



Edward River
COUNCIL



Annual Report 2016/17



Welcome and Overview

Message from the General Manager	1
About our Annual Report	3
Our Values	4
Our Image	4
Organisational Structure	5
Our Council.....	6
Councillors 2017-20	8

Message from the General Manager

I am pleased to present Edward River Council's Annual Report 2016-17, the first Annual Report prepared since the creation of Edward River Council following the merger of the former Conargo Shire Council and Deniliquin Council. This Annual Report outlines Council's performance and achievements over the period from 12 May 2016, the date on which Council was proclaimed, to 30 June 2017.

While 2016-17 was a time of extraordinary change for Council's staff as we sought to bring two teams together as one high-performing organisation; I am proud of our success in implementing Council's Operational Plan and delivering an impressive range of projects, programs, events and initiatives over the reporting period.

Of the 160 tasks included in our 2016-17 Operational Report, 132 – or just over 82 per cent - are either completed or on track. This is an extraordinary achievement which demonstrates that, despite the challenges brought by amalgamation; our staff and volunteers have continued to work tirelessly to meet the needs of our community and make the Edward River region an even better place to live, work and visit. I thank them for their efforts and achievements over the past year.

Our organisation's most important priority during 2016-17 was establishing the strong foundations required to position Council for success, both now and into the future. Incorporating the Stronger Councils Framework, developed by the NSW Government in partnership with all new councils across the state, into our internal processes and systems has been critical to achieving this goal.

Strategic capacity

Council demonstrated strong leadership and resolve over 2016-17 in advocating on behalf of our community. Through actively working with both the State and Federal Governments, as well as neighbouring local governments and the Riverina and Murray Regional Organisation of Councils, we have progressed matters of local and regional significance to decision-makers in both Sydney and Canberra. At a local level, we have worked with Murray Irrigation Limited and the Deniliquin Business Chamber to develop a region-wide Branding Strategy, which will enable us to work collaboratively in better promoting, and attracting investment to, our region.

Outstanding service provision

During the reporting period, the Department of Premier and Cabinet commissioned an independent community satisfaction survey of all new councils, with local results revealing that one third of Edward River residents rate our performance as either 'good' or 'very good'. While this is an encouraging result, it also indicates that there is much more work to be done over 2017/18 and beyond in ensuring that our residents and businesses have a convenient and satisfying experience when using Council's services.

We have taken practical steps over the year, including the centralisation of our customer service staff at our Customer Service Centre at 180 Cressy Street, as well as the implementation of a new accessible, customer-friendly website, to improve the quality of our customer service. The coming year will see the development of our first Customer Service Charter, which will include key performance indicators that will be measured and reported on regularly.

Robust community relationships

Improving communication with our community and facilitating conversations with our community has defined Council's approach to decision-making during 2016-17. Significant consultation was undertaken to help shape our \$8.6 million Major Projects Program, funded through the NSW Government's Stronger Communities Fund, as well as our first Disability Inclusion Action Plan

In June, we launched our online consultation platform, *OurSay Edward River*, which provides residents with a simple and accessible way to have their say on important projects and programs being developed by Council, such as our Open Space Strategy and Public Space Strategy, which will guide how we manage our local open and public spaces in the Edward River region over the coming years. Work on these strategies is progressing in 2017/18, with both scheduled to be adopted by Council in early 2018.

Strong performance

Council is working hard to deliver on the needs of our diverse community and provide exceptional services and infrastructure for all residents, irrespective of where they reside in the Edward River region. As demonstrated in our Capital Works Report, we have continued to deliver outstanding infrastructure maintenance and renewal works throughout the region over the past year: Improvements to the Blighty netball and tennis courts, the installation of gym equipment along Deniliquin's Beach to Beach Walk and the completion of the Pottinger Park landscaping project, as well as our annual urban and rural road reseal programmes, reflect our strong, ongoing commitment to considering the wellbeing of the entire region in our decision-making.

Just under \$10 million worth of development was planned or underway in the Edward River region by 30 June 2017, by way of development applications, construction certificates and section 68 (water, sewer and drainage) approvals being processed by Council's Economic Development and Business department. As our community experiences growth, it is critical that Council adopts a strategic approach to how we manage our assets and maintain our infrastructure. Through projects such as the construction of the new 4ML water reservoir in Deniliquin, we will be well positioned to facilitate the continued growth and development of our region.

Sound organisational health

Council's staff play a vital role in contributing to Council's success and our organisation's leadership team is committed to supporting a positive and cohesive workplace culture centred on our new corporate values of Leadership, Excellence, Accountability and Delivery. These values, which are being integrated into our recruitment and staff appraisal systems, will underpin how our organisation operates and how we deliver for our customers and community.

In closing, I thank Ashley Hall, who served as Council's Administrator from 12 May 2016 to 21 September 2017, for his strong leadership during the period covered by this Annual Report. Now, under the leadership of Mayor Norm Brennan, Deputy Mayor Pat Fogarty and our seven Councillors; I am confident that Edward River Council will continue to prove itself to be an effective, efficient and high-performing local government.

I commend this Annual Report to you.

Adam McSwain, General Manager

About our Annual Report

Under the *Local Government Act 1993* (the Act), all councils in NSW are required to report on their progress in implementing their Delivery Program and the effectiveness of the principal activities undertaken in achieving the objectives in their Community Strategic Plan at which those activities are directed.

The Annual Report must be prepared in accordance with the Act and *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005*, and include a copy of the council's audited Financial Statements. Once adopted, the Annual Report must also be posted on the council's website.

As a new council, Edward River Council is exempted from the statutory requirements under sections 428 and 428A of the Act to include the following in its Annual Report 2016-17:

- A State of the Environment Report; and
- An outline of our progress in implementing the Community Strategic Plan.

In the 2017-18 year, Council will develop and adopt our 10-year Community Strategic Plan, which will then inform our four-year Delivery Program and Resourcing Strategy, as well as our future annual Operational Plans. We will report on our achievements in implementing our Community Strategic Plan in future Annual Reports.

Financial Statements

The Office of Local Government has granted Council an extension to the deadline for adopting the audited Financial Statements for the 2016/17 financial year. This is largely due to the extra audit requirements relating to Council's assets. Accordingly, the audited Financial Statements will be attached to this report once adopted by Council in December 2017.

Our Values

Values form the basis of our culture; they add meaning to work and provide a basis for consistent planning and decision-making across our organisation. Edward River Council has adopted a set of values which were developed through a consultative process involving staff across the whole organisation.

All Council employees are expected to demonstrate our corporate values when undertaking their roles and making decisions that impact our customers and community:

Leadership	We seek to provide strong leadership for our community and our customers. We lead with empathy and integrity.
Excellence	We strive for excellence and continuous improvement: In who we are, in how we work, and in how we deliver results for our community.
Accountability	We are open, honest and transparent in how we do business, the decisions we make, and the action we take.
Delivery	We are committed to delivering results for our community.

Our Image

Edward River Council formally adopted its Corporate Logo and Brand on 31 August 2016 following an extensive community consultation process.

Inspired by the shared community values and natural attributes of the Edward River region, our Corporate Logo features intertwining elements:



Orange grain

The importance of agriculture to the Edward River region and its economy.

Blue droplet

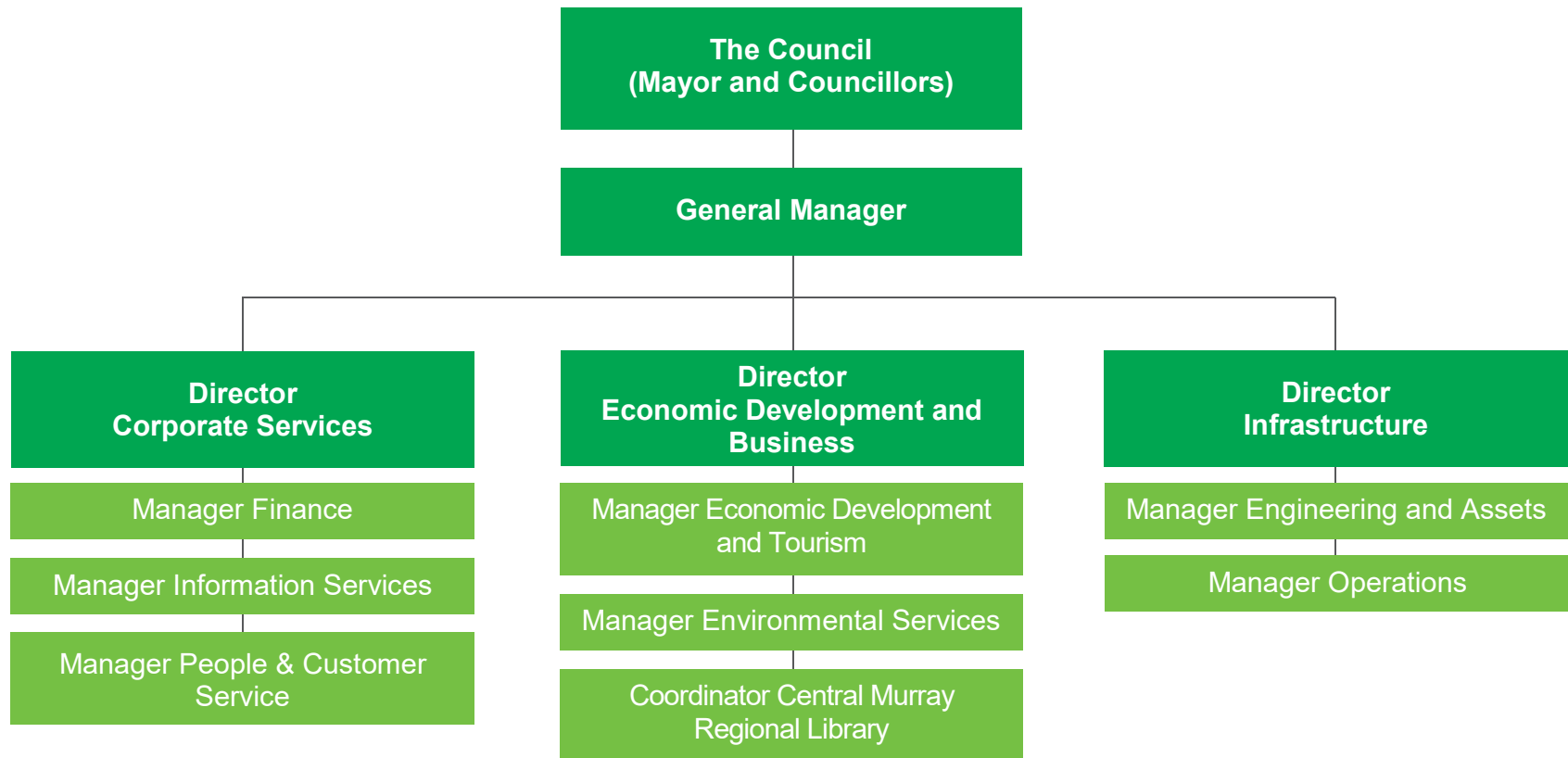
The Edward River, which winds its way through the region.

Green leaf

The Edward River region's unique natural environment and growing community.

Organisational Structure

Edward River Council is organised into three Departments, each with a range of service delivery responsibilities. Together, the General Manager and three Directors comprise the organisation's Executive Management Team and are responsible for providing the organisation with strong and effective leadership.



Our Council

Edward River Council's governing body comprises nine Councillors, all of whom were elected at the inaugural elections held on 9 September 2017. Councillors are elected to represent the entire region, rather than individual wards, with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor being elected by the Councillors.

Councillors are responsible for making decisions and developing policies that guide the activities of the Council. This role is performed at Council and Committee meetings, where the decision-making takes place. Our Councillors also provide leadership and guidance to the General Manager and facilitate communication between the Council as a governing body and the community.

Mayoral Election

The Council elected Cr Norm Brennan as Mayor and Cr Pat Fogarty as Deputy Mayor at its Ordinary Meeting in September 2017. Both Cr Brennan and Cr Fogarty were elected to their respective positions for a two-year term until September 2019.

Council Meetings

Council's Ordinary Meetings are held at 9.00am on the third Thursday of each month, from February to December. Meetings are usually held in the Council Chambers at 180 Cressy Street, Deniliquin, however, every third Ordinary Meeting is held at a venue in one of the Edward River region's rural villages. Further information on Council

meetings, including meeting venues and business papers, can be accessed from Council's website.

355 Committees

Under section 355 of the Local Government Act, Council is able to delegate some of its functions to a committee of Council. Council uses this delegation to appoint community members to manage its facilities or functions through a committee or board of management.

Council has constituted the following committees under section 355 of the Act:

- Blighty Hall Committee;
- Booroorban Hall Committee;
- Conargo Hall Committee;
- Deniliquin Multi-Arts Centre Committee;
- Deniliquin Promotional Advisory Group;
- Edward River Community Garden Committee;
- Edward River Heritage Committee;
- Edward River Municipal Band Committee;
- Edward River Tidy Towns Committee;
- Long Paddock Committee;
- Mayrung Hall Committee;
- Memorial Park Users Advancement Committee;
- Pretty Pine Hall Committee;
- Rotary Park Advancement Committee; and
- Wanganella Hall Committee.

External Committees

Council is represented on the following advisory committees, community groups, industry bodies and advocacy organisations:

- Billabong Yanco Creek System Project;
- Central Murray County Council;
- Central Murray Regional Library;
- Country Mayors Association;
- Deniliquin/ Conargo Area Local Emergency Management Committee;
- Edward River Country Education Fund;
- Murray Darling Association;
- Murray Valley Field Station Working Group;
- NSW Rural Fire Service Liaison Committee (Mid Murray Zone);
- NSW Rural Fire Service Zone Bushfire Management Committee;
- Riverina and Murray Regional Organisation of Councils;
- South West Music Regional Conservatorium; and
- Werkitya Kalpal Deniliquin and District Indigenous Working Party.

Advisory Committees and Working Groups

A number of advisory committees and working groups have been established to enable Council to develop a greater strategic planning capability, including:

- Deniliquin Community Safety and Crime Prevention Advisory Committee;
- Disability Advisory Committee
- Edward River Council Airport Advisory Committee;
- Edward River Council Floodplain Risk Management Advisory Committee;
- Edward River Council Open Space and Public Space Strategic Working Group; and
- Local Traffic Committee.

Councillors 2017-20

Elections for Edward River Council were held on 9 September 2017, at which nine Councillors were elected for a three-year term. Following the local government election and the swearing in of the Councillors, Cr Norm Brennan and Cr Pat Fogarty were elected Mayor and Deputy Mayor, respectively.



Cr Norm Brennan
Mayor



Cr Pat Fogarty
Deputy Mayor



Cr Peta Betts



Cr Marg Bull



Cr Ashley Hall



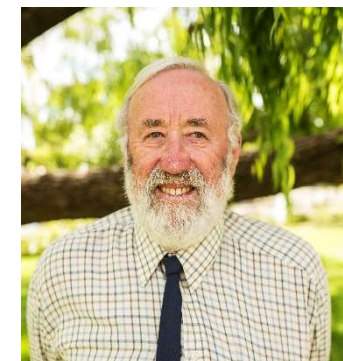
Cr Peter McCrabb



Cr Nick Metcalfe



Cr Norm McAllister



Cr Mac Wallace



Edward River
COUNCIL

Annual Report 2016/17

Part 2 - Operational Plan



Operational Plan

Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework..... 1

Achieving our Operational Plan 2016/17 2

 Table A: 2016/17 Operational Plan Tasks..... 2

Office of the General Manager 3

Corporate Services 4

Economic Development and Business 5

Infrastructure..... 6

Stronger Communities Fund..... 7

 Table B: Stronger Communities Grants Program..... 10

 Table C: Stronger Communities Grants Program (continued) 11

Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework

The *Local Government Act 1993* (the Local Government Act) requires all councils in NSW to operate within the Integrated Planning and Framework, which allows councils to draw their various plans together, understand how they interact and get the maximum leverage from their efforts by planning holistically for the future.

Community Strategic Plan

Sitting above all other council plans and policies in the planning hierarchy, the Community Strategic Plan identifies the main priorities and aspirations of the community and provides a clear set of strategies to achieve this vision. While Council has a custodial role in preparing and maintaining the Community Strategic Plan, other stakeholders, including NSW Government agencies and community groups, may also be engaged in delivering the long-term objectives of the Plan.

Resourcing Strategy

The Resourcing Strategy articulates how Council intends on delivering the Community Strategic Plan. The Strategy consists of three components: Long Term Financial Planning, Workforce Management Planning, and Asset Management Planning.

Delivery Program

The Delivery Program translates the goals of the community, as contained in the Community Strategic Plan, into actions. The Program sets out the principal activities to be undertaken

by Council in implementing the Plan within the resources available under the Resourcing Strategy.

Operational Plan

Spelling out the details of the Delivery Program, the Operational Plan lists the individual projects and activities that will be undertaken for the year to achieve the commitments made in the Delivery Program.



Achieving our Operational Plan 2016/17

The Local Government Act requires Council to report on the effectiveness of the principal activities in implementing the Delivery Program and Operational Plan in its Annual Report.

As Council was proclaimed on 12 May 2016, our 2015/16 Operational Plan, which was adopted on 21 July 2016, sought to deliver on the priorities set out in the Community Strategic Plans and Delivery Programs of our predecessor councils, Conargo Shire Council and Deniliquin Council. The development of a new Community Strategic Plan and Delivery Program will be completed in the 2017/18 year.

Our 2016/17 Operational Plan contained 160 tasks for our four departments: Office of the General Manager, Corporate Services, Economic Development and Business, and Infrastructure.

Table A: 2016/17 Operational Plan Tasks

Office of the General Manager	
On target	30
Not on target	6
Deferred	1
Corporate Services	
On target	14
Not on target	1
Deferred	1
Economic Development and Business	
On target	30
Not on target	5
Deferred	2
Infrastructure	
On target	58
Not on target	9
Deferred	3
On target	132
Not on target	21
Deferred	7

Office of the General Manager

The Office of the General Manager provides executive support to the Mayor and Councillors and is responsible for managing Council's relationships with Federal, State and local governments, as well as residents and ratepayers of the Edward River region. Its functions and services include:

- Advocacy, regional partnerships and government relations;
- Civic events and Citizenship ceremonies;
- Community engagement and development;
- Council Business and meeting support;
- Corporate communications and media relations;
- Mayor and Councillor secretarial support.

Key Achievements 2016/17

- Developed and implemented our new Edward River Council corporate brand, which was designed and selected following an extensive community consultation process.
- Held 22 Council meetings during 2016/17 and provided executive and secretarial assistance to various section 355 and advisory Committees during the reporting period.
- Facilitated an organisation-wide cultural assessment, which has informed the development of Council's new organisational structure.
- Designed and launched a new customer-friendly Edward River Council website at www.edwardriver.nsw.gov.au, which is accessible

across smartphone, tablet and desktop platforms. A simple homepage featuring predictive search enables customers to quickly access key services and information and locate forms and publications.

- Established a corporate Facebook page in 2016 and gained over 500 followers before end of the financial year.
- Successfully delivered the 2017 Australia Day celebrations in Conargo and Deniliquin and administered the Conargo and Deniliquin Australia Day Awards.
- Conducted community consultation to assist the Stronger Communities Fund Assessment Panel to determine the composition of Council's \$8.6 million Major Projects Program.
- Launched a new online community engagement hub, called *OurSay Edward River*, available at www.oursay.org/EdwardRiver, allowing residents and ratepayers to have their say on various Council projects, programs and activities.
- Partnered with community stakeholders to deliver various community events, including annual Seniors Week, Youth Week, NAIDOC Week and Local Government Week celebrations.
- Delivered the annual Wanganella Anzac Day service and supported the Deniliquin Sub-Branch of the Returned and Services League (RSL) in delivering the annual Deniliquin Anzac Day service.

Corporate Services

Corporate Services is responsible for providing corporate support and financial services to the organisation's internal and external customers, including managing the systems and processes required to enable outstanding service delivery to our customers. Its functions and services includes:

- Customer service;
- Finance, rates and revenue;
- Governance, compliance and Integrated Planning and Reporting;
- Human resources and recruitment;
- Information Technology and records management;
- Internal Audit; and
- Workplace health and safety.

Key Achievements 2016/17

- Centralised our customer service operations at our Customer Service Centre at 180 Cressy Street, Deniliquin, providing residents and ratepayers with a one-stop shop for doing business with Council.
- Commenced the implementation of new records management, finance and payroll systems. Once implemented, these systems will enable greater effectiveness and efficiency within the organisation and improve our performance.
- Reviewed our Policy Register, which resulted in a number of new policies being developed and adopted by Council during the reporting period.

- Integrated our new corporate values – LEAD: Leadership, Excellence, Accountability and Delivery – into our recruitment and staff appraisal processes.
- Merged the former Conargo Shire Council and Deniliquin Council Consultative Committees and Work, Health and Safety Committees.
- Adopted a new corporate staff uniform, promoting the Edward River Council brand in a consistent, professional manner to our customers and making it easier for customers to identify our staff.
- Developed project plans to support the delivery of key Corporate Services projects including Records Management, Information Technology, Finance and Governance.
- Commenced the upgrade of critical Information Technology infrastructure at Council's Customer Service Centre, Civic Place Administration Centre and Works Depots.
- Rolled out a new customer relations management system to improve the way customer enquiries and requests are managed.
- Commenced work on a new Customer Service Charter, which will establish clear standards for the level of customer service our community can expect from Council.
- Negotiated a service agreement with Forms Express to develop online rates services, which are scheduled to commence in 2017/18.

Economic Development and Business

Economic Development and Business is responsible for attracting new investment in the Edward River region, promoting the region as a tourism destination and centre for business development, and facilitating a regulatory environment conducive to economic, community and cultural growth. Its functions and services include:

- Business and industry development;
- Central Murray Regional Library;
- Disability inclusion and accessibility;
- Health and building;
- Local laws, ranger and animal services;
- Planning and development assessment; and
- Tourism, heritage and visitor information services.

Key Achievements 2016/17

- Processed a significant number of development applications and construction certificate, complying development certificate and section 68 works applications, worth a combined total value of \$9,826,155.00.
- Undertook a robust community engagement process to inform the development of Council's first Disability Inclusion Action Plan.
- Planned and delivered 272 events at the Central Murray Regional Library over the reporting period, attended by 3,927 people.
- Conducted 46 swimming pool inspections to ensure compliance with *Swimming Pool Act 1992* safety requirements.

- Developed and adopted a Contaminated Land Management Policy in partnership with other member councils of the Riverina and Murray Regional Organisation of Councils.
- Continued Council's membership of Murray Regional Tourism, the peak regional tourism organisation responsible for coordinating tourism activities and growing the visitor economy in the greater Murray region.
- Welcomed over 20,000 visitors to the Deniliquin Visitor Information Centre & Peppin Heritage Centre during 2015/16.
- Delivered phase one of the Deniliquin Promotions Advisory Group's *Visit Deni* campaign, promoting Deniliquin as a tourism destination and centre for business development.
- Partnered with Yarkuwa Indigenous Knowledge Centre Aboriginal Corporation to deliver cultural activities at the Central Murray Regional Library for both NAIDOC Week 2017 and Adult Learner's Week.
- Received a permanent bulk loan from the State Library of NSW comprising 200 large print books and 100 audio books, expanding the collection available at the Central Murray Regional Library.
- Conducted 60 inspections of local food premises during 2016/17 to ensure compliance with NSW Food Authority requirements and promote food safety.
- Hosted 15 exhibitions at the Peppin Heritage Centre, including the annual Bald Archy Prize Exhibition.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure is responsible for the operation, maintenance and upgrading of Council's asset infrastructure and open spaces, including parks and gardens and recreational reserves. Its functions and services include:

- Asset management;
- Engineering and technical services;
- Footpaths, kerb and gutter;
- Open space, parks and gardens, and recreation facilities;
- Roads and transport infrastructure;
- Stormwater drainage; and
- Water and sewerage services.

Key Achievements 2016/17

- Engaged 50-50 funding through the Federal Government's Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Programme to undertake the \$1.1 million Barham Road Widening Project.
- Installed two new exercise stations along Deniliquin's Beach to Beach Walk, which was co-funded by the Federal Government through its Stronger Communities Programme.
- Partnered with Local Land Services to extend the walkway from Murray Street, Wanganella, to the Billabong Creek bridge, improving access to the Peppin Merino Ram Memorial.
- Continued the implementation of the Conargo Village Masterplan through the completion of the

Pottinger Park landscaping project. The park celebrates the contribution of the late Manny Pottinger to the Conargo community.

- Commenced the consolidation and integration of the former Conargo Shire Council and Deniliquin Council asset management strategies and plans.
- Completed the construction of the new 4ML reservoir along Wright Bros Drive near the Deniliquin Airport, providing additional capacity in the water supply system for the adjacent industrial and residential areas.
- Upgraded the Blighty Recreation Reserve netball courts to ensure compliance with Picola and District Football and Netball League and Netball Victoria requirements.
- Constructed a wharf at the McLean Beach Boat Ramp, allowing boat users to safely enter and exit their vessels when accessing McLean Beach.
- Delivered our annual urban and rural road reseal programmes, which enabled approximately 30 kilometres of rural roads and 4.5 kilometres of urban roads to be resealed.
- Completed the replacement of the sewer pump stations at Pakenham Street and Burton Street, including the decommissioning and removal of the existing pump stations.
- Installed a dedicated trunk main, one kilometre in length, from the existing trunk main along Lawson Syphon Road to the new 4ML reservoir along Wright Bros Drive.

Stronger Communities Fund

The Stronger Communities Fund was established by the NSW Government to provide all new councils, including Edward River Council, with funding to kick-start the delivery of projects that improve community infrastructure and services.

Council received \$10 million through the Stronger Communities Fund, which was allocated as follows:

- \$8.6 million for Council's Major Projects Program;
- \$1 million for Council's Stronger Communities Grants Program;
- \$200,000 for projects identified by Council committees; and a
- \$200,000 contribution to the 2016 Deniliquin Ute Muster.

In determining which projects were funded through the Stronger Communities Fund, Council was required to follow an open and transparent process and apply high governance standards set by the NSW Government. This included the appointment of a Stronger Communities Fund Assessment Panel to oversee the funding process.

Major Projects Program

Council announced in June 2017 that 12 projects would be funded through our \$8.6 million Major Projects Program. These projects were selected by the Stronger Communities Fund Assessment Panel following an extensive community consultation process. All projects funded through the Major Projects Program must be completed by 30 June 2019 and acquitted by 31 December 2019. Projects funded include:

Deniliquin Swim Centre Revitalisation \$880,000

The Deniliquin Swim Centre will be revitalised through an \$880,000 investment, including the addition of an all-abilities Water Play Facility, creating a fun family-friendly aquatic environment for locals and visitors alike. Other improvements will include the re-lining of the main pool, the construction of a wet-deck and the installation of solar heating to the medium pool.

Community Masterplans and Initial Works \$2,105,000

Over \$2 million will be invested into developing and delivering on the first stage of works on long-term strategic plans for:

The Deniliquin River Front - \$750,000;

The Deniliquin Town Centre Streetscape - \$750,000;

An Arts and Culture Precinct - \$475,000; and

A multi-use Deniliquin Sports Precinct - \$130,000.

Deniliquin Regional Sports and Entertainment Stadium Extension \$540,000

An allocation of \$540,000 will go towards extending the Deniliquin Regional Sports and Entertainment Stadium and ensuring that it remains fit for use. This project will allow more sport and recreation programs to be facilitated at the Stadium through the installation of new flooring and additional court space.

Blighty Community Netball and Tennis Facility \$550,000

Council will construct a new purpose-built community Netball and Tennis Clubhouse at the Blighty Sport and Recreation Reserve. With the addition of the new Clubhouse, the Blighty Reserve will cement its place as one of the region's premier sporting facilities.

Deniliquin Children's Centre Extension \$500,000

Through a \$500,000 contribution to the Deniliquin Children's Centre expansion project, Council will assist local families to enjoy improved access to local childhood education services. Once delivered, this project will increase the number of childcare places in region by 11 per cent.

Deniliquin Netball Facility Improvement Works \$320,000

Upgrades to the Deniliquin Oval and Memorial Park netball facilities will be achieved through a \$320,000 investment. Both facilities' courts will be resurfaced, improving players' safety, with additional fence realignment works and the construction of a spectator shelter at the Deniliquin Oval courts.

Rural Villages Beautification Project \$300,000

Council will invest \$300,000 into achieving positive economic and social outcomes for our rural residents through our Rural Villages Beautification Project. Over the coming months, Council will engage in targeted consultation with rural residents to identify suitable projects from the Rural Village

Masterplans prepared by the former Conargo Shire Council which can be funded through this allocation.

Beach to Beach Walk Connectivity Improvements \$300,000

Connectivity to the Beach to Beach Walk and Island Sanctuary – two of our local tourism drawcards – will be improved through a \$300,000 investment. These funds will provide for the construction of additional footpath connections to the Beach to Beach Walk, as well as the refurbishment of both bridges into the Island Sanctuary.

Deniliquin Community Facility Refurbishments \$165,000

Creating accessible and inclusive community spaces is a priority for Council, as demonstrated by our \$165,000 improvement works to two local community facilities: the Edward River Boat Club, which will gain an accessible toilet, and the Deniliquin Scout Hall, which will be refurbished for use as an Army Cadet Parade Hall.

Urban Road Infrastructure Program \$2,390,000

Through our \$2.39 million Urban Road Infrastructure Program, Council will deliver much-needed upgrades to more than two kilometres of streets and over 500 metres of footpaths throughout the Deniliquin town area, going a long way to improving our urban road network. Works will include the road pavement reconstruction, kerb and gutter replacement and road reseals.

Deniliquin Airport Heritage Centre Development \$50,000

The second and third stages of the Deniliquin Heritage Centre Development Project, which celebrates the rich history of the local airport as a Royal Australian Air Force station during World War II, will be delivered through Council's \$50,000 contribution.

Unallocated Funding for New Council \$500,000

Half a million dollars has been set aside for the new Edward River Council to allocate to an eligible project. As with all other funded projects, the project selected by our new Councillors will need to be delivered by 30 June 2019.

Through Council's \$1 million Stronger Communities Grants Program, 44 projects were funded during the 2016/17 year. Of these, 16 were completed and acquitted by 30 June 2017. The remaining 28 projects are all scheduled to be completed in the 2017/18 year.

Stronger Communities Grants Program

Through Council's \$1 million Stronger Communities Grants Program, 44 projects received funding during 2016/17. Of these, 16 were completed and acquitted by 30 June 2016. The remaining 28 projects are scheduled to be completed by the end of the 2017/18 year.

Tables B and C detail the projects, including recipients and allocated amounts, funded through this program.

Table B: Stronger Communities Grants Program

Project	Purpose	Amount
Blighty School P&C	Playscape development	\$40,000
Blighty Football Club	Timekeepers' box upgrade	\$6,900
Bush Poets	Mobile stage, sound and light	\$7,500
Deniliquin & District Cricket Association	Replace and upgrade facilities	\$30,000
Deniliquin & District Historical Society	Rejuvenation of museum	\$13,000
Deniliquin Aero Club	Redesign/rebuild outdoor roof area	\$15,000
Deniliquin Boat Club	Riverbank Redevelopment	\$30,000
Deniliquin Bowling Club	Installation of disabled toilets	\$20,000
Deniliquin Bridge Club	Chairs	\$6,000
Clay Target Club	Amenity block upgrade	\$16,225
Deniliquin CWA	Maintenance and renovations	\$12,000
Deniliquin Drovers	Lighting	\$44,000
Deniliquin Field and Game	Shooting range relocation	\$35,000
Genealogy Group	Updating outdated equipment	\$8,000
Deniliquin Girl Guides	Hall maintenance	\$20,000
Golf Club	Fairway mower	\$40,000
Gymnastics Club	Equipment for safety and development	\$20,000
High School P&C	Kitchen appliance upgrade	\$6,740
Deniliquin Lawn Tennis Club	Court lighting	\$30,000
Little Athletics	Timing equipment	\$25,000
Deniliquin Men's Shed	Upgrade facilities	\$25,000
Deniliquin Netball Committee	Shelter Shed	\$5,000

Table C: Stronger Communities Grants Program (continued)

Project	Purpose	Amount
Deniliquin North Public School P&C	Irrigation system	\$32,250
Deniliquin Outdoor Pools Inc.	Pool ladder and lane ropes	\$10,456
Pistol Club	Clubhouse/air pistol range	\$10,000
Deniliquin Pony Club	Shed	\$35,650
Deniliquin Racing Club	Machinery and equipment storage shed	\$25,000
Rams Football and Netball Club	Storage shed/ seating	\$44,000
Deniliquin Rhinos	Equipment upgrade	\$7,571
Deniliquin Sports Park	Storage building	\$30,000
Deniliquin Truck Show & Industry Expo	Wall of Fame	\$10,000
Deniliquin Ute Muster	Purpose-built event sales facility	\$40,000
Edward School P&C	Shade shelter	\$40,000
Kurrajong Waratah	Yallambee: Cool room/ freezer	\$35,000
Mayrung Public School P&C	Safety development and enhancement	\$18,921
Navorina Ladies Auxiliary	Equipment upgrade	\$10,000
Navorina Nursing Home	Floor beds	\$17,000
Outback Theatre for Young People	While You Were Sleeping	\$50,000
Pastoral & Agricultural Society	PA system	\$5,855
Riding for the Disabled	Concreting and uniforms	\$22,730
Rotary/Lions/Soroptimist/RSL Joint Project	Liberty swing	\$20,000
Rovers Football Club	Construction of change rooms	\$44,000
South West Music	Instruments for kids	\$30,055
Deniliquin South Public School	Deniliquin South Public School project completion	\$10,000



Edward River
COUNCIL

Annual Report 2016/17

Part 3 - Capital Works





Capital Works

Overview	1
Roads and Transport Infrastructure	1
Footpaths and Kerb and Gutter	2
Community Amenity.....	3
Water Supply System	5
Sewerage System.....	5

Overview

This section is Edward River Council's Capital Works Report as required under the Capital Expenditure Guidelines, issued by the Department of Premier and Cabinet pursuant to section 23A of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

Roads and Transport Infrastructure

Hetherington Street Construction – Stage 2

Council completed Stage 2 of the reconstruction of Hetherington Street, between Pakenham Street and Carew Street. This section of road was approximately 500 metres long and the work included:

- Construction of new road pavement based on the existing formation;
- Sealing of the road to a width of nine metres;
- Table drains along both sides of the road, including culverts for driveway accesses; and
- Reconstruction and sealing of the intersection with Carew Street.

Woodbury Road Reconstruction – Stage 1

Council completed Stage 1 of the reconstruction of Woodbury Road. Woodbury Road is located near Blighty and is an important link for the agriculture and heavy vehicle operators in the area. This section of road was approximately 1.5 kilometres long and the work included:

- Strengthening of the existing road pavement and widening the pavement to eight metres wide;
- Widening the seal to eight metres wide (previously the seal was six to seven metres wide);

- Providing additional drainage to allow run-off to get away quicker.

Barham Road Reconstruction

Under the Federal Government's Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Programme (HSVPP), which provided 50 per cent of the funding for the project, Council reconstructed and widened approximately 1.2 kilometres of Barham Road, between Ochertyre Street and the Mulwala Canal bridge. Works included:

- Reconstructing and strengthening the pavement;
- Widening the pavement to allow for three, four-metre-wide lanes, including two through lanes and a central turning lane;
- Reconstruction of the intersection of Barham Road and Calimo Street to allow road trains to safely pass use the intersection;
- Reconstruction of the intersection of Barham Road and McCrabb Road to allow road trains to safely pass use the intersection;
- Improvement to drainage along this section of road including widening of the box culvert structure near Ochertyre Street.

It is noted that this project commenced in 2015/16 and was completed in 2016/17. The project met the HSVPP objectives of improving infrastructure and increasing productivity for heavy vehicles by providing wider lanes and upgraded intersections with local roads.

MR296 Pretty Pine Road Reconstruction and Resealing

Under the NSW Government's Regional Roads Repair Program, Council reconstructed approximately 2.5 kilometres of Pretty Pine Road. Works included:

- Strengthening the pavement and widening the pavement to 10.5 metres;
- Widening the seal to 8.4 metres;
- Resealing other sections of Pretty Pine Road.

Rural Road Reconstruction

Council reconstructed several sections of sealed rural roads throughout the local government area including sections of Blighty Hall Road, Mayrung Road, Wanganella Moulamein Road and Moonee Swamp Road. This work also included a section of the Wanganella Moulamein Road that was converted from sealed back to gravel.

Intersection Upgrade – Saleyards Road and Wirraway Drive

Under the NSW Government's Fixing Country Roads Program, which provided funding for this project, Council upgraded and realigned the intersection of Saleyards Road and Wirraway Drive. Works included:

- Realigning the intersection to provide staggered T-intersections between Wirraway Drive and Saleyards Road and Wirraway Drive and the exit from the Rice Mill;
- Upgrading the intersection to allow road trains to pass safely through the intersection;
- Strengthening and widening the pavement to cater for road trains.

Gravel Road Re-sheeting

Council resealed approximately 4.5 kilometres of urban streets including sections of Wirraway Drive, Victoria Street, Flanagans Lane, Sloane Street, Adele Court, Dahwilly Road, Hughes Street, Macauley Street, Evans Street, Poitiers Street and Civic Place.

Boat Ramps

Works included the construction of a wharf at the McLean Beach boat ramp. This wharf allows boat users to more safely enter and exit their vessels due to the level of the wharf being approximately 300mm above normal summer river level, and provides accessible access to the boat ramp and wharf area.

Footpaths and Kerb and Gutter

Sloane Street Footpath and Kerb and Gutter

Council reconstructed approximately 200 metres of kerb and gutter and footpath along Sloane Street, between Crispe Street and Junction Street. This work included:

- Removal of the existing kerb and gutter and footpath;
- Replacement of the kerb and gutter to allow the run-off to flow to the exiting drainage network; and
- Construction of a new 1.5-metre-wide footpath away from the edge of the road. The existing path was located adjacent to the kerb and gutter.

Community Amenity

Pottinger Park, Conargo

Council completed the construction of Pottinger Park in Conargo as part of the implementation of the villages landscaping plan. Works included:

- Installation of a windmill in honour of Manny Pottinger;
- Interpretive signage regarding the wool industry, especially in the Conargo district;
- Seating; and
- Landscaped areas.

Blighty Netball Courts

Council upgraded the Blighty netball courts so that the facility was compliant with the requirements of the Picola and District Football and Netball League and Netball Victoria. Work included:

- Moving fences at the back of the courts to ensure that there is adequate run off distance between the courts and the fence; and
- Re-surfacing the court with asphalt to provide an improved playing surface.

It is noted that Blighty successfully hosted the Picola and District Football and Netball League north-west division Grand Final in 2017.

BLIGHTY NETBALL COURTS: Images taken during court resurfacing (top-right) and relocation of fences (right).



Beach to Beach Walk Exercise Equipment

Council installed two outdoor exercise equipment areas along the Beach to Beach walk with a number of exercise stations in each area. The areas are at the start of the walk near McLean Beach and at the end of Macauley Street. Water stations, including provision for dogs, has been provided at each of the sites.

Wanganella Walkway

Council, with the assistance of the Local Lands Services, have extended the walkway from Murray Street, near the Peppin Merino Ram memorial, to the bridge over the Billabong Creek. The length of the project was approximately 400 metres and now connects the memorial to the existing walkway in the village.

POTTINGER PARK (Below): During 2016/17, new seating, interpretive panels, and a refurbished Comet Windmill were installed at Pottinger Park.



BEACH TO BEACH WALK (Below): Two new gym stations have been installed.



Water Supply System

New 4ML Potable Water Reservoir

Council completed the construction of the new 4ML reservoir along Wright Bros Drive near the airport. The reservoir shall provide additional capacity in the water supply system for the adjacent industrial areas, airport and residential areas. The reservoir was constructed by Briagalong Engineering Pty Ltd.

Trunk Main to New Reservoir

Council has installed a dedicated trunk main from the existing trunk main along Lawson Syphon Road to the new 4ML reservoir along Wright Bros Drive. The trunk main is approximately one kilometre long and is 375mm in diameter. The trunk main was constructed by ADM Structures Pty Ltd.

Mains Augmentation and Looping Project

Council continued its mains augmentation and looping project throughout Deniliquin. In 2016/17 approximately one kilometre of new water mains were installed as either augmentation works or looping of main to increase water quality and pressure to areas within Deniliquin. The areas include Barham Road, Wirraway Drive and Hardinge Street.

Sewerage System

Sewer Main Relining

Council continued its sewer main relining programme with approximately 1.2 kilometres of 150mm, 225mm and 300mm diameter vitrious clay and AC sewer mains being relined. The relining involves the installation of a fiberglass lining on the walls of the existing pipe and improves the structural integrity of the pipe as stopping any inflow of water into the pipe. This work was performed by Insituform Pacific Pty Ltd.

Sewer Pump Stations

Council completed the replacement of the sewer pump stations at Pakenham Street and Burton Street. Works at both sites included:

- Decommissioning and removal of the existing pump stations;
- Installation of package pump station including precast concrete well, submersible pumps and control boards; and
- Connection to Council's sewerage system.

Both pump stations were supplied and installed by Xylem Pty Ltd.



Edward River
COUNCIL

Annual Report 2016/17

Part 4 - Statutory Reporting





Statutory Reporting

Overview	1
Rates Written Off	1
Table A: Rates Written Off	1
Overseas Visits	1
Councillor Expenses and Provision of Facilities.....	2
Table B: Councillor Expenses and Provision of Facilities.....	2
Contracts	3
Table C: Major contracts awarded for works and services	3
Legal Proceedings.....	4
Subsidised Private Works	4
Financial Assistance to Others	4
Delegated External Bodies	4
Controlling Interest in Companies.....	4
Participation in Corporations, Partnerships, Joint Ventures or Other Bodies	5
Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan	5
General Manager and Senior Staff Remuneration.....	6
Table D: Senior Staff Remuneration	6
Stormwater Management Services.....	6
Coastal Protection Services	6
Planning Agreements.....	6
Companion Animal Management.....	7
Table E: Summary of Pound Data.....	7

Overview

Edward River Council's general reporting requirements are set out in section 428 of the *Local Government Act 1993* (the Local Government Act) and the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 (Part 9, Division 7) (the Regulation). Copies of the Act and Regulation can be accessed from www.legislation.nsw.gov.au.

This section also meets Council's reporting requirements under the *Companion Animals Act 1998* and Companion Animals Regulation 2008 and the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

Rates Written Off

Local Government (General) Regulation - Clause 132

Table A details the amount of Rates written off by Council in the reporting period:

Table A: Rates Written Off	
Category	Amount
Pensioner Rebates - Mandatory	\$145,098.39
Pensioner Rebates - Voluntary	Nil
Rates – Other	\$1236.55
Interest	\$97.67
TOTAL	\$146,432.61
* Council receives a subsidy equivalent to 55 per cent of the amount of Pension Rebates.	

Overseas Visits

Local Government Act 1993 – Section 428(4)(b), Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 – Clause 217(1)(a)

The Act and Regulation require Council to report on overseas visits undertaken by Councillors, Council staff or other persons representing Council during the reporting period.

Council's Director Economic Development and Business, Mr John Harvie, represented Council in his then capacity as Manager Economic and Business Development as a member of the Toowoomba and Surat Basin Enterprise *AccessChina'16* delegation, which visited Shanghai, China, between 23 October and 27 October 2016.

Mr Harvie's participation in the delegation was endorsed by Council resolution and complied with Council's Payment of Expenses and Provision of Facilities Policy. The cost of Mr Harvie's participation in the delegation amounted to \$6,800.00, inclusive of travel, accommodation and miscellaneous expenses.

Councillor Expenses and Provision of Facilities

Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 – Clause 217(1)(a1)

Council's Payment of Expenses and Provision of Facilities Policy allows for the payment of expenses incurred by, and the provision of facilities to, Councillors in relation to their roles as elected representatives and members of the governing body of Council.

During the reporting period, the governing body of Council comprised an Administrator, rather than elected Councillors. The total amount of remuneration paid to the Administrator during this period was \$120,615.00.

During the reporting period, Council also paid remuneration to members of Council's Local Advisory Committee and Implementation Advisory Group. The total remuneration amount paid to members of the Local Advisory Committee and Implementation Advisory Group amounted to \$226,344.00.

Table B details the amount spent on providing facilities to the Administrator and paying the Administrator's expenses during the reporting period.

Table B: Councillor Expenses and Provision of Facilities

Category	Amount
Office Equipment	Nil
Telephone Calls	\$3,293.79
Conference and Seminar Attendance	Nil
Training and Skill Development	Nil
Interstate Visits	Nil
Overseas Visits	Nil
Spouse Expenses	Nil
Childcare Provision	Nil
TOTAL	\$3,293.79

Contracts

Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 – Clause 217(1)(a2)

Council is required to disclose the details of each contract awarded for amounts greater than \$150,000, including the name of the contractor, the nature of goods or services supplied, and the total amount payable under the contract. The following major contracts for works and services were awarded during the reporting period:

Table C: Major contracts awarded for works and services

Contractor	Details of Contract	Total Amount Payable (inc. GST)
ADM Structure Pty Ltd	Construction of trunk main to new sewer	\$612,852.00
Briagalong Engineering	Design and construction of potable water reservoir.	\$2,124,317.00
CT Management	Services provided across 22 individual projects covering flood management, executive recruitment, project management, engineering support, asset management, service planning, organisational development, long-term financial planning, governance support and ICT strategic planning.	\$1,372,284.00
Decentralised Demountables	Five-year lease of temporary office accommodation.	\$675,763.00
Deniliquin Outdoor Pools Incorporated and Deniliquin Heated Pools	Operation and management of the Deniliquin Swim Centre.	\$192,000.00
Instituform Pacific Pty Ltd	Sewer main relining.	\$294,578.47
Primal Sealing	Sealing and enrichment works.	\$1,957,580.00
Riverina Earthworks	Reconstruction of Wirraway Drive/ Saleyards Road intersection.	\$348,232.00
Technology One Ltd	Provision of software, technical support, training and data migration.	\$335,888.00

Legal Proceedings

Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 – Clause 217(1)(a3)

Council is required to provide a summary of the amounts incurred in relation to legal proceedings, including amounts, costs and expenses paid or received, and a summary of the state of progress of each legal proceeding.

During the reporting period, Council incurred \$2028.04 in costs in relation to one legal proceeding. The matter has not been resolved and is still ongoing.

Subsidised Private Works

Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 – Clause 217(1)(a4)

During the reporting period, Council did not undertake any subsidised works on private land.

Financial Assistance to Others

Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 – Clause 217(1)(a5)

Council provided 28 contributions under section 356 of the Local Government Act during the reporting period, totaling \$64,450.68. These included cash donations, sponsorships and reductions in charges.

Delegated External Bodies

Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 – Clause 217(1)(a6)

During the reporting period, the following external bodies exercised functions delegated by Council:

- Blighty Hall Committee (Hall Management);
- Booroorban Hall Committee (Hall Management);
- Central Murray County Council (Noxious Weeds Control);
- Central Murray Regional Library (Library Services);
- Conargo Hall and Recreation Ground Committee (Hall Management);
- Deniliquin Multi-Arts Centre Committee (Hall Management);
- Mayrung Hall Committee (Hall Management);
- Pretty Pine Hall Committee (Hall Management); and
- Wanganella Hall (Hall Management).

Controlling Interest in Companies

Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 – Clause 217(1)(a7)

Council did not hold a controlling interest in any companies during the reporting period.

Participation in Corporations, Partnerships, Joint Ventures or Other Bodies

Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 – Clause 217(1)(a8)

During the reporting period, Council participated in the following corporations, partnerships and other organisations:

- Central Murray Regional Library;
- Country Mayors Association;
- Deniliquin Business Chamber;
- Destination NSW;
- Edward River Country Education Fund;
- Local Government NSW;
- Murray Darling Association;
- Murray Irrigation Limited;
- Murray Regional Tourism Board;
- Riverina and Murray Regional Organisation of Councils;
- Statecover Mutual Limited; and
- Statewide Mutual Limited.

In addition to the above, Council employed a Road Safety Officer under a Memorandum of Understanding between Edward River Council, Murray River Council and Roads and Maritime Services NSW.

Equal Employment Opportunity Management Plan

Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 – Clause 217(1)(a9)

Council has undertaken a review of the policies of the former Conargo Shire Council and Deniliquin Council in relation to Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and has developed a new EEO Policy.

This policy provides the framework for the development of Council's EEO Management Plan. Previous EEO Management Plans have been revised and work commenced on developing an EEO Management Plan for the 2017-2020 period for Council.

During the reporting period, a new staff induction handbook incorporating information on EEO, Anti-Discrimination and Harassment Prevention was developed. The handbook is provided to all new staff upon commencement at Council.

Council also provides an Employee Assistance Program, providing staff and their immediate family members access to a free professional counselling service.

General Manager and Senior Staff Remuneration

Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 - Clause 217(1)(b-c)(i-v)

Council employed three General Managers over the course of the reporting period: An Interim General Manager from 12 May 2016 to 20 November 2016, another Interim General Manager from 21 November 2016 to 17 April 2017, and Council's current General Manager, Mr Adam McSwain, from 18 April 2017.

On 2 February 2017, Council resolved to appoint three further Senior Officer positions under the Local Government Act: Director Corporate Services, Director Economic Development and Business, and Director Infrastructure.

The total expenditure for the reporting period in respect of employment for these senior staff, including salary, motor vehicle expenses, package benefits, fringe benefits tax, superannuation and provision for leave entitlements was \$443,357.99.

The annual remuneration paid to senior staff for the reporting period was as follows:

Table D: Senior Staff Remuneration

Position	Remuneration Amount
General Manager	\$286,394.00
Directors	\$156,963.99

Stormwater Management Services

Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 - Clause 217(1)(e)

Council applied a Stormwater Management Charge of \$25.00 to 3,074 residential and industrial properties during the reporting period for the purpose of raising revenue to implement its Stormwater Management Plan.

Coastal Protection Services

Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 - Clause 217(1)(e1)

Council does not apply an annual charge for coastal protection services.

Planning Agreements

Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 - Section 93G(5)

Council did not have any planning agreements in place during the reporting period.

Companion Animal Management

Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 – Clause 217(1)(f)

This statement requires Council to report its activities in enforcing and ensuring compliance with the *Companion Animals Act 1998* (Companion Animals Act) and Companion Animals Regulation 2008.

Lodgement of pound data collections returns

The pound collection data for the 2016/17 reporting period was lodged with the Office of Local Government (OLG). Table E summarises the data disclosed to the OLG:

Table E: Summary of Pound Data

	Cats	Dogs	Total
Seized	60	114	174
Returned to owner	1	70	71
Taken to pound	59	106	165
Rehomed via rehoming shelters	46	31	77
Euthanised	3	5	8

Lodgement of data relating to dog attacks with the Office of Local Government

It is mandatory for all dog attack data to be lodged with the OLG in accordance with the Companion Animals Act. This legislation requires a dog attack to be reported within 72 hours of the incident. In the 2016/17 reporting period, seven dog attack incidents involving people or animals were recorded.

Animal control expenditure

Council employs one full-time Ranger whose role includes local laws compliance and Companion Animals functions. The total staffing expense expended during the reporting period was \$104,189.87. Comprehensive improvements to Council's pound were undertaken during the reporting period, amounting to \$20,233. These improvements included the purchase of a new washing machine, storage shed, medical-grade cat cages, examination table, and shade sails for exterior pens.

Community education programs

Council regularly advertises in the *Pastoral Times* throughout the year. During the reporting period, responsible pet ownership was advertised in this publication on four separate occasions. Information relating to Companion Animal Management and responsible pet ownership is also available from Council's website at www.edwardriver.nsw.gov.au.

Euthanasia alternatives for unclaimed animals

The Companion Animals Act provides that microchipped animals be held for a period of 14 days and unidentified animals for seven days. Council's pound is a non-kill facility, and at the expiration of the prescribed period, unclaimed animals are rehomed via external shelters.

Off leash areas

Under the Companion Animals Act, each council must provide at least one off-leash area where dogs can be exercised off-leash during certain hours. While Council does not currently have an off-leash area, it has been identified as a priority and will be considered as Council develops its 2018-22 Delivery Program in the 2017/18 year.



Edward River
COUNCIL

Annual Report 2016/17

Part 5 - Special Rate Variation





Special Rate Variation

Overview	1
Background.....	1
Deniliquin Promotions Advisory Group.....	1
Annual Reporting Requirements	2
Expenditure and Outcomes	3
Table A: Visit Deni Campaign Expenditure and Outcomes, 2016-17	3
Graphic A: Outcomes – Visit Deni Campaign Phase One	4



Overview

Edward River Council is required under sections 508(2) and 508A of the *Local Government Act 1993* to report on special variation expenditure during the reporting period.

Background

The former Deniliquin Council resolved in June 2015 to implement the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal of NSW (IPART) determination under section 508(2) of the Local Government to approve the Council's application for a special variation to its rates. This Special Rate Variation, which applies the increase above the rate peg in the Business category of rates, continues with Edward River Council.

IPART determined that the former Deniliquin Council could increase its general income in 2015-16 by 4.49 per cent, including the rate peg of 2.4 per cent available to all councils. The former Deniliquin Council was permitted to retain the special variation in its general income base for three years, with it being removed from the council's rate base after 2017-18.

As stipulated in its submission to IPART, Special Rate Variation expenditure has been used to develop and deliver a strategic promotion and marketing campaign aimed at stimulating the local economy through promoting Deniliquin as a tourism destination and centre for business development. The campaign, titled *Visit Deni*, will be implemented over two phases: the first phase was delivered between December 2016 to May 2017, during the reporting period. The second phase will be delivered in the 2017/18 year.

Deniliquin Promotions Advisory Group

In July 2015, the former Deniliquin Council constituted the Deniliquin Promotions Advisory Group (DPAG) to advise Council on the development and delivery of the promotions strategy and recommend expenditure of funds. The DPAG has been continued under the current Edward River Council.

The DPAG is required to hold a minimum of two public meetings each year to report to levy payers and local businesses on the implementation of the promotional strategy including promotional activities undertaken and activity budget, and on its success in achieving the strategy's performance measures and results. During the reporting period, public meetings were held on the following dates:

- 9 September 2016; and
- 16 February 2017.

Destination NSW Funding

During the reporting period, Council leveraged the Special Rate Variation income to \$120,000 in additional funding through the NSW Government's Regional Visitor Economy Fund (RVEF), administered by Destination NSW.

The RVEF, which was now been superseded by the Regional Tourism Fund, was aimed at addressing a range of issues affecting tourism to regional NSW identified in the NSW Government's Visitor Economic Industry Action Plan.

As with the Special Rate Variation income, the RVEF income has been expended on the *Visit Deni* campaign.



Annual Reporting Requirements

IPART's approval of the former Deniliquin Council's application for a Special Rate Variation was made subject to four conditions, including the requirement that Council reports in its Annual Report for each year from 2015-16 to 2017-18 on:

1. Expenditure consistent with the former Deniliquin Council's application, and the reasons for any significant differences from the proposed expenditure; and
2. The outcomes achieved as a result of the actual program of expenditure.

Table A: Total SRL Available

	Amount
2015/16 Reserve Balance	\$79,496.24
2016/17 Actual SRL Received	\$79,167.33
2016/17 NSW Destination Funding	\$90,500.00
2016/17 Moomba Partnership Contribution	\$6,000.00
TOTAL	\$255,163.57

Table B: SRL Expenditure

	Amount
2015/16 Year	Nil
2016/17 Year	\$225,311.95
Net SRL Balance Remaining	\$29,851.62



Expenditure and Outcomes

Table E details expenditure on the *Destination Deniliquin* campaign for the reporting period, as well as the outcomes of each expenditure item:

Table A: <i>Visit Deni</i> Campaign Expenditure and Outcomes, 2016-17		
Project	Outcomes	Expenditure
Creative Development	Design of <i>Visit Deni</i> website, social media graphics, photo library, video library and billboard graphics. The <i>Visit Deni</i> website had an average of 1,212 visits each month during the reporting period, with the <i>Visit Deni</i> Facebook page gaining 2,014 followers during the reporting period.	\$26,000.00
Television Advertising	An initial TV Campaign was run through WIN TV Network through Shepparton and Bendigo stations A television campaign entitled ' <i>Deniliquin – Let's Go!</i> ' was run during phase 1 of the campaign throughout regional Victoria. Another TV campaign was launched to Melbourne audiences during the 'Moomba Festival' to compliment the campaign activities at the Moomba Masters Water Ski competition.	\$58,611.95
Digital Billboard	Purchase of trailer-mounted Digital Billboard.	\$61,700.00
Digital Advertising	Digital advertising targeting Melbourne and regional Victorian markets.	\$26,340.00
<i>We Are Explorers</i> Campaign	Campaign targeting adventure tourist market via adventure platform <i>We Are Explorers</i> .	\$3,000.00
Moomba Partnership	Partnership with Moomba Festival, March 2017.	\$10,000.00
Bus Skins	Bus Skin advertising in regional Victorian markets.	\$10,660.00
Cinema Advertising	Cinema advertising campaign in regional Victorian markets. Post-campaign audience analysis indicates that the campaign reaches 62,927 people.	\$24,000.00
Media Famil	Familiarisation for national travel media, including representatives of NRMA <i>Outback</i> , REX Airlines' <i>OUTthere</i> , APN <i>Seniors</i> , and <i>We Are Explorers</i> . The media famil resulted in Deniliquin and Edward River local government area receiving more than \$340,000.00 in media coverage.	\$5,000.00
TOTAL		\$225,311.95



Graphic A: Outcomes – Visit Deni Campaign Phase One

9 PACKAGES
7 HOT DEALS
DEVELOPED

+ BRAND NEW
PROFFESIONAL
CREATIVE
ASSETS



13 BOOKINGS
42 NIGHTS BOOKED

+ ANECDOTAL FEEDBACK FROM OPERATORS ABOUT
ADDITIONAL BOOKINGS THAT THEY HAVE RECEIVED
AS A DIRECT RESULT OF THE CAMPAIGN ACTIVITY

19,426
USERS TO
VISITDENI.COM.AU



1,212 **4,848**
AVERAGE VISITS UNIQUE PAGE VIEWS
PER MONTH TO WWW.VISITDENI.COM.AU/LETSGO
222 LEADS DIRECT TO OPERATORS WEBSITES FROM LET'S GO

 **1,600**
SUBSCRIBERS

 **2,014**
FOLLOWERS

 **14,000**
VIDEO VIEWERS

MEDIA
FAMIL







Leader
COMMUNITY NEWS




= AVE
\$340,000+



Edward River
COUNCIL

Annual Report 2016/17

Part 6 - Government Information (Public Access) Act





Government Information (Public Access) Act

Overview	1
Background.....	1
Review of Proactive Release Program.....	2
Number of Access Applications Received	3
Number of Refused Applications for Schedule 1 Information	3
Statistical Information about Access Applications	4
Table A: Number of applications by applicant and outcome.....	4
Table B: Number of applications by type of application and outcome	5
Table C: Invalid applications	5
Table D: Conclusive presumption of overriding public interest against disclosure: matters listed in Schedule 1 of the Act	6
Table E: Other public interest considerations against disclosure: matters listed in table to section 14 of the Act	7
Table F: Timeliness	7
Table G: Number of applications reviewed under Part 5 of the Act (by type of review and outcome)	8
Table H: Applications for review under Part 5 of the Act (by type of applicant).....	8
Table I: Applications transferred to other agencies	8

Overview

This section is Edward River Council's *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (GIPA Act) Annual Report for the 2016/17 reporting period.

Background

The GIPA Act became operational on 1 July 2010 and introduced a new right to information approach for access to government information. The GIPA Act replaced the *Freedom of Information Act 1989* and creates new rights to information that are designed to meet the community's expectation of more open and transparent government. It encourages the routine and proactive release of government information, including information held by providers of goods and services contracted by government agencies.

Council is required to prepare an annual report in accordance with the requirements of section 125 of the GIPA Act and clause 7 of the Government Information (Public Access) Regulation (GIPA Regulation). In the annual report we are required to include statistical information on formal access applications in the form required by Schedule 2 of the GIPA Regulation.

Under the GIPA Act, there are four ways in which government information can be released:

- 1. Open Access Information** - This information is made available on Council's website and is available free of charge, for example Council policies, meeting agendas and minutes, media releases and annual reports
- 2. Proactive Release** - Council is encouraged to make as much information of public interest as possible publicly available, free of charge or at minimal cost. Examples include frequently requested information or information of public interest.
- 3. Informal Release of Information** - Council is encouraged to make as much information of public interest as possible publicly available, free of charge or at minimal cost. Examples include frequently requested information or information of public interest.
- 4. Formal Release of Information (Formal Access Information)** - The release of all other information not made available by either mandatory, proactive or informal release can be made by way of submitting an Application for Information (Formal Application). Standard fees and charges and time frames are applicable for such applications. Examples include personal information relating to a third party where consultation is required or where information is of a confidential nature.

Review of Proactive Release Program

Government Information (Public Access) Regulation 2009 Reg (7) (a)

Under section 7 of the GIPA Act, Council is required to review its program for the release of government information to identify the kinds of government information held by Council that should, in the public interest, be made publicly available and that can be made publicly available without imposing unreasonable additional costs on Council. This review must be undertaken at least once every 12 months.

Council undertook the following initiatives as part of our review of our proactive release program for the reporting period:

- Reviewing the information published on Council's website to ensure that information featured is up-to-date, informative and relevant;
- Commencing a review of Council's Policy Register, which resulted in a significant number of policies being developed and adopted by Council during the reporting period.
- Monitoring matters of public interest to determine whether Council can proactively release further information about those matters; and
- Launched an online community consultation platform to better engage residents in the decision-making process and regularly seek community feedback on Council decisions, projects, programs and activities.

During 2016/17, Council continued to proactively release information, in addition to the statutory release of open access information, by:

- Publishing a quarterly community newsletter, *The Edward River News*, featuring content promoting Council decisions, projects, programs and activities and distributed to residents throughout the Edward River local government area via post;
- Publishing a monthly Central Murray Regional Library newsletter, featuring content promoting library projects, programs and activities and distributed to library members via email;
- Seeking community feedback on draft strategies and policies through public exhibition notices published in the *Deniliquin Pastoral Times*;
- Promoting Council decisions, projects, programs and activities through paid advertisements in both print and radio media and via Council's corporate Facebook account;
- Publishing a fortnightly full-page advertisement in the *Deniliquin Pastoral Times*, promoting Council decisions, projects, programs and activities; and
- Distributing regular media releases on Council decisions, projects, programs and activities.

Number of Access Applications Received

Government Information (Public Access) Regulation
2009 Reg (7) (b)

During the reporting period, Council received a total of one formal access to information application under the GIPA Act.

Number of Refused Applications for Schedule 1 Information

Government Information (Public Access) Regulation
2009 Reg (7) (c)

During the reporting period, Council refused one access application in part because the information requested was information referred to in Schedule 1 of the GIPA Act.

Statistical Information about Access Applications

Government Information (Public Access) Regulation 2009 Reg (7) (d) and Schedule 2

Information, in the form required by Schedule 2 of the GIPA Regulation, relating to the access applications made to Council during the reporting period is shown in the following Tables A to H.

The data demonstrates Council's commitment to openness and accountability and a willingness to meet the needs of our customers.

Table A: Number of applications by applicant and outcome*

	Access granted in full	Access granted in part	Access refused in full	Information not held	Information already available	Refuse to deal with application	Refuse to confirm/deny whether information is held	Application withdrawn
Media	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Members of Parliament	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Private sector business	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not for profit organisations or community groups	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Members of the public (application by legal representative)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Members of the public (other)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
% of Total	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

* More than one decision can be made in respect of a particular access application. If so, a recording must be made in relation to each such decision. This also applies to Table B.

Table B: Number of applications by type of application and outcome

	Access granted in full	Access granted in part	Access refused in full	Information not held	Information already available	Refuse to deal with application	Refuse to confirm/deny whether information is held	Application withdrawn
Personal information applications*	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Access applications (other than personal information applications)	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Access applications that are partly personal information applications and partly other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
% of Total	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

* A personal information application is an access application for personal information (as defined in clause 4 of Schedule 4 to the Act) about the applicant (the applicant being an individual).

Table C: Invalid applications

Reason for Invalidity	Number of Applications	% of Total
Application does not comply with formal requirements (section 41 of the Act)	0	0%
Application is for excluded information of the agency (section 43 of the Act)	0	0%
Application contravenes restraint order (section 110 of the Act)	0	0%
Total number of invalid applications received	0	0%
Invalid applications that subsequently became valid applications	0	0%

Table D: Conclusive presumption of overriding public interest against disclosure: matters listed in Schedule 1 of the Act

	Number of times consideration used	% of Total
Overriding secrecy laws	0	0%
Cabinet information	0	0%
Executive Council information	0	0%
Contempt	0	0%
Legal professional privilege	10	100%
Excluded information	0	0%
Documents affecting law enforcement and public safety	0	0%
Transport safety	0	0%
Adoption	0	0%
Care and protection of children	0	0%
Ministerial code of conduct	0	0%
Aboriginal and environmental heritage	0	0%
* More than one public interest consideration may apply in relation to a particular access application and, if so, each such consideration is recorded (but only once per application). This also applies in relation to Table E.		

Table E: Other public interest considerations against disclosure: matters listed in table to section 14 of the Act

	Number of times consideration was used	% of Total
Responsible and effective government	0	0%
Law enforcement and security	0	0%
Individual rights, judicial processes and natural justice	0	0%
Business interests of agencies and other persons	0	0%
Environmental, culture, economy and general matters	0	0%
Secrecy provisions	0	0%
Exempt documents under interstate Freedom of Information legislation	0	0%
Total	0	

Table F: Timeliness

	Number of applications	% of Total
Decided within the statutory timeframe (20 days plus any extensions)	1	100%
Decided after 35 days (by agreement with applicant)	0	0%
Not decided within time (deemed refusal)	0	0%
Total	1	0%

Table G: Number of applications reviewed under Part 5 of the Act (by type of review and outcome)

	Decision varied	Decision upheld	Total	% of Total
Internal review	0	0	0	0%
Review by Information Commissioner*	0	0	0	0%
Internal review following recommendation under section 93 of Act	0	0	0	0%
Review by NCAT	0	0	0	0%
Total	0	0	0	
% of Total	0%	0%		

*The Information Commissioner does not have the authority to vary decisions, but can make recommendations to the original decision-maker. The data in this case indicates that a recommendation to vary or uphold the original decision has been made by the Information Commissioner.

Table H: Applications for review under Part 5 of the Act (by type of applicant)

	Number of applications for review	% of Total
Applications by access applicants	0	0%
Applications by persons to whom information the subject of access applications relates (see section 54 of the Act)	0	0%
Total	0	

Table I: Applications transferred to other agencies

	Number of applications transferred	% of Total
Agency-Initiated Transfers	0	0%
Applicant-Initiated Transfers	0	0%
Total	0	



Edward River
COUNCIL

Annual Report 2016/17

Part 7 - Public Interest Disclosures Act





Public Interest Disclosures Act

Overview	1
Statistical Information on Public Interest Disclosures	1
Staff Awareness of Public Interest Disclosures Internal Reporting Policy	1
Public Interest Disclosures Internal Reporting Policy	1

Overview

Edward River Council is required to report annually on its obligations under section 31 of the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994* (PID Act) and clause 4 of the Public Interest Disclosures Regulation 2011.

Statistical Information on Public Interest Disclosures

Public Interest Disclosures Regulation 2011 cl 4 (2) (a)-(c)

As detailed in Table A, no disclosures were made during the reporting period.

Table A: Statistical Information on Public Interest Disclosures

May 2016 – June 2017	
Number of public officials who made PIDs	0
Total number of PIDs received by Edward River Council	0
Of the total received, the number in each of the following categories:	0
• Corrupt conduct	0
• Maladministration	0
• Serious and substantial waste	0
• Government intervention contravention	0
• Local government pecuniary interest contravention	0
Number of PIDs finalised in this reporting period	0

Staff Awareness of Public Interest Disclosures Internal Reporting Policy

Public Interest Disclosures Regulation 2011 cl 4 (2) (e)

During the reporting period, Council undertook the following actions to meet its staff awareness obligations:

- Making Council's Public Interest Disclosure Policy available on both our website and staff intranet; and
- Incorporating information on public interest disclosures into Council's Employee Manual which is provided to all new staff on commencement.

Public Interest Disclosures Internal Reporting Policy

Public Interest Disclosures Regulation 2011 cl 4 (2) (d)

In accordance with the requirements of the PID Act, Council adopted a Public Interest Disclosure Policy on 17 May 2017. The policy, which provides a mechanism for Council Officials to make disclosures about serious wrongdoing, is based on the NSW Ombudsman's model internal reporting policy for local government.

Council's Public Interest Disclosure Policy follows.

POLICY PURPOSE

In accordance with the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994* (PID Act), this policy provides information about the process and procedure for dealing with public interest disclosures.

POLICY SCOPE

This policy applies to all council staff and councillors including permanent, temporary and casual employees, consultants and individual contractors working for Edward River Council (Council). It also applies to members of committees and volunteers.

LEGISLATION

- Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994
- NSW Local Government Act 1993
- NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1998
- Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009

POLICY STATEMENT

Council is committed to encouraging, supporting the reporting and investigation, of wrongdoing within the council, and to protect those who make disclosures from any adverse action motivated by their report, keeping their identity confidential where possible.

WHAT SHOULD BE REPORTED?

You should report any suspected wrongdoing within Council. Reports about the five categories of serious misconduct include corrupt conduct, maladministration, serious and substantial waste of public money, breach of the GIPA Act, and local government pecuniary interest contravention will be dealt with under the PID Act as protected disclosures and according to this policy.

1. **Corrupt Conduct**

Corrupt conduct, as defined in the *Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1988* is deliberate or intentional wrongdoing, not negligence or a mistake. It can take many forms, but generally corrupt conduct is the dishonest or partial exercise by a public official in the performance of their official functions. This could include:

- the improper use of knowledge, power or position for personal gain or the advantage of others;
- acting dishonestly or unfairly, or breaching public trust

2. **Maladministration**

Maladministration is conduct that involves action or inaction of a serious nature that is contrary to law, unreasonable, unjust, oppressive or improperly discriminatory or based wholly or partly on improper motives. This could include:

- decision making and/or taking action that is unlawful
- refusing to grant an approval for reasons that are not related to the merits of their application.
- Intimidation, harassment, bullying or the influencing of a Council official.

3. Serious and substantial waste of public money

Serious and substantial waste is the uneconomical, inefficient or ineffective use of resources that could result in losing or wasting public money. This could include:

- not following a competitive tendering process for a large-scale contract
- having bad or no processes in place for a system involving large amounts of public funds.
- using Council resources for personal gain and private purposes

4. Breach of the GIPA Act

A breach of the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA Act) is a failure to properly fulfil functions under that Act. This could include:

- destroying, concealing or altering records to prevent them from being released
- knowingly making decisions that are contrary to the legislation
- directing another person to make a decision that is contrary to the legislation.

5. Local government pecuniary interest contravention

A local government pecuniary interest contravention is a failure to comply with requirements under the *Local Government Act 1993* relating to the management of pecuniary interests. These include obligations to lodge disclosure of interests returns, disclose pecuniary interests at council and council committee meetings and leave the meeting while the matter is being discussed.

A pecuniary interest is an interest that a person has in a matter because of a reasonable likelihood or expectation of appreciable financial gain or loss to the person. This could include:

- a senior council staff member recommending a family member for a council contract and not declaring the relationship
- a Councillor participating in consideration of a DA for a property they or their family have an interest in.

REPORTING PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURES

When will a report be treated as a Public Interest Disclosure?

For a report of wrongdoing to be treated as a protected disclosure it must meet the criteria under the PID Act. These are:

- the report must be about one of the five categories of serious wrongdoing and the person making the disclosure must honestly believe on reasonable grounds that the information shows or tends to show wrongdoing
- the report must be made to one or more of the following
 - the General Manager or,
 - for reports about the General Manager the Mayor
 - a position nominated in this policy or one of the investigating authorities nominated in the PID Act.

Reports by staff are not public interest disclosures if they:

- mostly question the merits of government policy, including the governing body of Council

- are made with the sole or substantial motive of avoiding dismissal or other disciplinary action

How to make a report

You can report wrongdoing in writing or verbally. You are encouraged to make a report in writing as this can help to avoid any confusion or misinterpretation. It also allows an opportunity for the investigating authority to seek clarification if required. Council's Internal Reporting Form is also available for staff or councillors to use to make a report.

If a report is made verbally, the person receiving the report will make a comprehensive record of the report and ask the person making the report to sign this record. The reporter should keep a copy of this record.

Can a report be anonymous?

There will be some situations where you may not want to identify yourself when you make a report. Although these reports will still be dealt with by Council it is best if you identify yourself. This allows us to provide you with any necessary protection and support, as well as feedback about what action is to be taken or has been taken to deal with the issues raised in the report, or the outcome of any investigation.

It is important to realise that an anonymous disclosure may not prevent you from being identified by the subjects of the report or your colleagues. If we do not know who made the report, it is very difficult for us to prevent any reprisal should others identify you.

Feedback to staff who report wrongdoing

Staff and councillors who report wrongdoing will be kept informed about what is happening in response to their report.

a. Acknowledgement

When you make a report, Council will contact you to confirm that your report has been received and to advise:

- the timeframe within which you will receive further updates
- the name and contact details of the people who can tell you what is happening or handle any concerns you may have.

After a decision is made about how your report will be dealt with, the Council will send you an acknowledgment letter, providing:

- information about the action that will be taken in response to your report
- the likely timeframes for any investigation or other action
- information about the internal and external resources or services available that you can access for support.

We will provide this information to you within ten working days from the date you make your report. We will also advise you if we decide to treat your report as a public interest disclosure and provide you with a copy of this policy at that time, as required by the PID Act.

Please note, if you make a report which meets the requirements of the PID Act but the report was made under a statutory or legal obligation or incidental to the performance of your day to day functions, you will not receive an acknowledgement letter or a copy of this policy.

b. Progress updates

While your report is being dealt with, such as by investigation or making other enquiries, you will be given:

- information about the progress of the investigation or other enquiries and reasons for any delay
- advice of any decision by the Council not to proceed with the matter
- advice if your identity needs to be disclosed for the purposes of investigating the matter or making enquiries, and an opportunity to talk about this beforehand.

c. Feedback

Once the matter has been finalised you will be given:

- enough information to show that adequate and appropriate action was taken and/or is proposed to be taken in response to your disclosure and any problem that was identified
- advice about whether you are likely to be called as a witness in any further matters, such as disciplinary or criminal proceedings.

Maintaining confidentiality

Council realises reporters may want their identity and the fact they have made a report to remain confidential. This can help to prevent any action being taken against them for reporting wrongdoing.

Where possible and appropriate we will take steps to keep your identity, and the fact you have reported wrongdoing, confidential. We will discuss with you whether it is possible to keep your identity confidential.

If confidentiality cannot be maintained, we will develop a plan to support and protect you from reprisal in consultation with you.

If you report wrongdoing, it is important that you only discuss your report with those responsible for dealing with it. This will include the Disclosures Coordinator and the General manager, or in the case of a report about the General Manager, the Disclosures Coordinator and the Mayor. The fewer people who know about your report, before and after you make it, the more likely it will be that we can protect you from any reprisal.

Any staff or councillors involved in the investigation or handling of a report, including witnesses, are also required to maintain confidentiality and not disclose information about the process or allegations to any person except for those people responsible for handling the report.

Managing the risk of reprisal and workplace conflict

When a staff member or councillor reports wrongdoing, the Council will undertake a thorough risk assessment to identify the risk to you of detrimental action in reprisal for reporting, as well as indirect but related risks of workplace conflict or difficulties. The risk assessment will also identify strategies to deal with those risks and determine the level of protection and support that is appropriate.

Depending on the circumstances, Council may:

- relocate the reporter or the staff member who is the subject of the allegation within the current workplace
- transfer the reporter or the staff member who is the subject of the allegation to another position for which they are qualified
- grant the reporter or the staff member who is the subject of the allegation leave of absence during the investigation of the disclosure.

These courses of action are not punishment and will only be taken in consultation with the reporter.

Protection against reprisals

The PID Act provides protection for who report wrongdoing by imposing penalties on anyone who takes detrimental action against another person substantially in reprisal for that person making a public interest disclosure.

These penalties also apply to cases where a person takes detrimental action against another because they believe or suspect the other person has made or may have made a public interest disclosure, even if they did not.

Detrimental action means action causing, comprising or involving any of the following:

- injury, damage or loss
- intimidation or harassment
- discrimination, disadvantage or adverse treatment in relation to employment
- dismissal from, or prejudice in, employment
- disciplinary proceedings.

a. Responding to allegations of reprisal

If you believe that detrimental action has been or is being taken against you or someone else in reprisal for reporting wrongdoing, you should tell your supervisor, the Disclosures Coordinator or the General Manager immediately. In the case of an allegation of reprisal by the General Manager, you can alternatively report this to the Mayor.

All supervisors must notify the Disclosures Coordinator or the General Manager if they suspect that reprisal against a staff member is occurring or has occurred, or if any such allegations are made to them. In the case of an allegation of reprisal by the General Manager, the Mayor can alternatively be notified.

If a PID Officer becomes aware of or suspects that reprisal is being or has been taken against a person who has made a disclosure, they will:

- assess the allegation of reprisal to decide whether the report should be treated as a public interest disclosure and whether the matter warrants investigation or if other action should be taken to resolve the issue
- if the reprisal allegation warrants investigation, ensure this is conducted by a senior and experienced member of staff
- if it is established that reprisal is occurring against someone who has made a report, take all steps possible to stop that activity and protect the reporter
- take appropriate disciplinary action against anyone proven to have taken or threatened any action in reprisal for making a disclosure
- refer any breach of Part 8 of the council's code of conduct (reprisal action) by a councillor or the General Manager to the Office of Local Government.
- refer any evidence of an offence under section 20 of the PID Act to the ICAC or NSW Police Force.

If you allege reprisal, you will be kept informed of the progress and outcome of any investigation or other action taken in response to your allegation.

If you have reported wrongdoing and are experiencing reprisal which you believe is not being dealt with effectively, contact the Office of Local Government, the Ombudsman or the ICAC (depending on the type of wrongdoing you reported). Contact details for these investigating authorities are included at the end of this policy.

b. Protection against legal action

If you make a public interest disclosure in accordance with the PID Act, you will not be subject to any liability, and no action, claim or demand can be taken against you for having made the public interest disclosure. You will not have breached any confidentiality or secrecy obligations and you will have the defence of absolute privilege in defamation.

Support for those reporting wrongdoing

Council will make sure that staff who have reported wrongdoing, regardless of whether their report is treated as a public interest disclosure, are provided with access to any professional support they may need because of the reporting process – such as stress management or counselling services.

Access to support may also be available for other staff involved in the internal reporting process where appropriate. Reporters and other staff involved in the process can discuss their support options with the disclosures coordinator.

Sanctions for making false or misleading statements

It is important all staff and councillors are aware that it is a criminal offence under the PID Act to wilfully make a false or misleading statement when reporting wrongdoing. Council will not support staff or councillors who wilfully make false or misleading reports. Such conduct may also be a breach of the code of conduct resulting in disciplinary action. In the case of councillors, disciplinary action may be taken under the misconduct provisions of the *Local Government Act 1993* and may include suspension or disqualification from civic office.

THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS THE SUBJECT OF A REPORT

The Council is committed to ensuring staff or councillors who are the subject of a report of wrongdoing are treated fairly and reasonably. This includes keeping the identity of any person the subject of a report confidential, where this is practical and appropriate.

If you are the subject of the report, you will be advised of the allegations made against you at an appropriate time and before any adverse findings. At this time, you will be:

- advised of the details of the allegation
- advised of your rights and obligations under the relevant related policies and procedures
- kept informed about the progress of any investigation
- given a reasonable opportunity to respond to any allegation made against you
- told the outcome of any investigation, including any decision made about whether further action will be taken against you.

Where the reported allegations against the subject officer are clearly wrong, or have been investigated and unsubstantiated, Council will support the subject officer. The fact of the allegations and any investigation will be kept confidential unless otherwise agreed to by the subject officer.

KEY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**General Manager**

The General Manager has ultimate responsibility for maintaining the internal reporting system and workplace reporting culture, and ensuring Council complies with the PID Act. The General Manager can receive reports from staff and councillors and has a responsibility to:

-
- assess reports received by or referred to them, to determine whether the report should be treated as a public interest disclosure, and to decide how the report will be dealt with
 - deal with reports made under the council's code of conduct in accordance with the council's adopted code of conduct procedures
 - ensure there are strategies in place to support reporters, protect reporters from reprisal and manage workplace conflict that may arise in relation to a report
 - make decisions following any investigation or appoint an appropriate decision-maker
 - take appropriate remedial action where wrongdoing is substantiated or systemic problems are identified
 - refer actual or suspected corrupt conduct to the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) refer any evidence of a reprisal offence under section 20 of the PID Act to the Commissioner of Police or the ICAC.

Council staff and councillors

Staff and councillors play an important role in contributing to a workplace where known or suspected wrongdoing is reported and dealt with appropriately. All council staff and councillors are obliged to:

- report all known or suspected wrongdoing and support those who have made reports of wrongdoing
- if requested, assist those dealing with the report, including supplying information on request, cooperating with any investigation and maintaining confidentiality
- treat any staff member or person dealing with a report of wrongdoing with courtesy and respect
- respect the rights of any person the subject of reports.

Staff and councillors must not:

- make false or misleading reports of wrongdoing
- victimise or harass anyone who has made a report

Additionally, the behaviour of all council staff and councillors involved in the internal reporting process must adhere to Councils code of conduct. A breach of the code could result in disciplinary action.

Disclosures Coordinator (Senior Governance Officer)

This position has a central role in Council's internal reporting system. The Disclosures Coordinator can receive and assess reports, and is the primary point of contact at Council for the reporter. The Disclosures Coordinator has a responsibility to:

- assess reports to determine whether a report should be treated as a public interest disclosure, and to decide how each report will be dealt with (either under delegation or in consultation with the General Manager)
- deal with reports made under the council's code of conduct in accordance with the council's adopted code of conduct procedures
- coordinate Council's response to a report
- acknowledge reports and provide updates and feedback to the reporter
- assess whether it is possible and appropriate to keep the reporter's identity confidential
- assess the risk of reprisal and workplace conflict related to or likely to arise out of a report, and develop strategies to manage any risk identified

- where required, provide or coordinate support to staff involved in the reporting or investigation process, including protecting the interests of any officer the subject of a report
- ensure Council complies with the PID Act
- provide six-monthly reports to the NSW Ombudsman in accordance with section 6CA of the PID Act.

Disclosures Officers

Disclosures officers are additional points of contact within the internal reporting system. They can provide advice about the system and the internal reporting policy, receive reports of wrongdoing and assist staff and councillors to make reports.

They have a responsibility to:

- document in writing any reports received verbally, and have the document signed and dated by the reporter
- make arrangements to ensure reporters can make reports privately and discreetly when requested, if necessary away from the workplace
- discuss with the reporter any concerns they may have about reprisal or workplace conflict
- carry out preliminary assessment and forward reports to the disclosures coordinator or general manager for full assessment.

Mayor

The Mayor can receive reports from staff and councillors about the General Manager. Where the Mayor receives such reports, the Mayor has a responsibility to:

- assess the reports to determine whether they should be treated as a public interest disclosure, and to decide how they will be dealt with
- deal with reports made under the council's code of conduct in accordance with the council's adopted code of conduct procedures
- refer reports to an investigating authority, where appropriate
- liaise with the disclosures coordinator to ensure there are strategies in place to support reporters, protect reporters from reprisal and manage workplace conflict that may arise in relation to a report
- refer actual or suspected corrupt conduct to the ICAC
- refer any evidence of a reprisal offence under section 20 of the PID Act to the Commissioner of Police or the ICAC.

Supervisors and Line Managers

Supervisors and line managers play an important role in managing the immediate workplace of those involved in or affected by the internal reporting process. Supervisors and line managers should be aware of the internal reporting policy and are responsible for creating a local work environment where staff are comfortable and confident about reporting wrongdoing. They have a responsibility to:

- encourage staff to report known or suspected wrongdoing within the organisation and support staff when they do
- identify reports made to them in the course of their work which could be public interest disclosures, and assist the staff member to make the report to an officer authorised to receive public interest disclosures under this policy

- implement local management strategies, in consultation with the disclosures coordinator, to minimise the risk of reprisal or workplace conflict in relation to a report
- notify the disclosures coordinator or general manager immediately if they believe a staff member is being subjected to reprisal as a result of reporting wrongdoing, or in the case of suspected reprisal by the general manager, notify the Mayor.

ASSESSMENT OF REPORTS

All reports will be promptly and thoroughly assessed to determine what action will be taken to deal with the report and whether the report will be treated as a public interest disclosure. The Director of Corporate Services or Senior Governance Officer are the Disclosure Coordinators under this policy. They are responsible for assessing reports, in consultation with the General Manager where appropriate.

All reports will be assessed on the information available to the disclosures coordinator at the time. It is up to the disclosures coordinator to decide whether an investigation should be carried out and how that investigation should be carried out. In assessing a report the disclosures coordinator may decide that the report should be referred elsewhere or that no action should be taken on the report.

Internal Investigating Authorities

Staff are encouraged to report general wrongdoing to their supervisor. However, the PID Act requires that, for a report to be a public interest disclosure, it must be made to certain public officials identified in this policy or any supporting procedures.

The following positions are the only people within Council who are authorised to receive a public interest disclosure. Any supervisor who receives a report that they believe may be a public interest disclosure is obliged to assist the staff member to make the report to one of the positions listed below. If your report involves a councillor, you should make it to the General Manager. If your report relates to the general manager, you should make it to the Mayor.

Role	Contact Person	Telephone Number
General Manager	Adam McSwain	03 5898 3047
Mayor	TBA	
Director Corporate Services	TBA	
Director Economic Development	TBA	
Disclosures Coordinator	TBA – Senior Governance Officer	

External Investigating Authorities

Staff and councillors are encouraged to report wrongdoing within Council, but internal reporting is not your only option. You can also make a public interest disclosure to:

- An investigating authority.
- A Member of Parliament or a journalist, but only in the limited circumstances outlined below.

The PID Act lists investigating authorities in NSW that staff and councillors can report wrongdoing to and the type of wrongdoing each authority can deal with. In certain circumstances, it may be

preferable to make a report of wrongdoing to an investigating authority, for example a report about either the general manager or the Mayor.

The relevant investigating authorities for the Council are:

- the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) — for reports about corrupt conduct
- the Ombudsman — for reports about maladministration
- the Information and Privacy Commissioner — for disclosures about a breach of the GIPA Act or Privacy Complaints
- the Office of Local Government— for disclosures about local councils.

You should contact the relevant investigating authority for advice about how to make a disclosure to them. Contact details for each investigating authority are provided at the end of this policy.

You should be aware that the investigating authority may well discuss any such reports with the Council. We will make every effort to assist and cooperate with the investigating authority to ensure the matter is dealt with appropriately and there is a satisfactory outcome. We will also provide appropriate support and assistance to staff or councillors who report wrongdoing to an investigating authority, if we are made aware that this has occurred.

Members of Parliament or journalists

To have the protections of the PID Act, staff reporting wrongdoing to a Member of Parliament (MP) or a journalist must have already made substantially the same report to one of the following:

- the General Manager
- a person nominated in this policy, including the Mayor for reports about the General Manager
- an investigating authority.

Also, the Council or the investigating authority that received your initial report must have either:

- decided not to investigate the matter
- decided to investigate the matter, but not completed the investigation within six months of the original report
- investigated the matter but not recommended any action as a result
- not told the person who made the report, within six months of the report being made, whether the matter will be investigated.

Most importantly – to be protected under the PID Act – if you report wrongdoing to an MP or a journalist you will need to be able to prove that you have reasonable grounds for believing that the disclosure is substantially true and that it is in fact substantially true

Other external reporting

If you report wrongdoing to a person or authority that is not listed above, or make a report to an MP or journalist without following the steps outlined above, you will not be protected under the PID Act. This may mean you will be in breach of legal obligations or our code of conduct – by, for example, disclosing confidential information.

For more information about reporting wrongdoing outside Council, contact the Disclosures Coordinator or the NSW Ombudsman's Public Interest Disclosures Unit. Their contact details are provided at the end of this policy.

POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed by Council within the first year of an election or as a result of changes to legislation.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Staff can seek advice and guidance from the Disclosures Coordinator and the NSW Ombudsman's website at www.ombo.nsw.gov.au or the external investigating authorities listed below.

For disclosures about corrupt conduct:

Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC)
Phone: 02 8281 5999
Toll free: 1800 463 909
Tel. typewriter (TTY): 02 8281 5773
Facsimile: 02 9264 5364
Email: icac@icac.nsw.gov.au
Web: www.icac.nsw.gov.au
Address: Level 7, 255 Elizabeth Street, Sydney NSW 2000

For disclosures about maladministration:

NSW Ombudsman
Phone: 02 9286 1000
Toll free (outside Sydney metro): 1800 451 524
Tel. typewriter (TTY): 02 9264 8050
Facsimile: 02 9283 2911
Email: nswombo@ombo.nsw.gov.au
Web: www.ombo.nsw.gov.au
Address: Level 24, 580 George Street, Sydney NSW 2000

For disclosures about breaches of the GIPA Act or Privacy Act:

Information & Privacy Commissioner
Toll free: 1800 472 679
Facsimile: 02 8114 3756
Email: ipcinfo@ipc.nsw.gov.au
Web: www.ipc.nsw.gov.au
Address: Level 11, 1 Castlereagh Street, Sydney NSW 2000

For disclosures about local councils:

Office of Local Government
Phone: 02 4428 4100
Tel. typewriter (TTY): 02 4428 4209
Facsimile: 02 4428 4199
Email: olg@olg.nsw.gov.au
Web: www.dlg.nsw.gov.au
Address: 5 O'Keefe Avenue, Nowra, NSW 2541

POLICY HISTORY AND VERSION CONTROL

Business Department	Corporate Services
Responsible Officer	Director Corporate Services
Council Reference	
Policy Review Date	Annually and within 12 months of Local Government election.
File No:	
Relevant Legislation	NSW Public Interest Disclosures Act 1994 NSW Local Government Act 1993 NSW Independent Commission Against Corruption Act 1998 Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009
Related policies, procedures, & protocols	

Version	Date Changed/Adopted	Modified by	Description of Change
1	Adopted 17 May 2017	Rhonda Skelton	Review and development of merged Edward River Council policy.

INTERNAL REPORT FORM

To be completed by an internal reporter and submitted to a nominated Disclosures Officer

Details of reporter *(You can make an anonymous report by leaving this section blank)*

Name:		
Position:		
Division/Unit:		Preferred method of contact
Telephone:		<input type="checkbox"/> Telephone
Email:		<input type="checkbox"/> Email
Postal address:		<input type="checkbox"/> Post

Details of the wrongdoing being reported

Description:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What happened?</i> • <i>Where did this happen?</i> • <i>When did this happen?</i> • <i>Is it still happening?</i> <p><i>[Attach an additional page if required]</i></p>	

How did you become aware of this?	
-----------------------------------	--

Name and position of people involved in the wrongdoing:	Name		Position	

Attach any additional relevant information or indicate where supporting evidence may be found:	Supporting evidence		Attached
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>

Name and position of other people who may have additional information:	Name		Position	

Statement

I honestly believe that the above information shows or tends to show wrongdoing.

<hr/> Signature of reporter <i>(Do not sign if you want to make an anonymous report)</i>	<hr/> Date report submitted <i>(Essential information)</i>
---	---