

**10.9 Community Strategic Plan - 2017 to 2027**

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**10.9 Community Strategic Plan - 2017 to 2027**

**Delivery Program** Governance

**Objective** To adopt the Community Strategic Plan 2017 to 2027.

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**Background**

The Office of Local Government's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework (the IPR Framework) has a number of steps that a council must follow after an election in respect to corporate documents that support the IPR Framework.

Some of the key steps listed in the Local Government Act are:

- A council must review the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) before 30 June following the election (section 402). The endorsed CSP must be exhibited for 28 days for public comment before formal adoption.
- A council must establish a Delivery Program after each ordinary election to cover the principal activities of the four year period commencing on 1 July following the election (section 404)
- A council must have an adopted Operational Plan each year, detailing the activities to be engaged in by the council, as part of the implementation of the Delivery Program, for that year (section 405).

The CSP was reported to the March 2017 Finance Committee meeting, and was subsequently placed on exhibition. This report addresses the submissions received and seeks formal adoption of the Community Strategic Plan 2017 to 2027.

**Key Issues**

- Feedback from the exhibition process
- Intention of the CSP
- Compliance with the *Local Government Act 1993*

**Information**

A briefing held with Councillors in November 2016 outlined the IPR Framework, which includes the Community Strategic Plan (CSP), Delivery Program and Operational Plan. These documents are essential as they advise the community how Council intends to, or has, allocated its resources.

Under the IPR Framework Council must have an adopted CSP, Delivery Program and Operational Plan in place by 30 June 2017.

## 10.9 Community Strategic Plan - 2017 to 2027

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The CSP is a very broad document that identifies the main aspirations and future vision of the community.

It outlines four agreed key directions that we will follow to deliver the future aspirations to the community. These themes are a Connected Community (Social), Prosperous Economy (Economic), Health Environment (Environment) and Engaged Leadership (Governance).

These themes are used throughout the CSP and they have been applied in preparing the Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

The final phase of the process is the consideration of the submissions received during the exhibition period.

Although limited in number, the submissions received were extensive and highlighted that the draft CSP had been studied closely. Copies of all the submissions are attached to this report.

The major submission was from the Northern NSW Local Health District (NNLHD). This submission generally supports the CSP and the Health Service acknowledges it needs to consider how it will meet the challenge of providing services to the increasing obesity rates and healthy eating initiatives in the Ballina Shire.

The NNLHD reviewed the CSP using the NSW Government's 'Healthy Urban Development Checklist'. Key considerations from this review are recommended to be incorporated in the Community Strategic Plan with particular reference to including additional detail in the *Measuring Our Progress* section (pages 28 to 31).

There has also been feedback from a number of Council staff in respect to the document and changes recommended on all the feedback received are as follows (the CSP attached to this report is the document as exhibited).

Page 6 – Slightly amend the community's vision to a more streamlined version which now reads:

*The Ballina Shire is safe, with a connected community, a healthy environment and a thriving economy.*

Page 22 – Amend CC3.3 to read:

*Support improved health outcomes by providing equitable access to **sporting, recreational** and community facilities.*

Page 22 – Additional *Relevant Council Documents* including: Captain Cook Park Masterplan, Pop Denison Park Masterplan, Companion Animals Management Plan, Emergency Management Plan, Playground Upgrade and Renewal Plan, Disability and Inclusion Action Plan

Page 23 - Additional *Relevant Council Documents* including: Ballina Marina Masterplan, Ballina Shire Economic Development Strategy, Regional Boating Strategy

Page 24 - Additional *Relevant Council Documents* including: Annual Procurement Plan, Fleet Procurement Plan

Page 25 - Additional *Relevant Council Documents* including: East Ballina Cemetery Masterplan, Section 94 and 64 plans, Urban Storm water Management Plan, Local Growth Management Strategy, Ballina Major Regional Centre Strategy, Killen and Tosha Falls Management Plans, Local Environmental Plan.

Page 28 – Connected Community Measures additional items:

- Improve visitation to our Community Facilities

Page 30 – Engaged Leadership Measures additional items:

- Customer requests responded within allocated timeframe
- Improve revenue generated from commercial property

### **Sustainability Considerations**

- **Environment**

Environmental, social and economic factors represent a key part of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework.

The four agreed directions in the CSP are based on the quadruple bottom line.

- **Social**

As above

- **Economic**

As above

### **Legal / Resource / Financial Implications**

Council is required to adopt a new CSP by 30 June 2017 to ensure it complies with the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework from the Office of Local Government.

### **Consultation**

Consultation undertaken to date in preparing the CSP, which is included as an attachment to this report, includes the following:

- Community Satisfaction Survey undertaken in August 2016 (500 people)
- Ward Committees (51 community organisations)
- Youth Forum undertaken January 2017 (8 people)
- Civic Panel undertaken January 2017 (5 people)
- Community Strategic Plan survey December 2016 (105 respondents)
- Feedback sought via Community Connect (21,000 copies distributed)
- Councillor feedback from the briefings held to date
- Existing strategies and plans
- Exhibition of the draft CSP from March to April 2017
- Community survey open during the exhibition period
- Implementation of a corporate Facebook page with CSP posts

### Options

The options are to adopt the CSP, as amended as per this report, or to make further changes.

A number of changes have been recommended within this report and it is difficult to list all of these in the final recommendation. The changes recommended are largely fine tuning the document based on the feedback received and on this basis it is recommended that Council adopt the document, as exhibited, subject to the changes identified within this report.

If there any are other particular changes or improvements that Councillors would like to see implemented, or that may have been missed from the submissions provided, they should be added to the recommendation.

### RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopts the Community Strategic Plan, as attached and exhibited, subject to the additional changes outlined within this report.

### Attachment(s)

1. Draft Ballina Shire Community Strategic Plan 2017 to 2027 (Under separate cover)
2. Submission to CSP - Alstonville Agricultural Society
3. Submission to CSP - Ballina Heights Residences Action Group (BHRAG)
4. Submission to CSP - NSW Health Northern NSW Local Health District

## **10.10 Delivery Program and Operational Plan - Adoption**

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### **10.10 Delivery Program and Operational Plan - Adoption**

**Delivery Program** Governance

**Objective** To report on submissions received in response to the exhibition of the draft Delivery Program and Operational Plan and to adopt the documents inclusive of any amendments.

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#### **Background**

The draft Delivery Program (2017/18 to 2020/21) and Operational Plan (2017/18) have been placed on public exhibition, with two public meetings held as part of the exhibition process. It is now incumbent upon Council to adopt the documents prior to 30 June 2017, subject to any matters arising during the exhibition period.

The draft Delivery Program and Operational (including the supporting documents such as the Fees and Charges, Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP), LTFP (Overview) and the Workforce Plan) were placed on exhibition following a series of Finance Committee meetings during March and April.

As the documents are extensive they have not been reproduced for this report. Copies of the documents, as exhibited, are available on Council's website. Additional hard copies can be obtained from Council if needed. Final copies of the documents will be reproduced in full once adopted.

#### **Key Issues**

- Contents of submissions
- Additional amendments

#### **Information**

This report has been dissected into two main components being:

- A. Submissions to the draft Delivery Program / Operational Plan and details of the two public meetings held during June.
- B. Further amendments to the draft documents based on updated information.

#### **A. Submissions**

The submissions can be categorised under three main headings:

1. Submissions for funding assistance in response to Council's donations programs (i.e. general donations, public hall capital works, sporting group facilities)
2. Submissions to fees and charges
3. Submissions for works and services

## 10.10 Delivery Program and Operational Plan - Adoption

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### 1. Submissions for Funding Assistance

The draft budget includes the following allocations for funding assistance / donations:

<b>Donation Description</b>	<b>Budget (\$)</b>
1. Donations – Community Groups	66,000
2. Capital Works Assistance for Community Halls	41,000
3. Capital Works Assistance for Sporting Groups	20,000
4. Richmond Room – Donation for Chair Set Up	5,200
5. Donations - Rates and Charges for Community Facilities	32,000
6. Assistance with Council Fees - Community Groups	3,000
7. Southern Cross University – Scholarship	10,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>177,200</b>

All of these items, excluding the Southern Cross Scholarship and Richmond Rooms, are supported by Council policies.

The submissions received relate to items 1 to 3, where Council called for applications for funding under these policies.

The Council policies state that to allocate these monies a working party will be formed, consisting of at least one Councillor from each ward plus the Mayor, to provide recommendations on the allocation of the monies to the July Ordinary meeting.

Even though only one Councillor from each ward is often appointed, all Councillors are entitled to attend the meeting where a review of the applications is undertaken.

This process has worked well for many years in determining a preferred allocation of the funding available as the applications are always in excess of the available funds.

Details of the applications received are summarised in the next two tables.

Applicants are required to complete a standard form that seeks to provide Councillors with consistent information.

As part of the exhibition process Council also writes to all the Public Hall Committees and Sporting Groups advising that there is funding available under our halls and sporting groups assistance programs.

### **General Donations – Community Groups**

Table one outlines the submissions received for general donations assistance.

Council has already allocated \$5,000 to the Ballina Riverside Carols as per resolution 241116/30.

**Table One: Submissions for Funding Assistance**

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Ref	Organisation / Person	Project / Activity	\$
1	Ballina Lions Club	Fundraising for various organisations	1,000
2	Northern Rivers Branch Ulysses Motorcycle Club	Traffic control for the 2017 Toy Run	800
3	Ballina RSL Sub Branch	Council rates for RSL Youth Club 5 Piper Drive, Ballina	3,968
4	Ballina Jet Boat Surf Rescue	Insurance and survey costs for rescue vehicles	6,000
5	Ballina Jet Boat Surf Rescue	Consumables for rescue vehicles	3,000
6	Northern Rivers Womens Bowling Association Inc	Operational costs towards Lawn Bowls Carnival October 2017	1,000
7	Ballina Breast Cancer Support Group	Room hire at Kentwell Community Centre	480
8	Lennox Head National Surfing Reserve Assoc Inc	Costs associated with producing a publication regarding Ballina and Lennox Head surfing history to coincide with State Government declaration of the reserve	1,000
9	Australian Native Orchid Society FNC NSW Inc	Annual exhibition held at Ballina Fair costs	490
10	Our Kids	Costs associated with running Our Kids Day Out 2018	5,000
11	Ballina Fox Street Preschool	Costs towards bringing 'Miss Billie Walker' to the preschool	4,000
12	Wollongbar Community Preschool	Upgrade of playground	5,000
13	United Hospitals Auxiliary Ballina Branch	Hire of a venue for the annual craft show and associated advertising costs	1,843
14	Hope Haven Women's Refuge	Purchase of ingredients and preparation of meals for the refuge	1,000
15	Ballina High Schools' Historical Society	Costs associated with archiving and preserving memorabilia	968
16	1 <sup>st</sup> Ballina Scout Group	Costs associated with training leaders	1,500
17	Alstonville Orchid Society Inc	Annual hall hire for shows and meetings	400
18	Ballina Region for Refugees Inc	Public Liability Insurances	2,000
19	Westpac Rescue Helicopter	Lennox Community Markets hall hire and cleaning and rubbish removal	6,170
20	Ballina and District Ministers Assoc	Ballina Riverside Carols	5,000
21	Lions Club of Lennox Head	Costs associated with holding fundraising BBQs for charities	1,724
22	Alstonville Plateau Historical Society	Requesting Council to pay Rates for Crawford House, Alstonville	3,083
23	Michael O'Connor	Repair and reseal car parking area at Empire Vale Post Office	5,000
24	TS Lismore Naval Cadets Unit Support Committee	Requesting Council to pay Rates and Charges (includes rates, services and consumption charges) for Endeavour Close, Ballina	9,381
<b>Total Requests</b>			<b>69,807</b>

### Donations - Capital Works for Community Halls

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The policy states that the maximum donation shall be \$10,000 per hall and that the Council donation needs to be matched either on a dollar for dollar basis or 'in-kind'.

**Table Two: Submissions for Community Halls Assistance**

Ref	Organisation	Project / Activity	Project Value (\$)	Amount Requested (\$)
1	Pearces Creek Public Hall inc	Upgrade and repair toilet facilities to provide better access	6,123	6,123
2	Ballina Shire Concert Band for Wigmore Hall	Improve acoustics by sound proofing the ceiling and walls in the band area.	6,838	5,838
3	Wardell and District War Memorial Hall	Internal painting of the hall.	10,000	7,000
4	Rous Mill and District Memorial Hall Inc	New gutter guard for roof to improve quality of water.	5,440	2,720
<b>Total</b>				<b>21,681</b>

### **Donations - Capital Works for Community Sporting Groups**

In July 2016 Council adopted a new 'Donations – Capital Works Assistance for Community Sporting Groups' policy to assist sporting groups with their various buildings / facilities.

Direct correspondence was also sent to the various sporting groups inviting them to apply for funds. As this is a new program the closing date for applications has been extended to 7 July 2017 as there has been limited response to date.

All applications received will be reported to the working party.

Copies of all the submissions for Tables One and Two have not been included with this report.

These submissions will be distributed to all Councillors as part of the working party process.

Copies are available from Council if needed.

### **2. Submissions Fees and Charges**

The following submission is included as an attachment to this report.

#### **Ms L Truman – Trulea Fit**

Ms Truman requests review and amendment to the fees and charges for low impact use of Council land (for group fitness classes). Currently low impact use is defined as 1-2 clients. Ms Truman requests that the low impact category be amended to include small group fitness classes (of up to around 10 clients).



## 10.10 Delivery Program and Operational Plan - Adoption

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### *Staff Comment:*

The licences and associated fee structure for personal trainers and group training is managed under Council's Commercial Activities on Public Land Policy. The fee structure was determined taking into account the nature of the activity, scale of its operation, use and impact on the reserve, and impact on the community - both beneficial and detrimental.

The current policy recognises the difference between personal training (1-2 clients) and group training (up to 20 clients maximum) and are identified as very low impact and medium impact, with associated fees per annum of \$130 and \$1,040 respectively.

The Commercial Activities on Public Land Policy is due for review in 2018, with a review from staff expected to commence early in the 2017/18 financial year.

It is recommended that Council consider the request for an additional smaller group (up to 10 clients maximum) training category under a broader review of the policy, and ensure that the policy remains contemporary and achieves best practice.

Council could deem it appropriate in the interim to assess and approve an interim category and fee (low impact, \$600 per annum) and adjust the policy accordingly based on this request.

### **3. Submissions to Works and Services**

The following submissions are included as attachments to this report.

#### Wardell Progress Association

The Wardell Progress Association have expressed "general euphoria here in Wardell with the amount of capital works being undertaken and of course the near completion of the beautiful Boardwalk".

This is a very pleasing turnaround from last year, at which time the Association had noted a high level of disappointment at the level of capital works and distribution of resources to the Wardell area.

Whilst the Association have expressed their appreciation for works completed in the current financial year, the following specific works have been noted for inclusion or prioritisation within the 2017/18 to 2020/21 Delivery Program:

- Byron Street, Wardell – Road reconstruction. This section of road has been included in the Delivery Program for 2020/21. It is requested that this road be given a higher priority and the works be brought forward.
- River Street (from Byron Street to the Bridge underpass) – Road reconstruction. This section of road adjoins the works noted above and is badly in need of repair, however is not listed in the four year Delivery Program. It is requested that this road be given a higher priority and be included in the Delivery Program.

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- Wilson Street – Drain. This is noted as a topic of continual complaint letters to Council and is requested to be included in the Delivery Program.
- Carlisle Street Footpath and Bridge Drive Footpath. It is requested that these works are completed whilst Council's construction team is currently in Wardell.

### *Staff Comment re Byron and River Streets:*

Byron Street, Wardell is currently listed for reconstruction in year four (2020/21) and comprises a 200m length of Byron Street / River Street from near Raglan Street to the recently sealed section of River Street, Wardell.

This particular road project and the priority ranking system for the road reconstruction delivery program were discussed at the March 2017 Finance Committee meeting.

This was subsequently followed-up with more information about the ranking system process in the 17 March 2017 Councillor Bulletin, which also included a summary of how Byron Street, Wardell was positioned within the Delivery Program.

The ranking system process applies a consistent assessment approach, and is a technically based formulation for the Delivery Program priority ranking of road reconstruction projects.

The Councillor Bulletin item from 17 March 2017 is attached to again respond to this enquiry. No change is recommended based on that Councillor Bulletin.

### *Staff Comment re Wilson Street Drain:*

Council has previously received notification about this drain, and has undertaken maintenance at the culvert locations where access is available.

Also, this particular drainage system has been placed on the design program for further investigation and assessment.

This investigation will assist to determine if any upgrade is required, and in particular of any requirement for open drain profiles through to the Richmond River.

Environmental constraints will likely be a significant consideration during this process.

At this stage resources have allowed for survey to be completed and the investigation is yet to commence.

This investigation is being completed when resources are available and this is the recommendation of staff from an overall drainage network perspective.

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To respond to the Wardell Progress Association it is recommended that Council include the investigation as a task within the Operational Plan and staff will respond with update reporting in future quarterly reviews on progress. This will include advice in regards to the need for any financial resources or deferral in other investigation work to support this priority, if in the end that is required.

### *Staff Comment re Carlisle Street Footpath and Bridge Drive Footpath:*

Council staff are currently working on the footpath connections along Bridge Drive, to connect the boardwalk to the jetty, and also to connect the boardwalk to Cedar Street. This work will continue until completion.

The footpath along Carlisle Street is complete from Bath Street through to the bus shelter, except for a single driveway location. It is proposed to complete the driveway location following the Bridge Drive works, subject to the owner's co-operation on this occasion.

### Mr Stead – Reconstruction of Riverbank Road Pimlico

Mr Stead advises that (segment 50) Riverbank Road is in a worse state than ever. This is further to Mr Stead's submission to the Delivery Program and Operational Plan for 2016/17, wherein the works were at that time scheduled for 2017/18.

### *Staff Comment:*

This section of road is included in the Delivery Plan with estimated works to be completed across 2018/19 and 2019/20. Council is still awaiting Federal Government advice in respect to funding promised at the 2016 Federal election that will allow Council to undertake works on another segment of Riverbank Road.

### Ms M & Mr B Wilcox - Lennox Head Village Renewal and Williams Reserve

Ms M & Mr B Wilcox have expressed concern with:

- Lack of acknowledgement of the Lennox Head Main Street upgrade
- No plan of management for Williams Reserve and
- Ensuring works not completed in 2016/17 are completed.

For the Lennox Head Village Renewal, these works are noted as urgent with particular concern over the growing population, traffic and parking issues and pedestrian safety.

Williams Reserve was noted as in serious decline and requiring a POM, with a proposal that the \$26,000 unexpended funds from the Main Street Upgrade concept design be reallocated to a Williams Reserve POM.

The incomplete works specifically enquired on were a) Park Lane traffic refuge b) Megan Crescent and Dodge Lane stormwater c) Allens Parade footpath and d) request over centre line marking for Montwood Drive.

### *Staff Comment re Lennox Head Village Renewal:*

Refer below

## 10.10 Delivery Program and Operational Plan - Adoption

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*Staff Comment re Williams Reserve:*

Refer below

*Staff Comment re works not completed:*

- (a) The Park Lane pedestrian refuge project is being deferred. This has been reported to Council at the last two quarterly Capital Expenditure reviews where design investigations have shown inadequate space for a refuge.

The future Lennox Head main street project will consider pedestrian access (and vehicle movement) in an overall design process.

At the March 2017 Capital Expenditure review the Park Lane budget was re-allocated to the Gibbon Street footpath project to partly cover the extra cost of extending the length of the Gibbon Street footpath.

- (b) The Megan Crescent and Dodge Lane project will continue beyond the current year. The immediate works comprise the extension of the pipe system at the catchment outlet (in conjunction with the waste water pump station reconstruction) and a detailed hydraulic assessment is in the design program to determine the extent of any further works.
- (c) The Allens Parade footpath project is complete. The scope of work for this project, and adopted in the current PAMP, comprises the connection of the existing Allens Parade path (off Ballina Street) with the coastal pathway at Lions Park, via the public walkway.
- (d) Regarding the request for road centreline marking it is not a traffic engineering practice to place centreline marking on urban residential roads. Normal low speed traffic manoeuvring occurs on these roads such as dealing with parked vehicles and passing vehicles, without centreline marking.

### Ms Shaun Eastment – Vice President Lennox Head Residents Association – Lennox Head Village Renewal

Ms Eastment notes disappointment in the lack of evidence for any commitment to fund and carry out the Lennox Head Town Enhancement Program.

Particularly noted are the need to proceed with community consultation, poor footpaths, hazards on the streets adjoining Ross Park, traffic and parking issues and the upcoming centenary.

*Staff Comment re Lennox Head Village Renewal:*

Refer below

### Ms Shaun Eastment – Lennox Head Village Renewal and Williams Reserve

Ms Eastment also submitted a separate submission in her own right.

Ms Eastment notes concern over the lack of mention of a Management Plan for Williams Reserve and the implementation of the Lennox Head Town Centre project.

## 10.10 Delivery Program and Operational Plan - Adoption

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Particularly noted are the upcoming centenary, poor footpaths, parking and traffic issues, pedestrian safety and need for improvement to open spaces and a request for community consultation to be commenced to allow this to proceed.

*Staff Comment re Lennox Head Village Renewal:*  
Refer below

*Staff Comment re Williams Reserve:*  
Refer below

### Debbie Smith – President Lennox Chamber of Commerce - Lennox Head Village Renewal

Ms Smith requests that consideration be given to funding of the Lennox Head Main Street Upgrade to allow this to proceed, rather than continue to be prioritised behind other projects.

*Staff Comment re Lennox Head Village Renewal:*  
Refer below

### Mr H Marley - Lennox Head Village Renewal

Mr Marley expresses disappointment that there has been no funding allocated for this project in the Delivery Plan and notes that Lennox is in need of many improvements, specifically noting a preference for this to be completed by the 100 year anniversary in 2022.

*Staff Comment re Lennox Head Village Renewal:*  
Refer below

### Ms B Thirkell - Lennox Head Village Renewal

Ms Thirkell expresses disappointment that there has been no funding allocated for this project in the Delivery Plan ahead of the 100 year anniversary and implores Council to reconsider prioritising this project.

*Staff Comment re Lennox Head Village Renewal:*  
Refer below

### Mr M Milner - Lennox Head Village Renewal and Williams Reserve

Mr Milner notes the continuing growth in Lennox Head and indicates traffic flow, car parking, footpath renewal, pedestrian crossings and improved open spaces as requiring consideration. Mr Milner also proposes that Williams Reserve could be better used as parkland and possibly shaded markets. Lastly, it is generally noted that the village requires upgrade prior to the 100 year anniversary.

*Staff Comment re Lennox Head Village Renewal:*  
Refer below

## 10.10 Delivery Program and Operational Plan - Adoption

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### *Staff Comment re Williams Reserve:*

The Williams Reserve Plan of Management has been prepared under the Crown Lands Act 1989 and endorsed by the Minister of Lands in 2007. The adopted land management objectives and reserve management provisions have been determined in accordance with the Act, and the identified management units of conservation, community and recreation remain contemporary.

From an overall Council perspective the expenditure of monies on the preparation of a new Plan of Management is difficult to justify over other priorities in the Delivery Program, and there is no funding allocated for that Reserve in the four year plan to implement any actions arising from such a plan.

### Mr B Pollard - Lennox Head Village Renewal

Mr Pollard expresses surprise that there is currently no funding for this project and notes that small businesses in the Lennox Village Centre will struggle and holiday makers will bypass Lennox Heads if these works are not completed urgently.

*Staff Comment re Lennox Head Village Renewal:*  
Refer below

### Ms F Jom - Lennox Head Village Renewal

Ms Jom requests Council to include funding to allow this project to proceed urgently. Specifically, Ms Jom notes pedestrian safety and the upcoming 100 year anniversary as her main reasons.

*Staff Comment re Lennox Head Village Renewal:*

This project is currently not included within the Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP).

A report was submitted to the 16 March 2017 Finance Committee meeting regarding the potential upgrade options for the Lennox Head Village Renewal.

This report suggested a preliminary cost estimate of \$5.5 million.

The majority of this budget is required for utility relocations and renewal, as well as the civil works associated with adjusting kerb levels and roadworks.

Due to the excavation and other work required to complete these renewals, and the expected changes in level and location of kerb for the entire length of the project, it is not practical or economic to develop the project in discrete segments or stages.

The only way a project of this nature can be funded is through loans or significant transfers from Council's property reserves.

## 10.10 Delivery Program and Operational Plan - Adoption

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The repayments on a loan of \$6m, over 15 years, at 4% (Council is currently able to access loans from NSW Treasury Corporation at approximately 3.7% as a Fit for the Future Council for asset renewal – this project would be classified as asset renewal) is approximately \$540,000.

An existing loan for the Ballina Town Centre works is repaid in full in 2018/19 freeing up funds of \$324,000. However the LTFP has this loan being replaced by a new loan for the completion of the Ballina Town Centre works being the remaining segment of River Street between Moon and Grant Streets. The repayments for that loan are estimated at \$308,000 so there is no real funding freed up for the Lennox Head Town Centre.

Council also has significant liabilities in the medium term in respect to works identified in the Roads Section 94 Plan being the four laning of River Street and the completion of Hutley Drive.

Both of these projects may require part loan funding as it is unlikely that the full amount of developer contributions required for the value of the projects will be collected by the time the projects are needed, based on traffic and population growth.

The practice followed with loan funding in the overall roads program is that where loans are needed, any net impact of loan repayments is offset by a reduction in the capital works program, to ensure that Council's cash financial position does not deteriorate.

However, at the same time, Council needs to minimise reducing the roads capital works program as that program is already under-funded based on the annual depreciation expense.

Council has already resolved to receive a report on deferring funding allocated to the Captain Cook Master Plan (\$750,000 in 2019/20 and \$2,100,000 in 2020/21) and the Ballina Town Entry Statement (\$800,000 in 2018/19) to examine funding other projects. The funds for these two projects are totally dependent on land sales so it is uncertain when and if those funds will be available.

Nevertheless it may be possible to reallocate part of these funds, combined with loan funds, to undertake the Lennox Head Village renewal.

The draft Delivery Program already has the following action for 2017/18 albeit there is no funding allocated in the LTFP:

Progress Lennox Head Town Centre enhancement plan	Progress made
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In response to the submissions the recommendation is to amend this item as follows in the Operational Plan for 2017/18:

Progress Lennox Head Town Centre Village Renewal and confirm funding strategy for preferred completion by December 2021	Progress made to confirm preferred design and funding strategy
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## **10.10 Delivery Program and Operational Plan - Adoption**

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The other real issue with this project is that there is still no agreed design and based on previous experiences the elected Council will need to make a firm decision on the preferred option as there will not be unanimous community support for either of the designs considered at the March 2017 Finance Committee meeting.

### Wollongbar Rugby Club - New Clubhouse

The Wollongbar Rugby Club submitted a proposal to Council in March 2017, requesting Council to partner with them in the construction of a multi sports club facility.

A representative from the Club has recently contacted Council staff again and have requested that this proposal be included as a submission to the Delivery Program.

#### *Staff Comment:*

The Wollongbar Rugby Club proposes to construct a clubhouse facility at the new Wollongbar Sports Fields.

The Club has secured some funds for this project, including a grant of \$500,000 from the Federal Government.

The Club has made a number of submissions to the Council requesting \$250,000 which is required to match proposed NSW Government grant opportunities.

The response from Council has been to advise the Club that the LTFP does not currently contemplate an allocation from Council to this project.

Clearly the provision of a club house at this location is desirable and would make an excellent addition to the new sports fields.

The Council has provided change rooms and amenities for the rugby field and further infrastructure was not possible for the sports fields project from the available funds.

The Council has many change rooms and toilet facilities at its sports fields which are in need of renewal or upgrade.

These projects are considered to be a higher priority for Council funds than supporting new club house facilities and no change is recommended to the existing LTFP.

### Scott Turner - Ballina Touch Bull Sharks - Saunders Oval Flood Lighting

Mr Turner notes the movement of the Saunders Oval Flood Lighting from the 2017/18 year to the 2018/19 as very disappointing, resulting in a large number of potential junior competitors being declined due to limited capacity and also possibly impacting on grant funding secured through NSW Sport and Recreation.

Request is made for Council to reconsider the timing of this project and include it in the 2017/18 year.



## 10.10 Delivery Program and Operational Plan - Adoption

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### *Staff Comment:*

Council considered a report to the April 2017 Finance Committee on alternative funding options needed to finalise the Wollongbar Sports Fields. The installation of sports field lighting at Saunders Oval remains a priority project however it has been deferred to 2018/19 to address that funding shortfall.

### **Public Meetings**

Council held two public meetings to outline the draft 2017/18 to 2020/2021 Delivery Program and 2017/18 Operational Plan.

The meetings were advertised in the local paper, on Council's website and via community access points. Brief descriptions of the meetings follow.

#### *Wardell Community Hall: 29 May 2017*

There were only four people in attendance excluding staff, Mayor Wright and Cr Cadwallader.

The attendees included two members of the Wardell and District Progress Association who noted that the low attendance was the result of a strong feeling of satisfaction amongst the Wardell community with the level of capital works completed in the current financial year, in particular with the boardwalk nearing completion.

A summary of discussion points is as follows:

- Boardwalk nearing completion

The design and look of the boardwalk is nearing completion and residents (and visitors alike) are appreciative of the beauty and functionality of this new community asset.

- Public Amenities

It was noted that the Delivery Plan included \$112,000 in 2019/20 for the rebuild of the public amenities adjacent to the Wardell tennis courts.

- Roads

A number of local roads were noted, including Byron Street, River Street, Raglan Street and Wilson Street. It was suggested to those present that a submission be made to Council regarding these matters. A submission was subsequently received from the Wardell and District Progress Association, as noted earlier.

- Drainage

Specific mention was made of the drain in Wilson Street. A submission was subsequently received from the Wardell and District Progress Association, as noted earlier.

## **10.10 Delivery Program and Operational Plan - Adoption**

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*Lennox Head Community and Cultural Centre: 30 May 2017*

There were 12 people in attendance excluding staff, Mayor Wright and Cr Cadwallader.

A summary of discussion points is as follows:

- **Hutley Drive**

Note there is \$17.2 million in the 2019/20 financial year to construct Hutley Drive. Discussion flowed around these works and the meeting was advised that the timing of the works will depend on growth rates and Section 94 road contribution collections.

This an indicative budget only and Council may well need to work with the developers in this locality to have this project delivered through the provision of in-kind works in lieu of future payment for Section 94 contributions.

- **Main Street Lennox**

The meeting was advised that the Draft Delivery Program includes no funding for the Lennox Town Centre. Several submissions have subsequently been received in relation to these works.

- **Williams Reserve**

It was noted generally that Williams Reserve required a new management plan

- **Tennis Courts**

There was some discussion of tennis courts. The meeting was advised that there are no current plans to build additional tennis courts within the shire.

### **B. Amendments to the Draft Delivery Program and Operational Plan**

#### **Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP - Budget)**

During the period that the draft Delivery Program and Operational Plan has been on exhibition numerous budgets have been adjusted and fine-tuned, particularly following the March 2017 Quarterly Financial Review.

Adjustments include:

#### ***Staff Resources***

The 2017/18 Workforce Plan was submitted to the April 2017 Finance Committee and the LTFP has been amended to reflect these changes.

### ***Plant Capital Expenditure for Rangers Vehicle***

The Development and Environmental Group has requested the purchase of an additional vehicle, with a one-off initial capital cost of \$25,000, plus annual running costs, for use by the rangers. This will improve productivity and timeliness as there is currently only two vehicles for four rangers plus a parking officer.

This purchase is being funded from internal reserves that have been generated from savings achieved in previous years by the Development and Environmental Health Group.

### **Fees and Charges**

#### ***Ferry Fees***

At the April 2017 Council meeting, Council resolved as follows:

*“That Council trial, for a period of 12 months, the introduction of a 50% pensioner/health care card holder discount for ferry season tickets by altering current ferry fees applicable to caravans and trailers to replace the current relevant fee and introduce two new fees. The first fee to be \$11.60 for vehicle and 1-axle trailer and the second fee to be \$17.40 for vehicle and 2-axle trailer and all caravans”.*

The draft Fees and Charges was updated and exhibited accordingly.

Following further analysis by staff there are a number of further considerations in applying this discount, namely:

- Council's Fees and Charges, as exhibited, include Ferry Season Tickets and also Ferry Quarterly Season Tickets. Clarification is required as to whether Quarterly Season Tickets are also subject to the pensioner/health care card holder discount.

If the discount were applied to annual season tickets only, this may cause financial disadvantage for some users who can only afford to purchase quarterly tickets. Therefore it is recommended it be applied to quarterly tickets.

- Ferry Season Tickets includes the subcategories of Motor Vehicles (under 3 tonnes carrying capacity), Motor Cycles and Agricultural Tractors. It is noted that Agricultural Tractors already receive a 50% discount on annual and quarterly tickets. Clarification is required as to whether all subcategories of Ferry Season Tickets are subject to the pensioner/health care card holder discount.

The recommendation is to apply it to Motor Cycles only as Agricultural Tractors represent a business use.

- Season Tickets are also available for Bicycles. Clarification is required as to whether Bicycle Season Tickets are also subject to the pensioner/health care card holder discount. The recommendation, for consistency, is to apply it to Bicycles.

## 10.10 Delivery Program and Operational Plan - Adoption

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- The eligibility of various cards needs to be clarified.

It is proposed that Council policy would extend availability of this discount to holders of the following:

- Commonwealth Seniors Health Card
- Health Care Card
- Ex-Carer Allowance (Child) Health Care Card
- Foster Child Health Care Card
- Low Income Health Care Card
- Department of Veteran Affairs' Health Card and
- Pensioner Concession Card

- Concession cards have expiry dates, for example some Health Care cards have a three month expiry.

It is proposed that Council policy would allow purchase based on the current (i.e. day of purchase) validity of the concession card, irrespective of whether the card's expiry date fell before or after the season end.

- It is recommended that purchase can only be made from Council's Customer Service at 40 Cherry Street, Ballina, with presentation of the pensioner/health care card together with Vehicle Registration papers in the same name/over details as the pensioner/health care card a requirement of purchase (not required for Bicycles).

### Other Matters

#### *Ordinary Rate Revenue*

Council needs to formally adopt the ordinary rates to be levied in the 2017/18 financial year. The rates in the dollar and base amounts in the following table reflect an increase of 4.9%, which is based on an approved (temporary) special variation application for 2017/18.

The application has been approved by IPART on the condition that this is a temporary (one year) increase only and the funds are applied in accordance with the application for asset renewal and healthy waterways programs.

#### **Rates in the Dollar and Base Amounts – 2017/18**

Rate Category	Rate in Dollar (cents in \$)	Base Amount (\$)	% Income from Base Amount
Residential	\$0.16583	491	49.8
Business	\$0.75581	491	14.6
Farmland	\$0.14128	491	32.4
Mining	\$0.75581	491	0.0

The recommendations that form part of this report include specific resolutions in respect to the making of the rates.

A recommendation is also included to make the various annual charges (i.e. waste, water etc) included in the fees and charges.

## **10.10 Delivery Program and Operational Plan - Adoption**

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### ***Application for Special Rate Variations for 2018/19 and 2019/2020***

The exhibited Delivery Program and the LTFP were prepared based on the presumption of permanent special rate variations of 4.9% in 2017/18, 5.9% in 2018/19 and 5.9% in 2019/20.

Subsequent to exhibition, IPART approved only a (temporary) increase of 4.9% for 2017/18, inclusive of a rate peg of 1.5% for 2017/18 (i.e. an increase of 3.4% over and above the rate peg).

In order to retain the 2017/18 4.9% as a permanent increase, as well as achieve the proposed additional 5.9% in 2018/19 and 2019/20 as per the current LTFP, Council will need to submit a further application to IPART.

To be consistent with the current LTFP, this submission will need to apply for a permanent increase to Council's rate income of 9.3% for 2018/19 (i.e. the 3.4% from 2017/18 plus the 5.9% for 2018/19) and 5.9% for 2019/20.

The basis for IPART's temporary approval, rather than for the full approval of the application for three year permanent increases, was due to shortcomings within the adopted Delivery Program and Operational Plan in that there was insufficient detail as to how the additional funds were to be utilised.

IPART provided feedback to Council management that the need and affordability considerations of the application were proven and that the public consultation process was considered more than sufficient.

From Council management's perspective, the shortcomings within the Delivery Program have subsequently been addressed, in that the detailed capital works programs are now provided for both scenarios (i.e. with and without the special rate variation).

Furthermore, the updated Delivery Program, inclusive of the two scenarios, has now been publicly exhibited and discussed as part of the recent public meetings held.

Council management has commenced discussions with IPART to determine minimum requirements in relation to a further special rate variation application for 2018/19 and 2019/20.

These preliminary discussions have indicated that whilst a further application must be a stand-alone document, information in relation to need and affordability of the rate rises can largely rely on resubmission of evidence provided in the initial application.

That is, it is expected that the community surveys already completed will provide sufficient evidence and there is currently no expectation that further surveys would be required.

Further discussions with IPART are expected to clarify requirements in relation to required community consultation. Of preliminary note by IPART is the need to ensure that the community is made aware of the two alternate scenarios, i.e. assumed rate peg rises of 2.5% versus permanent special rate variations of 9.3% for 2018/19 and 5.9% for 2019/20.

## 10.10 Delivery Program and Operational Plan - Adoption

A recommendation is included within this report to confirm Council's intention to submit a further application to IPART consistent with the current LTFFP. If this recommendation is not adopted, the LTFFP will require revision to exclude the additional income and expenditure.

The updated Delivery Program and Operational Plan, as well as including the works program also now includes the following actions:

Operational Plan Activity		Measures /Targets	17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	Responsibility
EL2.1g	Pursue compliance with the Fit for the Future Program	Improve our overall financial sustainability	X	X	X	X	Financial Services
EL2.1h	Apply for a permanent increase to Council's total rate income of 9.3% for 2018/19 and 5.9% for 2019/20 (cumulative 15.75%) with a rate peg assumed and included of 2.5%	Approval of application(s) by IPART	X	X	X		Financial Services

There has also been an entirely new page included in the Delivery Program, titled "Funding our Future". That page provides an overview of the reasons for Council applying for the additional rate revenue.

The Revenue Section of the Operational Plan also includes details on the special rate variation.

### ***Elizabeth Ann Brown Park Alstonville***

The March 2017 Ordinary meeting resolved that "*consideration of implementation of the masterplan for Elizabeth Ann Brown Park, with focus on the plinth*" be given in preparation of the Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

This project is currently not funded and not included within the Delivery Program.

A meeting was held with representatives for the Alstonville RSL Sub-Branch on 8 June 2017.

At the meeting it was expressed that the RSL's preference was for the marble tablets in the memorial at E.A. Brown Park to be returned to their original location in the Tintenbar Memorial Gates and a new memorial constructed in the park generally in accordance with the adopted master plan.

The reason for relocation of the existing plaques is to return them to their original location and to create a more inclusive memorial, similar to the one in Ballina using only the armed forces symbols.

## 10.10 Delivery Program and Operational Plan - Adoption

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Priority items for implementation of the master plan with a new memorial were inclusion of vandal proof power supply to the park and a sound system to improve communication on Memorial Day events.

Improvement in the display and maintenance of the memorial garden plaques is also required.

A detailed estimate to complete the master plan will be required but the RSL has proposed that they will be seeking grant funding for an estimated \$300,000 to have the master plan works detailed and carried out.

No change is recommended to the LTFP.

### ***Installation of BBQs***

The March 2017 Ordinary meeting resolved that “*consideration of installation of BBQs at Missingham Beach/Shaws Bay and any other appropriate sites*” be given in preparation of the Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

Investigation into the potential installation of BBQ facilities at Missingham Beach, Shaws Bay and any other appropriate public open space areas has been carried out with inclusion of Faulk’s Park at the request of Cr McCarthy.

The following items need to be considered in the investigation and development of an implementation program to ensure cost effective installation and ongoing sustainability of the assets:

- Demand and desirability of the location
- Availability of electricity and water services
- Proximity to public toilets
- Proximity to picnic settings
- Climate change and seasonal weather
- Access for maintenance and waste management services
- Relevant legislation
- Installation costs and annual maintenance costs.

In order to properly consider the proposed sites and equitable consideration for the installation of new BBQ facilities within Ballina Shire, a brief analysis of existing BBQ assets and the suitability of locations has been carried out using the above criteria.

The following analysis could be further developed into a guideline for the ongoing delivery of BBQs.

In developing program for BBQ facilities at the proposed locations, existing programs have also been taken into consideration.

A park classification system has already been established for the shire in relation to open space parks with playground facilities.

The classification system analysed park size, location, catchment population and results from asset inspections to determine the best management and upgrade program for playgrounds.

## 10.10 Delivery Program and Operational Plan - Adoption

This classification system can be utilised to further examine suitable sites for BBQ facilities, giving additional consideration to foreshore parks as desired locations, usage of parks as destination features for tourism, average visitation times and existing infrastructure.

The following table has been developed to establish levels of embellishment in parks relevant to the installation of public BBQ facilities to help identify suitable locations based on existing infrastructure.

### Recreation Park Embellishments

Embellishment	Local Parks	District Parks	Regional Parks	Foreshore Parks (≥5000m <sup>2</sup> )	Sports Grounds
Barbeques	By exception	1	2	1	By exception
Bins	1	2	4	2	As required by waste management strategy
Drinking fountains	0	1	2	1	1
Electrical switchbox	0	1	2	1	1
Maintenance taps	1	1	2	1	1
Picnic nodes	By exception	1	2	1	As required
Toilet blocks	By exception	1	1	1	1

In addition to identifying suitable levels of embellishment based on the status of parks, specific requirements need to be considered in the location and siting of BBQs. Barbeque facilities should:

- comply with relevant legislation and standards
- be made from robust materials that are vandal and corrosion resistant
- be designed to bolt to the finished surface
- have food grade low maintenance finishes
- include in-built safety features
- contain a secured, weather-proof power outlet
- include a tap
- have a wheelie bin and stand located nearby, but not within 5m of the BBQ, and preferably downwind of it
- be located in proximity to picnic units, preferably in a downwind location;
- be located in proximity to public amenities, but not within 10m
- be positioned so that maintenance doors and buttons are located opposite to the water and prevailing conditions in foreshore parks
- be positioned to avoid exposure to wind and
- be installed on a reinforced concrete slab with falls to ensure all surfaces are free draining. Provide a 10 millimetre radius trowel finish to the slab edge. The slab must have a minimum Class W slip resistance in conformance with AS/NZS 4586.

Based on the criteria outlined the proposed potential sites of Missingham Beach/Shaw's Bay and Faulk's Reserve along with other prominent open space sites are identified as being suitable for potential installation of new BBQ facilities.



## 10.10 Delivery Program and Operational Plan - Adoption

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Based on this analysis the sites within the shire that meet the criteria, subject to further detailed site investigation are:

- Faulks Reserve
- Riverview Park
- Captain Cook Memorial Park
- Missingham Beach/Shaw's Bay - Pioneer Memorial Park
- Pop Denison Park (1 existing BBQ)
- Ross Park and
- Geoff Watt Oval

The cost of installing and maintaining BBQs has many variables. Purchase price, site conditions, access and location, availability of services for electricity, water connection and contractor rates.

Using current rates, assumptions regarding site conditions and the availability of required services; the average installation of a two plate BBQ on a reinforced concrete slab is estimated at approximately \$16,750 or for a single plate BBQ approximately \$10,500. If a shelter is required with the installation, an additional cost of approximately \$11,500 may be required, and an additional \$3,000 if lighting is also required.

One of the greatest variables that can increase the cost of installation is the availability of suitable electrical supply. If there is no existing suitable supply within proximity of the proposed BBQ site, upgrade of the service may cost upward from \$20,000 to establish. Further investigation of the proposed sites will be required to establish if these additional costs may apply.

In considering the installation of new BBQs, the ongoing cost of cleaning and maintaining the assets also needs to be analysed. Based on the financial data for existing assets the average annual cost of cleaning and maintaining the shires current BBQ's is approximately \$33,000 in total or \$2,300 per BBQ each year.

If a program for installation of BBQs is agreed to for the proposed sites, installation costs may be able to be reduced by combining installation with existing works. This may reduce site preliminaries and site establishment costs as well as contract labour rates. It is noted that a number of these locations have other works proposed for the Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

All of this information will be applied moving forward to install BBQs where feasible within the available budgets.

### ***Bulwinkel Park Alstonville***

The March 2017 Ordinary meeting resolved *“that Council arrange a meeting with relevant stakeholders in relation to proposed improvements and if a plan of management is required, that consideration be given at the June meeting to the preparation and implementation of such a plan.”*

A meeting was held onsite between Council officers and representatives of the Bulwinkel Landcare and Lions Club groups on 6 June 2017.

## **10.10 Delivery Program and Operational Plan - Adoption**

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Discussion about the desired outcomes for the park and advantages and disadvantages of creating a specific Plan of Management for the park were undertaken.

It was agreed that development of a new Plan of Management for the park is not the preferred option as management of the park is sufficiently covered under the existing Plan of Management for Community Land 2015.

The community groups actively working to improve Bulwinkel Park will continue to liaise with Council regarding works within the park as well as discussing any potential funding and grant opportunities.

Council is in the process of relocating and upgrading the playground on the site to remove it from the flood affected area, as part of the Playground Upgrade Plan.

The relocation will also take into consideration spacing to allow for the potential future co-location of a new shelter and picnic setting in the same vicinity. Pruning of surrounding trees is to occur in conjunction with the installation works to ensure safety for playground users.

Other items discussed at the meeting that are request to be reviewed and considered are:

- Development of a concept/master plan for the park
- Pruning of trees around the public toilets
- Renewal of the public toilets
- Removal of the old shelter and construction of a new shelter out of the flood zone
- Improved car parking with equitable access to the park
- Improved drainage to redirect concentrated overland flows away from the active area of the park
- Installation of informative signage and
- Installation of BBQ facilities

It is not proposed to amend the existing Delivery Program or LTFP specifically for these items as some will be carried out within existing operating budgets and the larger capital items will be on-going considerations, as part of the recurrent capital budgets for items such as public toilet renewals,

### ***Swimming Pool Upgrades***

The redevelopment of the swimming pools is allocated over the 2016/17 and 2017/18 financial years with a total budget in the LTFP of \$14,018,500. Unfortunately asbestos has been located in significant amounts under the existing pool structures and this will result in a contract variation.

Details on that variation will be reported to Council early in the new financial year.

## 10.10 Delivery Program and Operational Plan - Adoption

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### Sustainability Considerations

- **Environment**  
This report encompasses the entire Council budget and proposed activities and operations.
- **Social**  
As above
- **Economic**  
As above

### Legal / Resource / Financial Implications

This report deals with all of Council's operations. Legal, resource and financial implications are all relevant to this report.

Based on the adjustments identified in this report the revised working capital deficit forecast for the General Fund for 2017/18 is \$192,000.

There remain significant concerns that the LTFP forecasts working capital deficits for the entire ten years as follows:

17/18	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	25/26	26/27
(192,000)	(250,900)	(411,000)	(478,500)	(389,900)	(363,200)	(223,100)	(220,000)	(256,500)	(146,000)

Council does budget conservatively however with the construction of the Ballina Indoor Sports Stadium, which should be fully operational by 2019/20, the net cost of operating that facility results in a significant jump in the forecast deficit.

The other concern is that the income figures in the LTFP for programs such as Development Assessment and Building Services are relatively high compared to long term trends, and when that income does fall, as the level of building activity slows, it will place further pressure on Council's finances.

Council is not in a position to reduce its capital expenditure funding as many asset classes are already not fully funded to their depreciation expense, therefore the pressure remains on staff and Councillors to aim to reduce existing service levels and achieve cost savings where possible.

Councillors should not be looking for expanded services unless matching or greater savings are identified.

From an operating result perspective the inclusive of the special rate variation monies means that an operating surplus should be achieved for the first time for the General Fund in 2018/19.

### Consultation

The Draft Delivery Program and Operational Plan have been advertised for public comment during May and June.

## 10.10 Delivery Program and Operational Plan - Adoption

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### Options

Council has a legal obligation to adopt the Operational Plan and Delivery Program. Two Finance Committee meetings have been held to develop the strategies contained within these documents and Council is also in a position to consider community input.

The recommendations that follow encompass all the items addressed in this report, along with a recommendation to endorse the rating structure for 2017/18.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Council adopts the 2017/18 to 2020/21 Draft Delivery Program and 2017/18 Operational Plan which includes the Long Term Financial Plan (budget) and Fees and Charges, as exhibited, inclusive of any amendments determined at this meeting.
2. That Council approves the formation of a Committee of a minimum of three Councillors, with at least one from each Ward, plus the Mayor, to consider the applications for the General, Public Hall and Sporting Group Donations for 2017/18. The representatives on the Committee are as follows (to be determined).
3. That Council endorses the following action in respect to the one submission on the draft fees and charges:

That, on review of the Commercial Activities on Public Land Policy during 2017/18, consideration is given at that time to including smaller fitness training groups as a low impact category.

4. That Council notes the contents of this report in respect to the submissions received for works and services, with the inclusion of the following amendments to the Operational Plan:
  - Wardell Progress Association – Include an action to investigate Wilson Street drain, Wardell, to determine the preferred management solution.
  - Various submissions – Amend the existing reference to the Lennox Head Town Centre enhancement plan to the following:

Progress Lennox Head Town Centre Village Renewal and confirm funding strategy for preferred completion by December 2021	Progress made to confirm preferred design and funding strategy
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5. That Council endorses the following amendment to the Long Term Financial Plan:
  - Plant capital expenditure – budget increased by \$25,000 for purchase of Rangers vehicle, with this initial one-off expenditure funded from the Development and Environmental Health internal reserve.

## 10.10 Delivery Program and Operational Plan - Adoption

6. That Council endorses the following actions in relation to the 50% pensioner/health care card holder discount for Ferry Fees:
- (i) The discount applies to motor vehicle, motor cycle and bicycle seasons and quarterly season tickets.
  - (ii) The discount applies to the following cards:
    - Commonwealth Seniors Health Card
    - Health Care Card
    - Ex-Carer Allowance (Child) Health Care Card
    - Foster Child Health Care Card
    - Low Income Health Care Card
    - Department of Veteran Affairs' Health Card and
    - Pensioner Concession Card
  - (iii) The discount can only be obtained by purchasing from Council's Customer Service at 40 Cherry Street, Ballina.
  - (iv) The discount can only be obtained by presenting one of the listed eligible cards together with vehicle registration papers in the same name as the card holder and the card must be valid as at the day of purchase (excluding bicycles).
7. That Council resolves to make a base rating structure applicable to all rateable land in the Shire for the levy of the 2017/18 Ordinary Rates as per the following structure.

Rate Category	Rate in Dollar (cents in \$)	Base Amount (\$)	% Income from Base Amount
Residential	\$0.16583	491	49.8
Business	\$0.75581	491	14.6
Farmland	\$0.14128	491	32.4
Mining	\$0.75581	491	0.0

The rate in the dollar for 2017/18 applies to the land value of all rateable land in the Shire within the relevant category.

8. That Council resolves to make the annual charges for 2017/18 as detailed in the Fees and Charges document that forms part of the Delivery Program and Operational Plan for Domestic Waste Management, Stormwater, Waste Management Operations, Water Services and Wastewater Services.
9. That Council confirms its intention to submit a further application to IPART, consistent with the current Long Term Financial Plan, being permanent special rate variations of 9.3% for 2018/19 and 5.9% for 2019/20 and authorises the General Manager to take all necessary actions to comply with the special variation application criteria.

### Attachment(s)

- 1. Submissions
- 2. Extract from Councillor Bulletin 17 March 2017

**MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF BALLINA SHIRE COUNCIL  
HELD IN THE BALLINA SHIRE COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
40 CHERRY STREET BALLINA,  
ON 22/06/17 AT 9.00 AM**

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**10.10 Delivery Program and Operational Plan - Adoption**

**220617/9 RESOLVED**

**(Cr Ben Smith/Cr Eoin Johnston)**

1. That Council adopts the 2017/18 to 2020/21 Draft Delivery Program and 2017/18 Operational Plan which includes the Long Term Financial Plan (budget) and Fees and Charges, as exhibited, inclusive of any amendments determined at this meeting.

2. That Council approves the formation of a Committee of a minimum of three Councillors, with at least one from each Ward, plus the Mayor, to consider the applications for the General, Public Hall and Sporting Group Donations for 2017/18. The representatives on the Committee are as follows.

- A Ward – Cr Meehan
- B Ward - Cr Cadwallader
- C Ward - Cr Smith

4. That Council notes the contents of this report in respect to the submissions received for works and services, with the inclusion of the following amendments to the Operational Plan:

- Wardell Progress Association – Include an action to investigate Wilson Street drain, Wardell, to determine the preferred management solution.
- Various submissions – Amend the existing reference to the Lennox Head Town Centre enhancement plan to the following:

Progress Lennox Head Town Centre Village Renewal and confirm funding strategy for preferred completion by December 2021	Progress made to confirm preferred design and funding strategy
---	--

- That \$10,000 of the budget from Ross Park be carried forward to cover consultation in respect to the Lennox Head Town Centre Village Renewal.
5. That Council endorses the following amendment to the Long Term Financial Plan:
- Plant capital expenditure – budget increased by \$25,000 for purchase of Rangers vehicle, with this initial one-off expenditure funded from the Development and Environmental Health internal reserve.

**MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF BALLINA SHIRE COUNCIL  
HELD IN THE BALLINA SHIRE COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
40 CHERRY STREET BALLINA,  
ON 22/06/17 AT 9.00 AM**

6. That Council resolves to make a base rating structure applicable to all rateable land in the Shire for the levy of the 2017/18 Ordinary Rates as per the following structure.

Rate Category	Rate in Dollar (cents in \$)	Base Amount (\$)	% Income from Base Amount
Residential	\$0.16583	491	49.8
Business	\$0.75581	491	14.6
Farmland	\$0.14128	491	32.4
Mining	\$0.75581	491	0.0

The rate in the dollar for 2017/18 applies to the land value of all rateable land in the Shire within the relevant category.

7. That Council resolves to make the annual charges for 2017/18 as detailed in the Fees and Charges document that forms part of the Delivery Program and Operational Plan for Domestic Waste Management, Stormwater, Waste Management Operations, Water Services and Wastewater Services.
8. That Missingham Beach Park be the number one priority for the installation of a barbecue.
9. That Council amend the ferry fees as per the submission from the Ferry Drivers as follows:

Car	\$ 6.00
Motor Bike	\$ 3.00
Car + 1 axle Trailer	\$12.00
Car + 2 axle Trailer / Caravans	\$18.00
Vehicle 3-10 tonnes	\$13.50
Vehicle 10 tonnes and over	\$15.50
Truck and Dog	\$22.50
Push Bikes	\$ 1.00
Ferry Weekly Ticket	\$56.00

FOR VOTE - All Councillors voted unanimously.  
ABSENT. DID NOT VOTE - Cr David Wright

A **Motion** was moved by Cr Jeff Johnson and seconded by Cr Nathan Willis

That Council include Saunders Oval lighting in the 2017/18 financial year for the reasons outlined in the report.

The **Motion** was **LOST**.

FOR VOTE - Cr Jeff Johnson and Cr Nathan Willis

AGAINST VOTE - Cr Phillip Meehan, Cr Sharon Parry, Cr Eoin Johnston, Cr Stephen McCarthy, Cr Keith Williams, Cr Sharon Cadwallader and Cr Ben Smith

ABSENT. DID NOT VOTE - Cr David Wright

**MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF BALLINA SHIRE COUNCIL  
HELD IN THE BALLINA SHIRE COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
40 CHERRY STREET BALLINA,  
ON 22/06/17 AT 9.00 AM**

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**220617/10**

**RESOLVED**

(Cr Nathan Willis/Cr Ben Smith)

That Council confirms its intention to submit a further application to IPART, consistent with the current Long Term Financial Plan, being permanent special rate variations of 9.3% for 2018/19 and 5.9% for 2019/20 and authorises the General Manager to take all necessary actions to comply with the special variation application criteria.

FOR VOTE - Cr Phillip Meehan, Cr Sharon Parry, Cr Stephen McCarthy, Cr Nathan Willis, Cr Keith Williams, Cr Sharon Cadwallader and Cr Ben Smith  
AGAINST VOTE - Cr Jeff Johnson and Cr Eoin Johnston  
ABSENT. DID NOT VOTE - Cr David Wright

John Truman, declared an interest in this matter and departed the meeting at this stage.

**220617/11**

**RESOLVED**

(Cr Ben Smith/Cr Nathan Willis)

That Council approve an interim category fee for smaller groups for personal trainers and group training (up to 10 clients maximum) (low impact, \$600 per annum) and adjust the Commercial Activities on Public Land Policy accordingly.

FOR VOTE - All Councillors voted unanimously.  
ABSENT. DID NOT VOTE - Cr David Wright

John Truman returned to the meeting at this stage.

**220617/12**

**RESOLVED**

(Cr Ben Smith/Cr Phillip Meehan)

That Council endorses the following actions in relation to the 30% pensioner/health care card holder discount for Ferry Fees:

- (i) The discount applies to motor vehicle, motor cycle and bicycle seasons and quarterly season tickets.
- (ii) The discount applies to the following cards:
  - Commonwealth Seniors Health Card
  - Health Care Card
  - Ex-Carer Allowance (Child) Health Care Card
  - Foster Child Health Care Card
  - Low Income Health Care Card
  - Department of Veteran Affairs' Health Card and
  - Pensioner Concession Card



**MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF BALLINA SHIRE COUNCIL  
HELD IN THE BALLINA SHIRE COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
40 CHERRY STREET BALLINA,  
ON 22/06/17 AT 9.00 AM**

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- (iii) The discount can only be obtained by purchasing from Council's Customer Service at 40 Cherry Street, Ballina.
- (iv) The discount can only be obtained by presenting one of the listed eligible cards together with vehicle registration papers in the same name as the card holder and the card must be valid as at the day of purchase (excluding bicycles).

FOR VOTE - Cr Phillip Meehan, Cr Sharon Parry, Cr Eoin Johnston, Cr Stephen McCarthy, Cr Sharon Cadwallader and Cr Ben Smith  
AGAINST VOTE - Cr Jeff Johnson, Cr Nathan Willis and Cr Keith Williams  
ABSENT. DID NOT VOTE - Cr David Wright

**9.9 Policy (New) - Mobile Vending on Public Land**

A **Motion** was moved by Cr Phillip Meehan and seconded by Cr Keith Williams

1. That Council adopt an amended Mobile Vending on Public Land Policy that maintains the status quo, however allows mobile vending with a licence arrangement on roads and car parks with a restriction of 300 metres from a retail outlet and with a time limitation.
2. That Council not allow mobile vending in parks for an extended period of time.
3. That Council applies the following fee structure in relation to the implementation of the policy.
  - Application Fee - \$99
  - Annual Fee (Roads and Car Parking Permit) - \$330
4. That the Mobile Vending on Public Land Policy takes effect from 1 August 2017.

An **Amendment** was moved by Cr Sharon Cadwallader and seconded by Cr Sharon Parry

That this matter be deferred to a Councillor Briefing.

The **Amendment** was **CARRIED**.

FOR VOTE - Cr Phillip Meehan, Cr Sharon Parry, Cr Jeff Johnson, Cr Eoin Johnston, Cr Stephen McCarthy, Cr Nathan Willis, Cr Sharon Cadwallader and Cr Ben Smith  
AGAINST VOTE - Cr Keith Williams  
ABSENT. DID NOT VOTE - Cr David Wright

The **Amendment** then became the **Motion** and was **CARRIED**.

**MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF BALLINA SHIRE COUNCIL  
HELD IN THE BALLINA SHIRE COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
40 CHERRY STREET BALLINA,  
ON 22/06/17 AT 9.00 AM**

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**10.8 Code of Conduct - Review**

**220617/35      RESOLVED**

(Cr Eoin Johnston/Cr Keith Williams)

1. That Council adopts the Office of Local Government's model Code of Conduct, as per attachment two, to this report.
2. That Council hold additional training on the Model Code of Conduct, specifically concentrating on matters that may have come out of the recent General Manager's survey to Councillors.

FOR VOTE - Cr Phillip Meehan, Cr Jeff Johnson, Cr Eoin Johnston, Cr Stephen McCarthy, Cr Nathan Willis, Cr Keith Williams and Cr Ben Smith

AGAINST VOTE - Cr Sharon Cadwallader

ABSENT. DID NOT VOTE - Cr David Wright and Cr Sharon Parry

**10.9 Community Strategic Plan - 2017 to 2027**

**220617/36      RESOLVED**

(Cr Sharon Cadwallader/Cr Ben Smith)

That Council adopts the Community Strategic Plan, as attached and exhibited, subject to the additional changes outlined within this report.

FOR VOTE - All Councillors voted unanimously.

ABSENT. DID NOT VOTE - Cr David Wright and Cr Sharon Parry

**11. Civil Services Group Reports**

**11.1 Sugar Cane Harvest Management Scheme - Permit Application**

**220617/37      RESOLVED**

(Cr Ben Smith/Cr Sharon Cadwallader)

1. That the application for the Sugar Cane Harvest Management Scheme to permit an additional 5% concessional mass on the gross mass load (GML) on State and Council roads which are currently approved for a 4.6 m high vehicles, be approved for an additional trial period of one year during the 2017 harvest period.

**10.7 Community Engagement Strategy - Proposed Special Rate Variation**

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**10.7 Community Engagement Strategy - Proposed Special Rate Variation**

**Delivery Program**      Communications

**Objective**              To endorse the draft Community Engagement Strategy for the proposed Special Rate Variation (SRV)

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**Background**

The NSW State Government established its Fit for the Future Program in 2014, whereby they asked all councils in NSW to identify how they would comply with a range of financial criteria to demonstrate that the council was financially sustainable.

Ballina Shire Council, in responding to this program, as well as identifying a range of efficiency measures and revenue opportunities, included in our submission a proposal to increase our general rate income by 2.9% each year, on top of the standard rate pegging limit, for the three year period from 2017/18 to 2019/20, with this income being a permanent increase.

This proposal was submitted to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) and Ballina Shire Council was confirmed as a Fit for the Future Council by the State Government. Many other councils submitted rate increases as part of their Fit for the Future submissions.

The additional revenue generated by Council from this proposal is to be spent on the renewal of core infrastructure assets, such as road reconstruction works, stormwater and drainage reconstruction, and the replacement of playground equipment and sports grounds facilities. Council has an extensive asset renewal program and this additional revenue, as well as ensuring that Council is financially sustainable, will also mean that our existing infrastructure is renewed in a timelier manner.

In considering this proposal, the elected Council resolved to amend our Fit for the Future submission and apply for a 4.9% (3.4% above the rate peg limit of 1.5%) increase in 2017/18 and a 5.9% (3.4% above an assumed rate peg limit of 2.5%) increase in 2018/19 and in 2019/20. This proposal was submitted to IPART in February 2017, and the increase was approved for a temporary one year period for 2017/18. Subsequent years were not approved.

Feedback from IPART was Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting documents, specifically the Delivery Program, did not sufficiently address Council's special rate variation application.

In light of this information, Council included information in the new Delivery Program for 2017/18 – 2020/21 on the proposed SRV in a new section called Funding our Future. Further detailed and specific information is also available in Appendix B which details the expenditure of the proposed SRV.

The Revenue Policy in the Delivery Program also includes scenarios with and without the SRV.

## **10.7 Community Engagement Strategy - Proposed Special Rate Variation**

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### **Key Issues**

- Engagement with the community on a proposed special rate variation (SRV)
- Re-engagement and public exhibition of the 2017/18 – 2020/21 Delivery Program and 2017/18 Operational Plan

### **Information**

IPART granted Ballina Shire Council a temporary one year special rate variation this year (2017/18). This special rate component of 3.4% will expire on 30 June 2018. Should Council continue to strive to meet the Fit for the Future benchmarks, Council needs to seek a further two year special rate variation in 2018/19 and 2019/20 to be permanently retained in the rate base.

It is important to acknowledge that this increase is focused on Council generating an operating surplus for the General Fund and allocating additional funds for asset renewal. Currently a number of Council's core infrastructure assets, such as roads, are under funded when balancing the recurrent revenue allocation against the annual depreciation expense.

The increase Council is now seeking is 9.3% for 2018/19 (3.4% extra for 2017/18 brought forward, 3.4% extra for 2018/19 plus an assumed rate peg of 2.5%) and 5.9% for 2019/20 (3.4% extra plus rate peg of 2.5%). Overall, the special rate variation proposal seeks a cumulative rate increase of 15.75%. Council at its June 2017 meeting, resolved to proceed with the SRV.

In reality the cumulative increase is actually 12.15% as Council already has applied the 3.4% for 2017/18 in the current financial year, however as this is not a permanent increase it now needs to be included in Council's SRV application.

In order to ensure that the community is aware of the SRV proposal and that they have the opportunity to provide feedback to Council, staff have developed a draft Community Engagement Strategy. The Strategy details how we will consult and inform the community to determine whether Ballina Shire Council should apply to the State Government for a permanent increase in our general rate income. This engagement exercise is additional to what was undertaken in May and June 2017, and in response to IPART's feedback.

Council has an adopted policy in respect to community consultation (Policy C14 – Community Consultation), a copy of which is available on Council's website. That policy outlines the range of consultation options available dependent upon the level of impact on the community of the Council decision. This draft Community Engagement Strategy (CES) has been developed with reference to those Policy principles.

The draft CES provides a comprehensive range of actions with items of note including:

- Letter to all ratepayers with factsheet
- Information in Council's newsletter Community Connect
- Online survey
- Ward Committees
- Advertising

## **10.7 Community Engagement Strategy - Proposed Special Rate Variation**

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- Media releases
- Information on website
- Social media
- Targeted survey

The Delivery Program and Operational Plan, although already adopted by Council, need to clearly explain as per IPART's Guidelines:

- The need for and the purpose of the SRV
- The extent of the rate rise under the SRV
- The impact on affected ratepayers of the SRV.

Council needs to feel comfortable that these requirements have been clearly articulated in the Delivery Program and Operational Plan. As the Delivery Program and Operational Plan are key elements of IPART's assessment it is proposed that this document be re-exhibited as part of the SRV community consultation process.

The timeline for the re-exhibition and community consultation on the SRV is to commence in September 2017. Submissions on both the Delivery Program and SRV proposal will close on 31 October 2017 and be reported to the November 2017 Council meeting.

### **Sustainability Considerations**

- **Environment**  
Not applicable
- **Social**  
Rating has a social impact on the community
- **Economic**  
The proposed special rate variation will enable Council to be financial sustainability

### **Legal / Resource / Financial Implications**

The development of the draft Community Engagement Strategy has been undertaken through existing staff resources.

There is no specific budget available for this project which means costs such as advertising, printing, postage and surveys will be funded from Council corporate budgets for these types of activities.

### **Consultation**

The focus of this report is to ensure that Council supports a comprehensive Community Engagement Strategy. It includes principles of the International Public Participation Spectrum and IPART's guidelines for community engagement.

### Options

The options available are to endorse or amend the attached draft Community Engagement Strategy. If there are any ideas that Council would like to see included in this draft document, they should be raised as part of this report.

Council also needs to recognise that each time this consultation process has been undertaken for a special rate variation the on-line survey and written responses typically range from 80% to 90% opposing the variation.

Generally Council consultation processes, involving written or on-line responses, result in the people feeling the strongest for, or against, a proposal to take the time to make a submission. Very few people strongly support proposed rate increases.

The one avenue Council has applied in special rate consultations to obtain broader community feedback has been to engage Micromex Pty. Ltd., a specialist research company, to undertake a community survey, which is theoretically more representative of the entire community. The Micromex surveys have provided results that are almost the opposite to the on-line or written submissions.

The Community Engagement Strategy again includes a survey by Micromex, which is estimated to cost approximately \$10,000.

Some people have questioned the legitimacy of the Micromex survey methods. If Councillors are not supportive of the survey it should be removed from the engagement strategy as it represents a significant cost.

Staff do not share those concerns in respect to Micromex and the Managing Director of Micromex, Mr Stuart Reeve, provided a detailed response to Council in February this year, when concerns were raised, with key extracts from that response as follows:

- *We are a mid-sized full service vertically integrated market research company – we have our own call centre, field interviewers, and online survey capabilities, plus extensive qualitative research experience.*
- *In 2011 Micromex Research gained contractor accreditation to the Local Government Procurement Community Services Panel LGP 12.08. We are also on the 2014 NSW Performance and Management Supplier Panel and the current NSW Transport Surveys & Fieldwork Services Supplier Panel. And we were accepted onto the NSW Office of Local Government's Fit for Future Technical Advisory Panel to provide community engagement/research advice to government.*
- *Our Special Rate Variation experience - Since 2010 we have provided technical survey services for over 30+ SRV consultations – and in all our submissions IPART has never expressed concern with our survey approach or scale. The community support and preference for Option 4 has the strongest support score and preference score we have seen for the highest option in an SRV.*

## 10.7 Community Engagement Strategy - Proposed Special Rate Variation

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- *The Support Scale - Why do we use a unipolar support scale? Quite simply because a **unipolar** scale prompts a respondent to think of the presence or absence of a quality or attribute.*
- *A perfect example of this is a response to a concept like an SRV option. Our unipolar scale includes the following choices:*
  - *not at all supportive*
  - *not very supportive*
  - *somewhat supportive*
  - *supportive*
  - *very supportive*
- *A **bipolar** scale prompts a respondent to balance two opposite attributes, determining the relative proportion of these opposite attributes. Where a unipolar scale has one “pole,” a bipolar scale has two polar opposites. For example:*
  - *Much too hot*
  - *A little too hot*
  - *Just right*
  - *A little too cold*
  - *Much too cold*
- *In the case of our support rating, trying to use a bipolar scale would be ‘messy’ – for instance, it would run from ‘very supportive’ to ‘very unsupportive’. In reality, you either don’t support an issue at all, or you support it to some extent – hence our use of the unipolar scale.*
- *Capturing community feedback - There are a number of options for capturing community feedback. Generally the best way of capturing representative and quantifiable community feedback is by undertaking a statistically significant, random survey. IPART anticipates that councils applying for a special variation will need to conduct such a survey.*

In conclusion Council now needs to decide whether it wishes to proceed with the Community Engagement Strategy. The additional funds, both for the Healthy Waterways Program and the increase in asset renewal funding, are considered essential for the long term sustainability of Council.

However Council also needs to accept that this strategy, once commenced, will create a significant amount of angst in sections of our community, and even more angst is created when, and if, Council resolves to proceed with an application when the majority of submissions, written and online, do not support the application.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That Council endorses the draft Community Engagement Strategy for the proposed special rate variation, as attached to this report.
2. That Council re-exhibit the 2017/18 – 2020/21 Delivery Program and 2017/18 Operational Plan, as part of this Community Engagement Strategy.

**Attachment(s)**

1. Community Engagement Strategy for Proposed Special Rate Variation 2018/19 - 2019/20



**MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF BALLINA SHIRE COUNCIL  
HELD IN THE BALLINA SHIRE COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
40 CHERRY STREET BALLINA,  
ON 24/08/17 AT 9.00 AM**

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Paul Hickey, General Manager and Cr Jeff Johnson declared an interest in Item 11.1 and left the meeting at 12:34 pm.

**11.1 Proposed Road Closing - Henderson Lane, Lennox Head**

**240817/6          RESOLVED**

(Cr Keith Williams/Cr Nathan Willis)

1. That Council re-establishes its support in response to the request for a road closing application to proceed for part of the former Henderson Lane adjacent to 37, 40, 42, 44 & 46 Kell Mather Drive at Lennox Head, subject to the execution of a 'Deed of Agreement', and any other documentation or property title registration processes, occurring between all relevant land owners prior to the road closing application being lodged by Council with Crown Lands.
2. That Council authorises the Council seal to be attached to the road closing application, associated documents and land dealings to finalise the road closing.

FOR VOTE - Cr Sharon Parry, Cr Eoin Johnston, Cr Stephen McCarthy, Cr Nathan Willis, Cr Keith Williams, Cr Sharon Cadwallader and Cr Ben Smith  
AGAINST VOTE - Cr David Wright and Cr Phillip Meehan  
ABSENT. DID NOT VOTE - Cr Jeff Johnson

Paul Hickey, General Manager and Cr Jeff Johnson returned to the meeting at 12:37 pm.

**10.7 Community Engagement Strategy - Proposed Special Rate Variation**

**240817/7          RESOLVED**

(Cr Keith Williams/Cr Nathan Willis)

1. That Council endorses the draft Community Engagement Strategy for the proposed special rate variation, as attached to this report, with the deletion from the strategy of the Micromex community survey.
2. That Council re-exhibit the 2017/18 – 2020/21 Delivery Program and 2017/18 Operational Plan, as part of this Community Engagement Strategy.

FOR VOTE - Cr Phillip Meehan, Cr Sharon Parry, Cr Eoin Johnston, Cr Stephen McCarthy, Cr Nathan Willis, Cr Keith Williams, Cr Sharon Cadwallader and Cr Ben Smith  
AGAINST VOTE - Cr David Wright and Cr Jeff Johnson

**12. Public Question Time**

Nil

**10.10 Special Rate Variation - Consultation**

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**10.10 Special Rate Variation - Consultation**

**Delivery Program**      Communications

**Objective**                      To report on the outcomes from the consultation process for the proposed special rate variation to fund a healthy waterways program and increased asset renewal and to determine if Council wishes to proceed with the application to the NSW State Government.

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**Background**

In February 2017, Council considered a report on a proposed special rate variation (SRV) and recommended the following:

1. *That Council acknowledges the feedback from the community consultation process undertaken for the proposed special rate variation to finance the Healthy Waterways Program and increased asset renewal.*
2. *In acknowledging this consultation Council remains of the opinion that it is reasonable to proceed with the proposed special variation application for a number of reasons, including but not limited to:*
  - a) *It is essential that Council increases its level of rate income to finance an adequate level of asset renewal to reduce the risk of Council's infrastructure assets deteriorating over time*
  - b) *The funding of the Healthy Waterways Program will help Council improve the overall condition of the Shire's waterways*
  - c) *The additional rate income generated will improve Council's overall financial position and long term financial sustainability*
  - d) *The removal of the waste operations charge in 2017/18 results in the financial impact of the additional increase in ordinary rates being substantially reduced for all residential and farmland ratepayers; and*
  - e) *Council is committed to minimising increases in the water, wastewater, waste and stormwater charges for the period 2017/18 to 2019/20 to assist in lessening the financial impact on ratepayers.*
3. *That Council authorises the General Manager to submit an application to IPART for a special rate variation based on 4.9% in 2017/18, 5.9% in 2018/19 and 5.9% in 2019/20.*

In response to the resolution, the SRV application was submitted to IPART in February 2017 and the increase was approved for a temporary one year period for 2017/18. Subsequent years were not approved.

Feedback from IPART was Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting documents, specifically the Delivery Program, did not sufficiently address Council's special rate variation application.

## 10.10 Special Rate Variation - Consultation

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In light of this information, Council included information in the Delivery Program for 2017/18 to 2020/21 on the proposed SRV in a new section called Funding our Future. The Revenue Policy in the Operational Plan also included scenarios with and without the SRV.

The adopted Operational Plan and Delivery Program are available on Council's website.

In June 2017, in adopting the Operational Plan and Delivery Program, Council resolved as follows:

*That Council confirms its intention to submit a further application to IPART, consistent with the current Long Term Financial Plan, being permanent special rate variations of 9.3% for 2018/19 and 5.9% for 2019/20 and authorises the General Manager to take all necessary actions to comply with the special variation application criteria.*

In August 2017, a community engagement strategy was reported to Council and it was decided to not only undertake public consultation on the special rate variation proposal, but to also re-exhibit the Operational Plan and Delivery Program to include further information on the SRV. The resolution was as follows:

- 1. That Council endorses the draft Community Engagement Strategy for the proposed special rate variation, as attached to this report.*
- 2. That Council re-exhibit the 2017/18 – 2020/21 Delivery Program and 2017/18 Operational Plan, as part of this Community Engagement Strategy*

In response to this resolution, Council implemented a consultation program including letters sent to all ratepayers, public advertising and media releases, an on-line survey on the Council website and public meetings at Ballina, Lennox Head, Wardell and Alstonville.

The report that follows provides an overview of the feedback from the consultation process.

### **Key Issues**

- Review feedback and submissions
- Council's long term financial sustainability

### **Information**

The proposed special rate variation is a 9.3% increase for 2018/19 and 5.9% for 2019/20. The IPART rate peg limit is estimated at 2.5% for 2018/19 and 2019/20. The proposal represents a compounded total increase for the two years of 15.7%.

However it is important to acknowledge that the 9.3% increase for 2018/19 includes the one year approval of 3.4% above the rate peg for 2017/18, therefore the actual increase as compared to 2017/18 for 2018/19 is 5.9%.

## 10.10 Special Rate Variation - Consultation

A summary of the consultation undertaken is as follows.

### Public Meetings

Public meetings were held in Alstonville (28 people in attendance), Lennox Head (17 people), Ballina (23 people) and Wardell (nine people). The purpose of the meetings was to provide information and to answer any questions.

A copy of the presentation provided to the meetings is included as the first attachment to this report. That attachment provides an overview of the proposal, the benefits to be achieved and the financial impact on ratepayers.

Generally the people who attended the public meetings opposed the proposed SRV, although there was a good exchange of ideas / thoughts / opinions between the Council staff present and the public.

### Written Submissions

Council has received a total of 41 written submissions, including one confidential submission. A copy of the submissions is included as the second attachment. A copy of the confidential submission is included as the third attachment. There are 36 letters against the proposal (the balance of letters received were requests for information only).

In respect to the submissions with objections, the main reasons for the objection are as follows:

1. *Council's rates and charges are becoming increasingly unaffordable*

The average Council total rates and charges account for Ballina Shire Council is approximately \$2,920 for 2017/18 based on an assumed water consumption of 172 kilolitres, which was the average consumption the previous financial year. This is a significant financial burden for any resident.

All councils are faced with similar challenges to keep rates and charges affordable and the following table is taken from the presentation used in the public meetings for the exhibition of the draft 2017/18 Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

**Table One - Total Residential Rates and Charges – 2017/18**

Residential Property	Ballina	Byron	Clarence Valley	Coffs Harbour	Lismore	Richmond Valley	Tweed
Ordinary Rate	989 (1)	1,178	987	1,191	1,226	917	1,556
Stormwater	25	25	0	25	25	25	0
Water Access	204	179	118	143	260	146	170
Water 172kl	375	425	414	480	610	382	499
Waste Water	953	1,137	1,109	806	886	948	820
Waste Collection	374	456	361	646	491	447	377
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,920</b>	<b>3,400</b>	<b>2,989</b>	<b>3,291</b>	<b>3,498</b>	<b>2,865</b>	<b>3,422</b>
<b>% to Ballina</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>116%</b>	<b>102%</b>	<b>113%</b>	<b>120%</b>	<b>98%</b>	<b>117%</b>

(1) This was a forecast figure and the actual average residential rate for 2017/18 is \$985

## 10.10 Special Rate Variation - Consultation

As per these figures, the average total rates and charges account payable for a residential property in Ballina Shire compares favourably to similar councils, however it is still a major financial burden.

The impact of the proposed special rate variation on the average rates payable in Ballina Shire for the three categories of rateable properties is outlined in the following table.

**Table Two - Estimated Increase in Rates (Average)**

Item	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	Total Change (\$)
<b>Standard Rate Pegging Increase</b>	<b>1.50%</b>	<b>2.50%</b>	<b>2.50%</b>	
Average Residential Rate	953	976	1,000	47
Average Business Rate	3,191	3,281	3,363	172
Average Farmland Rate	1,465	1,498	1,535	70
<b>With Additional Percentage</b>	4.90% actual	9.30 % (includes 3.4% from 2017/18)	5.90%	17.6% compounded for three years 15.7% compounded for two years based on 9.3%
Average Residential Rate	985	1,043	1,105	120
Average Business Rate	3,298	3,506	3,713	415
Average Farmland Rate	1,514	1,601	1,695	181
<b>Average Extra Rates Each Year</b>				
Residential Extra	32	67	105	<b>105</b>
Business Extra	107	225	350	<b>350</b>
Farmland Extra	49	103	160	<b>160</b>

The average extra rates each year figures represent the difference paid for each year, due to the proposed special rate variation. This is an average only and some people will pay more and some less. If Council does not proceed with the special rate variation the average averages payable for 2018/19 will be less than the 2017/18 average due to the one-off special variation.

A key item that assists in helping offset the implementation of this increase is the removal of the former waste operations charge of \$73 in 2016/17. The benefit of this is shown over the four period from 2016/17 as the original proposal was for three years of increases from 2017/18 to 2019/20.

**Table Three – Change in Average Residential Bill for Ballina Shire**

Item	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
<b>Ordinary Rate</b>	<b>943</b>	<b>985</b>	<b>1,043</b>	<b>1,105</b>
% Change			9.30	5.90
<b>Stormwater</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>
% Change			0.00	0.00
<b>Water Access</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>215</b>
% Change			2.00	2.50
<b>Water Consumption (172 kls)</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>394</b>
% Change			2.00	2.50
<b>Wastewater Charge</b>	<b>925</b>	<b>953</b>	<b>977</b>	<b>1,001</b>
% Change			3.00	2.50
<b>Domestic Waste Collection</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>374</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>393</b>
% Change			2.00	2.50
<b>Waste Operations Charge</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,901</b>	<b>2,916</b>	<b>3,023</b>	<b>3,133</b>
<b>% Annual Change</b>		<b>0.52</b>	<b>3.67</b>	<b>3.64</b>
<b>% Cumulative Change</b>		<b>0.52</b>	<b>4.21</b>	<b>8.00</b>

## 10.10 Special Rate Variation - Consultation

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Key points in this table are:

- a) Changes to stormwater, water, wastewater and waste are limited to largely CPI or less for the three year period, as per the latest revision of Council's Long Term Financial Plan
- b) The waste operations charge is removed from 2017/18 onwards (was \$73)
- c) The compounded total increase is 8.00% (0.52%, 3.37% and 3.64%), which is far less than the 15.7% mentioned earlier when the cumulative rate increase is considered in isolation. The 8.00% figure represents an average compounded increase of 2.60% per annum for the total rates and charges account.

The presentation to the public meetings also included information on the economic indicators for Ballina Shire (refer to slide 21 of attachment one) that highlights key indicators such as the percentage of residential property pensioners, socio-economic index ranking, unemployment rate, average taxable income and rates and charges outstanding, all of which compare equally or favourably when benchmarked against other councils in this region.

### 2. *Council should spend within its means*

A number of objections state that Council should implement further "efficiency measures" and "spend within its means" i.e. Council should not look to increase rate revenue above the IPART set pegged limit.

Council constantly endeavours to minimise costs and limit discretionary services.

From an operational perspective recent examples of efficiency gains include:

- increased allocation of smart devices to our engineering works staff has reduced the need for printing documents and improved connectivity with our corporate systems. For storm event responses, staff now spend around one quarter of the time they previously did in regards to the task of recording and documenting the impacts of a storm.
- Recent rationalisation of our mobile phones and the contract with the service provider has resulted in a decrease in annual operating costs of \$24,000
- Introduction of new software in the Development and Environmental Health Group now provides for the electronic stamping of plans and drawings which have generated significant efficiencies valued in excess of \$20,000 per annum.
- Improvements in the electronic approval process for Development Application and Construction Certificate determinations, resulting in a paperless process from submission to the determination of applications. This has seen electronic processes/workflows being introduced through both Authority and CM, including the use of portable tablet devices for assessment and inspection/plan marking processes, including the use of inspection *e forms*. Savings estimated in the tens of thousands of dollars.

## 10.10 Special Rate Variation - Consultation

- introduction of Pulse Software to undertake Performance Appraisals electronically, savings of six weeks work for one full time equivalent person
- continual improved management of the wastewater treatment plants has seen electricity costs for Ballina and Lennox Head reduce from a high of approximately \$68,000 per month to current figures of around \$35,000, which is significant considering increases in electricity prices for the last few years.

These are a few small examples with the key point being that efficiencies are being sought across the organisation every day.

It is not an easy task to benchmark the efficiency of a council, or for that matter any government organisation, typically due to the lack of competition in the services provided.

The Office of Local Government (OLG) provides a comparative data report each year, which is located on the OLG website. That report provides a range of figures that help to assist with some benchmarking, although it is not always easy to compare “apples with apples”.

One of the key figures in that report, the latest report being for 2015/16, is that Ballina Shire continues to have a comparatively low staff per capita. Ballina Shire Council has one employee per 149 residents in comparison to Byron Shire 129, Lismore City 104, Richmond Valley 92, Tweed Shire 139 and the industry average is 127. Based on the industry average, with an estimated population of 42,000 residents, Council should have an extra 49 full time staff.

This figure gives a basic indicator that Ballina Shire is operating with a lean workforce.

Another useful indicator has always been the total rate income collected by Ballina Shire as compared to our neighbours.

Table Four, which is taken from the presentation to the public meetings, outlines the difference in revenues from the ordinary rate based on the average rate yields. This table highlights the significant difference in rate income Ballina receives as compared to the councils listed.

**Table Four - Benchmarking – Total Rate Yield 2017/18**

Property Type	Ballina (\$)	Byron (\$)	Coffs (\$)	Lismore (\$)	Richmond Valley (\$)	Tweed (\$)
Residential Average Rate	953	1,178	1,191	1,226	917	1,556
Business Average Rate	3,191	3,082	4,094	4,858	2,632	3,075
Farmland Average Rate	1,465	1,963	2,124	2,320	1,480	2,021
<b>Number of assessments for Ballina Shire</b>						
Residential	15,860 (87%)					
Business	1,305 (7%)					
Farmland	1,043 (6%)					
<b>Total Rate Yield (\$'000)</b>	<b>20,807</b>	<b>24,752</b>	<b>26,447</b>	<b>28,204</b>	<b>19,522</b>	<b>30,799</b>
<b>Difference to Ballina (\$'000)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,945</b>	<b>5,640</b>	<b>7,397</b>	<b>(1,285)</b>	<b>9,992</b>

## 10.10 Special Rate Variation - Consultation

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This table multiplies the average rates for the three types of rateable properties by the number of Ballina Shire assessments.

This then determines the comparative total rate yield that would be received if Ballina Shire had the same average rates as the councils listed.

As per these figures there are substantial differences in the rate income received each and every year. The one Council comparable to Ballina is Richmond Valley however they are in the middle of an approved special rate variation, with 5.5% increases already approved for the 2017/18 and 2018/19 years. Their Fit for the Future Plan also has above rate peg increases recommended for a number of years beyond 2018/19.

Byron Shire Council also has approved special rate variations of 7.5% each year for the four years from 2017/18 to 2020/21.

These figures alone may not be an indicator of efficiency, but they demonstrate that Ballina Shire is delivering similar services to other councils in this region, based on a much lower rate base, excluding Richmond Valley. Even with the increase proposed Council's comparative rate income will still be well below all the other councils listed, excluding Richmond Valley.

Our current financial modelling estimates that we are underfunding our existing asset renewal by at least \$3million per annum. There is no possibility that Council can generate this additional level of increased expenditure from efficiency gains, based on our existing revenue base.

### **On-Line Survey on Council Website**

A total of 143 responses were provided to the on-line survey, a significant decrease from earlier in the year where we received 500 online survey responses.

The fourth attachment to this report is a summary of the responses received from the survey.

The individual responses to the majority of the questions included in the survey are listed in tabular form as per that attachment.

Brief comments on the questions asked in the survey and the responses are as follows.

**Question 1** - *Do you feel you have a reasonable understanding of this proposal based on the information provided by Council, such as the letter to all ratepayers and the information included on Council's website [ballina.nsw.gov.au](http://ballina.nsw.gov.au)? This proposal has extra complexity in that 3.4% of the 9.3% increase proposed for 2018/19 was actually levied by Council during 2017/18, although that 3.4% has only been approved by IPART for one year.*

Yes – 126 responses – 88%

No – 17 responses – 12%

This is a good response considering the complexity of this proposal due to the one-off increase for 2017/18.



## 10.10 Special Rate Variation - Consultation

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**Question 2** – If Council was to spend more on improving our waterways, where do you think the priority should be?

This question asked respondents to consider how high their priority was for the items listed. There were 134 responses with the overall ranking for the items listed as follows:

Item	Response Average
Richmond River Tributaries	3.2
Richmond River	3.0
Shaws Bay	2.9
Lake Ainsworth	2.9
Ballina Shire Coastline	2.8
Other	1.9

The survey software provides a response average based on the priority rankings provided by the respondents.

What these figures demonstrate is that the feedback is fairly evenly spread across the areas listed (i.e. all the areas identified are a high priority).

**Question 3** - *In respect to the Healthy Waterways Program how supportive are you of an extra 1.5% rate increase, as part of this total package, to fund increased expenditure to improve the health and amenity of our waterways?*

There were 143 responses with the results as follows:

Preference	Number	Percentage
Strongly supportive	15	10
Supportive	15	10
Somewhat supportive	11	8
Not very supportive	16	11
Not at all supportive	86	60

In summary 71% of the respondents do not support this proposal.

**Question 4** - *If you wish to provide additional feedback on the Healthy Waterways Program please provide your comments in the following text box.*

This question provided an opportunity for respondents to provide further comments, along with expanding on the “Other” option listed in question three. A total of 72 responses were received.

There is a mixture of comments for this question with some supporting the proposal, a large number expressing concerns that the Richmond River is not the responsibility of Council, comments regarding inefficiencies in Council and affordability concerns.

A complete copy of the comments for this question is included as attachment five.

**Question 5** - *If Council was to spend more on asset renewal related works, where do you think the priority should be??*

## 10.10 Special Rate Variation - Consultation

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This question asked respondents to consider how high their priority was for the items listed. There were 136 responses with the overall ranking for the items listed as follows:

Item	Response Average
Road reconstruction	3.7
Stormwater drainage	3.3
Community buildings	2.5
Open spaces and playground equipment	2.7
Sports fields facilities	2.6
Footpath and cycleway network	3.1
Other	2.4

There is more of a spread in these results, with roads the number one priority. This is consistent with the bi-annual community satisfaction survey that Micromex Pty. Ltd. undertakes on behalf of Council, where roads is always the number one priority.

**Question 6** – *In respect to the Asset Renewal Program, how supportive are you of an extra 5.3% in 2018/19 and 3.4% in 2019/20 on top of the estimated 2.5% standard rate peg for each year, to fund increased asset renewal works and to assist Council in being financially sustainable in the long term?*

Preference	Number	Percentage
Strongly supportive	10	7
Supportive	15	10
Somewhat supportive	8	6
Not very supportive	20	14
Not at all supportive	90	63

Similar to the Healthy Waterways result, 77% of the respondents do not support this proposal.

**Question 7** – *If you wish to provide additional feedback on the asset renewal program please provide your comments in the following text box.*

This question provided an opportunity for respondents to provide further comments with 65 responses received.

Many of the comments question Council's efficiency and object to paying extra rates for these services.

A complete copy of the comments for this question is included as attachment six.

**Question 8** – *Do you have any other comments in respect to the proposed special rate variation?*

This question provided an opportunity for respondents to provide further comments with 89 responses received.

A complete copy of the comments for this question is included as attachment seven.

## 10.10 Special Rate Variation - Consultation

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**Question 9** – *Can you please confirm whether you are a property or business owner who would be required to pay any increase in the Council rates?*

There were 143 responses to this question

<b>Preference</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes (property or business owner)	126	88
No (resident)	17	12

This highlights the majority of the respondents were property owners, which is important, as it is the property owner that is responsible for the payment of rates. Although it is also recognized that at times, tenants may also be responsible. It is also important that non-ratepayers should also have the opportunity to provide feedback on the type of community they want to live in.

**Question 10** – *If you answered yes to question 9 please clarify the type of property rates you are required to pay.*

There were 132 responses to this question.

<b>Type</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Residential	114	86
Business	2	2
Farmland	4	3
Multiple	12	9

The majority of the respondents are paying residential rates. The 86% is similar to the percentage of total rateable properties classified as residential, which is 87%.

**Question 11** – *Do you have any other feedback in respect to this consultation process? For example, you may have ideas as to how the consultation process could be improved, or additional information that could be made available to assist in understanding the proposal.*

Again there is a real mixture of comments in this question, both positive and negative. Attachment eight provides a listing of all these comments.

**Question 12** - *Your name and address (email or post) (this information is optional)*

A total of 56 contact details were provided.

It was decided not to make this question mandatory, as by even making it mandatory people who did not wish to provide their name could quite easily have provided limited information. People who provided their contact details will receive a response following the Council decision. Names and addresses have not been included in the attachment, primarily for space reasons. The majority of respondents did not provide contact details.

Overall the on-line survey responses are similar to the written responses in that there is clear majority opposition to the proposed special rate variation and generally speaking the objections are based on the same principles (i.e. affordability, Council inefficiency etc).

## 10.10 Special Rate Variation - Consultation

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It is important to acknowledge that on-line surveys do not provide statistically valid results, but rather they provide an easy and efficient opportunity for people to provide feedback.

As with many Council consultation processes often it is the most passionate / interested / impacted people who provide submissions, either for or against, and the challenge for any council is engaging with the entire community, as many people do not take the time, or have the time, to make a submission to Council.

To try and gauge the broader community sentiment, one method that has been used for the last ten years is an independent survey to obtain a more statistically accurate reflection of community sentiment. However Council chose to not pursue this as a method of consultation for this special rate variation.

### **Re-exhibition of the Delivery Program and Operational Plan**

Due to feedback from IPART advising the Delivery Program and Operational Plan did not sufficiently address Council's special rate variation application in 2017/18, Council staff sought their feedback whilst these documents were on re-exhibition throughout September and October 2017.

The advice received from IPART was that both documents clearly outlined the basis of the special rate variation in future years (2018/19 and 2019/20), and the documents satisfactorily explain the process of the temporary expiring special rate variation in 2017/18.

IPART advised that the approach from Ballina Shire Council was reasonable and we have covered off on their requirements.

### **Sustainability Considerations**

- **Environment**  
Contemporary works often incorporate environmentally sustainable initiatives.
- **Social**  
Council needs to be mindful of any social impacts that may arise from the imposition of extra Council charges.
- **Economic**  
Improved waterways can assist in promoting Ballina as a visitor or tourist destination. Modern and well maintained infrastructure is also seen as a positive benefit.

### **Legal / Resource / Financial Implications**

If Council resolves to proceed with the application there will be limited resource implications in completing the application.

If Council resolves not to proceed with the application it will be necessary to make savings in other recurrent programs to achieve the outcomes sought by the proposed special variation. Council will also not achieve financial sustainability which means that our assets will deteriorate over the medium to long term.

## 10.10 Special Rate Variation - Consultation

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### **Consultation**

A comprehensive consultation process has been undertaken including letters being sent to all ratepayers in the Shire, an on-line survey, advertising, media releases, promotion on Council's website and four public meetings.

### **Options**

The options available are not to proceed with an application to IPART, proceed, or proceed with an amended proposal.

The completed application has to be submitted to IPART by February 2018.

### ***Not Proceed***

Based on the written submissions and the on-line survey there are a number of objections to the proposal and Councillors may wish to support the residents who have taken the time to write or complete the on-line survey.

The advantage of this option is that it will reduce the cost of future increases in rates paid by property owners and lessen the burden on existing ratepayers.

The disadvantage of this option is that Council will continue to be under-funding its asset renewal program, which will, overtime, result in the long term deterioration of our infrastructure, increase the infrastructure backlog and increase our asset maintenance expenses. This then impacts on the overall financial sustainability of Council.

Council has a significant recurrent deficit in respect to its asset renewal program.

The presentation to the public meetings included a slide that demonstrated the annual depreciation expense for our core classes of infrastructure such as roads, stormwater, footpaths, buildings, open spaces etc is approximately \$10.0m per annum, and the Council recurrent budget, with regular grants is approximately \$6.7m, leaving a deficit of \$3.3m. It is not feasible to address the \$3.3m shortfall to eliminate this deficit through savings in existing operating expenses.

Therefore Councillors, as custodians of the infrastructure assets for the community, need to determine what strategy they wish to follow to ensure that our existing assets do not deteriorate over time.

The other disadvantage of this option is that Council will not be in a position to take a lead role in making a significant change to the health of our waterways, particularly the Richmond River.

### ***Proceed***

Councillors have the difficult task of making decisions in the best interests of the community and are entitled to make a decision that may not be popular, but may be considered to be the "right" decision taking into account the information available.

Some of the facts that support such a decision are:

## 10.10 Special Rate Variation - Consultation

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- a) Council has a responsibility to adequately maintain its infrastructure assets
- b) Deferring this type of decision only increases the future liability for Council
- c) Additional funds help to improve Council's overall financial position in respect to our operating result
- d) Additional funds in respect to the Healthy Waterways program will help turnaround the deterioration of the Shire's waterways
- e) Even if with this increase the overall average residential rates and charges account remains low compared to similar councils in this region
- f) In determining our last application for a permanent SRV, IPART stated "*that council has demonstrated the need for the proposed revenue in its LTFP and its community consultation*" (page 5 -25 May 2017). There is a need for this additional revenue based on Council's limited rate revenue and overall infrastructure base.

### ***Proceed with an amended application***

Council could resolve to proceed with a lower increase based on the feedback received. For example the Healthy Waterways Program could be deleted from the proposal, decreasing the overall increase by 1.5%. Another idea from the Ballina Public Meeting was to have a limited term for the Healthy Waterways Program (i.e. ten years) as that would then allow Council to reassess whether there have been benefits achieved.

If Council was to proceed with an amended application, the recommendation would be to amend the Healthy Waterways Program, as the funding for the asset renewal program is considered essential due to the recurrent funding deficiency, as compared to depreciation. It is also improves our annual operating result.

The Healthy Waterways Program does not improve our financial sustainability as additional revenue is totally offset by additional operating expenses, therefore this is more a change in service levels.

In respect to the recommendation, from a financial management perspective, it is critical that Council acts as reasonable custodians of the infrastructure we own or control. The asset renewal revenue is essential to the long term financial sustainability of Council therefore the recommendation is to proceed with the SRV application.

### **Delivery Program and Operational Plan**

The Delivery Program (2017/18 to 2020/21) and Operational Plan (2017/18), including the Long Term Financial Plan, were amended and re-exhibited to include extra information on the SRV based on feedback from IPART. No submissions were received and the recommendation asks Council to re-adopt those documents.

Copies of the re-exhibited documents are available on Council's website at the following link:

## 10.10 Special Rate Variation - Consultation

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[http://www.ballina.nsw.gov.au/cp\\_themes/default/page.asp?p=DOC-RMX-52-15-70](http://www.ballina.nsw.gov.au/cp_themes/default/page.asp?p=DOC-RMX-52-15-70)

Refer to the heading titled Current IPR Documents at that link (located in the Integrated Planning and Reporting quick link section of the website).

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Council acknowledges the feedback from the community consultation process undertaken for the proposed special rate variation to finance the Healthy Waterways Program and increased asset renewal.
2. In acknowledging this consultation Council remains of the opinion that it is reasonable to proceed with the proposed special variation application for a number of reasons, including but not limited to:
  - a) It is essential that Council increases its level of rate income to finance an adequate level of asset renewal to reduce the risk of Council's infrastructure assets deteriorating over time
  - b) The funding of the Healthy Waterways Program will help Council improve the overall condition of the Shire's waterways
  - c) The additional rate income generated will improve Council's overall financial position and long term financial sustainability
  - d) The removal of the waste operations charge in 2017/18 has helped to reduce the financial impact of the additional increase in ordinary rates
  - e) Council is committed to minimising increases in the water, wastewater, waste and stormwater charges for the three year period from 2017/18 to 2019/20 to assist in lessening the financial impact on ratepayers.
3. That Council authorises the General Manager to submit an application to IPART for a special rate variation based on 9.3% in 2018/19 and 5.9% in 2019/20.
4. That Council adopts the amended Delivery Program (2017/18 to 2020/21) and Operational Plan (2017/18), including the Long Term Financial Plan, as exhibited.

### Attachment(s)

1. Public Meetings - Presentation
2. Submissions
3. Confidential Submission (Under separate cover)
4. Summary of responses to on-line survey
5. Responses to on-line survey Question 4
6. Responses to on-line survey Question 7
7. Responses to on-line survey Question 8
8. Responses to on-line survey Question 11

**MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF BALLINA SHIRE COUNCIL  
HELD IN THE BALLINA SHIRE COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
40 CHERRY STREET BALLINA,  
ON 23/11/17 AT 9.00 AM**

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**10.7 Financial Review - 30 September 2017**

**231117/21      RESOLVED**

(Cr Sharon Cadwallader/Cr Ben Smith)

That Council notes the contents of the September 2017 Quarterly Budget Review and approves the changes identified within this report, with the following amendments:

1. Amendment to the ferry fee for dual axle caravans from \$18.00 to \$14.00.
2. That Council investigate a tour operator fee for operators using the facilities at Killen Falls.

FOR VOTE - All Councillors voted unanimously.  
ABSENT. DID NOT VOTE - Cr Jeff Johnson

**10.8 Financial Statements - 2016/17**

**231117/22      RESOLVED**

(Cr Ben Smith/Cr Sharon Cadwallader)

That Council adopts the annual financial reports and auditor's reports for the financial year ended 30 June 2017, as publicly exhibited.

FOR VOTE - All Councillors voted unanimously.  
ABSENT. DID NOT VOTE - Cr Jeff Johnson

**10.10 Special Rate Variation - Consultation**

A **Motion** was moved by Cr Keith Williams and seconded by Cr Nathan Willis

1. That Council acknowledges the feedback from the community consultation process undertaken for the proposed special rate variation to finance the Healthy Waterways Program and increased asset renewal.
2. In acknowledging this consultation Council remains of the opinion that it is reasonable to proceed with the proposed special variation application for a number of reasons, including but not limited to:
  - a) It is essential that Council increases its level of rate income to finance an adequate level of asset renewal to reduce the risk of Council's infrastructure assets deteriorating over time
  - b) The funding of the Healthy Waterways Program will help Council improve the overall condition of the Shire's waterways



**MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF BALLINA SHIRE COUNCIL  
HELD IN THE BALLINA SHIRE COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
40 CHERRY STREET BALLINA,  
ON 23/11/17 AT 9.00 AM**

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- c) The additional rate income generated will improve Council's overall financial position and long term financial sustainability
  - d) The removal of the waste operations charge in 2017/18 has helped to reduce the financial impact of the additional increase in ordinary rates
  - e) Council is committed to minimising increases in the water, wastewater, waste and stormwater charges for the three year period from 2017/18 to 2019/20 to assist in lessening the financial impact on ratepayers.
3. That Council authorises the General Manager to submit an application to IPART for a special rate variation based on 9.3% in 2018/19 and 5.9% in 2019/20.
4. That Council adopts the amended Delivery Program (2017/18 to 2020/21) and Operational Plan (2017/18), including the Long Term Financial Plan, as exhibited.

An **Amendment** was moved by Cr Phillip Meehan and seconded by Cr Ben Smith

That Council delete the Healthy Waterways Program from the special rate variation application.

The **Amendment** was **LOST**.

FOR VOTE - Cr Phillip Meehan and Cr Ben Smith

AGAINST VOTE - Cr David Wright, Cr Sharon Parry, Cr Eoin Johnston, Cr Stephen McCarthy, Cr Nathan Willis, Cr Keith Williams and Cr Sharon Cadwallader

ABSENT. DID NOT VOTE - Cr Jeff Johnson

The **Motion** was **CARRIED**.

FOR VOTE - Cr David Wright, Cr Sharon Parry, Cr Eoin Johnston, Cr Stephen McCarthy, Cr Nathan Willis, Cr Keith Williams and Cr Sharon Cadwallader

AGAINST VOTE - Cr Phillip Meehan and Cr Ben Smith

ABSENT. DID NOT VOTE - Cr Jeff Johnson

**231117/23**      **RESOLVED**

(Cr Keith Williams/Cr Nathan Willis)

- 1. That Council acknowledges the feedback from the community consultation process undertaken for the proposed special rate variation to finance the Healthy Waterways Program and increased asset renewal.
- 2. In acknowledging this consultation Council remains of the opinion that it is reasonable to proceed with the proposed special variation application for a number of reasons, including but not limited to:

**MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF BALLINA SHIRE COUNCIL  
HELD IN THE BALLINA SHIRE COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
40 CHERRY STREET BALLINA,  
ON 23/11/17 AT 9.00 AM**

---

- a) It is essential that Council increases its level of rate income to finance an adequate level of asset renewal to reduce the risk of Council's infrastructure assets deteriorating over time
  - b) The funding of the Healthy Waterways Program will help Council improve the overall condition of the Shire's waterways
  - c) The additional rate income generated will improve Council's overall financial position and long term financial sustainability
  - d) The removal of the waste operations charge in 2017/18 has helped to reduce the financial impact of the additional increase in ordinary rates
  - e) Council is committed to minimising increases in the water, wastewater, waste and stormwater charges for the three year period from 2017/18 to 2019/20 to assist in lessening the financial impact on ratepayers.
3. That Council authorises the General Manager to submit an application to IPART for a special rate variation based on 9.3% in 2018/19 and 5.9% in 2019/20.
4. That Council adopts the amended Delivery Program (2017/18 to 2020/21) and Operational Plan (2017/18), including the Long Term Financial Plan, as exhibited.

FOR VOTE - Cr David Wright, Cr Sharon Parry, Cr Eoin Johnston, Cr Stephen McCarthy, Cr Nathan Willis, Cr Keith Williams and Cr Sharon Cadwallader

AGAINST VOTE - Cr Phillip Meehan and Cr Ben Smith

ABSENT. DID NOT VOTE - Cr Jeff Johnson

**10.11 Water Leak - Write-off**

**231117/24 RESOLVED**

(Cr Sharon Cadwallader/Cr Nathan Willis)

That based on the contents of this report and the circumstances that contributed to this event, Council approves the write off of \$24,031.47 for water consumption charges.

FOR VOTE - Cr David Wright, Cr Sharon Parry, Cr Eoin Johnston, Cr Stephen McCarthy, Cr Nathan Willis, Cr Keith Williams, Cr Sharon Cadwallader and Cr Ben Smith

AGAINST VOTE - Cr Phillip Meehan

ABSENT. DID NOT VOTE - Cr Jeff Johnson

**10.8 Delivery Program and Operational Plan - 31 December Review**

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**10.8 Delivery Program and Operational Plan - 31 December Review**

**Delivery Program**      Communications

**Objective**              To provide the quarterly review of the 2017/18 Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

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Section 404 (5) of the Local Government Act states as follows:

***Delivery Program***

*"The general manager must ensure that regular progress reports are provided to the council reporting as to its progress with respect to the principal activities detailed in its delivery program. Progress reports must be provided at least every 6 months".*

Even though Council is only required to receive six monthly progress reports the preferred practice is to receive more timely quarterly reports. This report represents the second review of the 2017/18 - 2020/21 Delivery Program and the 2017/18 Operational Plan, with the information contained in the report based on work undertaken up to 31 December 2017 (six months).

The review documentation is included as a separate attachment to this report and the attachment provides an overview of all the programs included in the Delivery Program and Operational Plan, with comments provided by the group and / or section manager. Copies of the current Delivery Program and Operational Plan are available on Council's website and also accessible by Councillors on their iPads.

**Key Issues**

- Compare actual results against the adopted goals and priorities
- Update on special rate variation

**Information**

The Delivery Program and Operational Plan are the two key corporate documents that establish Council's goals and priorities for the term of the Council and the current financial year. The attachment to this report provides a comprehensive overview of the actions being progressed, with the information also being linked to Council's Community Strategic Plan (CSP) Objectives. The attachment has two main sections being:

- Program Actions - This section provides a comment on the status of all the major actions in the Operational Plan
- Service Delivery Indicators - This section provides details on the key indicators within the Operational Plan.

## 10.8 Delivery Program and Operational Plan - 31 December Review

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All items are marked with a green (on track for this financial year) amber (behind schedule or below target) or red (not progressing as planned or off track) traffic light. One item has been marked as black as Council resolved not to proceed with the project due to the funding being allocated elsewhere (Russellton Industrial Estate funding transferred to Airport Boulevard)

There are a total of 110 major tasks listed in the Operational Plan and the following two tables provide an overview of the status of those actions on a number and percentage basis.

### Program Actions Overview - By Number of Tasks

Group / Status	GM	DEH	Civil	SCF	Total
Green	25	9	37	34	105
Amber	0	0	3	1	4
Red	0	0	0	0	0
Black	1	0	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>110</b>

### Program Actions Overview - By Percentage

Group / Status	GM	DEH	Civil	SCF	Total
Green	96	100	93	97	95
Amber	0	0	7	3	4
Red	0	0	0	0	0
Black	4	0	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Items of interest in the attachment include:

- Implement Companion Animals Management Plan (page 4) – Council endorsed an update to this plan at the November 2017 Ordinary meeting.
- Implement Community Gallery Services at the Fire Station site (page 4) – This project is now tracking well with the launch of the building planned for February 2018.
- Participate in the Roads and Maritime Services Location Marker Program for Ballina (page 8) – After many years of planning the RMS has advised that the marker program will be installed for Ballina in mid 2018 with the Council selected images approved.
- Implement Regional Boating Strategy (page 9) – The installation of a number of pontoons and wharfs planned for this year has commenced.
- Implement Richmond River Estuary Coastal Zone Management Plan (page 12) – Council continues to be successful with grant applications with funding approved for a scoping study for North Creek.
- Implement Shaws Bay Coastal Zone Management Plan (page 13) – Works have commenced on Compton Drive with a significant amount of positive feedback on this project.

## 10.8 Delivery Program and Operational Plan - 31 December Review

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- Implement a proactive street tree planting program (page 13) – Tree plantings have been completed for another segment of Crane Street. The medium term benefits of this program are demonstrated by the excellent condition of the Council planted trees on Crane Street between Cherry and Moon Streets, with those trees now well advanced.
- Enhance online employee services (page 20) – A new onboarding system has been fully implemented to improve the induction program for new staff members.
- Pursue compliance with the Fit for the Future Program (page 20) – Council approved an application for a special rate variation at the November 2017 Ordinary meeting.

In respect to Service Delivery there are a total of 104 indicators identified in the Operational Plan and the following two tables provide an overview of how Council is performing against those indicators, again on a number and percentage basis.

### Service Delivery Indicators Overview - By Number of Activities

Group / Status	GM	DEH	Civil	SCF	Total
Green	19	21	30	19	89
Amber	1	2	5	5	13
Red	0	0	1	1	2
<b>Total Tasks</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>104</b>

### Service Delivery Indicators Overview - By Percentage

Group / Status	GM	DEH	Civil	SCF	Total
Green	95	91	83	76	86
Amber	5	9	14	20	12
Red	0	0	3	4	2
<b>Percentage Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

A number of these indicators are beyond the control of Council and the indicator's primary purpose is to provide an idea of how a service may be tracking compared to previous years.

Items of note include:

- Building Services (page 29) - Percentage of construction Certificates issued by Council (% of total market) – 78% - Council's market share has improved from the 73% recorded for the first quarter to 78%. This has still been marked as green as based on the trend the 80% benchmark should be achieved by year end. The lower than normal percentage relates to a large number of project homes being approved by private certifiers.
- Commercial Services (Airport) (page 29) – Income and passenger numbers continue to achieve record levels, with passenger numbers now over the 510,000 mark.
- Community Facilities (page 31) – A number of the library indicators are tracking below the benchmark figures and are generally trending below previous years.

## **10.8 Delivery Program and Operational Plan - 31 December Review**

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- Development Services (page 33) – A couple of the indicators are currently below the benchmark (i.e. Section 96 applications determined under 40 days by percentage and days) although with this being a small sample the benchmark figures should still be achieved. A significant amount of development staff resources is being allocated to the CURA A court case.
- Infrastructure Planning (page 38) - Percentage of internal referral applications assessed within 21 days (%) – The result of 86% is the best result recorded and a testament to a number of process improvements implemented in recent years, along with a stable workforce, albeit that one staff member is transitioning to retirement.

### **Sustainability Considerations**

- **Environment**  
There is a range of environmental, social and economic outcomes identified in the Delivery Program and Operational Plan.
- **Social**  
As above.
- **Economic**  
As above.

### **Legal / Resource / Financial Implications**

The Delivery Program and Operational Plan identify the allocation of Council's resources and finances.

### **Consultation**

The purpose of this report is to provide the community with information on how Council is performing in respect to the Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

### **Options**

The report is for noting purposes.

One other matter that can be raised in conjunction with this report is the proposed special rate variation for 2018/19 and 2019/20.

Council staff have had a recent phone conversation with representatives from IPART who are reviewing the integrated planning and reporting documents of councils who have confirmed their intention to apply for a special rate variation.

The feedback from IPART is that there are two areas where Council's adopted documents could still be improved being:

1. Reduction in the estimated rate peg limit for 2018/19 from Council's exhibited figure of 2.5% (which was an estimate) to the recently released figure of 2.3%. This now means Council's application for 2018/19 will be for 9.1% and not 9.3%, with the 9.1% consisting of the 2.3% rate peg, the 3.4% approved as a one-off for 2017/18 and the 3.4% proposed for 2018/19. There is no change to the proposed variation for 2019/20 being an estimated rate peg of 2.5% and a special variation percentage of 3.4% for a total variation of 5.9%.
2. Inclusion of further information in the Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) outlining the impact on ratepayers, as included in the adopted Delivery Program and Operational Plan. Based on earlier feedback, from different staff at IPART, Council included a comprehensive overview of the impact of the proposal on ratepayers in the Delivery Program and Operational Plan and this information can easily be replicated in the LTFP.

The one concern with this most recent IPART staff conversation is that Council has been dealing with a different staff member in preparing the adopted documents and the two IPART staff in the recent discussion have not been communicating with that other staff member. Therefore they may well bring different views to the assessment of Council's application.

Nevertheless both of these suggested changes are relatively minor and it is recommended that Council endorse these amendments to the adopted documents and the proposed special variation.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That Council notes the content of this report in respect to the 31 December review of the implementation of the 2017/18 Delivery Program and Operational Plan.
2. That Council authorises the General Manager to submit an application to IPART for a special rate variation based on 9.1% in 2018/19 (which is a reduction from the original 9.3% to reflect the confirmed rate peg limit for 2018/19 of 2.3%) and 5.9% in 2019/20.
3. That Council adopts the following minor amendments to the recently adopted Delivery Program (2017/18 to 2020/21), Operational Plan (2017/18) and Long Term Financial Plan:
  - a) Reduction in the actual rate peg limit for 2018/19 from the exhibited figure of 2.5% to 2.3% as per point two above and:
  - b) Inclusion of additional information in the LTFP in respect to the impact of the proposed special rate variation on ratepayers.

### **Attachment(s)**

1. Delivery Program and Operational Plan - 31 December 2017 Review (Under separate cover)

**MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF BALLINA SHIRE COUNCIL  
HELD IN THE BALLINA SHIRE COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
40 CHERRY STREET BALLINA,  
ON 25/01/18 AT 9.00 AM**

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**250118/15      RESOLVED**

(Cr Phillip Meehan/Cr Sharon Parry)

1. That Council adopts the amended Code of Meeting Practice, as exhibited, as per attachment one to this report, with an amendment that Council adopt a four minute timeframe for speeches by Councillors.
2. That Council notes the contents of the draft Model Code of Meeting Practice as per Office of Local Government circular 17-40.
3. That Council thanks Dr Walker and the Lennox Head Residents Association in respect to the submissions on the draft Code of Meeting Practice, as exhibited.

FOR VOTE - Cr David Wright, Cr Phillip Meehan, Cr Sharon Parry, Cr Jeff Johnson, Cr Eoin Johnston, Cr Stephen McCarthy, Cr Nathan Willis, Cr Keith Williams and Cr Sharon Cadwallader

AGAINST VOTE - Cr Ben Smith

**10.8      Delivery Program and Operational Plan - 31 December Review**

**250118/16      RESOLVED**

(Cr Sharon Cadwallader/Cr Nathan Willis)

1. That Council notes the content of this report in respect to the 31 December review of the implementation of the 2017/18 Delivery Program and Operational Plan.
2. That Council authorises the General Manager to submit an application to IPART for a special rate variation based on 9.1% in 2018/19 (which is a reduction from the original 9.3% to reflect the confirmed rate peg limit for 2018/19 of 2.3%) and 5.9% in 2019/20.
3. That Council adopts the following minor amendments to the recently adopted Delivery Program (2017/18 to 2020/21), Operational Plan (2017/18) and Long Term Financial Plan:
  - a) Reduction in the actual rate peg limit for 2018/19 from the exhibited figure of 2.5% to 2.3% as per point two above and:
  - b) Inclusion of additional information in the LTFP in respect to the impact of the proposed special rate variation on ratepayers.
4. That Council receives a report on options to fast track the Water Loss Reduction Program.
5. That Council receives a report on the progress of Council's Waste Diversion Program.



**MINUTES OF THE ORDINARY MEETING OF BALLINA SHIRE COUNCIL  
HELD IN THE BALLINA SHIRE COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
40 CHERRY STREET BALLINA,  
ON 25/01/18 AT 9.00 AM**

**FOR VOTE - Cr David Wright, Cr Phillip Meehan, Cr Sharon Parry, Cr Eoin Johnston, Cr Stephen McCarthy, Cr Nathan Willis, Cr Keith Williams, Cr Sharon Cadwallader and Cr Ben Smith**  
**AGAINST VOTE - Cr Jeff Johnson**

**Adjournment**

The Mayor declared the meeting adjourned at 10.33 am

The meeting resumed at 10.59 am

**10.9 Capital Expenditure Program - 31 December 2017 Review**

**250118/17      RESOLVED**

(Cr Keith Williams/Cr Nathan Willis)

1. That Council notes the contents of this status report on the Capital Expenditure Program for the 2017/18 financial year.
2. That Council approves the following budget amendments as outlined in the attachments to this report:

Item	Current Budget	Revised Budget	Variation	Comment
<b>Open Spaces and Reserves</b>				
Shade Sails – Ballina Heights	0	30,000	30,000	\$15,000 from general revenue and \$15,000 transfer from the open spaces operating budget
Skennars Head Sports Fields	1,300,000	50,000	(1,250,000)	Transfer to 2018/19
<b>Property – Commercial</b>				
Airport – Terminal Expansion	3,400,000	2,400,000	(1,000,000)	Transfer to 2018/19
<b>Water</b>				
Main Renewals	301,600	100,000	(201,600)	Budget saving – transfer back to reserve
<b>Wastewater</b>				
Main Renewals	200,000	100,000	(100,000)	Budget saving – transfer back to reserve
Trunk Mains – Gravity Main Wollongbar	709,000	409,000	(300,000)	Budget saving – transfer back to reserve
Kings Court - Landscaping	0	50,000	50,000	Funded by transfer from wastewater reserve as per Council resolution
<b>Engineering Works – Stormwater</b>				
Coogee Street, Ballina	15,500	5,500	(10,000)	Fund Killarney works
Grant Street, Ballina	93,300	63,300	(30,000)	Transfer to Roads – Grant Street
Megan Crescent / Dodge Lane	18,000	13,000	(5,000)	Fund Killarney works
Kerr Street	20,000	5,000	(15,000)	Fund Killarney works
Grant Street (Tamar to River St), Ballina	20,000	5,000	(15,000)	Fund Killarney works