

10.3 STATE OF OUR REGION REPORT 2022-2024 - ATTACHMENT

Attachment Titles:

1. Draft State of Our Region Report 2022-2024

Attachment 1 - 20241014 - Draft 2021-2024 State of Our Region Report (Presented to Council - 21 Nov 2024)



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS

Snowy Valleys Council proudly acknowledges the
traditional owners and custodians of this land and
water and pays respect to their Elders Past and
Present



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ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES 2022-2024

Local Government Elections were held in December 2021. The elected Council is responsible for the direction and control of Council's affairs in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993* and associated legislation.

Councillors represent the interest of the residents and ratepayers, provide leadership and guidance to the community and facilitate communication between the community whilst maintaining the broader vision, needs and aspirations of the whole Snowy Valleys community.



**Mayor
Ian Chaffey**



**Deputy Mayor
Trina Tompson**



Hansie Armour



Julia Ham



James Hayes OAM



Sam Hughes



Mick Ivill



John Larter



Brent Livermore

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This STATE OF OUR REGION REPORT has been prepared under section 428 of the *Local Government Act 1993*. It focuses on how Snowy Valleys Council has been delivering against social, environmental, economic and civic leadership objectives in support of the Snowy Valleys Community Strategic Plan – Towards 2042.

The Snowy Valleys Community Strategic Plan (CSP) is based on the aspirations and priorities of our community and sets out a long-term vision for the area. It is the community's plan for the future, not a council plan. Snowy Valleys Council is a custodian for the CSP and state agencies, businesses, industry groups, community groups, and individuals also lead and support the achievement of the vision and strategic priorities.

This report spans the 2022-2024 term of office and provides information that sets the scene for the new council including a snapshot of council achievements over the term and a scorecard of the community indicators used to measure and report progress on the implementation of the CSP.

It should assist the new council to better understand the current state of the region and help them to undertake a review of the CSP which is an essential component of the Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) cycle.

It is structured around the five themes that have guided the community over the past three years.

- Our Community
- Our Economy
- Our Environment
- Our Infrastructure
- Our Civic Leadership

About the Snowy Valleys Region

The Snowy Valleys region, located in the western foothills of the Snowy Mountains and bordered by Kosciuszko National Park and Murray River, covers over 8,960 square kilometres.

With a current population of 14,935 the Snowy Valleys is home to over 5,000 local jobs. The agriculture and softwoods timber industries, including Australian largest softwood processing mill, underpin the region's economic base. Beef cattle farming employs more working residents of the Snowy Valleys than any other industry. The softwood industry is the Snowy Valleys' largest employer, centered around the Visy and AKD softwood processing mills in Tumut and Hyne Timber Mill in Tumbarumba.

Other key industries include retail, hydro-electricity generation and horticulture. The tourism industry also offers potential for growth while the Federal Government \$12 billion expansion of the Snowy Hydro Scheme (Snowy 2.0) will provide an economic boost to the region.

Based on the region's comparative and competitive advantages, emerging opportunities in the Snowy Valleys Council area include apple cider, premium cool climate wine, chestnuts, blueberries, apples, aged care and tourism.



Measuring to Succeed (Wellbeing Index)

The Wellbeing Index assesses regional well-being by examining local economic activity, specifically Gross Regional Product (GRP), as well as six additional indicators: income and wealth, employment knowledge and skills, housing, health, equality and community, and the environment.

This comprehensive approach provides a deeper insight into how different places impact people's lives. The Snowy Valleys Council Sub-Index score is evaluated against other comparison regions, with a score of 0 representing the lowest performance and 10 reflecting the highest.



Income & Wealth
SVC Score: 5.00
Other comparison regions: 5.01



Employment, Knowledge & Skills
SVC Score: 4.00
Other comparison regions: 4.55



Housing
SVC Score: 8.00
Other comparison regions: 7.42



Health
SVC Score: 4.00
Other comparison regions: 4.47



Economy
SVC Score: 4.00
Other comparison regions: 4.20



Equality & Community
SVC Score: 5.00
Other comparison regions: 5.41



Environment
SVC Score: 10.00
Other comparison regions: 3.91



Headline CRWI*
SVC Score: 6.00
Other comparison regions: 5.12

*The **Headline CRWI** converts a region's performance across the seven dimensions of wellbeing into an overall wellbeing score.

Source: SCG Economy & Planning, Cities and Regions Wellbeing Index 2024

Community Strategic Plan Report Card





1. OUR COMMUNITY

Our community protects and celebrates its history while looking forward to a secure and prosperous future.

Services in the Snowy Valleys are accessible and diverse, supporting all stages of life. They bring us together, connect us and build our sense of belonging.

We feel safe and confident in our ability to respond to change.



82%

Residents feel
Snowy Valleys is a
safe place to live



108 Alcohol Related
hospitalisations (21/22)



Community Volunteers
19.9%

Crime Statistics

Major Offence Incidents Recorded
(2021-2024)



- 200 Domestic Violence (Stable)
- 169 Break In's (-27.4%)
- 262 Theft (-15.1%)



13 Community Led
Projects to the value
of \$10,013,638



Children enrolled in a
preschool program
4-year-olds - 136
5-year-olds - 78



82.9 years
Life Expectancy



8.3%
Mental Health
Condition



3,313 (23.3%)
Persons with
disability

Source:
ABS (2021)
NSW Health Stats(2021)
SGS Cities & Region Wellbeing Index (ABS)

Our Community Highlights

How Council contributed to the Community Strategy Plan Strategic Objectives

Strategic Objective:

THE LIVABLE HERITAGE, AND UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS OF OUR REGION IS ACKNOWLEDGED, SUPPORTED AND RETAINED.

Rotary Pioneer Park Update

The Tumut Rotary Pioneer Park upgrade project has brought significant improvements to this beloved community space. Officially opened in March 2024, the project introduced new nature-inspired play areas, accessible amenities, and pedestrian bridges, along with upgraded walking paths and solar-powered lighting. Additionally, new playground equipment, low-maintenance plantings, and increased seating and picnic tables have been added, making the park more welcoming and accessible for local families and visitors alike. These enhancements ensure that the park will continue to be a cherished spot for the community for years to come. Funded by a \$1,330,000 grant from the NSW Government's Public Spaces Legacy Program.



Goldfields Park Upgrades

Officially opened in March 2024 the Goldfields Park upgrade brought new nature-inspired play areas, accessible facilities, terrace seating, modern play equipment, and enhanced landscaping to the area. A cycling playground with a mini road network for young cyclists was also added by Cyle Tumbarumba who secured a NSW Government grant and oversaw the build.

Bull Paddock Amenities and Driver Reviver Site

The Bull Paddock Youth Precinct on Fitzroy Street Tumut, a key recreation spot in the Snowy Valleys, now features new amenities closer to the playground and a permanent Driver Reviver site. The Tumut Lions Club secured a loan to fund the Driver Reviver site. Completed in April 2022, these upgrades enhance accessibility and make the area more family-friendly for locals and visitors.

New Amenities in Khancoban

The public amenities at the Khancoban shopping centre were completely refurbished. The old facilities were stripped out and upgraded with larger cubicles, all-new fittings, updated tiles, and a fresh coat of paint.

Funding of \$161,818 was received under the NSW Government's Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program.

Pool Upgrades

The 2022 pool upgrade projects at Tumut, Batlow and Khancoban were funded under the Local Economic Recovery program, which is jointly funded by the Australian and New South Wales governments. *Tumut Pool:* The old toddler and baby pools were removed and transformed into a vibrant splash play area and a learn-to-swim pool, complete with separate filtration and chlorination systems. These exciting new additions were unveiled in December 2022. *Batlow Pool:* The community warmly welcomed the new learn-to-swim pool and splash play area when they opened in January 2023. The project also included replacing the old amenity block with a modern facility, added shade structures, installing solar heating and blankets for temperature control, improving drainage, and replacing backflow pipes.

Khancoban Pool: Khancoban Pool upgrades included new amenities, a new fence around the pool facility and the installation of solar heating and a blanket system to help regulate water temperature.



Strategic Objective:**THE WELLBEING OF LOCAL PEOPLE IS SUPPORTED THROUGH THE PROVISION OF LOCAL SERVICES****Coffee with a cop in Khancoban**

More than 50 motorcyclists from as far away as Queensland broke their journey in Khancoban on the way to the Phillip Island Grand Prix. They enjoyed free coffee and a chat about road safety with local law enforcement officers, Council's Road Safety Officer, and NSW Road Safety representatives. The event, organised to address motorcyclist fatigue, was supported by the team at the Pickled Parrot Providore.

**Seniors Expo**

Following the success of the 2023 event, Council hosted over 200 seniors at the 2024 Seniors Expo. Held in conjunction with the NSW Seniors Festival, the expo featured networking opportunities, live entertainment, specialist exhibitors, and a delicious lunch.

Children's Services

Council operates a range of early childhood education and care settings in the Tumbarumba area catering to families and community needs.

Our team of dedicated Early Childhood Teachers, Educators, alongside Administration Staff and hardworking Cleaners play an important role supporting the learning, well-being and healthy development of over 330 children in our community.

Our services include Carcoola, Tumboosh, Puggles Mobile Children Services and Toy Library, ensuring the growth and happiness of our little learners.

Public Toilet Incontinence Bin Trial

Sanitary bins for male incontinence products are being trialled in public toilets locations across the region with support from Bins4Blokes. It's reported that 1.34 million boys and men across Australia have incontinence issues, and the trial was in response to community requests to enable men to dispose of pads and other incontinence products easily, safely and with dignity.

Visit from Rural Health

Council hosted Professor Ruth Steward, the National Rural Health Commissioner who met with councillors to discuss region's primary healthcare challenges and share insights into the commissioner's collaborative care program being trailed in our area to tackle the issues head on.

Representatives from Department of Health and Aged Care, Murrumbidgee PHN and Murrumbidgee LHD were also in attendance.

Tumbarumba Community Reading Day

Over 300 children from Tumbarumba Public School, All Saints, Carcoola Children's Centre, and Humula Public School gathered at the Tumbarumba Library and surrounding Bicentennial Park for a day of Dr Seuss themed fun and education as part of this year's Community Reading Day.



Strategic Objective:**OUR COMMUNITY IS PREPARED AND RESILIENT AND IS ABLE TO RESPOND TO NATURAL DISASTERS AND ECONOMIC SHOCKS****Connected Communities Roadmaps**

Council worked with local community to prepare community led roadmaps aimed at understanding our places, spaces and networks that connect is to build stronger more resilient communities. Each of the seven localities in the Snowy Valley's has its own individual Connected Community Roadmap developed. These Roadmaps identify the community led vision, aspirations and ideas to build more socially connected and cohesive local communities.

Partially funded as part of the Bushfire Community Recovery Resilience Fund, phase 2.

**Hello Snowy Valleys**

Hello, Snowy Valleys! Is a live show about the Snowy Valleys featuring stories written and performed by the people who live here.

The show was put together by award winning playwright Hannie Rayson (Hotel Sorrento), ABC Radio's Michael Carthcart, and the residents of the Snowy Valleys, with support of Council.

On Friday 18 and Saturday 19 of March 2022, ticket holders enjoyed local stories and songs about the high times enjoyed by the Land Army Girls during WW2, the impact of bush fire, the joys of spraying grapes by moonlight in Tumbarumba, memories of the Sugar Pines, good times and bad at the Batlow cannery, and drama in the Tumut Local Government Area.

A Bushfire Community Recovery and Resilience Fund project through the joint Commonwealth/State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangement.

Nature Wellness Drive

The Snowy Valleys Nature Wellness Drive was developed as a community initiative, offering a unique and invigorating overlay to our stunning landscapes and unlock the health benefits of nature through self-guided experiences known to improve wellbeing. Council supported the initiative with installation of signage along the Talbingo Walking Track, the Tumut Riverwalk, Adelong Falls Creek Walk, Pilot Hill Arboretum, Goldfields Park and Bicentennial Park in Tumbarumba, Southern Cloud Lockout and Lakeside Walk in Khancoban.

Crime Prevention Plan

The Snowy Valleys Crime Prevention Plan (CPP) 2020-2025 is a community wide-plan and reflects a commitment from Council to work together with a range of organisations and local groups to provide a coordinated approach to crime prevention in the Snowy Valleys.

The CPP is available on Council's website and emergency police contact details are also published online. Council is committed to supporting known police campaigns through sharing on social media.

New community safety content was made available on Council's website in late 2023 and features links to NSW Police crime prevention information and crime prevention is discussed at quarterly Interagency Meetings facilitated by Council.



Vehicle theft is often opportunistic. Keep your belongings safe.

- Don't leave anything visible inside your car
- Remove and take your ignition keys
- Lock your doors and windows

#SVC #crimeprevention



Strategic Objective:**ARTS AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES THRIVE IN OUR REGION****Snowy Valleys Sculpture Trail**

The Snowy Valleys Sculpture Trail is a significant public art collection that stretches over 150 km along the Snowy Valleys Way, and features installations in ten locations. The trail showcases over 50 artworks by artists from 13 countries, including Australia, Austria, China, the Czech Republic, Denmark, England, Japan, Iceland, New Zealand, Slovakia, South Africa, Ukraine, and the USA. The artworks are selected by a local community advisory committee with representatives from each town in the Snowy Valleys.

**Live and Local Programs**

Delivered in partnership with the Live Music Office and APRA AMCOS, Live and Local was a capacity building program designed for local grassroots live music communities including musicians, businesses, venues, and local industry workers.

The Live and Locals program aimed to foster a consistent approach to best practice sustainable live music presentation, supported by better regulation and policy implementation that assists with growth through all levels in the live music industry and provides clear career pathways for new and emerging musicians and industry professionals.

The program included the development of a local musician and venue mapping project, participating in a Live and Local Working Group and delivery of a local industry forum and professional development workshops.

Youth Pop Up Recording Studios

Council hosted Pop-up Recording Studio Sessions providing attendees the opportunity to hone their song writing skills, record their music and shoot their own music video clip.

The pop up visited the Snowy Valleys for 10 days during the January 2022 School Holidays and was developed for budding musicians and singer song writers aged 12 to 25 years.

David Blake from Montville Lane Sessions and Australian songwriter, performer, recording artist and youth mentor Cameron Devell mentored the attendees with a fully equipped studio, song writing workshop and recording sessions.

Council also partnered with the Tumbafest Committee to provide live performance opportunities for the artists at the year's festival.

NAIDOC Week

Each year, Council proudly celebrates NAIDOC Week with flag-raising ceremonies in Tumut and Tumbarumba. Community members, including many children, gather with Elders from the Brungle-Tumut Local Aboriginal Land Council and the Ngarigo Toomaroombah Kunama Namadgi Indigenous Corporation for a Welcome to Country, NAIDOC address, the raising of the Australian and Indigenous flags, smoking ceremony and morning tea.



COMMUNITY INDICATORS

Key measures and targets detailed in the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) provide an indicator of progress and performance against the long-term aspirations expressed by the community.

Within each of the indicators there are a number of measures which help to show whether we as a community have moved **towards** or **away** from the goal.

OUR COMMUNITY

Indicator	Data Source	Baseline 2022	2024	Trend
Community rating of cultural, recreational and entertainment events	*SVC Community Satisfaction survey	'Good' Rating' for community, recreational and entertainment events	'Above Average' 85%	▲
Community Satisfaction with facilities and services, early education and childcare services	*SVC Community Satisfaction Survey	> 62% satisfaction rating	57%	▼
Incidents of crime in outdoor/public places which include Domestic Violence (DV), Non DV, Sexual offences, Robbery, Break & Enter, Motor Thief, Steal from Motor Vehicle, Steal from person and Malicious damage to property.	NSW Bureau Crime Statistic and Research (BOSCAR)	< 67 outdoor public place incidents reported	71 incidents recorded	▼
Community accessibility and satisfaction to Library Services	SVC Council Data	2% increase on 56,251 library loans across all SVC Library Services	89,456	▲
Community satisfaction with the comfort of accessing community services, programs and facilities in times of natural disasters and economic shocks	*SVC Community Satisfaction Survey	> 70% community satisfaction rating	68%	▼
SVC Childcare Services children enrolment ratios	SVC Council Data	Capacity Enrolment number reached	Childcare enrolments at capacity	▲

* Results from the Community Satisfaction Survey undertaken in April/May 2024.



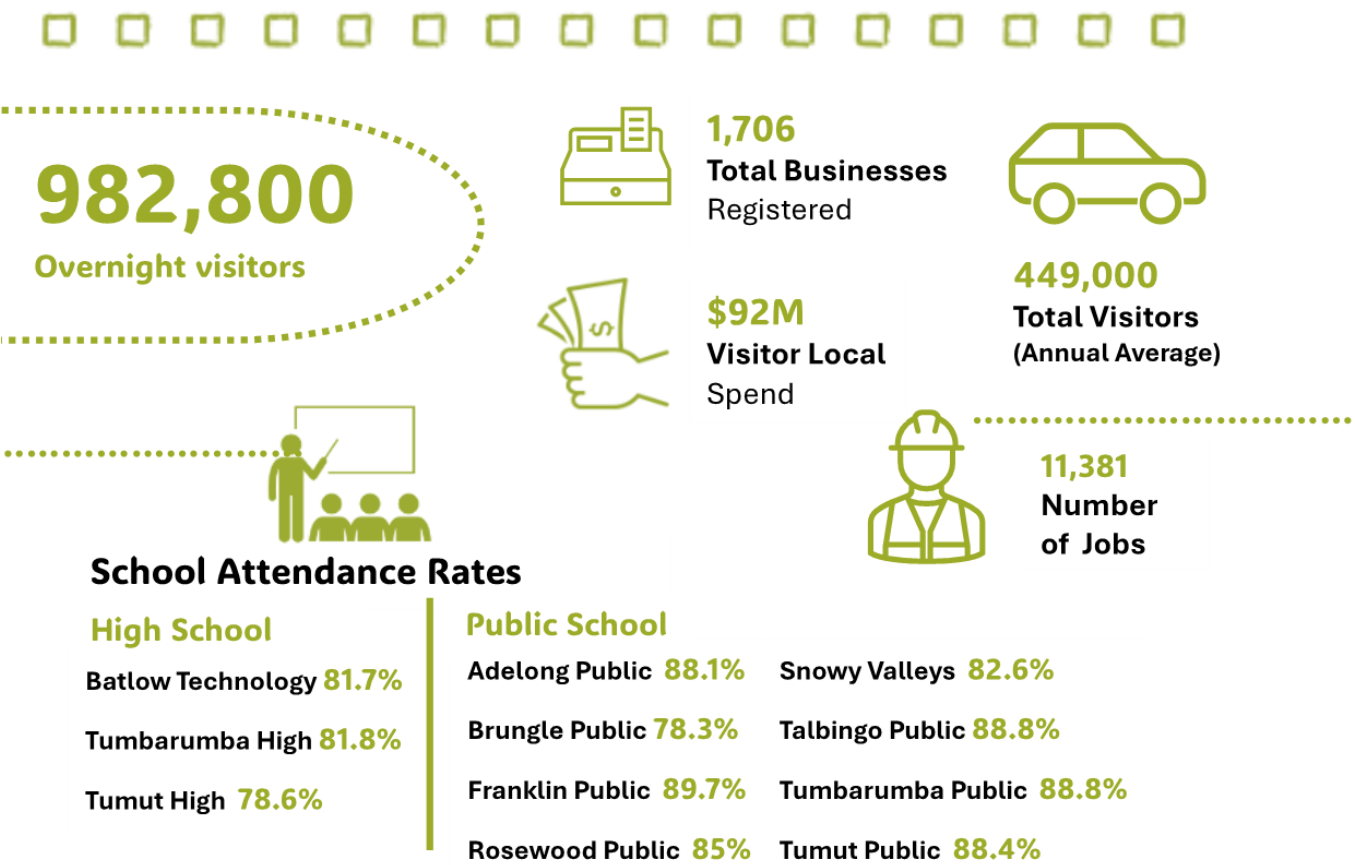


2. OUR ECONOMY

Strong relationships between industry, organisations, government and community underpin our actions to supporting existing businesses and attracting new industry. Together, we are committed to the development of infrastructure that is essential for economic growth.

Our economy provides a wide range of opportunities ensuring positive employment pathways and the ability to attract and retain young people and families.

We welcome and encourage visitors to our region and support the development of new and diverse tourism experience as a way to boost our economy.



Our Economy Highlights

How council contributed to the Community Strategy Plan Strategic Objectives

Strategic Objective:

OUR ECONOMY IS MADE UP OF A BROAD RANGE OF BUSINESSES AND INDUSTRY WITH DIVERSE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Career Development Day

Council hosted 15 high school students from Tumut High School, McAuley Catholic Central School, and Gundagai High School for a day focused on learning and career development. The students explored the traineeship, cadetship, and apprenticeship opportunities available within Council and gained valuable insights from a mechanic who successfully launched his career by completing his apprenticeship with Council.



Career Expos

More than 220 Year 9-12 students attended the Snowy Valleys Careers Expo in Tumbarumba in March 2023, building on the success of the inaugural event in 2022. The expo focused on local youth employment opportunities and career pathways, with students engaging in hands-on activities and discussions with over 35 local businesses, industries, and organisations. Council partnered with the NSW Regional Industry Education Partnership (RIEP) to host the event. Due to its success, a third expo was held in Tumut in 2024.

International Women's Week Dinner

Council hosted sixty-five guests at Courabyra Wines in celebration of International Women's Week. Guest speakers, Kristina Kaminski from Hyne Timber and Gabrielle Curtin from Snowy Hydro, captivated the audience with their personal and professional insights. Attendees enjoyed a three-course meal accompanied by musical entertainment from local a musician.

Disability Awareness Training for Business

Council partnered with GetAboutAble to support local businesses in improving access and inclusion for people with disabilities. The online training workshops were held over three days during lunchtime, with recordings provided to all registered participants.

Bush Bursary

Council partnered with the NSW Rural Doctors Network, to successfully coordinate the Bush Bursary Program which allocated two doctors to experience working in rural health.

Small Business Month Workshop

Each year Council organises a range of free and low-cost events during Small Business Month as part of our commitment to supporting the local economy and small business owners.

Events have included online webinars and in person workshops on a range of topics including small business tool for tourism, streamlining email marketing, automation basics, building resilience and boosting tourism through online reputation management.

Strategic Objective:**OUR ECONOMY ATTRACTS, RETAINS AND SUPPORTS YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES IN THE REGION.****Colour Fun Runs**

Family-friendly Colour Explosion Fun Runs proved to be highly popular school holidays events. Building on the success of the Tumut event at Bila Park, a similar event was organised at the Tumbarumba Rail Trail Track Head. These free events featured participants running through a vibrant course of bursting coloured powder, finishing with a free BBQ.

**Youth Comedy and Basic Car Workshops**

To mark NSW Youth Week, Council organised Comedy Workshops in Tumut and Tumbarumba with professional comedian Anthony Lamond, offering students an inside look at the art of stand-up comedy. We also held very popular Basic Car Skills Workshops for L and P platers providing young drivers with hands-on experience in car maintenance and safe driving techniques.

Winter Bites Festival

Council received funding through the Regional Tourism Bushfire Recovery (RTBR) Grants to fund three single-day events aimed at restoring visitor levels and supporting businesses affected by bushfires and COVID 19. The festival was hosted in Batlow, Tumbarumba and Adelong, all significantly impacted by the Dunn's Road Bushfire. The events showcased local businesses, community groups, and producers. Tumbarumba's event was held in July 2021 while Adelong and Batlow's event was held over until 2022 due to COVID-19 health orders.

Khancoban Long Lunch

Around 90 people attended the Khancoban Long Lunch Event where guests enjoyed a delightful afternoon of locally sourced food, drinks, and music in a beautifully styled, relaxed setting. Justin Clancy MP, Member for Albury, kicked off the event with an opening speech, while musical entertainment kept the atmosphere lively throughout the day. Council received a \$27,000 grant from the Commonwealth of Australia's Australian Trade and Investment Commission to bring the event to life.



Strategic Objective:**SUSTAINABLE TOURISM INITIATIVES CONTRIBUTED TO A THRIVING ECONOMY.****Regional Tracks and Trails Masterplan**

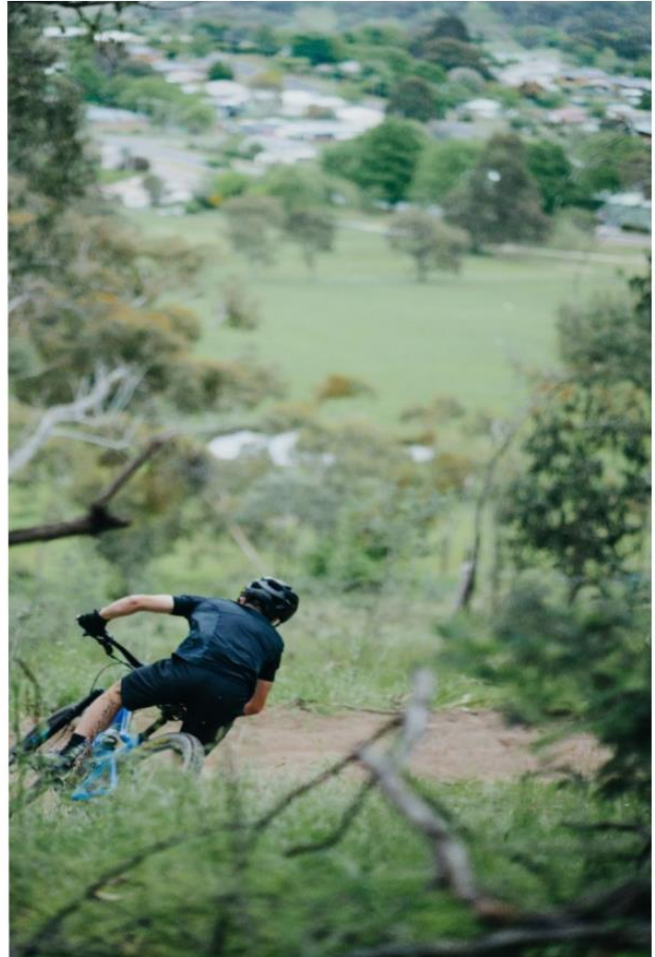
Council adopted the Snowy Valleys Regional Tracks and Trails Masterplan in February 2023 as an aspirational plan – a vision of what the region's track and trails network could look like in the long term, boosting tourism and local recreation opportunities.

Three significant projects identified in the Masterplan were prioritised to ensure a clear path, should suitable funding become available.

The three projects are:

- The Tumut River Walk project – an opportunity to elevate the Tumut River Walk by upgrading the road portion of Elm Drive to incorporate an off-road alignment that improves pedestrian safety and allows for spectacular views of the Tumut River. Interpretation signage will also help to create a narrative that acts to generate a positive experience for trail users.
- The Batlow Cider Rail Trail – Stage 1: Batlow to Wybalena- provide an 8km return trail with a gradient that is dedicated off-road and safe.
- The Gudja Gudja Mura Trail – The Ngarigo Toomaroombah Kunama Namadgi Indigenous Corporation (TKNIC) developed a proposal for a recreational trail (walk/cycle) from Murray's Crossing to the Tumbarumba to Rosewood Rail Trail utilising a Travelling Stock Route.

Council received \$270,000 in funding through the Bushfire Community Recovery and Resilience Fund (Stream 2) to undertake the master planning process.

**Strategic Objective:****QUALITY TELECOMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURE, INCLUDING MOBILE PHONE RECEPTION AND HIGH-SPEED INTERNET ACCESS SUPPORTS COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC GROWTH****Blackspot Mobile Coverage**

Council pledged to collaborate with the government and key stakeholders to enhance communications infrastructure across the LGA. Council has actively advocated for prioritising mobile coverage improvements in significant "blackspot" areas, including Gocup Road and the communities of Yaven Creek, Brungle, Bondo, and Claremont, all of which currently experience substantial gaps in mobile service.

COMMUNITY INDICATORS

Key measures and targets detailed in the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) provide an indicator of progress and performance against the long-term aspirations expressed by the community.

Within each of the indicators there are a number of measures which help to show whether we as a community have moved **towards** or **away** from the goal.

OUR ECONOMY

Indicator	Data Source	Baseline 2022	2024	Trend
Number of active registered businesses	ABS (Data by Region)	> baseline (1627 active businesses)	1706	▲
Number of jobs	ABS (Data by Region)	2% increase (from 11,415 jobs)	11,381	▼
Income from Visitors economy	Tourism Research Australia	> baseline (\$1.78)	\$2.4m	▲
Community Satisfaction with Council's Planning Controls	*SVC Community Satisfaction Survey	64% Community 'Good' Satisfaction Rating	25%	▼

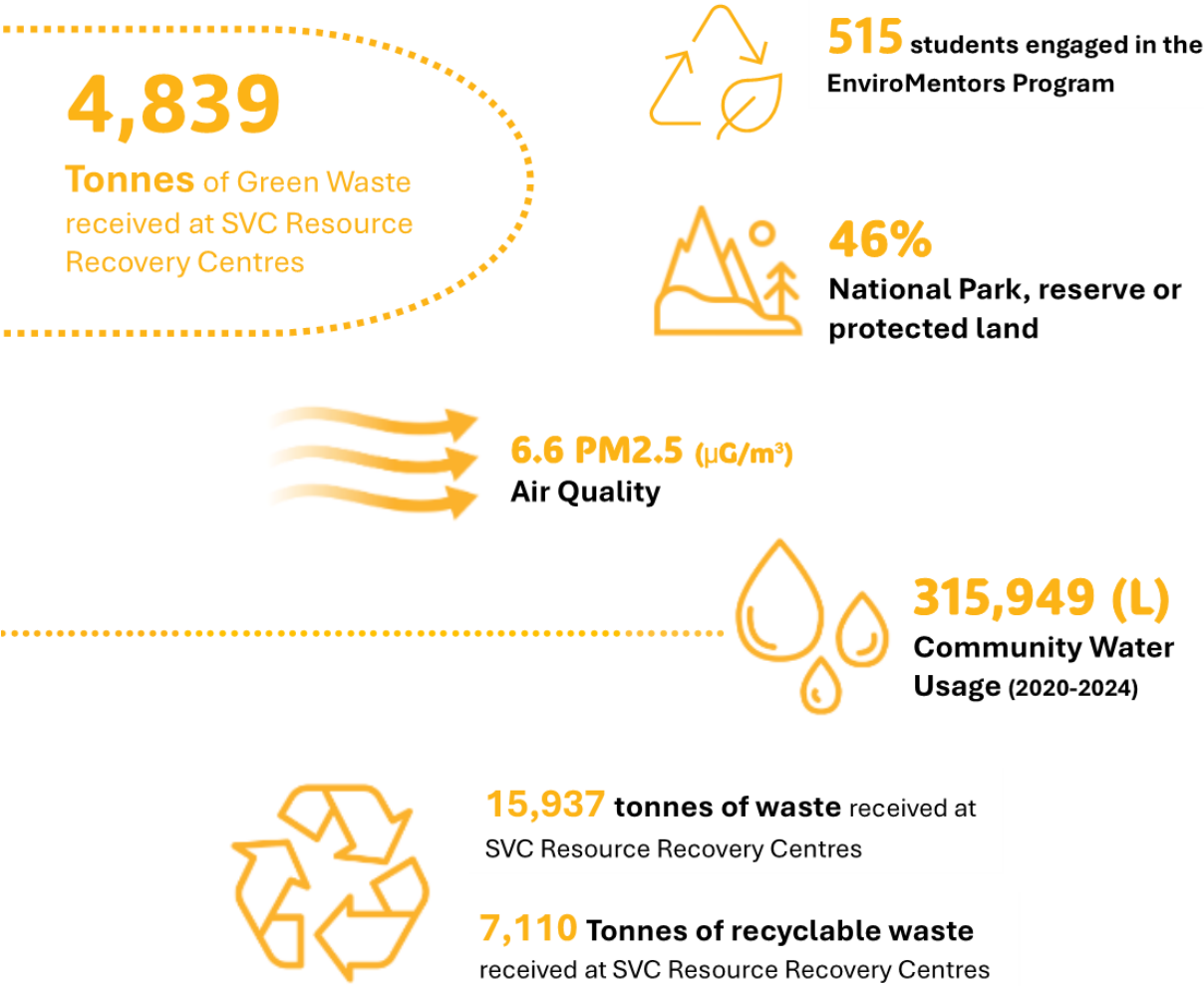
* Results from the Community Satisfaction Survey undertaken in April/May 2024.





3. Our Environment

Our community embraces sustainability practices to protect our natural environment and resources and ensure we are resilient to a changing climate.
We work collectively to manage our environmental footprint and respect and preserve the beauty of our landscape.



Source:
SVC Council Data (2022-2024)
SGC Cities & Regions Wellbeing Survey (2024)
Air Quality NSW

Our Environment Highlights

How Council contributed to the Community Strategy Plan Strategic

Strategic Objective:

OUR COMMUNITY WORKS TOGETHER TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Kids encouraged to Scrap Together

The Scrap Together education campaign was run in partnership with the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) and aimed to help residents get the most out of their Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) kerbside collection service.

The Scrap Together Colouring Competition provided a fun and interactive way for Council to help teach younger children about sustainability and how to make the world a cleaner and brighter place.

Open to children across the Snowy Valleys region, all colouring entries went into a draw to win one of six Eco Book prizes.

The colouring design featured food scraps, including fish and meat bones, fruit and veggie scraps and cheese – all things that go in the green-lid FOGO bin.

Kids could simply cut the colouring entry form out of their local newspaper or pick up a hard copy from Council's customer service counters and local Libraries.

Six winners were drawn randomly including four kindergarten students from McAuley Catholic Central School who were thrilled to receive their book prizes.



Local Students Engage in Interactive Environmental Education Workshops

Over 500 students from schools across the Snowy Valleys took part in environmental workshops supported by Council and conducted by EnviroMentors.

The workshops aimed to inspire students to become environmental leaders in recycling and waste reduction. Students from Adelong, Franklin, Khancoban, and Tumbarumba Public Schools learned about "Composting and Worm Farming" and "Garbage to Garden" in hands-on workshops.

They showed enthusiasm for diverting waste from landfill and were familiar with Council's FOGO bins. This program was funded by the Canberra Region Joint Organisation, of which SVC is a member.



Strategic Objective:

OUR ABILITY TO LIVE SUSTAINABLY IS SUPPORTED BY ACCESS TO CONTEMPORARY WASTE, WATER AND WASTEWATER SERVICES.

Resource Recovery Centre Upgrades

Infrastructure upgrades at the Adelong, Batlow, Khancoban, and Tumbarumba Resource Recovery Centres (RRCs) have improved environmental sustainability.

The project included closing and capping landfill cells to maximise resource recovery opportunities, new security systems, new fencing and gates, weighbridges, road improvements, new site offices, and extensive revegetation. As part of the upgrades, the Tumut RRC also received a new weighbridge.

The project was jointly funded under the NSW Government's EPA Bushfire Recovery Program and the Bushfire-generated Green Waste Grants, and the new weighbridge for the Tumut RRC was funded by Council's waste reserve.

**On Site Sewer Management Strategy**

Council's on-site Sewer Management Strategy was adopted in June 2023 and addresses specific on-site treatment systems, management practices, environmental monitoring, and regulatory regimes in complying with the environment and public health principles of the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021.

The Strategy incorporates the principles of Ecologically Sustainable Development, Total Catchment Management, Water Cycle Management and protection of public health to mitigate any long-term impacts.

There are currently in excess of 5,000 on-site wastewater/sewage systems in the Snowy Valleys Council area.

FOGO Making a Difference

Since introducing the Food Organics Garden Organics (FOGO) kerb side collection service in August 2021, an average of 12 toone of organics has been diverted from landfill each week.

In the first two years, a massive 2,833 tonnes of organics has been collected, which is now processed at the new Gilmore Processing Facility.

Compost made from the organics is currently being trialed in Council parks and cemeteries with plans to make it available to residents in the future.

Organics Processing Facility

A new, state-of-the-art organics processing facility at the Tumut Resource Recovery Centre in Gilmore is now complete and fully operational.

The new facility allows Council to process and repurpose organic waste locally in support of the Kerbside FOGO collection service.

The works included the installation of the innovative Modular Aerated Floor (MAF) composting technology, a storage shed and associated road works and fencing. The project was supported by a \$946,924 grant from the NSW Environmental Trust, in partnership with the NSW Environment Protection Authority.

**Partnering with Water Quality Experts**

Council supplies 1,485.74ML of water to residents annually and is partnering with WaterNSW under the NSW Government's Town Water Risk Reduction Program (TWRRP) to enhance drinking water safety by identifying and reducing risks at the water source.

The group has so far visited Blowering Dam and other key source water locations at Tumut, Brungle, Talbingo and Batlow exploring catchment management and approaches to ensure a safer, healthier water supply for our communities.

Strategic Objective:

THE RECREATION AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES PROVIDED BY OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT IS PRESERVED FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Artifacts Returned to Council

The replacement and realignment of Bombowlee Creek Bridge required the takeover of a large amount of green land.

Council conducted an archaeological dig of the area before construction, to ensure any Aboriginal cultural heritage in the area was managed and protected. Traditional owners from the Brungle-Tumut Local Aboriginal Land Council were involved in identifying a small number of Indigenous cultural items buried in the area that were returned to country following the completion of works.

Bushfire Green Waste Clean Up

A total of 23,025 tonnes of bushfire destroyed trees have been cleared from roadsides and public spaces across the Snowy Valleys under the NSW Government's EPA Bushfire-generated Green Waste program.

Works included assessing and removing hazardous trees and clearing burnt trees that had already been stockpiled including more than 200 truckloads of fire damaged trees that were collected from the Talbingo area.

**Hume and Hovell Track**

Council partners with the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment to deliver maintenance and upgrades on the 426km Hume and Hovell Track that passes through Yass, Wee Jasper, Albury, Tumut, Talbingo and Tumbarumba.

Following the 2021 flooding event, Council's team worked to replace the track's Col Daniel suspension bridge which had been washed away by flood waters. The well-known suspension bridge located near Tumbarumba, is a vital connection for the Hume and Hovell Ultra course which starts and finishes at the Henry Angel Trackhead.

Hume and Hovell track celebrated their bicentennial in 2024.

**Cultural Burns**

Council regularly supports RFS, Landcare and the Wiraduri Cultural Burn Team to conduct cultural burnings at the Tumut Wetlands.

The burns help to remove weed species, restore health to the site and assist with building biodiversity.

Strategic Objective:**WE ARE RESILIENT TO A CHANGING CLIMATE THROUGH ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION****Fence Cycle**

In 2022 Council received funding from NSW Environment Protection Authority's FenceCycle program to help bushfire-impacted property owners safely dispose of and recycle burnt fencing materials free of charge.

Sixty tonnes of burnt fencing material was collected and kept out of landfill.

**Climate Change Partnerships**

Council continues to work with targeted partners to take a wider approach to climate change action, including Regional Development Australia – Riverina, NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, Canberra Region Joint Organisation, local Landcare groups, local businesses, NSW Office of Water, Regional Development NSW, Charles Sturt University and SEGRA.

Solar PV

Solar photovoltaic systems (solar PV) have been installed on several Council buildings and facilities including Council Offices and Depots, the Tumbarumba RSL Hall, Tumbarumba Sports Stadium, Carcoola Childcare Centre, Roths Corner Medical Centre, Tumut Library and Water/Wastewater facilities across the region. Solar PV lights have also been installed along a section of the Tumut River Walk and Council's pools have solar hot water temperature controls.

EPA and Tumut Odour Issue

In late June 2023 Council worked with the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) to manage impacts across the community from a series of odour complaints from the Gilmore and Tumut areas. After a thorough inspection of numerous licensed premises within the Tumut region, the EPA identified the source of the odours as coming from a Waste Management Facility at Bellettes Landfill on Killarney Road, Gilmore.

A Clean Up Notice and a Prevention Notice were issued, and detection monitors were installed around Tumut and Gilmore to monitor odours.

Council was supportive of the measures the EPA took in response to the Tumut odour issues.

LED Lighting

To help Council reduce its carbon footprint in the region LED lights are used wherever possible including Tumbarumba's Main Street coloured lights and lighting as part of the Tumut Bull Paddock upgrades.

LED lighting products produce light up to 90% more efficiently than incandescent light bulbs.

Strategic Objective:**A ROBUST PLANNING FRAMEWORK SUPPORTS THE NEEDS AND IDENTITY OF OUR COMMUNITY AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT****NSW Planning Portal**

Council now uses the NSW Planning Portal, an e-planning platform that enables the community, industry, and government to collaborate more effectively to understand and meet the obligations under the *Environment Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

The portal hosts a range of digital planning services, mapping and reporting tools and offers users the convenience needed to meet their development needs efficiently.

Once registered, users can view, manage, track, and progress applications online via their user dashboard. They are also able to submit documents and be notified when decisions have been made.

As part of the launch, Council offered one-on-one training and support for owner-builders through the SVC Planning Portal Kiosk.

Local Flood Studies

Council has been successful in achieving grant funding to undertake comprehensive flood studies in Tumut, Tumbarumba, Brungle and Adelong.

A major benefit of the studies will be to guide future development and ensure that new development is appropriately protected from flooding and that the correct controls are in place for development within the floodplain where appropriate.

Community members were invited to share their local knowledge and flooding experiences via an online survey and at Community Pop-Ups held in the towns.

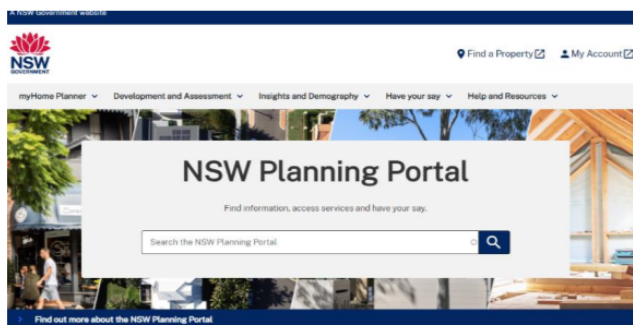
The projects are supported by the NSW Government's Floodplain Management Program

Council Outpaces State Average in DA Processing Times

Council's (SVC) average development application (DA) processing times are significantly faster than the New South Wales state average, according to a new league table comparing NSW council DA processing speeds.

In 2023/24, staff assessed 147 applications with an average gross assessment time of 66 days. This is well under the NSW state average of 114 days.

In addition to outperforming the state average, SVC also demonstrated superior efficiency compared to the Canberra Joint Organisation (CRJO) councils. The average assessment time for the collective CRJO councils is 130 days.



COMMUNITY INDICATORS

Key measures and targets detailed in the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) provide an indicator of progress and performance against the long-term aspirations expressed by the community.

Within each of the indicators there are a number of measures which help to show whether we as a community have moved **towards** or **away** from the goal.

OUR ENVIRONMENT

Indicator	Data Source	Baseline 2022	2024	Trend
Community awareness of climate change impacts	*SVC Community Satisfaction Survey	> 60% Community Satisfaction Rating	63%	▲
Levels of Waste generation	SVC Council Data	No net increase from 4230.7 tonnes per year	3177	▲
Community Satisfaction with Recycling Services & Waste Management	NSW SVC Council Data	> 70% community Satisfaction Rating	68%	▼
Average water consumption across LGA	SVC Council Data	No net increase from 195 kilolitres per connection	172.9kL	▲

* Results from the Community Satisfaction Survey undertaken in April/May 2024.



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4. Our Infrastructure

Our tracks, trails and paths provide the community and visitors with sustainable transport and recreational opportunities.

We plan for, provide and maintain a safe local transport network.

Our community facilities and spaces cater for active and passive recreation and are well maintained, safe and accessible.



151,903
Swimming
Pools Visits



70.8%
Internet accessed from dwelling



Number of cars per household
One Car 1,811
Two Cars 2,065



313 Walked
To work



Median
Weekly
Rent
\$230



Average House
Prices
\$663,000



6.54%
Dwellings
Owned outright



895,892 (ha)
Land
Area

236,493 (ha)
Area
Agriculture Land

Source:
SVC Council Data (2022-2024)
SGC Cities & Regions Wellbeing Survey (2024)
ABS (2021)

Our Infrastructure Highlights

How Council contributed to the Community Strategy Plan Strategic Objectives

Strategic Objective:

A robust transport network services us

Yaven Creek Road Improvements

Major improvements have been made to Yaven Creek Road. In 2022, a \$900,000 project funded the replacement of culverts, road realignment, widening, and pavement reconstruction for a 1.58 km stretch near the Snowy Mountains Highway.

In 2024, the Rehabilitation Project further strengthened and widened six 1 km sections, improving visibility and safety for all road users. The work also included a two-coat seal and drainage corrections. This \$2.96 million project was funded by the NSW Government's Fixing Local Roads Fund.



Mannus Glenroy Road Improvements

Mannus Glenroy Road has been widened and had its pavement strengthened to improve safety, particularly benefiting the local timber industry who are high users of the road. The upgrades cover the section from Jingellic Road to Munderoo Access Road and were funded through the Federal Government's Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program Round 3.

Wee Jasper Road Bridge Replacement

The old single lane timber bridge (located between Brungle Creek Road and Red Hill Road) is now a 15m dual lane concrete structure with steel beams, and steel safety barriers. The upgrade doubles capacity, improving safety and connectivity for all users.

Bombowlee Creek Road Realignment and Bridge Replacement

Council partnered with Softwoods Working Group to secure funding of \$6,729,920 from the NSW Government's Restart NSW Fund for the Bombowlee Creek bridge replacement and road upgrade. The installation of the new 60m long concrete flood and earthquake proof bridge and upgraded Bombowlee Creek Road ensures this essential timber road will continue to benefit the local timber industry and make safer travelling conditions for all road users.



Tooma Road Works

A 1.4 km stretch of Tooma Road near the Paddys River Falls Road intersection has been upgraded, featuring a 100mm gravel overlay and a two-coat seal. The project was funded by the NSW Government's Regional and Local Road Repair Program (RLRRP).

Strategic Objective:**Our amenities, infrastructure and community facilities meet community needs****Ournie Hall**

In December 2022, the Ournie Community Hall was officially opened by Mayor Ian Chaffey and Justin Clancy MP with a ribbon cutting and cake. The new hall, replacing the 100-year-old school destroyed in the 2019/20 bushfires, includes a community space, storage room, kitchen, amenities, and a wood fireplace. The \$740,000 project was funded by the Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund, co-supported by the Australian and NSW governments.

**Tumbarumba Sports Stadium Upgrades**

The stadium now boasts a new colourbond roof and a new revitalised wooden floor complete with expert sealing and clear markings. The project was fully managed by Council, with support from the Tumbarumba Sports Academy.

Bull Paddock Female Change rooms

The new female change rooms and amenities at Tumut's Bull Paddock Recreation Reserve comprise of both visitor and home change rooms equipped with showers, toilets, and bench seating areas, along with a referee room, storage space, and verandah. Situated next to the existing amenities, these facilities create a secure space for women to change before and after competitions including local sporting clubs

**New Footpaths**

New footpaths constructed around Tumut to help make walking or riding to school easier and safer, including the Franklin Public School boundary footpath along the Snowy Mountains Highway, Herbert St footpath adjacent to Tumut High School, Capper St extension to the Snowy Mountains Highway and the Lambie St extension. Funded by a NSW Government Local Road Community Infrastructure Grant.

Tumut River Walk

A section of the Tumut Riverwalk was widened to enable better accessibility for walkers, cyclists and mobility vehicles. We worked with the Anglican Parish of Tumut to widen the section of path from the church along the river's edge.



Amenities Upgrades in Khancoban

The amenities at the Khancoban shops underwent a complete transformation. The old facilities were fully stripped out and upgraded with larger cubicles, brand new fixtures, tiles, and fresh paint. This \$161,818 project was funded through the NSW Government's Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program.



Bull Paddock Surface Upgrade

The northern fields at Tumut's Bull Paddock now feature new drainage and automated irrigation, enhancing usability during both wet and dry conditions. These upgrades help keep the oval accessible in wet weather and improve watering coverage in dry periods.

The southern fields, which saw significant upgrades in 2019, have continued to benefit users by staying open during wet conditions. The recent work has now extended these improvements to the remaining southern fields near the shot-put circle, enhancing the playing surface. The project was funded by the Greater Cities and Regional Sport Facility Fund.



Reedy Creek Park Repatriation Project

Batlow's Reedy Creek Park suffered extensive damage during the Black Summer Bushfires. Restoration efforts involved clearing fire damaged vegetation and replacement of the walking bridge in July 2022. \$70,000 was received from the Commonwealth-State Bushfire Resilience and Recovery Fund (BCRRF).

COMMUNITY INDICATORS

Key measures and targets detailed in the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) provide an indicator of progress and performance against the long-term aspirations expressed by the community.

Within each of the indicators there are a number of measures which help to show whether we as a community have moved **towards** or **away** from the goal.

OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

Indicator	Data Source	Baseline 2022	2024	Trend
Community satisfaction with the quality of parks, sporting and recreational facilities and open spaces.	SVC Community Satisfaction Survey*	80% Community Satisfaction Rating	72%	▼
Community satisfaction with the maintenance of footpaths	SVC Community Satisfaction Survey*	70% Community Satisfaction Rating	56%	▼
Community satisfaction with the condition & maintenance of local roads across LGA	SVC Community Satisfaction Survey*	> 62% Community Satisfaction Rating	48%	▼
Infrastructure Backlog**	SVC Council Data	< 2.0%	0.2%	▲

* Results from the Community Satisfaction Survey undertaken in April/May 2024.

** Refers to total amount or value of renewal works that need to be undertaken in proportion to the total asset value to ensure assets are at acceptable standard. Benchmark of 2% is NSW Office of Local Government benchmark.



5. Our Civic Leadership

We are a collaborative and connected community that recognises our mutual responsibility to work towards our goals. We actively participate and engage to improve our region.

Our leaders act fairly, listen to and represent our community and are accountable and transparent in their decision-making process. They build strong relationships across the community, with other levels of government, industry and agencies to advocate for our needs.

Council's resources are well managed in order to ensure a high level of customer service, ongoing viability and value for money.



216,652
SVC Website
Visits



240
Media
Releases



60
Documents on
Public Exhibition



Ordinary Council Meetings held



Extraordinary Council Meetings held



YouTube Views Council
Meetings 7,368



Facebook Posts 1,469
Facebook Followers 7,138
Increase 15%



Councillors completed
39 letters of support to the
community.



Councillors attended in
excess of 150 community
activities / community
meetings per year

260 Councillor
request were recorded



57 Radio
Interviews



44 Community
Newsletters



Website Visits
216,652
Have Your Say
Engagement
44,087

Our Civic Leadership Highlights

How Council contributed to the Community Strategy Plan Strategic Objectives

Strategic Objective:

Council and local communities partner to create an ongoing culture of engagement and communication in decision-making.

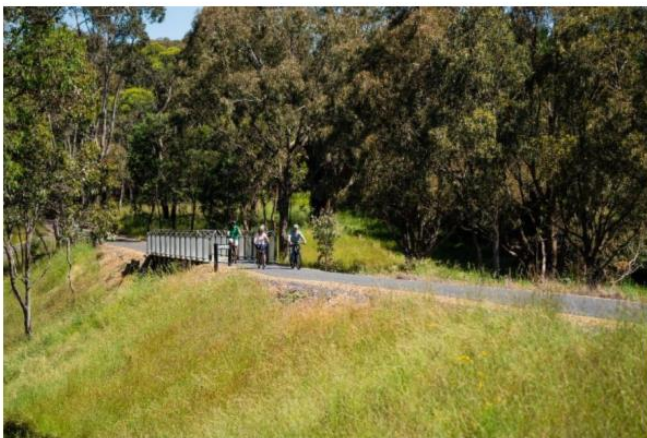
Tracks and Trails Masterplan Consultation

To help inform the development of a Regional Tracks and Trails Master Plan, community members were invited to participate in a range of engagement activities including an online survey, two virtual community workshops and two in-person workshops.

Participants were enabled to articulate why tracks and trails are important to them and to the broader tourism offering of the Snowy Valleys, discuss what improvements they would like to see on any of the region's existing tracks and trails, and note any proposals or ideas for new tracks or trail developments.

Participants were also able to get a clearer understanding of the master planning process and the anticipated final outcomes of the completed plan.

Once developed, the draft plan was also placed on public exhibition for 45 days for community comment.



Disability Inclusion Action Plan

More than 100 people participated in providing important information about how people living with disability and their carers could participate in the Snowy Valleys on an equal basis with others.

People with disability, family members, carers, people working in the disability sector and interested residents were invited to fill in a survey or join a community workshop to share their ideas and thoughts.

Interested participants were given a range of options to engage and provide ideas and feedback including six community workshops, two online community workshops, an online survey, one-on-one interviews, targeted sector discussions, and phone consultations.

The information collected helped to inform Council's Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2026.

Council Newsletter

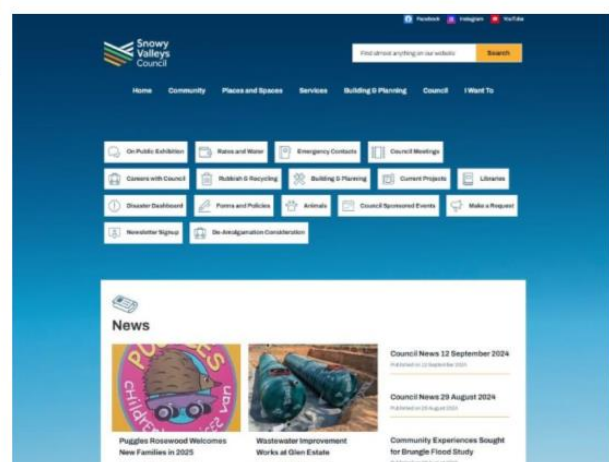
Launched in August 2022 Council's Community Newsletter is emailed to a database of over 625 subscribers each fortnight. Hard copies are also provided to Council's Customer Service Desks, Libraries, and Child Care facilities to ensure a large readership. Designed with news and updates to help keep locals informed about Council works, projects and community opportunities happening around the region. People can subscribe to the email version via the SVC website and past editions are also available for download.

Communicating With Our Community

Council's website visits continued to grow with average monthly visits exceeding 15,000. The most visited pages are Contact Us, Careers with Council, Council Meetings and Forms and Policies.

Over the last three years, Council has received and responded to over 235 media enquiries and issued over 240 Media releases, along with over 1,600 posts to social media and weekly local radio interviews about Council updates and services - keeping the community up-to-date with Council initiatives and projects.

Council Meeting Business Papers and Minutes are available on the SVC website and the meetings are livestreamed and recorded each month via the SVC YouTube channel.



Strategic Objective:

Council has strong organisation practices to ensure a viable organisation that provides value for money.

Program and Grants Management

The management and delivery of Council's Grant Program is delivered within the Project Management Framework.

The Framework provides oversight of Council's portfolio of projects across the organisation to ensure the effective and efficient management, development, and delivery of externally funded projects.

A Major Project Oversight Committee was established in July 2023 to ensure that all grant applications are strategically aligned and are part of the Project Management Framework gated process.

The project portfolio of externally funded projects is presented to Councillors and Audit Risk, Improvement Committee on a quarterly basis providing an update on the progress and financial

**Enterprise Systems**

Council's enterprise resource planning (ERP) software is powered by TechnologyOne which enables the efficiency of operations, greater mobility to staff and reduces the complexity of systems and processes.

The ongoing CiAnywhere migration program ensures that each business unit undergoes a comprehensive review of its internal workflows and processes. This review aims to optimise the next generation of processes to maximise the usability and functionality of the software, aligning with Council's needs.

As of now, Council has completed 50% of its planned upgrade of the TechnologyOne software, which began in 2021-2022. This work will continue through 2024-2025, focusing on the full migration of the Property and Rating suite to the CiAnywhere platform.

Procurement Policy

Council is committed to procurement practices that result in the best value for money and uses accountable, transparent, fair, and sustainable processes in the procurement of all goods and services.

A review of the SVC Procurement Policy was undertaken in 2022 and covers purchasing, tendering, contract management, payments and asset disposal relating to the procuring of goods and services as well as a First Nations procurement statement.

Successful procurement provides great opportunities to use the community's money wisely and to deliver the required goods and services in a financially, environmentally, and socially sustainable way.

Our principles for procurement include ensuring best value for money and cost-effectiveness, open and effective competition, transparency and accountability, ethical behaviour and fair.

Strategic Objective:
Council demonstrates innovative leadership and strong governance practices to ensure a high performing organisation.

Online Request System

Council's Online Request System provides customers with the convenience of submitting requests anytime—both during and outside of business hours. The system also offers email notifications to keep customers updated on the progress of their requests.

Customers can submit requests across various categories, including:

- Bin and Waste Management
- Rates and Water Services
- Tree Maintenance
- Cemetery Upkeep
- Animal Services
- Parks, Open Spaces, and Facilities
- Roads and Footpaths
- Stormwater and Drainage
- Water and Wastewater Management
- Public Health, and more.

This system enhances service accessibility and ensures timely communication with the community.

Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee

The Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC) provides independent assurance to Council by monitoring, reviewing and providing advice about Council's governance processes, compliance, risk management and control frameworks, external accountability obligations and overall performance. ARIC members are appointed for up to a four-year term and the committee meets at least four times per year, with one of these meetings to include review and endorsement of the annual audited financial reports and external audit opinion. The committee provides an update to Councillors of its activities and opinions after every ARIC meeting.

IT Cyber Security

Council is committed to managing cyber security risks effectively, maintaining a secure operating environment and managing critical IT system changes. SVC's IT Cyber Security Policy is designed to be a framework to guide the implementation and operation of information security throughout Council and represents the minimum-security control requirements that all staff, including third parties, contractors and volunteers must follow in order to appropriately protect Council's information assets. Activities conducted by people using Council's information assets are subject to continuous monitoring, logging and altering. This process is used to identify and investigate unauthorised activities and enforce compliance.

Online Service Requests

A range of council services are now available online. Now you can make a council request at a time that suits you! Lodge a request in or out of business hours and receive email updates on the progress of your request.

Can't find what you're looking for? Search through a list of all available service types here - [All Service Requests](#)

By Phrase or Keyword

Search

14 Result(s) Found

Rates Enquiries

Use this service for a range of rate-related requests, including address changes, financial assistance, rate category changes, rebates, payments, 603 certificates, and general rate inquiries

Bin and Waste Requests

Use this service for various waste-related needs, including ordering bins, repairs, replacements, cancellations, reporting issues, and making inquiries.

Tree Request

Use this service to request pruning and other tree maintenance, tree removal or to report fallen branches or trees on public property

Cemetery Maintenance Requests

Use this service to request maintenance at one of council's managed cemeteries.

Animal Request

Use this service to report dog-related issues, request dog waste bag dispenser restocks, or make other animal-related inquiries, including strayed, deceased, or captured animals in residential areas.

Open Spaces and Facilities Requests

Use this service to request maintenance and repair, report vandalism or request cleaning of council's parks and buildings

Roads and Footpath Requests

Use this service to request road, footpath, bridge or cycleway maintenance, make a signage request or report a street lighting issue.

Stormwater and Drainage Requests

Use this service to report damage to rural road table drains, town stormwater network issues, reported stormwater flooding, or make developer inquiries regarding stormwater drainage.

Water Request

Use this service for reporting water issues, maintenance requests, inquiries about restrictions or offenders, water quality problems, backflow device reports, connection applications, or other water-related matters.

Integrated Planning and Reporting

The Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) framework enables Council to consolidate its plans and strategies, creating a clear vision for the future and an actionable roadmap to achieve community priorities and aspirations. Although Council leads the IP&R process, it is a collaborative effort, involving active engagement with communities and elected representatives. Council's IP&R documents comply with the standards and regulations outlined in the *Local Government Act 1993* and the *Local Government (General) Regulations*.

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10.3 STATE OF OUR REGION REPORT 2022-2024 - ATTACHMENT

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Strategic Objective:

Council acknowledges the unique identity of different townships and villages in our Council area while promoting connection and a shared vision for our future.

ALGA National General Assembly Motions

The aim of Australasian Land & Groundwater Association (ALGA) is to provide the opportunity for Local Government from all states and territories across Australia to engage with and hear from Federal Ministers in relation to important initiatives, policies and schemes that impact all Australians.

As a minimum, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor attend the conference, and Council is allocated one voting delegate for voting on motions raised.

Motions submitted by SVC have included:

- Appropriate legislation to ensure access to 'face to face' financial transactions through banks and/or building society branches in rural and regional areas
- Undergrounding Transgrid Transmission Infrastructure
- Transgrid annual contribution to Emergency Service Levy
- Consideration of 'Betterment' in relation to disaster funding
- Australian Energy Regulator to provide community enhancement funding in LGAs negatively impacted by nation-building energy transmission infrastructure
- Options for postal services from Australia Post where post offices no longer exist
- Urgent review on the impact of the National Teacher Workforce Action Plan
- Provide certainty of the security and timing of Financial Assistant Grant payments to enable Local Government to better manage cash flows

Support for the relocation of the Tumut Fire and Rescue Fire Station

Council met with the Minister for Emergency Service to lobby for the relocation of the 100-year-old Tumut Fire and Rescue Fire Station on behalf of the Tumut community. The town is badly in need of a 'fit for purpose' Fire Station to support the retained members who graciously give up their time for the community.

Country University

Council supported a Country Universities Centre (CUC) in the Snowy Valleys and formed a Country Universities Centre working group to assist with the submission of a grant application for funding for a CUC in Tumut.

A CUC creates learning and study places designed for regional people by regional people - community owned, operated and supported. A CUC in Tumut would provide equitable access for Snowy Valleys residents to quality tertiary education, inject knowledge and qualifications into the local workforce and ensure the continued growth of our local government area.

Of the 10 CUC's in NSW, the closest to Tumut are the centres in Cooma and Goulburn; both a fair distance for any Snowy Valleys residents to travel to.

De-amalgamation Advocacy

The mayor and other council delegates wrote to and also met several times with the Minister for Local Government in advocacy of a Council de-amalgamation.

The Hon. Ron Hoenigh MP was also hosted in the Snowy Valleys in February 2024 where he provided advice to the Council on the new de-amalgamation Pathways legislation.

COMMUNITY INDICATORS

Key measures and targets detailed in the CSP provide an indicator of progress and performance against the long-term aspirations expressed by the community.

Within each of the indicators there are a number of measures which help to show whether we as a community have moved **towards** or **away** from the goal

OUR CIVIC LEADERSHIP

Indicator	Data Source	Baseline 2022	2024	Trend
Community Satisfaction with opportunities to participate in decision making.	*SVC Community Satisfaction Survey	80% Community Satisfaction Rating	35%	▼
Operating Performance Ratio* <i>Measure expenses against revenue</i>	SVC Council Data	> 0%	6.72%	▲
Own source revenue Ratio* <i>Measures Council reliance on external funding sources.</i>	SVC Council Data	>60%	59.83%	▼
Unrestricted current Ratio* <i>Represents Council ability to meet short-term obligations.</i>	SVC Council Data	>1.5x	3.33	▲
Debt service cover Ratio* <i>Measures operating cash available to service debt.</i>	SVC Council Data	>2x	16.55	▲
Rates and Annual Charges outstanding percentage* <i>Measures impact of uncollected rates and charges.</i>	SVC Council Data	<10%	5.59%	▲
Cash expenses cover Ratio* <i>Indications number of months Council can pay expenses without additional cash inflows</i>	SVC Council Data	> 3 Months	11.94 Months	▲
Overall community satisfaction with Council services	*SVC Community Satisfaction Survey	60% community 'Good' satisfaction rating	35%	▼

* Results from the Community Satisfaction Survey undertaken in April/May 2024.



ACTIONS AND ADVOCACY

Throughout this Council term, significant efforts have been dedicated to addressing two key priorities for both the community and Council: the pursuit of de-amalgamation of the Snowy Valleys Council into the two former LGAs of Tumut and Tumbarumba and working toward long-term organisational financial sustainability.

The following pages outline the background, timeline of advocacy efforts, and steps taken to move closer to fulfilling these goals.

PURSuing DE-AMALGAMATION

In September 2022, Councillors resolved to pursue a de-amalgamation of Snowy Valleys Council into two new councils based on the boundaries of the former Tumut and Tumbarumba Shire Council LGAs.

An SVC De-amalgamation Business Case was submitted to the Minister for Local Government in September 2023 including a copy of the University of Newcastle's Report – *Snowy Valleys Council - Evidence Regarding Advantages and Disadvantages of De-amalgamation* and an overview summary.

The Minister subsequently referred the submission to the Local Government Boundaries Commission and instructed them to conduct an inquiry and report on the proposal.

At the time of writing this report (October 2024) the Boundaries Commission has undertaken a public inquiry and is awaiting SVC's Financial Sustainability Plan (FSP) and Stage 1 De-amalgamation Implementation Plan (DIP) to assist them in making their recommendation to the Minister.

The FSP and DIP have been developed and will be presented to the new Council in early 2025 for consideration and next steps.

TIMELINE

18 August 2022 – Council resolves to seek proposals for a business case for the demerger of Snowy Valleys Council subject to the Minister for Local Government deciding to allow the de-amalgamation of Cootamundra Gundagai Regional Council

24 August 2022 – The Minister for Local Government, Hon. Wendy Tuckerman MP agrees to a demerger of Cootamundra Gundagai Regional Council.

15 September 2022 – Council votes to pursue a de-amalgamation of Snowy Valleys Council into two new councils based on the boundaries of the former councils subject to State funding

13 October 2022 – Council writes to the Minister for Local Government requesting that the previous recommendation of the Boundaries Commission to demerge Snowy Valleys Council be upheld.

20 October 2022 – Mayor Ian Chaffey met with Hon. Wendy Tuckerman MP to discuss the merit of de-amalgamation Snowy Valleys Council based on the previous business case and the favorable decision of the Boundaries Commission at that time. The Minister advised that this was not possible and Council would need to resubmit a business case.

17 November 2022 – Council engaged the University of Newcastle to develop a De-amalgamation Business Case capable of being submitted to the Minister for Local Government on the advantages and disadvantages of de-amalgamation and allocates \$100,000 to fund the project.

16 and 17 February 2023 – De-amalgamation Business Case Report author and project lead, Professor Joseph Drew of the University of Newcastle, meets with representatives of key stakeholder groups, Councillors, and Council staff to collect information, feedback, and individual views on the advantages and disadvantages of de-amalgamation.

25 March 2023 – NSW State Elections. The Australian Labor Party is elected to a four-year term in the Legislative Assembly.

27 and 28 April 2023 – Professor Drew returned to the region to share his draft findings with councillors and the community at public forums held in Tumut and Tumbarumba.



15 May 2023 – Prof. Drew’s final report is distributed to Councillors

22 May 2023 - The final report was made public on Council’s website

22 June 2023 – Council formally considers the University of Newcastle’s report and resolves to pursue de-amalgamation subject to State funding and agrees to provide the final report to the new Minister for Local Government Hon. Ron Hoenig MP and invite the minister to meet with councillors to discuss its contents.

5 July 2023 - Mayor Chaffey and Deputy Mayor Thomson meet with the Minister for Local Government to discuss the concerns of the community and the desire of SVC to de-amalgamation. The Councillors are advised to use the statutory pathway provided by the current Local Government Act if they wish to seek a de-amalgamation.



5 September 2023 - Council Submits its De-Amalgamation Business Case to the Minister for Local Government. The submission includes a copy of the University of Newcastle’s Report – *Snowy Valleys Council - Evidence Regarding Advantages and Disadvantages of De-amalgamation* and an overview summary.

27 September 2023 - The Minister for Local Government advises council that he has referred the proposal to the Local Government Boundaries Commission to conduct an inquiry and report on the proposal.

15 February 2024 - A draft De-amalgamation Road Map is presented to councillors developed to guide staff in the preparation of a De-amalgamation Implementation Plan (DIP) and a De-amalgamation Financial Sustainability Review (DFSR)

28 February 2024 - Council hosts a visit by the Minister for Local Government, the Hon. Ron Hoenig MP, primarily to receive advice on the new pathway for Councils seeking to de-amalgamate should the NSW Local Government Amendment (De-amalgamations) Bill 2024 be assented into legislation.



18 April 2024 – Council engages Peter Tegart from Always Thinking Advisory to undertake the preparation of a Financial Sustainability Plan (FSP) and allocates up to \$70,000 to fund the FSP and complete Stage 1 of the De-amalgamation Implementation Plan (DIP).

3 May 2024 – The Local Government Boundaries Commission calls for written submissions and opens registrations to attend the public inquiry sessions to be held in Tumbarumba and Tumut in late May.

9 May 2024 – The NSW Local Government Amendment (De-amalgamations) Bill 2024 passes Parliament. It provides a legal pathway to achieve de-amalgamation and provides for a mechanism for the Government to contribute to funding the costs of demergers incurred by councils.

14 and 15 May 2024 – Council hosts Community Information Sessions to provide updates on the SVC de-amalgamation proposal and share information on how community members can participate in the upcoming Boundaries Commission’s public inquiry.

16 May 2024 – Mayor and Interim General Manager met with the Minister for Local Government to lobby for a commitment to partially fund the development of Council's De-amalgamation Implementation Plan and Financial Sustainability Plan.

29 and 30 May 2024 - The Local Government Boundaries Commission holds public inquiry sessions. In Tumbarumba 46 people presented and 134 total were in attendance, 13 people presented at Tumut with 27 total in attendance.

The Chair of the Local Government Boundaries Commission, Mr Peter Duncan, confirmed that the Commission would allow Council the time to submit the DIP and FSP prior to making a recommendation to the Minister.

Mr Duncan also advised that, once received, the plans would be placed on public exhibition to enable Snowy Valleys residents the opportunity to comment.



20 June 2024 – Council is advised that the Minister has committed to providing \$45,000 (excl. GST) to assist in the preparation of the FSP and DIP.

24 June 2024 - Workshop held with Executive Staff and Peter Tegart, Always Thinking Advisory

11 July 2024 - Peter Tegart hosts workshop and financial sustainability update with Councillors

8 August 2024 - A first working draft of both the DIP and FSP was presented for Councillor's information

Next Steps

Once finalised, the Financial Sustainability Plan (FSP) and Stage 1 of the De-amalgamation Implementation Plan (DIP) will be presented to the new Council for consideration.

Should the new Council agree to submit the plans to the Boundaries Commission, and ultimately with the approval of the Minister, a de-amalgamation is approved, significant additional funding will be required to complete the second stage of the De-amalgamation Implementation Plan along with the actual implementation costs.

Changes to the Act, however, have given the Minister for Local Government the discretion to provide either a grant and/or a loan to assist with the de-amalgamation costs should a de-amalgamation be approved.

The current risk has been assessed as high, as at this stage, the De-amalgamation Business Case is before the Local Government Boundaries Commission for examination, and it is unknown whether the State Government will provide funding or approval for Council's wish to de-amalgamate.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

From the start of this council term, Councillors have been tasked with navigating complex decisions to address the organisation's financial sustainability challenges. The organisation has also faced significant uncertainty and instability due to executive turnover, general staff attrition, and the consequent loss of corporate knowledge.

Throughout this term, there have been four Interim General Managers and seven Interim Directors. In the last year (2023/24), some stability has been realised with the employment of two permanent Directors.

The SVC Road to Sustainability Plan created in 2020 was to establish financial sustainability over the medium to long term by aligning organisational actions to increase income and reduce expenditure. As part of this plan, the council of the day identified the need for a Special Rate Variation (SRV) and engaged extensively with the Snowy Valleys community around the ongoing financial sustainability challenges it faced.

At the beginning of their term in January 2022, Councillors resolved to apply to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for a permanent SRV. The purpose of this SRV was to maintain existing services, enhance financial sustainability, and fund infrastructure maintenance and renewal.

The SRV application proposed an increase in ordinary rates of 15.7% (including the rate peg) for 2022/23 and 17.5% (including the rate peg) for 2023/24, amounting to a total cumulative increase of 35.95% over the two years. This increase was to be retained within the rate base.

Key Milestones:

- 10 May 2022: IPART approves the SRV application.
- 16 June 2022: Councillors resolve to increase rating income for 2022/23 by 15.7%, including a 0.7% rate peg, effective from 1 July 2022 for all properties in the Local Government Area.
- 29 June 2023: Councillors resolve to increase rating income for 2023/24 by 17.5%, including a 2.7% rate peg, effective from 1 July 2023 for all properties in the Local Government Area.

SRV Outcomes and Challenges

The cumulative SRV increase of 35.95% aimed to enhance the Council's long-term financial sustainability and address ongoing deficits in the General Fund before capital grants and contributions.

However, financial modelling and assumptions in the 2023-2033 Long-Term Financial Plan (LTFP) indicated that the SRV was insufficient to address the persistent deficit between recurrent revenues and expenses. Rising costs, rate pegging, limited opportunities to generate own-source revenue, and increased cost-shifting from other levels of government had left the organisation unable to deliver services from current revenue levels.

In response, the Council notified IPART of its intent to apply for an additional SRV and began consulting with the community about further rate increases to be spread over several years.

In February 2024, the Council applied to IPART for a permanent 42.38% special rate increase over three years (2024/25, 2025/26, and 2026/27) to achieve a long-term balanced budget and maintain service levels. However, the application was unsuccessful.

IPART's decision not to grant a further special rate variation intensified the organisation's immediate financial sustainability challenges. To mitigate the shortfall, an extensive review of staffing and service levels was conducted, and initiatives were implemented to achieve savings of \$1.25 million over the 2024/25 year. Changes in service levels and associated savings were identified in areas such as libraries, pools, resource recovery centres, grants, sponsorships, donations, and staff reductions.

A further \$1M of cost savings has been highlighted as needing to be identified in the 2025/26 Budget.



STATE OF OUR REGION REPORT
2022-2024

Noted by Council on 21 November 2024
Resolution #
ECM: 3331842