



End of Term Report 2017-2021



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About

This Report

Under the NSW Government's Integrated Planning and Reporting Legislation for Local Government, Council is required to produce a report on its progress in implementing the Community Strategic Plan during its term. This report is prepared for presentation to the final meeting of the outgoing Council prior to the Local Government Elections to be held on 4 December 2021.

Yass Valley Council adopted its Community Strategic Plan in February 2017 after conducting a comprehensive engagement and consultation strategy with the Yass Valley community.

In partnership with Upper Lachlan Shire and Goulburn Mulwaree Councils and the communities, Council developed a long-term vision for the future of our home, which is now reflected in *The Tablelands Community Strategic Plan 2016-2036*. This vision is to build and maintain sustainable communities while retaining the region's natural beauty. Working together in this way is our opportunity to plan ahead to address the issues the community has told Council are important.

In addition to the Community Strategic Plan, Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework extends to include a four-year Delivery Program and an annual Operational Plan.

The Delivery Program describes how Council will work with the community to achieve community goals. It outlines the priorities that Council will pursue to meet the goals and strategies Council has adopted and presented in *The Tablelands Regional Community Strategic Plan 2016-2036*. The Operational Plan includes Council's annual budget and provides detailed information on the range of actions and projects Council will undertake in the financial year that will assist in progressing towards the agreed community goals.

This End-of-Term Report provides comments in respect of the progress Council has made through its Delivery Program and Operational

Plans between 2017 and 2021, against the agreed strategies presented in *The Tablelands Regional Community Strategic Plan 2016-2036*.

The aim of this End-of-Term Report is to provide an update to the Yass Valley community on how the Council is progressing towards achieving the objectives of the Community Strategic Plan.



Our Councillors



Back: Cr Allison Harker, Cr Cecil Burgess, Cr Nathan Furry (Deputy Mayor), Cr Michael McManus & Cr Mike Reid
Front: Cr Geoff Frost, Cr Rowena Abbey (Mayor), Cr Kim Turner & Cr Jasmin Jones

A snapshot of some achievements during the 2017-2021 term

2016-2017

- Official opening of new Murrumbateman Sewerage Scheme
- Official opening of upgraded Murrumbateman Transfer Station
- Yass Valley Library becomes an independent library
- Major road construction projects – Mulligans Flat Road, Yass River Road, Tallagandra Lane and Sutton Road
- Yass Riverbank Park fitness stations and fitness trail opened
- Training light installation at Joe O'Connor Park and Binalong Oval completed
- Resurfacing of Yass Netball Courts completed
- Installation of accessibility playground in Banjo Paterson Park
- Yass, Sutton & Gundaroo Flood Studies adopted by Council
- Council commences discussions with Wuzhou, China on formation of 'Friendship City' partnership
- Lobbying State and Federal Governments for duplication of the Barton Highway
- Council received grants totalling of \$12.6 million for operating and capital purposes
- Council provided grants and donations of \$122,192



2017-2018

- Dicks Creek Road Bridge – Nanima – road segment 1
- *Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017-2020* endorsed by Council July 2017
- Discussions continued with Wuzhou, China on formation of ‘Friendship City’ partnership, with delegation visiting Yass Valley in August 2017
- *Yass Valley Settlement Strategy* adopted by Council September 2017
- *Yass Gorge Plan of Management* adopted by Council September 2017
- Digital Yass Valley – Smart Region was adopted by Council July 2017
- *Yass Valley Bike Plan and Pedestrian Access Mobility Plan (PAMP) 2017-2027* adopted by Council October 2017
- Barton Highway duplication commitment by Federal and State Government with work to commence October 2019.
- 14 new bus shelters installed in Yass Valley through the Country Passenger Transport Infrastructure Grants Scheme (CPTIGS)
- \$350,000 upgrade works to service centre round-a-bout completed March 2018
- Yass Valley’s new equestrian facilities at Murrumbateman Recreation Grounds officially opened March 2018
- Stage one of upgrades to Victoria Park amenities completed in May 2018
- Funding commitment by both Liberal and Labor State Government parties for school in Murrumbateman
- Council received grants totalling of \$14.3 million for operating and capital purposes
- Council provided grants and donations of \$107,251.56



2018-2019

- Mulligans Flat Road Bridge completed
- Replacement of the Binalong Recreation Ground amenities building
- Four sustainability workshops and a school education program were conducted to help reduce the amount of household waste going to landfill
- Resurfacing of level two of the Yass Netball Courts at Joe O'Connor Park, Yass
- Council adopted Yass Valley's first Reconciliation Action Plan, developed in partnership with the local Aboriginal community
- Completion of important road rehabilitation projects on Gundaroo Road & Good Hope Road
- Sutton amenities building commenced
- Works to deliver the 'Safety around Schools' Program in Sutton and Yass (Berinba Primary School) commenced
- Improvements to lighting for Walker Park and Murrumbateman Recreation Ground
- Sealing of 2.1km of Mulligans Flat Road and the replacement of the timber bridge
- Council adopted the *Yass Valley Development Contribution Plan*
- Council received grants totalling \$13.4 million for operation and capital purposes
- Council provided grants and donations of \$100,564.28



2019-2020

- Completion of Timber Bridge replacement program:
 - Yass River Road Bridge (Walmsley) – Yass River - Road Segment 25
 - Black Range Road bridge Road - Segment 7
 - Nottingham Road Bridge – Wee Jasper - Road Segment 6
 - Nottingham Road bridge – Wee Jasper - Road Segment 13
 - Childowla Road bridge – Childowla - Road Segment 18
 - Childowla Road bridge – Childowla - road segment 9
 - Childowla Road bridge –Childowla - road segment 16
 - Burrinjuck Road bridge- Burrinjuck - road segment 28
 - Leake Street Bridge - Bowning – Road segment 1
 - Graces Flat Road Bridge – Bowning - Road segment 1
 - Horseshoe Road bridge – Mullion - Road Segment 2
- Construction and completion of Sutton Amenities building
- Walker Park and Murrumbateman Recreation Ground lighting upgrade
- Completion of Victoria Park Amenities upgrade
- Completion of Coronation Park Playground upgrade
- Completion of Aboriginal Scarred Tree Installation at Oak Hill
- Completion of a new carpark at Walker Park
- Riverbank Park BBQ Shelter replaced
- Investigation of a design and business case for the Yass Water Treatment Plant
- Yass to Murrumbateman pipeline infrastructure commences
- Council received grants totalling \$16.6 million for operating and capital purposes
- Council provided grants and donations of \$104,089.93



2020-2021

- Yass to Murrumbateman Pipeline project, officially opened in early 2021
- Council commissions Hunter H2O to prepare a design and business case for the upgrade of the Yass Water Treatment Plant
- Council reached an agreement with DPIE (Water) on stage one of the Yass Water Treatment Plant upgrade which includes the installation of bubble plume aeration at Yass Dam, an upgrade of the raw water pump station and urgent works at the Yass Water Treatment Plant
- Completion of the replacement of three Timber Bridges:
 - Balgalal Creek Bridge - Garry Owen Road Binalong
 - Carrolls Creek Bridge – Burrinjuck Road, Burrinjuck
 - Tributary to Carrolls Creek Bridge – Burrinjuck Road, Burrinjuck
- Council's continued advocacy over a number of years for a primary school in Murrumbateman has been realised, with a development application being lodged with the NSW Department of Planning, Infrastructure and Environment
- Council adopted the *Wee Jasper Hall and Tennis Courts Plan of Management*
- Council adopted the *Heavy Haulage Development Contributions Plan*
- Council received grants totalling \$24 million for operating and capital purposes
- Council provided grants, donations and waived fees of \$231,444.19



Our Environment

We appreciate our range of rural landscapes and habitats, and act as custodians of the natural environment for future generations.



Protect and enhance the existing natural environment including flora and fauna native to the region

- Every development application assessed by Council considered impacts on the natural environment.
- Flora and fauna studies were undertaken for new water infrastructure, such as the Murrumbateman Pipeline, the Wellington Street Sewer Pump Station and the Yass Water Treatment Plant extension.
- Council has an assessor accredited under the *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016* on staff.
- Biodiversity surveys were undertaken on Council-owned property 'Hawthorn' to inform an application for strategic biocertification.
- Areas of Council-owned land or Council-managed Crown Land identified as priority sites for assessment for possible biodiversity stewardship sites, which would receive ongoing funding for management of biodiversity values.
- Weed management functions were returned to Council following the dissolution of the Southern Slopes Noxious Plant Authority. The Strategic Weeds Plan was completed and adopted by Council. Roadside weed spraying and community education on weed identification and management has increased significantly, with an overall improvement in biosecurity compliance.
- Council employs a Senior Biosecurity Weeds Officer to undertake inspections and implement the *Local Strategic Weeds Plan*.

Adopt environmental sustainability practices

- Council continues to engage with Environmentors who deliver programs to interested local primary schools.
- The CRJO funded workshops focused on waste reduction were delivered by the Eaton Gorge Theatre Company. Council requested workshops focused on High School and Preschool aged students as that is a demographic we have missed engaging before. There were a series of drama workshops at Yass High School and presentations at two local preschools featuring the 'King and Queen of Green'.
- Clean Up Australia Day activities were coordinated by Council including organising rubbish pickup at approved sites, advertising and assisting volunteer groups.
- Sustainability information shared weekly on Council's Social Media #SustainabilitySunday.
- Council obtained funding for a series of hands on workshops focused on encouraging people to think differently about resources, and reducing waste sent to landfill. This was called the Hands On for Less Waste Project, and was funded by the NSW Environmental Trust. The Project ran from 2018 to 2020. The project provided 8 adult workshops (attended by 113 people) and 35 primary school workshops (attended by 802 children). The workshops covered topics such as How to Halve Your Household Waste, Garden Art from Junk, Zero and Low Waste Gardening, Lunches Unwrapped, and 'In The Bin'.
- In 2021 Council launched the Yass Valley Eco Champs Project. This is a promotional project designed to use local and social media to showcase local businesses who are making an effort to increase the sustainability of their operations. The

project is free to participate in and is open to all businesses in the Yass Valley.

- In 2021, Council commenced a Climate Change and Natural Disaster Risk Assessment. This document is designed to assess the risks that a changing climate presents to Council assets and operations.
- Water sensitive urban design principles were considered in the assessment of development applications.

Protect and rehabilitate waterways and catchments

- Council continues to carry out the actions in the *Yass Gorge Plan of Management*, together with Friends of Yass Gorge.
- Council contributes monthly data for two monitoring points to ACT and region Waterwatch. This data, combined with the Water Bug Surveys, which are conducted every year in spring, contributes to the Catchment Health Indicator Report (CHIP Report). The CHIP report gives an outline of the water quality and river health for each subcatchment in the Upper Murrumbidgee, including the Yass River.
- Council is working toward broader catchment health goals through our membership on the Upper Murrumbidgee Catchment Network (UMCN), the ACT and Region Catchment Management Coordination Group, and the ACT and Region Stormwater Education Group.
- Council supported Yass Landcare on an Environmental Trust Restoration and Rehabilitation grant to restore a section of Yass River and Manton Creek.

Maintain a balance between growth, development and environmental protection through sensible planning

- A number of planning proposals have been approved, including three at Sutton, two at Gundaroo and one in Murrumbateman, as well as the creation of the *Parkwood Local Environmental Plan*. These have all involved significant assessment of biodiversity, bushfire, flooding and Aboriginal cultural issues.
- Strategic context for planning decisions was provided through the adoption of the *Sutton Masterplan*, *Gundaroo Masterplan* and *Yass Valley Settlement Strategy*.
- The *Yass Valley Local Strategic Planning Statement* was adopted.
- The Public Spaces Legacy Program development assessment efficiency targets were achieved. This included a reduction in gross median assessment

times for development applications and 100% usage of the NSW Planning Portal.

To investigate and implement approaches to reduce our carbon footprint

- Council continues to separate eligible containers for recycling at transfer stations. Non-ferrous metal is separated in respective types to be sold.
- While the population continues to increase, the Yass Valley LGA has achieved a steady reduction in waste to landfill for the past 3 years.
- Approximately 700 tonne from YVC kerbside recycling was processed at the Canberra Material Recycling Facility annually. Cardboard recycling is undertaken by Visy.
- One Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) is located in Yass in the Woolworths Carpark which has recovered approximately 130,000 eligible containers annually.
- New efficient lighting has been installed in the Yass Library.
- Street lighting upgraded to LED in Yass.
- New walking and cycling paths have been installed within Yass and the villages during this time, and a contract awarded in 2021 for the shared Murrumbateman Winery Trail.

Our Economy

We have a strong regional economy experiencing sustainable growth, which provides for a diverse range of employment opportunities.



Capitalise on the region's close proximity to Canberra and its position as a convenient location to attract industry and investment.

Council received \$1 million for the Murrumbateman Winery Trail under the Stronger Regional Communities Fund. Construction of the Murrumbateman Winery Trail commenced at the end of 2020.

Council worked with Regional NSW and Regional Development Australia Southern Inland on potential industry set-up opportunities in the Yass Valley. Such ventures included a wool processing plant and pet food manufacturing. Unfortunately, these have all been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Jointly develop appropriate tourism opportunities and promote the region as a destination.

Destination Southern NSW's plans and projects have now been aligned with Council's plans. This will assist Council in leveraging broader state initiatives and funding opportunities.

Council and Visit Canberra have provided support and funding to the rebranding of the Canberra District Wine Region. This joint collaboration will assist in promoting the Canberra Wine Region as a destination.

Council worked with adjoining Councils as part of the Southern Tablelands working group. The working group aligns projects with Destination Southern NSW's plans and projects, which are aligned with Council's plans. This assisted Council in leveraging broader state initiatives and funding opportunities.

Support and foster conditions that enable local and small/home based businesses to grow.

Council's team at Visit Yass Valley supports and promotes small/home-based businesses through social media and online platforms, as well as provides

opportunities to stock the products within the Yass Valley Information Centre.

Foster and develop a diverse, adaptive and innovative agricultural industry.

Council adopted the *Yass Valley Settlement Strategy* to focus development on existing settlements and, in particular, to protect rural land within 5km of the ACT border, which is under the greatest pressure for development.

Development applications in rural land use zones were assessed in accordance with the *Yass Valley Local Environmental Plan 2013*, including:

- Relevant zone objectives
- Prescribed minimum lot size or average lot size provisions
- Consideration of potential land use conflict between existing and proposed development, particularly between residential and rural land uses
- Potential for subdivisions to adversely affect the use of the development site and surrounding land for agricultural purposes

Encourage collaboration between businesses, government, and training providers to develop employment and training opportunities for young people in the region

- The *Southern Tablelands Regional Economic Development Strategy 2018-22* sets out a long-term vision and associated strategy for Council, along with Upper Lachlan Shire and Goulburn Mulwaree Councils. This Strategy is focused on developing employment in rural industries across the three LGAs.

Our Community

We are a network of vibrant, inclusive and diverse communities that value our rural lifestyle.



Facilitate and encourage equitable access to community infrastructure and services, such as health care, education and transport.

Ongoing advocacy has been undertaken seeking upgraded facilities at Yass Hospital.

The Yass Valley Library reviews its current service and programs to ensure we can provide equitable access to the library service. At present, this is achieved via the Mobile Library Service, outreach services to village pre-schools, the homebound service, in house programs and online resources. The services offered by Yass Valley Library were impacted during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Council actively advocated for the delivery of a primary school at Murrumbateman. A site was acquired and planning and design were completed. Council has also actively advocated for the development of a new multipurpose hall at Yass High, and a development application has been lodged. Discussions have been ongoing with the Department of Education to secure joint use of these facilities for the community.

Encourage and facilitate active and creative participation in community life.

Council's website was updated in 2018 to ensure it is compliant with relevant standards to enable access. The format for online documents has been altered with captions included for illustrations/photographs and colour contrasting.

Yass Valley Library offers a range of programs (both within the library and outreach) for all age levels and interests. In 2020, a restructure was undertaken, which introduced two additional staff members who have a programs focus. Unfortunately, the programs offered by Yass Valley Library were disrupted during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A graffiti 'free wall' has been established under the Hume Bridge in Yass.

The annual Community Grants Program has continued to support community groups and events, such as the Gundaroo Music Festival, Yass Scouts and local sporting teams.

Council facilitated a very popular grant-writing workshop for community groups, which was recorded and made available on our website.

Foster and encourage positive social behaviours to maintain our safe, healthy and connected community.

Council has continued to participate in interagency groups such as Child, Family and Youth. Council also supported the establishment of the Yass Suicide Prevention Network by Wesley Mission, and the delivery of the PCYC Fit for Life program.

Recognise and celebrate our diverse cultural identities, and protect and maintain our community's natural and built cultural heritage.

Throughout this term, Council (in conjunction with Heritage NSW) contributed to 36 heritage conservation projects in the Yass Valley with a total overall value of \$309,000. The projects ranged from the publishing of a book on Sutton's History, works on local shops, churches and halls through to private dwellings.

Council has continued to offer its heritage advisory service to staff and landowners.

Council adopted the *Heritage Strategy 2017-20*, which recognises the value of heritage places within the LGA.

Council completed the installation of three Aboriginal Scarred Trees on Oak Hill, Yass.

Council also adopted its first *Reconciliation Action Plan*, and began its implementation. Council

meetings, website and publications now include an Acknowledgement of Country. Cultural Awareness Training has also been undertaken for staff.

Maintain our rural lifestyle

Council adopted the *Yass Valley Settlement Strategy* to guide decisions of Council that will maintain the rural lifestyle.

Council adopted the *Yass Valley Settlement Strategy* to guide decisions of Council that will maintain the rural lifestyle.



Our Infrastructure

Our community is well serviced and connected to built, social and communications infrastructure.



Develop high speed rail links between the region, Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne.

Council has taken no action because no high speed rail link proposal has been formulated.

Improve public transport links to connect towns within the region and increase access to major centres.

No additional need for public transport to Canberra has been identified. Council remains committed to working with providers to provide additional options as the need is identified.

Maintain and improve road infrastructure and connectivity

Council has delivered the annual sealed and unsealed road maintenance program aimed at maintaining all roads to a minimum standard. This has been challenging due to a prolonged dry period from 2018-2020, followed by a sustained wet period from 2020-2021 and the network is under some stress.

Council delivered a comprehensive program of road infrastructure upgrades aimed at reducing the annual maintenance burden and improving connectivity within and through the Yass Valley. Council has completed the replacement of 11 timber bridges and the upgrade of other bridges.

Council has also completed a comprehensive program of sealed road rehabilitation and renewal. Council delayed the resheeting of unsealed roads during the dry period due to a lack of construction water and as a result the unsealed road network has suffered during the 2021 prolonged wet period.

Council has increased the resheeting program to recover the program, however, this has also been hampered by the prolonged wet. Council continues to seek grants for the sealing of unsealed roads as they become available.

Maintain and update existing community facilities, and support the development of new community infrastructure as needed.

Council has an annual maintenance program for community facilities to provide sporting and recreational amenities in a safe environment and to maintain their usage and appeal.

Council has continued a renewal and upgrade program across community facilities with new or upgraded amenities blocks at Sutton, Victoria Park, Binalong, and Gundaroo (for the Gundaroo Recreation Ground Trust). Council has completed upgraded playgrounds at Coronation Park and Binalong, along with improved BBQ facilities at Riverbank Park. Council has also completed lighting upgrades at Walker Park and Murrumbateman Recreation Grounds.

Ensure high quality water supply options for the towns in the region

Council has continued to maintain water supply to Yass, Binalong and Bowning with the network also being connected to Murrumbateman through the construction of the Yass to Murrumbateman pipeline infrastructure.

Challenges with water quality have been experienced through the period and Council has pushed ahead with the investigation, design and business case for an upgrade of the Yass Water Treatment Plant to enable consistent high quality water supply and to reduce the number of times water below the required quality is provided. Council had one boil water alert during the period. Council commenced stage one of the upgrade program of the Yass Water Treatment Plant in order to provide some quality improvements while the design and development of the final solution is completed.

Implement safe, accessible, and efficient management and recycling options for general waste, green waste and sewage.

Council has continued to deliver high-quality sewage management through the continued maintenance and management of the Yass and Murrumbateman sewage networks. No major breaches of Council's environmental compliance have been recorded. A number of minor issues were reported due to the prolonged dry or heavy rains.

Domestic and commercial waste collection and the operation of waste transfer stations have been maintained throughout the period. Initiatives to reduce waste and increase recycling through schools and at the waste transfer stations are reducing Council's waste to landfill.

An On-Site Sewage Management Systems Strategy has been developed to protect public health and the environment from ineffective and failing on-site sewage management systems and to guide landholders towards sustainable on-site sewage management.

Secure improvements for, and future proof, telecommunications infrastructure.

Council continues to work with all telecommunications providers to deliver better services throughout the Yass Valley.

Improve accessibility to, and support the development of, health and medical facilities in the region.

Council continues to both lobby and support NSW Health in delivering high quality health services for the Yass Valley.

Improve accessibility to, and support the development of, education and training facilities in the region.

Council has been an active advocate for the delivery of a Primary school at Murrumbateman. A site has now been acquired, planning and design are completed, and construction due to commence later 2021.

Council has also actively advocated for the development of a new multipurpose hall at Yass High, and a development application has been lodged.

Discussions have been ongoing with Department of Education to secure joint use for the community of these facilities.

Our Civic Leadership

Our leaders operate ethically and implement good governance. We empower our residents with the tools to participate actively in the development of our communities.



Effect resourceful and respectful leadership and attentive representation of the community

Council has carried out its functions in a safe manner and in accordance with legislative requirements.

Council decisions about services and infrastructure are informed by the Council's Long Term Financial Plan to ensure Council can meet the needs of the community in a financially sustainable manner.

Encourage and facilitate open and respectful communication between the community, the private sector, Council and other government agencies

Council's new website, compliant with relevant standards to enable access, was launched in 2018. The format for printed documents altered, with captions included for illustrations/photographs, and colour contrasting used.

Council uses its official website and social media channels to inform the community of engagement opportunities and announcements. Residents that are directly impacted by major projects are directly engaged through letter or email.

For announcements, Council issues an official media release to local media outlets.

Council directly engages community groups, providing them with information of interest, including opportunities to comment on projects and contribute to relevant plans.

The community is notified of development applications in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Strategy.

Advice and concurrence from relevant government agencies is sought through the development application process, as required by legislation.

Collaborate and cooperate to achieve efficiencies and a greater voice in regional decision-making, and encourage similar cooperation across other sectors and community groups.

Council is an active contributing member of the CRJO, the peak body for Councils in the broader region.

The Mayor is the Chairperson of the CRJO.

Council actively contributes to consultation opportunities as they become available, particularly where there is the opportunity to influence outcomes with State and Federal Government bodies.

Actively investigate and communicate funding sources and collaboration opportunities that can strengthen the region

Council monitors all government information distribution channels and disseminates information to the community on a proactive basis. The Council provided regular updates to the community about COVID-19 restriction throughout 2020 and 2021.

Council purchased online grant portal access through Regional Development Australia Southern Inland. The portal allows community groups and residents to search for, and be alerted to, grants that are available from a variety of sources.

The General Manager met regularly with the General Managers of Goulburn Mulwaree and Upper Lachlan Shire Councils to identify opportunities for collaboration.

