

FEDERATION COUNCIL

END OF TERM REPORT

2017/
2021



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**FEDERATION
COUNCIL**

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Under the NSW Government's Integrated Planning and Reporting Legislation for Local Government, Council is required to produce a report on its progress in implementing the Community Strategic Plan – 'Our Community – Our Opportunity' during its term.

The aim of this report is to provide the community with a status of how Council is progressing toward achieving its Strategic Plan - Our Community – Our Opportunity. Federation Council adopted its Community Strategic Plan - Our Community – Our Opportunity in 2018. The plan is a long term plan that identifies where the Federation Council community want to be in the future. It outlines the community's priorities and aspirations and how these will be achieved. This plan assists in shaping the future of the Federation Council Local Government Area (LGA). It provides the direction for the provision of key projects and services which enable Council to meet the needs of the community and deliver good quality services and facilities.

It integrates asset, service and financial plans so that Council's resource capabilities are matched to the community's needs and shows how Council is working towards achieving a better quality of life for all who live, work, visit and play in the magnificent Federation Council. This is a dynamic strategy that is evaluated consistently and comprehensively reviewed at the end of Council's term. This report will focus on the period 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2021. This report has been structured to demonstrate what Council has done towards achieving strategic goals, underpinned by five key pillars as set by the community.



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MAYORS MESSAGE

It is with great pride I present to you the End of Term Report for Federation Council. Since Council was elected in September 2017, my fellow Councillors and I have worked hard to deliver nearly \$215M in services and assets for the community over an extraordinary four year period.

Since the beginning of our election, Council has been committed to our vision – Federation will be home to a community rich in spirit, thriving through the opportunities of our unique history, rural landscapes and waterways.

What we have valued is our waterways, parks and recreational opportunities, our tranquil country lifestyle, strong community spirit and our close proximity to other centers on both sides of the Murray.

It has been a privilege serving as Mayor and on behalf of my fellow Councillors, I thank Federation Council's hard-working and dedicated staff, our volunteers and our wonderful residents who share our vision to deliver the best possible future for our amazing Shire.

Cr, Patrick Bourke
Federation Council Mayor





Federation Council 2017-2021



Mayor Cr Patrick Bourke



Deputy Mayor Cr Shaun Whitechurch



Cr David Longley



Cr Paul Meigel



Cr Fred Longmire



Cr Bronwyn Thomas



Cr Gail Law



Cr Norman W Wales APM



Cr Andrew Kennedy

End of Term Achievement Highlights

In the early stages of the Council term in 2017, a significant focus of the newly elected Federation Council was to restructure the senior management level with a strong focus on financial management, both operationally with robust procedures, internal controls and internal capability building, and strategically with its long term financial sustainability. During this time, Council embarked on a holistic long term financial management project using funds from the New Council Implementation Fund. The first Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP) under a new service planning approach was adopted by Council and the Long Term Financial Plan has then been further improved for 2021/22 as Council finalized significant major community building projects, financially supported by the NSW State Government Merger funds.

Throughout the last four years, Council has managed an overall operating budget of \$215M which has ensured the consistent delivery of the 43 service areas of Council, as well as the delivery of an unprecedented of new infrastructure projects. The above operating budget is the audited result of Council's financial statements which comprises operating costs, capital works and repayment of borrowings.

Overall achievements throughout the four year Council term, as underpinned by the Community Strategic Plan 'Our Community – Our Opportunity' include:

BUILT FEDERATION

ECONOMIC FEDERATION

NATURAL FEDERATION

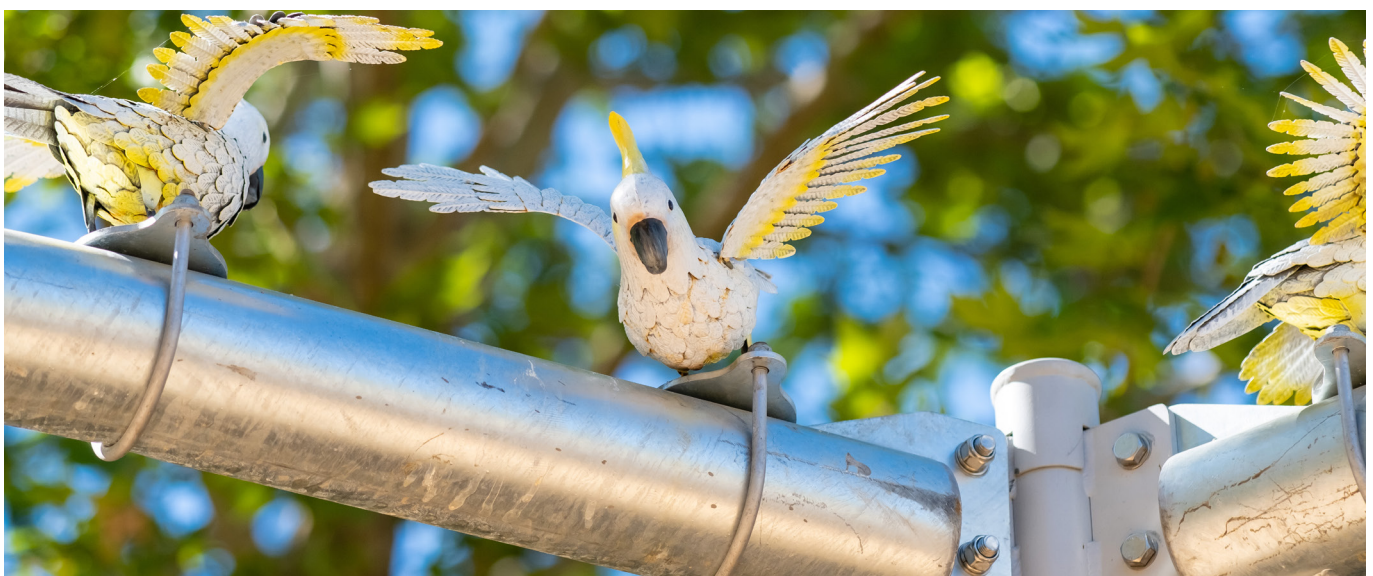
SOCIAL FEDERATION

WELL-GOVERNED FEDERATION

Built Federation

Maintained and improved infrastructure that meets the needs of residents and industry.

- Bangerang Park Corowa new playground.
- Demolition of existing toilet and construction of new toilet at Bangerang Park.
- Corowa Skatepark Extension.
- Lowe Square Howlong - demolition of existing building and construction of new tennis pavilion.
- Delivery of the Howlong Community Hall and Gymnasium.
- Delivery of a new multiuse facility at the Urana Aquatic Centre.
- Corowa Aquatic Centre - demolition of existing facility and delivery of a new 50m outdoor pool and 25m indoor pool and splash park.
- Ball Park Corowa - construction of new cricket club pavilion.
- Oaklands Recreation Ground - construction of new football changerooms.
- Construction of Oaklands Medical Centre.
- Construction of Oaklands RV Park.
- Construction of the Hume St Cycle pathway in Corowa
- Demolition of existing toilet and construction of new toilet at Purtle Park Mulwala.
- Delivery of a new state of the art adventure playground at Purtle Park Mulwala
- Completion of the Mulwala industrial Estate.
- Completion of the Howlong Industrial Estate.
- Corowa Saleyards improvements to auctioneer walkways and additional 29 pens.
- Delivery of the revamped Memorial Plaza in Corowa.
- Implement Aerodrome Management Services.
- Implement Development Contributions Plan.
- Effective management of Councils Landfill Operation Services.
- Construction of new Corowa Water Victoria Street Pump Station.
- Upgrade of new Radio Telemetry at the Corowa, Mulwala, Urana and Oaklands Sewerage Pump Stations.
- Digital Water meters installed.
- Restore 2.3km of walking track and construction of 400 metres of fencing at Kyffins Reserve Mulwala.
- Urana Netball Court renewal.
- Council wide roads and drainage project of \$3.8M delivered.
- Corowa Aerodrome Pavement Defects Rectification.
- Howlong Skate Park project delivered.
- Remove existing playground and install new playground and fencing at the RSL Park in Corowa.



Economic Federation

Growing, progressive and prosperous communities that build on sustainable manufacturing, agriculture and tourism, close proximity to other centres on both sides of the Murray and affordability.



- North of the Murray branding strategy complete.
- Council adopted inaugural Federation Arts and Cultural Strategy 2021-2025 in November 2020.
- Council unveiled commissioned sculpture titled the Last Train from Boree Creek; as a tribute to the late Tim Fischer in Boree Creek.
- Shearing of the Rams trail launched.
- Corowa Foreshore Structure Plan and Morris Park South Corowa Masterplan developed.
- \$2.6M State Government grant obtained to provide walkways and other upgrades to further activate the Murray River in Corowa.
- Council's inaugural Economic Development strategy adopted.
- Facilitate training opportunities to support industry development.
- Conduct initiatives to support higher rates of population and employment growth, especially in youth and young family segments.
- Build relationships with government, education and industry peak bodies including NSW government agencies, Murray Regional Development Australia, and joint organisations.

Natural Federation

Sustainable rural landscapes and waterways offering tranquility and attractive recreational spaces



- Flood study completed for Northern towns/villages of Council area in former Urana Shire area, in response to major flooding in 2012.
- Grant funding received for flood study of Howlong, Corowa and Mulwala.
- Maintain Corowa Bangerang Park Renewal project.
- Implement Urana Victoria Park Redevelopment.
- Work with Landcare and Local Land Services for weed management and bush regeneration.
- Implement road side vegetation management, verge slashing and reserve mowing.
- Upgrade to irrigation systems across the Federation LGA which resulted in business efficiencies.

Social Federation

Close-knit and welcoming communities where people come together and support each other.



- Celebrate the contribution of senior residents through the delivery of Seniors Week initiatives.
- Facilitate networking meetings of key health stakeholders and practitioners to identify any gaps in health care provision.
- Facilitate the Federation Youth Council to ensure young people are well represented.
- Support the Youth Council to deliver youth led initiatives during Youth Week.
- Work in partnership with local schools to provide opportunities for students to participate in activities delivered by council.
- Launch of the Ageing Well Resource.
- Support the communication and distribution of the Family and Childrens Services Directory.
- Deliver the mobile preschool service in four LGA locations.
- Support community events and initiatives through the delivery of the Community Grant program.
- Develop a program of Arts & Culture initiatives that provides an opportunity for all sectors of the community to participate
- Continue to implement Sister City Exchange Program.
- Ageing Well Strategy adopted.
- Maintain libraries in Corowa, Howlong and Mulwala that are vibrant community spaces and provide opportunities for all members of the community.
- Provide free access to public computers and Wi-Fi through Federation Council libraries.

Well-Governed Federation

Strong civic leadership and governance supporting equity across communities and effective communication with residents.



- Extensive discussions with NSW and Victorian Cross Border Commissioner on the impact of COVID-19, associated restrictions and opportunities to support the community in recovery.
- The Rates Advisory Committee established to assist with the rates harmonisation process and as a result a new rating structure was adopted.
- Councils internal audit program implemented.
- Policy framework implemented.
- Ensure Federation Council's key objectives and strategies link to service reviews and business plans.
- Implement Council's Corporate Communications Strategy.
- Implement the Workforce Strategic Plan 2018-2021.

Community Satisfaction



In August 2020 Council undertook a new independent quantitative Community Satisfaction Survey project. The research objective was to determine the community's satisfaction, as well as the importance of Council's performance across service areas and facilities to provide Council with guidance on the future needs of the community.

Previous to this, a Community Satisfaction Survey was delivered in 2016, and it was pleasing to see an overall increase in growth of satisfaction in areas identified for improvement during previous consultation.

It is also important to note that Federation Council outperformed other NSW regional councils in customer satisfaction with Council's Staff. The best performing areas were sewerage and water services, waste management and maintaining the appearance of public areas. Residents would like to see Council further prioritise roads, economic development and tourism.

Satisfaction Survey highlights include, but are not limited to:

- More than half (52%) of Federation Council residents are satisfied overall (rating of 4 or 5) with how Federation Council has performed over the past 12 months.
- Thirty-four percent (34%) provided a neutral rating of 3. These residents present a strong opportunity to be converted into advocates of Council.
- 39 of 41 Council services and facilities achieved medium of high satisfaction ratings.

- Federation Council is succeeding in providing and maintaining high quality community facilities.
- Federation Council is outperforming other NSW Regional Councils in customer satisfaction with Council's Staff.
- Nine in ten residents (91%) believe Federation Council is a good place to live.
- The key drivers of these high perceptions of liveability are safety, affordability and pride in the area.
- There is a strong, positive correlation between perceptions of liveability and overall satisfaction with Council. Residents that enjoy living in the area have high perceptions of the performance of Federation Council and vice versa.

To further improve community satisfaction with Council, the key findings included, but are not limited to:

- Council's performance in the delivery of Governance services is encouraging, with all seven services recording medium average satisfaction ratings and performing in-line with results from 2016. This is a strong result given the challenges posed by amalgamation. However, these services are performing below-average compared to Council's wider service provision. Residents that provided a low overall satisfaction rating (1-2) are least satisfied with these services.
- To increase residents' overall satisfaction, Federation Council should focus on further improving the perceptions of governance services including: Council leadership and advocacy, Council leadership and advocacy, Decisions made in the interest of the community, providing value for money for rates, and being a well-run and managed.
- This extends to services within the Economy service area including planning and development and promotion of economic development and job growth.
- This can be achieved through continual and effective communication, engagement and consultation with residents surrounding Council decision making, planning and financial management.



Where to next for Federation Council?

Early foundation work, along with the restructuring and subsequent recruitment within the Federation Council organisation has been a key factor in Council now having a solid base to work forward on and transition into phase two of our organisational journey.

Since the formation of Federation Council in 2016, Council has worked extensively to deliver a range of new community infrastructure projects, as well as complete a monumental number of internal system upgrades and projects to provide a strong foundation for Council and the community moving forward.

Council as a result of the \$10 million dollar Stronger Communities Fund (merger funds) as well as many other grants since then including from the Stronger County Communities Grant Program, COVID Stimulus, Drought Funding and other grants, has invested in many new, and or upgraded community assets right across the Council region. This work has undoubtedly enhanced the areas reputation for livability greatly. Council has also undertaken significant investment into its roads and related infrastructure network, however there remains a significant challenge in managing these assets with current revenue levels.

Council as a business has experienced rapid changes and growth since its creation, with both former Councils having historically low rate bases and disproportionate asset bases to population levels. These challenges include a road network of 2322 km of roads broken into 964 km of sealed roads and 1,358 km of gravel roads. Council also due to having 14 towns and villages, have a large amount of relatively low usage but high priority to the community, facilities, such as Halls, Courts and Ovals. These are spread across the towns and villages of Corowa, Howlong, Mulwala, Urana, Balldale, Boree Creek, Buraja-Lowesdale, Coreen, Daysdale, Morundah, Oaklands, Rand, Rennie and Savernake. Council also has varying service levels across each of these facilities. Council and the community are aware that there are significant infrastructure challenges ahead that will almost undoubtedly require significant special rate increases.

The new Council is recommended to continually work on initiatives and strategies focused on improving the long-term sustainability of the Council. Key to this is the delivery of the recommendations and action plans developed through the merger-funded Asset Management and Long Term Financial Planning Services Model – completed in the 2019/20 financial year. The objective of this project was to integrate Council's asset management planning and whole-of-life costings into service costings to enable more robust long term financial planning to be undertaken.

While the Merger Funding has delivered some excellent facilities for our community, Council needs to ensure it can afford to maintain and operate them and strategically identify and plan for revenue sources to support its growing asset list. Over the next 12 months Council is recommended to engage with the community to discuss an array of options on how Council increases its revenue to meet community expectations in relation to service delivery, asset renewal, and asset maintenance.

Council's main focus in the short to medium term also is recommended to focus on critical infrastructure planning for the required water and sewer upgrades along with a sustained improvement to Council's asset management approach, especially in the roads and related infrastructure area, buildings and facilities and waste management areas.

Council is set to deliver \$16M in Capital Projects, \$6.5M in Road Works and \$5.8M on Sewerage and Water Network Works for the 2021-2022 financial year.

Budget Highlights 2021-2022

MORUNDAH

\$10.6million Corowa Saleyards upgrade

\$3.3m Corowa to Mulwala Cycleway

\$2.7million Cullivel Road Urana upgrade

Progress sales of industrial land in Howlong and Mulwala

Implement North of the Murray branding

\$2.6million Corowa foreshore upgrade

Implement Ageing Well Strategy

OAKLANDS

Foster Federation Youth Council

Review Community Strategic Plan & develop new Delivery Program

Financial sustainability initiatives

Federation Council Local Environmental Plan

\$16M in Capital Projects

\$6.5M in Road Works

\$5.8M on Sewerage and Water Network Works



Further Reading

- Annual Reports
- Community Strategic Plan - Our Community – Our Opportunity.
- Copies of these reports can be found on Council's website under: Corporate Planning.
- Visit Council's Website

www.federationcouncil.nsw.gov.au

Contact Us

Your comments and suggestions are valuable to Council particularly in highlighting opportunities for improving Council's services, plans and reports.

You can contact Council at:

In person:
Corowa Office: 100 Edward St, Corowa NSW, Open: 8:30am - 5:00pm Monday to Friday
Urana Office: 30 William St, Urana NSW, Open: 9:00am - 4:30pm Monday to Friday
Howlong Office: 59 Hawkins St, Howlong NSW, Open: 10am - 1pm & 2pm - 5pm Tuesday & Wednesday, 10am - 1pm Thursday & Friday
Mulwala Office: 71 Melbourne St, Mulwala NSW, Open: 10am - 1pm & 2pm - 5pm Tuesday & Wednesday, 10am - 1pm Thursday & Friday

By phone:
(02) 6033 8999 during business hours or **1800 110 088** after hours for emergencies only.

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