenditure in the Balonne Shire.

Balonne Business Improvement Program

The Balonne Business Improvement Scheme was delivered across the





76 employers and the successful placement of 74 FTE jobs. In 2023-24, projects and outcomes from the program include:

- Balonne Career and Job Expo in May – 38 stallholders and 325 visitors, including 245 students. A networking event was facilitated the night before the expo to also coincide with Queensland Small Business Month
- 10 workshops delivered to 97 participants in pre-employment training, barista training, resume writing, activation program and white card training
- 3 rounds of St George State High School's Agriculture, Water and Environment (AWE) Ag Immersion program – council developed profiles of 11 participating producers, a farm seasonal calendar and program marketing collateral
- Working with Connect Southwest, supporting the local online jobs portal through the development of a Balonne workforce QR Code linked to Balonne jobs pages
- Development and promotion of the monthly Balonne job opportunities column in the Balonne Bulletin
- In partnership with CUC Balonne, the acquisition of 4 virtual reality headsets and software (funding provided by Workforce Australia), a 1 year subscription to WorkWindow (job interview and work experience simulation) software to assist with virtual training and exposure to current and emerging career pathways
- Balonne Workforce Development needs survey
- Facilitated visits from GROW and University of Queensland School of Rural and Remote Health and student placement programs
- Migration projects including proposed participation in a Designated Area Migration Agreement (DAMA), support to multicultural groups and further welcoming support services
- Submission to the Sustainable and Resilient Communities Funding.

shire and completed in April 2024. The purpose of the program was to support local businesses in the shire and promote tourism opportunities through the improvement of commercial districts in our towns, either through visual improvements or energy efficiency upgrades. The project further aimed to improve the business sustainability, business retention and associated jobs as well as provide additional employment and economic opportunities within the shire. Funding was provided by the Australian Government under the Murray-Darling Basin Economic Development Program.

A total of 52 projects were delivered including 31 visual improvement and 21 energy efficiency projects. All 7 communities had projects completed in their towns, 34 in St George, 6 in Dirranbandi, 4 in Bollon, while Thallon, Mungindi and Hebel all had 2 projects each. Visual improvement projects included painting, panels, fencing, verandas, flooring, landscaping, reception areas, display cabinets, signage, security and furniture. Energy efficiency projects included solar installations, battery storage and energy efficient lighting, lighting and security equipment and refrigeration.

A total of \$1.26M in projects were delivered, of which \$833,000 was through government funding and \$427,000 in business co-contributions. Local contractors completed a total of \$613,000 (49%) in project work. Within

this local spend, a total of \$214,000 was spent with Indigenous owned and operated businesses (17% of the total project values). A total of 15 solar installations realised more than \$88,000 in energy savings and 339 tonnes of greenhouse gas savings in the 2023-24 period.

Buy Balonne Gift Card

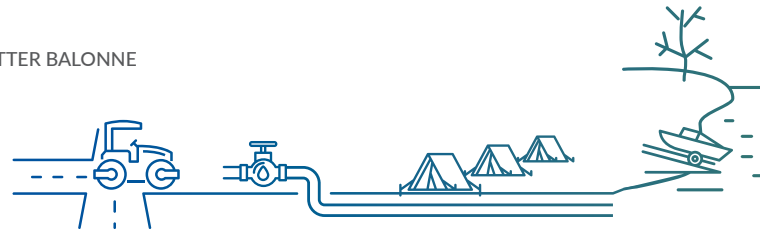
Council continued to provide back-office support and program reporting to the St George and District Chamber of Commerce's Buy Balonne Gift Card program aimed at encouraging local spend in the Balonne Shire.

A total of 79 Balonne based businesses and organisations are participating in the gift card program. In the year, \$60,000 was spent on gift cards with \$53,000 redeemed. More than \$317,000 has been spent on these gift cards in the 4 years the program has been operating.

Workforce Development

Building on the success of the first year of the Balonne Workforce Development program, council was successful in securing a second round of funding (\$165,000) to December 2024. The funding has been secured through the Queensland Government's Growing Workforce Participation Program and will enable council to deliver their workforce development strategy.

The program supported 118 job seekers,



2.5 GROW TOURISM

Event Support

A key priority of the Tourism and Events Strategy (priority 2) is to help activate new events and reinvigorate existing shire events. During the 2023-24 financial year, council approved \$33,500 in grants from the Tourism Events Grant Fund. Ongoing local events that received funding included the McIntyre 900 (\$4,000), Easter in the Vines (\$3,000), Thallon Truck Pull (\$3,000), Dragon Country Sandgreen Cup (\$4,000), and the St George Fishing Competition (\$3,000).

New events supported by council included awarding \$3,000 to Youlden Valley for the 2024 Pinnacle Boer Goat Expo & Championship, as well as \$7,000 to St George Junior Rugby League for the Junior Rugby League Carnival, which saw 9 teams and their supporters converge on Rowden Park for a week-long event.

In addition to monetary support, council provided in-kind assistance to the Yellowbelly Country Music Festival, filling the St George Showgrounds with song, dance, and more than 260 visitors.

Council also backed a major new event initiative to bring the hugely successful Pub Choir experience to the Balonne Shire. This event was funded by a \$36,000 grant from the state government's DRFA program, with an



additional \$7,500 contributed by council. Through a competitive process, the Thallon Progress Association (TPA) was selected to host the event, with their proposal for an outdoor event beneath Thallon's painted silos aligning with council's mission to showcase the region and boost economic opportunities. Held in October 2023, the Pub Choir Thallon event was attended by 370 people, 192 were Balonne Shire residents and 178 were travellers from outside the shire.

Pub Choir Thallon exemplified how events can bring people together, foster resilience, and promote tourism while spreading joy and harmony. It showcased the indomitable spirit of the Thallon community and their determination to create a brighter future for their

town and the shire. As a result, Thallon Progress Association was presented with an Australia Day Award for Best Community Event.

Industry capability and capacity

As highlighted by the current Tourism and Events Strategy, council has a strong commitment to supporting and growing the capability of our local businesses (priority 4).

The Tourism Manager, the Economic Development team, Mayor and Deputy Mayor took part in a Hospitality Convos workshop in August 2023, along with a number of the shire's hospitality operators specialising in food and beverage. Presented by consultant Trudi Bartlett, topics covered included tips on how to reduce costs and improve profitability and benefits of business mentoring and other free support services along with an update on tourism and events in the shire.

Council partnered with Outback Queensland Tourism Association to seek and receive a \$20,000 Queensland Government's Tourism Industry Resilience Grant for the Balonne Shire





Mentoring Program. This program provided 13 local businesses with mentoring services from 6 mentors across a total of 130 allocated hours. Designed to help business owners connect and share insights for success, the program was purpose-built to respond to current issues faced by businesses in our region. While the program aimed to help businesses recover from disruptions caused by recent floods, it also assisted with preparedness, response and resilience when faced with future disasters through:

- Business planning and continuity
- Recovery – cost reduction, debt and cashflow management
- Transformation – product development and diversification
- Digital literacy and engagement.

Additionally, mentees were offered up to \$9,000 in project funding, with matching co-contribution to support business improvements including EFTPOS systems, furniture, IT, appliances, display units and website development.

Product development

ST GEORGE REGION BIKES

The St George VIC now offer 2 cruiser-style push bikes for loan to visitors. This initiative aligns with our commitment to providing entertaining and eco-friendly ways to explore the area. These eye-catching bikes offer tourists a unique and comfortable way to discover the town and its scenic surroundings, all while reducing their environmental footprint.

Chosen for their comfort and distinctive design, the brightly coloured bikes also prominently feature in our branding, reinforcing their connection to the VIC and enhancing our presence within the community. Available free of charge (with a security deposit), the bikes are equipped with helmets, emergency repair kits and locks to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience.



ST GEORGE ART TRAIL

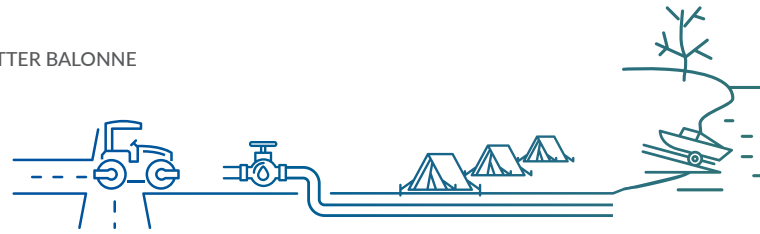
In late 2023, the Tourism team commenced work on an exciting new Art Trail for St George, designed to showcase the town's vibrant collection of murals, including the latest creations by Simon White Art. This trail will highlight the diverse stories captured within each mural, offering both locals and visitors an enriching glimpse into the unique culture and community of the St George Region.

Strategically placed throughout the town, these murals can be easily explored on a leisurely stroll, making them a must-see for art enthusiasts and casual explorers alike. As the Art Trail develops, plans are underway to expand it into a regional route that will incorporate all sculptures and artworks across the shire, further celebrating the area's rich artistic expression and enhancing the cultural experience for all who visit.

ONE TON POST

Council secured a Queensland Flooding Flexible Funding Grant of \$19,500 to safeguard the heritage listed One Ton Post in Mungindi, a site of profound significance for both tourism and the local community. This funding has enabled council to engage Niche





Environment and Heritage, a specialist consultancy agency, to research, assess, and develop a comprehensive Conservation Management Plan for this iconic monument.

The One Ton Post, erected by JB Cameron, stands as a remarkable testament to the completion of the 2 year endeavour to survey the straight section of the Queensland New South Wales border from Cameron Corner to the Barwon River. As one of the few remaining physical markers of this monumental achievement, the One Ton Post is not only a cherished historical landmark but also a key attraction that draws visitors to the region.

Through this initiative, council aims to ensure that the One Ton Post is preserved for future generations, maintaining its status as a vital part of our cultural heritage. Community consultations and site visits, commencing in August 2024, are integral to this process, ensuring that the voices and values of those who hold this site dear are honoured in the preservation efforts.

Marketing and promotions

ST GEORGE REGION: YOU'LL BE HOOKED

When it comes to reeling in tourists, we really know how to bait the hook in the St George Region. Running from May to September 2023, the highly successful, fish pun-laden “St George Region: You'll Be Hooked” campaign was designed to attract high-value, adventure-seeking families and SINKS/ DINKS (Single Income No Kids/Double Income No Kids) with the irresistible promise: one visit, and you'll be hooked. With St George celebrated as Queensland's inland fishing capital and all our towns perfectly situated by rivers, fishing became the ideal metaphor for our campaign. We knew that by highlighting our deep connection to these waterways, we could cast a wide net, enticing travellers to discover the region's many facets.



Recognising that there are many ways to hook a fish, we crafted our campaign with a wide-angle approach, embedding its messaging into vivid imagery and promotions that showcased the St George Region's significant experiences, attractions, and events. Taglines such as ‘Meander along inland waterways – You'll Be Hooked,’ ‘Fall for flat-out amazing views – You'll Be Hooked,’ ‘Visit classic Aussie Pubs – You'll Be Hooked,’ and ‘Experience events of the Outback kind – You'll Be Hooked’ highlighted the diverse adventures awaiting our visitors.

The campaign's centrepiece was the innovative ‘I Got Hooked on the St George Region’ Scavenger Hunt, a social media competition that encouraged visitors to explore all 7 towns, collecting a unique fish token in each town. This initiative not only boosted visitation and promoted regional dispersal but also enhanced social media engagement, aligning perfectly with our broader objectives of increasing overnight visitor expenditure and elevating the region's tourism profile.

Regarding our primary marketing objective of increasing awareness of the region, the St George Region website experienced a remarkable surge in traffic during the campaign period. From May to September 2022, the website recorded 61,047 views. In the same period in 2023, the website attracted

161,825 views, an impressive 165% increase. This heightened awareness was successfully converted into actual visitation.

During the campaign, a record-breaking wave of visitors was lured to our region, resulting in the most successful tourist season our shire has ever seen. The St George Region Visitor Centre recorded 12,035 visitors—a 24.3% increase compared to 9,676 visitors during the same period in 2022, making 2023 our best tourism year on record. This was achieved at a time when our neighbouring shires were experiencing a decline in visitors.

The ‘I Got Hooked’ keyring promotion was particularly popular, with 165 keyrings distributed by the Visitor Centre, engaging an estimated 330 participants (with groups ranging from 2 to 6 people). Of those who participated, 65% reported that they either altered their travel plans to visit the region or extended their stay to take part in the scavenger hunt. With more than 1,155 images shared on social media during the campaign, engagement and following on St George Region social media platforms saw a sharp increase. Facebook followers increased by 17.25% while Instagram grew by 22.38%, achieving our goal of growing our social media following and engagement.



LET THE ADVENTURE BEGIN

In early 2024, the shire unveiled its latest tourism marketing campaign, St George Region: Let the ADVENTURE begin! This campaign launched on the Imparja Network and ran throughout the tourist season, strategically airing during key viewing times, including the State of Origin.

The campaign's objective was to ignite the wanderlust of travellers, inviting them to embark on unforgettable journeys through the heart of our corner of southwest Queensland. Whether it's relaxing in one of our 7 river towns, delving into the rich history, savouring local cuisine, or embracing the great outdoors, the St George Region offers an adventure uniquely tailored to every visitor. The TV adverts were bolstered by a comprehensive digital and print campaign, extending across social media channels and electronic direct mail.

The campaign's highlight was the Win a VIP Trip for Two to the St George Region promotion, which launched in June 2024 across the St George Region Facebook and Instagram accounts. Prizes valued at over \$1,200 were generously provided by the St George Jockey Club, Riverland Motor Inn, The Australian Hotel, Geiger's Bistro, Riversands Wines and CC's Trendz. The promotion received an overwhelming response, culminating in a record-breaking 8,674 clicks on the competition page on the St George Region website. By 30 June, over 2,000 entries had been received, more than tripling the 653 entries recorded by the

same date in 2022, a remarkable 101.5% increase in engagement.

Destination profile

SOCIAL MEDIA

The 2023-24 financial year marked a period of exceptional growth for both the St George Region Facebook and Instagram pages, reflecting the success of our digital outreach and the increasing popularity of our region.

On Facebook, we witnessed a remarkable 48.9% increase in followers, starting the year with 8,502 and ending with 12,997. This surge was driven by the success of our "Get Hooked" and "Let the ADVENTURE begin" campaigns, which resonated strongly with our audience. However, a key moment that propelled this growth was a viral post featuring a stunning image from Dust Devil Helicopters, capturing goats being mustered on a property near Bollon. This post struck a chord with audiences, garnering over 7,800 likes, 1,200 comments and 1,800 shares in under 2 days. It reached an audience of more than 1 million people and resulted in over 1,500 new followers for the St George Region page. The post's impact was further amplified when it was picked up by Queensland Country Life, highlighting our region on a broader platform.

Instagram also saw a steady increase, with followers growing by 12.3%, from 1,243 to 1,396. This growth, while more gradual, underscores the

expanding reach of our content and the increasing interest in the St George Region's unique offerings.

WEBSITE

Building on the momentum from our record-breaking social media growth, the 2023-24 financial year also saw unprecedented success in website traffic. Once again, we exceeded all previous benchmarks, with total website views soaring to 311,260, a staggering 115% increase from the prior year. Similarly, total sessions surged by 117%, reaching an impressive 73,300.

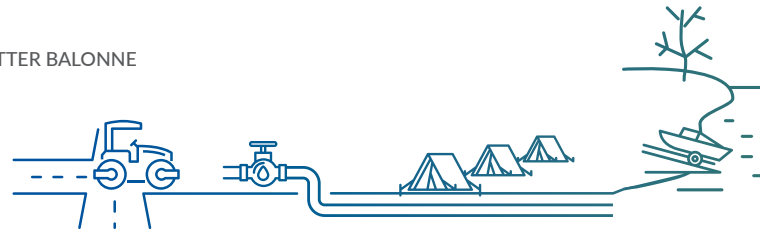
Competition for the most viewed pages was fierce, with the top spot claimed by the Balonne Artesian Thermal Hot Springs, attracting 16,624 views. Hot on its heels was the Explore St George Region homepage with 15,084 views, followed closely by the St George Queensland town page, which garnered 15,001 views. The Attractions page also performed strongly, securing 12,329 views, while the WIN a VIP Trip to St George Region for Two Competition page achieved an impressive 8,674 views in just 1 month.

These figures not only highlight the success of our targeted campaigns and engaging content but also underscore the growing interest and curiosity about our region. The significant rise in website traffic is a clear indicator of our continued ability to captivate and attract both new and returning visitors, further solidifying our position as a premier destination in the heart of Queensland.

Awards and recognition

TRIPADVISOR TRAVELLERS' CHOICE AWARDS

For the third consecutive year, the dedicated staff and volunteers at the St George Region VIC were honoured with a Tripadvisor Travellers' Choice Award. This accolade celebrates their unwavering commitment to providing exceptional service, recognising their efforts in creating memorable



experiences for visitors. Being awarded this prestigious recognition not only highlights the hard work and passion of our Tourism team but also places our VIC among the top 10% of travel experiences worldwide. This achievement is a testament to the team's consistent excellence and the welcoming atmosphere they cultivate for all who visit the St George Region.

GREY NOMAD AWARDS

Balonne Shire secured a remarkable victory at the 2023 Grey Nomad Awards, winning 2 golds. Our town of Thallon and its 250-strong residents were honoured with 2 gold awards in March 2024, the Best Grey Nomad Friendly Town in Australia and the Best Grey Nomad Friendly Experience in Queensland. This achievement highlights how Thallon, led by the Progress Association, revitalised itself from the brink of becoming a ghost town into a must-visit destination. Iconic landmarks like 'William' the hairy-nosed wombat statue and the stunning Thallon painted GrainCorp Silos have captured the imagination of visitors. Thallon now stands as a testament to the power of community spirit and the possibilities of hope. These awards followed the shire's 2022 win for Best Grey Nomad Trail for the Mungindi Sculpture Trail.



BEST OF QUEENSLAND

Six local businesses from the St George Region made it onto Tourism & Events Queensland's (TEQ) "Best of Queensland" list for 2024. These businesses were the Francis Hotel, Hebel Hotel & General Store, Jacaranda Country Motel, Nindigully Pub, Pelican Rest Tourist Park, and Sandytown River Cruises. This was a remarkable achievement, especially considering that our region had previously only ever had 1 business, the Francis Hotel, recognised on this list. This success was largely due to the ongoing support provided by BSC through the Tourism Mentoring Program and the General Mentoring Program.

Cross regional partnerships

The Balonne Shire Tourism team works in partnership with local, regional, state, and national tourism groups, bodies, and associations to ensure that the VIC and the St George Region are effectively promoted, while also ensuring that staff stay up to date with current best practices. Strengthening these relationships remains a high priority within our strategy, particularly under Priority 3.2: Highway Links and Priority 4.3: Industry Networking.

At the local level, the Tourism team hosted 4 quarterly meetings with the Balonne Shire Tourism Network. These meetings are designed to support operators by keeping them informed about industry events and activities, while also providing a platform for collaboration and improving cross-promotion within the region. The team travelled to Thallon in November 2023 and to Dirranbandi in February 2024 for 2 of the meetings, with the other 2 held in St George in August 2023 and May 2024. Additionally, the team partnered with 4 local businesses for a 2 page spread on the St George Region in the 2024 Outback Queensland Travellers' Guide.

At the regional level, the Tourism team continued its collaboration with SWQROC, attending the Queensland Outdoor Adventure Expo in July 2023 in Toowoomba and the Moreton Bay Expo in February 2024 as part of the SouthWest: Be Our Guest stand, alongside representatives from Quilpie, Murweh, Paroo, and Bulloo Shires. We also worked with our SWQROC partners on a 2024 South West regional major events calendar and an advertisement promoting the SouthWest Loop in the 2024 Outback Queensland Travellers' Guide. Moreover, Anita Clark was contracted to represent and promote the SouthWest Loop at the 2024 Australian Tourism Exchange in Melbourne.

The Tourism manager also attended the 2024 launch of the Outback Queensland Tourism Association's (OQTA) Travellers' Guide and the new Wellness Way trail in February 2024, alongside representatives from SWQROC partner councils. As a direct result of this partnership with OQTA, the St George Region hosted travel writers Andrew Mevisson and Glenn Diggle, who were commissioned by Vacations & Travel to write a feature about the southwest region of Outback Queensland's new Wellness Way Trail experience, which begins in St George.

At the state level, the Tourism manager attended the Outback Conversations industry event at TEQ, providing an opportunity to engage directly with TEQ staff on topics including publicity, events, marketing, trade, and experience development, and to present an update on new offerings for the St George Region in 2024.

At a national level, the Tourism manager attended the Australian Regional Tourism Conference in Newcastle in October 2023, with representatives from TEQ and OQTA. Discussions at the conference focused on crisis planning for tourism, creating sustainable tourism futures, the challenges and opportunities of AI in the visitor economy, and strategies for regions to embrace wellness and agritourism.



2.6 STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS, PLANNING AND ADVOCACY

Building and maintaining strategic partnerships is critical to the success of BSC in identifying projects and advocating to all levels of government and key stakeholders that are key to current needs, liveability and future growth of the shire. Council values its relationships with local groups including the St George and District Chamber of Commerce, progress associations (Mungindi, Thallon, Dirranbandi and Hebel) and the Bollon District & Community Group.

Through regular engagement at meetings and forums, council can obtain valuable community feedback to assess, determine and scope key place-based activities and projects and seek funding to deliver these projects across the shire's communities. Council has also been proactive in attending targeted industry events to promote opportunities in the Balonne region and identify and implement best practices learned from these events.

The economic and workforce development programs were active in continuing community musters in Thallon and Bollon, encouraging businesses and residents to have their say and be made aware of relevant programs and projects in the economic and workforce development areas.

Funded by the Australian Government's Regional and Remote Communities Microgrid fund and in partnership with All Energy Pty Ltd, council completed 6 renewable energy and battery projects across the shire in February 2024. A total of 55.8kWp Photovoltaic solar and 10.8kwh of battery storage was delivered. Power generation per annum is estimated at 93,155 kWh with \$26,800 estimated savings based on current tariff 20. Export to the grid is approximately 32% and 68% is utilised onsite.

Council plays an important advocacy role on behalf of our communities and



is actively involved in several regional advocacy groups including:

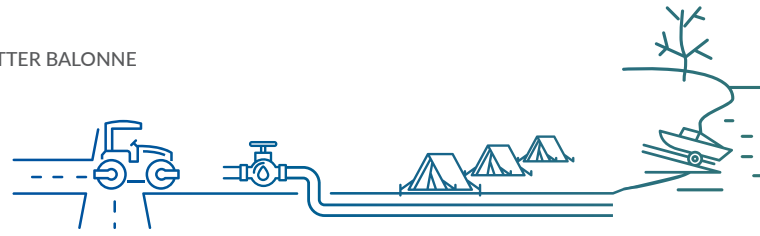
- South West Regional Organisation of Councils (SWQROC)
- Darling Downs South West Queensland Council of Mayors (DDSWQCOM)
- Western Queensland Alliance of Councils (WQAC)
- Toowoomba Surat Basin Enterprise (TSBE)
- Murray-Darling Basin Authority (MADA)
- Outback Queensland Tourism Association (OQTA)

Key projects council is working on with regional partners include:

- Inland rail opportunities via the southwest rail line to Goondiwindi, with Goondiwindi Regional Council
- Digital connectivity to eliminate black spots
- Designated area migration agreements to assist in attracting migrant workers to the region

- Housing initiatives including the delivery of the Balonne Shire LHAP
- Childcare and education needs, including building on opportunities from the CUC Balonne and university partners and supporting education across the regions
- Working with SWQROC to promote the Southwest Queensland region, to attract investment, business services, professionals and trades
- Opportunities arising from the 2032 Olympic Games and legacy
- Environmental projects such as waste and recycling projects
- Cross-border issues
- Major infrastructure projects
- Tourism marketing promoting regional events and opportunities.

Council also relies heavily on its advocacy and values the partnerships it has with both the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments across numerous departments and key industry groups including AgForce, Meat and Livestock Australia, Cotton Australia, Hort Innovation, Queensland Farmers



Federation, Ag Tech and Logistics Hub, Advance Queensland, State Development, Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Department of Employment and Small Business Training, Trade and Investment Queensland, Tourism Queensland, Outback Queensland Tourism Association and the Office of the Small Business Commissioner.

Into the future

COMMUNITY

- Continue to build upon service delivery through the Hub and shire-wide libraries
- Community grants and RADF will continue to support our local community groups
- Continue support for volunteer organisations with assistance via Work Camps in St George and Dirranbandi
- The Arts and Culture Strategy will be reviewed and adopted
- Create more opportunities for the community to connect through events and functions across the shire
- Increased engagement and building relationships with community groups across the shire

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Partner with agencies, telcos and various technologies to eliminate black spots in digital connectivity across the shire enhancing both liveability and enabling future economic development opportunities
- Work with partners investing in new tourism infrastructure and supporting the growth of tourism in the shire including areas such as adventure and agritourism
- Further build on opportunities created by landholder investments in exclusion fencing projects
- Continue to support and encourage agricultural expansion and diversification
- Continue to support small business development, growth and entrepreneurship and trade and procurement opportunities to maintain strong and resilient businesses and communities
- Continue to advocate through direct engagement and business case development to both state and federal governments on much needed infrastructure and addressing key issues that impact shire liveability,

growth and prosperity

- Encourage further investment into renewables and alternative energy, decarbonisation and circular economy projects in the region, aligning with state and federal government strategies and opportunities
- Through the LHAP Committee, promote investment opportunities and support investors and developers in the development and construction of housing to support current needs and future growth in the shire
- Play a key role in emerging and evolving industries to realise the economic and employment opportunities
- Support 7 major project proponents to develop and establish projects in the Balonne Shire and potential subsequent investment
- Subject to further government funding support, continue to deliver the workforce development program supporting current and future Balonne based businesses, future skills and workforce needs and develop bespoke and skilled future career pathways for current and future Balonne Shire residents



- Develop key industrial land and areas for commercial development
- Support and further develop the shire's educational capabilities through local schools and further advancement of the CUC Balonne centres in St George and Dirranbandi
- Continue to deliver on the actions set forth in the 2023-27 Balonne Shire Economic Development Strategy
- Other areas Council will support the agricultural sector include;
 - Improvements to on-farm digital connectivity
 - Workforce development, including temporary and permanent workers and career pathways
 - Energy and water initiatives
 - Supply chain opportunities
 - Advocacy on key issues facing the agriculture industry
 - Agricultural education and immersion programs
- Agricultural technology and innovation
- Business mentoring and advisory
- Farm diversification
- Further development and opportunities in the small livestock sector
- Value-add opportunities in the grain and cotton sectors
- Opportunities in renewable and alternative energy, circular economy and decarbonisation
- Advocating for infrastructure requirements.

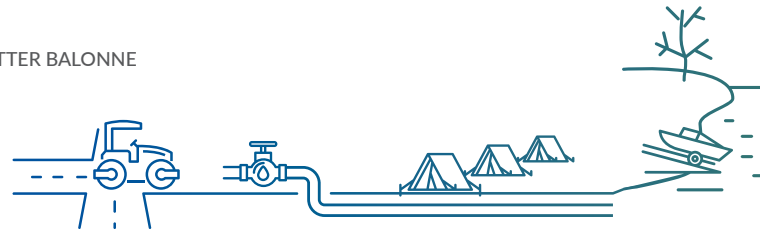
TOURISM AND EVENTS

- Continue to drive growth in the Balonne Shire, building on previous successes in raising the destination's profile, increasing visitor numbers, and extending overnight stays.
- Adapt strategies to ensure continued growth in the face of challenges ahead, including a potential decline

in domestic travel, due to rising fuel prices and the escalating cost of living, particularly impacting the Grey Nomad market

- Expanding our reach to High-Value Adventure-Seeking Families and SINKS/DINKS (Single Income No Kids/ Double Income No Kids), demographics known for their higher spending and longer stays in the region. By targeting these markets, we aim to sustain and enhance our tourism numbers even in the face of economic headwinds.
- Intensify efforts to support and collaborate with local tourism and events operators, helping them grow and diversify their products and experiences, ensuring the Balonne Shire continues to offer unique and compelling attractions for visitors
- Continue to work closely with local, regional, and state partners, including SWQROC, OQTA, and TEQ, to stay ahead of industry trends and maintain our competitive edge.








ENVIRONMENT

Enhance, protect and sustain the environment within a framework of balancing social, cultural, economic and environmental needs.

15 actions were included in the operational plan for Environment.



-  = 14 Actions achieved target 90% on target and /or complete
-  = 0 actions achieved between 70% - 90% of action target
-  = 0 actions achieved less than 70% action target



3.1 BEST PRACTICE WASTE MANAGEMENT AND RECYCLING

Illegal dumping project

BSC and the Department of Environment, Science and Innovation have been working together for the past 3 years to work towards zero waste in Queensland communities. Council has been successful in securing an extension to the grant funding from the department, funding a full-time officer to continue to monitor, remove illegal dumping and educate the community about correct waste disposal until May 2025. Representatives from the Department of Environment, Science and Innovation visited the Balonne Shire, and council's Illegal Dumping Officer to discuss the program and its continued benefits for our shire.

Illegal dumping is a serious issue. It pollutes our environment, causes great harm to our ecosystems and significantly diminishes the use, enjoyment and value of our public places for residents and tourists. It can introduce and facilitate the spread of invasive weeds and pest species into our natural areas and bushlands, and harm wildlife and livestock by smothering natural vegetation cover.

A poor and uncared for environment leads to more dumping, other illegal

activities and antisocial behaviour. This in turn, can lead to reduced community pride, property values. Clean up and disposal costs can be substantial.

In the past 12 months, 219 illegal dumping sites were identified in the Balonne Shire. Common illegally dumped items included:

- Household general rubbish and goods (whitegoods, TVs, mattresses and furniture) - 24 sites
- Wood chipping, green and garden waste – 42 sites
- Building and commercial waste (construction and demolition materials) - 24 sites
- Tyres – 54 sites
- Vehicles and vehicle parts – 50 sites
- Animal carcasses and effluent – 16 sites
- Hazardous (asbestos, chemicals and syringes) - 9 sites

Offenders often go to extraordinary lengths to illegally dispose of waste to avoid detection and prosecution. BSC has increased surveillance within the shire, particularly in known hot spots and along stock routes. Surveillance signage and cameras have been erected, surveillance footage is reviewed regularly, any non-

complaint activity is investigated. On investigation, offenders were contacted, and appropriate action was taken. In the past 12 months 101,601 litres of illegally dumped waste material have been removed from our shire.

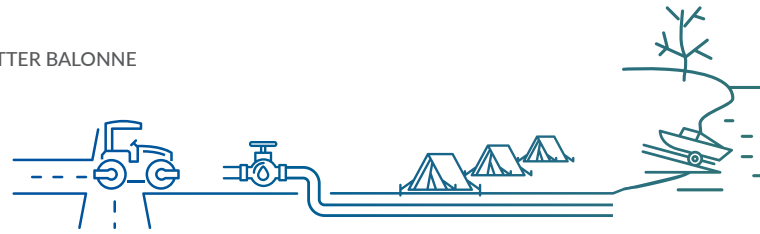
Waste management

During 2023-24, council continued to implement the Solid Waste Plan with the staggered implementation of landfill masterplans and infrastructure upgrades. Council also maintained an uninterrupted service of its weekly kerbside collections to St George, Dirranbandi, Thallon and Bollon.

Council delivered waste management information postcards to all residents on 2 separate occasions in the last financial year. The first postcard promoted correct recycling practices, while the second contained information of where and how rubbish should be correctly disposed.

Working in partnership with 11 other councils, BSC participated in the development and delivery of the Southwest Queensland Regional Waste and Resource Recovery Management Plan. The plan identifies collective and individual council responsibilities to





achieve a balanced and effective waste management system for the broader southwest region. The plan identified which councils contribute the most waste in the region, key issues in the region and a plan to address them.

Fires at landfill sites are another concern, with several illegal fires in landfill trenches occurring in Hebel, Dirranbandi and Thallon over the last year. This is a reportable offence to the Department of Environment, Science and Innovation.

Landfill sites

Council maintains a network of waste facilities across the shire. Since the development of the Solid Waste Plan in 2022, council has been working on improving its landfills and forecasting infrastructure upgrades to comply with the conditions set out by the environmental authority, while improving community access to services.

During 2023-24, the St George waste facility undertook concrete crushing to reclaim space in the resource recovery area. This resulted in a total of 3,280m³ of <75mm crushed concrete, which will be used for recycled pavement material for internal roads and dropdown pads. The St George waste facility also shredded 12,000 tonnes of green

waste. Unfortunately, due to a high level of plastic and foreign material contamination, this green waste was used as landfill cover, to reduce odour and windblown litter.

As part of an adopted master plan, a survey was completed at the Dirranbandi landfill to identify historic cell location and inform future placement of landfill cells. New landfill cells are specially engineered to comply with environmental and work health safety standards.

The contract to manage the St George landfill went out to a scheduled tender this year. Proterra Group were the awarded contractor for this tender. We would like to acknowledge AH & JH Earthmoving who managed the site for the previous 8 years and who ensured an efficient and uninterrupted transition to the awarded contractor.

Kerbside collections

In the 2023-24, council reviewed and revitalised its kerbside collection services, including mapping service areas for the weekly general and bi-weekly recycling service days, delivered in a colour coordinated visual aid.

Council also reviewed kerbside bin,

general waste and recycling information provided to new and existing residents. Updated information now includes alternate drop-off locations for household recoverable items, as well as tips to manage household rubbish.

Council offered an additional kerbside collection for bulk green waste items to the townships of Bollon, Dirranbandi, Thallon and St George, as part of an effort to maintain community gardens.

DrumMUSTER

The DrumMUSTER service provides the best solution for disposing empty farm chemical containers. It is cleaner, safer and more cost effective than other disposal methods, it is also environmentally friendly.

Council continued to provide a quarterly DrumMUSTER service at their Springwell Road, St George site in August 2023, November 2023, February 2024 and May 2024. A total of 2,862 containers were collected in 2023-24, a decrease of 455 containers from the previous financial year.





3.2 BIOSECURITY, PEST MANAGEMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Mosquito management

The Mosquito and Vector Control Program is crucial for protecting public health. Council work in partnership with Queensland Health to actively monitor and report mosquito-borne illnesses and other disease carrying vectors. Council conducts various mosquito surveillance initiatives to monitor and mitigate diseases such as Ross River virus and Barmah Forest virus. Council have also continued to monitor Japanese Encephalitis virus (JEV) and work closely with neighbouring jurisdictions to ensure effective vector spraying can be administered in border towns such as Mungindi, during disaster responses.

Effective mosquito management involved implementing environmental management practices to reduce mosquito breeding sites, this included eliminating stagnant water sources and properly maintaining and treating water vessels, as needed.

Council encouraged community participation in mosquito control efforts and supporting initiatives to enhance public health resilience against vector-borne diseases. Public education campaigns were provided to inform the

community about mosquito prevention measures, such as using repellents, wearing protective clothing, and helping banish breeding sites.

Biosecurity Plan

The BSC Biosecurity Plan 2019 – 2024 provides strategic direction for the management of pest plants and animals in the Balonne Shire, to reduce the impact of invasive biosecurity matter on our community, our economy and our environment.

The plan provides a coordinated approach to the management of pest plants and animals in our local government area by:

- setting objectives and strategies to manage pest plants and animals
- prioritising pest plants and animals
- identifying the roles and

responsibilities of all stakeholders

- outlining processes to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the plan.

An environment column is included in the Balonne Bulletin, to assist our community to identify and effectively manage priority pest plants and animals in the shire.

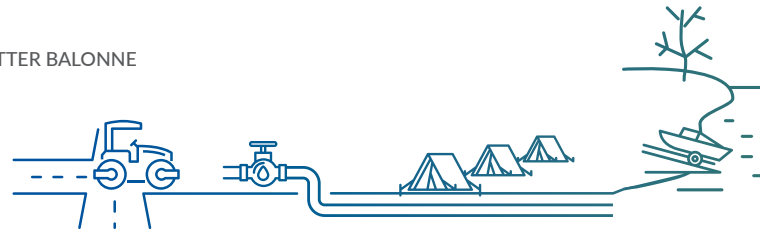
Feral animal levy

Funds raised from the feral animal levy are applied towards the continued operation of feral animal management services and activities in the shire. This includes:

- a wild dog scalp bounty for all wild dogs captured in the Balonne Shire local government area
- a 1080 baiting service, including free meat baits (to a maximum of 40kg) for baiting campaigns within the shire.



BAITING CAMPAIGN MONTH	NUMBER OF PARTICIPATING PROPERTIES	KILOGRAMS OF FRESH MEAT BAIT	KILOGRAMS OF FRESH PIG MEAT BAITS
October 2023	56 properties	2,280kg	40kg
May 2024	67 properties	2,280kg	1,690kg



Baiting

Wild dog baiting campaigns were completed in October 2023 and May 2024. Council currently has 2 licensed operators to conduct these bi-annual campaigns, with the assistance of the Queensland Murray-Darling Catchments Ltd rangers.

In between campaigns, council provided 1080 baits for 25 properties to conduct pulse baiting activities, including:

- 440kg wild dog meat baits
- 280kg pig meat baits
- 11,395kg pig grain baits
- 1,000 manufactured wild dog baits.

Council has now acquired all the necessary equipment to conduct baiting activities at the St George council depot, including a new baiting shed, a 1080 storage shed and concrete area.

Scalps

Council received 340 wild dog scalps in 2023-24, 141 male, 115 female and 84 pups. A total of 202 dogs were trapped and 138 were shot. This number is significantly higher than the 180 wild dog scalps received in 2022-23. The increase could be attributed to the 2023-24 bounty increase, from \$50 to \$100 per scalp, as well as an indication of favourable weather conditions over the past year.

3.3 STOCK ROUTE PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

Weed management

Under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*, local government and landholders are responsible for controlling weeds on their property and taking all reasonable and practical steps to minimise the risks and impacts associated with invasive plants under their control on our environment.

Weeds have a significant impact on primary industries, natural ecosystems, and human and animal health. Taking a proactive approach to controlling weeds is much better than waiting for problems to occur. Identifying, reporting, and having planned ongoing weed management strategies will deliver long term benefits to our shire.

Council was successful in receiving \$67,000 from TMR funding for Element 5 declared pest weeds. The herbicide spraying program along state-controlled road corridors was completed using these funds. Council's environmental services officers, along with Queensland Murray-Darling Catchments Ltd (QMDCL) rangers also conducted spraying programs along the stock routes, roadsides, and local road corridors. Priority pest weed species that were targeted in 2023-24 included



Pest flora images courtesy of Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

African Boxthorn, Coral Cactus, Mimosa Bush, Mother of Millions, Common Pest Pear and Tree Pear, and Prickly Acacia.

Coral Cactus

Council's environmental officers have been working in partnership with Biosecurity Queensland and landholders in the southwest region of our shire to combat and control the spread of Coral Cactus (*Cylindropuntia fulgida*). Council officers have conducted follow up site

visits to the affected properties through the year, to monitor the biocontrol agent that has been released over the past 7 years. This biocontrol agent has been extremely successful and has achieved fantastic results.

Harrisia Cactus

Council's environmental officers have been working in partnership with Biosecurity Queensland and landholders in the north-northeast region of our



shire to combat and control the spread of *Harrisia Cactus* (*Harrisia martinii*). Officers are using herbicide control measures to stem the spread of this restricted cactus.

Hymenachne

Hymenachne (*Hymenachne amplexicaulis*) has been found in the Moonie River in the Thallon area. Council's environmental officers, in conjunction with Biosecurity Queensland, used a drone to map infestations. Control treatment spraying works commenced in June 2024. Further monitoring and re-spraying using a watercraft will be required in the coming year.

Stock route grazing and travelling permits

To mitigate potential fire risk along landholder's property boundaries, council offered grazing permit fee waivers to landholders agisting stock on stock routes and road corridors along their boundaries, from July to December 2023. The standard application fee was still applicable.

This opportunity was well utilised, with 34 stock route grazing agistment permits (for 6,530 head) issued for the shire's stock route network in 2023-24. This resulted in landholder permit fee savings of approximately \$67,000, while also reducing grass fuel loads across the shire.

Eight stock route travel permits (for 9,054 head) were issued for the shire's stock route network in 2023-24.

Council was successful in receiving \$32,000 from TMR funding for Element 6 firebreak grading. Firebreak grading of all shire town surrounds was completed.

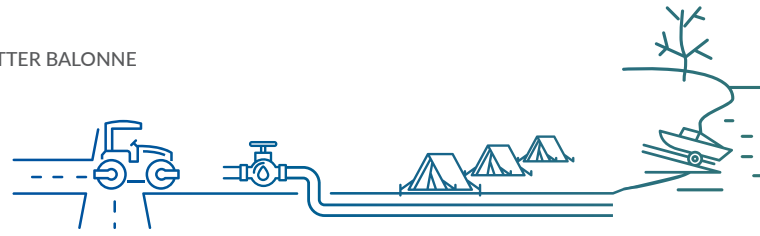
Capital works projects

The Department of Natural Resources approved 3 capital works projects across the shire's stock route network in 2023-24. Capital works were completed for new night yards at the Eagle Hawk and Boombah 1 water facilities. Desilting and erosion control were also carried out at the Diamond water facility.

Wild dog exclusion fencing

BSC has collaborated with rural landholders to construct Wild Dog Exclusion Fencing (WDEF) across the region over the past 5 years. Council has been successful in obtaining 3 federal grants and a special rate scheme since 2019. Current status of previous funding rounds as follows:

- Communities Combatting Pest and Weed Impact (CCWI) – completed in October 2020
- MDBEDP Round 1 - Since construction commenced, 41 of the 45 properties



have reached practical completion, with 788.53km of the 810.80km approved fencing projects completed (97.25% project completion)

- MDBEDP Round 3 - Since construction commenced, 9 of the 14 properties have reached practical completion, with 157.34km of the 180.76km approved fencing projects completed (87% project completion)
- Special Rate Scheme Round 1 - Since construction commenced, 18 of 23 properties reached practical completion, with 335.29km of the 393.50km approved fencing completed (85.25% project completion)
- Special Rate Scheme Round 2 - Since construction commenced, 11 of 15 properties reached practical completion, with 157.09km of the 197.52km approved fencing completed (80% project completion).

An independent report on the WDEF program is commissioned every 2 years to monitor impacts of the program over the long term. The second Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement Report was released by Hall Chadwick in February 2024. The report outlined the economic background and impacts from investment by farmers involved in the WDEF program and their opinions. Hall Chadwick estimates that this investment will lead to an increase in the value of

agricultural production in the shire by at least \$100M per year.

Council will seek any available future funding in 2024-25 for strategic fencing projects that will close identified gap corridors within our shire.

BSC was proud to receive the LGMA 2024 Award of Excellence in the Sustainability category for its ambitious and highly successful WDEF Program.





3.4 ADOPTION OF ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES AND RENEWAL SOLUTIONS TO ADAPT AND RESPOND TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Flood resilient design

Queensland is the most disaster impacted state in Australia, with flooding being the most frequent disaster event. We cannot stop floods from occurring, but we can take steps to reduce their impact. Flood resilient design is one of the many ways council has been improving flood resilience in our shire. Flood mapping has been incorporated into council's Planning Scheme, providing clear guidance on flood resilient design principles and construction details.



Cultural burn

The cultural burn project was awarded to council in 2021 by the Department of Agricultural, Water and the Environment. The project aims to prove that cultural burning, or cool burning, a technique developed and used by Aboriginal people over the last 40,000 years, is an effective weed eradication technique, including eradication of Prickly Pear and Mother of Millions.

BSC received an extension to continue this project during 2023-24 due to the region being either too wet or too dry to allow for burning to take place.

Workshops were led by Fire Sticks, an Indigenous organisation specialising in Indigenous land management practices. These workshops focused on how to complete assessments of the burn sites. It has become evident that the cool burning technique has been effective in reducing weed infestation. The prevalence of scar trees in and around burn sites was noted during assessments.

Council officers and Traditional Owners from Mandandanji, Yuwaalaraay, Gunggari and Kamilaroi nations attended the Biri Bulumba Budang National Custodians of Country Gathering

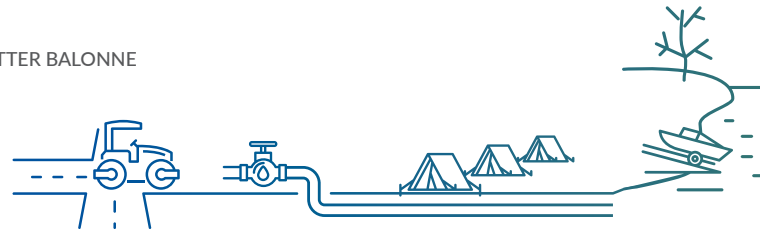


in Cairns. This gathering was an opportunity for the working group to share knowledge and experiences with other groups, while learning about the responsibility all people have when looking after country. The gathering expanded the knowledge of indigenous innovation and how this ingenuity can help improve outcomes for threatened species management, biodiversity and agriculture. The conference helped our QMDCL rangers emerge as fire practitioners. This will be a wonderful asset for the shire in continuing to manage weeds through cultural burning.

Rain delayed cultural burning activities in 2024, which moved the focus of the project to milestones not affected by weather. The project working group took steps to ensure scar trees were

identified as a prominent fixture of the shire's landscape. Working with Traditional Owners, QMDCL recorded scar tree GPS locations. Council worked with QMDCL to erect barriers and signs around scar trees to protect them and acknowledge their cultural significance.

Council also coordinated a cultural burning workshop for local farmers, graziers and agriculture students. Queensland Fire Department, Landcare and Fire Lore explained how cultural burning can be used to improve the land. Landcare showed examples of successful cultural burning sites on properties in Cunnamulla, with significantly improved pasture due to increased nutrients and carbon storage created by cultural burning. Fire Lore explained how cultural burning can be used to improve the



health of the land and demonstrated a cultural burn on a local property. This site will continue to be monitored by the project team.

Favourable weather conditions allowed for another burn in autumn, which was led by the QMDCL emerging fire

practitioner as soon as site assessments were completed, and Traditional Owners had provided their consent.

Moving into the end of the 2023-24 the project was again delayed by unfavourable weather conditions which meant that USQ were not able

to complete their final report. As a result, council have been granted a further extension for the project to be completed by December 2024. The additional time will allow the project team to determine an accurate indication of the cultural burning impact on stock route weeds.

3.5 STRONG ENVIRONMENTAL PARTNERSHIPS AND ADVOCACY

BSC aims to continue to increase collaboration with other environmental regulators to enable better regulation and implement continuous improvements, to ensure strong environmental outcomes for our shire. Networking with other councils and relevant federal and state government departments builds strong respectful relationships and trust with stakeholders and our community.

Council hosted the inaugural Southern Rural Lands Officers Group (SRLOG) Forum in April 2024. The Environmental Services team worked with the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries in organising the forum. Representatives from 10 local governments in the southern region, 6 representatives from various state government departments and 3 other stakeholders attended the forum. This was an opportunity for all attendees



share information and enhance biosecurity skills and knowledge.

Field trips and workshops covered biologically controlled Coral Cactus, a cacti identification master class, best practice cactus management, stock route vegetation management practices, vegetation codes, emergency animal diseases, TMR weed spraying and available funding, rabbit control measures, impacts of identified emerging

weeds and a pig control project.

Council's Environmental Services officers attended the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) Natural Resource Management Forum, held in Cunnamulla, in May 2024.

All environmental motions put forward by BSC at the LGAQ 2023 Annual Conference were adopted by LGAQ. These motions covered advocacy on a



range of issues including environmental compliance for landfills and waste, water buybacks, gravel pits, land use classification for carbon farming and wild dog fence projects.

In June 2024, the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries announced the successful applicants for the Queensland Feral Pest Initiative Round 8(a) - Feral pig coordination – Biosecurity Preparedness funding. SWQROC was selected to receive this funding, which will be used to employ feral pig management coordinators across the region. These coordinators will support the initiation and delivery of effective feral pig management, bolstering local biosecurity efforts.

Food Safety

Food safety regulations apply to each stage of food and beverage production. Currently there are 54 food licence holders within the Balonne Shire. Current licence holders are a combination of shop front businesses, hotels and motels, caterers and mobile food vendors. Council works with food businesses to ensure that they are providing safe food to their customers.

Local Laws

The focus for local laws in the past financial year has been to reinforce changes to laws introduced in July 2023, these included:

- Residential allotments less than 10,000m² (2.47 acres) are only permitted up to 3 registered dogs, 1 must be desexed and they require a permit
- Allotments over 10,000m² (2.47

acres) are permitted to have up to 4 registered dogs, 2 must be desexed

- A permit is required for keeping a rooster in the urban footprint of the St George township
- A permit is required for keeping more than 2 beehives in the urban footprint of St George, Thallon, Mungindi, Dirranbandi, Hebel and Bollon.

Council continued their relationship with Karma's Place Rescue. Karma's is a small not-for-profit volunteer organisation dedicated to the rescue, rehabilitation, and rehoming of animals in need. Karma's volunteers drive from their Wondai location to St George to collect surrendered and unclaimed dogs at no cost to council. Karma's Place saved and rehomed 26 dogs and puppies from the Balonne Shire in 2023-24. Council was also grateful to receive a pallet of free dog food from ARC Companion Animal Rescues, which has been used to feed impounded animals.

Compliance - animal control

Council conducted an annual systematic inspection program from May to June in 2024. This authorised inspection program was conducted throughout the shire townships and allowed council's authorised officers to visit and enter yards of premises to monitor compliance. When unregistered dogs or other animals were residing at the residences, council issued the resident with a compliance notice but allowed the resident to register their dogs and pay for any required permits in the discount period in July 2024.

In November 2023, BSC assisted Quilpie Shire Council with their authorised inspection program to identify



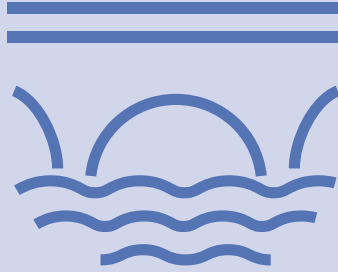
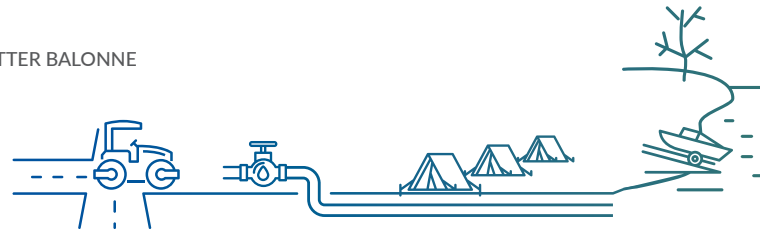
unregistered dogs in the townships of Quilpie and Eromanga. This was conducted under the Sister Council Program, helping councils achieve outcomes when they do not have the required resources.

At the end of 2023 council ran a social media 'Shut the Gate' campaign, reminding residents to keep dogs and other animals secure in their residence.

Into the future

In 2024-25, the Environmental Services team will focus on:

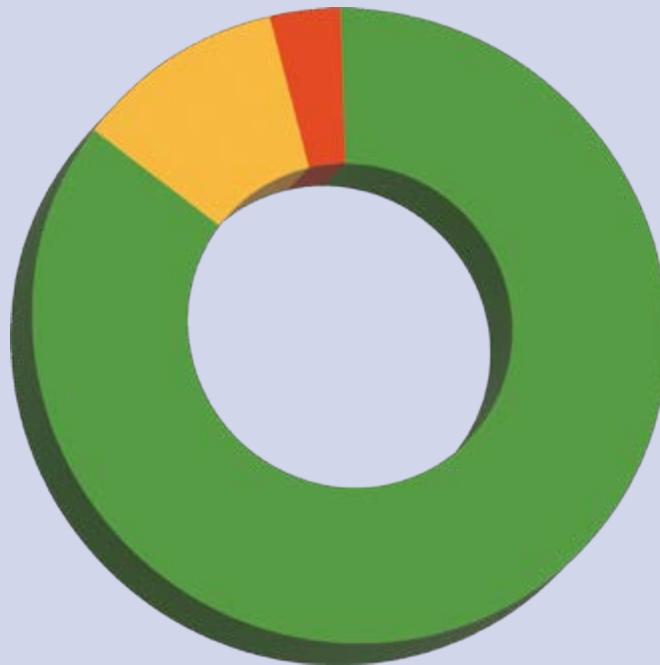
- BSC Biosecurity Plan 2025 – 2030
- Diversifying weed management practices through cultural burning
- Education about the implications of illegal dumping
- Completion of the existing WDEF programs
- Seeking further funding for strategic Wild Dog Fencing
- Stock Route compliance
- Local Laws compliance






INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLANNING

Effective infrastructure planning and design, construction, and ongoing management to support the shire's needs with a focus on well-planned projects to suit changing needs into the future.

29 actions were included in the operational plan for Infrastructure and Planning.



-  = 24 Actions achieved 90% on target and /or complete
-  = 3 actions achieved between 70% - 90% of action target
-  = 1 action achieved less than 70% action target



4.1 SAFE AND CONNECTED TRANSPORT NETWORKS

BSC handed down its largest budget in recent years with over \$65M allocated for road maintenance and upgrades. This achievement is the culmination of many years working towards financial sustainability and lobbying for change in the distribution of federal assistance grants.

Council has maintained a good position to increase revenue through contract works with the achievement of ISO accreditation for its quality, environmental and safety systems for transport and infrastructure, along with maintaining TMR accreditation.

Our shire has a small population spread over a large geographical area, as well as a heavy reliance on transport haulage, making road works a crucial priority for council. As a result, maintaining and improving our road network takes most

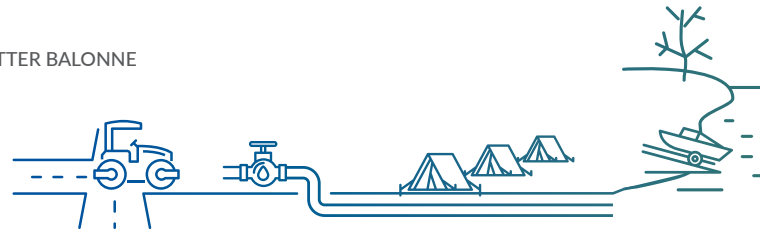
of our forecast expenditure for the coming financial year.

Key road projects for BSC in the 2023-24 financial year include:

- Flood recovery road works throughout the shire (QRA)
- Jakelwar-Goodooga Road Upgrade (DRFA Local Recovery and Resilience Grants)
- Jakelwar-Goodooga Road South (BSC, Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme and Roads to Recovery Program)
- Betterment Project - Jakelwar Goodooga Road South (BSC and QRA) and Jakelwar Goodooga Road North (QRA)
- Bollon-Mitchell Road Upgrade (Remote Roads Upgrade Pilot Program)
- Whyenbah Road (BSC and TIDS /R2R)

- Betterment Project - Whyenbah Road (BSC and QRA)
- Rural Grading Water Points
- Local Roads Reseal Program
- Local Roads Re-sheet Program
- Local Roads Sealed Road Rehabilitation Program
- Local Unsealed Road Rehabilitation Program
- Local Roads (Town) Program
- Detail Design for Victoria Street between Scott and Henry Streets
- Road Condition Assessment

The Balonne Shire experienced multiple severe weather events between 2020 and 2024, with a total of 6 separate declared disasters in this period. Council delivered and completed the remaining flood damage restoration works in the last financial year.



As of 30 June 2024, council has completed flood damage restoration works on the following roads:

• Bollon-Dirranbandi Road - Bridge	• Albert Street	• Ballangarry Road
• Beltana Road	• Bimbil Road	• Bolins Road
• Booligar Rd	• Byra Rd	• Cambo Road
• Cashelvale Road	• Cemetery Road	• Chelmer Road
• Corack Road	• Cubbie Road	• Dalkeith Road
• Davirton Road	• Dingadee Road	• East Goondulla Road
• Eumerella South Road	• Euraba Road	• Fernlee Road - Culverts - Fernlee Road
• Fernlee Road	• Gunningdaddy Road	• Habnarey Road
• Hollymount Road	• Hoolavale Road	• Ingaby Road
• Jakelwar- Goodooga Road North	• Jakelwar-Goodooga Road South	• Jhelum Plains Road
• Kilcummin Road	• Koomalah Road	• Kooroon Road
• Kulki Road	• Link Road	• Littleton Road
• Loughnan Downs Road	• McDonnel Avenue	• Minnum Road
• Mulga Downs Road	• Narkoola Road	• Noondo - Mungindi Road
• Noondoo-Thallon Road	• North Kulki Road	• Nulky Road
• Pine Park Road	• Ramalis Road	• Runnymede Road
• Salmon Road	• Satur Road	• Sunset Valley Road
• Talwood Mungindi Road	• Tambingey Road	• Teelba Road
• Thomby Road	• Thompsons Road	• Thungaby Road
• Trackers Crossing Road	• Ula Ula Road	• Wagoo Road
• Warrie Road	• West Haran Road	• Whyenbah Road
• Wonolga Road	• Woolerbilla Road	• Wolverine Road
• Yilgangandi Road		

Council is working with QRA to ensure all wet weather events in 2023-2024 are captured and that projects are identified for the Betterment Fund and DRFA, jointly funded by the Australian and Queensland Governments.

Local Roads of Regional Significance (LRRS)

The Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme (TIDS) is a jointly funded initiative between state and local governments. It is administered through the Road Alliance and the Southwest Regional

Roads Technical Group. The funding is specifically for identified LRRS. The following projects received TIDS funding in 2023-24:

- Whyenbah Road – Pavement upgrade and bitumen sealed
- Jakelwar-Goodooga Road North – Pavement upgrade and bitumen sealed

Roads to Recovery

R2R is a federal government funded multi-year program. This program was renewed by the federal government in 2023-24 with \$6.8M committed to council from 2019-20 to 2023-24. Council received R2R funding for pavement upgrade and bitumen sealing on Whyenbah Road in 2023-24.



Working in partnership on state roads

Council partners with TMR to deliver contract maintenance and upgrade works on state-controlled roads. Council has a Road Maintenance Performance Contract (RMPC) that services the state road network.

BSC's RMPC crew support our construction crew to deliver maintenance and construction services. Works include gravel re-sheeting, pavement repairs and flood emergent works, where required.

Council's RMPC contract amount for 2023-2024 was over \$4M. Council's road team successfully completed the contract with 100% spend of the RMPC funds allocated. Council's RMPC team has also been able to accommodate additional works outside their allocation to further assist TMR and the shire in providing a safer road network.

The continued funding and additional emergent works are testament to council's capability to meet TMR expectations of 100% spend whilst ensuring value for money and high-quality service.

CONTRACTED WORKS - 24A CARNARVON HIGHWAY - WIDENING AND RESEAL

Council was awarded the Minor Infrastructure Contract Sole Invitee to deliver pavement rehabilitation and widening on 24A Carnarvon Highway, between St George and Nindigully. The project consisted of earthworks, embankment, drainage structures, stabilisation and sealing.

CONTRACTED WORKS - 36A BALONNE HIGHWAY - PAVEMENT REHABILITATION

Council was awarded the Minor Infrastructure Contract Sole Invitee to deliver construction of the Balonne Highway. The project consisted of earthworks, drainage structures, stabilisation and sealing.

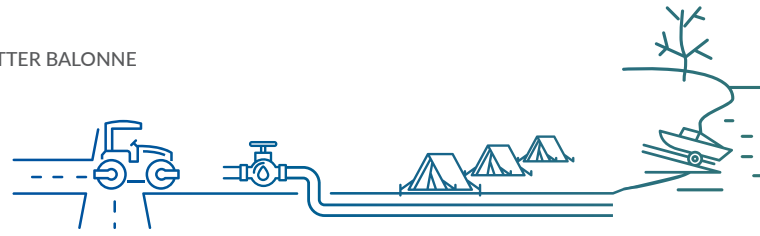
CONTRACTED WORKS - 24A CARNARVON HIGHWAY (MUNGINDI - ST GEORGE) FLOOD RESTORATION WORKS

Council was awarded the Minor Infrastructure Contract Sole Invitee to deliver Restoration of Essential Public Asset works due to flood damage. The project involved removing and replacing unbound pavement, minor pavement repairs, heavy shoulder grading, in-situ stabilisation and seal.

CONTRACTED WORKS - 24A CARNARVON HIGHWAY (NINDIGULLY - THALLON) GRID REMOVALS AND FENCING OF THE PROPERTY BOUNDARY

Council was awarded the Small-Scale Minor Works Sole Invitee to deliver the 24A grid removals and fencing of the property boundary project between Nindigully and Thallon. The project consisted of earthworks, side-track, fencing stabilisation and sealing.





4.2 ROBUST ASSET MANAGEMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND FACILITY MAINTENANCE

Maintaining our facilities

Providing effective and efficient management of assets is a key obligation for council. BSC faces unique challenges delivering services in a rural setting due to costs, availability of contractors and resources, as well as the impact of inclement weather. Council maintains approximately 215 buildings and structures across 7 townships. Maintenance activities are undertaken to ensure efficient operation and serviceability of assets. This ensures that the assets retain their service potential over the course of their life.

Maintenance includes reactive and proactive work activities. Reactive maintenance is unplanned repair work carried out in response to a service request and proactive maintenance is work that is carried out regularly or identified through routine inspections.

Council has received 267 service requests (up by over 100 requests) specifically related to buildings, and many more through consultation with our user groups and progress associations.

Aerodromes servicing our shire

Council is the operator of 2 certified aerodromes, St George and Dirranbandi, and aircraft landing areas at Bollon and Hebel. As required by CASA, annual technical inspections were completed at St George and Dirranbandi, and issues were rectified. St George Aerodrome has a state government regulated public transport service which is operated by Regional Express (Rex) Airlines twice a week. All aerodromes have a maintenance program administered by council. The aerodromes and airstrips service the Royal Flying Doctor Service, businesses and private users.

The Civil Aviation Safety Authority undertook an Obstacle Limitation Surfaces survey of the certified aerodromes in April 2024. Fourteen safety observations were identified for St George and 15 for Dirranbandi aerodromes. A corrective action plan has been prepared and items are being undertaken.

Developing St George Aerodrome

Council received \$1M in funding through the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program (LRCIP) to further develop the St George Aerodrome. The project consisted of electrical supply, switchboard, apron and drainage works.

Cemeteries

Council operates cemeteries in St George, Dirranbandi, Bollon, Thallon and Hebel. Council is progressing masterplans for St George and Bollon with the plans undertaking community consultation and being adopted.

Works commenced at Bollon with the installation of a memorial wall and landscaping. Stage 1 of the St George Cemetery works will commence next year with additional beams and landscaping being installed.

Across the shire

COUNCIL STAFF HOUSING

Council received funding from Works for Queensland to construct council staff housing. A 2 unit duplex was successfully constructed in Scott Street, St George. The units are a double brick construction, designed to be low maintenance and energy efficient with integrated heating and cooling, solar and automatic watering systems.

BEARDMORE DAM MASTERPLAN STAGE 1

Co-funding from Works for Queensland, BSC and Sunwater allowed council to commence works at Beardmore Dam as part of the Beardmore Dam Masterplan, including installing barbecues, picnic





tables, shelters and bins, all within a new irrigated area, supported by pumps and tanks to allow for irrigation of the area when the rainfall is not sufficient.

UPGRADES TO THE ST GEORGE HUB PRECINCT

Works completed at the St George Hub precinct in 2023-24 included installing lighting along the centre path, CCTV cameras and a screening fence to delineate the area from the carpark in Kling Lane.

DIRRANBANDI RAIL AND RIVER PRECINCT

This year saw further works undertaken on the Dirranbandi Rail and River Precinct project, with the completion of the long carpark on the northern side. This parking area was specifically designed to accommodate caravans and other long vehicles, encouraging visitors to stop in Dirranbandi and explore the local businesses and adjoining parklands.

ST GEORGE CBD - VICTORIA STREET DESIGN

Council undertook the next phase of the design for Victoria Street in the St George central business district, continuing from works previously completed. The project covers Grey Street from Henry Street to Scott Street and includes beautification of the centre median, footpath, buildouts and cross over points, as well as irrigation and landscaping.

TREE PLANTING AND LANDSCAPING

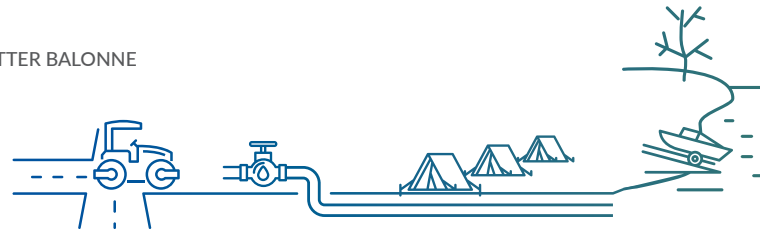
Council has been improving its landscape and streetscapes across the shire, thanks to the Australian Government funded LRCIP. The program includes removing, renewing and maintaining trees and other plants, together with irrigation systems. Council is striving to produce a balance of aesthetics and suitability of plants for our unique environment.

Council continues to collaborate with

Work Camp to deliver its horticultural plans in St George and other townships, storing almost 2000 seedlings at its nursery, shovel ready for planting. The infrastructure team is proud that all vegetation and horticultural work is carried out in-house.

PUBLIC OUTDOOR SPACES

The St George foreshore has recently been improved with new furniture, including 3 picnic shelters, 2 barbecue shelters and 1 park bench. These new additions provide comfortable and convenient spots for social gatherings, family outings, and recreational activities, creating a vibrant and welcoming environment along the foreshore. With a total cost of \$100,000, this project was funded by a \$60,000 allocation from the council's budget, supplemented by \$40,000 grant funding from the Queensland Government Emergency Response Fund Recovery and Resilience 2022 Program Recovery Grant.



4.3 EFFECTIVE WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT AND SEWERAGE SERVICES

New Mungindi Artesian Bore

Council finalised construction of a new water bore to secure an ongoing water supply for residents of the cross-border town of Mungindi and are currently working through the process for the final connection of this bore. This follows on from an agreement between BSC and the New South Wales Government on a collaborative funding arrangement to improve water quality, supply and pressure on both sides of the border. Funding for the project totalled \$1,475,852, which included a contribution of \$418,713 from BSC and \$1,057,139 of grant funding from the New South Wales Government. Currently, the township of Mungindi draws its water supply from the Moree Plains Shire Reservoir in New South Wales. Establishing the artesian bore in Mungindi supports the development of sustainable, secure and healthy water resources for our communities.



Dirranbandi Water Treatment Plant Upgrade

The Dirranbandi water treatment plant upgrade was initiated following a significant water quality incident. A glitch in the dosing system caused over 10 mg/L of residual chlorine to enter the town's distribution system, causing multiple complaints from residents. A comprehensive review of the plant revealed several operational issues which were rectified through a series of actions including:

- Relocating piping at the underground storage (balance tank), together with the chlorine injection point to enhance chlorine contact time and stabilise residual chlorine levels
- Installing 2 new analysers to ensure accurate measurement and monitoring of chlorine levels
- Upgrading the polymer dosing system to improve coagulant dosing.

The plant is operating consistently and meeting all regulatory requirements of the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines.



Water mains replacement, water consumption and water quality

Council has continued to renew or augment its water supply network at various critical locations across the shire to improve delivery of potable wholesome water to consumers. At Scott Street in St George the 80mm asbestos cement main was replaced by 100mm Blue Brute main. This project was executed in-house, from inception through to commissioning.

The 225mm main at Alfred Street, between Murchison Street and Henry Street, was replaced with a 225mm Blue Brute pipe as part of a request for tender.

The 100mm cast iron main at Dirranbandi was changed to a 100mm Blue Brute as part of a Minor Works Contract.

Stormwater, drainage and levees

In 2023, council secured funding through the Local Government Grants



and Subsidies Program to conduct a masterplan for stormwater and drainage in St George and Mungindi. The study will be completed by September 2024 and will include flood maps, options analysis and masterplans. The study will also feature solutions for local service requests and various inundation hotspots identified in the rain-on-grid flood study.

Council also received a DRFA grant for conducting an integrated stormwater and flood risk management study and plan for St George. The remaining townships were included in a recent grant submission that closed in August 2024. The grant allows for obtaining riverine flood data as an input for the study.

The levees around the shire are currently being inspected by qualified Queensland Registered Professional Engineers and a summary of completed inspections and their recommendations showing priorities have been submitted to council for budget estimation and approval.

Sustainable planning and development

The 2019 BSC Planning Scheme was reviewed and updated this year. Review changes included greater protection to existing businesses, greater site coverage

allowances, shed sizes relative to lot size, the St George centre zone was extended and intensive animal industry became code assessable.

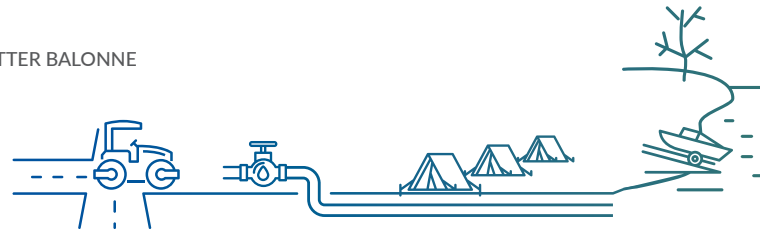
A feature of the 2024 Planning Scheme is updating flood mapping to cover all towns using new LiDAR data. The maps will be added through the same consultative planning process in late 2024. The information will also inform a QRA website portal in 2025 that will provide interactive flood mapping for residents.

A framework was provided for better integration of planning and building development applications with a single administration officer for both approval types. The planning customer service charter and development incentives policies were also adopted. Council received 12 planning and 36 building applications, with a total value of \$21M in 2023-24.

In line with legislative expectations, council commissioned an audit of planning compliance which resulted in council introducing a draft Planning Compliance Policy, scheduled reviews of conditions being met for development applications, a follow up process to ensure that developments undertaken without approval gained approval.

Into the future

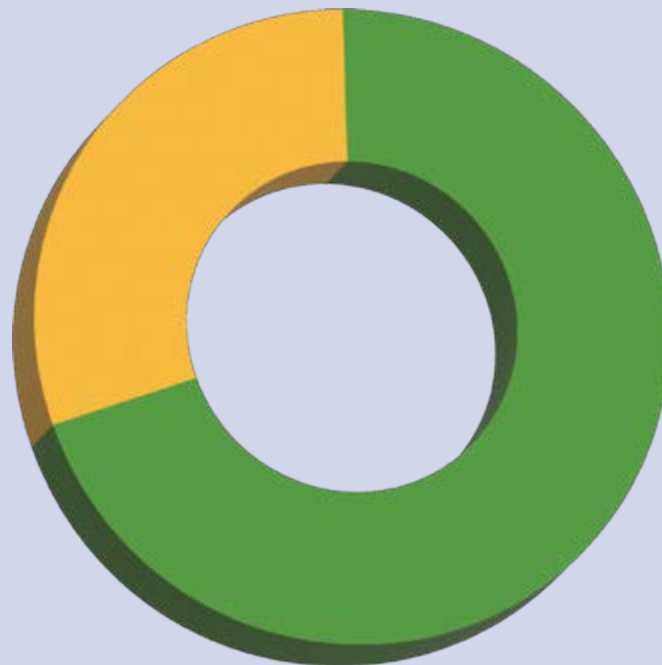
- Continuation of \$1.5M industrial development at St George Aerodrome
- Upgrade of lighting, fencing, perimeter road and terminal building at St George Aerodrome - \$592,000 co-funded by federal and state governments
- New female amenities block at Rowden Park - \$700,000 co-funded by state government
- Hebel Showgrounds toilet block - \$250,000 funded by the federal government
- Thallon Playground renewal - \$300,000
- Extending the seal by 20km on the Jakelwar Goodooga Road - funded by the state and federal governments
- Improving water security at Mungindi - \$700,000 co-funded by the NSW Government
- Resurfacing Beardmore Place with asphalt - \$659,000 funded by the federal government
- Plant replacement program - \$2.2M.






GOVERNANCE

Deliver an effective corporate governance framework that drives enhanced organisational performance through best practice project management, financial management and risk mitigation.

11 actions were included in the operational plan for Governance



-  = 7 Actions achieved target 90% on target and /or complete
-  = 3 actions achieved between 70% - 90% of action target
-  = 0 actions achieved less than 70% action target



5.1 EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE DELIVERY TO CUSTOMERS AND COMMUNITIES

Council values its customers, who are at the centre of everything we do. We aim to get things done with speed, conviction and agility.

The 2023-24 financial year resulted in a significant improvement in customer service relating to payment options. A trial 'pop up' shop was held in Dirranbandi with a positive response from customers. The next stage will be training our library staff in Bollon, Dirranbandi, Hebel and Thallon to take payments for rates and dog registrations.

Council introduced a new meeting management system which has improved productivity for preparing and approving council agendas and minutes. Members of the public also have improved visibility, having the option to select a report that interests them or download the entire agenda paper.

Snap Send Solve is becoming increasingly popular with customers as an efficient method to report issues including road conditions and wandering animals. A new feature of Snap Send Solve allows customers to provide feedback on council's service, allowing council to more effectively manage quality control and to follow up with customers, if required.

Council has continued to work on the community priority areas outlined in its corporate plan as follows:

- Retention and attraction of people and new business/industries - demonstrated by the Workforce Development program and economic development plan. See more on page 42
- Increased base level services and needs - the key performance indicators to acknowledge and resolve service requests improved compared to previous years



- Community liveability and wellbeing – CUC Balonne continues to improve access to tertiary and vocational education. The Learning Opportunities survey and advocacy work with Education Queensland has resulted in the Agricultural Water and Environment program at the St George State High School
- Indigenous engagement – council continues to engage with First Nations people through council's Indigenous Advisory Committee
- Digital connectivity – refer to page 71 for a detailed overview of initiatives surrounding digital connectivity across the shire. Council has also advocated for improvements to Telstra services with the phasing out of the 3G network.

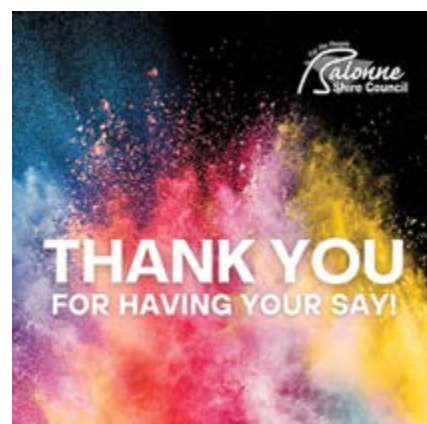
Community engagement

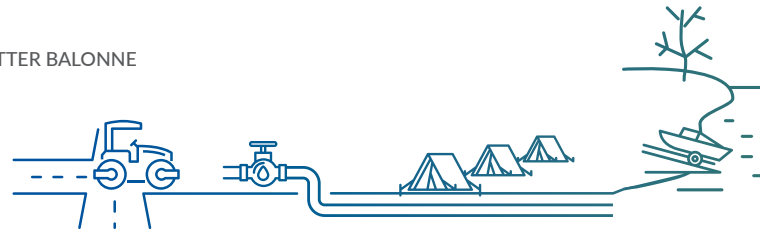
Councillors, members of our senior leadership group and relevant teams attended progress association, user and advisory group meetings across the shire to ensure our communities are well represented in the decision-making process.

Council produce and distribute regular editions of our community newsletter, the Balonne Bulletin, providing important updates on council and community activities, events and issues. In 2023-24, 8 editions were distributed by post and electronically to all townships in the shire.

Council's Parks and Gardens Standing Committee and Asset Standing Committee met on numerous occasions over the course of the financial year to monitor and consider new and current council projects across the shire.

Have Your Say was introduced via council's website to encourage community feedback on a range of projects and initiatives, including the Balonne workforce survey, proposed amendments to the Balonne Planning Scheme and the St George water supply scheme.





5.2 HEALTHY, SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE WORKPLACE CULTURE

BSC has continued to make improvements to its safety management system through reviews, inspections, internal and external audits. The Safety Committee, comprised of representatives from management and staff, is meeting regularly to review safety performance and consider initiatives to further improve safety at council workplaces and within the community.

Additionally, risk assessments are regularly conducted at all workplaces to identify any new hazards that may result from operational changes and to verify that existing safety controls are being correctly implemented and are effective. The findings of these risk assessments are documented, and actions are taken to ensure that risks are controlled, and the workplace is maintained to the highest possible level.

These regular assessments have now been conducted for several years and it is increasingly possible to identify trends, both favourable and unfavourable, and implement actions to further enhance favourable trends and, where required, apply corrective action and subsequent assessments verifying the effectiveness of actions taken.

ISO Certification

The Road Construction and Maintenance Section of the Infrastructure Services department is certified as compliant with the requirements of the ISO 45001 International Standard for Health and Safety. This certification is mandated by TMR and is designed to ensure safety, as road construction and maintenance is inherently a higher risk activity than

some other council operations. The ISO compliant Safety Management System is part of the Integrated Management System (IMS), which includes Quality Assurance to the ISO 9001 Standard and Environmental Management and the ISO 14001 Standard. This is a requirement for council to receive TMR funding for road construction and maintenance within the shire, which benefits all road users and ratepayers.

The requirement for Quality Assurance ensures that council has processes in place to check and ensure roadwork is completed to achieve specified outcomes. Environmental management requires a systematic approach to ensuring that strict environmental requirements are identified and complied with.

Internal audits are regularly conducted to verify compliance and to identify areas requiring attention. Any issues are resolved prior to each annual external audit, which is undertaken by an independent certifier.

Transport and Main Roads

In 2022, prequalification to the National Prequalification System for Civil (Road and Bridge) Construction Contracts was awarded to council by TMR. This classifies contractors who wish to tender for road and bridge construction contracts. Council has an R2 rating, allowing council to bid for tenders valued up to \$2M.

The classification is based on the contractor's technical and managerial expertise, financial capacity and previous performance.

The IMS Coordinator and the Roads team work in partnership to maintain new project specific management plans, including project safety, traffic, air quality, noise, erosion and sediment plans. Supporting documentation including procedures, forms, registers and checklists are also maintained. This system is applied on all current TMR works. The system is periodically audited allowing ongoing prequalification status to be maintained.

Hazard inspections

All council facilities are periodically inspected for hazards and the risk register is updated to reflect findings from these inspections. A hazard inspection frequency regime has been developed to ensure hazard inspections are conducted across the shire each year. Hazard inspections are a valuable tool for ensuring compliance against legislative and council requirements. Generally, council remains compliant across all facilities. Appropriate controls are developed, implemented, maintained and checked for effectiveness.

National Audit Tool

The safety management process applied across all council activities is audited periodically against the requirements of the National Audit tool (version 3). Year-on-year improvement has been demonstrated over the past 3 years and continuing effort is being applied to maintain that trend.



Incident and injury statistics 2023-24

The incident spreadsheet is updated monthly and reported to management. It is pleasing to see incidents being reported and recorded with more regularity, this improves council's

ability to track incidents and prevent recurrence. During the 2023-24 financial year, the following incidents were recorded:

Total number of incidents	29 incidents recorded, down from 34 in the previous year
Number of incidents remaining open as of 30 June 2024	1 investigation still active and waiting review of actions before closing out
Number of incidents closed	29 incidents closed (96.5%)

INCIDENT TYPE	NUMBER
Fatalities	0
Lost Time Injuries (LTI)	4
First Aid Injuries (FAI)	3
Medical Treatment Injuries (MTI)	1
Restricted Duty Injury (RDI)	0
Near Misses (NM)	3
Reported Incident (RI)	7
Asset Damage (AD)	11
Environmental Damage (ED)	0
QTY of Reported Public Related Incidents for 2023-24	N/A

Employee satisfaction survey

Council conducts an employee satisfaction survey every 2 years to gain an understanding of workforce sentiment in key areas including job satisfaction, communication and workload and reveal valuable insights on employee experiences. An independent firm was appointed (BDO) to conduct an anonymous employee engagement survey in January 2024.

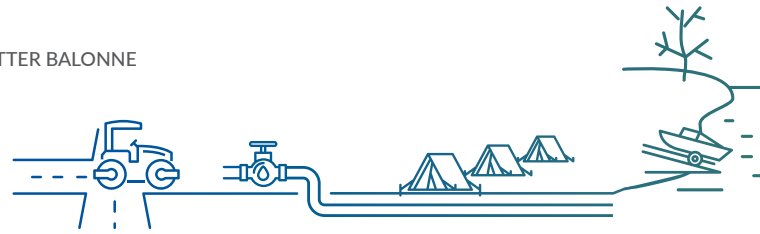
The survey had a 68% response rate

with 83% of employees indicating they are satisfied in their current positions at BSC. This is a 27% increase on 2021 (56%) and a 9% increase on 2019 (74%) survey engagement results. Other key findings and insights included:

- A significant increase in overall satisfaction on 2021 survey results
- 15 of the 16 survey categories have significantly increased on 2021 survey results

- The top 3 categories for 'things we can do better' were fairness, communication and reward
- Council's commitment to the community was highlighted in 'things we are doing well'

Council is committed to working with its employees to continuously improve the lower performing categories and investigate concerns in lower scoring areas.



5.3 LEADERSHIP, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING

Mental Health Strategy and workforce plan

Council has both a Mental Health Strategy and workforce plan in place. Both are overseen by the Mental Health Implementation Team and the Director of Finance and Corporate Services. Key progress milestones include:

- Continuing to update and review all human resource management directives

- Psychosocial risk assessments completed
- Management training and development
- Learning and development plans implemented.

Individual training plans are reviewed with performance appraisals. Council's

register for tickets and qualifications is reviewed regularly for renewals and expiry.

Council's managers and supervisors completed the Objective Leader course, which included modules on conflict resolution and performance management, as well as coaching over a 3 month period.

Professional Development

A range of professional development opportunities were attended by relevant staff including:

Risk Management Forums (online)	LGMA Villages (online)	LGMA Annual Conference
LGAQ Annual Conference	Finance Officers Networks	Local Government Finance Professionals Conference
Tropical Financial Workshop	Local Government Cyber Security Round Table	Darling Downs and South West Queensland Council of Mayors
Darling Downs South West Queensland CEO Forum	Border of Regional Organisation of Councils	Queensland Disaster Management Conference
CEO Forums		

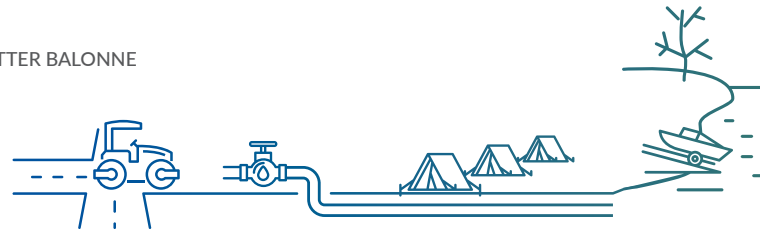




The following training was provided to relevant staff in 2023-24:

Psychosocial Risk Management in the Workplace	Entering and exiting large vehicles	How to use HartSine Defibrillator
Sexual Harassment	How to Behave at the Christmas Party	Noise Hazard Guide
Stress Less at Work	Asbestos Awareness in the Workplace	Fire Awareness and Extinguisher Training
2024 CIVICA Reflect User Group Training Conference	2024 HR Masterclass	2024 Water Skills Forum (QLD Water)
ACDC Chemical Licence	Aerodrome Reporting Officer and Works Safety Officer Refresher Training	Aerodrome Reporting Officer and Works Safety Officer Training
Aeronautical Radio Operator Certificate	Annual Infrastructure Asset Management Forum	Apply Poison Baits
Assertive Communication Skills for EA - Online	Asset Management Symposium	Authorised Persons E-Learning
Bushfire Awareness	Certificate II Horticulture	Certificate III Business
Certificate III Parks and Gardens	Certificate III Water Industry Operations	Conduct civil construction grader operations LG
Confined Space	Contract Management	CPR and First Aid
Diploma of Procurement and Contracts- Level 3 Advanced (IPAA)	Drinking Water Quality Management Plan Overview and Operational Incident Reporting	Drug and Alcohol
Executive Management in QLD Local Government Program	Fire Warden	Flood Barrier Installation
Grant Writing Webinar	Humane Destruction Course	IPWEA Conference
IPWEA SEQ/SWQ Branch Conference	JP Cdec	LGBTIQA+ Awareness in the Workplace
Licence to operate a forklift	Local Government Worker	Magiq Documents User Training
MATES Assist	MATES Connector	MATES General Awareness
Objective Leader Program	Park Facilities Inspection	Pool Safety Inspector Licence
Procurement Fundamentals	Procurement Training	Project Planning Breakthroughs
QGATE Investigative Essentials	Southwest Indigenous Youth Field Careers Day 2024	State Library Queensland Rural Libraries Workshop
SynergySoft Introduction to Rates and Property Essentials	Welcoming Australia Symposium	WHS Due Diligence for managers and supervisors
WHS Representative Initial Training	Women in Local Government	Young Professionals Mentoring Program

The Director of Finance and Corporate Services mentored a Communications Officer from a larger regional council. Two teams of 4 council employees participated in the LGMA Rural Management Challenge, hosted in St George.



Staff turnover

Staff turnover remains a challenge, with 24 staff leaving the organisation in 2023-24, out of a workforce of 119 (including part-time and casual staff). This figure includes 18 resignations, 1 dismissal and 5 temporary contract conclusions. Turnover reduces productivity and requires ongoing training and upskilling of incoming employees.

Council also struggles to attract appropriately qualified and skilled

employees with several positions having to be re-advertised several times throughout the year. Council is working hard to sell the region and local government opportunities to compete with the open market.

Internal promotions and movements were higher than in previous years, with 27 staff taking advantage of our diverse organisation for career changes and promotions.

Council offers a range of benefits including 5 weeks annual leave, 15 days sick leave, salary packaging, 13.5% superannuation and, for some positions, housing and private use of vehicles. Council does offer some flexible working arrangements that meet operational requirements. Council did not have a significant number of staff working from home following the pandemic, however we have had increased requests for flexible work arrangements.

TOTAL ROLES RECRUITED	62
Positions advertised internally	6
Positions advertised externally	44
Not advertised	1
Transitions to permanent appointments	2
Internal movements	6
Contract/Labour Hire	3

Results of recruitment activity (including multiple appointments for some positions)

External appointments	31
Internal appointments (incl. current employees applying through external advertising)	27
Labour Hire appointments	4
Positions not filled or progressed	5
Finalised from 2022-23 - external appointments	4
Finalised from 2022-23 - internal appointments	8
Ongoing into 2024-25	5



5.4 TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT EMPLOYEES TO ACHIEVE EFFICIENCY THROUGH CONNECTIVITY AND MOBILITY

Council recognises technology as a valuable tool to improve efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery. Our outdoor workforce continues to utilise mobile tablets to improve their connectivity with corporate information, complete online timesheets and learning and development modules. The Skytrust workplace health & safety system will also be rolled out across the organisation and is compatible with mobile tablets, phones and desktops.

Our CCTV network continues to be accessed via NX Witness, while

our Memorandum of Understanding continues with the Queensland Police Service. The CCTV Strategy was updated and adopted by council in March 2024, incorporating the flood warning infrastructure network.

Mapping is near complete for digitising council's cemeteries records across the shire.

Field Solutions Group and council continue to work together to manage information technology services and support our IT staff. The IT Service

Desk has been busier than previous years with the high changeover in staff and additional support for outdoor workers coming online.

Tickets opened: 4496

Tickets closed: 4503

Average tickets closed per week: 86.6

As of 30/06/2024 there were 70 open tickets.

Intune was introduced to secure and effectively manage our devices across council.

5.5 HIGH LEVELS OF TRANSPARENCY AND COMPLIANCE

Administration Action Complaints

Council received and resolved 8 administrative action complaints in 2023-24, an increase from 4 in 2022-23. All 8 complaints were resolved within 30 business days or less. Areas of concern included water rates, animal management, water quality and showgrounds. The Queensland Ombudsman requested further information for 1 external review of a complaint. Council had no referrals to

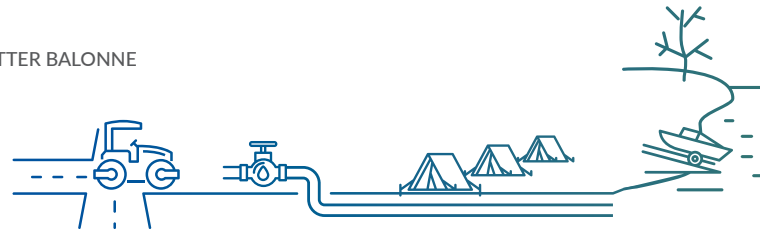
the Crime and Corruption Commission (CCC) in the 2023-24 period.

Councils process for resolving administrative action complaints (AAC), from when received to resolved process is as follows:

- cover all AAC matters
- respond quickly and efficiently to complaints in a fair and objective way

- include criteria to be considered when assessing whether to investigate a complaint
- inform the affected persons of the decision about the complaint and the reasons for the decision.

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Number of administration complaints	9	1	4	8
Number of complaints resolved	10 (including 1 from 2019-20)	2 (including 1 from 2020-21)	4	8
Number of complaints outstanding	0	0	0	0



Right to Information

Under Queensland's *Right to Information Act 2009* and *Information Privacy Act 2009*, members of the community can apply for access to documents held by council (subject to statutory exemptions). The *Information Privacy Act 2009* also allows members of the community to apply for and request amendments to documents concerning their personal affairs, where it is believed the information is incomplete, out-of-date, inaccurate or misleading. In 2023-24 council received and processed 1 Right to Information application and no Information Privacy applications. There were no complaints for breach of Information Privacy provisions.

Audit and Risk Committee

Our Audit and Risk Committee operates in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2009*, and the *Local Government Regulation 2012*. The committee met 5

times during the 2023-24 financial year. The Audit and Risk Committee reports directly to council and has 4 voting members. The committee members are:

- Independent Chair
- James Hetherington
- Independent Member
- Walter Brosnan
- Mayor Samantha O'Toole
- Cr Robyn Fuhrmeister
- Cr Avery (up to 16 March 2024).

The Chief Executive Officer and all directors, the Manager Finance Services and council's Internal Auditor, together with representatives from the Queensland Audit Office, attend Audit and Risk Committee meetings as standing invitees. Council's external auditor attends to provide an overview of the external audit. Council's Internal Auditor attends to provide an update on implementation of the Internal Audit Plan and any outstanding internal audit recommendations. Council's external

auditors, UHY Haines Norton, were appointed by the Queensland Audit Office.

Internal Audit Function

Council appointed Crowe to undertake the internal audit function for council. Four internal audits were completed in 2023-24 which included:

- Contract management
- Compliance with development approvals delivered in 2024
- Contract management delivered in 2024
- Asset management delivered in 2023
- Business continuity delivered in 2023
- Plant costing
- Water compliance

Some asset management recommendations remain outstanding from prior year audit, with 80% of recommendations completed.

5.6 CREATE AND PROTECT VALUE THROUGH RISK MANAGEMENT

Council's strategic risks are due to be reviewed with the incoming council as part of induction. Operational risks continue to be reviewed with relevant directorates. Psychosocial risk assessments were completed in consultation with staff in 2023-24.

Council's enterprise risk management framework and risk appetite statement and tolerances will be reviewed with the incoming council.

Risk management training is completed online through our Learning Management

System. A quarterly report is provided to the Audit and Risk Committee.

The Balonne Management Group has improved its performance reporting on capital and operational projects as detailed in 5.7, below. The reports include risks and issues identified which may impact projects or programs across council. Potential opportunities are also identified with a view to improving efficiencies, communication and procurement planning. In summary the following risks were common across all program areas:

- High turnover of staff
- Temporary project managers continue to assist in progressing council's larger capital projects
- Supplier prices continue to be higher than originally estimated
- Contractor availability continues to delay some projects
- Balonne has experienced 4 flood events in 2023-24.



5.7 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT FOR LONG TERM SUSTAINABILITY

The Queensland Government introduced a Sustainability Framework for Queensland local governments which came into effect in July 2023. The framework has been implemented across financial reporting and will have the new financial ratios incorporated into the 2023-24 financial statements.

Council introduced an improved performance report for its capital and operational projects to improve openness and transparency on the progress of council projects. The Balonne Management Group, made up of council's middle management, reported on 8 program areas across council. All programs are aligned with the outcomes of the Corporate Plan. The programs are:

- Corporate Governance
- Community Services
- Corporate Finance
- Disaster Management
- Economic Development
- Environmental Services

- Infrastructure Services
- Fleet and Plant

The reports are summarised in a dashboard based on the financial status of the projects.

The long-term financial plan was submitted to the Queensland Treasury Corporation within the required timeframe, a borrowing application to renovate and increase the size of the council's works depot was also submitted. Council achieved a moderate credit rating with a neutral outlook and were approved for borrowings up to \$4M. In early 2024, council resolved to defer the application to allow the incoming council to consider all options.

Council reviewed its budget in December 2023 and April 2024 due to a high volume of flood recovery projects approved during the financial year.

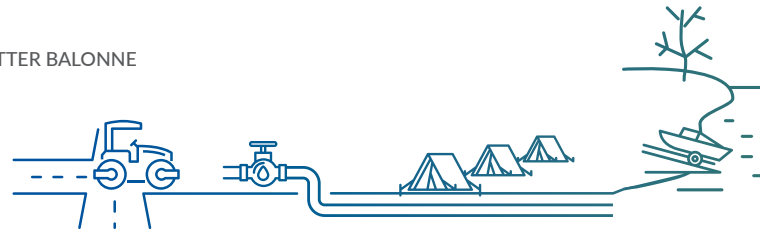
Council continues to utilise ProMaster for online credit card reporting and Eftsure to check supplier details against council's financial system.

Into the future

The digital strategy was deferred in 2023-24 due to staff shortages. The plan will be completed in 2024-25.

A review of the Mental Health Strategy and Workforce Plan is due in 2024-25.





STATUTORY INFORMATION

Councillor training, professional development and engagement

Councillors participated in several training and professional development opportunities including:

- Local Government Association Annual Conference
- Border Region of Councils
- South West Regional Organisation of Councils
- Western Queensland Alliance of Councils
- Mandatory training for councillors
- Bush Councils Convention
- Darling Downs South West Mayor Forums
- Elected Members Update
- Councillor inductions (in-house)

Councillor attendance at council and committee meetings

COUNCILLOR NAME	COUNCIL ORDINARY MEETING	SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
Cr Samantha O'Toole (Mayor)	12	3
Cr Robyn Fuhrmeister	12	3
Cr Scott Scriven	12	3
Cr William Winks	12	3
Cr Rod Avery	4	0
Cr Alex Benn	6	0
Cr Adam Osborne	5	0
Cr Andrew Dries	3	3
Cr Michaela Christensen	3	3
Cr Jason Southern	3	3

Council held 31 workshops and the following Standing Committee meetings in 2023-24:

- Asset Committee (2)
- Parks and Gardens Committee (2)
- Plant Committee (1)
- Audit and Risk Committee (4)
- Information Communications and Technology Committee (2)

Councillor Conduct (s150) and Councillor Complaints Register/any decisions of QIA:

No councillor complaints were received in 2023-24.



Councillor remuneration

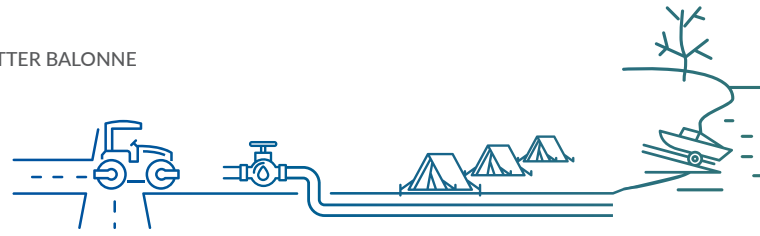
COUNCILLOR PAYROLL - 2023/2024					
	BASE ALLOW	MEETING FEES	PRIVATE VEHICLE	OTHER EXP	TOTAL
Mayor - Cr O'Toole	114,801.00	-	-	-	114,801.00
Cr Avery	28,334.06	12,572.56	-	-	40,906.62
Cr Benn	28,334.06	14,167.00	664.70	-	43,165.76
Cr Christensen	9,200.73	4,600.35	2,222.75	-	16,023.83
Cr Dries	9,200.73	4,600.35	-	-	13,801.08
Cr Fuhrmeister (Deputy Mayor for part year)	59,507.34	4,600.35	340.00	-	64,447.69
Cr Osborne	28,334.06	14,167.00	-	-	42,501.06
Cr Scriven	38,266.67	19,133.29	-	-	57,399.96
Cr Southern	9,200.73	4,600.35	-	-	13,801.08
Cr Winks (Deputy Mayor for part year)	44,990.33	14,532.94	14,751.75	-	74,275.02
TOTAL	370,169.71	92,974.19	17,979.20	-	481,123.10

Senior management remuneration

Remuneration package including salary, superannuation, rental assistance and vehicle for the senior leadership group totalled \$1,198,412 in 2023-24.

REMUNERATION PACKAGE RANGE	No. OF CONTRACT POSITIONS
\$0.00 - \$100,000	0
\$100,001 - \$200,000	0
\$200,000 - \$300,000	2
\$300,000 - \$400,000	2

Council has 4 senior executives, 9 managers on contract and 1 remote contract position.



Advisory groups and committees

Councillors adopted the following Standing Committees, Advisory Committees and User Groups to consult with both internal and external stakeholders.

STANDING COMMITTEES

- Audit and Risk Committee
- Information Communications and Technology (ICT) Standing Committee
- Assets Standing Committee
- Plant Standing Committee
- Parks and Gardens Committee

ADVISORY COMMITTEES

- Biosecurity Advisory Committee
- Wild Dog Advisory Committee
- Community Advisory Committee
- Work Camp Advisory Committee
- Dirranbandi Swimming Pool Advisory Committee
- Economic Development Advisory Committee
- Indigenous Advisory Committee

WORKING AND USER GROUPS

- Dirranbandi Multi Sports User Group
- Airport – Industrial Land Working Group
- Equestrian Working Group
- Rowden Park Users Group
- Business Taskforce including Business Mentoring Advisory Group and Bettering Balonne
- Dirranbandi Showgrounds User Group
- Bollon Showgrounds User Group
- St George Showgrounds User Group

DISASTER MANAGEMENT

- Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG)
- Local Disaster Community Recovery Committee

REGIONAL GROUPS/ORGANISATIONS

- South West Economic Development Group
- South West Regional Roads & Transport Group
- South West Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils
- South West Regional Waste Group
- Wild Dog Barrier Fence Committee (QLD State)
- Outback Queensland Tourism Association
- Murray Darling Association
- Border Region Organisation of Councils

Registers and policies

Registers / Policies s190 Local Government Regulations must include any invitations to change tender/ concession for rates charges.

In accordance with *section 190(1) (f) of the Local Government Regulations 2012*, the following lists the registers and other publications that are kept under the control of the Chief Executive Officer. These are open to inspection, with or without restriction, in some cases charges may apply for copies or extracts if these are allowable.

- Land Record
- Fees and Charges
- Road Register
- Local Law Policies
- Planning Scheme
- Council Meeting Minutes
- Council Delegation to Chief Executive Officer to employees
- Policy Register
- Corporate Plan
- Annual Operational Plan
- Budget
- Lease Register
- Archive Register.

Council maintains a current policy register which indicates when policies require review.

POLICIES ADOPTED OR REVIEWED BY COUNCIL IN 2023-24 WERE:

- Confidentiality Policy
- Grants Policy
- Corporate Credit Card Policy
- Gifts & Benefits Policy
- Cemeteries Operations Policy
- Entertainment & Hospitality Policy
- Investigation Policy – Councillor Conduct Breach
- Tourism Events Grant Policy
- Code of Meeting Practice
- Councillor Reimbursement of Expenses Policy.

Special rates and charges

SPECIAL RATES AND CHARGES – LEVIES

Thallon Town Rural Fire Brigade

For 2023-24 a special charge was levied on those rateable properties contained within the benefited area of Thallon. This was for the purpose of raising revenue to fund the operational costs of the Thallon Town Rural Fire Brigade. During the 2023-24 year \$7,578.40 was levied.

Urban Animal Management Special Charge

For the 2023-24 year a special charge was levied on those rateable properties in the Rating Categories 4A – 4B within the BSC boundary. This levy is for the purpose of raising revenue to assist funding council's Urban Animal Management services or activities in the shire. During the 2023-24 year \$32,455.00 was levied.



Feral Animal Special Charge

For the 2023-24 year a special charge was levied on those rateable properties in the Rating Categories 79, 80, 81 and category 100 and all properties > or = 1000 Hectares in Cat 200 and Cat 300 within the BSC area. This levy is for the purpose of raising revenue to fund the continued operation of Feral Animal Management services or activities in the shire. During the 2023-24 year \$124,042.85 was levied.

Environmental Special Charge

For the 2023-24 year a special charge was levied on those rateable properties contained in the benefited area surrounding the townships of St George,

Dirranbandi, Bollon, Thallon, Hebel, Mungindi and Nindigully. This was for the purpose of raising revenue to fund the continued operation of the landfills in St George, Dirranbandi, Bollon, Hebel, Thallon and Nindigully. During the 2023-24 year \$13,493.00 was levied.

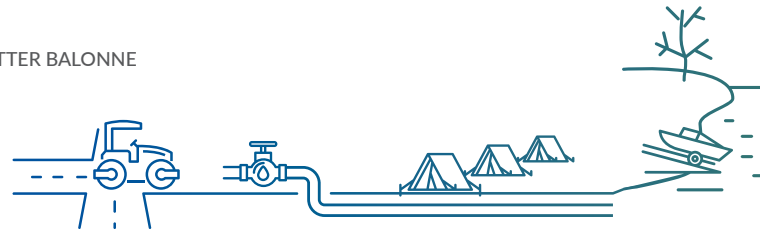
Wild Dog Exclusion Fencing Special Rate Scheme

For the 2023-24 year a special rate was levied on those approved rateable properties that participated in Round 1 and Round 2 of the Special Rate Scheme for the specific purpose to construct exclusion fencing on the benefited properties. The special rate scheme is underpinned with a loan from

Queensland Treasury Corporation with a total of \$4.5M drawn down from the loan facility.

SPECIAL RATES	LEVY (2023-24)
Thallon Town Rural Fire Brigade	\$7,578.40
Domestic Animal Levy	\$32,455.00
Feral Animal Levy	\$124,042.85
Environmental Levy	\$13,493.00
Wild Dog Exclusion Fencing Special Rate Scheme	\$97,386.08





Rebates and concessions

PENSIONER REBATE REMISSIONS

Council provides a remission of rates for properties owned or occupied by pensioners, equal to a maximum of \$170.00 per annum to owners of qualifying premises. The subsidy was in addition to the subsidy offered by the state government. This includes a concession for pensioners for their waste services.

The state government also provides a rebate for eligible pensioners per annum to owners living at that specific primary property address. The total amount of the Pensioner Rebate offered by the state government and claimed for during the 2023-24 year totals \$43,072.91.

PAYMENT OF RATES BY INSTALMENTS

Council will accept applications for payment of rates by instalments from property owners who can demonstrate a genuine financial hardship. Council has determined that each application will be assessed on its merits. All instalment plans must have the effect of liquidating the debt within 6 to 12 months.

No interest is charged for the payment of rates by instalments under such arrangements, however interest continues to be charged on overdue rates which are not subject to an

approved payment plan. The applicant must comply strictly with the terms of the instalment plan agreed to waive the interest. Three default payment plans will result in council requiring immediate full payment of future instalments and could result in recovery action.

COMMUNITY RATES SUPPORT PROGRAM CONCESSIONS

Concessions for rates and charges and other remission requests, or rate deferral requests are assessed on a case-by-case basis in accordance with *Section 190 (1)(g) of the Local Government Regulations 2012*. Council grants concessions of 50% off utility charges to eligible religious, charitable, and other organisations and 25% off utility charges for eligible sporting organisations. Total concessions granted for 2023-24 was \$18,247.02.

DISCOUNT FOR PROMPT PAYMENT OF RATES AND CHARGES

Council allows a discount for prompt payments of rates and charges as a means of ensuring a timely flow of cash to fund its operations. Council set by resolution, at its budget meeting, a discount of 10% with the date by which the rate must be paid at least 30 days after the issue of the rates notice. Council provides the discount for each rate moiety.

The discount applies to the prompt payment of:

- General rates
- Urban Water Charges
- Rural Residential Water Charges
- Waste Water Charges
- Cleansing Charges
- Thallon Town Rural Fire Levy

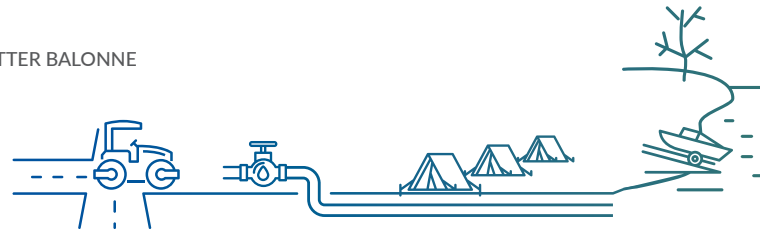
Excess Water Charges

ST GEORGE RIVER WATER

Council applies excess water charges annually for bore water and river water in St George. A separate excess water charge will apply to water supply for untreated bore water, untreated river/creek water, treated water and blended treated/untreated bore water.



COMMUNITY FINANCIAL REPORT



COMMUNITY FINANCIAL REPORT

The Community Financial Report is a simplified version of council's financial performance and position for the 2023-24 financial year. The aim of the report is to assist readers in evaluating council's financial performance and position without the need to interpret the financial information contained in the Annual Financial Statements.

Council's financial statements are audited by the Queensland Audit Office in partnership with UHY Haines Norton.

The key statements that are summarised in the Community Financial Report are:

- Statement of Comprehensive Income
- Statement of Cash Flows
- Statement of Financial Position
- Statement of Changes in Equity
- Financial Sustainability Ratios

Executive summary of key financial highlights:

- Cash holdings of \$19,132 thousand generating \$1,913 thousand in interest revenue
- Council debt decreased as a result of repayment of the principal component Administration and Water loans.

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

The Statement of Comprehensive Income measures how council performed in relation to revenue and expenses for the year. Council's operating result for 2023-24 is a deficit of \$327 thousand which is the difference between revenue and expenses.

In comparison, council's operating result has decreased from a surplus \$7,358 thousand in 2022-23. This can be attributed mainly to the timing of the payment of the financial assistance grants which for 2023-24 was prepaid and recognised as revenue in the 2022-23 year, while the 2024-25 grant was not prepaid and couldn't be recognised as revenue for 2023-24.

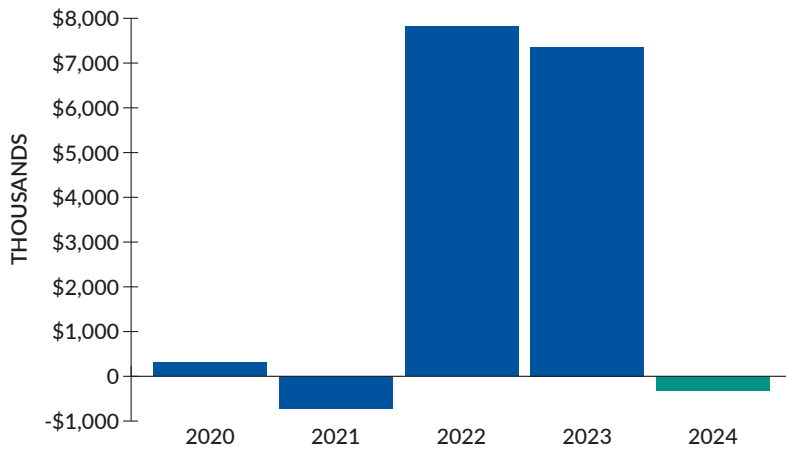
The Statement of Comprehensive Income shows both cash transactions and non-cash transactions. For example, all rates issued are recorded as revenue when levied irrespective of them actually being paid. The amount not paid would show in the Statement of Financial Position as an amount owed to council. In accounting terms this is referred to as accrual accounting principles.

5-YEAR FINANCIAL SUMMARY

FINANCIAL FAST FACTS	2019/20 \$'000	2020/21 \$'000	2021/22 \$'000	2022/23 \$'000	2023/24 \$'000
Capital Expenditure	\$8,724	\$9,977	\$14,229	\$13,887	\$21,780
Net Result - Surplus / (Deficit)	\$3,062	(\$723)	\$7,819	\$7,358	-\$327
Increase / (Decrease) in Net Assets	\$1,535	(\$723)	\$28,257	\$33,768	\$25,096
Revenue	\$32,998	\$52,086	\$85,884	\$61,145	\$97,392
Percentage of Revenue from Rates and Charges	32%	19.5%	12%	18%	12%
Expenses	\$29,936	\$52,809	\$78,065	\$53,786	\$97,719
Cash Holdings	\$40,239	\$37,479	\$31,184	\$46,947	\$19,132
Restricted Cash	\$19,215	\$16,720	\$13,147	\$22,754	\$11,532
Borrowings	\$5,572	\$6,851	\$6,718	\$6,588	\$6,432
WIP	\$8,114	\$11,427	\$7,786	\$5,071	\$16,338



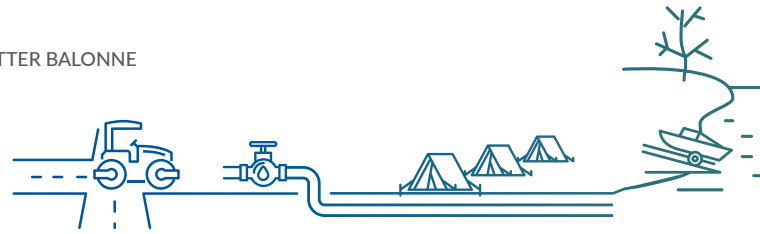
Overall Surplus / (Deficit)



5-YEAR FINANCIAL SUMMARY OF REVENUE & EXPENSES

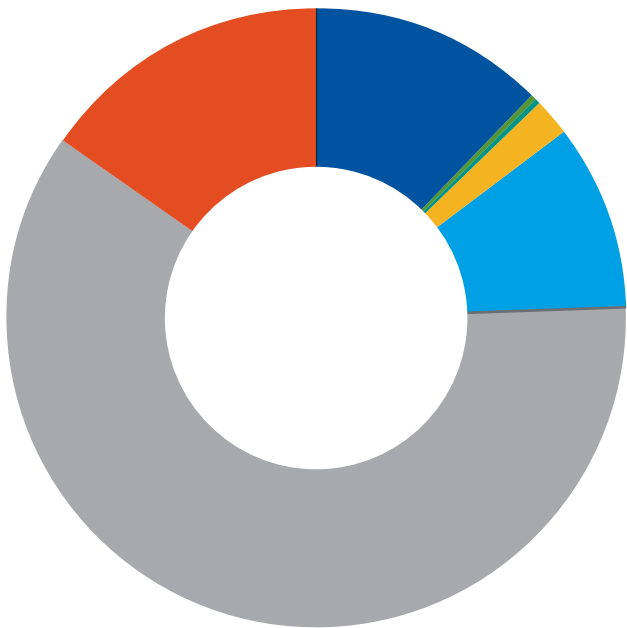
REVENUE	2019/20 \$'000	2020/21 \$'000	2021/22 \$'000	2022/23 \$'000	2023/24 \$'000
Rates, Levies and Charges (Net of Discounts)	\$10,478	\$10,159	\$10,278	\$10,901	\$11,804
Federal Assistance Grant	\$5,854	\$5,807	\$8,187	\$10,028	\$373
Other Grants, Subsidies & Contributions	\$8,892	\$27,183	\$58,930	\$25,366	\$71,902
Sales Revenue	\$6,582	\$7,757	\$7,537	\$12,181	\$9,207
Interest and Investment Revenue	\$389	\$464	\$251	\$1,380	\$1,913
Other Income	\$295	\$188	\$225	\$403	\$172
Fees and Charges	\$292	\$236	\$225	\$378	\$361
Rental Income	\$209	\$292	\$251	\$367	\$280
Capital Income	\$7	\$0	\$0	\$141	\$1,380
Total Revenue	\$32,998	\$52,086	\$85,884	\$61,145	\$97,392

Expenses	2019/20 \$'000	2020/21 \$'000	2021/22 \$'000	2022/23 \$'000	2023/24 \$'000
Employee Costs	\$6,927	\$8,272	\$9,166	\$10,333	\$10,419
Material, Services and Other Expenses	\$15,112	\$36,245	\$53,334	\$34,564	\$77,067
Depreciation	\$7,699	\$7,673	\$7,956	\$8,644	\$9,858
Borrowing Costs	\$198	\$226	\$175	\$208	\$375
Capital Expenses	\$0	\$393	\$7,434	\$37	\$0
Total Expenses	\$29,936	\$52,809	\$78,065	\$53,786	\$97,719



Operating Revenue

Council's total revenue for the financial year was \$97,392 thousand.



- Rates, Levies and Charges - 12.12%
- Rental Income - 0.29%
- Fees and Charges - 0.37%
- Interest Revenue - 1.96%
- Sales Revenue - 9.45%
- Other Income - 0.18%
- Grants, Subsidies, Contributions and Donations - 59.24%
- Capital Grants, Subsidies, Contributions and Donations - 14.97%
- Capital Income - 0%

NET RATES, LEVIES & CHARGES - \$11,804 THOUSAND

- General rates / Community Levy – \$7,767 thousand.
- Special Rates from Domestic Animal, Feral Animal and Thallon Fire – \$159 thousand.
- Water charges of \$2,211 thousand for access and \$119 thousand for water consumption and sundry water charges.
- Urban waste water charges – \$1,238 thousand.
- Waste service charges of \$1,480 thousand.
- Total rates discounts and write-offs of \$1,133 thousand and Pensioner remissions – \$37 thousand.

FEES & CHARGES - \$378 THOUSAND

This includes (but is not limited to):

- Planning and building – \$75 thousand
- Infringements – \$20 thousand.
- Cemetery Charges – \$68 thousand.
- Hire Charges – \$74 thousand.
- Search and Other Council Documents – \$12 thousand.

OPERATING GRANTS, SUBSIDIES, CONTRIBUTIONS & DONATIONS - \$57,691 THOUSAND

Operating grant funding varies from year to year depending on the number of successful grant applications received. The annual Federal Financial Assistance Grant contributed \$373 thousand to the overall operational grant funding as there was no 'bring forward' payment of the 2024-25 allocation which had occurred in previous years. Council also recognised \$53,833 thousand of funding for QRA Flood Damage submissions.

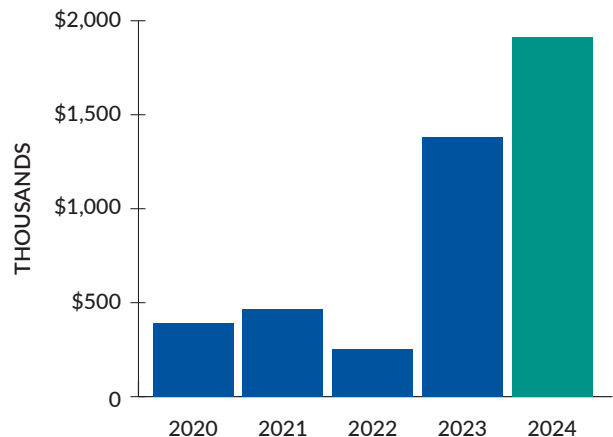
CAPITAL GRANTS, SUBSIDIES, CONTRIBUTIONS & DONATIONS - \$14,584 THOUSAND

Capital revenue varies from year to year depending on the level of grant funding sourced. In 2023-24 council received funds for Roads to Recovery projects, DFRA local recovery and resilience projects, the Rowden Park female amenities project, and other various state and commonwealth government subsidies and grants.

INTEREST & INVESTMENT REVENUE - \$1,913 THOUSAND

Council's cash investments were held by Westpac Banking Corporation and Queensland Treasury Corporation (QTC) and returned interest revenue of \$1,699 thousand. Council charged interest of 11.64% on outstanding rates, levies and charges balances which generated \$100 thousand. Interest of \$114 thousand was accrued as part of WDEF Special Rates Loan Scheme.

INTEREST AND INVESTMENT REVENUE



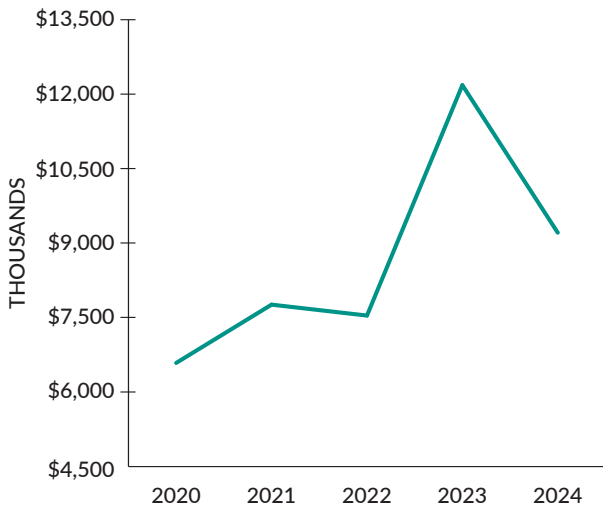


SALES REVENUE - \$9,207 THOUSAND

Sales revenue contributed \$9,207 thousand of council's income in 2023-24 decreasing from \$12,181 thousand in 2022-23.

The decrease in sales revenue is due to a decrease in Transport and Main Roads funding as the works program changes from year to year.

SALES REVENUE

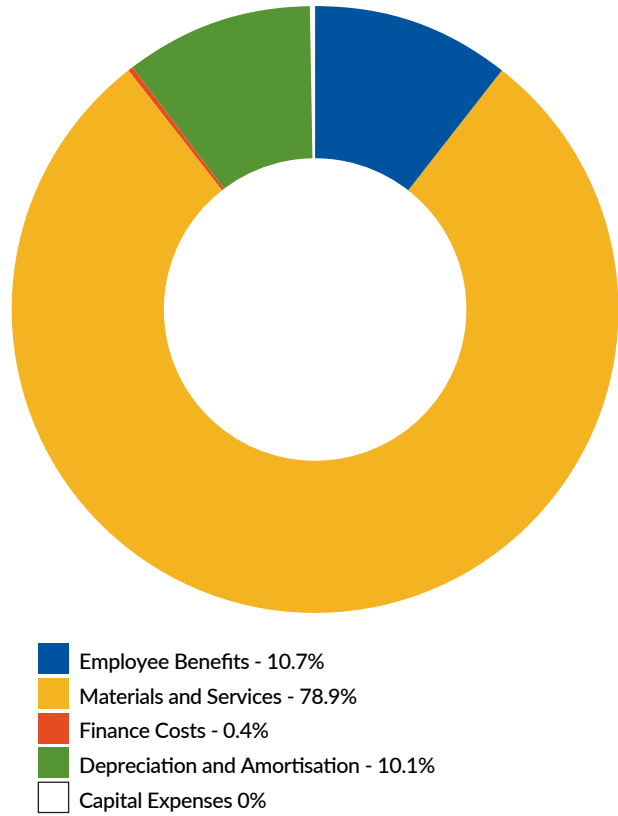


OPERATING EXPENSES - \$97,719 THOUSAND

Council's total expenses for 2023-24 was \$97,719 thousand up from \$53,786 thousand in 2022-23. The significant increase is a result of the spending on QRA Flood Restoration costs increasing from \$14,475 thousand in 2022-23 to \$56,633 thousand in 2023-24.

Operating expenses consist of materials and services, employee benefits, depreciation, finance costs and loss on disposal of assets. A breakdown of council's 2023-24 operating expenses is shown here:

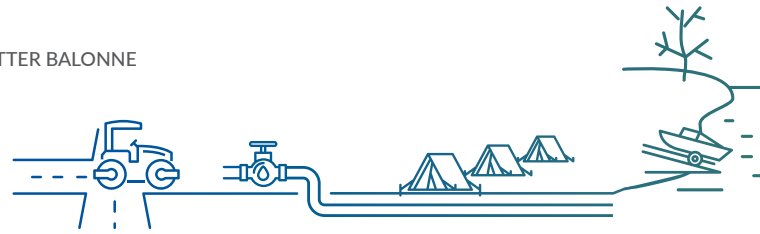
OPERATING EXPENSES



Council provides a wide range of services to the community. This work is performed by council staff and, in some instances, contractors. Wherever possible, local suppliers and local contractors are used, so the money flows back into the local economy.

The 3 major cost categories are employee costs, materials and services and depreciation. Materials and services of \$77,067 thousand accounted for 78.9% of all operating expenses. The costs for materials and services incorporates our payments to suppliers for the delivery of services and projects to the community such as roads, parks, water, sewerage, waste, footpaths, libraries, pools, community halls, planning and building services, flood repairs and compliance and includes payments for purchases like bitumen materials, gravel, electricity, fuel and other operational costs.

Employee costs of \$10,419 thousand includes employee salaries and wages, superannuation, leave entitlements and councillor remuneration.



5 YEAR FINANCIAL DEPRECIATION BY ASSET CLASS

Asset Class	2019/20 \$'000	2020/21 \$'000	2021/22 \$'000	2022/23 \$'000	2023/24 \$'000
Building & Other Structures	\$1,433	\$1,179	\$1,231	\$1,342	\$1,391
Plant & Equipment	\$733	\$675	\$675	\$753	\$1,009
Furniture and Fittings	\$30	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Water Supply Network	\$450	\$465	\$477	\$523	\$615
Other Infrastructure Assets	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Transport Infrastructure	\$4,733	\$5,032	\$5,266	\$5,685	\$6,516
Urban Waste Water Network	\$304	\$304	\$307	\$341	\$327
Intangible Assets	\$16	\$18	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Depreciation	\$7,699	\$7,673	\$7,956	\$8,644	\$9,858

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

Cash and cash equivalents is \$19,132 thousand as at 30 June 2024. This cash balance is sufficient to cover council's restricted assets/reserves for future asset replacement of \$9,971 thousand.

The Statement of Cash Flows is similar to your personal bank statement. If you summarised your bank statements for the year it would be your cash flow statement.

Council's cash flow statement reports on cash movements and shows:

1. How much money we started the year with;
2. Where the incoming money came from;
3. Where the money was spent; and
4. How much money we had left at the end of the year.

The Statement of Cash Flows quantifies the inflows and outflows of cash throughout the organisation during the financial year.

Cash flows for the period are separated into operating, investing and financing activities.

- Operating activities – includes all areas such as rates, user charges, grants, employee costs, material and services, interest and administration - (\$14,160) thousand.
- Investing activities – includes money council receives and spends when we buy or sell property, plant and equipment – (\$13,499) thousand.
- Financing activities – incorporates cash received if council takes out new loans or cash paid to repay loans – (\$156) thousand.

Cash Flow	2019-20 \$'000	2020-21 \$'000	2021-22 \$'000	2022-23 \$'000	2023-24 \$'000
Opening Cash Balance	\$31,225	\$40,239	\$37,479	\$31,184	\$46,947
Net Cashflow from Operating Activities	\$9,634	\$1,963	(\$1,623)	\$24,351	-\$14,160
Net Cashflow from Investing Activities	(\$3,533)	(\$6,001)	(\$4,539)	(\$8,458)	-\$13,499
Net Cashflow form Financing Activities	\$2,913	\$1,278	(\$133)	(\$130)	-\$156
Closing Cash Balance	\$40,239	\$37,479	\$31,184	\$46,947	\$19,132

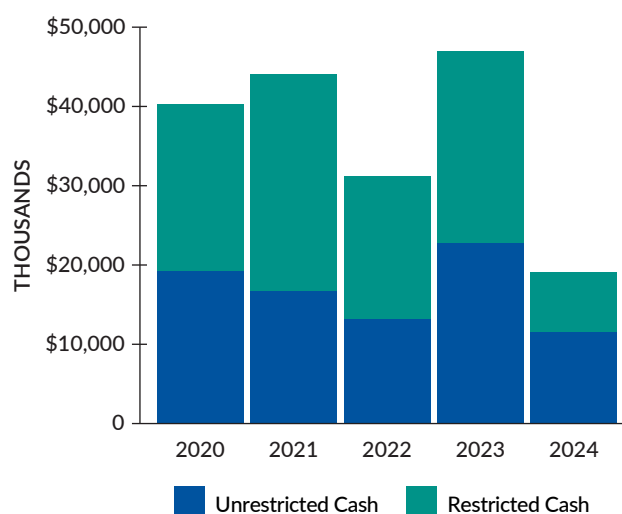


STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

CURRENT ASSETS - \$31,420 THOUSAND

The major component of current assets was cash and investments totaling \$19,132 thousand at 30 June 2024. Of these funds, \$11,532 thousand is restricted (grants, subsidies, developer contributions and specific council reserves).

CASH BALANCE AT YEAR END



NON-CURRENT ASSETS - \$404,838 THOUSAND

A receivable for the WDEF Special Rate Loan Scheme of \$4,514 thousand was recognised in 2023-24 representing the loan value of practically completed properties and capitalised interest on loans.

The non-current asset also includes the value of council's infrastructure assets, buildings and facilities, plant and equipment and capital works in progress at 30 June 2024 as shown in the table.

Asset Group	\$'000
Land	\$3,549
Buildings and Other Structures	\$58,847
Plant and Equipment	\$10,012
Water Supply Network	\$26,780
Transport Infrastructure	\$271,591
Urban Waste Water Network	\$13,207
Capital Work in Progress	\$16,338
Total	\$400,324

LIABILITIES - \$18,468 THOUSAND

Council's liabilities include amounts owed to creditors at year end, grant funds received in advance, and provisions for the future rehabilitation of landfill sites, and accrued employee leave entitlements. Additionally, council owes \$6,432 thousand in loans.

Local governments, in general, have a very high level of assets under their control but are limited in revenue raising opportunities. This means that the majority of councils in Queensland have to rely on borrowing or substantial grants to fund major capital works, while using their general revenue (rates, fees and charges) to provide services and maintain community assets.

Details of all loans outstanding as at 30 June 2024 are as follows:

LOANS OUTSTANDING AS AT 30 JUNE 2024

Description of Purpose	Amount
Administration Building	\$1,094,257
Water	\$468,968
WDEF Special Rates Loan Scheme (Round 1)	\$491,617
WDEF Special Rates Loan Scheme (Round 2)	\$495,423
WDEF Special Rates Loan Scheme (Round 3)	\$2,308,547
WDEF Special Rates Loan Scheme (Round 4)	\$1,277,252
WDEF Special Rates Loan Scheme (Round 5)	\$296,283
Total	\$6,432,348

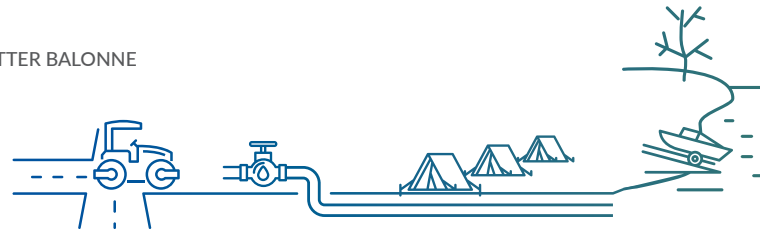
STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY

ASSET REVALUATION SURPLUS - \$314,425 THOUSAND

This amount represents an accumulation of the net increase in value of council's non-current assets having regard to asset condition, useful life and time value of money.

RETAINED SURPLUS - \$103,365 THOUSAND

This amount represents council's estimated net wealth at the end of the year.



FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY RATIOS

The Local Government Regulation 2012 requires that council reports its results for the financial year against selected financial sustainability ratios. Commencing with the 2024 financial year, an update to the reporting requirements has increased the number of ratios to be reported from 3 to 8. Other changes include different targets for different categories of council (based on remoteness and population), and updated definitions of key inputs to the calculations. Additionally, most ratios are now reported on a 5 year average basis to provide a better understanding of council's results over time as single year results can be distorted due to timing differences when accounting for grant receipts and expenditures.

For the 2023-24 financial year, council's ratio results have been impacted by the timing of the payment of the financial assistance grant. This grant from the federal government has historically been prepaid for the following financial year but this did not occur in 2024 which resulted in reduced cash balance at 30th of June 2024 and reduced operating revenue. Consequently, some of the ratios are outside of the target for 2024, however on a 5 year average basis, with the exception of the Asset Sustainability Ratio, council has met the required target for all ratios.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT MEASURES OF FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY		2024 Actual Result	5yr Average Result	Target	Actual Within Limits	5yr Average Within Limits
Measure	Description					
Unrestricted cash expense coverage ratio	This measure represents the number of months that council can continue operating based on current monthly expenses.	2.5 months	N/A	> 4 months	No	N/A
Operating Surplus Ratio	This measures the extent to which operating revenue raised covers operational expenses only or is available for capital funding.	-19.99%	-7.20%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Operating Cash Ratio	This measures council's ability to cover its core operational expenses and generate a cash surplus.	-7.42%	9.80%	> 0%	No	Yes
Asset Sustainability Ratio	This measure shows whether infrastructure assets owned by council are being replaced as they reach the end of their useful lives.	67.65%	66.20%	Greater than 90%	No	No
Asset Consumption Ratio	This measure shows the extent to which council's infrastructure assets have been consumed compared to the cost to build a new asset with the same benefit to the community.	69.94%	70.80%	> 60%	Yes	Yes
Leverage Ratio	This measure is an indicator of council's ability to repay its existing debt. It measure the relative size of council's debt to its operating performance.	-1.1 times	0.8 times	0-3 times	No	Yes
Council Controlled Revenue	This measure is an indicator of council's financial flexibility, ability to influence its operating income and capacity to respond to unexpected financial shocks.	14.93%	22.20%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Population Growth	Population growth is a key driver of council's operating income, service needs and infrastructure requirements into the future.	0.58%	-0.10%	N/A	N/A	N/A



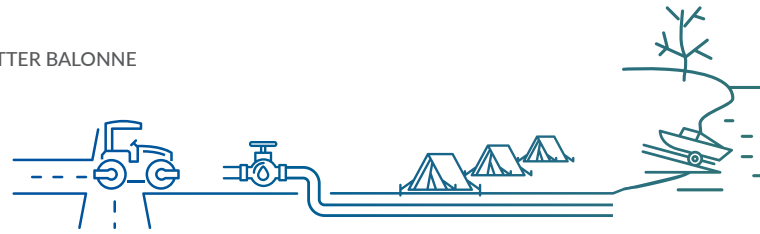
BALONNE SHIRE COUNCIL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

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Financial Statements 2024

Balonne Shire Council

Statement of Comprehensive Income

for the year ended 30 June 2024

\$ '000	Notes	2024	2023
Income			
Revenue			
Recurrent revenue			
Rates, levies and charges	3a	11,804	10,901
Fees and charges	3b	361	378
Sales revenue	3c	9,207	12,181
Grants, subsidies and contributions	3d(i)	57,691	32,230
Total recurrent revenue		79,063	55,690
Capital revenue			
Grants, subsidies and contributions	3d(ii)	14,584	3,163
Total capital revenue		14,584	3,163
Other income			
Rental income		280	367
Interest received		1,913	1,380
Other income		172	404
Capital income	4	1,380	141
Total other income		3,745	2,292
Total income		97,392	61,145
Expenses			
Recurrent expenses			
Employee benefits	5	10,419	10,333
Materials and services	6	77,067	34,564
Finance costs		375	208
Depreciation:			
Depreciation of property, plant and equipment	9	9,858	8,644
Total recurrent expenses		97,719	53,749
Capital Expenses		-	37
Total expenses		97,719	53,786
Net Result		(327)	7,359
Other comprehensive income			
Amounts which will not be reclassified to net result			
Increase in asset revaluation surplus		25,423	26,409
Total other comprehensive income for the year		25,423	26,409
Total comprehensive income for the year		25,096	33,768

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes and material accounting policies.



Balonne Shire Council

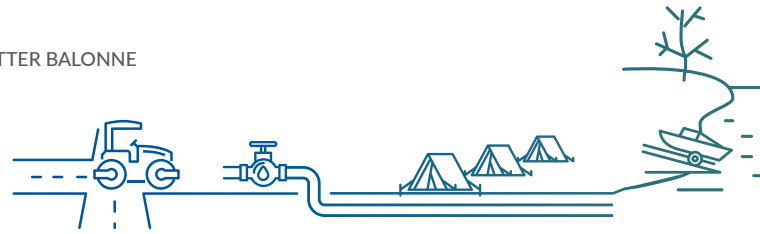
Financial Statements 2024

Statement of Financial Position

as at 30 June 2024

\$ '000	Notes	2024	2023
Assets			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	7	19,132	46,947
Receivables	8	3,097	4,386
Inventories		106	345
Contract assets	10	8,704	1,984
Other financial assets		381	131
Total current assets		31,420	53,793
Non-current assets			
Receivables *	8	4,514	2,809
Property, plant and equipment	9	400,324	363,769
Total non-current assets		404,838	366,578
Total Assets		436,258	420,371
Liabilities			
Current liabilities			
Payables	11	7,215	3,121
Contract liabilities	10	1,082	12,621
Borrowings	12	279	161
Provisions	13	1,861	1,556
Other liabilities		-	711
Total current liabilities		10,437	18,170
Non-current liabilities			
Borrowings	12	6,153	6,427
Provisions	13	1,878	3,080
Total non-current liabilities		8,031	9,507
Total Liabilities		18,468	27,677
Net community assets		417,790	392,694
Community equity			
Asset revaluation surplus		314,425	289,002
Retained surplus		103,365	103,692
Total community equity		417,790	392,694

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes and material accounting policies.



Balonne Shire Council

Financial Statements 2024

Statement of Changes in Equity for the year ended 30 June 2024

\$ '000	Notes	Asset revaluation surplus	Retained surplus	Total equity
Balance as at 1 July 2023		289,002	103,692	392,694
Restated balance as at 1 July 2023		289,002	103,692	392,694
Net result		-	(327)	(327)
Other comprehensive income for the year				
- Increase in asset revaluation surplus	9	25,423	-	25,423
Total comprehensive income for the year		25,423	(327)	25,096
Balance as at 30 June 2024		314,425	103,365	417,790
Balance as at 1 July 2022		262,593	96,334	358,927
Restated balance as at 1 July 2022		262,593	96,333	358,926
Net result		-	7,359	7,359
Other comprehensive income for the year				
- Increase in asset revaluation surplus	9	26,409	-	26,409
Total comprehensive income for the year		26,409	7,359	33,768
Balance as at 30 June 2023		289,002	103,692	392,694

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes and material accounting policies.



Balonne Shire Council

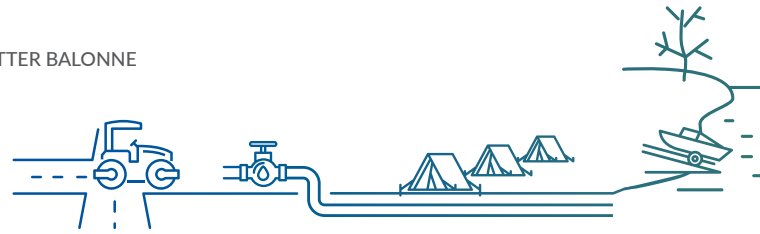
Financial Statements 2024

Statement of Cash Flows

for the year ended 30 June 2024

\$ '000	Notes	2024	2023
Cash flows from operating activities			
Receipts from customers		20,956	22,139
Payments to suppliers and employees		<u>(83,954)</u>	<u>(44,967)</u>
		(62,998)	(22,828)
Receipts			
Interest and investment revenue received		1,913	1,380
Rental income		280	367
Non capital grants and contributions		46,738	45,237
Other		172	402
Payments			
Borrowing costs		<u>(265)</u>	<u>(208)</u>
Net cash (outflow)/inflow from operating activities	18	<u>(14,160)</u>	<u>24,350</u>
Cash flows from investing activities			
Receipts			
Proceeds from sale of property, plant and equipment		983	248
Grants, subsidies, contributions and donations		7,278	5,183
Payments			
Payments for property, plant and equipment		<u>(21,760)</u>	<u>(13,888)</u>
Net cash (outflow) from investing activities		<u>(13,499)</u>	<u>(8,457)</u>
Cash flows from financing activities			
Payments			
Repayment of borrowings		<u>(156)</u>	<u>(130)</u>
Net cash flow (outflow) from financing activities		<u>(156)</u>	<u>(130)</u>
Net (decrease)/increase in cash and cash equivalents held		<u>(27,815)</u>	<u>15,763</u>
plus: cash and cash equivalents at beginning of the financial year		46,947	31,184
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the financial year	7	<u>19,132</u>	<u>46,947</u>

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes and material accounting policies.



Balonne Shire Council

Financial Statements 2024

Notes to the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2024

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Balonne Shire Council

Financial Statements 2024

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 1. Information about these financial statements

(a) Basis of preparation

Balonne Shire Council is constituted under the Queensland *Local Government Act 2009* and is domiciled in Australia.

These general purpose financial statements are for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024. They are prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2009* and the *Local Government Regulation 2012*.

Council is a not-for-profit entity for financial reporting purposes and these financial statements comply with Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations as applicable to not-for-profit entities.

These financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention except for the revaluation of certain classes of property, plant and equipment and investment property.

(b) New and revised Accounting Standards adopted during the year

Balonne Shire Council adopted all standards, which became mandatorily effective for annual reporting periods beginning on 1 July 2023. None of the standards impacted the reported position, performance, or cash flows.

The adoption of the revisions to AASB 101 *Presentation of Financial Statements* resulted in disclosure of material accounting policy information only rather than significant accounting policies. This means that accounting policy information is disclosed only if it relates to material transactions, other events or conditions and:

- a) Council has changed accounting policy during the reporting period and this change resulted in a material change to the information in the financial statements.
- b) Council chose (or was mandated to use) the accounting policy from one or more options permitted by Australian Accounting Standards.
- c) The accounting policy was developed in accordance with AASB 108 *Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors* in the absence of an Australian Accounting Standard that specifically applies.
- d) The accounting policy relate to an area for which a Council is required to make significant judgements or assumptions in applying an accounting policy, and the Council discloses those judgements or assumptions in the financial statements.
- e) The accounting required for them is complex and users of the entity's financial statements would otherwise not understand those material transactions, other events or conditions.

(c) Standards issued by the AASB not yet effective

Council has assessed all the standards / interpretations which are not yet effective and have determined that there is no expected material impact on the reported financial position or performance.

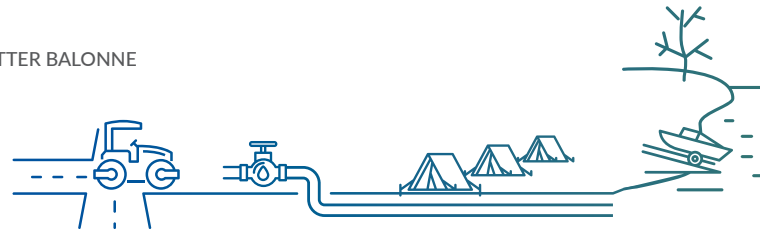
(d) Estimates and Judgements

Council makes a number of judgements, estimates and assumptions in preparing these financial statements. These are based on the best information available to Council at the time, however due to the passage of time, these assumptions may change and therefore the recorded balances may not reflect the final outcomes. The significant judgements, estimates and assumptions relate to the following items and specific information is provided in the relevant note:

- Revenue recognition - Note 3
- Valuation and depreciation of property, plant and equipment - Note 9
- Provisions - Note 13
- Contingent liabilities - Note 16

(e) Rounding and Comparatives

The financial statements have been rounded to the nearest \$1,000 or, where that amount is \$500 or less, to zero, unless otherwise stated. Comparative information is generally restated for reclassifications, errors and changes in accounting policies unless permitted otherwise by transition rules in a new Accounting Standard.



Balonne Shire Council

Financial Statements 2024

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 1. Information about these financial statements (continued)

(f) Trust funds held for outside parties

Funds held in the trust account on behalf of outside parties include those funds from the sale of land for arrears in rates, deposits lodged to guarantee performance and unclaimed monies (e.g. wages) paid into the trust account by the Council. Council performs only a custodial role in respect of these monies and because the monies cannot be used for Council purposes, they are not considered revenue nor brought to account in the financial statements.

(g) Volunteer Services

Council engages volunteers to assist with the operation of its Visitor Information Centres but does not recognise volunteer services in the Statement of Comprehensive Income due to immateriality.

(h) Taxation

Council is exempt from income tax, however is subject to Fringe Benefits Tax, Goods and Services Tax ('GST') and payroll tax on certain activities. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO is shown as an asset or liability respectively.



Balonne Shire Council

Financial Statements 2024

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 2. Analysis of results by function

(a) Components of Council functions

Details relating to the Council's functions / activities as reported in Note 2(b) are as follows:

Corporate governance

The objective of corporate governance is to provide effective organisational leadership through strategic planning, accountability and ethical standards of practice. This function includes activities and services relating to risk management, strategic and operational planning and also includes the Mayor, Councillors and Chief Executive Officer.

Corporate services

The goal of corporate services is to enhance the capability and performance of Balonne Shire Council and ensure resources are directed to achieve organisational objectives. This function includes activities and services related to social and corporate performance, human resources and information services.

Planning, development and environmental health services

The objectives of this function is to implement appropriate planning and building construction controls to ensure and encourage the balance between quality development of the shire and the protection of the environment, by implementing policies and operational programs that will contribute to the environmental health and wellbeing of the community. This function includes activities and services related to planning, development and environmental health services.

Rural services

The goal of this function is to provide effective and efficient management of stock routes, animal and weed pests. The major activities and services included in this function is pest management.

Infrastructure services

This function's objective is the provision of quality services and infrastructure for the current and future community that is planned, provided and managed on sound environmental and asset management principles. Activities and services included in this function relate to infrastructure that meets our community's needs including roads, water and sewerage.

Community lifestyle

The goal of the community lifestyle function is to encourage and promote a sense of community and belonging, community pride, engagement, wellbeing and grow social capital. Parks and gardens related activities and services is the major contributor to this function.

Economic development

The objective of economic development is to foster a vibrant economic environment which promotes a strong and sustainable regional economy. This function includes activities and services related to tourism and economic development.

Commercial services

The goal of commercial services is to undertake commercial works within the scope of Council's expertise in an efficient and cost effective manner. This function includes activities and services relating to private works (Road Maintenance Performance Contracts, Department of Transport and Main Roads, etc).

Balonne Shire Council

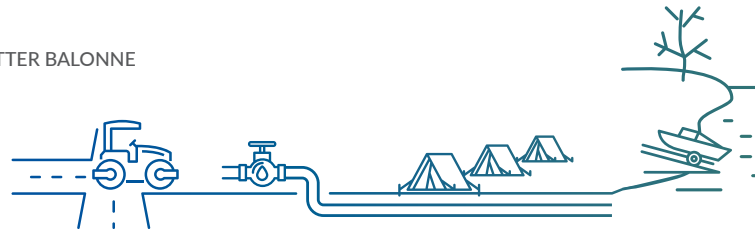
Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 2. Analysis of results by function (continued)

(b) Income, expenses and assets attributed to Council functions

Functions \$ '000	Gross program income			Gross program expenses			Net result from recurring operations			Total assets
	Recurring grants	Recurring other	Capital grants	Capital other	Total income	Recurring	Capital expenses	Total expenses	Net result	
2024										
Corporate governance	422	5	173	-	600	(2,047)	-	(2,047)	(1,620)	(1,447)
Corporate services	321	9,351	-	-	9,672	(4,116)	-	(4,116)	5,556	5,556
Planning, development and environmental health services	306	144	464	1,214	2,128	(1,310)	-	(1,310)	(860)	818
Rural services	290	127	-	-	417	(1,731)	-	(1,731)	(1,314)	(1,314)
Infrastructure services	55,653	5,102	13,902	166	74,823	(76,315)	-	(76,315)	(15,560)	(1,492)
Community lifestyle	638	(142)	45	-	541	(4,296)	-	(4,296)	(3,800)	(3,755)
Economic development	61	80	-	-	141	(1,079)	-	(1,079)	(938)	(938)
Commercial services	-	9,070	-	-	9,070	(6,825)	-	(6,825)	2,245	2,245
Total	57,691	23,737	14,584	1,380	97,392	(97,719)	-	(97,719)	(16,291)	(327)
2023										
Corporate governance	776	131	358	-	1,265	(2,491)	-	(2,491)	(1,584)	(1,226)
Corporate services	10,058	8,495	-	-	18,553	(4,244)	-	(4,244)	14,309	14,309
Planning, development and environmental health services	261	173	(108)	29	355	(844)	-	(844)	(410)	(486)
Rural services	(447)	225	650	-	428	(1,550)	-	(1,550)	(1,772)	(1,122)
Infrastructure services	20,993	4,692	1,728	112	27,525	(30,556)	(8)	(30,564)	(4,871)	(3,035)
Community lifestyle	346	(152)	488	-	682	(4,188)	(29)	(4,217)	(3,994)	(3,535)
Economic development	243	60	47	-	350	(1,120)	-	(1,120)	(817)	(770)
Commercial services	-	11,986	-	-	11,986	(8,756)	-	(8,756)	3,230	3,230
Total	32,230	25,610	3,163	141	61,144	(53,749)	(37)	(53,786)	4,091	7,358
										420,371





Balonne Shire Council

Financial Statements 2024

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 3. Revenue

\$ '000	2024	2023
(a) Rates, levies and charges		
Rates, levies and charges are recognised as revenue at the beginning of the rating period to which they relate. Prepaid rates are recognised as a financial liability until the beginning of the rating period.		
General rates	7,767	7,228
Water	2,211	2,078
Water consumption, rental and sundries	119	60
Waste charges	1,480	1,308
Special rates	159	159
Urban waste water	1,238	1,166
Total rates and utility charge revenue	12,974	11,999
Less: discounts	(1,128)	(1,055)
Less: pensioner remissions	(37)	(36)
Less: rates write-offs	(5)	(7)
Total rates, levies and charges	11,804	10,901

(b) Fees and charges

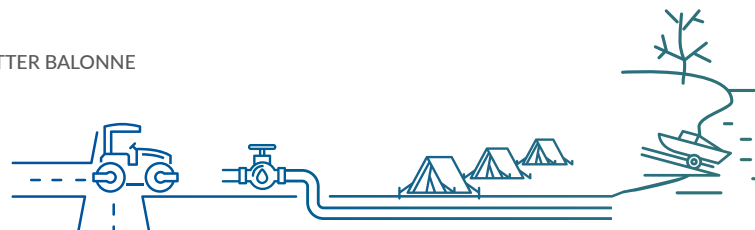
Revenue arising from fees and charges is recognised when or as the performance obligation is completed and the customer receives the benefit of the goods / services being provided.

The performance obligation relates to the specific services which are provided to the customers and generally the payment terms are within 30 days of the provision of the service or in some cases, the customer is required to pay on arrival, for example caravan parks. There is no material obligation for Council in relation to refunds or returns.

Licences granted by Council are all either short-term or low value and all revenue from licences is recognised at the time that the licence is granted rather than the term of the licence.

Revenue from infringements is recognised on issue of infringement notice after applying the expected credit loss model relating to impairment of receivables for initial recognition of statutory receivables.

\$ '000	2024	2023
Building and development fees	75	55
Infringements	20	74
Cemetery fees	68	63
Council facilities hire	74	46
Search and other Council document fees	12	31
Other fees and charges	112	109
Total fees and charges	361	378



Balonne Shire Council

Financial Statements 2024

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 3. Revenue (continued)

(c) Sales revenue

Sale of goods revenue is recognised when the customer has taken delivery of the goods. Revenue from services is recognised when the service is rendered.

Revenue from contracts and recoverable works generally comprises a recoupment of material costs together with an hourly charge for use of equipment and employees. This revenue and the associated costs are recognised by reference to the stage of completion of the contract activity based on costs incurred at the reporting date. Where consideration is received for the service in advance it is included in other liabilities and is recognised as revenue in the period when the service is performed. There are no contracts in progress at the year end. The contract work carried out is not subject to retentions.

\$ '000	2024	2023
Rendering of services		
Contract and recoverable works	9,115	12,121
Other sale of services	30	-
Total sale of services	9,145	12,121
Sale of goods		
Visitor Information Centre	62	60
Total sale of goods	62	60
Total sales revenue	9,207	12,181

(d) Grants, subsidies, contributions and donations

Grant Income Under AASB 15 - Revenue from Contracts with Customers

Where grant income arises from an agreement which is enforceable and contains sufficiently specific performance obligations then the revenue is recognised when control of each performance obligation is satisfied. The performance obligations are varied based on the agreements. Payment terms vary depending on the terms of the grant, cash is received upfront for some grants and on the achievement of certain payment milestones for others.

Each performance obligation is considered to ensure that the revenue recognition reflects the transfer of control and within grant agreements there may be some performance obligations where control transfers at a point in time and others which have continuous transfer of control over the life of the contract.

Where control is transferred over time, generally the input methods being either costs or time incurred are deemed to be the most appropriate methods to reflect the transfer of benefit.

Grant Income Under AASB 1058 - Income of Not-for-Profit Entities

Assets arising from grants in the scope of AASB 1058 are recognised at the asset's fair value when the asset is received. Council considers whether there are any related liability or equity items associated with the asset which are recognised in accordance with the relevant accounting standard.

Once the assets and liabilities have been recognised then income is recognised for any remaining asset value at the time that the asset is received.

Capital Grants

Capital grants received to enable Council to acquire or construct an item of property, plant and equipment to identified specifications which will be under Council's control, and which is enforceable, are recognised as revenue as and when the obligation to construct or purchase is completed. For construction projects, this is generally as the construction progresses in accordance with costs incurred since this is deemed to be the most appropriate measure of the completeness of the construction project as there is no profit margin.



Balonne Shire Council

Financial Statements 2024

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 3. Revenue (continued)

Donations and Contributions

Where assets are donated or purchased for significantly below fair value, revenue is recognised when the asset is acquired and controlled by Council.

Financial Assistance Grant

The annual Financial Assistance Grant, received from the Federal Government, is customarily paid in four equal quarterly instalments. Since 2008 an advance payment has been received by all local governments in late June of a portion of the following year's allocation. This has varied between 25%, 50% and 75%. In June 2023 the advance payment was for 96.6% of the 2023/24 financial year grant allocation. This resulted in a distortion of the operating result for 2022/23 given the requirement to recognise the grant revenue on receipt due to its untied nature. In the 2023/24 financial year no advanced payment of the 2024/25 proposed grant allocation was received. The unpredictability in the timing and amount received each financial year for the Financial Assistance Grant continues to result in a distortion of Council's reported operating result. Council's Financial Assistance Grant allocation was \$11,056,459 for the 2024 financial year of which only \$373,418 was received during the 2023/24 financial year due to an advance payment of \$10,683,041 being received in June 2023 (2022/23: \$8,210,168 grant allocation of which \$4,983,455 received in advance in April 2022).

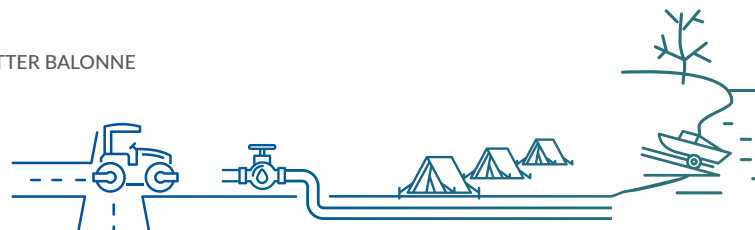
\$ '000	2024	2023
(i) Operating		
General purpose grants	261	13,910
State government subsidies and grants	1,176	1,272
Commonwealth government subsidies and grants	2,167	617
Donations	7	-
Contributions	19	30
Other	228	-
Flood restoration reimbursements *	53,833	16,401
Total recurrent grants, subsidies, contributions and donations	57,691	32,230

(*) Significant flood events occurred in the Shire between 2020 - 2024. The Queensland Reconstruction Authority (QRA) has approved funding for restoration works in relation to these events. This revenue will be received progressively over multiple financial years.

(ii) Capital

Capital Revenue includes grants and subsidies received which are tied to specific projects for the replacement or upgrade of existing non-current assets and / or investment in new assets.

State government subsidies and grants	11,587	170
Commonwealth government subsidies and grants	2,997	2,993
Total capital grants, subsidies, contributions and donations	14,584	3,163



Balonne Shire Council

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 3. Revenue (continued)

(iii) Timing of revenue recognition for grants, subsidies, contributions and donations

\$ '000	2024		2023	
	Revenue recognised at a point in time	Revenue recognised over time	Revenue recognised at a point in time	Revenue recognised over time
Grants, subsidies, donations and contributions - Operating	2,073	55,618	14,844	17,386
Grants, subsidies, donations and contributions - Capital	1,395	13,189	-	3,163
	<u>3,468</u>	<u>68,807</u>	<u>14,844</u>	<u>20,549</u>

Note 4. Capital income

\$ '000	Notes	2024	2023
(a) Gain / loss on disposal of non-current assets			
Proceeds from the disposal of property, plant and equipment		944	-
Less: carrying value of disposed property, plant and equipment	9	(774)	-
		<u>170</u>	<u>-</u>
Proceeds from disposal of land and improvements		43	-
		<u>43</u>	<u>-</u>
Gain on disposal of non-current assets		<u>213</u>	<u>-</u>
(b) Provision for restoration of land			
Discount rate adj. - refuse restoration	13	1,171	-
		<u>1,171</u>	<u>-</u>
(c) Other			
Other		(4)	141
		<u>(4)</u>	<u>141</u>
Total capital income		<u>1,380</u>	<u>141</u>

Note 5. Employee benefits

\$ '000	Notes	2024	2023
Employee benefit expenses are recorded when the service has been provided by the employee.			
Wages and salaries		7,155	6,584
Councillors remuneration		481	458
Annual, sick and long service leave entitlements		1,262	1,503
Superannuation	17	1,031	892
Training costs		339	251
Workers compensation insurance		29	23
		<u>10,297</u>	<u>9,711</u>
Other employee related expenses		122	622
Total Employee benefits		<u>10,419</u>	<u>10,333</u>

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Balonne Shire Council

Financial Statements 2024

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 5. Employee benefits (continued)

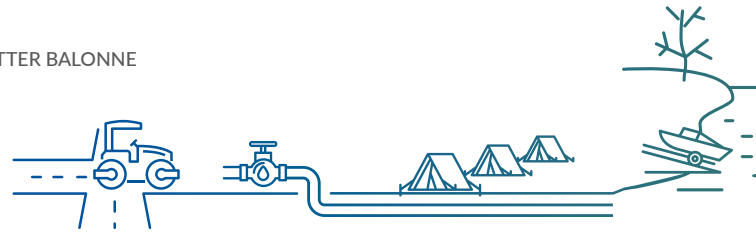
Councillor remuneration represents salary, and other allowances paid in respect of carrying out their duties.

	2024 Number	2023 Number
Additional information:		
Total Council employees at the reporting date:		
Elected members	7	7
Administration staff	57	53
Depot and outdoors staff	51	46
Total full time equivalent employees	115	106

Note 6. Materials and services

\$ '000	2024	2023
Expenses are recorded on an accruals basis as Council receives the goods or services.		
Advertising and marketing	91	124
Administration supplies and consumables	143	380
Audit of annual financial statements by the Auditor-General of Queensland	167	112
Communications and IT	216	627
Contractors/consultants	6,924	5,064
Community donations/assistance	54	11
Power	568	469
Repairs and maintenance	6,762	8,547
Subscriptions and registrations	619	386
Insurance	755	782
Cleansing services	350	273
Land protection fund precept	395	319
Urban water and waste water services	1,058	965
Flood restoration contractors	56,633	14,475
Other materials and services	2,332	2,030
Total materials and services	77,067	34,564

Total audit fees exclusive of travel expenses are \$72,500 (2023: \$61,000 plus \$8,949 additional audit effort) as quoted by the Queensland Audit Office relating to the 2023/24 general purpose financial statements.



Financial Statements 2024

Balonne Shire Council

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 7. Cash, cash equivalents

\$ '000	2024	2023
Cash and cash equivalents in the statement of cash flows include cash on hand, all cash and cheques received but not banked at the year end, deposits held at call with financial institutions, other short-term, highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less that are readily convertible to cash and which are subject to an insignificant risk of changes in value, and bank overdrafts.		
Cash and cash equivalents		
Cash at bank and on hand	7,504	22,152
Deposits at call	4,999	17,831
QTC cash fund	6,629	6,964
Balance per Statement of Financial Position	19,132	46,947
Balance per Statement of Cashflows	19,132	46,947

Council's cash and cash equivalents are subject to a number of internal and external restrictions that limit amounts available for discretionary or future use.

These include:

(i) Externally imposed expenditure restrictions at the reporting date relate to the following cash assets:

Unspent government grants and subsidies	1,082	12,621
Rates paid in advance	425	375
Unspent loan monies	54	-
Total externally imposed restrictions on cash assets	1,561	12,996

(ii) Internal allocations of cash at the reporting date:

Internal allocations of cash may be lifted by a Council with a resolution.

Future capital works	621	621
Future asset replacement	9,332	9,119
Future recurrent expenditure	18	18
Total internally allocated cash	9,971	9,758
Total unspent restricted cash	11,532	22,754

Cash and cash deposits are held with the Commonwealth Bank of Australia (A+), Westpac Banking Corporation (AA-), and Queensland Treasury Corporation (AA+) in normal deposits at call and business cheque accounts.

Note 8. Receivables

\$ '000	2024	2023
Current		
Rates and charges	1,168	860
Trade debtors	1,734	3,437
WDEF Special Rates Loan Scheme	203	97
Total	3,105	4,394
less: Provision for impairment		
Rates and charges	(5)	(5)
Trade debtors	(3)	(3)
Total provision for impairment - receivables	(8)	(8)
Total current receivables	3,097	4,386

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Balonne Shire Council

Financial Statements 2024

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 8. Receivables (continued)

\$ '000	2024	2023
Non-current		
WDEF Special Rates Loan Scheme	4,514	2,809
Total non-current receivables	4,514	2,809

Receivables, loans and advances are amounts owed to Council at year end. They are recognised at the amount due at the time of sale or service delivery or advance. Settlement of receivables is required within 30 days after the invoice is issued.

A Non-Current Receivable exists for the WDEF Special Rates Loan Scheme and represents the value of completed projects at 30 June 2024, and payable by landholders under a specific scheme approved by Council. Repayments will be made by way of a special levy over a 20-year period, with Council recovering interest on the outstanding balance at a proportionate interest rate ranging between 1.907% and 2.564% depending on the QTC interest rate at time of loan drawdown.

Debts are regularly assessed for collectability and allowance is made, where appropriate, for impairment. Impairment of Council's receivables is not material. All known bad debts were written-off at 30 June. If an amount is recovered in a subsequent period it is recognised as revenue.

Because Council is empowered under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2009 to sell an owner's property to recover outstanding rate debts, Council does not generally impair any rate receivables. However, due to recent events, we recognise the need to impair rate receivables in certain circumstances where recovery through property sale is not possible.

Balance of trade debtors as at 30 June 2024 includes \$579,229 in outstanding invoices relating to Contract Works (2023: \$2,647,011).

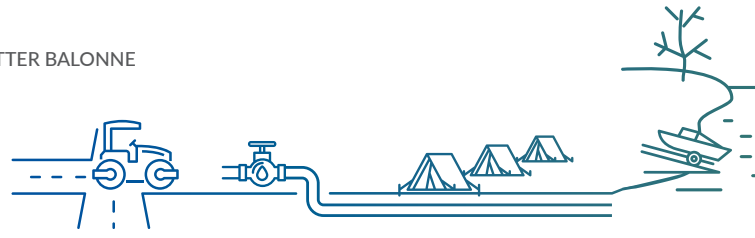
Balonne Shire Council

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 9. Property, plant and equipment

\$ '000	Land		Buildings and other structures		Plant and equipment		Water supply network		Transport infrastructure		Urban waste water network		Work in progress		Total
	Fair Value Level 2 & 3	Fair Value Level 2 & 3	Fair Value Level 2 & 3	Cost	Fair Value Level 3	Cost	Fair Value Level 3	Fair Value Level 3	Fair Value Level 3	Fair Value Level 3	Cost	Fair Value Level 3	Cost		
2024															
Measurement basis															
Fair value category															
Opening gross balance at 1 July 2023	2,995	78,545	17,453	17,453	41,451	17,453	355,895	23,273	5,071	524,883					
Work in progress transfers to PPE	554	1,731	2,377	2,377	2,061	2,377	3,721	63	(10,507)	21,760					
Additions	-	-	-	(2,408)	-	(2,408)	(476)	-	-	21,760					
Disposals	-	-	-	-	(356)	(356)	-	-	-	-					
Prior year WIP expensed and adjustments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	14					
Revaluation adjustment to revaluation surplus	-	9,190	-	-	-	9,190	14,538	-	-	23,728					
Transfers between PPE classes	-	138	-	-	-	138	(138)	-	-	-					
Transfers to WDEF contract assets	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					
Transfers from/(to) held for sale category	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					
Total gross value of property, plant and equipment	3,549	89,602	17,422	17,422	43,156	17,422	373,540	23,336	16,338	566,943					
Opening accumulated depreciation and impairment	-	26,210	8,141	8,141	16,001	8,141	100,760	9,802	-	160,914					
Depreciation expense	-	1,381	1,009	1,009	615	1,009	6,516	327	-	9,858					
Depreciation on disposals	-	-	(1,740)	(1,740)	(240)	(1,740)	(476)	-	-	(2,458)					
Revaluation adjustment to revaluation surplus	-	3,154	-	-	-	-	(4,849)	-	-	(1,695)					
Total accumulated depreciation and impairment of property, plant and equipment	-	30,755	7,410	7,410	16,376	7,410	101,949	10,129	-	166,619					
Total net book value of property, plant and equipment	3,549	58,847	10,012	10,012	26,780	10,012	271,591	13,207	16,338	400,324					
Other information															
Range of estimated useful life (years)	Land: Not depreciated	10-100	4-50	4-50	15-100	15-100	10-120	15-105	N/A						
*Asset additions comprise	-	476	2,185	2,185	1,411	2,185	4,080	9	-	8,171					
Asset renewals	565	1,953	168	168	1,014	168	9,889	-	-	13,589					
Other additions	565	2,429	2,353	2,353	2,425	2,353	13,979	9	-	21,760					
Total asset additions															

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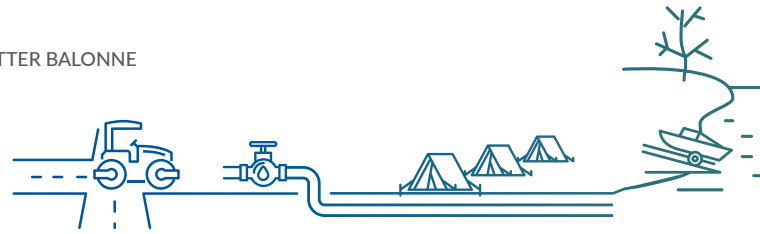
Balonne Shire Council

Notes to the Financial Statements
for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 9. Property, plant and equipment (continued)

\$ '000	2023	Measurement basis Fair value category	Land		Buildings and other structures		Plant and equipment		Water supply network		Transport infrastructure		Urban waste water network		Work in progress		Total	
			Fair Value Level 2 & 3	Fair Value Level 2 & 3	Fair Value Level 2 & 3	Cost	Fair Value Level 3	Fair Value Level 3	Fair Value Level 3	Fair Value Level 3	Fair Value Level 3	Fair Value Level 3	Cost					
		Opening gross balance at 1 July 2023	3,077	76,867	13,961	313,642	24,644	34,964	313,642	24,644	7,765	475,140						
		Work in progress transfers to PPE	4	3,333	3,200	6,847	—	35	6,847	—	(13,419)	—						
		Additions	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	13,887	13,887						
		Disposals	—	(109)	(654)	—	—	—	—	—	—	(762)						
		Prior year WIP expensed and adjustments	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(117)						
		Revaluation adjustment to revaluation surplus	—	—	—	34,805	(1,571)	6,451	34,805	(1,571)	—	39,686						
		Transfers between PPE classes	—	(1,547)	946	600	—	1	600	—	—	—						
		Transfers to WDEF contract assets	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—						
		Transfers from/(to) held for sale category	(86)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(3,065)	(3,065)						
		Total gross value of property, plant and equipment	2,995	78,545	17,453	355,895	23,273	41,451	355,895	23,273	5,071	524,683						
		Opening accumulated depreciation and impairment	—	24,947	7,928	84,573	10,573	11,591	84,573	10,573	—	139,612						
		Depreciation expense	—	1,342	753	5,685	341	523	5,685	341	—	6,644						
		Depreciation on disposals	—	(79)	(540)	—	—	—	—	—	—	(619)						
		Revaluation adjustment to revaluation surplus	—	—	—	10,502	(1,112)	3,887	10,502	(1,112)	—	13,277						
		Total accumulated depreciation and impairment of property, plant and equipment	—	26,210	8,141	100,750	9,802	16,001	100,750	9,802	—	160,914						
		Total net book value of property, plant and equipment	2,995	52,335	9,312	255,135	13,471	25,450	255,135	13,471	5,071	363,769						
		Other information	Land: Not depreciated	10-100	4-50	10-120	15-105	15-100	10-120	15-105	N/A							
		Range of estimated useful life (years)																
		*Asset additions comprise																
		Asset renewals	—	1,590	3,053	3,754	57	478	3,754	57	—	8,932						
		Other additions	—	888	290	3,719	27	32	3,719	27	—	4,955						
		Total asset additions	—	2,478	3,343	7,472	84	510	7,472	84	—	13,887						

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Balonne Shire Council

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 9. Property, plant and equipment (continued)

(a) Recognition

The asset capitalisation threshold for Council is:

Land	No threshold
Plant & Equipment	\$5,000
Buildings & Other Structures	\$10,000
Transport Infrastructure	\$10,000
Water Supply Network	\$10,000
Urban Waste Water Network	\$10,000
Intangible Asset	\$10,000

Land under roads and reserve land under the Land Act 1994 or Land Title Act 1994 is controlled by the Queensland State Government and not recognised in the Council financial statements

(b) Measurement

Property, plant and equipment assets are initially recorded at cost. Subsequently, each class of property, plant and equipment is stated at cost or fair value less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment loss.

Cost is determined as the fair value of consideration plus costs incidental to the acquisition. Direct labour, materials and an appropriate portion of overheads incurred in the acquisition or construction of assets are also included as capital costs.

Property, plant and equipment received in the form of contributions, for significantly less than fair value or as offsets to infrastructure charges are recognised as assets and revenue at fair value.

(c) Depreciation

Assets are depreciated from the date of acquisition or, in respect of internally constructed assets, from the time an asset is completed and commissioned ready for use, at which time they are reclassified from work in progress to the appropriate asset class.

Land, work in progress, and road formations are not depreciated. Depreciation, where applicable, is calculated on a straight-line basis such that the cost of the asset less its residual value is recognised progressively over its estimated useful life to Council. Management believe that the straight-line basis appropriately reflects the pattern of consumption of all Council assets.

The useful life of leasehold improvements is the shorter of the useful life of the asset or the remaining life of the lease.

Where assets have separately identifiable components, these components have separately assigned useful lives.

Depreciation methods, estimated useful lives and residual values are reviewed at the end of each reporting period and adjusted where necessary to reflect any changes in the pattern of consumption, physical wear and tear, technical or commercial obsolescence, or management intentions.

Key Judgements and Estimates

Management reviews its estimate of the useful lives of depreciable assets at each reporting date, based on the expected utility of the assets. Uncertainties in these estimates relate to technical or physical obsolescence that may change the utility of infrastructure assets.



Balonne Shire Council

Financial Statements 2024

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 9. Property, plant and equipment (continued)

(d) Impairment

Property, plant and equipment is assessed for indicators of impairment annually. If an indicator of possible impairment exists, Council determines the asset's recoverable amount. Any amount by which the asset's carrying amount exceeds the recoverable amount is recorded as an impairment loss.

(e) Valuation

Key Judgements and Estimates

Some of the Council's assets and liabilities are measured at fair value for financial reporting purposes. In estimating the fair value of an asset or a liability, the Council uses market-observable data to the extent it is available and other inputs as necessary.

(i) Valuation Processes

Council considers the carrying amount of its property, plant and equipment on an annual basis compared to fair value and makes adjustment where these are materially different. Every 3 - 5 years Council performs a full comprehensive revaluation by engaging an external professionally qualified valuer. Transport Infrastructure Assets were subject to a full comprehensive revaluation in 2023/24.

In the intervening years, Council uses internal financial and engineering expertise to review appropriate industry cost indices for the region and undertake an assessment of movements in input costs and assumptions associated with all infrastructure assets, land and buildings. Together these are used to form the basis of determining whether a material movement has occurred for the infrastructure asset classes.

Further details in relation to valuers, the methods of valuation and the key assumptions used in valuing each different asset class are disclosed below.

Revaluation increases are recognised in the asset revaluation surplus unless they are reversing a previous decrease which was taken through the income statement, in that case the increase is taken to the income statement to the extent of the previous decrease.

Revaluation decreases are recognised in the asset revaluation surplus, where there is sufficient amount available in the asset revaluation surplus relating to that asset class. Where there isn't sufficient amount available in the surplus, the decrease is recognised in the statement of comprehensive income. Where the class of asset has previously decreased in value and this reduction was recognised as an expense, an increase in the value of the class is recognised in the statement of comprehensive income.

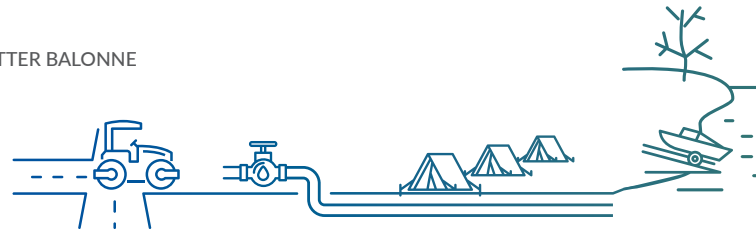
On revaluation, accumulated depreciation is restated proportionately with the change in the carrying amount of the asset and any change in the estimate of remaining useful life.

In accordance with AASB 13 fair value measurements are categorised on the following basis:

Level 1: Fair value based on quoted prices (unadjusted) in active markets for identical assets or liabilities,

Level 2: Fair value based on inputs that are directly or indirectly observable, such as prices for similar assets, for the asset or liability,

Level 3: Fair value based on unobservable inputs for the asset and liability.



Balonne Shire Council

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 9. Property, plant and equipment (continued)

(3) Valuation techniques used to derive level 2 and level 3 fair values

Asset class and fair value hierarchy	Valuation approach	Last comprehensive valuation date	Valuer engaged	Index applied (change in index recognised this year)	Other interim revaluation adjustment
Land (Levels 2 and 3)	Market value	30/06/2022	JLL	Below materiality threshold - Valuer-General Land Valuation	Nil

Key assumptions and estimates (related data sources)

The current Balonne Shire Council's Planning Scheme (adopted 19 December 2019) was considered in determining the highest and best use of the land.

The valuations were undertaken having regard to available sales evidence in the locality in which the land assets were located. Where local sales were not available evidence was sourced from other localities considered to be of relevance. The type of sales found was determined in consideration with a number of factors such as the zoning of the subject land, neighbouring land uses and physical characteristics.

Buildings and other structures (Level 2)	Market value	30/06/2022	JLL	11.43% ABS: 3020 Non-residential building construction Queensland	Nil
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Key assumptions and estimates (related data sources)

Where there is a market for Council building assets, fair value has been derived from sales evidence across the relevant local market of comparable properties after adjusting for considerations such as location, development potential, aspect, size, physical characteristics and date of sale.

Buildings and other structures (Level 3)	Current replacement cost	30/06/2022	JLL	11.43% ABS: 3020 Non-residential building construction Queensland	Nil
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Key assumptions and estimates (related data sources)

Where Council buildings are of a specialised nature and there is no active market for the assets, fair value has been determined on the basis of replacement with a new asset having similar service potential including allowances for preliminaries and professional fees. The gross current values have been derived from reference to market data for recent Council projects and costing guides such as Rawlinsons and Cordells which provide indicative unit rates for a variety of building and infrastructure assets as well as material, plant and labour. Allowances for physical depreciation and obsolescence were made based on on-site condition assessments in discussion with appropriate Council's Asset Management and Property Services staff.



Balonne Shire Council

Financial Statements 2024

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 9. Property, plant and equipment (continued)

Asset class and fair value hierarchy	Valuation approach	Last comprehensive valuation date	Valuer engaged	Index applied (change in index recognised this year)	Other interim revaluation adjustment
Transport infrastructure (Level 3)	Current replacement cost	30/06/2024	Shepherd Services Pty Ltd	N/A	Nil

Key assumptions and estimates (related data sources)

Fair Value of assets were assessed on the basis of determining the Gross Replacement Cost of the modern equivalent and then adjusting for the level of consumed future economic benefit and impairment.

Valuation Methods:

- First Principles Approach utilising labour rates, plant hire, supply contract costs for raw materials
- Average cost of outsourced projects or internal construction projects
- Benchmarking rate based on surrounding councils audited unit rates.

Assets were visually inspected by the valuer with 100% of roads captured and assessed. Remaining useful lives were calculated taking into consideration the visual condition.

Water supply network (Level 3)	Current replacement cost	30/06/2023	JLL	Below materiality threshold ABS: 3109 Other heavy and civil engineering construction Australia	Nil
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Key assumptions and estimates (related data sources)

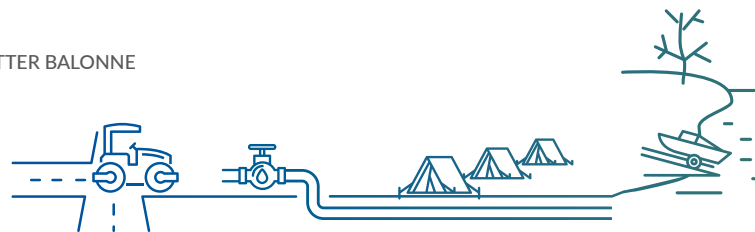
Water Supply assets were componentised to a level to ensure a reliable measure of cost and service capacity and deterioration of estimated remaining life. Valuation was calculated by reference to asset linear and other specifications, estimated plant, labour and material inputs and overhead allocations. An assessment of remaining useful life was made by the Valuer taking into consideration the construction date, evidence of recent repairs or capital works and the surrounding environmental factors.

Urban waste water network (Level 3)	Current replacement cost	30/06/2023	JLL	Below materiality threshold ABS: 3109 Other heavy and civil engineering construction Australia	Nil
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Key assumptions and estimates (related data sources)

Urban Waste Water assets were componentised to a level to ensure a reliable measure of cost and service capacity and deterioration of estimated remaining life. Valuation was calculated by reference to asset linear and other specifications, estimated plant, labour and material inputs and overhead allocations. An assessment of remaining useful life was made by the Valuer taking into consideration the construction date, evidence of recent repairs or capital works and the surrounding environmental factors.

For waste water gravity mains the assumption that the pipes will be relined was adopted.



Balonne Shire Council

Financial Statements 2024

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 10. Contract balances

Where the amounts billed to customers are based on the achievement of various milestones established in the contract, the amounts recognised as revenue in a given period do not necessarily coincide with the amounts billed to or certified by the customer.

When a performance obligation is satisfied by transferring a promised good or service to the customer before the customer pays consideration or before payment is due, Council presents the work in progress as a contract asset, unless the rights to that amount of consideration are unconditional, in which case Council recognises a receivable. When an amount of consideration is received from a customer / fund provider prior to Council transferring a good or service to the customer, Council presents the funds which exceed revenue recognised as a contract liability.

\$ '000	2024	2023
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(a) Contract assets

Contract assets	8,704	1,984
Total current contract assets	8,704	1,984
Contracts with customers	2,936	1,943
Contracts to construct councils own assets	5,768	41
Total contract assets	8,704	1,984

(b) Contract liabilities

Funds received upfront to construct Council controlled assets	330	1,909
Deposits received in advance of services provided	752	10,712
Total current contract liabilities	1,082	12,621

Revenue recognised that was included in the contract liability balance at the beginning of the year

Funds to construct Council controlled assets	1,896	809
Deposits received in advance of services provided	9,643	847
Total revenue included in the contract liability	11,539	1,656

(c) Significant changes in contract balances

During 2023/24 Council completed a number of funded projects. In addition Council's flood damage funding changed from a contract liability of \$8.776m to a contract asset of \$6.910m throughout the year with work being undertaken on various QRA approved submissions that will be completed over a number of financial years.

The contract assets and liabilities have arisen on adoption of AASB 15 and AASB 1058. Previously the revenue was recognised on receipt and therefore there was no effect on the statement of financial position.



Balonne Shire Council

Financial Statements 2024

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 11. Payables

\$ '000	2024	2023
Creditors are recognised when goods or services are received, at the amount owed, and are generally settled on 30 day terms.		
Current		
Creditors and accruals	5,852	3,108
Prepaid rates	425	-
Other entitlements	2	-
Security bonds and deposits	936	13
Total current payables	7,215	3,121

(*) Balance as at 30 June 2024 includes unpaid invoices for flood damage works relating to grant funding of \$3,928,957 (2023: \$28,892).

Note 12. Borrowings

Borrowings are initially recognised at fair value plus any directly attributable transaction costs. Thereafter, they are measured at amortised cost. Principal and interest repayments are made quarterly in arrears.

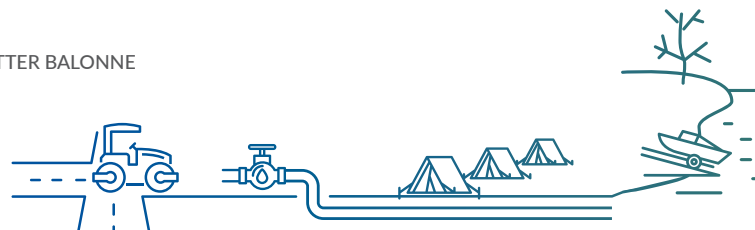
All borrowings are in Australian dollar denominated amounts and interest is expensed as it accrues. No interest has been capitalised during the current period. Expected final repayment dates vary from 15 June 2032 to 15 March 2041. There have been no defaults or breaches of the loan agreement during the period.

Council adopts an annual Debt Policy that sets out Council's planned borrowings for the next ten years. Council's current policy is to only borrow for capital projects and for a term no longer than the expected life of the asset. Council also aims to comply with Queensland Treasury Corporation's borrowing guidelines and ensure that sustainability indicators remain within acceptable levels at all times.

\$ '000	2024	2023
Current		
Loans - Queensland Treasury Corporation	279	161
Total current borrowings	279	161
Non-current		
Loans - Queensland Treasury Corporation	6,153	6,427
Total non-current borrowings	6,153	6,427

Reconciliation of Loan Movements for the year

Loans - Queensland Treasury Corporation		
Opening balance at beginning of financial year	6,588	6,718
Principal repayments	(156)	(130)
Book value at end of financial year	6,432	6,588



Balonne Shire Council

Financial Statements 2024

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 12. Borrowings (continued)

The QTC loan market value at the reporting date was \$5,379,073 (2023: \$5,547,647), of which \$3,804,010 (2023: \$3,800,968) relates to the WDEF Special Rates Loan Scheme. This represents the value of the debt if Council repaid it at that date. As it is the intention of Council to hold the debt for its term, no provision is required to be made in these accounts.

No assets have been pledged as security by Council for any liabilities, however all loans are guaranteed by the Queensland Government. There have been no defaults or breaches of the loan agreement during the 2023 and 2024 financial years.

The following table sets out the Council's liquidity risk of borrowings in a format as it might be provided to management. The amounts disclosed in the maturity analysis represent the contractual undiscounted cash flows at balance date:

	0 to 1 year \$'000	1 to 5 years \$'000	Over 5 years \$'000	Total contractual cash flows	Carrying amount
2024					
Loans - QTC	444	2,407	4,773	7,624	6,153
2023					
Loans - QTC	335	2,237	5,387	7,959	6,588

Balonne Shire Council is exposed to interest rate risk through its borrowings from the QTC. Council has access to a mix of variable and fixed rate funding options through QTC so that interest rate risk exposure can be minimised.

Note 13. Provisions

Long Service Leave

The provision for long service leave represents the present value of the estimated future cash outflows to be made in respect of services provided by employees up to the reporting date. The liability is calculated using current pay rates and projected future increases in those rates and includes related employee on-costs. The estimates are adjusted for the probability of the employee remaining in the Council's employment or other associated employment which would result in the Council being required to meet the liability. Adjustments are then made to allow for the proportion of the benefit earned to date, and the result is discounted to present value. The interest rates attaching to Commonwealth Government guaranteed securities at the reporting date are used to discount the estimated future cash outflows to their present value.

Where employees have met the prerequisite length of service and Council does not have an unconditional right to defer this liability beyond 12 months, long service leave is classified as a current liability. Otherwise it is classified as non-current.

Refuse Dump Restoration and Quarry Rehabilitation

A provision is made for the cost of restoring refuse dumps and quarries where it is probable the Council will have an obligation to rehabilitate when the use of the facilities is complete.

The provision for refuse restoration is calculated as the present value of anticipated future costs associated with the closure of the dump sites, decontamination and monitoring of historical residues and leaching on these sites. The calculation of this provision requires assumptions such as application of environmental legislation, site closure dates, available technologies and engineering cost estimates. These uncertainties may result in future actual expenditure differing from amounts currently provided. Because of the long-term nature of the liability, most significant uncertainty in estimating the provision is the costs that will be incurred. The provision recognised for dump sites is reviewed at least annually and updated based on the facts and circumstances available at the time. The final concept landform for the St George landfill has been modified to reflect a larger footprint and re-location of the transfer station infrastructure to reflect the St George Landfill Masterplan (September 2022). This has resulted in an increase in the volumetric capacity of the landfill and associated operational life extension. Management estimates that St George, as the longest lasting of the current landfills, will close in 2116 and that the restoration will occur progressively over the subsequent four years.

As refuse dumps are on State reserves which Council does not control, the provision for restoration is treated as an expense in the year the provision is first recognised. Changes in the provision are treated as an expense or income.



Balonne Shire Council

Financial Statements 2024

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 13. Provisions (continued)

\$ '000	2024	2023
Current		
Annual leave	869	748
Long service leave	933	760
Other employee entitlements	59	48
Total current provisions	1,861	1,556
Non-current		
Long service leave	70	211
Refuse restoration	1,808	2,869
Total non-current provisions	1,878	3,080

Details of movements in provisions

Refuse restoration

Balance at beginning of financial year	2,869	3,165
Increase in provision due to unwinding of discount	110	119
Increase/(decrease) in provision due to change in discount rate	(1,070)	(162)
Increase/(decrease) in provision due to change in inflation	95	(442)
Increase/(decrease) in provision due to change in the projected cost	(196)	189
Balance at end of financial year	1,808	2,869

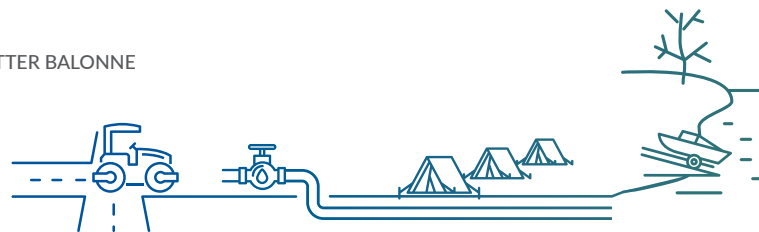
Refuse restoration

Balonne Shire Council currently operates six (6) active landfill sites.

This represents the present value of the estimated cost of restoring the refuse disposal sites to a useable state at the end of their useful lives. The projected cost is \$1,808,262 (2023: \$2,869,222) and this cost is expected to be incurred between 2032 and 2101 after closing the sites between 2026 and 2116 and allowing a period for settlement. The judgement made to the rehabilitation provision is currently 2.5%, aligned with the long term RBA target inflation rate. If this rate were adjusted to 3%, the impact would be \$780,410.

Note 14. Asset revaluation surplus

The asset revaluation surplus comprises revaluation movements on property, plant and equipment. Increases and decreases on revaluation are offset within a class of assets.



Financial Statements 2024

Balonne Shire Council

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 15. Commitments for expenditure

\$ '000	2024	2023
Contractual commitments		
Contractual commitments at end of financial year but not recognised in the financial statements are as follows:		
Waste Collection Contract (per year) - Expires 30/06/2025	632	1,263
Landfill Maintenance Contract - Expires 01/06/2030	3,258	303
Swimming Pool Contract - Expires 30/06/2026	267	400
Plant and Equipment Purchases	-	2,143
Other Capital Projects	-	227
	4,157	4,336

Note 16. Contingent liabilities

Details and estimates of maximum amounts of contingent liabilities are as follows:

Local Government Mutual

The Council is a member of the local government mutual liability self-insurance pool, LGM Queensland. In the event of the pool being wound up or it is unable to meet its debts as they fall due, the trust deed and rules provide that any accumulated deficit will be met by the individual pool members in the same proportion as their contribution is to the total pool contributions in respect to any year that a deficit arises.

As at 30 June 2024 the financial statements reported an accumulated surplus and it is not anticipated any liability will arise.

Local Government Workcare

The Council is a member of the Queensland local government worker's compensation self-insurance scheme, Local Government Workcare. Under this scheme the Council has provided an indemnity towards a bank guarantee to cover bad debts which may remain should the self insurance licence be cancelled and there was insufficient funds available to cover outstanding liabilities. Only the Queensland Government's workers compensation authority may call on any part of the guarantee should the above circumstances arise. The Council's maximum exposure to the bank guarantee is \$226,580 (2023: \$192,542).



Balonne Shire Council

Financial Statements 2024

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 17. Superannuation - regional defined benefit fund

Council contributes to the Brighter Super Defined Benefits Fund (the scheme), at the rate of 12% for each permanent employee who is a defined benefit member. This rate is set in accordance with the LGIASuper trust deed and may be varied on the advice of an actuary. The Regional Defined Benefits Fund is a complying superannuation scheme for the purpose of the Commonwealth Superannuation Industry (Supervision) legislation and is also governed by the Local Government Act 2009. The scheme is managed by the LGIASuper trustee for LGIASuper trading as Brighter Super.

The scheme is a pooled defined benefit plan and it is not in accordance with the deed to allocate obligations, plan assets and costs at the Council level.

Any amount by which the scheme is over or under funded may affect future contribution rate obligations, but has not been recognised as an asset or liability of the Council.

Technically Council can be liable to the scheme for a portion of another local governments' obligations should that local government be unable to meet them. However the risk of this occurring is extremely low and in accordance with the LGIASuper trust deed changes to council's obligations will only be made on the advice of an actuary.

The last completed actuarial assessment of the scheme was undertaken as at 1 July 2021. The actuary indicated that "At the valuation date of 1 July 2021, the net assets of the scheme exceeded the vested benefits and the scheme was in a satisfactory financial position as at the valuation date." The measure of vested benefits represents the value of benefit entitlements should all participating employees voluntarily exit the scheme. Council is not aware of anything that has happened since that time that indicates the assets of the scheme are insufficient to meet the vested benefits, as at reporting date.

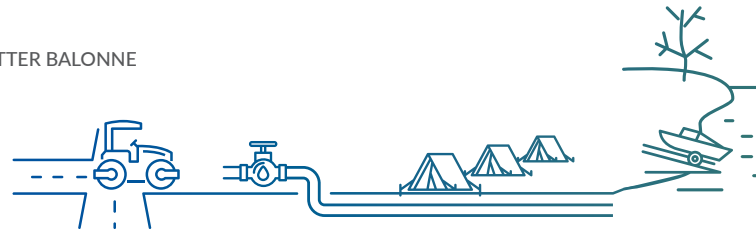
No changes have been made to prescribed employer contributions which remain at 12% of employee remuneration and there are no known requirements to change the rate of contributions.

The next triennial actuarial review is not due until 1 July 2024.

The most significant risks that may result in Brighter Super increasing the contribution rate, on the advice of the actuary, are:

- Investment risk - risk that the scheme's investment returns will be lower than assumed and additional contributions are needed to fund the shortfall.
- Salary growth risk - risk that wages or salaries will rise more rapidly than assumed, increasing vested benefits to be funded.

\$ '000	Notes	2024	2023
Superannuation contributions made to the Regional Defined Benefits Fund		45	41
Other superannuation contributions for employees		986	851
Total superannuation contributions paid by Council for employees	5	1,031	892



Balonne Shire Council

Financial Statements 2024

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 18. Reconciliation of net result for the year to net cash inflow/(outflow) from operating activities

\$ '000	2024	2023
Net result	(327)	7,359
Non-cash items		
Depreciation	9,858	8,644
	<u>9,858</u>	<u>8,644</u>
Losses/(gains) recognised on fair value re-measurements through the income		
Unwinding of discount rates on restoration provisions	(1,171)	-
	<u>(1,171)</u>	<u>-</u>
Investing and development activities		
Net (profit)/loss on disposal of assets	(213)	(104)
Capital grants and contributions	(14,584)	(3,163)
Work in progress transfers to held for sale & expenses	-	202
	<u>(14,797)</u>	<u>(3,065)</u>
Changes in operating assets and liabilities:		
(Increase)/decrease in receivables	(416)	(3,656)
(Increase)/decrease in inventories	239	(131)
(Increase)/decrease in contract assets	(993)	5,951
(Increase)/decrease in other assets	(250)	166
Increase/(decrease) in payables	4,094	(626)
Increase/(decrease) in contract liabilities	(9,960)	9,405
Increase/(decrease) in employee leave entitlements	164	(71)
Increase/(decrease) in other provisions	110	(296)
Increase/(decrease) in other liabilities	(711)	670
	<u>(7,723)</u>	<u>11,412</u>
Net cash (outflow)/inflow from operating activities	<u>(14,160)</u>	<u>24,350</u>

Note 19. Reconciliation of liabilities arising from finance activities

\$ '000	As at 30/06/23	Cashflows	As at 30/06/24
	Opening Balance		Closing balance
Borrowings	6,588	(156)	6,432
	<u>6,588</u>	<u>(156)</u>	<u>6,432</u>

\$ '000	As at 30/06/22	Cashflows	As at 30/06/23
	Opening Balance		Closing balance
Borrowings	6,718	(130)	6,588
	<u>6,718</u>	<u>(130)</u>	<u>6,588</u>



Balonne Shire Council

Financial Statements 2024

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 20. Events after the reporting period

There has not been any event that occurred after the end of the reporting period that has significantly affected, or may significantly affect, the current or future financial results of the Council.

Note 21. Financial instruments and financial risk management

(a) Financial assets and financial liabilities

Council has exposure to three types of risk from financial instruments; interest rate risk, credit risk, and liquidity risk.

Financial risk management

Risk Management Framework

Council is responsible for the establishment and oversight of the risk management framework, together with developing and monitoring risk management policies. Council's risk management policies are established to identify and analyse the risks faced, to set appropriate limits and controls, and to monitor these risks and adherence against limits. Council aims to manage volatility to minimise potential adverse effects of financial performance.

Council's audit and risk committee oversees how management monitors compliance with risk management policies and procedures, and reviews the adequacy of the risk management framework. The committee is assisted in its oversight role by internal audit. Internal audit undertakes both regular and adhoc reviews of risk management controls and procedures, the result of which are reported to the audit and risk committee.

Credit risk

Credit risk is the risk of financial loss if a counterparty to a financial instrument fails to meet its contractual obligations. These obligations arise principally from the council's investments and receivables. Exposure to credit risk is managed through regular analysis of credit counterparty ability to meet payment obligations.

Investments in financial instruments are required to be made with Queensland Treasury Corporation (QTC) or financial institutions in Australia, in line with the requirements of the *Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982*. No collateral is held as security relating to the financial assets held by Balonne Shire Council.

The carrying amount of financial assets at the end of the reporting period represent the maximum exposure to credit risk.

Liquidity risk

Liquidity risk is the risk that the Council will encounter difficulty in meeting the obligations associated with its financial liabilities that are settled by delivering cash or another financial asset. Council's approach to managing liquidity is to ensure, as far as possible, that it will have sufficient liquidity to meet its liabilities when they are due, under both normal and stressed conditions, without incurring unacceptable losses or risking damage to Council's reputation.

Exposure to liquidity risk

Balonne Shire Council is exposed to liquidity risk through its normal course of business and through its borrowings with QTC and other financial institutions.

The Council manages its exposure to liquidity risk by maintaining sufficient cash deposits and undrawn facilities, both short and long term, to cater for unexpected volatility in cash flows.

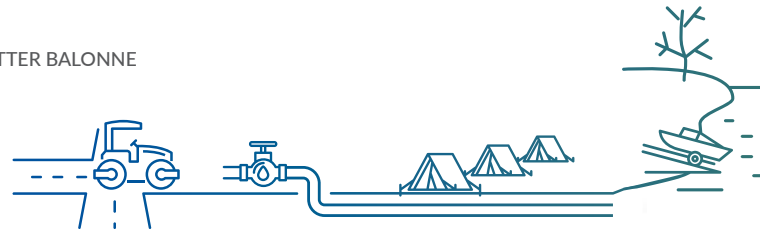
Market risk

Market risk is the risk that changes in market indices, such as interest rates, will affect the Council's income or the value of its holdings of financial instruments.

Interest rate risk

Council is exposed to interest rate risk through investments and borrowings with QTC. Council has access to a mix of variable and fixed rate funding options through QTC so that interest rate risk exposure can be minimised.

continued on next page ...



Balonne Shire Council

Financial Statements 2024

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 21. Financial instruments and financial risk management (continued)

Sensitivity

Sensitivity to interest rate movements is calculated for variable financial assets and liabilities based on the carrying amount at reporting date. Movements in interest rates are unlikely to have a significant effect on Council's equity or net result as they only impact interest on investments.

The Council does not account for any fixed-rate financial assets or financial liabilities at Fair Value through Profit or Loss, therefore a change in interest rates at the reporting date would not affect profit or loss.

Measurement of Fair Value

The valuation technique used in measuring financial liabilities is discounted cash flows. This valuation model considers the present value of expected payments, discounted using a risk-adjusted discount rate (where appropriate).

(b) Fair value

The fair value of trade and other receivables and payables is assumed to approximate the value of the original transaction, less any allowance for impairment.

Note 22. Transactions with related parties

(a) Key management personnel

Transactions with key management personnel

KMP include the Mayor, Councillors, Council's Chief Executive Officer and Directors.

\$ '000	2024	2023
The compensation paid to key management personnel comprises:		
Short-term employee benefits	1,517	1,391
Post-employment benefits	105	80
Total	1,622	1,471

(*) Detailed remuneration disclosures are provided in the Annual Report

(b) Other Related Parties

Transactions with other related parties

Other related parties include the close family members of KMP and any entities controlled or jointly controlled by KMP or their close family members. Close family members include a spouse, child and dependent of a KMP or their spouse.

No transactions between Council and other related parties are applicable based on the criteria.

(c) Loans and guarantees to/from related parties

Council does not make loans or receive loans from related parties. No guarantees have been provided.



Balonne Shire Council

Financial Statements 2024

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

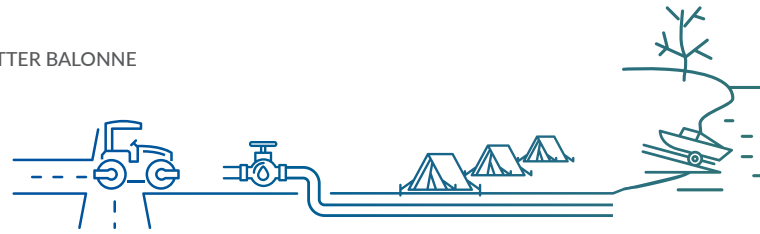
Note 22. Transactions with related parties (continued)

(d) Transactions with related parties that have not been disclosed

Most of the entities and people that are related parties of Council live and operate within Balonne Shire. Therefore, on a regular basis ordinary citizen transactions occur between Council and its related parties. Some examples include:

- Payment of rates
- Normal use of Council's sport and recreational facilities
- Dog registration
- Normal fees and charges
- Normal creditor and debtor transactions

Council has not included these types of transactions in its disclosure, where they are made on the same terms and conditions available to the general public.



Balonne Shire Council

Financial Statements 2024

General Purpose Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Management Certificate

for the year ended 30 June 2024

These General Purpose Financial Statements have been prepared pursuant to sections 176 and 177 of the Local Government Regulation 2012 (the Regulation) and other prescribed requirements.

In accordance with Section 212(5) of the Regulation, we certify that:

- i. the prescribed requirements of the Local Government Act 2009 and Local Government Regulation 2012 for the establishment and keeping of accounts have been complied with in all material respects; and
- ii. the General Purpose Financial Statements, as set out on pages 3 to 6, present a true and fair view, in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards, of the Council's transactions for the financial year and financial position at the end of the year.

Mayor
Cr S C O'Toole
25 October 2024

Acting Chief Executive Officer
Mr G Kanofski
25 October 2024



INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Councillors of Balonne Shire Council

Report on the audit of the financial report

Opinion

I have audited the financial report of Balonne Shire Council.

The financial report comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2024, the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, notes to the financial statements including material accounting policy information and the certificate given by the Mayor and Acting Chief Executive Officer.

In my opinion, the financial report:

- a) gives a true and fair view of the council's financial position as at 30 June 2024, and of its financial performance for the year then ended; and
- b) complies with the *Local Government Act 2009*, the Local Government Regulation 2012 and Australian Accounting Standards.

Basis for opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with the *Auditor-General Auditing Standards*, which incorporate the Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial report* section of my report.

I am independent of the council in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)* (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Australia. I have also fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code and the *Auditor-General Auditing Standards*.

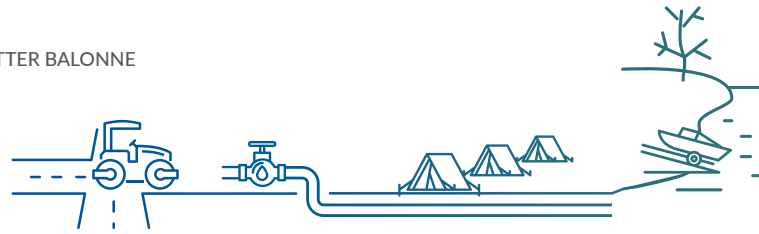
I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Other information

The councillors are responsible for the other information.

The other information comprises the information included in the entity's annual report for the year ended 30 June 2024, but does not include the financial report and our auditor's report thereon.

At the date of this auditor's report, the available other information in Balonne Shire Council's annual report for the year ended 30 June 2024 was the current year financial sustainability statement – audited ratios, current year financial sustainability statement – contextual ratios (unaudited) and the unaudited long term financial sustainability statement.



My opinion on the financial report does not cover the other information and accordingly I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. However, as required by the Local Government Regulation 2012, I have formed a separate opinion on the current year financial sustainability statement.

In connection with my audit of the financial report, my responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial report and my knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this information, I am required to report that fact. I have nothing to report in this regard.

Responsibilities of the councillors for the financial report

The councillors are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2009*, the Local Government Regulation 2012 and Australian Accounting Standards, and for such internal control as the councillors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

The councillors are also responsible for assessing the council's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless it is intended to abolish the council or to otherwise cease operations of the council.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial report

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

A further description of my responsibilities for the audit of the financial report is located at the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board website at:

https://www.auasb.gov.au/auditors_responsibilities/ar4.pdf

This description forms part of my auditor's report.

Report on other legal and regulatory requirements

In accordance with s. 40 of the *Auditor-General Act 2009*, for the year ended 30 June 2024:

- a) I received all the information and explanations I required
- b) I consider that, the prescribed requirements in relation to the establishment and keeping of accounts were complied with in all material respects.



Prescribed requirements scope

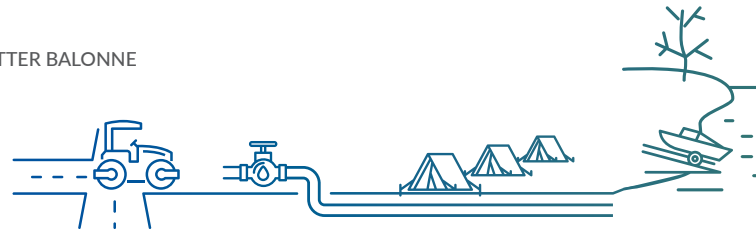
The prescribed requirements for the establishment and keeping of accounts are contained in the *Local Government Act 2009*, and the *Local Government Regulation 2012*. The applicable requirements include those for keeping financial records that correctly record and explain the council's transactions and account balances to enable the preparation of a true and fair financial report.

Jacques Coetzee

29 October 2024

Jacques Coetzee
as delegate of the Auditor-General

Queensland Audit Office
Brisbane



Financial Statements 2024

Balonne Shire Council

General Purpose Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Current Year Financial Sustainability Statement

	Target Tier x	Actual 2024	5 Yr Av. 2020-24
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Audited ratios

Council's performance at 30 June 2024 against key financial ratios and targets.

Liquidity

1. Unrestricted cash expense coverage ratio

Total cash and equivalents add current investments add available ongoing QTC working capital limit less externally restricted cash

	x 12	> 4 mths	2.5 months	N/A
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Total operating expenditure less depreciation and amortisation less finance costs

The unrestricted cash expense cover ratio is an indicator of the unconstrained liquidity available to a council to meet ongoing and emergent financial demands, which is a key component to solvency. It represents the number of months a council can continue operating based on current monthly expenses.

Operating Performance

2. Operating surplus ratio

Operating result				
Total operating revenue		N/A	(19.99)%	(7.20)%

The operating surplus ratio is an indicator of the extent to which operating revenues generated cover operational expenses. Any operating surplus would be available for capital funding or other purposes.

3. Operating cash ratio

Operating result add depreciation and amortisation add finance costs				
Total operating revenue		> 0%	(7.42)%	9.80%

The operating cash ratio is a measure of council's ability to cover its core operational expenses and generate a cash surplus excluding depreciation, amortisation, and finance costs.

Asset management

4. Asset sustainability ratio

Capital expenditure on replacement of infrastructure assets (renewals)				
Depreciation expenditure on infrastructure assets		> 90%	67.65%	66.20%

The asset sustainability ratio approximates the extent to which the infrastructure assets managed by a council are being replaced as they reach the end of their useful lives.

5. Asset consumption ratio

Written down replacement cost of depreciable infrastructure assets				
Current replacement cost of depreciable infrastructure assets		> 60%	69.94%	70.80%

The asset consumption ratio approximates the extent to which council's infrastructure assets have been consumed compared to what it would cost to build a new asset with the same benefit to the community.



Balonne Shire Council

Financial Statements 2024

General Purpose Financial Statements

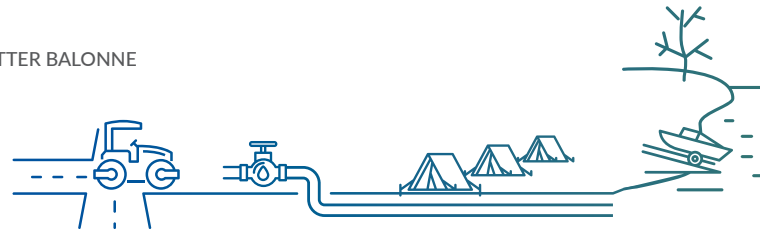
for the year ended 30 June 2024

	Target Tier x	Actual 2024	5 Yr Av. 2020-24
Debt servicing capacity			
6. Leverage ratio			
Book value of debt			
<u>Total operating revenue less total operating expenditure add depreciation and amortisation</u>	0-3 times	(1.1) times	0.8 times

The leverage ratio is an indicator of a council's ability to repay its existing debt. It measures the relative size of the council's debt to its operating performance.

Note 1 - basis of preparation

The current year financial sustainability statement is prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Regulation 2012 and the Financial Management (Sustainability) Guideline 2024. The amounts used to calculate the 6 reported measures are prepared on an accrual basis and are drawn from the council's audited general purpose financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2024.



Financial Statements 2024

Balonne Shire Council

General Purpose Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Certificate of Accuracy (audited ratios)

This current-year financial sustainability statement has been prepared pursuant to Section 178 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* (the Regulation).

In accordance with Section 212(5) of the Regulation we certify that this current year financial sustainability statement has been accurately calculated.

Mayor
Cr S C O'Toole
25 October 2024

Acting Chief Executive Officer
Mr G Kanofski
25 October 2024



INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Councillors of Balonne Shire Council

Report on the Current-Year Financial Sustainability Statement

Opinion

I have audited the accompanying current year financial sustainability statement of Balonne Shire Council for the year ended 30 June 2024, comprising the statement, explanatory notes, and the certificate of accuracy given by the Mayor and the Acting Chief Executive Officer.

In accordance with s.212 of the Local Government Regulation 2012, in my opinion, in all material respects, the current year financial sustainability statement – audited ratios of Balonne Shire Council for the year ended 30 June 2024 has been accurately calculated.

Basis of opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with the *Auditor-General Auditing Standards*, which incorporate the Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the current year financial sustainability statement* section of my report.

I am independent of the council in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)* (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the statement in Australia. I have also fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code and the *Auditor-General Auditing Standards*.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Emphasis of matter – basis of accounting

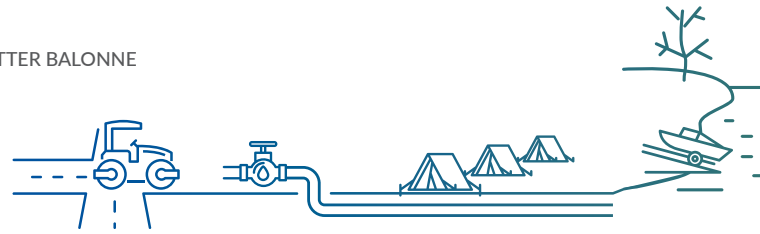
I draw attention to Note 1 which describes the basis of accounting. The current year financial sustainability statement – audited ratios has been prepared in accordance with the Financial Management (Sustainability) Guideline 2024 for the purpose of fulfilling the council's reporting responsibilities under the Local Government Regulation 2012. As a result, the statement may not be suitable for another purpose. My opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Other Information

The councillors are responsible for the other information.

The other information comprises the information included in the entity's annual report for the year ended 30 June 2024, but does not include the financial sustainability statement and our auditor's report thereon.

At the date of this auditor's report, the available other information in Balonne Shire Council's annual report for the year ended 30 June 2024 was the general-purpose financial statements, current year financial sustainability statement – contextual ratios (unaudited) and the unaudited long term financial sustainability statement.



My opinion on the current year financial sustainability statement does not cover the other information and accordingly I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. However, as required by the Local Government Regulation 2012, I have formed a separate opinion on the general-purpose financial report.

In connection with my audit of the financial sustainability statement, my responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial sustainability statement and my knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this information, I am required to report that fact. I have nothing to report in this regard.

Responsibilities of the councillors for the current year financial sustainability statement

The councillors are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the current year financial sustainability statement in accordance with the Local Government Regulation 2012. The councillors responsibility also includes such internal control as the councillors determine is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of the statement that is accurately calculated and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the current year financial sustainability statement

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the current year financial sustainability statement as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this statement.

My responsibility does not extend to forming an opinion on the appropriateness or relevance of the reported ratios, nor on the council's future sustainability.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the statement, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the council's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of material accounting policy information used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the council.

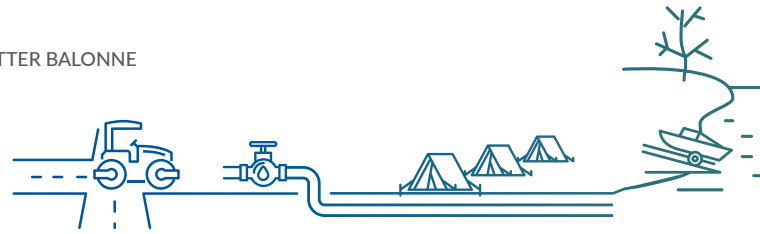


I communicate with the council regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

Jacques Coetzee

Jacques Coetzee
as delegate of the Auditor-General

29 October 2024
Queensland Audit Office
Brisbane



Balonne Shire Council

General Purpose Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Current Year Financial Sustainability Statement

	Target Tier x	Actual 2024	5 Yr Av. 2020-24
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Contextual ratios (unaudited)

Financial Capacity

1. Council controlled revenue

Net rates, levies and charges add fees and charges			
Total operating revenue	n/a	14.93%	22.20%

Council controlled revenue is an indicator of a council's financial flexibility, ability to influence its operating income, and capacity to respond to unexpected financial shocks.

2. Population growth

Prior year estimated population	-1		
Previous year estimated population	n/a	0.58%	(0.10)%

Population growth is a key driver of a council's operating income, service needs, and infrastructure requirements into the future.



Balonne Shire Council

Financial Statements 2024

General Purpose Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Certificate of Accuracy (contextual ratios - unaudited)

Certificate of Accuracy

This current-year financial sustainability statement has been prepared pursuant to Section 178 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* (the Regulation).

In accordance with Section 212(5) of the Regulation we certify that this current year financial sustainability statement has been accurately calculated.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S C O'Toole', positioned above a horizontal line.

Mayor

Cr S C O'Toole

25 October 2024

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G Kanofski', positioned above a horizontal line.

Acting Chief Executive Officer

Mr G Kanofski

25 October 2024

Balonne Shire Council

General Purpose Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Unaudited Long Term Financial Sustainability Statement

	Target 2024	Actual 2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034

Measures of financial sustainability

Liquidity

1. Unrestricted cash expense coverage ratio

Total cash and equivalents add current investments
add available ongoing QTC working capital limit less
externally restricted cash

x 12

2024	2.5	2.5	2.5	3.8	5.7	7.4	9.7	10.7	12.4	14.0	15.8	17.5
	months	months	months	months	months	months	months	months	months	months	months	months

Total operating expenditure less depreciation and
amortisation less finance costs

The unrestricted cash expense cover ratio is an indicator of the unconstrained liquidity available to a council to meet ongoing and emergent financial demands, which is a key component to solvency. It represents the number of months a council can continue operating based on current monthly expenses.

Operating Performance

2. Operating surplus ratio

Operating result

Total operating revenue

2024	(19.99)%	0.20%	0.30%	0.70%	0.10%	0.80%	1.40%	0.80%	1.60%	2.20%	1.60%
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The operating surplus ratio is an indicator of the extent to which operating revenues generated cover operational expenses. Any operating surplus would be available for capital funding or other purposes.

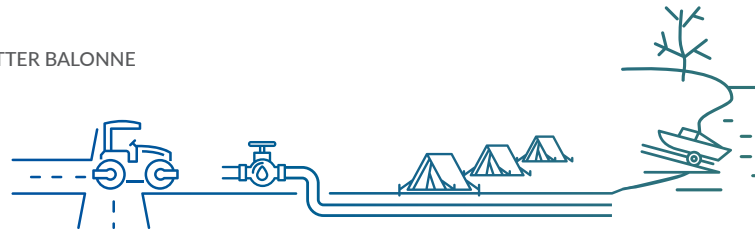
3. Operating cash ratio

Operating result add depreciation and amortisation add finance costs

Total operating revenue

2024	(7.42)%	18.50%	23.70%	24.40%	24.50%	24.70%	24.60%	24.70%	24.70%	24.90%	25.00%	25.10%
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The operating cash ratio is a measure of councils ability to cover its core operational expenses and generate a cash surplus excluding depreciation, amortisation, and finance costs.



Balonne Shire Council

General Purpose Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Financial Statements 2024

Unaudited Long Term Financial Sustainability Statement (continued)

	Target 2024	Actual 2024	Forecast									
			2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
Asset Management												
4. Asset sustainability ratio												
Capital expenditure on replacement of infrastructure assets (renewals)	>90%	67.65%	110.60%	99.50%	97.40%	95.30%	97.20%	99.30%	96.50%	98.40%	95.10%	96.10%
Depreciation expenditure on infrastructure assets												
The asset sustainability ratio approximates the extent to which the infrastructure assets managed by a council are being replaced as they reach the end of their useful lives.												
5. Asset consumption ratio												
Written down replacement cost of depreciable infrastructure assets	>60%	69.94%	65.50%	67.20%	66.10%	64.80%	63.70%	62.50%	61.30%	60.20%	59.10%	57.90%
Current replacement cost of depreciable infrastructure assets												
The asset consumption ratio approximates the extent to which council's infrastructure assets have been consumed compared to what it would cost to build a new asset with the same benefit to the community.												
Debt servicing capacity												
7. Leverage ratio												
Book value of debt												
Total operating revenue less total operating expenditure add depreciation and amortisation	0-3 times	(1.1) times	0.6 times	0.6 times	0.6 times	0.5 times	0.5 times	0.5 times	0.5 times	0.4 times	0.4 times	0.4 times

The leverage ratio is an indicator of a council's ability to repay its existing debt. It measures the relative size of the council's debt to its operating performance.

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Balonne Shire Council

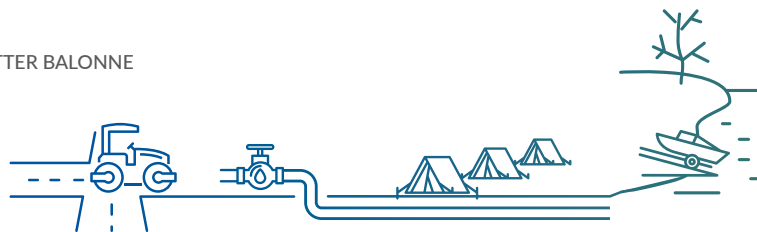
General Purpose Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Unaudited Long Term Financial Sustainability Statement (continued)

	Target 2024	Actual 2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034
Financial Capacity												
8. Council controlled revenue												
Net rates, levies and charges add fees and charges		14.93%	23.10%	30.40%	31.80%	31.80%	31.90%	32.00%	32.10%	32.10%	32.20%	32.30%
Total operating revenue	N/A											
Council controlled revenue is an indicator of a council's financial flexibility, ability to influence its operating income, and capacity to respond to unexpected financial shocks.												
9. Population growth												
Prior year estimated population												
Previous year estimated population	-1	0.58%	0.60%	0.60%	0.50%	0.30%	0.60%	0.40%	0.50%	0.40%	0.40%	0.50%

Population growth is a key driver of a council's operating income, service needs, and infrastructure requirements into the future.





Balonne Shire Council

Financial Statements 2024

General Purpose Financial Statements

for the year ended 30 June 2024

Certificate of Accuracy - Long Term Financial Sustainability Statement as at 30 June 2024

This long-term financial sustainability statement has been prepared pursuant to Section 178 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* (the Regulation).

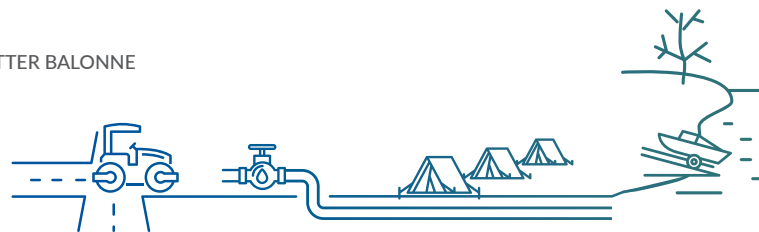
In accordance with Section 212(5) of the Regulation we certify that this long-term financial sustainability statement has been accurately calculated.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S C O'Toole', positioned above a horizontal line.

Mayor
Cr S C O'Toole
25 October 2024

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G Kanofski', positioned above a horizontal line.

Acting Chief Executive Officer
Mr G Kanofski
25 October 2024



GLOSSARY

ACRONYM	TITLE
BSC	Balonne Shire Council
CUC Balonne	Country Universities Centre Balonne
DRFA	Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements
IMS	Integrated Management System
LDMG	Local Disaster Management Group
LGAQ	Local Government Association of Queensland
LGMA	Local Government Managers Australia
LHAP	Local Housing Action Plan
LRCIP	Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program
LRRS	Local Road of Regional Significance
MDA	Murray Darling Association
QMDCL	Queensland Murray-Darling Catchments Ltd
QRA	Queensland Reconstruction Authority
R2R	Roads 2 Recovery
RADF	Regional Arts Development Fund
RMPC	Road Maintenance Performance Contract
SWQROC	South West Queensland Regional Organisation of Councils
TEQ	Tourism & Events Queensland
TIDS	Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme
TMR	Department of Transport and Main Roads
USQ	University of Southern Queensland
VIC	Visitor Information Centre
WDEF	Wild Dog Exclusion Fencing



CONTACTING BALONNE SHIRE COUNCIL

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