

Bega Valley Shire Council

State of the Shire Report - August 2024



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Introduction

I am proud to present this report, which showcases the previous Council's term, our achievements, challenges, and our journey to positively impact our community.

As we reflect on the period January 2022 - August 2024, we take great pride in our progress towards our goals. This report is a testament to our staff's hard work and unwavering commitment to delivering projects and services to our community.

The previous Council was officially sworn in on 11 January 2022 at an extraordinary meeting. Four new Councillors - Helen O'Neil, Karen Wright, David Porter and Joy Robin – joined five re-elected Councillors - Russell Fitzpatrick, Tony Allen, Cathy Griff, Mitchell Nadin and Liz Seckold - in office. Cr Fitzpatrick was re-elected as Mayor, and Cr Seckold was re-elected as Deputy Mayor until September 2023.

Cr Fitzpatrick was also elected Chair of the Canberra Region Joint Organisation and secured a seat on the Country Mayors Association of NSW Executive Committee, ensuring the shire's needs are heard among member organisations. It has also strengthened the voice of rural and regional councils to advocate local government priorities. In April 2022, I was appointed Chief Executive Officer of Council after acting in the position for nine-and-a-half months.

Despite the compounding effects of the Black Summer bushfires, multiple flooding events, the 2023 Coolagolite fire and COVID-19 on our community and economy, we remained resilient. The economic impact of border closures and lockdowns, as well as national

and global influences on the economy, was felt acutely throughout the shire. However, we persevered and continued to serve our community.

The cost of living continued to increase, with more people experiencing difficult times and financial hardship. Living costs such as food, health care, housing, transport, electricity, and fuel continued to escalate.

A shortage of affordable housing has significantly impacted local people, industries, small businesses and services. Following the loss of more than 460 homes in the Black Summer bushfires and an influx of city investors during the COVID-19 lockdowns, we formally adopted an Affordable Housing Strategy. We also established an Affordable Housing Implementation Group and initiated changes to the Local Environmental Plan and the Development Control Plan to improve housing diversity and stimulate supply.

An online payment platform made paying rates, water notices, and debtor accounts easier. Waste vouchers went paperless, the Bega Valley Shire Library app was launched, our website was refreshed, and the Community Strategic Plan 2042 was adopted in June 2022.

We extended and sealed the runway at Merimbula Airport and upgraded the road



pavement and intersection on Arthur Kaine Drive. Work began on the General Aviation Precinct at the airport. We completed the Tura headland walking track upgrade, the accessible ramp into Bermagui's Bruce Steer Pool, the new Barclay Street Recreational and Sporting Precinct in Eden, a new toilet block at Cobargo's Apex Park, the upgrade and sealing of the remaining unsealed sections of Towamba and Burragate roads, boat ramp upgrades in Bermagui and Pambula Lake, along with specialist squash and multi-use courts at the Sapphire Aquatic Centre and Gym complex. We also saw several timber bridge replacement projects underway, the most notable being the Murrabrine Bridge in Cobargo. The restoration of the iconic Tathra Wharf was completed and works commenced on the Bega and Pambula Sporting Complexes.

We engaged in extensive community consultation regarding a Special Rate Variation, with an application submitted to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART), for a permanent Special Rate Variation (SRV) – a difficult yet financially responsible decision. Council endorsed the decision to implement the permanent SRV from 1 July 2023, which included a rate increase of 24% for the 2023-24 financial year and 19.6% for the 2024-25 financial year.

Our grant funding applications were competitive, resulting in significant state and federal government funding for various projects, including \$8 million for the Merimbula Boardwalk, a further \$3.29 million for

the Pambula Sports Complex and \$4 million towards improving resilience in Council services and assets. We also welcomed the NSW Government's additional funding of \$522,000 to repair potholes on local flood-damaged roads brought on by extreme wet weather. We collaborated with funding agencies and all levels of government to deliver resilient road networks and improved water quality and security. We advocated for government investment in community infrastructure to reduce future financial burden. We collaborated with the Canberra Region Joint Organisation to develop the South East NSW Resilience Blueprint.

We signed a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with a group of NSW councils to meet our 100% renewable energy target by 2030. Additional solar panels were installed at the Sapphire Aquatic Centre (SAC) in Pambula, reducing running costs and significantly reducing our overall carbon footprint.

A funding commitment from the NSW Government's Safe and Secure Water Program saw the planning, implementation and delivery of Brogo Water Treatment Plant delivering treated and filtered town water for northern customers in the shire. Under the same grant program Council secured \$12.05M for the construction of the Bega Water Treatment Plant which is aiming to be operational in early 2025.

We were among the first councils selected by the NSW Government to publish road data on its OneRoad portal. This portal provides valuable traffic information to keep our communities safe in times of crisis, such

as bushfires or floods.

Council and the New South Wales Government finalised the sale of Narira Village Complex in Cobargo to managing agent Southern Cross Community Housing (SCCH). The sale proceeds will be reinvested into new community housing stock in the shire. Strong and collaborative relationships with SCCH, Homes NSW and Department of Communities and Justice help us achieve our goal of increasing social and community housing and implementing our Affordable Housing Strategy.

I want to thank all the Councillors and Mayor, for their leadership and support during the previous term. Council staff have also continued to work extremely hard to deliver on the Council's strategic direction and implement the many projects, programs and services for our community. I sincerely thank them all for their dedication, passion and professionalism.

Anthony McMahan
Chief Executive Officer

COUNCIL highlights Council Term January 2022 - August 2024



\$188M

capital works completed #



\$55M

spent on our road network



4,745,591

litres of fuel consumed by fleet



\$16M

spent on our region's bridges



\$1,076,325

in grant funding under Council's Community Grants Program



80

new Australian Citizens welcomed in Bega Valley Citizenship Ceremonies



139

Community Project Proposals received



Development Assessment



\$630.9M

estimated development cost of Development Applications determined



157,808

Airport passengers



\$16M

spent on capital works at the Airport



11,179

SECCA visitors since November 2023 opening



139,269

calls to customer service



562

sportsfield bookings



379,174

library loans



41,552

tonnes of waste diverted from landfill**

Water Supply



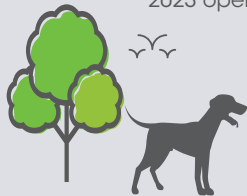
8,012 ML

of potable water supplied



656

new water and sewer connections



240

dogs and cats successfully rehomed



4,600

biosecurity inspections of public and private properties



49

Council meetings



366

burials and ash interments



111

procurements presented to and approved by Council



91

Have Your Say engagements



178

children enrolled in Council's childcare services



320

inspections of food premises



143

clients supported with NDIS Plan Management



1575

NSW Health Drinking Water quality verification samples

*This data covers the 2021-22, 2022-23 and 2023-24 financial years. #Includes Disaster Recovery funded works. ** The waste data only includes the 2021-22 and 2022-23 financial years.

Council terms are typically 4 years. The Local Government Election in 2020 was delayed to December 2021 resulting in a shortened Council term.

Councillors



(L to R) Councillor Tony Allen, Councillor Joy Robin, Councillor Cathy Griff, Councillor Karen Wright, Councillor Russell Fitzpatrick (Mayor), Councillor Mitchell Nadin, Councillor Liz Seckold (Deputy Mayor), Councillor Helen O'Neil, Councillor David Porter.

Mayor

Russell Fitzpatrick (January 2022 – August 2024)

Deputy Mayor

Cr Liz Seckold (January 2022 - September 2023)
Cr Cathy Griff (September 2023 - August 2024)

This State of the Shire report has been prepared under Section 428 of the *Local Government Act 1993* and is presented to the second meeting of the newly elected Council. This report covers the term of the previous Council and helps to set the scene for the newly elected Council to undertake planning for their term. This process of ongoing planning and reporting is outlined in the NSW Government's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework.

The State of the Shire report is structured around the themes and strategic objectives from the Community Strategic Plan 2042 and focuses on what Council has delivered to support reaching the aspirations our community has outlined.

Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

Bega Valley Shire Council, like all other councils in NSW, operates within the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework established by the NSW Government. This framework requires preparation and adoption of the following plans to assist councils in their ongoing delivery of services to residents and ratepayers.

A **Community Strategic Plan** - a 10 year + strategic direction for the Bega Valley Shire.

A **Resourcing Strategy**, details Council's approach to long term financial planning, workforce planning and asset management. It provides a vital link between the Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program.

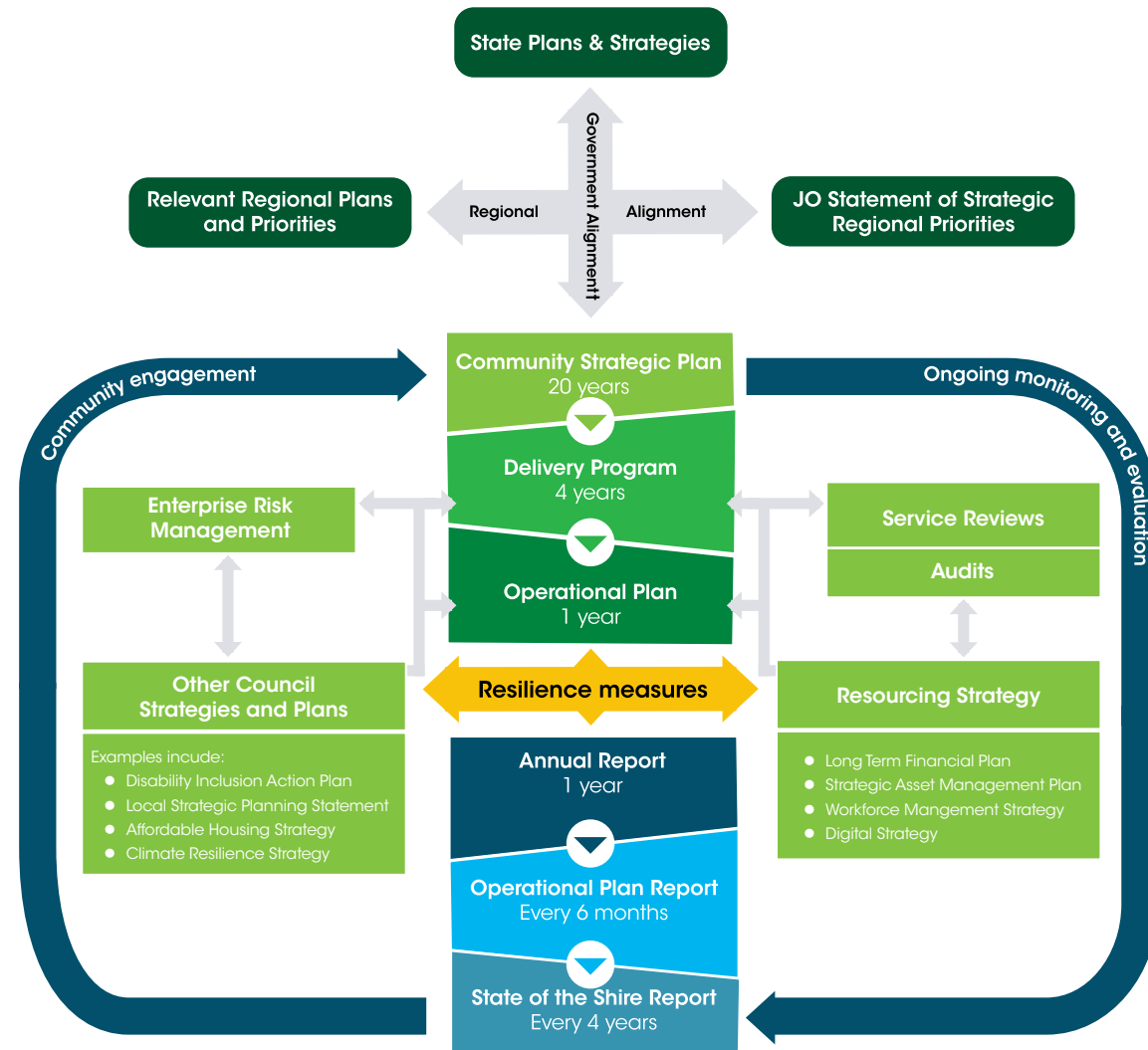
A **Delivery Program** - aligning with the four year term of the Council, it details Council's response and commitment to implementing, within available resources, the long term vision contained in the Community Strategic Plan.

A one year **Operational Plan and Budget** - outlining the activities Council will carry out in the coming financial year to achieve the Delivery Program and the long-term vision identified in the Community Strategic Plan.

An **Annual Report**, which provides an overview of Council's performance and activities during the financial year and includes audited financial statements.

A six-monthly **Operational Plan Report**, provides an overview of Council's progress in delivering the Operational Plan activities and projects.

A **State of the Shire Report**, prepared at the end of each Council term to outline progress against the four-year Delivery Program and Community Strategic Plan.

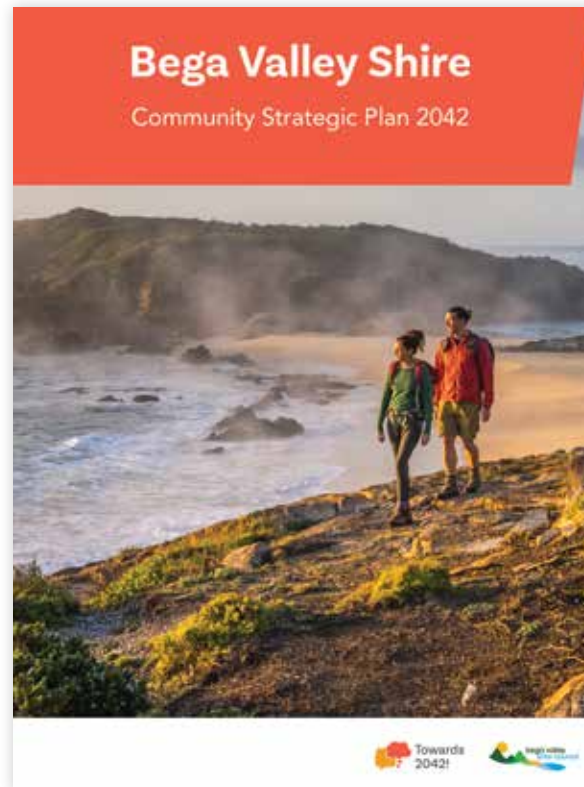


Community Strategic Plan 2042

As a community, it is important we have a document that takes a big-picture-view of the future and outlines what we value most. The Community Strategic Plan (CSP) documents the aspirations and priorities of our community. It sets out a long-term vision for the region to 2042 and identifies the key priorities and strategies for achieving this.

It is the community's plan for the future, not a council plan. Council is the custodian of the CSP however many other external agencies and stakeholders also lead and support the vision and strategic priorities. Businesses, industry groups, community groups, individuals, service providers and government agencies all have a role to play in reaching our shared vision.

As part of the development of the CSP 2042, in-depth community consultation was undertaken with more than 1,900 community members identifying important challenges, opportunities and priorities impacting them and our area. The community were asked four key questions; Where are we now? Where do we want to be in the future? How will we get there? How will we know when we have arrived.



Council has a variety of roles in supporting and delivering on the CSP.

- We **provide** services, facilities, infrastructure, programs, planning and engagement.
- We **collaborate** with the community, business and industry, other councils and other tiers of government on projects and issues.
- We **advocate** to amplify the voice of our community to get the best possible outcomes.

Every 4 years Council develops a Delivery Program and Resourcing Strategy that outlines what can be achieved in meeting our communities' priorities. If Council don't directly deliver the service then we will be collaborating with others to ensure it is delivered or advocating for the resources and services our community needs. This approach to planning is a requirement for all Councils in NSW.

The Community Strategic Plan 2042 outlines our community vision and has 5 themes supported by strategic objectives.

Our community vision

The Bega Valley Shire is an inclusive and welcoming community that integrates quality of life, prosperity, sustainable development and conservation of the environment.

Our connection to Country is guided by the culture and heritage of our Traditional Owners.

Our Community

Our Economy

Our Environment

Our Infrastructure

Our Civic Leadership



Measuring the Community Strategic Plan

The CSP 2042 consists of 5 themes and 16 strategic objectives that reflect the community's key ambitions for our future. From these themes and strategic objectives a series of 39 strategies have been developed that detail how Council, other government agencies and our community can work together to achieve our vision.

As part of the development of CSP 2042, performance measures with baseline data and the desired trend were identified for each of the themes. This report provides an update on how we are tracking against those measures.

The baseline data was obtained from a number of sources including the Bega Valley Shire Council Community Survey performed by IRIS in 2016; the 2020 NSW Regional Wellbeing Survey, University of Canberra; Profile ID <https://profile.id.com.au/bega-valley>; the ABS (Census data collected in 2016); Bega Valley Shire Council Annual Report and Operational Plan Progress Report; the NSW Health Population Health Survey; National Institute of Economic and Industry Research; Port Authority of NSW; and Bega Valley Shire Council internal research and reports.

This report outlines the current position, as of August 2024 of each of the performance measures, where data is available. Data from the August 2021 census has been released in stages and informs some of the measures in this report. Data from the 2023 NSW Regional Wellbeing Survey was released in August 2024. Council

undertook a community satisfaction survey in July 2024 and where possible it has been compared with the 2016 Community Survey.

Legend

These symbols are used to indicate if we have achieved the trends outlined.



Tick = met desired trend



Circle = did not meet desired trend



Rectangle = Inconclusive, unaligned or unavailable data



A connected and vibrant community where people are happy, safe and well.

Our Community



Our Community

Strategic Objectives

- We are a vibrant, respectful, inclusive and connected community that enjoys a culturally rich community life.
- We are a resilient and caring community that supports the health and wellbeing of our residents.
- We value the role of community in supporting and enhancing the life of all Bega Valley Shire residents.
- Our shire continues to be a safe and affordable place to live.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Council adopted the Bega Valley Affordable Housing Strategy in May 2022 and has successfully implemented several initiatives and legislative changes to increase affordable housing in the shire including:
 - establishment of an Affordable Housing Implementation Group
 - writing to all non-resident ratepayers to encourage them to consider making their properties available for residential leases in November 2022.
 - changes to local planning controls with amendments to the Bega Valley Local Environmental Plan 2013 to remove the site area restriction for residential flat buildings and multi dwelling housing in residential and mixed use zones, to allow multi dwelling housing in R2 zones and seweraged villages, to enable concurrent construction and subdivision of more than two dwellings at a time and permit some lots to be smaller than the minimum lot size in Greenfield subdivisions.
 - amendments to the Bega Valley Development Control Plan 2013 to reduce setback requirements to encourage smaller strata dwellings and parking requirements for multi dwelling housing, residential flat buildings and shop top housing to incentivise one-bedroom apartments.
 - commitment to develop a draft Affordable Housing Contributions Policy which would permit Council to apply a levy on developers in certain circumstances that could support social housing projects.
 - amending internal processes to ensure that DAs submitted by accredited community housing providers or government agencies for social or affordable housing are prioritised.
- Councils' ongoing advocacy efforts on affordable housing were recognised when the old Bega TAFE site was announced by the NSW Premier in August 2023 as a social and affordable housing project to be redeveloped by the NSW Land and Housing Corporation (now called Homes NSW). The underutilised government land will be transformed into a new 97 dwelling diverse housing project with 30% of homes to include much needed social and affordable housing. The mixed tenure development proposes to deliver approximately eight affordable homes, 65 private homes, and 24 social homes, including a 20-unit complex specifically designed for senior social housing residents.
- The old Bega TAFE redevelopment builds upon the collaborative efforts of Council in working with Homes NSW in the sale of Narira Village Complex in Cobargo to Southern Cross Housing (SCH). The sale of Narira in November 2022 provided funds that have been reinvested back into new community housing stock in the shire. Council is supporting the development of a 60+ dwelling seniors housing project that is being delivered by Southern Cross Housing in Bega.
- The newly expanded South East Centre for Contemporary Art (SECCA) opened in November 2023 with the Archibald Prize exhibition attended by over 6,000 visitors. Funded as part of the Bega Valley Cultural and Recreational Infrastructure Project – which received \$1.67 M from the Australian Government's Building Better Region Fund – the transformed art space has nearly

Our Community

doubled the size of the former Bega Valley Regional Gallery. Together with a co-contribution from Council and a \$250,000 grant from Create NSW the vision of building a cultural hub for the South East has become a reality.

- Sibling Architecture, the firm that designed SECCA recently received the prestigious Australian Institute of Architects Blacket Prize for achieving design excellence in a regional context.
- Art Month Sapphire Coast and MOTEL Art Fair 2022 and 2023 were highly successful, providing a platform for local artists to showcase their work, fostering the arts and driving the cultural tourism economy by bringing visitors to the region.
- Our strong partnership with South East Arts Inc continued to provide support to artists and arts and cultural organisations across the shire through collaborative projects, promotion, advice, training and advocacy.
- In partnership with Museums and Galleries NSW, Council supported a Museum Advisor Program, providing advice and assistance to volunteer organisations to attract funding, manage their collections, deliver workshops and development programs.
- The Bega Valley Shire Arts and Culture Plan was adopted by Council in July 2024.
- Council secured grant funding for a Youth Speak Resilience Project. It launched with a Youth Forum and Future Shapers Camp that identified a range

of youth-led activities to be delivered including late night libraries in Bega and Tura and a range of 'hang-time' and sporting events. The grant funding supported a dedicated Youth Resilience Officer who helped to coordinate 19 events including a youth festival and Battle of the Bands competition.

- A 2-year funding agreement with the National Indigenous Australians Agency (NIAA) was negotiated and came into effect in January 2023. A best practice cultural connections program, developed alongside local Aboriginal elders has been rolled out in all council children's services, with a focus on local language and sharing of cultural knowledge to preschool children, families and educators. Funding was also secured for a mural and yarning circle at Bandara. The program has enabled employment of several Aboriginal staff and contractors.
- 4 students are undertaking a School Based Apprenticeship and Traineeship in 2024 in our Children's Services team.
- Eden Early Learning Centre has undergone its Assessment and Rating with the Department of Education and passed with 'Meeting' National Quality Standards.
- A service review of Children's Services was undertaken in 2023 with Council resolving to investigate expanding services to meet an unmet need in the community.

- The Community Connectors Bushfire Recovery Project supported community groups and not-for-profit organisations with training and resources. The program also supported Volunteer Expos in 2023 and 2024.
- Council delivered the Bega Valley Accelerated Recovery Through Targeted Resourcing grant program which included employment of staff to assist with the backlog of development applications and a Resilience Officer to embed resilience into Council policies and plans. The grant also funded improvements to Council's communication materials for the DA assessment process.
- A service review of Council's families, ageing and disability services was undertaken with Council resolving in July 2024 to exit the services by 30 June 2025.
- Council advocated for improved health and wellbeing resources for our community and met with several Ministers and Shadow Ministers to discuss long-term health infrastructure planning and clinical reviews for Southern NSW Local Health District and challenges with medical professional resourcing with use of locums and visiting medical officers.
- Council delivered and supported a range of events including Australia Day, Citizens of the Year awards, Bega Valley Medallion awards and citizenship ceremonies, Community Grants presentation, Councillors in the Community,

Our Community

SECCA launch, Archibald Prize 2023, Many Hands Volunteer Expo, Garage Sale Trail, Household Chemical Cleanout, Clean up Australia Day, Asbestos Awareness Week, National Child Protection Week, the Central Waste Facility tour, Wilderness to Water tours, Valley Vibes Music Competition, Tathra Youth Festival, National Tree Day giveaway, Community Hall Odyssey and major events held in libraries.

- In May 2022 Council launched the Bega Valley Library App making it easier to access library services.
- Tura and Bermagui Libraries were upgraded with a new courtyard area in Tura boasting a new shade shelter, garden beds, seating, lighting and STEM Learning wall. The courtyard was opened in May 2023. A new makerspace and entry foyer in Bermagui was completed in March 2024.
- Council was a finalist in the 2024 NSW Local Government Excellence Awards with a podcast project, Talking Together, that was launched by Council's library team in December 2023. The library collected community stories of strength, generosity, grief and resilience, to capture an enduring record of the COVID-19 years.
- Council partnered with Atlas of Life Far South Coast to deliver environmental engagement activities including the popular 'Life in our Cemeteries' events.
- The Investing in Rural Community Futures program was delivered in partnership with the

Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal (FRRR) and included a range of activities to support not-for-profit and volunteer organisations including professional development and networking. The program received a Highly Commended recognition in the NSW category of the 2024 National Resilient Australia Awards.

- Under the Regenerate Program 30 community leaders participated in two residencies with the Australian Rural Leadership Foundation.
- A social cohesion grant was secured to deliver the 'Community Hall Odyssey' Campaign - a journey of connection, celebration and collaboration aimed at showcasing local volunteering and bringing communities together across councils 18 community halls.
- Council distributed over \$1M in grant funding under the Community Grants program which leveraged multiple state government funding programs.
- Council worked with local service Clubs to deliver the annual Club Grants program funding for community groups and grass roots organisations across the shire.
- Council supported the use of the Pambula Sporting Complex as the home for the inaugural Wanderer Festival held in September 2022.
- Our shire has experienced 13 declared natural disasters since the 2019-20 Black Summer bushfires. A dedicated Infrastructure Services Recovery team was established to manage




the Disaster Recovery Funded Arrangements (DRFA) restoration works with the team having completed restoration works to 9 of the declared natural disasters. Over \$58M in natural disaster recovery works has been undertaken, with further work continuing.

- The Health and Wellbeing Recovery Support Service that was established in early 2020 to provide casework, advocacy and referral services for those impacted by the 2019-20 Black Summer Bushfires concluded on 31 December 2022.
- Council's Building Certification team has seen a steady increase in building applications from stakeholders and development professionals over the reporting period.
- Council employed a Bushfire Planning and Assessment Officer who can provide Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) certificate assessments and planning reports.
- Ranger Services commenced wearing body worn cameras in September 2022 improving workplace safety for these staff when engaging with the community.
- Mosquitos were trapped for several weeks across our shire as part of our participation in the NSW Health Arbovirus Surveillance Program.
- Summer beach lifeguard services continued across the shire with paid patrols delivered at eight beach locations across Bermagui, Eden, Merimbula, Pambula and Tathra.

- Councils' aquatic facilities continued to promote community led events. Grant funding was secured to deliver swimmer development clinics and training courses. The Sapphire Aquatic Centre also worked with the Bega Multicultural Centre and Reclink Bega Valley to deliver a multi-cultural learn to swim program.
- Operation of the Bega War Memorial Pool returned to Council in May 2024 after the operator concluded their contract. Redevelopment plans for the site continue, including seeking grant funding for construction.
- In July 2024 the Memorandum of Understanding with the Bega, Eden, Merrimans Local Aboriginal Lands Councils was reviewed and endorsed by Council setting the foundation for collaboration and action.








Images: Community Hall Odyssey social media tile | Youth Speak event poster | Opening of South East Centre for Contemporary Art (SECCA) | Signing of the MOU with Local Aboriginal Land Councils

Progress Measure	Baseline- March 2022	Desired Trend	Result- August 2024	Outcome
Level of personal wellbeing				
<p>The Personal Wellbeing Index score is calculated based on answers of respondents to the question ‘How satisfied are you with...?’:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Your standard of living (ii) Your health (iii) What you are currently achieving in life (iv) Your personal relationships (v) How safe you feel (vi) Feeling part of your community and (vii) Your future security 	<p>Bega Valley 75.8 (Regional NSW 72.9)</p> <p>Source: 2020 NSW Regional Wellbeing Survey, University of Canberra</p>	<p>Increase</p>	<p>Bega Valley 72.7 (Regional NSW 70.8)</p> <p>Source: 2023 NSW Regional Wellbeing Survey, University of Canberra</p>	
Community access to health and education				
<p>Access to health and education was measured by asking respondents to rate their access to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) General health services e.g. GP, general health consultation services (ii) Mental health services e.g. psychologist, psychiatrist (iii) Specialist health services (other than mental health) and (iv) Quality of local schools 	<p>Bega Valley 4.1 (Regional NSW 4.3)</p> <p>Source: 2020 NSW Regional Wellbeing Survey, University of Canberra</p>	<p>Stable or increase</p>	<p>Bega Valley 3.2 (Regional NSW 3.7)</p> <p>Source: 2023 NSW Regional Wellbeing Survey, University of Canberra</p>	
Involvement in community activities				
<p>The extent of a person’s involvement in local community activities was examined by asking survey participants how frequently they took part in the following types of activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) I attend community events such as farmers markets, community festivals (ii) I attend meetings/social events of local clubs/groups and (iii) I take part in sports groups or teams 	<p>Bega Valley 2.4 (Regional NSW 2.2)</p> <p>Source: 2020 NSW Regional Wellbeing Survey, University of Canberra</p>	<p>Stable or increase</p>	<p>Bega Valley 3.2 (Regional NSW 3.3)</p> <p>Source: 2023 NSW Regional Wellbeing Survey, University of Canberra</p>	


Progress Measures

Progress Measures	Progress Measure	Baseline- March 2022	Desired Trend	Result- August 2024	Outcome
	Recommending my community				
	Respondents were asked 'I would recommend my community to others as a good place to live' and rated it on a 7 point scale.	Bega Valley 6.4 (Regional NSW 6.0) Source: 2020 NSW Regional Wellbeing Survey, University of Canberra	Stable or increase	Bega Valley 5.6 (Regional NSW 5.2) Source: 2023 NSW Regional Wellbeing Survey, University of Canberra	
	Number of recorded criminal incidents for major offences				
		Bega Valley- Total 947 Source: December 2021 NSW Recorded Crime Statistics (BOSCAR) Major Offences- April 2020- March 2021	Decrease	Bega Valley 823 Source: March 2024 NSW Recorded Crime Statistics (BOSCAR) Major Offences- April 2023- March 2024	
	Self-reported health				
	Percentage of residents over 16 years who rate their health as 'good' or 'very good' or 'excellent'	Bega Valley 78.6% Source: 2020 Southern NSW Local Health District- Health Stats	Stable or increase	Bega Valley 77% Source: 2023 Southern NSW Local Health District- HealthStats	
	Voluntary work				
	Percentage of people aged over 15 who do voluntary work through an organisation or group	Bega Valley 25.8% (Regional NSW 20.8%) Source: 2016 Census	Increase	Bega Valley 21.0% (Regional NSW 15.5%) Source: 2021 Census	



Progress Measure	Baseline- March 2022	Desired Trend	Result- August 2024	Outcome
Housing affordability				
1) Percentage of households where rent payments are 30 per cent or more of household income	Bega Valley 9.2% (NSW 12.9%)	Decrease	Bega Valley 38.4% * (NSW 35.5%)	
2) Percentage of households where mortgage payments are 30 per cent or more of household income	Bega Valley 5.8% (NSW 7.4%) Source: 2016 Census	Decrease	Bega Valley 15%* (NSW 10.8%) Source: 2021 Census * Note ABS is calculating this differently now: https://abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/quickstats/2021/LGA10550#housing	
Cultural facilities upgrades				
Upgrade to Regional Gallery	Construction commenced on Regional Gallery	Completion	SECCA opened November 2023.	
Tura Murrang Library completed	Tura Murrang design stage Source: Council data	Commenced	Design of Tura Murrang Library upgrade completed and development application lodged. DA works currently unfunded. Source: Council data	
Number of actions delivered from Affordable Housing Strategy				
Implementation of the actions from the Affordable Housing Strategy	Strategy awaiting adoption Source: Council data	Increase	Affordable Housing Strategy adopted in May 2022. Numerous actions implemented. https://begavalley.nsw.gov.au/community/affordable-housing-strategy	

Progress Measures



A resilient and prosperous economy that supports employment and learning opportunities.

Our Economy

Our Economy

Strategic Objectives

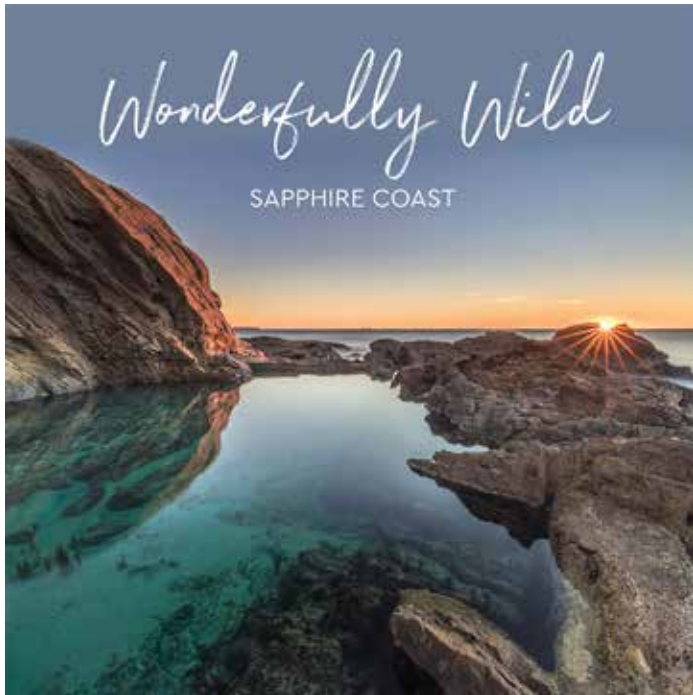
- Our economy is prosperous, diverse and supported by innovative and creative businesses.
- We have meaningful employment and learning opportunities for people at all stages in life.
- Our key industries are resilient and strong.
- We have quality digital connectivity that supports community connection and quality of life and economic growth.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Sapphire Coast Tourism Future Program, financed by a Bushfire Local Economic Recovery Fund (BLERF) grant, provided the local business community with 622 hours of expert mentoring and 14 well-attended masterclasses, including workshops on ecotourism, agritourism, staff recruitment and retention, Aboriginal tourism product development, cultural awareness, mountain bike tourism and social media.
- Council facilitated investment of over \$572,000 in state and federal funding for Sapphire Coast marketing in partnership with Destination NSW. This included the Wonderfully Wild and Feel New campaigns, the production of the new Sapphire Coast brochure and map, and a mural commissioned for the arrival lounge in Merimbula Airport.
- The Tourism marketing contract was awarded to The Destination Agency in March 2024.
- Funding agreements for our 4 accredited Visitor Information Centres were finalised in July 2024.
- A separate BLERF project has enabled Council to better support local small businesses through the Business Activator program that offered mentoring, grants, networking and training opportunities.
- Council received bushfire recovery funding to research and develop inspiring case studies of business recovery and resilience. 10 case studies and videos in the 'Stories of Change' series were developed to highlight support services, grant funding and investment opportunities that have helped businesses navigate their recovery and resilience journey.
- A partnership with the University of Wollongong (UOW) College Australia provided the opportunity for 13 small business owners to participate in a free accredited training course to help them design a targeted business plan. Council also partnered with UOW to support the Bega Valley Innovation Hub and iAccelerate Program, to help build and scale sustainable businesses that have a positive impact in the region. A Regional Innovation Summit was held in Bega in March 2023.
- Council received NSW Government funding for the development of a Regional Event Activation Strategy and Prospectus, under Regional NSW's Business Case and Strategy Development Fund. Both documents were adopted by Council in July 2024.
- Development applications for standing approvals for major events at Bega and Pambula Sporting Complexes have been drafted as a component of Council's Events Strategy.
- An Expression of Interest process was conducted in May 2023 for installing and operating public EV chargers in council carparks.
- Council is working in partnership with Transport for NSW to secure funding for the development of a marina in Snug Cove, Eden.
- Council has continued to support the Regional Circularity Cooperative including its launch event in November 2023. Council also participated in a circularity accelerator workshop with the NSW Environment Protection Authority and Circularity Australia.

Our Economy

- Telstra facilitated a workshop with Council in October 2023 to develop a Digital Connectivity Plan, outlining our region's connectivity and technology needs over the next 5 years. Council will continue to work collaboratively with Telstra and other service providers to deliver improved telecommunications services in our region.
- The Bega Valley Commemorative Civic Centre (BVCCC) continued to deliver a range of corporate and community events including Snowy and the seven cool dudes, Many Hands Volunteer Expo, Aladdin, Festival of Daring Possibilities, Fiddler on the Roof, Toni Childs, Ross Noble, The Wiggles, Kath and Kim Drag Bingo, A Taste of Ireland, Anh Do and Ella Hooper amongst many others.
- The Bega Valley Regional Learning Centre was sold in January 2024 for \$3.3m with the proceeds from the sale to be used for future development or reinvestment into Council property.
- Council secured over \$800,000 under the Regional Youth Investment Program (RYIP) grant to fund 6 civil construction trainee positions.
- Council supported the community to identify and access grants through the provision of the free Bega Valley Funding Finder platform and grant writing workshops.
- Fifteen organisations secured \$362,000 in funding for locally run events through the NSW Government's Reconnecting Regional NSW Community Events Program.



Images: Sapphire Coast Tourism Wonderfully Wild campaign | Stories of Change: The Wool Shed and Currajong Retreat

Our Economy

Progress Measure	Baseline- March 2022	Desired Trend	Result- August 2024	Outcome
Number of active registered businesses				
Businesses are included if they are registered with the ATO, with an ABN used within the previous two financial years	Bega Valley 3,146 Source: 2021 ABS Data through National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (NIEIR)	Increase	Bega Valley 3,376 Source: 2023 ABS Data through (NIEIR)	✓
Economic growth				
Gross regional product is a measure of size or net wealth generated by the local economy	Bega Valley \$1,554 million Source: 2021 Census through (NIEIR)	Stable or increase	Bega Valley \$2,143 million Source: NIEIR 2023	✓
Unemployment rate				
The number of people looking for work, as a percentage of the labour force (employed and unemployed over 15)	Bega Valley 5.4% (Regional NSW 6.6%) Source: 2016 Census	Stable or decrease	Bega Valley 3.5% (Regional NSW 4.6%) Source: 2021 Census	✓
Visitor expenditure				
Spending by non-residents of your Local Government Area in your Local Government Area	Bega Valley \$278.3 million Source: FY21- Spendmapp by Geografia (2022)	Increase	Bega Valley \$347.3 million Source: FY23- Spendmapp by Geografia (2024)	✓

Our Economy

Progress Measures	Progress Measure	Baseline- March 2022	Desired Trend	Result- August 2024	Outcome
	Value of tourism to the economy				
	Total tourism and hospitality sales in Bega Valley Shire	Bega Valley \$233.8 million Source: NIEIR 2020-21	Increase	Bega Valley \$380.88 million Source: NIEIR 2022-23	✓
	Reduction in telecommunications ‘mobile blackspots’				
	Mobile blackspot database of reported black spot locations	Bega Valley 62 Source: Department of Infrastructure, Transport Regional Development	Decrease	Nil- data source no longer available	■
	Early childhood development				
	Percentage of children 0-5 years who are developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains	Bega Valley 19.6% Source: 2021 Australian Early Development Census	Stable or decrease	Bega Valley 19.6% Source: 2021 Australian Early Development Census. No data available past 2021.	■

Our Economy

	Progress Measure	Baseline- March 2022	Desired Trend	Result- August 2024	Outcome
Progress Measures	School retention				
	Percentage of people aged over 15 years had completed Year 12 schooling (or equivalent)	Bega Valley 37.7% (NSW 38%) Source: 2016 Census	Increase	Bega Valley 43.4% (NSW 56.9%) Source: 2021 Census	✓
	People participating in further education				
	Percentage of people with a further education qualification- vocational, diploma, bachelor or higher	Bega Valley 47.1% (NSW 46.3%) Source: 2016 Census	Increase	Bega Valley 52.4% (NSW 55.2%) Source: 2021 Census	✓
	Household income				
	Percentage of households earning over \$2,500 or more per week	Bega Valley 8.9% (NSW 14.6%) Source: 2016 Census	Increase	Bega Valley 16.2% (NSW 32.1%) Source: 2021 Census	✓
	Access to high-speed reliable internet				
	Average score on a 7-point scale from 'very-poor' (1) to 'very-good' (7)	Bega Valley 3.8 (Regional NSW 4.2) Source: 2020 NSW Regional Wellbeing Survey, University of Canberra	Increase	Bega Valley 3.9 (Regional NSW 4.2) Source: 2023 NSW Regional Wellbeing Survey, University of Canberra	✓

Our Economy

	Progress Measure	Baseline- March 2022	Desired Trend	Result- August 2024	Outcome
Progress Measures	Infrastructure and planning milestones				
	Tathra Wharf	Detailed Planning	Completed	Tathra Wharf Completed July 2024	✓
	Airport- General Aviation Precinct	Detailed Planning	Completed	Aviation Precinct detailed planning complete- lease agreements in negotiation.	✓
	Snug Cove Masterplan	Masterplan under review	Updated	Not completed. Council working with TNSW to secure funding to deliver a marina in Snug Cove.	○
	Bega Valley Circular Economy	Delivery of two key initiatives	Completed	Centre for Circularity Circularity in Fisheries and Aquaculture Enhancing Biodiversity Connectivity Improving Drought Resilience On Farm Carbon Plans	✓
		Source: Council data and NSW Government		Source: Council data and NSW Government	

We embrace sustainable living and value and conserve our natural environment.



Our Environment



Our Environment

Strategic Objectives

- Our air and water are pristine, and our natural environment and rural landscapes are protected.
- We are leaders in sustainable living and support innovative approaches to resource recovery and the production of renewable energy and food.
- We act to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change.

HIGHLIGHTS





- In August 2023, the Brogo-Bermagui water treatment plant became fully operational. The project was funded through a \$10M grant from the NSW Department of Planning and Environment's Safe and Secure Water Program, and along with a \$2.5M Council contribution.
- A reference design for the Merimbula Ocean Outfall and Sewage Treatment Plant upgrade has been completed. An Environmental Impact Study is being finalised and an option assessment and concept design is also progressing.
- Planning has progressed for the Yellow Pinch Water Treatment Plant with tender documents nearing completion and land rezoning in progress.
- The \$15.8M Bega Water Treatment Plant is currently under construction with completion expected in February 2025. The 9.5ML/Day facility is designed to meet peak demands as forecast out to 2046 and has been supported by the NSW Government with \$12.05M of funding provided through the Safe and Secure Water program. The project included the development of a new Water and Sewer Operations Depot which staff moved into in 2022.
- Council's Water and Sewer Strategy was adopted in July 2022. It will be reviewed and updated by mid-2025.
- \$325,000 in grant funding was secured to develop a Recycled Water Strategy.
- Solar has been installed at the new Water and Sewer Operations Depot, Brogo Water Treatment Plant, Sapphire Aquatic Centre, South Bega Reservoirs and the Bega Sewer Treatment Plant. Solar will also be installed at the new Bega Water Treatment Plant.
- DA assessment processing timeframes have improved with the average net processing down to 91.43 days compared to the 2023 net average of 117.77 days. The state-wide skills shortage in town planning and development engineering has continued to impact vacancies in Council's planning team. Growing our own talent has been a focus, with 3 planning cadets joining our team in January 2024.
- Council transitioned to internal service delivery of our road reserves weed spraying with equipment and vehicles purchased and operational in 2023.
- The shire wide estuarine water quality monitoring program to review the ongoing impacts of the Black Summer bushfires across 8 estuaries concluded in 2023.
- Coastal Management Plans have been developed for Bermagui River, Wallaga Lake, Merimbula and Back Lakes and Lake Curalo.
- The Bushfire Affected Waterways program delivered a range of environmental benefits in the Towamba, Kiah, Wonboyn, Quaama, Bemboka and Cobargo communities. A promotional video was produced by the NSW Government to showcase the project, and it was recognised at the NSW Coastal Management Conference taking out the Local Government Category.
- Wilderness to Water events have been successfully rolled out in Merimbula and Wallaga Lake, Eden, Pambula Beach and Tathra.

Our Environment

- The Community Environment Grant Program, which has been in operation since 2011–12, provided \$142,977 in funding to support various projects including control of invasive weeds at Panboola Wetlands, Wallaga Lake Heights environment recovery, Beauty Point bushcare, Bermagui dune care, Narira Creek stabilisation and support for oyster farmers working to protect Pambula Lake.
- Council's Green Shoots Bushfire Recovery Program won the Local Government Category at the 2023 NSW Coastal Management Conference awards.
- The Glebe Lagoon Flying-fox Camp Management Plan was adopted by Council in August 2024.
- Council partnered with several other councils in signing a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) to supply Council's major sites with electricity sourced from a solar farm in the New England area. The signing of the PPA was a major action within Council's Clean Energy Plan and when combined with existing BVSC solar arrays installations, will see Council's electricity consumption be one hundred percent renewable by 2030.
- Electricity meters have been changed over on 50 large electricity consumption sites to meet Council's Power Purchase Agreement contract.
- Dune enhancement works have been undertaken in the Bermagui, Tathra, Merimbula, Pambula and Eden areas. A robust and healthy coastal dune system is a key climate adaptation response and coastal hazard defence mechanism that Council has pursued for many years as outlined in our Climate Resilience Strategy.
- Upgrade of the Central Waste Facility is progressing with a masterplan and Environmental Impact Statement being prepared. The development application is set to be lodged in early 2025.
- SOILCO Pty Ltd were awarded the contract to design, construct, operate and maintain a 15,000 tonne per annum organics processing facility at the Central Waste Facility. The development application is due to be lodged in late 2024.
- A range of options for a leachate management solution at the Central Waste Facility have been developed and plans are progressing for a semi-automated waste disposal system at the former Cobargo waste transfer station.
- Waste vouchers went paperless and were made available through Council's popular Waste App and a comprehensive waste management guide was sent to all households in August 2024.
- Capping of Cell 3 at the Central Waste Facility was completed in January 2023.
- Council's Waste Strategy is under review, after successful implementation of a range of initiatives. A Regional Waste Strategy was adopted by the Canberra Region Joint Organisation in December 2022.



Images: Brogo-Bermagui Water Treatment Plant | Bega Water Treatment Plant

Progress Measures	Progress Measure	Baseline- March 2022	Desired Trend	Result- August 2024	Outcome	
	Community satisfaction that Council has the right balance between economic development and environmental protection					
	Percentage of respondents who have a medium or high satisfaction	83% Source: 2016 Council Community Survey	Increase	The 2024 Community Satisfaction did not pose the same question so it is difficult to directly compare. Satisfaction with planning/managing residential growth rated low compared to other services (mean of 2.3)		
	Perception of environmental health					
	Average score of participants from 1-7 of the overall perception of environmental health of their area	Bega Valley 5.0 (Regional NSW 3.8) Source: 2020 NSW Regional Wellbeing Survey, University of Canberra		Bega Valley 3.9 (Regional NSW 3.9) Source: 2023 NSW Regional Wellbeing Survey, University of Canberra		
	Climate Resilience Strategy performance measures					
		Refer Climate Resilience Strategy Source: Council data	Increase	Progress in implementing Climate Resilience Strategy reported to Council Source: Council data		
	Tonnage of waste diverted from landfill					
		18,320 tonnes Source: FY2021-22 Council data	Increase	15,729 tonnes Source: FY2022-2323 Council data		



Progress Measures	Progress Measure	Baseline- March 2022	Desired Trend	Result- August 2024	Outcome	
	Number of heritage items listed for protection					
	Number of Aboriginal Places protected	3 Aboriginal Places	Increase or stable	3 Aboriginal Places	■	
	Number of Stage Heritage Register listing	12 State Heritage Register		12 State Heritage Register		
	Number of heritage items in LEP	427 LEP		301 LEP		
		Source: State Heritage Register		Source: State Heritage Register		
	Infrastructure and planning milestones					
	Organics Processing Facility	Detailed Planning	Completed	Tender awarded and concept design complete. DA on track for submission 2024.	✓	
	Merimbula Sewage Treatment Plant	Awaiting Department of Planning Approval	Construction commences	Preparing to engage contractor for options assessment and concept design.	✓	
	Water treatment facilities at Bega and Yellow Pinch	Bega- Detailed design	Construction commences	Currently under construction, scheduled for completion in early 2025.	✓	
Yellow Pinch- Preliminary design		Detailed design complete	Tender documents nearing completion and land rezoning in progress.	✓		
	Source: Council data		Source: Council data			

A wide-angle photograph of a construction site on a dirt road. In the foreground, a white concrete mixer truck is parked with its drum tilted. Several workers in high-visibility yellow shirts and dark shorts are gathered around the truck, some appearing to be pouring or managing the concrete. To the right, a blue Kobelco excavator is parked on a gravel area. The road is lined with orange traffic cones and workers. In the background, another concrete mixer truck is visible on the dirt road, which is flanked by trees and vegetation. The scene is set in a rural or semi-rural area with a clear sky.

Our infrastructure complements our natural surroundings and character while enhancing the lives of our community.

Our Infrastructure

Our Infrastructure

Strategic Objectives

- Our public and private infrastructure and community services meet community needs.
- Our community has access to good quality open space, recreation and sporting facilities that support health and wellbeing.
- Our transport networks support our community to work, learn and socialise.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Merimbula Transport Study was completed and adopted by Council in November 2023.
- Council secured \$110,000 to develop an Active Transport Strategy that was adopted in August 2024. It provides a roadmap for active transport infrastructure for the next 10 years.
- Council secured grant funding to develop Conservation Management Plans for Old Pambula Courthouse and the old CBC Building.
- Community engagement was undertaken in June 2024 to develop a Recreation Strategy, with over 426 responses to the online survey.
- Council was a finalist at the Local Government Week 2023 Awards with the Bega Valley Coastal Accessibility- Destination for all project that has improved visitor safety and accessibility at 3 sites across the shire.
- Council secured \$2.8M in funding from the Federal Government for improvements in the Merimbula CBD.
- The Kiah Hall rebuild was completed in April 2024 and the Wandella Hall is expected to open in October 2024. Both halls were destroyed in the 2019-20 Black Summer bushfires.
- Council continued to support community hall volunteers with the upgrade of community halls to improve amenity and accessibility including a new roof at Wolumla, air conditioning at Brogo, new curtains at Pambula, a new awning at Wyndham, restumping at Rock Hall, kitchen renovations at Candelo.
- Tathra Wharf upgrade was completed and opened in July 2024 after Council had secured \$7.1M in funding from Crown Lands.
- Council secured \$15M from the State Government towards the Cuttagee Bridge replacement project.
- Construction commenced on the Pambula Sporting Complex with demolition of the old sporting facility completed at the end of 2023.
- The Bega Sporting Complex construction commenced in May 2024 with completion expected in September 2025.
- Council secured two rounds of Fixing Country Bridges funding for replacement of several bridges including Katechencarry Creek, Sam Woods Gully, Dignams Creek, Murrays, Murrabrine Creek, Ritchies Lagoon, Logans, Nungatta Road, Meringola Gully, Wonboyn River, Johnston Creek, Saddle Camp Creek, Murrabrine, Yowaka, Buckajo, Bens Creek, Old Soldiers, Red Hill.
- Whipstick Bridge was completed in November 2023 and Watergums Bridge renewal is progressing with construction set to commence in late 2024.
- Grant funding was secured to seal Wanatta Lane and Kameruka Lane and the upgrading and sealing of the remaining unsealed sections of Towamba and Burragate roads were completed.
- 5 separate grant programs supported close to \$2.7M in road, drainage and pathway upgrades in Kalaru that were completed in June 2023.
- A section of the Tathra headland path that was destroyed by a storm surge flood event in March 2022 was repaired with funding from the Crown Land Flood Recovery Program.





Our Infrastructure

- A Resilience Engineer was appointed through funding under the Preparing Australian Communities grant to understand natural hazard risks (coastal, flood and fire) to our major asset classes and develop three 'shovel-ready' packages of work. This project has progressed to engagement of a contractor to manage and deliver detailed designs, cost estimates and project plans.
- Council worked closely with CSIRO on the pilot Enabling Resilience Investment project.
- Vehicle telematics have been implemented in Council's fleet.
- An updated Local Infrastructure Contribution Plan and Voluntary Planning Agreements Policy was adopted by Council in August 2024.
- Council secured funding in both round 1 and round 2 of the Regional Housing Strategic Planning Fund. The \$250,000 round 1 funding supported the delivery of structure plans for major urban release areas in Bega and Wolumla. The round 2 funding secured in February 2024 will support the preparation of a planning proposal for rezoning of the urban release area in Bega.
- Passenger numbers at Merimbula Airport have returned to pre-pandemic level, with over 60,000 passengers flying in and out of Merimbula in the 2023-24 financial year.
- The Merimbula Airport Masterplan 2043 was adopted in June 2024, funded through a \$306,250 grant under the NSW Government's Business Case and Strategy Development Fund. There has been considerable change in at the Merimbula Airport over the ten years since Council adopted the 2013-2033 Masterplan including infrastructure upgrades to the runway, apron, and terminal.
- Electrical, civil and fencing works were finalised at the General Aviation (GA) Precinct at Merimbula Airport. The GA Precinct contains 20 lease sites with allocation of the sites expected to commence by end of 2024.
- Upgrade works valued at \$3.2M were completed on Arthur Kaine Drive, providing improved access to the airport.
- Council secured grant funding for numerous parks and recreation assets including \$250,000 for George Brown Oval changerooms, \$500,000 for Merimbula Skatepark and \$10M for Merimbula Boardwalk, comprising \$8M from the NSW State Government and \$2M from the Federal government.
- Council completed the Barclay Street Recreational and Sporting Precinct in June 2024 that includes a new sports pavilion, an all ability playspace, skatepark, upgraded cricket nets, memorial garden, basketball quarter court and connecting pathways, BBQ and seating.
- A range of parks and recreation projects have been completed including the Bermagui Harbour boat ramp, Pambula Lake boat ramp, Candelo Pavilion renovation, outdoor courts in Eden, Cobargo and Bermagui, Quaama Playground, improved coastal accessibility at Bruce Steer Pool in Bermagui and Short Point in Merimbula, heat pumps at Sapphire Aquatic Centre, amenities at Apex Park in Cobargo and Colombo Park, specialist squash and multi-use courts at the Sapphire Aquatic Centre and Gym complex, Quarantine Bay fishing platform, cricket net upgrades in Eden, Tathra and Wolumla along with floodlighting upgrades at Barclay Street soccer, Berrambool soccer, Pambula AFL and Pambula rugby league.
- Plans are underway for internal upgrades to Bermagui Indoor Stadium, floodlighting improvements at Keith Mitchell Oval, a skatepark at Ford Park in Merimbula and amenities upgrades at Taylors Square in Tathra.
- 139 Community Project Proposals were received, assessed and reported to Council.



Image: Murrabrine Bridge, Cobargo

Progress Measures	Progress Measure	Baseline- March 2022	Desired Trend	Result- August 2024	Outcome	
	Community access to Local Government services					
	Average score on a 7-point scale from 'very-poor' (1) to 'very-good' (7)	Bega Valley 4.7 (Regional NSW 4.6) Source: 2020 NSW Regional Wellbeing Survey, University of Canberra	Stable or increase	Bega Valley 4.0 (Regional NSW 4.1) Source: 2023 NSW Regional Wellbeing Survey, University of Canberra	○	
	Infrastructure and planning milestones					
	Pambula Sporting Complex	Detailed Design	Completed	Design complete. Construction commenced.	✓	
	Bega Sporting Complex	Detailed Design	Completed	Design complete. Construction commenced.	✓	
	Bega War Memorial Swimming Pool	Concept Design	Funding Secured	Concept design developed in 2020. No funding secured.	✓	
	Merimbula Boardwalk	Concept Design	Funding Secured	Concept design in development. Grant funding secured. 2026 completion.	✓	
	Merimbula Transport Study	Community engagement	Adopted	Merimbula Transport Study adopted November 2023.	✓	
	Fixing Country Bridges Program	Delivery commencing Source: Council data	Projects completed	Round 1- 12 bridges completed. Round 2- funding awarded for a further 6 bridges. Source: Council data	✓	

Progress Measures	Progress Measure	Baseline- March 2022	Desired Trend	Result- August 2024	Outcome
	Kilometres of unsealed roads maintained				
		591kms maintained Source: Council data	Stable or decrease	710.85kms* maintained Source: Council data- Strategic Asset Management Plan. The amount reported is different due to data improvement and network definition.	
	Community satisfaction with sporting and recreation facilities				
	Average satisfaction of leisure and recreation services	3.4 Source: 2016 Council Community Survey	Increase	3.3* Source: 2024 Council Community Survey * Parks and Playgrounds only	
	Participation in outdoor recreation activities				
		New measure- no baseline		Data not captured in 2024 Customer Satisfaction Survey	
	Passenger numbers through Merimbula Airport and Port of Eden				
		Airport- 24,445* Port of Eden- 0 Source: Council data and Port Authority. *FY21 Council and Port Authority data noting significant COVID-19 impacts on travel during this period	Increase	Airport- 64,927 Port of Eden- 62,211 Source: Council data (FY22) and Port Authority 2023-2024 Cruise Season	

	Progress Measure	Baseline- March 2022	Desired Trend	Result- August 2024	Outcome
Progress Measures	Access to roads and public transport				
	Average score relating to access to roads and public transport, measured on a scale ranging from 'very poor' (1) to 'very good' (7) (i) Quality of local roads and (ii) Access to public transport (including taxis, buses, trains)	Bega Valley 3.2 (Regional NSW 3.6) Source: 2020 NSW Regional Wellbeing Survey, University of Canberra	Completion	Bega Valley 2.6 (Regional NSW 2.8) Source: 2023 NSW Regional Wellbeing Survey, University of Canberra	○
	Asset renewals ratio				
	The rate at which buildings and infrastructure assets are being renewed relative to the rate at which they are depreciating > 100% benchmark	91.40% Source: BVSC Audited Financials FY21	Stable or above benchmark	107.34% Source: BVSC Audited Financials FY23	✓
	Asset maintenance ratio				
	Actual asset maintenance / required asset maintenance with >100% benchmark	111.91% Source: BVSC Audited Financials FY21	Stable or above benchmark	116.57% Source: BVSC Audited Financials FY23	✓
	Infrastructure backlog ratio				
Estimated cost to bring assets to a satisfactory standard / Net carrying amount of infrastructure assets with <2.00% benchmark	2.07% Source: BVSC Audited Financials FY21	Decrease to benchmark or below	2.08% Source: BVSC Audited Financials FY23	○	

Our Infrastructure

Progress Measures	Progress Measure	Baseline- March 2022	Desired Trend	Result- August 2024	Outcome
	Infrastructure grant investment				
	Grants and contributions provided for capital purposes	\$30,941,000 Source: BVSC Audited Financials FY21	Stable or increase	\$40,448,000 Source: BVSC Audited Financials FY23	✓



Image: Tathra Headland walkway

Local leadership is strong, consultative and responsive to our community's needs.



Our Civic Leadership

Our Civic Leadership

Strategic Objectives

- We are an informed and engaged community with a transparent, consultative and responsive Council.
- Council has strong organisational practices to ensure a viable organisation that delivers services and facilities to meet community needs.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Council supported a multi-agency response to the Coolagolite fire in October 2023, where two homes were lost, 14 outbuildings destroyed, and nearly 7,000ha burnt. The region's Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) was stood up and a Local Recovery Committee (LRC) was established with representation from NSW Police, Transport NSW, Council, NSW Health, Local Land Services, the National Emergency Management Agency and NSW Reconstruction Authority. Council also supported residents affected by the Coolagolite bushfire through the Bega Valley Community Disaster Relief Fund, originally set up to support the community following the Tathra and Yankees Gap bushfires in 2018.
- Council is working with Reconstruction NSW to develop a draft Disaster Recovery Plan, a requirement for all NSW Councils.
- Council engaged in extensive community consultation regarding a Special Rate Variation, with an application submitted to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART), for a permanent Special Rate Variation (SRV) in February 2022. Council endorsed the decision to implement the permanent SRV from 1 July 2023, which included a rate increase of 24% for the 2023-24 financial year and 19.6% for the 2024-25 financial year.
- Council produces two fortnightly e-newsletters, Bega Valley Together has over 2,500 subscribers and Business News is sent to over 770 businesses. Our Facebook presence continues to grow with over 24,000 followers.
- Council used a spatial storytelling tool, Storymaps, to share the waste journey of a disposable cup in ['The Cuppa'](#) and the building of the Brogo-Bermagui Water Treatment Plant in ['Fire and Water'](#).
- Council has implemented a Service Review Framework, where each service Council provides is reviewed in detail on an annual basis.
- Comprehensive asset revaluations were undertaken on roads, buildings, water and sewer, operational land, stormwater, open space and recreation, footpaths and waste.
- Council has continued to remain active in applying for grants and has secured a range of funding to support infrastructure and services. Several of our significant grants include \$1.5M in Blackspot Funding for Sapphire Coast Drive, \$1.9M for Nethercote Road from the Infrastructure Betterment Fund and \$1.4m from Fixing Local Roads, over \$2M across multiple programs for Boundary Road, \$552,003 in the Fixing Local Roads Pothole Repair grant and \$335,000 for Merimbula and Back lake Floodplain Risk management.
- Council has invested in a 'Grow our own' approach to resourcing challenges and has successfully implemented a cadet, trainee and apprentice program. In 2024 Council had 10 cadets studying either engineering, planning, finance or human resources, along with 3 apprentices and 10 trainees. Council also provides a professional work experience and work placement program.
- Council has continued working in consultation with local high schools and employment agencies to promote career pathways in Local Government.

- In 2023 a mentoring program was launched with 46 participants to support our efforts in succession planning and skill development.
- Council implemented a training program for managing mental health in the workplace with over 90 supervisory staff attending.
- A Learning Management System for online delivery of standardised corporate and mandatory training was introduced reducing external facilitated training costs.
- Council's Digital Transformation Program is progressing with 3 central IT systems transitioning to a Cloud environment with the project expected to be complete in May 2025.
- Council has implemented Payble, allowing ratepayers to better manage their payments and internal system improvements are being realised with the implementation of elementTIME, a digital and mobile timesheet solution, and Assetic, an asset maintenance and management system.
- Council won a 2024 Statewide Mutual Risk Management Excellence Awards for the implementation of an innovative procurement assistance portal and supporting guides.
- Council collaborated with the Canberra Region Joint Organisation to develop the Resilience Blueprint, Net Zero Guide and Regional Community Strategic Plan.
- Council's website and internal Sharepoint platform were refreshed providing improved content and navigation.
- Councillors in the Community events were held in May and November 2022 and again in November 2023.
- Council was selected by the NSW Government to be an early adopter of its OneRoad portal that provides statewide traffic information to keep our communities safe.
- Council's Audit Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC) reviewed and approved the ARIC Strategic Workplan 2022-23 to 2025-26 in September 2023.
- Council continues to advocate on matters that affect our community and have provided submissions to government on local government sector financial sustainability, privatisation of water utilities, childcare, funding for trainees, public transport, pensioner concessions, housing, investment in Eden port precinct and resilient road and bridge infrastructure.
- Council has developed 'Funding our Future' an advocacy document that outlines Council's key investment priorities over the next three to five years.
- An organisational restructure was completed in mid-2022 with removal of the Economic Development Manager role and Events Officer and combining the economic development function with grants and corporate planning to reduce duplication of effort and increase efficiency.
- Council introduced pro-rata rating when a registration of a subdivision DP (Deposited Plan) or SP (Strata Plan) is received and undertook a comprehensive review of uncharged service costs being applied to non-rateable properties.
- Since 2020 Council has divested 20 parcels of land plus an additional 4 transfers to community groups as part of asset rationalisation of surplus land parcels, with very few saleable parcels remaining.
- Council undertook a Community Satisfaction Survey in July 2024, with the last survey having been completed in 2016.



Image: Councillors in the Community poster

Progress Measures	Progress Measure	Baseline- March 2022	Desired Trend	Result- August 2024	Outcome	
	Operating performance ratio					
	Total continuing operating revenue excluding capital grants and contributions less operating expenses / Total continuing operating revenue excluding capital grants and contributions with >0.00% benchmark	2.89% Source: BVSC Audited Financials FY21	Maintain above benchmark	6.30% Source: BVSC Audited Financials FY23	✔	
	Percentage of Council revenue received from grants and contributions					
	Grants and contributions provided for both operating and capital purposes	46.2% Source: BVSC Audited Financials FY21	Stable or increase	46.3% Source: BVSC Audited Financials FY23	✔	
	Community satisfaction with involvement in Council decision making					
	Percentage of respondents who have a medium or high satisfaction in enabling the community to be involved in local decisions	66% Source: 2016 Council Community Survey	Increase	The 2024 Community Satisfaction did not pose the same question so it is difficult to directly compare. Source: 2024 Council Community Survey	■	

Progress Measures	Progress Measure	Baseline- March 2022	Desired Trend	Result- August 2024	Outcome
	Community satisfaction with Council’s overall performance				
	Overall satisfaction with Bega Valley Shire Council	55% Source: 2016 Council Community Survey	Increase	41% Source: 2024 Council Community Survey	
	Canberra Region Joint Organisation Initiatives				
	Number of cost saving and efficiency initiatives implemented through membership of the Canberra Region Joint Organisation of Councils	2 initiatives Source: Council data	Completion	Regional Community Strategic Plan, Resilience Blueprint, Women in Planning, Regional Waste and Resource Recovery program, Disaster Risk Reduction Source: Council data	
	Having a say and being heard index				
	The extent to which people felt they could have a say in their community, and that they would be heard	Bega Valley 4.7 (Regional NSW 4.4) Source: 2020 NSW Regional Wellbeing Survey, University of Canberra	Increase	Bega Valley 3.7 (Regional NSW 4.2) Source: 2023 NSW Regional Wellbeing Survey, University of Canberra	

Resourcing Strategy

Bega Valley Shire Council's Resourcing Strategy supports the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) 2042. Where the CSP provides a vehicle for expressing long-term community aspirations, the Resourcing Strategy details how Council can help achieve these in terms of time, money, assets and people. The Resourcing Strategy is comprised of 4 key documents, the Long Term Financial Plan, the Strategic Asset Management



LONG TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

The Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) is a 10-year financial planning document that is formulated using estimates and assumptions to project the future revenue and expenditure required by Council to deliver the services, projects and programs expected by the community. In doing so, it considers the resources that impact Council's ability to fund its services and capital works whilst remaining financially sustainable.

During the last term of Council multiple iterations of the LTFP were developed and adopted. In June 2022 an LTFP was adopted that outlined 3 scenarios; decline, maintain and improve with the improve scenario outlining a 40% increase in general rates. Considering ongoing cost escalation, rapidly rising inflation and further revaluation of assets, the LTFP was updated and included 5 scenarios. These scenarios informed the community engagement that was undertaken on the Assets and Services Special Rate Variation (SRV). The LTFP that was adopted in February 2023 included 5 scenarios; Option A- 90% SRV in 2024, Option B- 45% SRV in 2024 and 37.2% SRV in 2025, Option C- 43% SRV in 2023, Option D- No SRV, Option E- 24% SRV in 2024 and 19.6% SRV in 2025. Option E was supported by Council and formed the basis of the Assets and Services SRV application that was submitted to IPART in February 2023.

In June 2023 another version of the LTFP was adopted returning to 3 scenarios. Option A- Financial sustainability continued to model the need for a 90% rate increase. Option B modelled the approved Assets and Services SRV and Option C modelled a rate peg only increase. The LTFP was reviewed again as part of the development of the 2023-24 budget and in June 2024 a revised version of the LTFP was adopted. It continues to model 3 scenarios and demonstrates the gap in revenue that we are facing despite the recent approval of the two-year Assets and Services SRV. Without further significant asset renewal intervention, the quality of assets and the services they support, will continue to decline across key service areas of Council. The LTFP will continue to be reviewed and updated annually as part of the budget development process.



STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN

Council manages and maintains more than \$1.9 billion of assets, which enable us to provide services to our community. These assets include roads, drainage, pathways, water and sewer infrastructure, community facilities, parks and recreational facilities, administration buildings, cemeteries, works depots, plant and vehicle fleet and the Merimbula Airport. The level of service delivered by these assets is largely determined by the way they are maintained and operated within Council's available resources. The Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP) sets out the broad framework for undertaking structured and coordinated management of Council's assets in accordance with Council's Asset Management Policy.

Considered in conjunction with the Long Term Financial Plan, the SAMP lays bare the available funding under Council's existing revenue compared to the costs of providing levels of service currently

adopted to meet the communities current and future demand.

Supporting the SAMP are detailed Asset Management Plans (AMP's) for each asset class, which are living documents that are continually updated and refined. Our AMP's inform our capital works program. Over this last term of Council \$188m was invested in capital projects, in addition to our annual operating and maintenance budgets that keep our assets functional.

The SAMP 2022-25 was originally adopted in June 2022. It was updated in February 2023 and readopted to support Councils SRV application. Further updates have been made to the SAMP to reflect revised modelling in the LTFP 2023-32, asset revaluation work undertaken, and current replacement costs revised to reflect the FY23 Audited Financials.

The SAMP includes an improvement plan and lists a range of actions. Council has a cross-organisational Asset Management Group that meets on a bi-monthly basis to progress actions in the improvement plan. The implementation of Assetic, an asset management information system has been a key achievement, providing a centralised asset register and maintenance system.



DIGITAL STRATEGY

The Digital Strategy launched Councils Digital Transformation journey. One of the biggest risk areas identified when the Strategy was adopted in 2022 was legacy technology. Many of our corporate systems were entering the end of their supportable life increasing Councils risks associated with data and system confidentiality, integrity and availability.

Taking influence from the emergence of digital government, the Strategy committed to delivering improvements to technology and digital asset utilisation to achieve internal efficiencies and improve customer experience. Council has progressed major system upgrades in our corporate Geographical Information System (ESRI), our Enterprise Resource Platform and Document Management System (CIVICA Altitude and Content Manager), our Corporate Asset Management system (Assetic), improved corporate IT procurement guidelines, initiated a Microsoft

utilisation program including improved staff mobility, implemented Payble for online payments, established a mandated Data Breach Policy (which was tested with an incident), progressed towards Essential 8 Maturity (Cyber Security improvement) and continued advocacy for improved telecommunications.

The Strategy has given a common understanding of the strategic priorities for IT investment, with supporting funding outlined in Councils LTFP. It has highlighted the importance of strong IT foundations to support organisational growth, sustainability and resilience. The Strategy has given voice to issues of data access and management and the threat of Cyber Security.

The Digital Strategy will be revised and will focus largely on the same concepts and commitments, continuing the program of work underway and leveraging this further to explore improved IT Service Management providing governance and assurance over big ticket items Cyber Security, Data as an Asset and Customer facing digital services. Continued IT investment will be crucial to our success.



WORKFORCE STRATEGY

The Workforce Strategy considers the people, capabilities, experience and expertise required to implement Councils plans and deliver services to our community. The Strategy integrates principles of human resource management, strategic workforce planning and capability building. It includes an action plan, with progress made in delivering on many of those actions as outlined below.

In 2022, Council updated its performance management system (ELMO) to coordinate employee onboarding, training, and annual staff reviews. The system is based on a competency-based skills library to measure skills, experience, and competencies required by staff at all levels of the organisation. Council also implemented a Learning Management System (LMS) to support the delivery of training to staff. The LMS provides an online learning platform where short online learning courses can be provided to staff. Council uses its LMS to induct and onboard its

new employees. In March 2024, Council commenced implementation of a new electronic timesheet system (ElementTime).

Council's home-based work procedures, initially adopted in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, have been retained with eligible staff able to request work from home. This approach has proved to be a positive attraction and retention tool. Council has continued to implement its staff wellbeing program which consists of seasonal influenza vaccinations, spirometry testing, audiometric testing, skin Cancer checks and our Employee Assistance Program. In February 2024, Council reviewed and updated its employee reward and recognition procedures. It also reviewed its recruitment and selection procedures.

Council implemented its mentoring program in March 2023 with a second cohort commencing in June 2024. The initial intake included 46 participants ranging from the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), directors, managers, right through to some of our civil construction trainees. The program offers a collaborative and mutual beneficial partnership between mentors and mentees and has supported the professional development of all participants. In 2023, 14 Council staff participated in a program led by the Canberra Region Joint Organisation and funded by NSW Department of Planning for Women in Planning.

Council staff work closely with careers advisors from Eden Marine High School, Lumen Christi Catholic College, the South Coast Anglican College, and Bega High School to provide work experience, work placement, and school-based traineeships to students in years 10 through 12. We are also considered a key

stakeholder in providing support to career services with the University of Wollongong Bega Campus. Council participated in the annual careers expo coordinated by the Department of Education. This is an opportunity for students to have access to tools, resources and people when considering career paths in local government.

Council completes an annual assessment process where it is required to report on its work health and safety practices. The assessment is submitted to StateCover, Council's WHS and workers compensation insurers. Depending on the outcome of the assessment, Council may qualify for an incentive payment to be utilised for future safety initiatives. In 2023, Council qualified for the maximum incentive payment which was used to train all supervisors (96) in managing psychological safety in the workplace, to provide training to front line staff and a wellness reimbursement initiative.

Council continued to work in collaboration with key stakeholders to further develop its diversity and inclusion strategies. As of July 2024, a formalised diversity and inclusion plan is in draft form and will include a broader perspective to diversity and inclusion by including education and awareness about gender diversity, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and people with disability.

Capital Projects

Council spent over \$188m on capital projects across the last 3 financial years including the extensive work undertaken as part of our Disaster Recovery program. We are continuing to invest in our assets and have delivered several significant capital projects along with ongoing upgrade and renewals. We maintain a 10-year capital works program, supported by our asset management plans, to prioritise the allocation of limited funds to capital projects. Much of our larger projects have relied on State and Federal Government grant funding.

Description	Total
Council Administration Buildings, Pound, Planning Services, Saleyards	729,610
Regional Gallery- South East Centre for Contemporary Art	4,376,675
Bridges	16,264,679
Cemeteries	60,623
Civic Centre	34,310
Community Halls	4,243,037
Council Depots	61,871
Drainage	1,122,305
Childrens Services	65,290
Fire and Emergency Services and Emergency Response	741,964
Fleet	6,713,163
Footpaths and Cycleways	1,924,377
Library Services	1,001,665
Merimbula Airport	17,659,120
Parks and Gardens	4,504,296
Public Amenities	712,239
Roads	55,116,304
Sporting Grounds and Facilities	8,518,857
Swimming Pools	561,025
Town Centre Carparks	669,212
Wharves, Jetties and Boatramps	10,247,889
Waste Services	4,918,925
Project Development Services	1,387,880
Water Supplies	31,784,236
Sewer Services	15,457,617
	188,877,169

Conclusion

This State of the Shire report demonstrates the amazing breadth and quality of the activities undertaken by Council to progress our communities vision. However, as the performance measures show there are some trends that need greater collaborative action between Council, the community and other levels of government to ensure we change our current trajectory.

This document is presented to the new Council elected in September 2024 and provides a reflection of Councils progress during the previous term. Understanding previous achievements and challenges helps to guide the development of the next Delivery Program that will outline the priorities of Council over the next 4 years from 2025-2029.

The Community Strategic Plan 2042 has recently been reviewed and updated with community engagement undertaken in February and March 2024. The revised CSP 2042 will be provided to the newly elected Council in November 2024 before being provided to the community for review and feedback.

REFERENCES

Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021 Census
Regional Wellbeing Survey, University of Canberra,
2023
NSW Population Health Survey, Centre for
Epidemiology and Evidence, NSW Ministry of Health
Tourism Research Australia
National Institute of Economic and Industry Research
NSW Department of Planning, Industry and
Environment
Bega Valley Shire Community Survey 2016
Bega Valley Community Satisfaction Survey 2024
NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research
SpendMapp by Geografia
Australian Early Development Census
Electoral Commission of NSW
State Heritage Register
Port Authority NSW



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