



Corowa Shire

...the choice

Annual Report

2014 - 2015





A quality Council.

On behalf of Corowa Shire Councillors and staff, we are pleased to present our 2014 - 2015 Annual Report.

This document is an important means of communication between Council and the community. It provides the opportunity to highlight the programs and achievements for the 2014 - 2015 financial year.

We are proud of the achievements made this year and are committed to further organisational improvements.

Council is focused on the constant improvement of the organisation. An improvement program has been set in place and the implementation of a number of reviews completed this year achieved good results.

There is a strong focus on ensuring a sustainable future for the Council and the community we service.

A significant improvement in Council's financial Operating performance has been achieved this year however more needs to be done.

Council has worked proactively with both the New South Wales and Australian Governments to ensure the greatest level of representation and positive outcomes for this region.

This has resulted in strong levels of funding being received and Council being selected as a pilot Council for initiatives such as the Crown Land Review.

A very strong focus is placed on communicating and working collaboratively with the community.

As a result there has been comprehensive community engagement this year to ensure Council understands the priorities of the community on important issues.

Council benefits greatly from the many partnerships we have in working with groups and organisations throughout the Shire. This allows maximum outcomes to be delivered for the community.

We would like to sincerely thank the many volunteers that work with Council to support the community to deliver such a diverse range of functions.

Corowa Shire is lucky to have residents that are committed to improving the quality of life and supporting those around them.

Council has a team of highly committed staff and we would like to thank everyone for their valuable contributions this year.

Cr Fred Longmire - Mayor

Chris Gillard - General Manager

COROWA SHIRE ORGANISATIONAL VALUES

EXCELLENCE

- We will take pride in providing quality and value for money services and we will continually strive for improvement.

INTEGRITY

- We will be open, respectful and truthful in our dealings.

ACCOUNTABILITY

- We will take responsibility for our actions and be consistent in the application of our principles, policies and process.

INNOVATION

- We will create our future by encouraging new ideas, opportunities and better ways of doing things.

RESPONSIVENESS

- We will be accessible to the community and make timely and informed decisions.

TEAMWORK

- We will foster an enjoyable workplace where people feel supported and respected, are empowered and have the opportunity to grow.



Cr Fred Longmire - Mayor

Statutory Committees

- Traffic (as an observer)
- Rural Fire Service Liaison
- Rural Fire Service Advisory
- Code of Conduct

Council Committees

- Road Closure
- Australia Day
- Saleyards Consultative
- Social and Community Plan Implementation

Council Delegate to Organisations

- RAMROC
- ClubGrants (Corowa/Howlong)
- SubPact



Chris Gillard - General Manager

The General Manager leads all staff and is directly responsible to the elected Council. The General Manager is responsible for the day-to-day management of the whole organisation, as well as all functions shown under the respective Directorates.

2023 - Our Vision, Our Future

We are a community built on our strengths – our natural beauty, our land, our opportunities and our people.

We embrace and celebrate our rich history; whilst at the same time continue to be excited in our plans for the future.

We are inclusive, welcoming and compassionate. We are deeply committed to protecting our families, our environment, and our economy.

We are a great place to visit, to live and to enjoy. We are 'The Choice'

Corowa Shire has a population of 11,000 people with the population based in three main towns: Corowa with a population of 5,628, Howlong 2,110, Mulwala 1,985, and 905 people in smaller villages and rural areas of Balldale, Coreen, Buraja-Lowesdale, Daysdale, Rennie, and Savernake. Corowa is the key town in the region which has developed as a key service centre for surrounding rural villages and farming communities.

The Shire covers an area of 2407.29 square kilometres.

Our Heritage

78.5% of residents have both parents born in Australia, and 87.7% of residents were themselves born in Australia. 21.5% of residents have one or both parents born overseas. Of the 12.3% who were born overseas, the most prevalent countries of birth were United Kingdom, New Zealand, Netherlands, Germany and Philippines.

Our Employment and Education

There are 8,873 residents aged over 15 in the Shire, of which, 4,897 are in the workforce. Of those in the workforce, 33.4% are employed full-time, 15.3% are employed part-time, 3.9% are employed other, and 2.6% are unemployed and looking for work.

Corowa Shire boasts six government primary schools, one non-government primary school, one government high school, and two further education campuses. There are 573 children enrolled in primary school and 542 children



enrolled in high school, supported by 72.5 EFT teachers.

The most common qualification in the Corowa Shire is a Certificate. Of the 2,806 people who have secondary qualifications, 65.4% have a Certificate, 14.6% have an Advanced Diploma and 20.0% have completed a Bachelor Degree or higher.

Our Finances

The median housing loan repayment is \$1,040 per month, and median rent is \$150 per week.

The median weekly individual income for persons aged 15 years and over is \$389, compared with \$466 in Australia. The median weekly household income is \$776, compared with \$1,027 in Australia. The median weekly family income is \$1,014, compared with \$1,171 in Australia.

OUR COUNCILLORS



Statutory Committees

- Traffic (as an observer)
- Internal Audit

Council Committees

- Community Safety Committee
- Drug Action Team
- Australia Day
- Mulwala Friends of the Library

Council Delegate to Organisations

- Yarrawonga Mulwala Tourism
- Lonsdale Reserve Management
- ClubGrants (Mulwala)
- Liquor Accord (Mulwala)
- SubPACT

Cr Daryl Davey

Statutory Committees

- Traffic (observer)
- Internal Audit

Council Committees

- Australia Day
- Mulwala Streetscape
- Road Closure
- Traffic Safety Committee

Council Delegate to Organisations

- Yarrawonga Mulwala Tourism
- Friends of the Library (Mulwala)
- Lonsdale Reserve Management
- Liquor Accord (Corowa)



Cr Norm Wales APM



Cr Joan Palmer

Council Committees

- Corowa Friends of Library
- Corowa District Landcare
- Energy Audit
- Traffic Safety (observer)

Council Delegate to Organisations

- Riverina Regional Library
- Daysdale Water Trust

Council Committees

- Road Closure
- Corowa Shire Tourism
- Energy Audit
- Aerodrome User Group
- Festival of Dance
- Traffic Safety (observer)

Council Delegate to Organisations

- ERNWAG (Noxious Weeds)



Cr Francesco Bruinsma



Cr Fiona Schirmer

Council Committees

- Australia Day
- Corowa Shire Tourism
- Lowe Square Management
- Social and Community Plan Implementation

Council Delegate to Organisations

- Murray Darling Association
- Riverina Regional Library (alternate)
- Corowa Shire Tourism
- Corowa Arts & Culture Advisory
- Alliance of the Councils & Shires of the Upper Murray
- Murray Arts

Council Committees

- Road Closure
- Aerodrome User Group
- Lowe Square Management

Council Delegate to Organisations

- ClubGrants
- Liquor Accord (Corowa)
- SubPact



Cr Mark Shields



Cr Paul Miegel - Deputy Mayor

Council Committees

- Australia Day
- Sister City
- Sanger Street
- Energy Audit
- Community Safety Committee & Corowa Drug Action Team

Council Delegate to Organisations

- Friends of the Library (Corowa)
- Corowa Shire & Rutherglen District Health & Community Support
- Alliance of the Councils and Shires of the Upper Murray

Council Committees

- Corowa Friends of Library
- Aerodrome Management
- Social Planning
- Community Safety Committee
- Drug Action Team



Cr Gail Law

DIRECTOR ENGINEERING & INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr Nigel Sutton

- Water Services
- Sewer Services
- Waste and Trade Waste
- Saleyards
- Roads
- Parks & Gardens
- Airport
- Cemeteries
- Emergency Management
- Public Infrastructure
- Recreational Grounds
- Stores and Depot
- Plant
- Design and Construction
- Work Health & Safety
- Trees and Public Risk
- Road Safety



DIRECTOR CORPORATE & COMMUNITY SERVICES

Ms Kristy Kay

- Finance
- Library Services
- Tourism
- Community Development
- Economic Development
- RMS Agency
- Customer Service
- Human Resources / Payroll
- Information Technology
- GIS
- Insurances
- Records Management
- Public Interest Disclosure and Public Access
- Leases and Governance
- Strategic Planning
- Communications
- Events Risk Management
- Asset Management



DIRECTOR PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES (ACTING GENERAL MANAGER)

Mr Bob Parr

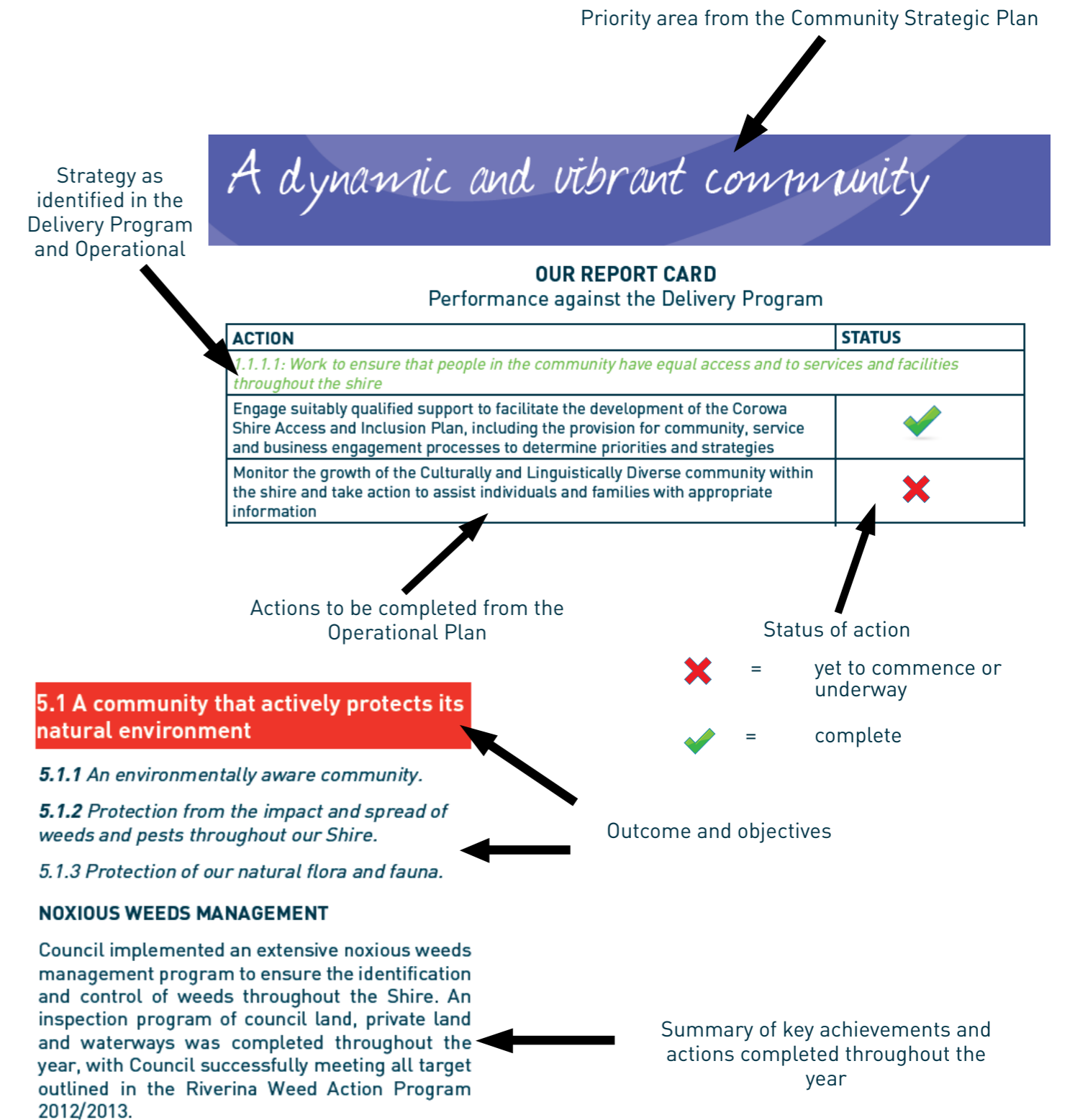
- Environmental Planning
- Health and Building
- Town Planning
- Building and Facilities Management
- Environment and Landcare
- Swimming Pools
- Noxious Weeds
- Cleaning Services
- Street Furniture and Signage



READING AND UNDERSTANDING THE ANNUAL REPORT

The Annual Report provides an opportunity for Council to report back to the community on the implementation of actions within the Delivery Program and Operational Plan.

The graphic below outlines what each section of this report represents.



INTEGRATED PLANNING & REPORTING FRAMEWORK

In NSW, amendments were made to the NSW Local Government Act 1993 (NSWDLG 2010) which required every Council to develop a minimum ten-year Community Strategic Plan, informed through community engagement.

The Community Plan is each Council's principal planning document, detailing asset management and service provision planning in the form of a Delivery Program and an Operational Plan.

The Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework (IPRF) in NSW requires that Councils engage with their communities. The legislation requires that communities must be involved in visioning processes that span a 10 year or greater timeframe. It also requires that:

- The Council must establish and implement a strategy (its "community engagement strategy"), based on social justice principles, for engagement with the local community when developing the community strategic plan.
- The Council exhibit the draft plan for public comment 'for a period of at least 28 days', and that submissions must be considered by the Council before the plan is endorsed or amended.

Council's Community Strategic Plan has been developed to deliver clear direction in order to achieve the vision of our collective community. The Community Strategic Plan is the Shire's principal planning document, and will support the development of the local economy, environment, infrastructure and addressing a broad range of issues relevant to the whole community.

The vision for our community can only be achieved through close co-operation, support and partnerships between Council, state agencies, private industry, community groups and individuals in the implementation of the Plan.

To ensure that we achieve our desired community vision, we will undertake asset management, service provision and workforce management

planning and prepare a Delivery Program and operational plan to service the key strategy items highlighted in the Community Strategic Plan.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Corowa Shire Council is proud to be an Equal Employment Opportunity Employer (EEO).

Council adopted its first EEO policy on 24 July 1991 as part of its Corporate Plan and has since amended and expanded this policy to incorporate the requirements of the Local Government Act 1993.

A review has been completed of the Corowa Shire EEO Plan this year in consultation with staff.

The plan includes strategies in relation to work force planning and actions that address equal employment opportunity such as:

- Communication and Awareness raising
- Consultation
- Recruitment
- Questions at Interview
- Appointment, Promotion and Transfer
- Training and Development
- Grievance Resolution
- Evaluation and Review of EEO Management Plan

HUMAN RESOURCES

Council is focused on its Human Resources activities to ensure a quality workforce.

Activities this year have included:

One senior role was vacated and this role was absorbed into the current staffing arrangements. New roles were created due to organisational restructure and these roles have been filled through external advertising processes and this has proven to attract excellent staff.

Staff who have left Council have been encouraged to complete exit interviews to ensure constructive feedback can be considered and issues or opportunities addressed.

Council is constantly reviewing its induction process, to meet ever changing legislation and to incorporate new processes.

We have been actively working with Primary and High Schools to promote careers in Local Government. This has included our staff and HR Officer making presentations at Career Day talks.

We have been focused on up-skilling our workforce by placing existing staff into Certificate III or Certificate IV courses within their fields through traineeships or modules in their respective fields. These include finance, business administration, water and sewer, parks and gardens and construction. Corowa Shire is very proactive in supporting learning and development as a means of organisational improvement and supporting its employees. Corowa Shire Council this year has successfully facilitated a large number of employees to complete their traineeships.

The Local Government State Award has approved a 2.7% increase.

Council has been actively benchmarking performance through the Murray Regional Organisation of Councils (RAMROC) and HR Forums.

Over the past year Council has considered support for appropriate flexible work arrangements where organisation requirements are still met.

Council's Code of Conduct, Behavioural Competencies and Council's Vision has been a major part of educating all staff on what is expected of a Council worker.

Council has retained close communications with injured staff to support their return to work even if the injury has not been work related.

Council's General Manager was the only Senior Staff appointment employed under a remuneration package of \$208,478 consisting of salary, fringe benefits and on costs (including motor vehicle expenses and superannuation).

WHS / RISK MANAGEMENT

Council is proactive in identifying and implementing strategies to mitigate risk.

Corowa Shire is committed to ensuring that risk management systems are put in place to benefit and protect both the organisation as well as the community we serve. During 2014-15 our works programs were routinely inspected and reviewed to ensure that the risk management systems are effective without compromising the safety of our workers and the community. As part of our commitment to safety and compliance our staff are provided with up to date training to ensure all works are conducted by safe and competent operators.

In conjunction with our Insurer, an annual Risk Management Action Plan (RMAP) is developed to identify specific strategic and operational risks and outlines timeframes and milestones to complete identified actions. The 2014-15 RMAP has identified the following risk initiatives;

- Develop and implement a Footpath Inspection and management system
- Develop and implement a Street Tree Policy and management procedure
- Reduce the risk of Fraudulent Activities by updating Council's Fraud Management Strategy
- Improve playground safety by the development of a Playground Safety Management Strategy.

Corowa Shire continues to be proactive towards risk management and promotes a safe work place not only for our own staff but also for the broader community. Internal and external audits have been conducted on our assets which have identified issues that will be required to maintain the safety and integrity of our infrastructure. Following a recent external audit, a scope of works was implemented which gave priority to assets which pose the highest risk to our organisational structure. These works are continuing and further reviews will be conducted.

2014/2015 financial year were:

COUNCILLOR FEES AND FACILITIES

The total amount expended in 2014/15 on Mayoral fees, Councillor fees, and the provision of services to Councillors in line with Council's adopted policy was:

Councillor Fees	\$90,630.36
Mayoral Fees	\$20,140.20
Councillor and Mayor reimbursements (travel)	\$31,571.05
Mayor reimbursements (other)	\$3,044.33
Education costs	\$1,900.00
Office equipment (laptop computers, mobile / landline phones / fax)	\$3,360.00
Telephone/ calls (home/mobile/fax)	\$659.18
Attendance at conferences	\$4,060.00
Councillors Travelling Costs Interstate	\$0
Councillors Travelling Costs Overseas	\$0
Spouse fees	\$0
Care of Children	\$0

SUMMARY OF RESOLUTIONS CONCERNING WORK CARRIED OUT ON PRIVATE LAND, AND ANY SUBSIDIES RELATED TO THIS WORK

There were no resolutions concerning private works carried out on private land for the 2014/2015 financial year.

Income of \$329,384.91 was received for works undertaken by Council on private land in the 12 month period.

No subsidies were provided. Council's policy with regard to charging for these private rates is as follows:

Plant Hire Rates	Reviewed each year based on a commercial rate of return on (including operator) capital invested
Additional Labour	Actual costs plus 45% for overheads
Stores and Materials	Actual cost plus 20% for overheads

MEMBERSHIP OF EXTERNAL BODIES

Council was a member of Upper Murray Regional Library for the 2012/2013 financial year however this membership ceased from 30 June 2013 due to the voluntary wind up of the organisation by member Councils.

Upper Murray Regional Library was a company limited by guarantee for which Council held an interest along with seven other member Councils.

A solvent wind up of the organisation was completed by the Board and an appointed executive to the voluntary wind up of the organisation by member Councils.

More than \$150,000 of surplus funds have now been transferred to Riverina Regional Library for use by member Councils.

Corowa Shire Council joined Riverina Regional Library from 1 July 2013.

LEGAL PROCEEDINGS

Rate Recovery

Council has worked diligently to recover a large amount of outstanding debt and legal proceedings with Summons and judgements having been issued to ratepayers incurring legal fees of \$46,826.89. These legal fees are charged and eventually recovered from the person incurring the overdue debt.

Failed Investments

(Corowa Shire Council and Ors v LGFS and Ors NSD 1073 of 2009)

Council continues to be party to two class actions:

- Corowa Shire Council and Ors v LGFS and Others
- Wingecarribee Shire Council and Ors v Lehman Brothers Australia Limited.

Corowa Shire Council against Local Government Financial Solutions (LGFS) relates to a failed CPDO which saw Council lose \$1,000,000.

Councils participating in the class action appointed IMF to fund the legal action and law firm Piper Alderman as representation. A world first court ruling was made on 5 November 2012 which meant that Councils should recover about \$30 million in losses.

While a part distribution was made to Corowa Shire Council, an appeal has been lodged and these funds are to be kept in reserve until the outcome of the appeal.

Council expects to recover less than 50% of the \$1,000,000 loss.

CONTRACTS AWARDED

Contracts awarded exceeding \$150,000 during the

Contractor	Description	Value
Edi Downer	Reseals	\$1,564,243
Cleanaway	Waste	\$879,129
Riverina Earthworks	Road Construction	\$874,890
Focus Engineering	Saleyards Construction	\$538,148
Caltex	Fuel	\$501,123
Bucher Municipal	Streetsweeper	\$355,336
Milbrae Quarries	Crushing	\$332,642
Uptons Engineering	Centre Pivot	\$281,891
Corowa Tree Care	Trees	\$255,796
Haralec Services	Solar PV	\$203,012
Williams Adams	Hire of Plant	\$202,946
Martim Contracting	Landfill	\$191,575
Omega Chemicals	Chemicals	\$178,224
De Kort Pumps	Pumps	\$178,119
PJK Wallis	Hire of Water Cart	\$169,902
Yarrawonga Refrigeration	Airconditioning works	\$127,804

COMPANION ANIMALS

SECTION 355 COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL

Under the provisions of Section 355 and 377 of the Local Government Act 1993, Council is able to delegate some of its functions to a Committee of Council. Council may use this authority and appoint Community groups to manage facilities or functions through a Section 355 Committee of Management.

The following fourteen bodies were appointed as Section 355 Committees of Council for the 2014 - 2015 financial year:

Name of Committee	Function
Corowa Shire Tourism	Tourism Promotion
Low Square Management Committee	Low Square Recreation Ground Management - Advisory
Corowa Safety Committee & Drug and Alcohol Team	Encourage responsible drug and alcohol use
Corowa Arts and Cultural Advisory Committee	Annual Arts and Photographic Exhibition
Festival of Dance	Dance Festival within Corowa
Corowa District Landcare	Landcare Operations
Corowa Friends of the Library	Ancillary Library Functions
Mulwala Friends of the Library	Ancillary Library Functions
Lonsdale Reserve Committee of Management	Lonsdale Reserve Management - Advisory
Daysdale Advisory Water Trust	Daysdale Water Supply - Advisory
Corowa Shire & Rutherglen District Health Social and Community Support Committee	Forum for Health Issues affecting the wider Community & Community Safety and Drug Action Team

STATE OF THE ENVIRONMENT REPORT

Ecological sustainable development (ESD) is the major objective of environment protection in New South Wales. The important role of Local Government in the implementation of ESD principles has been formally recognised

by incorporating the principles of Ecological Sustainable Development in the Local Government Act and by requiring Councils to manage their regulatory and service functions in an ecological sustainable manner. State of the Environment Reporting is a key mechanism for assessing progress towards sustainability.

Council has produced a State of the Environment Report incorporated the ESD principles by utilising the pressure - state - response model, a model designed to show the effect of human activities on the environment. The pressure - state - response model uses three main indicators; indicators of the positive or negative effects of human activities on a given environment; indicators of the changes in the environment, reflecting the impact of the pressures and/or the effectiveness of the responses; and, indicators of the actions taken in response to perceived or potential environmental problems and issues.

Since 2002 Council has joined with other Local Government Authorities within the Murray Regional Organisation of Councils to develop a regional SOE and these have been updated annually. Under Integrated Planning and Reporting, the SOE report is now due once every four years with Council's next SOE due 30 November 2016.

ROADS & MARITIME SERVICES (RMS)

Council, under contract to the Roads and Maritime Services (RMS) provides a motor registry service centre to the Corowa Shire and surrounding communities. Matters relating to licences and vehicle registrations are carried out at the Agency Office located at Corowa Shire Civic Centre, 100 Edward Street Corowa.

Council will be extending these services by becoming a Service NSW agency next year.

Agency hours are 9.30am to 4.30pm Monday to Friday inclusive.

Phone enquiries can be made to the RMS on 132213.

2014/15 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

This report provides an overview of the 2014/2015 Financial Statements. These statements are produced in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards and the NSW Local Government Code of Accounting Practice. The statements are independently audited, reported to Council, placed on public exhibition and lodged with the Division of Local Government (DLG) by

Income area	% of total income
Rates & Annual Charges	34.4%
User Fees & Charges	23.6%
Interest and Investment Revenues	2.8%
Other Revenues	9.9%
Grants and Contributions - Operating	24%
Grants and Contributions - Capital	5%

Please note the expense figures include depreciation. Figures have been rounded.

SPECIAL RATE VARIATION

During the 2013/2014 financial year Council gained approval from the Independent Pricing Authority (IPART) to implement an increase in general rates of 7% each year from 2013/2014 - 2016/2017. The below table provides a summary of the average rates throughout the Shire at that time and the average rates increase for each year.

	Current average rates	Average rates for Year 1 of increase	Average increases Year 1 \$	Average increase over 4 years	Cumulative increase over 4 years
Residential Corowa	371.31	397.46	26.15	115.60	
Residential Howlong	400.28	416.67	16.39	110.16	
Residential Mulwala	644.12	694.89	50.77	207.15	
Residential Corowa Rural	345.24	356.59	11.34	91.59	
Residential Mulwala Rural	622.39	694.16	71.77	227.99	
Residential Howlong Rural	522.79	579.70	56.91	187.37	
Business Corowa	748.29	795.92	47.63	226.74	
Business Mulwala	2422.61	2625.38	202.77	793.59	
Business Howlong	665.29	729.99	64.70	228.97	
Business Non Urban	495.60	518.95	23.35	140.13	
Farmland	2073.09	2218.12	145.04	644.21	

early November each year.

Under the 1993 NSW Local Government Act, Council is required to produce an audited set of Financial Statements. Key statements produced and included in this document are:

- **Income Statement**
- **Statement of Comprehensive Income**
- **Balance Sheet**
- **Cash Flow Statement, and**
- **Notes to the Financial Statements**

Expense area	% of total spend
Governance	1%
Administration	9.5%
Health	2.2 %
Environmental	7.3%
Community Services	.65%
Housing and Community Amenity	1.6%
Water Supply	11%
Sewerage Services	9.9%
Recreation and Culture	8.9%
Mining, Manufacturing & Construction	.59 %
Transport and Communication	17.7%
Economic Affairs	3.1%
Loan Repayments	4 %
Capital Works	21.8%

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Council has this year achieved a surplus in its net operating result from continuing operations (excluding capital contributions) of \$1,209k for the year ended 30 June 2015 (compared to year ended 2014: \$427k deficit).

This has been a major achievement for the Council and means that the depreciation of our assets has this year been adequately funded.

A major body of work has been undertaken by the Council this year to ensure a more sustainable long term financial position and while this has been a major shift for the year, Council remains committed to addressing the significant backlog in community infrastructure.

The improvement of Council's financial position will continue to require difficult decisions to be made. This will include rate increases, a review of service levels and the determination of clear community priorities.

Council has always ensured the careful management of its financial position. This has allowed the Council to be one of the lowest rated Councils in NSW while at the same time, manage a large number of increasing cost pressures such as:

- Rising insurance and public liability management
- An ageing population with increasing pensioner concessions
- Escalating waste management expenses and
- Cost shifting from other levels of Government.

Cost pressures are continuing to increase and there is no fiscal flexibility within Council's current financial position to continue to adjust to these ongoing pressures. Rate pegging in NSW has limited the opportunity for Council to raise additional revenue.

Some of the current measures undertaken by Council this year to address its long term financial position have included:

INTERNAL REVIEW AND IMPROVEMENT

Council has completed a large number of internal initiatives in order to reduce cost pressures or address service level requirements wherever possible.

Initiatives have included organisational re-structure, service level and efficiency reviews and a strong focus on innovation.

FINANCIAL TREATMENT

Significant work has been completed to ensure that Council is consistent in the treatment of the depreciation of its assets. Council completed large scale asset inspections throughout 2014/2015 of its road network, footpaths and storm-water drainage. Due to a much larger than normal construction works program over the last five year period, the condition of these assets has improved which has in turn improved Council's current projected financial position.

IMPROVED ASSET CONDITIONS

Council is committed to focusing its works around asset renewal instead of any expansion or upgrade.

This will reduce long term maintenance costs and allow Council to improve its financial position.

RATE REVENUE

Council will be seeking to again increase its general rate revenue above the rate peg limit. This will need to occur whether Council is to amalgamate or not.

Corowa Shire is one of the lowest rated Councils of the 152 general purpose Councils in NSW.

Corowa Shire has one of the lowest average rate assessments when comparing the total general rate income of all Councils by the number of rateable properties (position 150 out of 152). Corowa Shire also has the lowest average rate assessment when comparing like Councils (position 20 out of 20).

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

EXPENSES	2013/2014	2014/2015
Total Income from Continuing Operations	\$31,832,000	\$30,279,000
Total Expenses from Continuing Operations	\$27,529,000	\$27,549,000
Net Operating Result for Year	\$4,303,000	\$2,730,000
Net Operation Result before Capital Grants and Contributions	-\$427,000	\$1,207,000
Current Assets	\$26,831,000	\$27,264,000
Non-Current Assets	\$320,227,000	\$335,202,000
Current Liabilities	\$5,483,000	\$4,957,000
Non-Current Liabilities	\$6,219,000	\$4,822,000
Total Equity	\$335,356,000	\$352,687,000
Rates Outstanding	6.9%	7.3%
Unrestricted Current Ratio	3.07x	3.34x
Own Source Operating Revenue Ratio (target greater than 60%)	63.01%	70.7%
Asset Renewal (target greater than 100%)	117.8%	93.2%

1.1 An inclusive, considerate and welcoming community

1.1.1 A community that supports people of all abilities, backgrounds and cultures.

1.1.2 A place of diverse opportunities and resources for young people.

1.1.3 A community that embraces and provides for our older residents.

1.1.4 A community that welcomes new residents and families.

1.1.5 Strong and vibrant rural communities.

YOUTH WEEK 2015

During Youth Week 2015 Corowa Skate Park was revitalised with sensational artworks created by Chris Henderson with assistance from around 25 local scooter and bike riders who use the park on a regular basis.

Created over a 5 day period the mural works attracted quite a lot of attention with more than 75 people visiting the location at various times to watch the progress of works.

The Skate Park Revamp project was made possible through NSW National Youth Week funding and Council's partnership with Corowa Skate Park Committee and Corowa (YAC) Youth Advisory Committee.

Photo: Artist Chris Henderson applies finishing touches to Corowa skate park shelter shed.



YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Corowa Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) was reformed during 2015. The newly formed committee was actively involved in the planning and facilitation of youth week activities which included the revamp of Corowa skate park and a movie night at Corowa RSL auditorium. Corowa YAC meets on a regular basis to discuss the needs of young people and is in the process of developing an action plan for activities and services for young people in Corowa.

Photo: Corowa YAC members planning Youth Week 2015 activities



LIBRARY AND INFORMATION WEEK

This year the Corowa Shire Libraries hosted International author Shamini Flint during Library and Information Week.

Shamini delivered ten sessions over three days, to over 540 students from all schools of the Corowa Shire. They were entertained by Shamini's humorous antics in describing the development of her stories which originated from real life experiences. 25 adults attended an evening session. The children are returning to the library to borrow and comment how much they liked her books. Both children and adults found her very entertaining.

1.2 A community that supports and provides opportunities for our families

1.2.1 A supportive community for our families.

1.2.2 Opportunities for our families to interact.

1.2.3 A community that prioritises the protection and growth of our children.

FESTIVAL OF FUN FOR KIDS

The Festival of Fun for Kids is a free community event delivered by Council in partnership with the community and ten business sponsors. The event was held for the fourth time on 23 November 2014 and was attended by more than 4000 people. The festival aims to encourage and inspire family and community togetherness, establish a fun, learning environment and to promote Corowa Shire as a tourist and family destination. A fantastic range of free activities were provided and these were hosted by community groups and organisations from throughout the region. More than 50 community groups and organisations supported the event and delivered activities that were interactive and engaging for children.

The Festival of Fun for Kids also provides an opportunity to showcase the wonderful services that are available to families in the region. Those offering child related products or services hosted displays at the festival to promote what they do and provide valuable information to parents and carers.



AN INSPIRED SENIORS WEEK

Seniors Week 2015 presented our older residents with a selection of activities that fitted within the annual theme of "Be Inspired" which was about encouraging creativity and celebrating self expression. To start the celebrations "Natter with Noel", an evening with bush poet Noel Stallard, was held at the Corowa Whisky & Chocolate Factory.

This event which was organised by Corowa Arts & Culture Committee and Federation Arts volunteers attracted more than 80 people and included numerous opportunities for the audience to be actively involved.

The regular afternoon tea and entertainment which is hosted by the Mayor and supported by Corowa High School hospitality students was held in the new RSL auditorium and attended by more than 150 people.

BABY BOUNCE PROGRAM

A four week Baby Bounce program was popular at Corowa Shire Libraries with half the parents and bubs returning to attend the weekly Storytime sessions. During December, Christmas stories and songs were a good lead up for the young children to acclimatize to Santa who visited after Storytime for a chat and photos.

Introduce your baby to the rhythm and sound of language at Corowa Library

Baby Bounce

10-11am
18 June 2015
25 June 2015
2 July 2015
9 July 2015

Baby Bounce is a four week, interactive, early literacy program for 0-12 month old babies and their carers.

Sessions require one leg per baby; no please invite extra helpers if you have twins or triplets. And don't forget to bring along a small rug.

Bookings can be made when visiting Corowa Library, by calling (02) 6033 8941 OR corowalibrary@corowa.nsw.gov.au

A poster for the 'Baby Bounce' program. It features a photograph of a woman smiling and holding a baby. The text is arranged around the image, including the program title, dates, and contact information. There are also small logos for Corowa Shire and the NSW Government at the bottom.

1.3 Engaging events and celebrations

1.3.1 An exciting and diverse calendar of events.

EVENTS DATABASE

Council continued to maintain an events database which aims to capture all known events scheduled in Corowa Shire. This database is used to update websites, create seasonal media releases and prepare the monthly Calendar of Events which is distributed throughout Corowa Shire and surrounding areas.

Work was undertaken to refresh the Calendar of Events and make it more relevant for visitors to Corowa Shire.

Changes were also made to the way the publication was produced and distributed. By emailing the calendar to operators and stakeholders, printing costs were significantly reduced with more than 20,000 pieces of paper saved over a 12 month period. This also resulted in the calendar being more widely circulated and the events receiving a greater level of exposure.

VISITOR SERVICES

Th Corowa Shire Council delivers professional visitor services from three locations across the Shire. Our friendly staff and volunteers are committed to ensuring visitors to the region receive exceptional customer service and information to meet their needs.

Our centres offers - brochure and poster displays, booking facilities for accommodation, events and attractions, product referral service and day trip suggestions, souvenirs and gifts, local knowledge and experience, maps, guides and information on services and facilities, free internet access and bike hire.

- 219 Nights at booked
- 33 Days of bicycle hire

AUSTRALIAN Billy Cart Championships

- 58 Entrants
- 22 Sponsors
- 32 volunteers
- 4,000 spectators



TOURISM EVENTS GRANT PROGRAM

Council recognises and appreciates the valuable contribution events make to our community and provides ongoing support to the attraction of new events through the Tourism Events Grant Program. An annual allocation of \$20,000 is made to this program, which supports events which deliver positive social and economic benefits to the community.

12 events were supported through two funding rounds during the 2014/15 financial year.

WHATS UP DOWN UNDER!

Council participated in a Spring marketing campaign implemented by Murray Region Tourism and targeted at two key markets - caravan and camping enthusiasts and families.

This campaign provided an opportunity to showcase key experiences within the Shire, with the aim of increasing visitation and overnight stays.

The campaign promoted tourism along the Murray and included a segment on the television series "What's Up Down Under". The segment featured the three Golf Clubs within the Shire, as well as Rivergum Holiday Retreat and Corowa Whisky and Chocolate Factory. The TV campaign was supported by a significant multimedia campaign and had an estimated reach of over 3,000,000 viewers.

712 Facebook Likes
424 Twitter
Followers

TOURISM DIGITAL PLATFORM

Council commenced work on the development of a new destination website which forms part of a regional digital platform project involving ten destinations along the Murray.

Due to be completed at the end of 2015, the new website will more effectively promote the Corowa region as a tourist destination and provide visitors with a richer and more effective digital experience.

It will showcase the great range of product available for visitors to enjoy and improve their ability to plan their trip and seek relevant travel information.

Features of the platform include;

- Responsive design that works across a range of devices (mobile, desktop, tablet).
- Customised design using destination brand.
- Local operator listing and integration with Australian Tourism Data Warehouse.
- Social media integration.
- Easy product search and filter options.
- Event calendar with easy search features.
- Integration with weather zone to provide a live local weather feed.
- Itinerary planning tools and easy search functions where users can book all or part of an itinerary.
- Integration with Bookeasy enabling visitors to make bookings online.

1.4 A Shire of excellence for sport and recreation

1.4.1 Well planned recreation facilities.

1.4.2 Diverse and sustainable recreation opportunities.

LONSDALE RESERVE MASTER PLAN

A Lonsdale Reserve User Group Committee has been established to help direct the implementation of the Lonsdale Reserve Master Plan.

Council have worked proactively with this committee to ensure the implementation of the Master Plan. Significant works have been undertaken on internal roads and drainage throughout the Reserve, the installation of the new netball courts. A total of \$75,000 was allocated by Council towards capital improvements at the Reserve and as well as an additional \$35,000 for maintenance.

SWIMMING POOLS

Council funds the howlong and corowa swimming pools.

HOWLONG SWIMMING POOL

The howlong swimming pool has hosted a range of coordinated swimming activities throughout the season catering for all age groups and including ongoing fitness programs, extended opening hours to accommodate times to suit patrons and the introduction of movie nights.

These activities were experienced by an increasing number of groups and patrons from various sectors of the community and included:

- NSW Dept. Sport & Rec January swimming program (extra classes added to accommodate increase in numbers of children 6 & under)
- Howlong, Brocklesby & Hopefield Public Schools water confidence & swimming program
- North Albury Swimming Club extensive training program
- Howlong sporting groups preseason training program

COROWA SWIMMING POOL

The purchase of inflatable pool modules for the Corowa Pool has assisted in establishing another dimension to the facility, enhancing its status as a family friendly venue and safe alternate to the nearby lagoon area.

1.5 A creative community

1.5.1 Creative community spaces.

1.5.2 Opportunities for all community members to participate in and enjoy the arts.

CARTOONING WITH DR EGYPT

School Holiday programs of Cartooning with Andrew Hore, Dr Egypt: with Eve Guerry- who brought Egypt and archaeology to life with her interactive workshop and Crafty Kids - learning about recycling from a member of the Halve Waste program.

This followed with the children creating unique sculptures from packing beans. These were all very successful programs.



MURRAY ARTS

Council is a member of Murray Arts to ensure that all members of the community have the opportunity to participate in and enjoy the arts.

Murray Arts are passionate about the arts in regional communities. They contribute directly to the arts and cultural lifeblood of the region by working directly with individuals, communities and local government to assist them in developing the arts and cultural life of their communities.

NAIDOC WEEK

Sixty-eight children and their parents and carers enjoyed NAIDOC week cultural activities at Corowa Hub. The program which was a joint initiative of Murray Arts, Corowa Council and Intereach included story-telling and traditional art workshops by Aboriginal artists from Burraja Arts. Uncle Walter Melrose told the dreamtime story of the emu, passed around emu eggs and had fun trying to hunt an emu. He taught the children to identify animal tracks in the bush and showed them how to draw them using charcoal. Aunty Marlene Plunkett told stories of traditional Aboriginal family and taught the children how to tell their own stories using traditional dot painting methods.

Photo: Aunty Marlene, pictured with local children, passed around traditional Aboriginal containers used to collect berries and seeds.



GYLES FAMILY COLLECTION & WW1 'IN ACTION' EXHIBITION

In April 2015 a touring exhibition "In the Action" with items from the Light Horse Museum Bandiana and Albury museum visited Corowa ArtSpace. The exhibition commemorated the 100 year anniversary of WW1 and featured a magnificent and unique collection of photographs taken by local Corowa man Sapper Murray Gyles. The photographic studies, which were exhibited for the first time in Corowa, portrayed the life and environs of Australian servicemen in countries such as Turkey, Syria, Libya, Egypt, Jordan, France and Belgium during World War 1. They captured life in times of extreme conflict and are a direct representation of what war is like.

1.6 An empowered and active community

1.6.1 High levels of involvement across our community.

VOLUNTEERS WEEK

To celebrate 2015 National Volunteers Week, Corowa Shire Council hosted an afternoon tea on Thursday 14 May to recognise and thank Council volunteers from across the shire.

The event was attended by 40 volunteers, who spent the afternoon sharing stories and talking about their experiences as volunteers.

In his address, Corowa Shire Mayor Fred Longmire thanked Council's volunteers for their dedication and hard work in supporting the delivery of Council activities.

Council has 120 volunteers who work with Council officers to help achieve community goals and enhance the delivery of services to residents and visitors.

As part of the celebrations, Council launched a volunteer training program designed to support volunteers working with Council.

Thank you!

COMMUNITY GRANTS PROGRAM

There were two rounds of funding provided through the Community Grants Program during 2014/2015 period. Rounds in April and October resulted in funding for 18 community groups and organisations totaling \$28,067.

This program aims to assist community groups and organisations deliver projects that foster community development, develop partnerships and improve the quality of life and well being of the community.

COROWA COMMUNITY GARDEN

The Corowa Tree of Life Community Garden was a community partnership with Corowa and District Landcare and is supported by Council.

The Community Garden which has been recently established is strengthening bonds, providing food and creating recreational, therapeutic and educational opportunities for our community.

The Garden Committee had a display at the Corowa Show attracting over 50 people in October. The garden was visited by the Albury Wodonga Garden Collective with members from community gardens in Bright, Yackandandah, Albury, Rutherglen, Beechworth and Wodonga.

A dedication of the 'Tree of Life' Corowa Community Garden attracted over 40 people to the Calvary Uniting Church in December conducted by Rev. David Sloane, who is also a landcare committee member.

Landcare has also supported ongoing learning through the Community Garden via a series of six workshops to be held during 2015, those held already focus on Soils, Waterwise Gardening and Composting.



OUR REPORT CARD Performance against the Delivery Program

ACTION	STATUS
<i>1.1.1.1: Work to ensure that people in the community have equal access and to services and facilities throughout the shire</i>	
Monitor the growth of the culturally and linguistically diverse community within the shire and take action to assist individuals and families with appropriate information	✓
Continue to seek opportunities to raise awareness of and be inclusive of indigenous culture through appropriate programs and projects	✓
Continue to seek opportunities to celebrate and recognise our communities indigenous culture	✓
<i>1.1.2.1: Develop and implement the Corowa Shire Youth Development Strategy that supports the positive engagement of young people within community life</i>	
Engage suitably qualified support to facilitate the development of a service mapping and needs analysis project to determine current and future needs of young people within the shire	✓
<i>1.1.2.2: Provide leadership opportunities for young people within our community</i>	
Continue to maintain relationships with schools, community groups and sporting clubs to ensure knowledge of leadership opportunities is maintained	✓
Continue to support, promote and develop the Corowa Youth Council in partnership with Corowa High School and other youth organisations	✓
Continue to liaise with young people and Corowa High School to inform issues related to young people within the shire	✓
<i>1.1.2.3: Ensure that young people have access to community spaces where they feel welcomed, safe and included</i>	
As part of the consultation and research for the Youth service mapping and needs analysis project, ensure that consideration is given to the most appropriate delivery of a 'youth based' community space within Corowa	✓
Incorporate appropriate strategies into the Corowa Shire Youth Development Strategy that outlines the future provision of Council to facilitate 'youth based' community space within Corowa	✗
Ensure that the Corowa Shire Youth Development Strategy plans for the support of youth friendly spaces throughout the townships of the shire	✗
<i>1.1.3.1: Develop a comprehensive understanding of the needs, challenges and opportunities facing our older residents now and into the future</i>	
Engage suitably qualified services to undertake a service mapping and needs analysis project for older residents within the shire	✓
Engage suitably qualified services to develop an Ageing Well Strategy for Corowa Shire, in partnership with appropriate services, community groups and agencies	✓
Continue to support and promote the celebration of Seniors Week throughout the shire	✓
<i>1.1.3.3: Facilitate opportunities for our older residents to remain physically and socially active, particularly those that are socially isolated</i>	

<i>1.1.4.1: Explore innovative ways to actively welcome new residents to the shire and support their involvement in the community</i>	
Continue to update and promote the Corowa Shire New Residents Pack	✓
<i>1.1.5.1: Explore innovative ways to ensure the regular consideration of the changing needs and priorities of our rural and isolated communities</i>	
Continue to maintain involvement with programs that provide health and well being programs for rural and isolated residents	✓
Develop Community Priority Action Plans for each small rural community within the shire	✗
Advocate for appropriate representation on committees, groups and Council from our rural communities	✓
<i>1.1.5.2: Explore innovative ways to support our rural communities to capture and record their vibrant histories for preservation</i>	
Implement an annual program that encourages rural residents to submit photos that reflect their history and community	✓
Support historical groups to record historic stories, photographs and memorabilia that celebrate and promote the historic stories of the area	✓
Continue to provide historical information through the library	✓
As part of website reviews, explore online history opportunities	✓
<i>1.2.1.1: Ensure that all families are supported and encouraged to participate in community activities, programs and opportunities</i>	
<i>1.2.1.2: Ensure that the needs of all our families are considered in the long term planning of community facilities and programs including at a state and federal level</i>	
Engage appropriate and qualified services to support the facilitation of a service mapping and needs analysis process to determine the needs, challenges and service maps that exist of children and families within the shire	✓
Review parents/carers facilities throughout the shire and develop a 4 year priority list for implementation	✓
Undertake retrofitting works as per the priority list	✓
<i>1.2.1.3: Continually explore and develop ways to engage our most at risk families in services, activities and programs that will improve their opportunities and quality of life</i>	
<i>1.2.2.1: Develop and implement a playground masterplan for the shire that also considered the placement of supporting infrastructure such as public toilets, footpaths, and shade</i>	
Undertake a shire wide review of playgrounds, focusing on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk and safety, Usage and placement, Supporting infrastructure, Potential decommission, Long term consolidation 	✓
Place the findings of the playground review out to community review	✗
<i>1.2.3.1: Continue to meaningfully engage children in community life</i>	
Provide ongoing financial assistance to the Corowa Toy Library	✓

Community and Culture

Ensure a range of child friendly programs are provided at the Corowa, Mulwala and Howlong Libraries	✓
Sponsor children's week programs and activities throughout the shire	✓
Provide a school holiday activity	✓
Provide the baby playgroup/parenting program in Corowa and Howlong	✓
Provide ongoing financial support to our shire's preschools	✓
Support the delivery of Family Day Care services within the Shire	✓
Promote the range of services, programs and resources available for children and families throughout the shire	✓
<i>1.2.3.2: Advocate on behalf of our children to ensure that we continue to develop our communities as great places for our children to grow</i>	
Continue to support the provision of personal and community safety programs for primary school aged children throughout the shire	✓
<i>1.2.3.3: Ensure that our communities are developed with opportunities for children to develop their independence and skills</i>	
<i>1.3.1.1: Develop and implement a diverse, interesting and relevant calendar of events that reflect the strengths and characteristics of our communities and towns</i>	
Work to attract new events and further develop existing events through the implementation of the Corowa Shire Event Grants program	✓
Continue to manage the central events database for events held in Corowa Shire	✓
Develop an events strategy for the shire that focuses on the successful and meaningful delivery of Council events, and events facilitated by Section 355 Committees of Council	✗
Continually explore options for the implementation and delivery of major municipal events that respond to both tourism and community needs	✓
<i>1.3.1.2: Ensure that all events are safe, well planned and high quality</i>	
Continually review and update the Event Manual and make readily available to event organisers	✓
Investigate the opportunity to provide event management and risk management workshops/training	✓
Develop guidelines that assist event organisers in delivering events that are sustainable and consider the impact on the environment	✓
<i>1.4.1.1: Ensure a place making approach is taken for all open space and water foreshore developments within the shire</i>	
Continue to support the implementation the Lowe Square masterplan	✓
Undertake the Lonsdale Recreation Masterplan	✓

Community and Culture

Implement the Corowa Riverfront Masterplan	✓
<i>1.4.1.2: Take a whole of community approach to the planning of recreational facilities to ensure the appropriate development of infrastructure that can meet the changing needs of our communities and can facilitate the potential attraction of new sports and diverse use</i>	
<i>1.4.1.3: Explore innovative ways to ensure the long term sustainability of our rural sporting facilities</i>	
<i>1.4.1.4: Continue to actively seek funding opportunities to support the upgrading of the Corowa Swimming Pool</i>	
Ensure that the Corowa Shire Corowa Pool Business Plan is maintained up to date and reflective of best practices, sector research and community needs and expectations	✓
<i>1.4.2.1: Coordinate the planning of sport and recreation groups to support their long term financial, membership and facility viability</i>	
Facilitate the Department of Sport and Recreation to deliver appropriate training sessions throughout the shire	✓
<i>1.4.2.2: Actively work to attract visiting sporting competitions, events, training programs and games to our shire</i>	
<i>1.4.2.3: Continue to encourage and support high level representation from our shires community members throughout a diverse range of sporting opportunities</i>	
<i>1.4.2.4: Continue to maintain and expand a high quality pathway network that is flexible in purpose to facilitate a range of users</i>	
Implement the annual PAMP works program on time and on budget	✓
Undertake an annual inspection for the entire pathway network throughout the shire	✓
Complete quarterly inspections for high usage pathways	✓
Undertake appropriate maintenance work	✓
Implement appropriate markers along the high use cycleway	✓
Promote the extensive path and cycle way network that exists throughout the shire in all appropriate visitor, tourist and community information	✓
Liaise with surrounding Council's to connect Corowa Shire's network with surrounding areas	✓
<i>1.5.1.1: Continue to facilitate exciting and engaging community spaces that allow for community members and visiting artists to display and perform cultural activities including arts, music and theatre</i>	
Ensure that all cultural events, programs and exhibitions are promoted throughout Council's newsletter and on Council's website	✓
Continue to provide the Corowa Shire Art Space with a focus on supporting the opportunity for local artists to display their art	✓
Facilitate the establishment of, and provide ongoing support to the Corowa Arts Advisory Committee in the planning and management of activities and exhibitions at Corowa Art Space	✓
Support and manage the volunteer staffing of Corowa Art Space	✓

<i>1.5.2.1: Ensure that there are opportunities for our children and young people to participate in and enjoy arts and culture activities</i>	
In partnership with the local schools and Murray Arts, develop and implement programs that facilitate young people and children's involvement in the arts	✓
In partnership with schools, develop and implement an annual project that facilitates involvement by children in the lead up to the Festival of Fun for Kids	✓
<i>1.5.2.2: Provide a diverse range of artistic activities for all people within our community to participate in</i>	
Provide annual financial assistance to Murray Arts, with an agreed schedule of projects/programs required for delivery within Corowa Shire	✓
<i>1.6.1.1: Encourage diversity of people participating in community groups, clubs and committees throughout the shire</i>	
<i>1.6.1.2: Continue to facilitate community driven projects that respond to identified community needs</i>	
<i>1.6.1.3: Encourage participation in volunteering throughout the shire</i>	
Update and publicise the volunteering opportunities available throughout the Shire	✓
In partnership with schools, develop programs and activities that support young people's volunteering involvement in their community	✓
Continue to publicly recognise and celebrate the citizen of the year awards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizen of the year – Corowa, Howlong, Mulwala, Rural • Young Citizen of the year – Corowa, Howlong, Mulwala, Rural 	✓
Publicly acknowledge the contributions of volunteers working with Corowa Shire as part of the National Volunteer Week	✓
<i>1.6.1.4: Support the long term sustainability of community groups, committees and clubs</i>	
Facilitate joint planning and information sessions with sport and recreation groups	✓
Continue to promote available grants and promotional opportunities for community groups, clubs and committees	✓
<i>1.6.1.6: Facilitate the delivery of exciting and engaging libraries throughout the shire</i>	
Introduce a range of new programs and enticements to the libraries throughout the shire to ensure they are well utilised community spaces	✓



2.1 Efficient and high quality service delivery

2.1.1 Services that are planned and delivered with consideration to the changing needs of our community.

2.1.2 Coordinated service delivery.

2.1.3 Improved understanding and utilisation of available services.

COMMUNICATIONS FOCUS

This year, Council focused on increasing communication activities to ensure residents, visitors and staff were provided with important and current information about a range of issues.

The following communication activities were undertaken;

- Weekly full page 'Snippets' in the Corowa Free Press and Yarrowongra Chronicle which notify residents of upcoming events, Council meetings, grant opportunities, rates notices, compliance notifications and more.
- Increased number of media releases circulated to local and regional media outlets regarding significant Council matters.
- Monthly Council page in the Howlong Grapevine providing residents with information specific to the Howlong township.
- Community Matters Newsletter prepared quarterly and delivered to all households in the Shire.
- Council website.
- Social media platforms including Facebook, YouTube and Twitter (tourism only).
- Internal communication activities such as the establishment of a monthly staff newsletter.

2.2 High quality education for people of all ages

2.2.1 Education that provides opportunities for our children and young people.

2.2.2 Education options that support a diverse range of skills within our communities.

LIBRARY ACTIVITIES

The Corowa Shire Libraries hosted narrator Stig Wemyss to celebrate Children's Book Week. Over 470 children from Upper Primary classes from all schools in the Corowa Shire were jumping in their seats as Stig performed. Stig involved the children in his performance and Bolinda Digital provided audio books as prizes which were handed out during the performance. This was an opportunity to introduce to the children other resources such as audio books and the new addition of the eLibrary collection.

Library and Information Week was celebrated with children's book Illustrator, Craig Smith. Ten sessions were held over three days with over 540 children from all schools in the Corowa Shire attending. Craig Smith talked about his illustrations, how books are made, and the role of the author, editor and illustrator. With Craig's guidance the children experienced the early stages of illustrating with the creation of their own drawings.

Corowa Library joined in the National Simultaneous Storytime with Craig Smith reading 'Too many elephants' to 92 children from St Marys Primary School.



2.3 Health services that support a healthy community

2.3.1 A range of services that promote a healthy life.

2.3.2 High quality health services.

COROWA CDAT (COMMUNITY DRUG ACTION TEAM)

The "NO to Violence" project which was developed by Corowa CDAT, and funded by the Australian Drug Foundation, emphasises the link between alcohol and family violence. The project which is supported by Corowa Shire, Corowa Police and Murrumbidgee Health, involved an extensive information and education campaign which was run over a 4 week period and followed up by information booths at the Annual Safety Expo and Festival of Fun for Kids which each attract crowds of around 4,000 people.

2.4 A community protected and prepared for emergencies

2.4.1 Services to protect our community.

2.4.2 A community that is prepared to respond to crisis.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

The Corowa Shire Local Emergency Management Committee met on 4 occasions throughout 2014-15. Delegates to the Committee represent Emergency and support agencies that operate in the local area, including NSW Police, Rural Fire Service, Fire & Rescue NSW, SES, VRA, NSW Ambulance, Local Land Services, RSPCA, NSW Health, Australian Munitions, Ambulance Victoria and Victorian SES. The agencies provide reports on the level of incidents and activities they respond to, and other initiatives being implemented to manage the risk and be better prepared when emergencies occur. The first draft of the revised Corowa Shire Emergency Management Plan, which guides response to emergencies and defines responsibilities in the local area was drafted late in the financial year, for consideration at the first Committee meeting in 2015-16.

RURAL FIRE SERVICES

Corowa Shire Council provides financial support to the Southern Border Rural Fire Services.

The twelve Rural Fire Service brigades across Corowa Shire attended a total of 91 incidents during the 2014-15 year. This involved 1,174 volunteer hours. The incidents incorporated 14 motor vehicle accidents and 13 occasions when brigades assisted the CFA and NSW Fire Rescue. Of those incidents involving fire, 19 were started by lightning and a total of approximately 100 hectares of land was burnt.

The Corowa brigades also assisted Greater Hume Shire brigades with a large fire on Tunnel Rd, Woomargama at the end of December 2014.

A new double bay station has been completed at Lavis Rd, Hopefield which was supplied by the NSW Rural Fire Service and Corowa Council.

A hazard reduction burn was undertaken by National Parks and Wildlife Service at Mulwala in April. The burn was conducted on the western boundary of Thales and incorporated National Park land. This will provide a reduced fuel area for additional protection of Thales and Pimpala Crescent.

Community Engagement Team members from brigades continue to support their local communities, providing a local presence at many fetes, shows and events across the shire.

Local brigades attend the Corowa Safety Expo and Emergency Services Day and special events were held across the shire to herald the commencement of the Bush Fire Danger Period on the 1 November.

Visits to rural schools and several pre-schools were conducted across the shire. The aged care facility at Howlong is also visited bi-annually.

With the drier weather towards the end of the Bush Fire Danger Period over 90 agricultural permits were issued for the Corowa Shire.

OUR REPORT CARD Performance against the Delivery Program

ACTION	STATUS
<i>2.1.1.1: Remain up to date on social and community priorities and ensure that these are regularly considered in the delivery of projects, services and funding</i>	
Explore the most appropriate ways to collect and utilise information from the community relating to levels of satisfaction with Council's services	✓
<i>2.1.1.2: Advocate on behalf of our communities to ensure that their needs are consistently and accurately represented at state and federal levels in regards to the allocation of services, resources and programs</i>	
Facilitate an annual community profile and make available on Council's website	✓
Where appropriate support services and agencies with requests for information and data	✓
Provide appropriate website links to Council's demographic information sources include Profile and ABS	✓
<i>2.1.2.1: Ensure a strong strategic advocacy body for the health services in the region</i>	
<i>2.1.2.2: Develop mechanisms that continue to support the appropriate distribution and promotion of service information throughout the shire</i>	
Develop a Communications Strategy that outlines processes and protocols for providing information to the community, including website, media and promotional material	✓
<i>2.1.2.3: Continue to explore best practice opportunities relating to the appropriate co-location of services within our communities</i>	
Continue to work in partnership with State and Federal Government in the exploration of service co-location	✓
<i>2.1.3.1: Facilitate the involvement of service providers and organisations within the community, in particular in regards to community planning processes</i>	
<i>2.2.1.1: Support the long term sustainability of our small rural schools</i>	
<i>2.2.2.1: Advocate for the innovative delivery of further education options within the shire</i>	
Support education providers with infrastructure and education expansion to support the delivery of range of education options within the Shire	✓
<i>2.1.2.2: Support the development of local training and education opportunities that target the long term unemployed and socially disengaged</i>	
<i>2.3.1.1: Deliver a range of health promotion programs throughout the shire</i>	
<i>2.3.1.2: Continually promote opportunities and messages that support healthy decisions for our community members</i>	
Provide sunscreen, free access to water and insect repellent etc at Council's events	✓
Ensure that healthy options for food and active participation exist where appropriate at Council events and projects	✓

Deliver a range of Cancer Council programs throughout the shire including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sun smart at Council facilities Distribute information 	✓
Ensure that annual maintenance and renewal programs for all recreation facilities are delivered on time and on budget	✓
Continue to promote an up to date list of all Council recreation facilities on Council's website	✓
<i>2.3.2.1: Ensure the long term sustainability of health and medical services provided throughout the shire</i>	
<i>2.3.2.2: Ensure appropriate service delivery for our community members with increased needs including older people and people with a disability</i>	
<i>2.4.1.1: Ensure the adequate provision of responsive police and emergency services throughout our community</i>	
<i>2.4.1.2: Continue to focus on crime prevention throughout our community</i>	
<i>2.4.1.3: Continue to ensure high levels of community involvement in volunteer services that act to protect our community</i>	
<i>2.4.2.1: Maintain and further develop the shire emergency management and recovery plan</i>	
Ensure the plan is updated annually and effectively communicated	✓
As per communications strategy, ensure that emergency and evacuation messages are adequately communicated to the community, in particular to residents that are in high risk areas	✓
Ensure the accurate maintenance of a high risk register for the community	✓



3.1 Flexible and sustainable community infrastructure

3.1.1 Buildings that are well utilised and maintained by our communities.

3.1.2 Protection and utilisation of our historic buildings.

ACCELERATED BUILDING MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

Maintenance was carried out on Council buildings, taking guidance from the condition report which was prepared for Council during 2013-14. A significant example of this was the restoration of the ceiling at Corowa Federation Museum. An annual program of building renewal is now in place and is a key priority for the Council.



1240 hours were spent street sweeping this year

3000 hours were spent emptying council bins in parks and main streets

3.2 Infrastructure that supports our daily life

3.2.1 Responsible waste management practices.

3.2.2 Well maintained assets for our future.

ORGANICS WASTE

Corowa Shire began our third bin Organics collection in April 2015, this initiative was part of our Regional and Corowa Shire waste strategy. The uptake of this new service has been fantastic with contamination rates less than 1%. This initiative will aim to reduce material to landfill by 50%.

Free recycling in Corowa Shire

The following items are accepted **free of charge** at these facilities in Corowa Shire:

Corowa Waste Management Centre Riverina Highway (Albury Road) Corowa	Mulwala Transfer Station Old Barooga Road Mulwala	Howlong Landfill Goomargana Road Howlong
✓ Paper and cardboard	✓ Paper and cardboard	✓ Paper and cardboard
✓ Glass	✓ Aluminium and steel	✓ Glass
✓ Aluminium and steel	✓ Batteries	✓ Aluminium and steel
✓ Batteries	✓ Scrap metal	✓ Batteries
✓ Scrap metal	✓ Waste oil	✓ Scrap metal
✓ Waste oil	✓ White goods	✓ Waste oil
✓ Drum muster		✓ Drum muster
✓ E-waste		✓ White goods
✓ White goods		✓ Clean fill
✓ Clean fill		

To find out more visit our website halvewaste.com.au

HalveWaste
reduce • reuse • recycle

Printed on recycled paper

WATER QUALITY CONTROL

Significant work was undertaken during the year improving water quality control for town drinking water and for the return of treated sewage effluent to the environment.

A Quality Assurance Program, termed the Drinking Water Management System, was implemented in September 2014 as required by Health Department legislation to ensure the town water supplies are as safe as possible. The framework comprises procedures, registers, data management systems, flow diagrams, process and instrumentation diagrams, critical control points and emergency procedures. Practices are being revised and adopted accordingly.

TRADE WASTE

Council's Trade Waste policy has been implemented requiring all commercial discharges of waste water into the sewerage system to meet specified standards. This has required some businesses to upgrade their pre-treatment facilities. All premises are to be inspected annually to maintain control on quality of influent received by the town sewerage treatment plants.

TREATMENT PLANT UPGRADES

Water treatment plant capital renewal work and upgrades have continued with new line pumps and compressors at the Corowa plant, new flow paced chemical dosing of polyaluminium chloride and sodium hypochlorite, new pump variable speed drives at Howlong and a new 5ML reservoir for fluoride dosing at Mulwala.

Sewerage treatment plants have been upgraded with new building amenities for staff at Corowa, replacement chemical manifolds for sodium hydroxide and aluminium sulphate at Mulwala, and new water quality monitoring equipment at Howlong.

Sewerage pump stations upgrading work continued with new pumps, switchboards and telemetry units at 12 sites.

Since implementing the 3 bin system, Corowa Shire has collected 393 tonne of Organic Waste, avoiding landfill and decreasing General Waste by 49.4%.

RISK-BASED DRINKING WATER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

A new quality control system for the management of the town drinking water supplies was prepared with the Department of Health to be ready for implementation on the 1st September 2014 to meet the requirements of the 2010 Public Health Act. The program of 76 actions will be implemented over 3 years and comprises a range of procedures, registers, data management systems, flow charts, process and instrumentation diagrams, and critical control points.

SEWERAGE TREATMENT PLANT EFFLUENT REUSE UPGRADE

The irrigation reuse scheme comprising a flood irrigated tree plantation and perennial pasture which has operated adjacent to the aerodrome for the last 20 years has reached the end of its useful life and has been replaced with a centre pivot spray irrigated lucerne cropping regime.

Transitional cropping is currently progressing with a tendered lease to commence in July 2016. The work has been undertaken to meet EPA requirements for sustainable effluent reuse.

INDUSTRIAL ESTATE DRAINAGE

The stormwater channel which drains the Corowa industrial estate to the river has been enlarged from a channel of width of 2.0m to a width of 5.0m over a distance of 3km of its total length of 4.5km. Combined with rehabilitation of 1km of grassed swale drain within the industrial estate the work will eliminate recurring minor flooding of this area.

3.3 Infrastructure that supports our community identity

3.3.1 Exciting community spaces

3.3.2 Consistent and complimentary signage throughout the towns

3.4.1 A range of housing

3.4.2 Infrastructure that supports our ability to grow.

MELBOURNE STREET MULWALA

Stage three of Melbourne Street Mulwala was completed including the installation of central lighting, median and attractive landscape works.

The Mulwala Streetscape Project has been a long standing priority for the Mulwala community.

PROMOTIONAL BANNERS

Promotional banner flag poles have been installed in Mulwala, Howlong and Corowa. These banners are displayed at key entrance points to the townships and will provide the opportunity to welcome visitors to the Shire and promote key events throughout the years.

This multi million dollar initiative aims to improve traffic flow and pedestrian safety and to create a central business district and 'village' for the Mulwala township. The beautification of the area is helping to attract investment to the area and improve the appeal of Mulwala as a tourist destination.



3.5 A Shire with safe and high quality travel options

3.5.1 A road network that is safe for our farmers, our community and our visitors.

3.5.2 Infrastructure that facilitates and supports growth in our public transport options.



Photo: Sergeant Matt Zemaitis of NSW Highway Patrol on location in Dawe St Corowa for a speed monitoring project

ROAD SAFETY INITIATIVES

A number of Road Safety programs were conducted this year. These included programs to address issues such as:

- Excessive Speeding,
- Mobile Phone use,
- Driving whilst under the influence of Alcohol,
- Improved education for young people and their mentors through conducting Graduated Licensing Scheme workshops and participation in the Cool Heads event; and
- Conducting an education forum for current and potential Mobility Scooter users.
- Walking Safely presentation were provided to Community Health groups, and a Road Safety presence was provided at Truck and Car Show and Safety Expo, Festival of Fun for Kids and the Corowa B & S Ball.

Corowa Shire maintains 1500 kms of local roads...

AERODROME

The aerodrome is now operating with its new strengthened but shortened main runway and has had upgrading work undertaken to comply with Civil Aviation Safety Authority requirements. Changing business circumstances sees the Wagga Air Centre no longer making daily flights into Corowa as part of its courier contract but the Army has continued with its two parachute training courses each year, one of 10 weeks duration and the other for 5 weeks. The Australian Soaring Centre maintains its annual summer gliding season from December through to early February as does the parachuting training school and the ultra lite pilot training school which both run year round.

The local Aerodrome User Group, informally the Corowa Aero Club, has undertaken considerable work upgrading the terminal building for their use. Work has included carpentry, painting, plumbing, roofing and generally occupying the building giving it a new lease on life and improving its serviceability to the public.

YARRAWONGA MULWALA BRIDGE CROSSING

Council has maintained a very strong level of advocacy towards the critical importance of a new Yarrowonga Mulwala Bridge crossing - to ensure both the New South Wales and Victorian Governments allocated the required funds to build the new crossing by 2020.



OUR REPORT CARD Performance against the Delivery Program

ACTION	STATUS
<i>3.1.1.1: Explore ways to increase the community utilisation of community halls throughout the shire</i>	
Develop a maintenance program for the long term maintenance needs of community halls	✓
<i>3.1.1.2: Support communities to have a sense of ownership for community buildings and facilities</i>	
<i>3.1.1.3: Continue to support community facilities that allow for diverse and flexible use to meet the changing priorities and needs of our community</i>	
<i>3.1.2.2: Investigate innovative ways to increase the accessibility of historic buildings whilst continuing to maintain their historic integrity</i>	
<i>3.2.1.1: Develop and implement a long term waste management strategy that plans for the future waste needs for all of the communities within our shire</i>	
Commence the development of the Corowa Shire Waste Management Strategy that outlines community needs and strategy responses for the delivery and provision of waste services throughout the shire for 20 years	✓
Adequately budget for the implementation of annual priorities as part of the delivery of the Corowa Shire Waste Management Strategy	✓
Provide locality garbage services for the rural areas of the shire	✓
Provide kerb side garbage services for the urban areas and Balldale	✓
<i>3.2.1.2: Support responsible recycling practices for all businesses, industry, farmers and residents throughout the shire</i>	
Continue to implement the curb side recycling service throughout the urban areas of the shire	✓
Implement the new organic waste service as part of the shire's waste service	✓
Continue to work with recycling contractors to provide information to the community via Council's website, newsletter and appropriate mail methods to inform the community of recycling options and environmental impacts	✓
Provide recycling provisions within the existing five rural localities of the shire to facilitate recycling by rural residents	✓
<i>3.2.2.1: Continue to develop and implement the Asset Management Strategy which is based on the outcomes of the assets mapping process that strategically considers the needs and sustainability of all Council's assets, and where appropriate plans for their consolidation or renewal</i>	
Develop a maintenance management program for the Shire's road network	✓
Develop a maintenance management program for the Shire's footpath and cycle way network	✓
Develop an inspection system for mobile platforms that integrates with Council's asset register and informs maintenance works programs	✓
<i>3.2.2.3: Continue to actively seek funding to support the long term sustainability and maintenance of community and Council assets</i>	

Continue to facilitate the effective delivery of the roads to recovery program	✓
<i>3.3.1.1: Support the implementation of the streetscape plan for Mulwala that embraces the unique identities of the townships</i>	
Accurately budget and plan for the implementation of the annual priorities that support the implementation of the Mulwala CBD streetscape masterplan	✓
Undertake appropriate maintenance as required within the Mulwala CBD	✓
<i>3.3.1.2: Explore ways to increase public art throughout the shire</i>	
<i>3.3.2.1: Provide consistent signage and entrance points to all of our communities, including our outlying rural townships</i>	
<i>3.3.2.2: Work to ensure that all signage throughout the town, including directional, promotional and business signage is developed in respect of its environment and relevant standards</i>	
Develop a signage strategy that plans for, and provides guidelines for the installation of all forms of signage throughout the shire	✗
<i>3.4.1.1: Implement policies and facilitate sustainable growth in line with Council's LEP</i>	
Assist the community with the understanding and application of the new shire LEP	✓
<i>3.4.1.2: Offer a range of housing and accommodation choices within our shire to meet the needs of all our community members</i>	
<i>3.4.1.3: Investigate the housing needs of our ageing population now and into the future – including the review of private housing, independent living and high needs accommodation</i>	
As part of the service mapping and needs analysis project for the shire's aged population, ensure that housing needs and accommodation gaps are appropriately considered	✓
<i>3.4.2.1: Provide and maintain an efficient sewerage system that allows for possible expansion</i>	
Update the Corowa Shire Sewerage Strategic Business Plan as appropriate	✓
Ensure accurate budgetary planning for the implementation of annual sewerage treatment plant needs	✓
Implement the annual sewerage maintenance program	✓
Implement the annual sewerage system capital renewal program	✓
Introduce best practise pricing including the development of a trade waste policy	✓
<i>3.4.2.2: Ensure quality water supply that is sustainable to meet the demands of future growth</i>	
Update the Corowa Shire Water Business Plan	✓
Implement the annual water reticulation maintenance program	✓
Implement the annual water reticulation capital renewal program	✓

<i>3.4.2.3: Prioritise the development of appropriate drainage systems that provide for efficient services to our community and allows for growth in our residential areas</i>	
Complete an assessment of the current drainage system throughout the shire	✗
Implement the annual drainage maintenance program	✓
Implement the annual drainage capital renewal program	✓
<i>3.5.1.1: Implement a sustainable road strategy that prioritises the development and maintenance of roads</i>	
Incorporate existing documentation to form the basis of the long term road strategy	✗
As part of the development of the Roads Strategy ensure that assessment procedures are detailed	✓
Ensure that safety aspects are addressed within the road strategy to ensure consideration throughout all maintenance and construction practices	✓
Ensure that road side environment is considered in our maintenance and construction practices	✓
Develop a four year works program for reseals	✗
Implement annual priorities as per the reseal works program	✓
Develop a four year works program for construction	✗
Implement the annual priorities as per the construction program	✓
<i>3.5.1.2: Continually assess the efficiencies and requirements of the operational practices of the roads team</i>	
Where appropriate and as need arises, review aspects of the operational practices of the roads team	✓
<i>3.5.1.3 Implement road safety campaigns to encourage and educate safe driving on our roads</i>	
<i>3.5.2.1: Ensure development enables current and future transport needs</i>	
Review the development guidelines to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lighting – standard • Sensitive urban storm water design 	✓
<i>3.5.2.2: Continue to advocate for the ongoing development of public and community transport options within the shire</i>	

This year:

1000 hours were spent slashing Council land

2500 hours were spent mowing parks

900 hours were spent mowing ovals



4.1 A strong and resilient local economy

4.1.1 An economy that is well prepared for the future.

4.1.2 A prepared and skilled business community.

4.1.3 Maintaining and establishing viable and long term businesses within the Shire.

4.1.4 A profitable and resilient agriculture sector.

LIVE OUTSIDE BROADCAST

Corowa Shire Council and the Corowa Business Chamber worked in partnership with 3NE / Edge FM to coordinate a live outside radio broadcast in Sanger Street, Corowa.

The broadcast provided local businesses with a fantastic advertising opportunity in the lead up to Christmas. With 31 businesses participating in the initiative, Corowa was showcased to over 270,000 listeners throughout the region.

The initiative highlighted the excellent range of products and services available in Corowa and was designed to support local businesses and encourage residents to shop locally.

SMALL BIZ BUS

Small businesses were able to take advantage of free business assistance when Council hosted the Small Biz Bus in Howlong, Corowa and Mulwala.

The bus gave business operators the opportunity to access expert advice, resources and tools to help them on their path to success.

The mobile advisory service provides guidance and support to operators on such things as growing their business, marketing or simply gaining a fresh perspective. Advice was also available for those looking to embark on a new business venture.



4.2 A thriving tourism sector

4.2.1 A positive visitor experience.

4.2.2 Continued growth in the use of our natural assets to support our tourist industry.

POSTCARDS

The Visitor Information Centre developed a series of 12 postcards that captured the historic significance of the area. The concept was developed following the popularity of the images which were posted on the Visitor Information Centre Facebook page, as part of the 'Flashback Friday' initiative. The project was completed in partnership with the Corowa Federation Museum, who provided the photos.



TRAINING FOR VOLUNTEERS

A training program called "Build on your Skills" which was specially designed for Corowa Shire Council volunteers was launched during 2015 volunteer week celebrations. Training included topics such as privacy and confidentiality, how to keep safe while volunteering, communication skills, working with people with disabilities and understanding and overcoming cultural barriers. Eighteen volunteers completed the course which was run by Albury Volunteer Resource Centre over 3 consecutive weeks.

COROWA VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE

Corowa Shire Council delivers professional visitor services from three locations across the Shire. Our friendly staff and volunteers are committed to ensuring visitors to the region receive exceptional customer service and information to meet their needs.

Our centres offer;

- Brochure and poster displays.
- Booking facilities for accommodation, events and attractions.
- Product referral service and day trip suggestions.
- Souvenirs and gifts.
- Local knowledge and experience.
- Maps, guides and information on services and facilities.
- Free internet access.
- Bike Hire



COROWA SALEYARDS

A major upgrade of the Corowa Saleyards has taken place to increase efficiency and movement of stock through the complex, contributing to a throughput of 624,055 head of sheep with a sale value of \$66,888,178.

Installation of a water tank has reduced water usage and increased efficiency towards cleaning of the holding yards.



4.3 A growing and sustainable business and industry community

4.3.1 Attract new industry and business to the Shire.

4.3.2 Strong partnerships that support the business community.

MELBOURNE STREET OPEN FOR BUSINESS!

Parking was restricted in Melbourne Street throughout the duration of the Melbourne Street Reconstruction project. Council encouraged residents to continue shopping locally and supporting businesses in Melbourne Street by launching the 'Melbourne Street - Open for Business' campaign. The campaign aimed to inform residents and visitors that all Melbourne Street businesses were remaining open and trading as usual.

Melbourne Street Reconstruction - Open for Business Campaign

All businesses received a campaign decal to place in their window and signs were placed at either end of the site.



4.4 A skilled and qualified workforce

4.4.1 Improved access to education and training opportunities for our Shire's residents.

4.4.2 Partnerships that support our workforce.

MULWALA INDUSTRIAL ESTATE

Corowa Shire Council was successful in their bid for funding under the Commonwealth Government's National Stronger Regions Fund which attracted 405 applications nationally. Corowa Shire's successful bid was one of only 51 local projects being approved for funding and secured over \$655,000 for an upgrade of the Mulwala Industrial Estate Development.

Local MP, Sussan Ley, recognised the project by saying "the project will improve existing infrastructure and extend the estate to help new business expansion, as well as rectify major drainage issues". She also acknowledged the value of this project and its impact on the broader community, stating that "this commitment helps strengthen the wider Yarrowonga-Mulwala community by improving economic growth, boosting productivity and employment opportunities."

OUR REPORT CARD

Performance against the Delivery Program

ACTION	STATUS
<i>4.1.1.1: Continue to implement the Corowa Shire Economic Development Strategy</i>	
<i>4.1.1.2: Continue to strengthen relationships within the business community</i>	
Work with government agencies and educators to address skill shortages and workplace requirements	✓
<i>4.1.1.3: Ensure that Corowa Shire's economic viability and sustainability is protected and advanced through responsible land-use and development</i>	
Ensure relevant LEP information is readily accessible to investors, community members and businesses as appropriate	✓
Develop a single point of reference on Council's website for all economic related regulatory approvals	✓
<i>4.1.1.4: Continue to plan for a future with less water</i>	
Implement and promote sustainable water use guidelines and recognise and celebrate best practice	✓
Erect web cams at key locations throughout the Murray region (John Foord Bridge and Lake Mulwala) <i>Erected in Mulwala and grant submitted for Corowa.</i>	✓
Develop and promote Corowa Shire's key wetlands	✓
Develop passive recreational activities in and around the river and lake (fishing platform in Corowa and Mulwala) walking and bicycle trails (Corowa Riverfront Master Plan, Corowa to Mulwala trail)	✓
<i>4.1.2.1: Ensure the appropriate delivery of training and professional development opportunities that enhance and maintain the economic culture of the Corowa Shire Economy</i>	
Assist in the circulation of relevant industry and regulation information and opportunities	✓
Facilitate and promote a program of training and assistance for local businesses	✓
<i>4.1.3.1: Continue to support existing and newly established businesses within the shire</i>	
Provide cost effective industrial land	✓
Develop an Investment Marketing Strategy to promote Corowa Shire as a place to invest	✓
<i>4.1.3.1.: Increase the support for our local businesses from the broader community</i>	
<i>4.1.4.1: Advocate for long term water security for our agriculture sector</i>	
<i>4.1.4.2: Advocate for sustainable farm management practices</i>	
<i>4.1.4.3: Continue to support the Corowa Saleyards as a major regional sheep selling facility</i>	
<i>4.2.1.1: Continue to develop the positive image of our communities</i>	
Develop an annual and monthly calendar of events and promote throughout the shire	✓
Engage suitably qualified support to facilitate the development of a communications strategy for Council that addresses social media and media	✓
<i>4.2.1.2: Ensure high quality visitor information services are provided to our visitors</i>	

Provide a new outreach visitor information service from the Mulwala Civic Centre	✓
Review the demand for the visitor information services provided in Howlong	✓
Provide visitor information services that add value to the visitor experience and enable revenue raising opportunities that can further support tourism development in Corowa Shire (accommodation booking system, hire of bicycles, product sales etc)	✓
Maintain the Corowa Visitor Information Centre as a level 2 Accredited Visitor Information Centre	✓
Engage suitable qualified support to facilitate the development of the Corowa Shire Tourism strategy for Council	✓
<i>4.2.1.3: Continue to work with tourist bodies and neighbouring shires to promote and market our shire</i>	
<i>3.4.2.1: Continue to explore innovative ways to promote our shire as a place of significant natural beauty and recreational pursuits</i>	
<i>4.3.1.1: Develop and implement marketing activities to attract and retain businesses within the shire</i>	
<i>4.3.1.2: Maintain a broad understanding of the shire's economic profile and work to recognise and share the successes of the business community</i>	
<i>4.3.1.3: Make Corowa the choice for internal and external economic investment</i>	
<i>4.3.1.4: Continue to develop infrastructure that facilitates business growth</i>	
Implement annual actions as per the Mulwala Streetscape Master plan	✓
Continue to improve and maintain the Howlong and Corowa Streetscapes	✓
<i>4.3.1.5: Continue to develop the diversity of retail within our CBD's</i>	
<i>4.3.2.1: Ensure continuing networks within the local business community</i>	
<i>4.3.2.2: Ensure appropriate representation on regional business partnership bodies to support the ongoing consideration of the needs of our business community</i>	
Advocate for a review to the proposed poker machine reform and work to support the ongoing viability of Corowa Shire's clubs	✓
<i>4.4.1.1: Identify and develop partnership opportunities with education and training providers that support increased education provision within the shire</i>	
<i>4.4.1.2: Provide education and training facilities within the shire that supports the delivery of diverse and flexible opportunities</i>	
<i>4.4.2.1: Investigate models of support networks to assist in retaining health care workers within the shire</i>	
<i>4.4.2.2: Support the development of mentoring relationships between experienced and young professionals, particularly in industries/sectors with skill shortages</i>	



5.1 A community that actively protects its natural environment

- 5.1.1 An environmentally aware community.
- 5.1.2 Protection from the impact and spread of weeds and pests throughout our Shire.
- 5.1.3 Protection of our natural flora and fauna.

NOXIOUS WEEDS MANAGEMENT

Council has implemented an extensive noxious weeds management program to ensure the identification and effective control of noxious weeds throughout the shire. An inspection program was also undertaken on council land, private land and waterways throughout the year. This included the following locations:

- High risk pathways,
- High risk road side inspections of noxious weeds,
- High and low risk property inspections,
- Waterways inspection from Lake Mulwala through to Howlong on the Murray River, This also includes all creeks and lagoons.

Council continues to successfully meet all the objectives and outcomes in the Riverina Weed Action Program 2014/2015. Council works closely with adjoining local councils, all weed officers in the Riverina, Local Land Services, National Parks, Crown Lands, Goulburn Murray Water to ensure the best outcome for Council.

COROWA & DISTRICT LANDCARE COAL SEAM GAS FORUM

Corowa and District Landcare, a section 355 of Council held a Coal Seam Gas forum which attracted over 160 people including farmers, agri-banking representatives, industry, investors, local government and urban people to the Corowa Golf Club.

The high profile, thought provoking guest speakers delivered a highly informative forum, imparting an understanding on the emerging topic of coal seam gas (CSG) and its relevance to our region, particularly in relation to water, legislation and landholder rights.

Attendees demonstrated a concern for a decrease in the quality and quantity of food products, and also human health. However it was quite apparent much concern was held for the possible threat to ground and surface water, the availability of water and of real estate devaluation leading to a decrease in equity if CSG mining came to our region.

The electronic survey conducted at the completion of the forum indicated 90% of the people in attendance were opposed to CSG in this area.

Photo: Council's Noxious Weed Officer, Pat Minogue hosted an information session with students from Lowesdale Public School. The students learned about the role Council plays in noxious weed management.



5.2 A Shire that leads in environmental sustainability

- 5.2.1 Innovative environmental practices.
- 5.2.2 Environmentally responsible development.

DAVID TAYLOR TRACK

A band of bird lovers gathered at Redlands Hill Reserve to celebrate the opening of two new walking tracks within the reserve. This unique event was made possible through a "Landcare Grow Grant" of which only 25 were issued nationwide to celebrate 25 years of Landcare. The day kicked off with the ceremonial unveiling of the David Taylor Track, created in memory of David Taylor, who lived in the old Redlands School next to the reserve and held a keen interest in the geology and the ecology within the reserve. Over 80 attendees, were guided on a walk around the new tracks by well-known ecologist "Ian Davidson" who delighted the large audience by "twitching" in over 25 birds, including babblers and whistlers. The Wahgunyah Historical Society gave an interesting account of local indigenous artist Tommy McRae, highlighting Tommy's gift for painting everyday happenings as he saw them, with great attention to detail. This was followed by the Corowa Historical Society who spoke about Tom Robert's association with the local area and the creating of his iconic painting 'Shearing the Rams'. The day was a wonderful celebration of indigenous culture, bush poetry and artists. Its success was the result of the hard work of staff, volunteers, and the participation of many community groups and the support of the Corowa Council.

LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN (LEP)

During the year 4 amendments were made to the LEP. The first altered the River Front Building Line that is applicable to properties in Corowa Road, Mulwala between Lang and North Streets.

The second amended the zoning of the portion of 249 Honour Avenue, Corowa fronting John Street from B2-Local Centre to R1-General Residential.

The third amendment created a 500 metre buffer area to the livestock processing facility (Cool-Off) at 271 Jude Street, Howlong and altered the appropriate clause in the LEP from site specific to general reference that is applicable across all industrial land in the Shire.

The fourth amendment corrected a mapping error by inserting a boundary figure to a property subject to the River Front Building Line.

CIVIC CENTRE PRINTING INITIATIVE

A concentrated effort to reduce waste and reduce our impact on the environment whilst bringing about a cost reduction in printing has been undertaken by staff at the Corowa Civic Centre office. Significant changes to printing capabilities being implemented through the 'Civic Centre Printing initiative' initiated in March 2015 and as a result of new printing credits and limitations combined with an accrual, and colour printing warning system, a saving of almost one third of our pre-implementation budget has been saved. Total number of pages printed per day has been reduced by 31% and the percentage of colour pages printed dropped from 24% to 18% (with the number of colour pages printed nearly halved).

This initiative was designed not to restrict staff in their ability to do their job, but rather to review current practices and procedures. It has been successful in igniting discussion whilst helping to instill a culture of mindfulness about cost saving and waste. The Information Services Team have now put out the challenge to other areas of Council to consider ways they can reduce waste and improve efficiency.

COROWA AND DISTRICT LANDCARE

ANNUAL PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

The Corowa and District Landcare Group annual amateur photography competition continues to attract interest from all ages, as does the photography exhibition which was displayed at the Civic Centre Art Space for the community to enjoy. This year there were 80 photos entered with over 40 attending the grand opening of the display and award presentation.

LANDCARE AT THE FESTIVAL OF FUN FOR KIDS

The 'Festival of Fun for Kids' was a big success for the joint Murray Local Land Services and Corowa District Landcare tent. There were hundreds of children through the tent playing games and requesting show bags. However the main attraction was the fishing game where children actively caught laminated fish from a tarp using magnetised bamboo rods. They then sought help identifying if they were native, protected, introduced or a pest. The children took great delight in putting the carp and redfin in the bucket.



ENERGY EFFICIENCY COST SAVINGS

Council has placed a strong focus on containing expenditure on energy over the last 12 months.

On average, the cost of energy supply has increased by 9% each year for the last seven years. Council was forecasting expenditure exceeding \$1,000,000 this year.

Our major energy efficiency initiative has included the solar PV project. Others include:

- Energy audit on Corowa Civic Centre
- Power correction units
- Scrutiny and rigorous monitoring of sites
- Installation of more energy efficient hot water units
- Understanding the cost of peak demand and considering some changes to operational procedures

Three quarters of energy usage data has now been received for accurate cost savings to be calculated when comparing quarters 1 - 3 of 2014 to quarters 1 - 3 of 2015.



OUR REPORT CARD

Performance against the Delivery Program

ACTION	STATUS
<i>5.1.1.1: Continue to support our children and young people's knowledge of environmental protection practices</i>	
<i>5.1.1.2: Develop practices to ensure our residents and visitors are aware of appropriate behaviour to limit their impact on our environment</i>	
<i>5.1.1.3: Encourage the community to be involved in preservation and enhancement of the environment</i>	
Through Murray Waste Group, continue the primary school waste/environmental education program	✓
<i>5.1.2.1: Implement appropriate weed management practices in response to outbreaks throughout the shire</i>	
Continue to participate in the annual Eastern Riverina Noxious Weeds Advisory Group at the Henty Field Days and other appropriate media/education campaigns	✓
Continue to make available information within Council centres and on Council's website relating to noxious weeds and their prevention and control	✓
Ensure appropriate publicity of any new noxious weed classifications	✓
Continue to work with Eastern Riverina Noxious Weeds Advisory Group to facilitate funding applications and weed classification processes	✓
Continue to effectively monitor the presence and outbreaks of weeds throughout the shire upon both private and public land and respond to outbreaks and control measures accordingly	✓
At least fortnightly, undertake sheep inspections at the Corowa Saleyards to detect the presence of noxious weeds	✓
<i>5.1.2.2: Support the community to implement appropriate pest management practices</i>	
<i>5.1.3.1: Identify areas of significant natural value and ensure they are provided with high level conservation recognition</i>	
<i>5.1.3.2: Ensure areas of high vegetation and habitat significance are appropriately protected from the impact of destructive recreational uses</i>	
During peak tourism times, undertake regular inspections of native areas to ensure appropriate recreational use	✓
Provide signage in native areas requiring protection to encourage appropriate usage and inform community members and visitors regarding restrictions and requirements	✓
As part of regular inspections, ensure that recreational uses have not adversely impacted on the environment and implement appropriate maintenance/repair works where appropriate	✓
<i>5.2.1.1: Support moving towards a carbon neutral community</i>	
<i>5.2.1.2: Celebrate the achievements within our shire that demonstrate our commitment to environmental protection – including from schools, farmers and community groups</i>	
<i>5.2.1.3: Consistently consider water protection and conservation practices</i>	
<i>5.2.2.1: Ensure where feasible that all Council and community developments, upgrades and retrofits are carried out with consideration to environmental sustainability</i>	
<i>5.3.2.1: Continue to improve and protect the water quality in our waterways</i>	
<i>5.3.2.3: Implement environmental protection strategies to limit the impact of recreational use on waterways</i>	

6.1 Government that plans for the needs of the current and future communities

6.1.1 A community that has the opportunity to be engaged in decision making.

6.1.2 A strong involvement in State and Federal planning for the region.

RAMROC

Corowa Shire is an active member of the Riverina and Murray Regional Organisation of Councils (RAMROC).

RAMROC is a voluntary regional organisation of 18 councils in the Murray Region. RAMROC's Mission is to work collaboratively to enhance the economic, social, economic and environmental capabilities of our communities so as to ensure the long term sustainability of our region.

RAMROC's key roles:

- Provide an effective means for discussion and action on issues of regional significance and common concern;
- Consider the needs of Local Government areas and the people of the region and to make known those needs to the Commonwealth and State Governments to advance the interests of the region;
- Support to individual Member Councils on specific issues of local concern where appropriate;
- Strengthen the role of Local Government in regional affairs, particularly where the region may be affected by Commonwealth or State Government policy; and
- Facilitate the Member Councils working together and co-operating on issues and projects of joint interest and benefit.

Key RAMROC initiatives have included:

- The RAMROC Regional Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy 2013-2021.
- Reform of NSW Local Government – Independent Local Government Review Panel
- Participation in the Murray Darling Basin documentary “Muddied Waters” – refer to www.muddiedwaters.com
- Murray Darling Basin Plan - adverse impacts on our food production and sustainability of our communities.

FIT FOR THE FUTURE CONSULTATION

An extensive communication campaign was developed to inform the community about the Fit for the Future program and engage with residents regarding the future of the Shire.

The following provides an overview of the activities that were undertaken;

- A 'Fit for the Future' page was created on Council's website, with a direct link from the homepage. This page hosted a range of information regarding the NSW Local Government Review and the Fit for the Future program.
- Community information sessions were held in Corowa, Howlong and Mulwala. These sessions were attended by more than 150 residents in total.
- An online video was developed and uploaded to YouTube and Council's website. The video featured the General Manager and encouraged viewers to read the available information and complete the survey.
- An 8 page information pack was delivered to all Corowa Shire residents and non-residential ratepayers.
- A survey was prepared and included as part of the information pack delivered to residents. The survey was also available online from Council's website. A competition was run to encourage completion of the survey, with four \$100 vouchers at a local business provided.
- Social media was used to promote the information sessions and survey.
- A strong media presence (print, radio and television) was established.
- 'Pop up' consultation across the Shire.

The feedback collected from the community throughout this process was used to inform the improvement proposal Council submitted to the State Government.

6.2 A community that is informed about and engaged in its future

6.2.1 Timely and appropriate communication with the community.

6.2.2 Strong community representation.

COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

This year, Council focused on increasing communication activities to ensure residents, visitors and staff were provided with important and current information about a range of issues.

The following communication activities were undertaken;

- Weekly full page 'Snippets' in the Corowa Free Press and Yarrowonga Chronicle which notify residents of upcoming events, Council meetings, grant opportunities, rates notices, compliance notifications and more.
- Increased number of media releases circulated to local and regional media outlets regarding significant Council matters.
- Monthly Council page in the Howlong Grapevine providing residents with information specific to the Howlong township.
- Community Matters Newsletter prepared quarterly and delivered to all households in the Shire.
- Council website.
- Social media platforms including Facebook, YouTube and Twitter (tourism only).
- Internal communication activities such as the establishment of a monthly staff newsletter.

COROWA SHIRE IS ON FACEBOOK!

Various consultation processes suggested there was a desire from the community to see a corporate Council Facebook page established to support communication activities. As such, the page was launched in May 2015 and since this time has provided valuable information to residents and visitors.

The page is an opportunity for the community to learn more about the activities of Council and some of the issues affecting residents. With information about Council news, public notices, construction works, library activities and more, the page has created meaningful conversations between Council and the community.

By 30 June, 2015 the Council page had 210 likes and growing.

The page compliments the existing 'Corowa Visitor Information Centre' page, which is aimed at providing visitors to the region with tourism information. This page had 684 likes at 30 June, 2015.

COMMUNITY PROFILES

Council has developed and maintains local socio-economic community profiles for the Shire.

This initiative provides Council and the community with meaningful statistical information which is presented in a user friendly manner and supports effective planning.

www.id.com.au/profile/corowa



OUR REPORT CARD

Performance against the Delivery Program

ACTION	STATUS
<i>6.1.1.1: Continue to update and implement Council's Community Engagement Strategy to ensure that it reflects the most appropriate ways of engaging the community</i>	
<i>Ensure Council's Communications Strategy incorporates strategies and processes to support the dissemination of information to the community regarding major projects</i>	
<i>6.1.1.2: Support the involvement of the community in decision making at all levels of government</i>	
<i>6.1.2.1: Continue to advocate for the appropriate and accurate representation of the needs of the Corowa Shire community at a state and federal level</i>	
<i>6.1.2.2: Maintain strong representation on appropriate state and federal committees, projects and networks, and ROCs</i>	
Maintain attendance at and involvement in RAMROC and REROC meetings and individual professional sub-groups meetings	✓
<i>6.1.2.3: Continue to support the resolution of cross-border issues, challenges and anomalies that impact on our community</i>	
Continue to participate as required in the commission established to address cross border issues	✓
<i>6.1.2.4: Take a leadership role in matters of regional significance</i>	
<i>6.1.2.5: Enhance relationships with national and state policy makers for community benefit</i>	
<i>6.2.1.1: Develop a communications strategy that supports effective communication mechanisms within the community</i>	
Engage suitably qualified support to assist Council in the development of a Communications Strategy	✓
Implement training across all areas of Council to support the successful implementation of Council's Communication Strategy	✓
<i>6.2.1.2: Continue to explore innovative ways of ensuring that the community is aware of relevant information, projects, events and decisions</i>	
<i>6.2.2.1: Ensure a strong community presence on relevant advisory boards, committees and organisations</i>	
<i>6.2.2.2: Strong support and involvement in local government within the shire</i>	
Undertake review and draft delegations and policy for all section 355 committees	✓
<i>6.2.2.3: Encourage and support a wide range of community members to represent the community – including women, young people, people from culturally diverse backgrounds and people with a disability</i>	
<i>6.3.1.1: Ensure regular communication between partners responsible for achieving priorities within the Community Strategic Plan</i>	
Engage partners to update key priority areas to allow Council to present an accurate and integrated update of information to the community as part of its annual reporting process	✓
<i>6.3.2: Ensure the review of community led strategies and review priorities as part of the annual review process</i>	
Engage the community to update key priority areas to allow Council to present an accurate and integrated update of information as part of its annual reporting process	✓

<i>6.3.2.1: Support a coordinated approach to funding applications, long term strategic planning and program implementation for groups, committees and clubs within the shire</i>	
Collect the relevant information to develop the snapshot and place snapshot on Council's website	✓
As grant information becomes available to Council ensure it is passed on to relevant community groups, committees and organisations	✓
Provide information to appropriate groups and organisations regarding workshops as it becomes available to Council	✓
<i>6.3.2.2: Ensure that community based partnerships are developed and strengthened</i>	

6.4.1 Council is financially responsible and sustainable in the short and long term

6.4.1.1 Council has a 10 year financial plan, four year Delivery Program and operates within these budgets

Extensive work has been undertaken by the Council throughout the year in developing its 'Fit for the Future' submission as part of the New South Wales Government review of Local Government. This included a review of Council's resourcing strategy, including its long term financial plan and asset management plans. A significant community consultation process was undertaken which informed the development of Council's proposal and improvement plan.

COROWA SHIRE

... working with you to build a better future



INFORMATION PACK

NSW Government's **Fit for the Future** package and what this means for Corowa Shire

www.corowa.nsw.gov.au



Corowa Shire
...the choice