

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2023-2024



**Somerset**  
REGIONAL COUNCIL

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## HISTORY AND PROFILE

Somerset Regional Council was formed on 15 March 2008 following the amalgamation of the Esk Shire and Kilcoy Shire Councils.

Somerset Regional Council has a Mayor and six Councillors who are elected by their constituents and serve a four-year term.

This regional local government is one-hour west of Brisbane and has strong agricultural, environmental, heritage and tourism values. It contains important vegetation and forest, areas of high scenic and landscape amenity and significantly, the key water catchments for South-East Queensland.

The Somerset region is home to about 25,057 people with an area of 5382 sq km and major townships of Esk, Fernvale, Kilcoy, Lowood and Toogoolawah. Neighbouring local governments are Brisbane City, City of Moreton Bay, Sunshine Coast, Gympie, South Burnett, Toowoomba, Lockyer Valley and Ipswich City.

Somerset Regional Council's logo represents the region's two major dams, with the larger body of water representing Wivenhoe and the smaller body being Somerset. The overall shape of the icon with the water flowing from Somerset to Wivenhoe creates the shape of an 'S'.

The previous Esk and Kilcoy Shire Councils had adopted floral and fauna emblems. The continued use of these emblems is symbolic, given none of the emblems are reflected in the logo. On 19 December 2008 Council adopted the following emblems:

Floral:           Weeping bottlebrush (*Callistemon viminalis*)  
                      Native frangipani (*Hymenosporum flavum*)

Faunal:           Red deer (*Cervus elaphus*)

Deer were first introduced into Queensland in September 1873 when two stags and four hinds were released at Scrub Creek, Cressbrook Station. These deer were from Windsor Great Park and were a gift from Queen Victoria to the Acclimatization Society of Queensland. Today, the descendants of the original release are well entrenched in the ranges of the Brisbane and Mary Valleys.

Somerset Regional Council covers the largest local government land area in South East Queensland and has the smallest rate base. Despite the challenges, the region continues to develop in an economically, environmentally and socially sustainable way.



# MAYOR'S REPORT

It is my great pleasure to present Somerset Regional Council's Annual Report for the 2023/2024 financial year.

Firstly, I extend my gratitude to Somerset's former Mayor Graeme Lehmann for his stewardship. Having only served as Mayor for three months of the previous financial year, it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the work of Mayor Lehmann and the former Councillors for placing Somerset in such a strong position.

I was proud to join my new team of Councillors after the March 2024 elections to continue advancing Somerset. My colleagues and I are wasting no time in addressing the issues facing the region while balancing the needs of all residents.

The last few years have been difficult for Somerset due to the ongoing cost-of-living crisis and the fallout of Covid. Times have been tough for residents with unbelievable cost spikes for essential items and services. So too has the economic crisis impacted Council's operations.

Navigating the 2022 flood recovery process presented a significant challenge to Council. We appreciate residents' patience and understanding as we have worked through the long and arduous process of funding and restoring our roads. We recognise this has been a slow process, and as a Council we see there is room for improvement from all levels of government to deliver on road repairs and upgrades, on time and on budget.

One key challenge to recovery work was the delay in reimbursements from government agencies, which placed enormous pressure on Council's cash position. Council's finance team has worked incredibly hard to navigate these challenges and I am incredibly proud of their performance in the face of adversity.

Despite said challenges, Council has been successful in securing many significant grants which will allow the continuation of key infrastructure projects around the region.

Engagement and wellness were a priority for Council in 2023-2024. We adopted the Somerset Social Plan in July 2023, we have enhanced our sport and recreation facilities, and our Libraries, Visitor Information Centres and The Condensery have grown in visitor numbers. This is wonderful news and shows our region is bouncing back strongly.

The Experience Somerset brand has done wonders to promote our tourism industry. Developing our tourism industry is crucial to supporting our many small businesses, and we look forward to seeing how assets like the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail, Lake Wivenhoe and Lake Somerset can be further utilised to bring visitors and dollars to our region.

I would like to thank and congratulate our officers, directors and CEO for working so diligently to deliver a stronger and more resilient Somerset in the face of so many challenges.

To my fellow Councillors, both past and present, thank you for joining me in representing Somerset and advocating for our residents.

**Jason Wendt**  
**Somerset Regional Council Mayor**

# CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

*Section 190(1) of the Local Government Regulation 2012*

The 2023-2024 financial year has been pivotal for Somerset Regional Council, highlighted by the March local government elections. We bid farewell to former Mayor Graeme Lehmann and Councillors Cheryl Gaedtke, Sean Choat, and Bob Whalley, acknowledging their significant contributions. Mayor Lehmann, with 30 years of service, and Cr Gaedtke, with 39 years, have exemplified dedication to public service.

On March 28, 2024, I was privileged to swear in the new Council: Mayor Jason Wendt, Deputy Mayor Helen Brieschke, and Councillors Michael Bishop, Kylee Isidro, Tiara Hurley, Brett Freese, and Sally Jess. This team has embraced their induction and is committed to representing our community.

Reflecting on our initiatives, I'm proud of our resilience and innovation. Our strategic focus has been on infrastructure recovery, sustainable development, and community engagement. Collaboration among Council, staff, residents, and external stakeholders has been essential to navigate complex challenges.

A major highlight was our substantial infrastructure efforts, particularly in response to flood events. The finance team managed a 43% increase in transaction volumes, processing \$37.3 million in flood repairs and \$30.8 million in capital works, balanced against net rate revenue of \$30.4 million.

Despite facing delays in government reimbursements—averaging 127 days and resulting in a \$17.6 million cash deficit as of June 30, 2024—our team secured significant competitive grants totalling \$12.6 million for key infrastructure projects. This achievement underscores our capability in delivering community-shaping projects.

Financial pressures led to an operating deficit of \$6.5 million, primarily due to a \$5.3 million reduction in Commonwealth Financial Assistance Grants and a 15% increase in depreciation. However, responsible financial management earned us our sixteenth consecutive unmodified audit opinion from the QAO.

Alongside our financial management and infrastructure delivery, Council made strides in upgrading its Information Technology infrastructure across multiple sites.

Community engagement and wellness have been focal points for Somerset Regional Council in 2023-2024. Council adopted the Somerset Social Plan in July 2023. Youth engagement has remained a priority with Council completing a review of the Somerset Youth Engagement Strategy.

Sport and recreation facilities have been enhanced. Somerset Libraries continued to experience growth, with membership increasing by 11%. Libraries remain an important hub for learning, connection, and culture. In the arts and culture space, The Condensery hosted eleven exhibitions, contributing to Somerset's vibrant cultural landscape.

Tourism remains a key focus for Council. As a financial member of Southern Queensland Country Tourism, Council has undertaken significant promotional efforts to promote the Experience Somerset brand.

Somerset Regional Council's Planning and Development Department has been instrumental in ensuring compliance with relevant legislation. The department has provided ongoing guidance on planning matters and managed Planning and Environment Court appeals. Strategic planning achievements for the year included the review of the Local Government Infrastructure Plan and contributions to the ShapingSEQ 2023 regional plan.

The Operations branch completed 3,595 customer service requests, reflecting the community's engagement and the Council's efforts in maintaining service levels across roads, waste collection, and facilities.

Overall, Council has demonstrated strong leadership in addressing the evolving needs of community infrastructure and disaster recovery. Council has a commendable track record of successfully executing many projects as part of its ongoing construction program. The dedicated team is committed to delivering quality civil infrastructure throughout the entire region, making optimal use of both internal expertise and external resources/contractors.

The Human Resources and Customer Service Department ensured employee compliance with legislation and work health and safety requirements while serving as the community's first point of contact at the Council's Administration and Customer Service Centres.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to all those who have contributed to our collective achievements this year. We are Team Somerset, and under the guidance of the Mayor and Councillors, Council staff have all played an essential role in the successes of 2023-2024. Despite the challenges, Somerset Regional Council has demonstrated resilience, innovation, and a commitment to building a region we can all be proud of. As we look to the future, we remain focused on delivering services and infrastructure that meet the evolving needs of our community while ensuring Somerset retains its unique identity and rural charm.

Together, we will continue building a prosperous and vibrant Somerset where our community can thrive for generations.

**Andrew Johnson**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

## ELECTED MEMBERS

The Somerset region is undivided for electoral purposes. Each Councillor represents the overall public interest of the region. The Mayor and Councillors are elected by all voters in Somerset. Elections were last held on 16 March 2024, with the below Councillors elected.

These seven elected representatives are responsible for formulating Council policies, the corporate plan and operational plan, and making decisions to achieve Council's goals.



### **Cr Jason Wendt (Mayor)**

Jason Wendt was first elected as a Councillor for Somerset in March 2020 and in March 2024 was elected Mayor.

He has proudly called the Somerset region his home, together with his wife Laurisa and their three boys, for more than two decades.

Jason is a qualified vet who graduated with first class honours and has practiced since 1996. In his spare time, you will find him working on the land, in his tractor or the cattle yards across Somerset.

In addition to his passion for animals, Jason is passionate about community and has actively been involved in the Fernvale Rural Fire Brigade for more than two decades, amongst other community roles.

Jason is a progressive thinker who wants to empower the community to help create a sustainable future.

He is an advocate for effective and well-thought-out development that balances the liveability of the Somerset region with its rural amenity.



### **Cr Helen Brieschke (Deputy Mayor)**

Helen Brieschke moved to the Somerset region in 1976 after experiencing Cyclone Tracy, in Darwin as a child. She has been an active volunteer in the community since her teenage years and has held executive positions in many associations. Helen has been actively involved with the historic Toogoolawah Pictures, Alexandra Hall, for the past 37 years.

Helen, and husband David owned and operated a wholesale milk distribution business in the Somerset region for 33 years, while working and raising a family.

Cr Brieschke was first elected to Council in 2012 and was elected Deputy Mayor for a second term in 2024.

She has a strong commitment to the community with a keen interest in recreation, environment, the arts and Councils core services.

As an experienced Councillor of more than a decade, Cr Brieschke is dedicated to fulfilling her role in representing the Somerset community.



### **Cr Kylee Isidro**

Born and raised in Somerset, Kylee Isidro (nee Lukritz) was first elected as a Somerset Councillor in 2020 before being reelected in 2024.

She has a wealth of local government customer service experience backed by a Diploma in Local Government Administration.

Prior to progressing her local government career in Somerset, Kylee lived in Africa and the United Kingdom working in the pharmaceutical and IT industries.

She is passionate about delivering exceptional customer service, expanding arts and culture, disaster management, tourism growth and economic development.

Kylee, a mum of two daughters, is a fifth generation descendant of two Somerset families, and is passionate about the region and sustainable development.



**Cr Brett Freese**

Brett Freese was first elected as a Councillor in 2024 but he is no stranger to Somerset having lived at Glamorgan Vale, on a family farm, for most of his life.

Dedicated to serving the community, Brett has had various involvement with several groups and boards including the Glamorgan Vale Water Board and the Lowood and Fernvale Community Bank.

Brett has a background in information technology and spent much of his life working across multiple industries including water, local government, transport, telecommunications and agriculture.

He is passionate about the agricultural industry, infrastructure management, pest management and tourism.



**Cr Tiara Hurley**

For the past decade, Tiara Hurley has called Somerset home. In 2024 she was elected as a Somerset Councillor.

Together with her husband and their two young children they live on a cattle grazing property at Lower Cressbrook and have strong agricultural ties.

Since moving to the region, Tiara has embedded herself in the community by volunteering her time on campdraft associations in Esk, Kilcoy and Toogoolawah, as well as being part of the Toogoolawah Show Society and the Toogoolawah State School P&C.

She has experience in earthmoving and demolition, real estate sales, has an MC Multi-Combination Truck Licence and more recently completed a Diploma of Local Government.

Tiara is interested in economic development, roads and transport, and striking a balance between growth and environmental conservation.



**Cr Michael Bishop**

Michael was first elected to Council in 2024 and has a deeply engrained passion for community development.

For the past decade he has called Somerset home and advocated, through various roles, for improved services for rural communities.

With a lengthy background in clinical services, Michael has served on many boards across child and youth services, mental health, has a background in occupational therapy and is an allied health professional.

He was also a foundation member of the Mental Health Council of Australia.



Amongst his many interests, community development and social inclusion rate highly followed by preserving heritage, tourism management, events and infrastructure development.

In his spare time, he enjoys arts and culture, writing and gardening.



**Cr Sally Jess**

Sally Jess has a long association with the Somerset region, including completing her primary and high school education at Esk and Toogoolawah respectively.

In 2003, together with her husband, Sally purchased a beef cattle and cropping farm at Esk. In 2024, Sally became elected as a Councillor for the Somerset region.

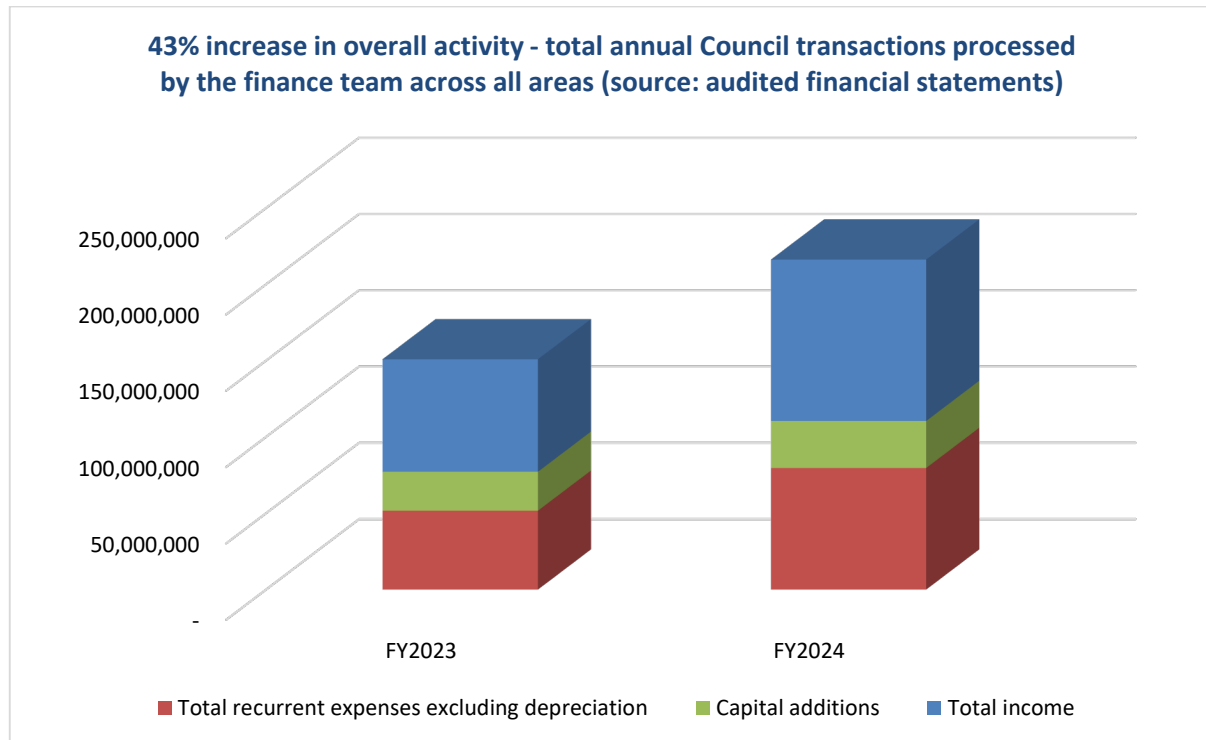
She is passionate about representing the community and has a vision for growth in Somerset. For more than a decade Sally has been the secretary of the Esk Show Society. She's also supported many in the community through her work as a multifaceted entrepreneur including interior design, e-designer and offerings through an online boutique.

With a certificate in business, Sally is passionate about supporting small business, improving community engagement, tourism growth and supporting the agricultural, arts and culture sectors.

# FINANCE HIGHLIGHTS: COMMUNITY FINANCIAL REPORT

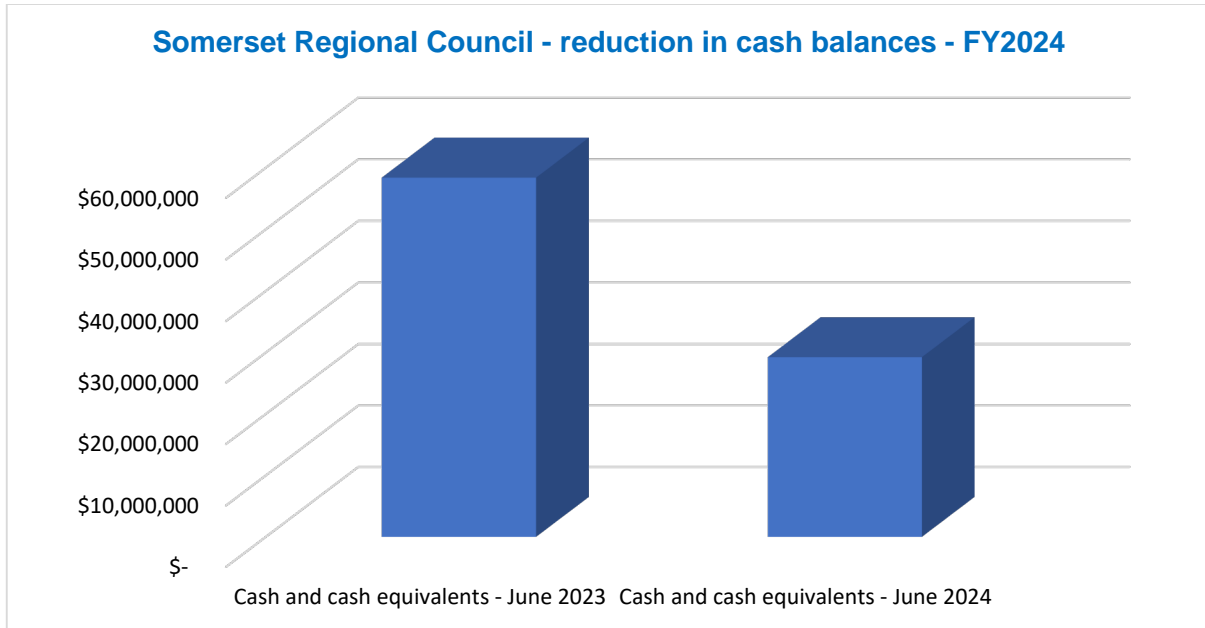
*Section 184 of the Local Government Regulation 2012*

Council's Finance Team managed record levels of transactions during FY2024. Process improvements developed and instigated by the Finance Team assisted in managing the 43% increase in transaction volumes which followed many consecutive years of large increases.

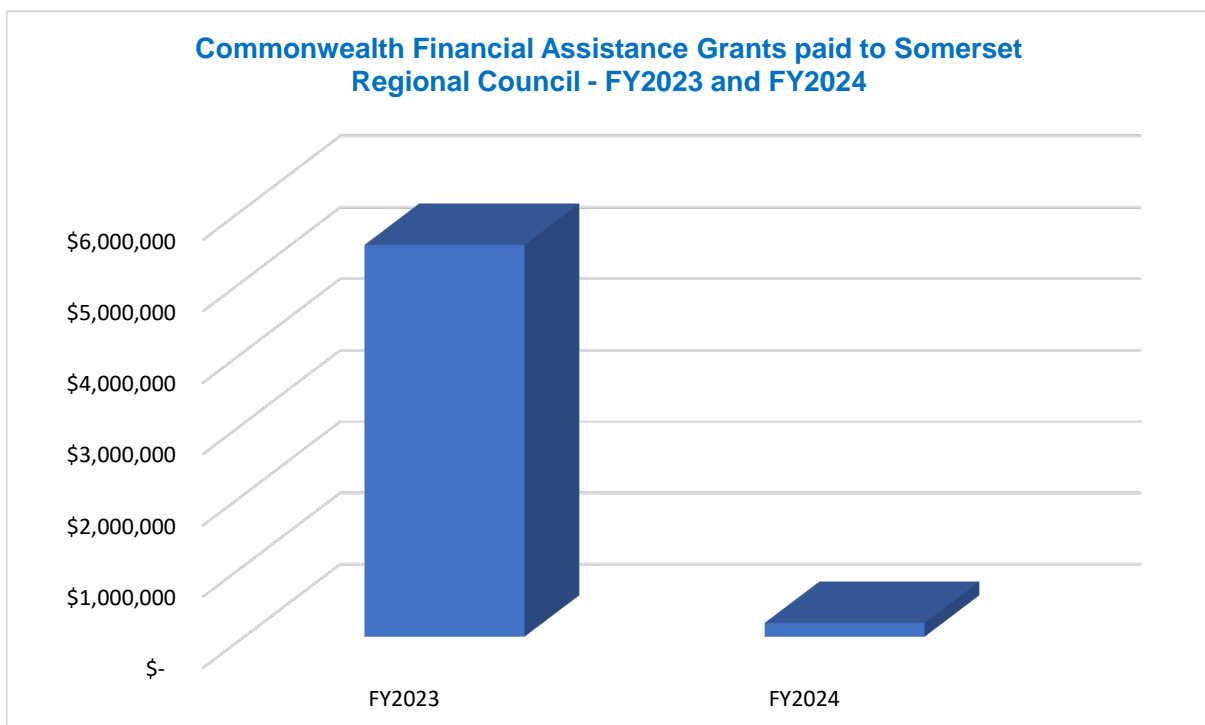


The increase in transactions related primarily to \$37.3M in operating cost flood repairs subject to Commonwealth/State disaster funding arrangements and \$30.8M of capital additions - majority funded by government grants - compared to net rate revenue of \$30.4M.

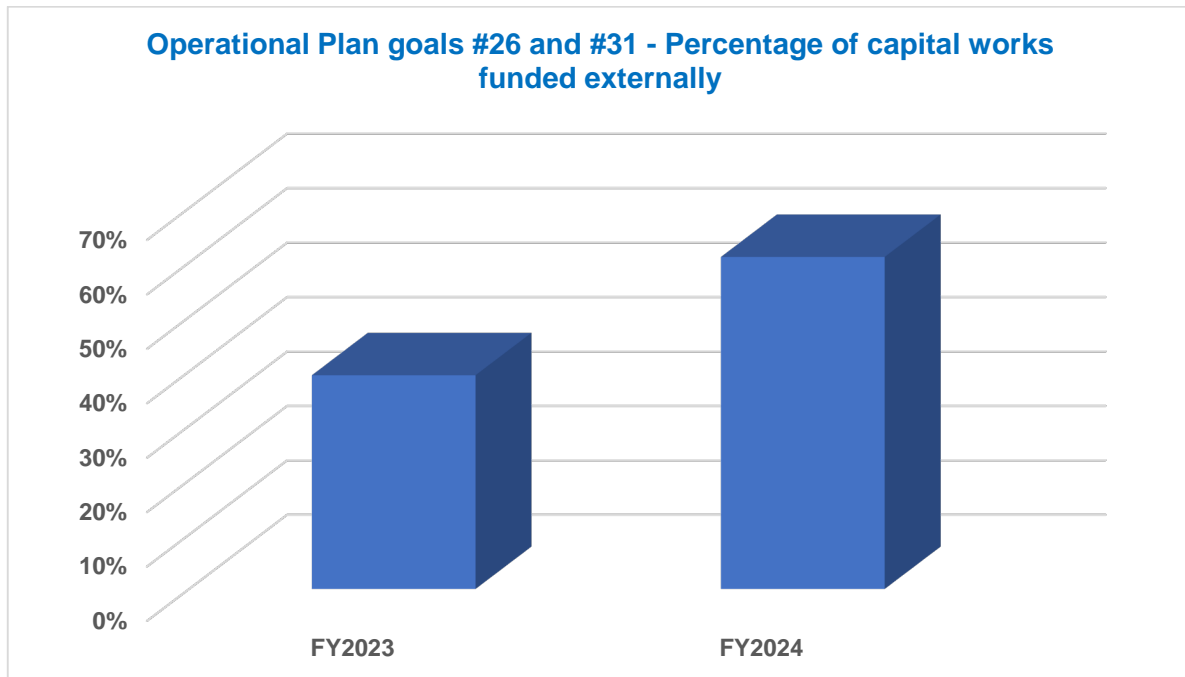
Relevant government agencies took an average of 127 days to process Council's claims for flood repair reimbursement through to payment. Council's cash position was impacted by this timeframe, with Council's expenditure on flood repairs exceeding cash funding received for those repairs by \$17.6M to 30 June 2024.



Council incurred an operating deficit of \$6.5M in FY2024. The operating deficit reflected the \$5.3M reduction in allocated Commonwealth Financial Assistance Grants paid to Council during FY2024 compared to FY2023, plus a \$1.7M (15%) increase in depreciation expense. The non-payment of Commonwealth Financial Assistance Grants was replicated throughout all Queensland councils during FY2024. The 15% depreciation expense increase reflected a 15% increase in the valuation of Council's roads, buildings, structures and other fixed assets.



During FY2024, Council's Finance Team was responsible for delivery of the following operational goal: "Identify and make application for external funding/subsidy" to be measured by "Percentage of capital works funded externally" with a significant increase in externally funded capital works achieved from 39% to 61%.

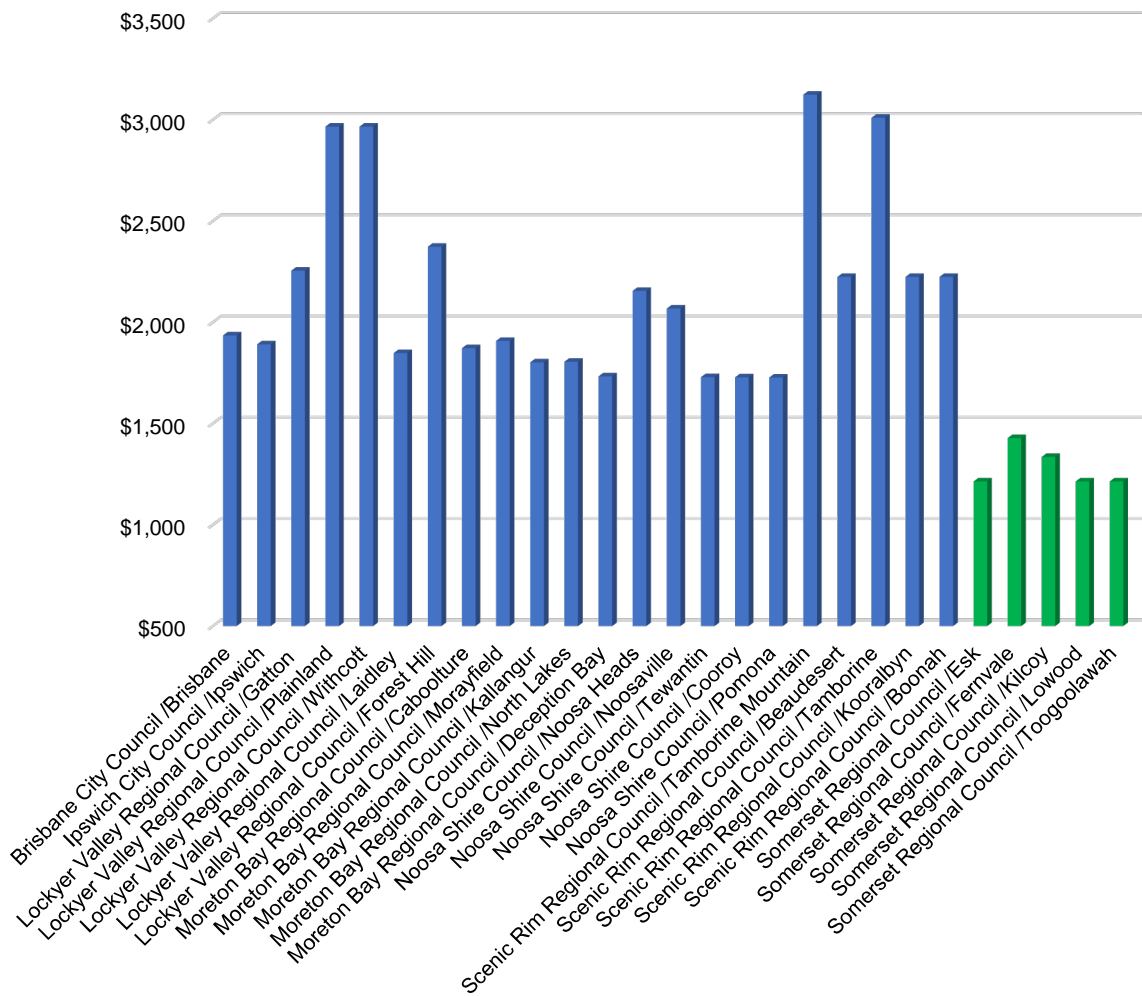


In addition, major new competitive capital grants achieved with FY2024 competitive grant applications included:

- \$5.0M in funding under the Australian Government's competitive Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program (HVSP) to fund a new \$10M inter-highway connecting road between the Brisbane Valley Highway and Forest Hill Fernvale Road along the Muckerts Lane/McCulkins Lane road corridor which will allow traffic between Lowood and Brisbane to bypass Fernvale town centre.
- \$2.1M in funding under the Australian Government's competitive Disaster Ready Fund (DRF) round 2 to fund a \$4.2M heatwave mitigation project through tree planting to support streetscaping in Kilcoy, Lowood and Fernvale. The grant was the fourth largest awarded under that program in Queensland.
- \$5.5M in funding under the Queensland Government's SEQ Community Stimulus Program (competitive component) towards Kilcoy Multipurpose Recreation Facility Upgrade and Toogoolawah Swimming Pool Upgrade. This funding represented around 25% of the entire competitive funding pool available under that program.

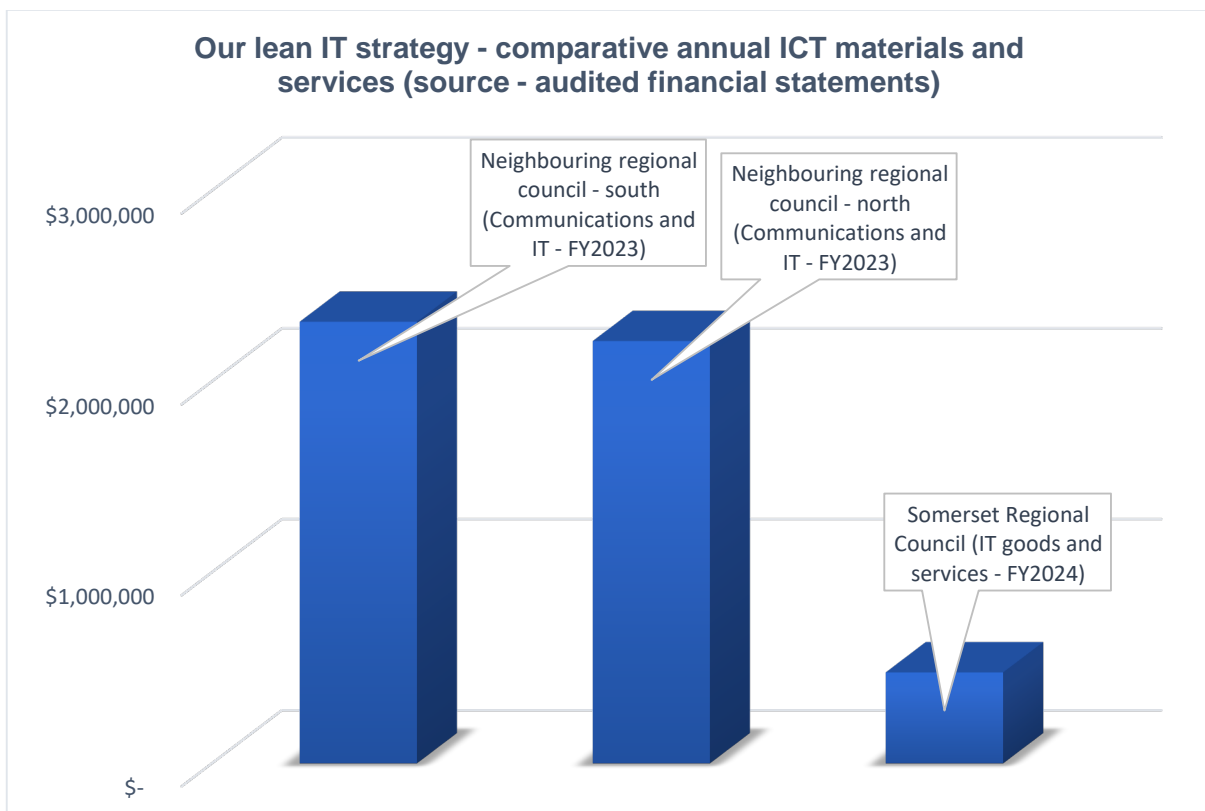
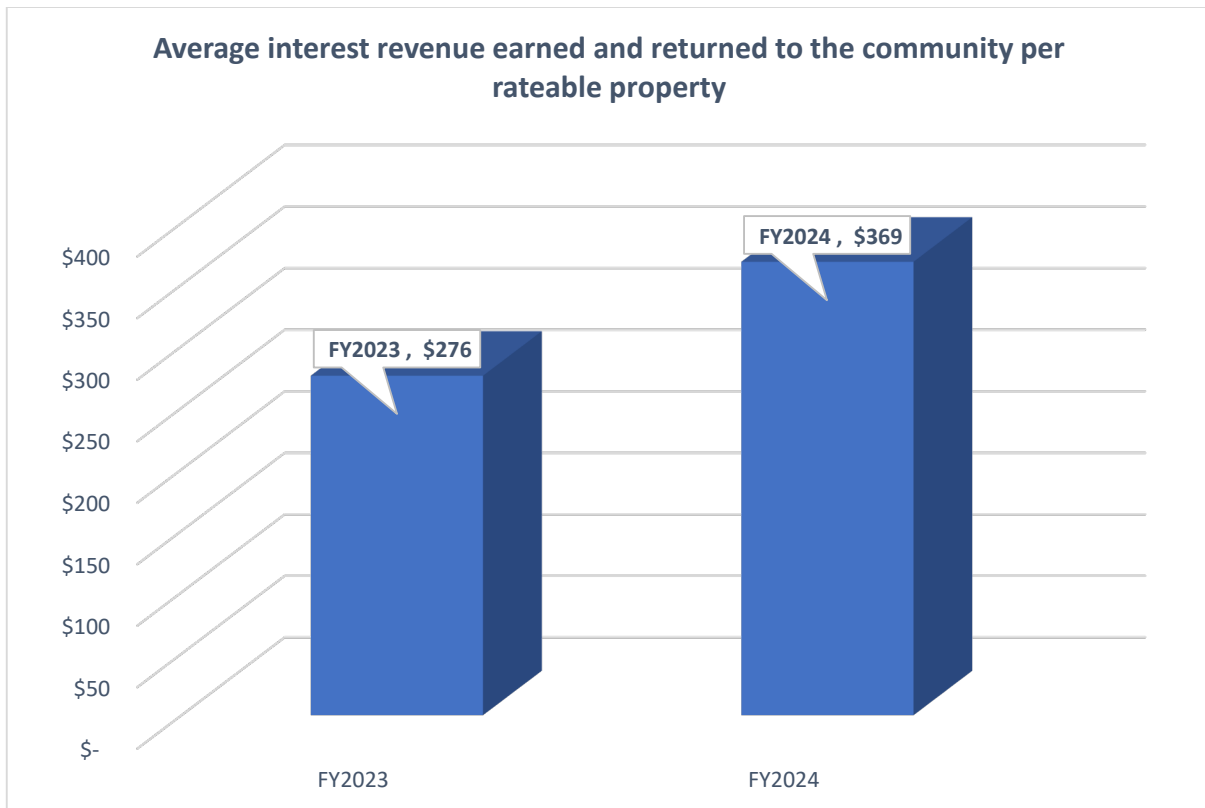
During FY2024, Council's Finance Team was responsible for delivery of the various operational goals (#32 and #33) relating to the adoption of a sustainable budget and ten-year financial plan by 31 July 2023. Budget adoption including setting of FY2024 rates and charges was achieved on 21 June 2023 resulting in residential rates and charges as below.

Net average residential rates and charges FY2024 - SEQ non-water charge  
regional councils (source: DHLGPPW)



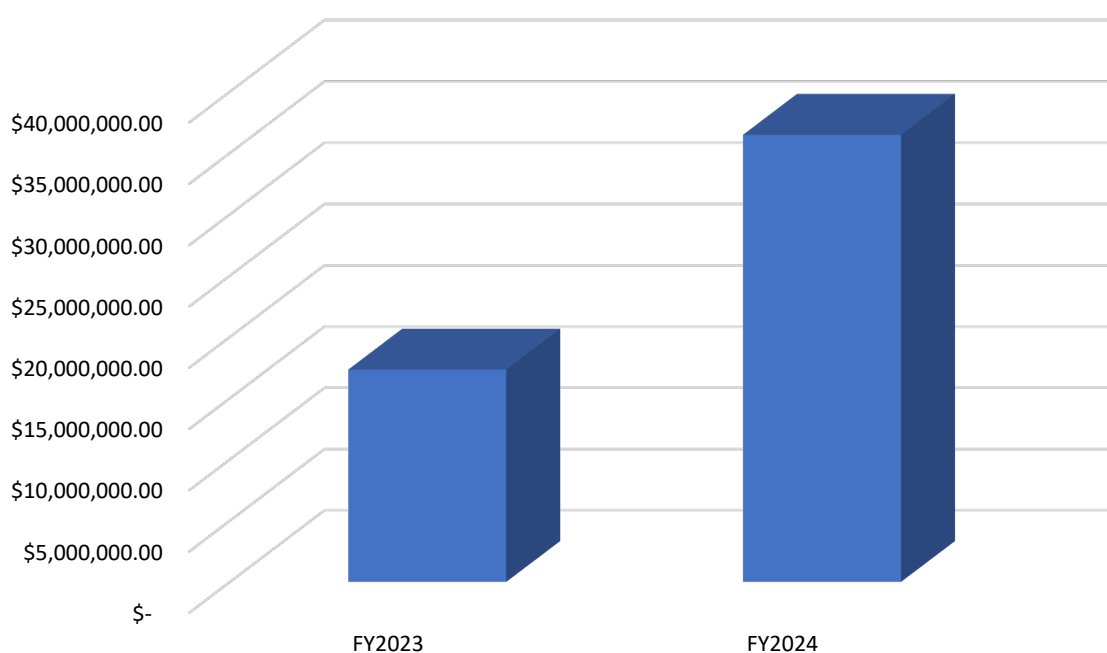
To maintain affordable rates and effective services while maintaining Council's sustainability, Council maintained lower operating costs and grew revenue from sources other than rates. Examples of this included:





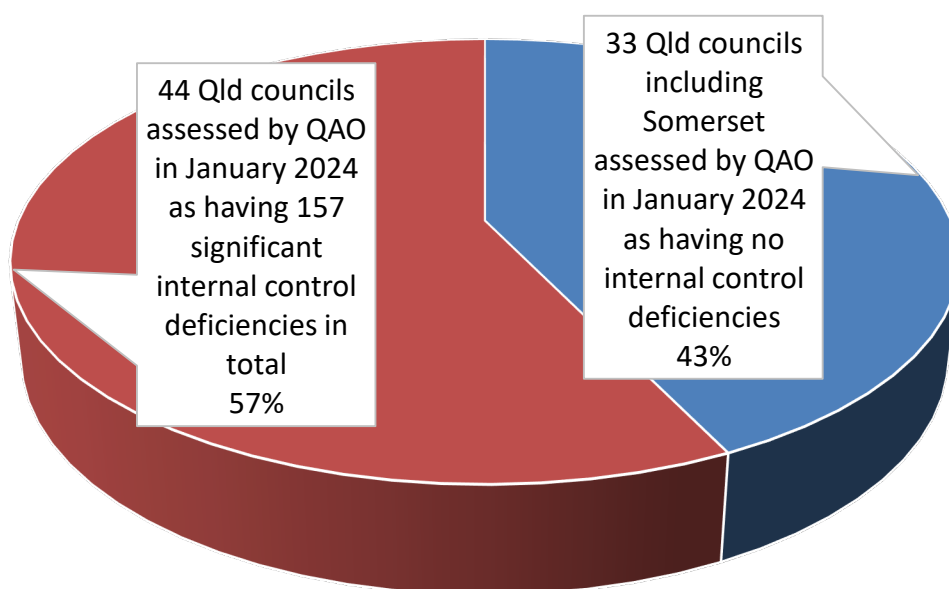
Council kept money circulating in the local economy by employing locally and buying locally. Council's payments to local businesses during FY2024 exceeded Council's entire rates and charges revenue for the year:

### Somerset Regional Council - payments to local suppliers

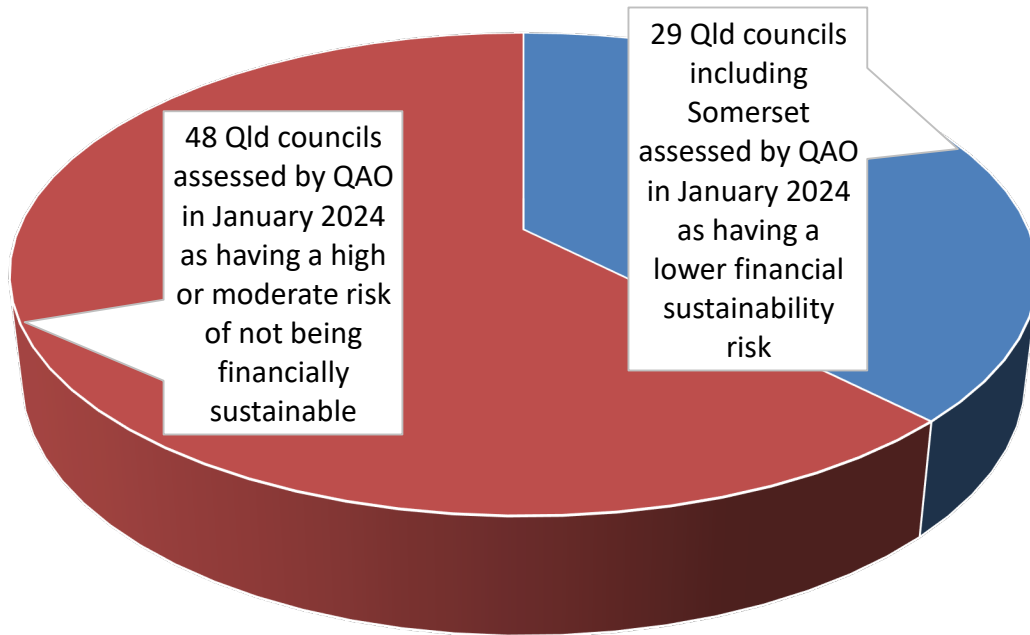


During FY2024, Council's Finance Team was responsible for obtaining an unqualified audit certificate by 31 October 2023 under operational goal #41. This was achieved on 20 October 2023.

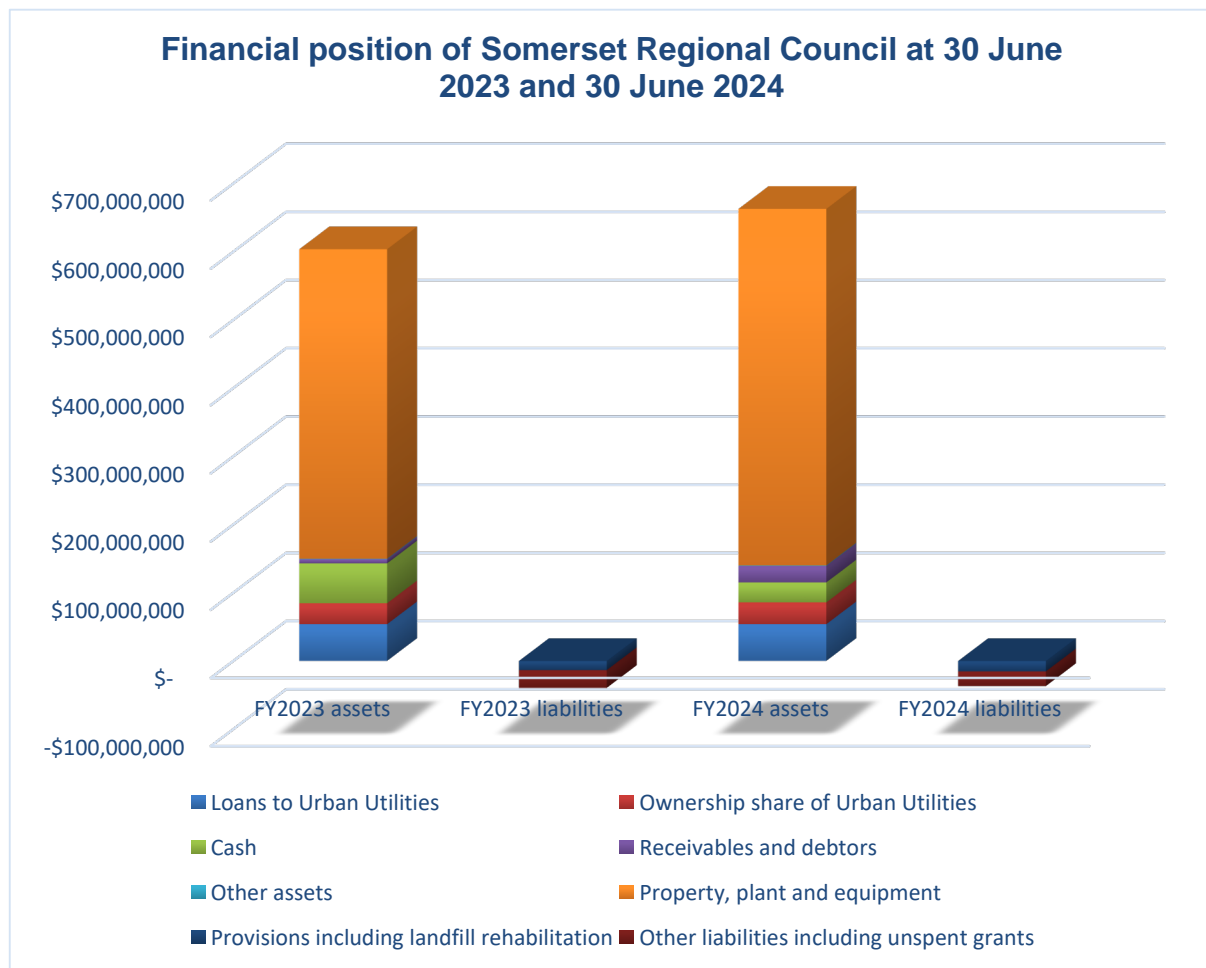
### Queensland Audit Office Local government - Report 8: 2023–24 - report to Parliament - Assessment of the financial governance of councils



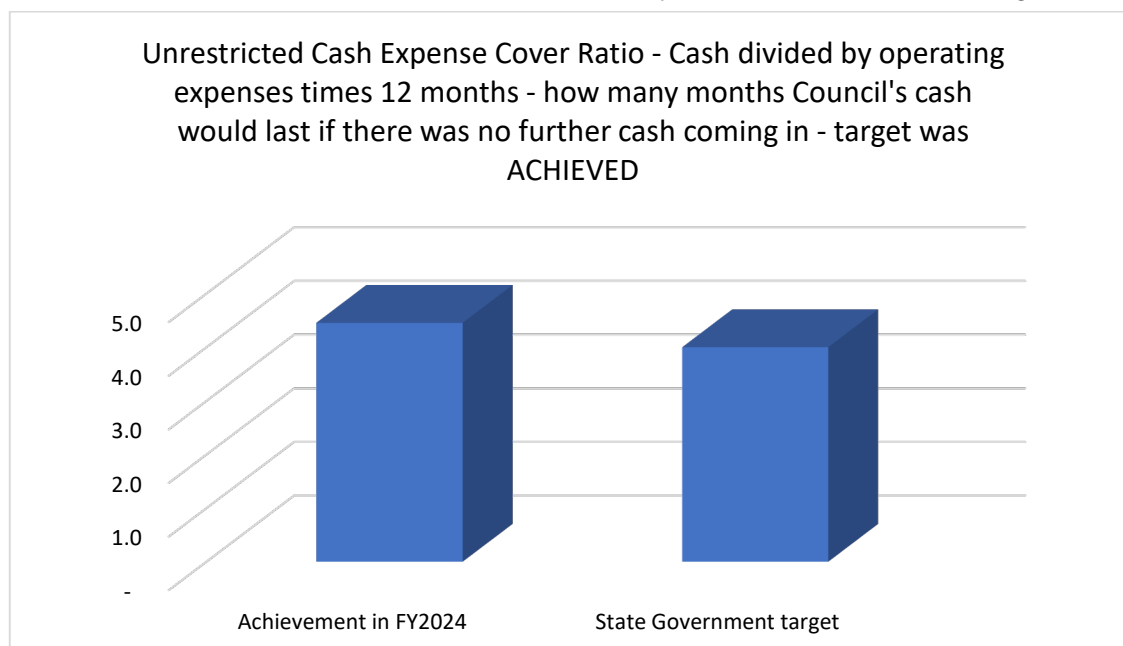
**Queensland Audit Office Local government - Report 8: 2023–24 - report to Parliament - “At 30 June 2023, 48 councils (2021–22: 46 councils) are still at either a moderate or a high risk of not being financially sustainable.”**



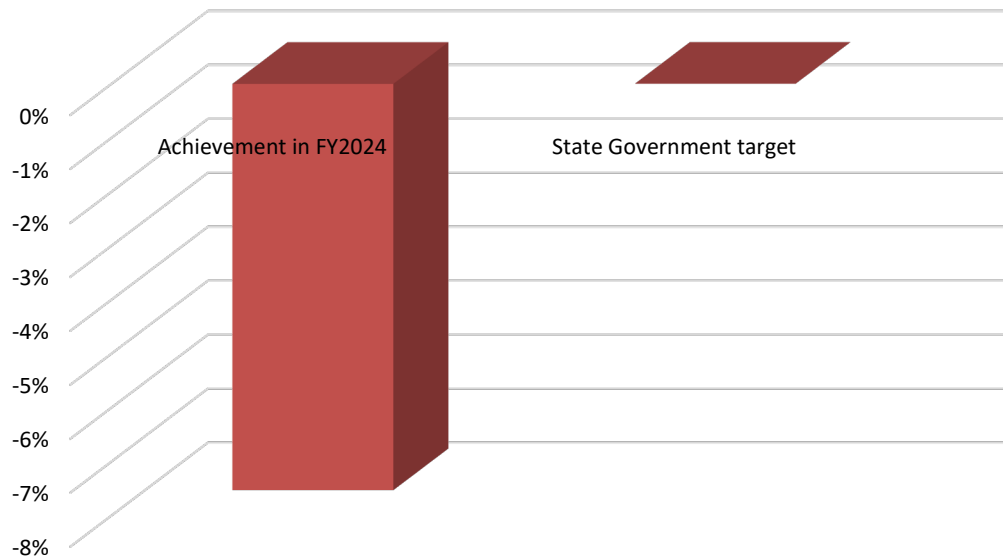
Council grew community assets during FY2024 and remains debt-free:



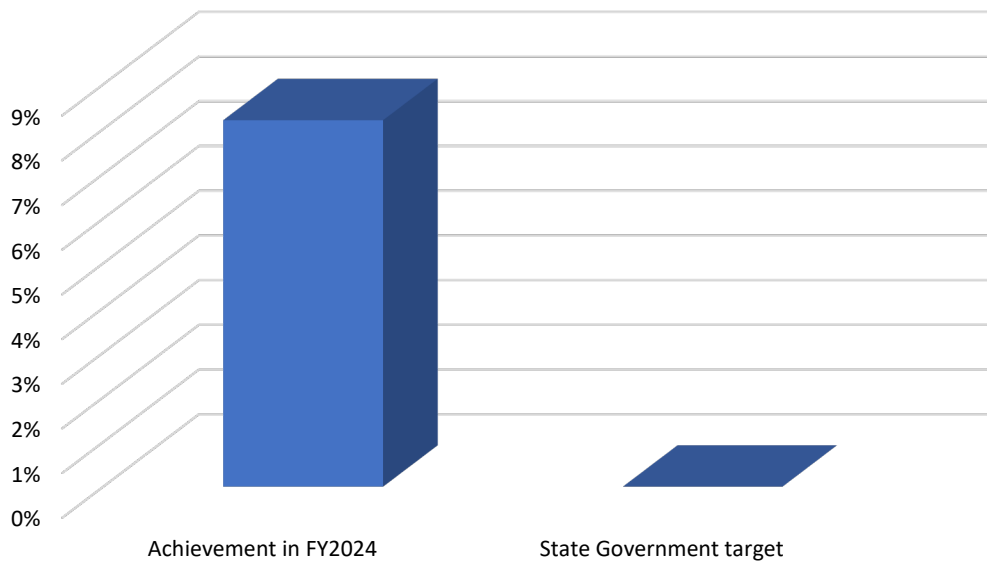
Council's financial performance during FY2024 was measured by its achievement of all but one of the set State Government financial sustainability targets during FY2024. The unachieved target was the operating surplus ratio which was impacted by the non-payment of Commonwealth Financial Assistance Grants to any Queensland council during FY2024:



Operating Surplus Ratio - Operating surplus or deficit divided by operating expenses - how Council was meeting its operating expenses with operating revenue - target was NOT ACHIEVED

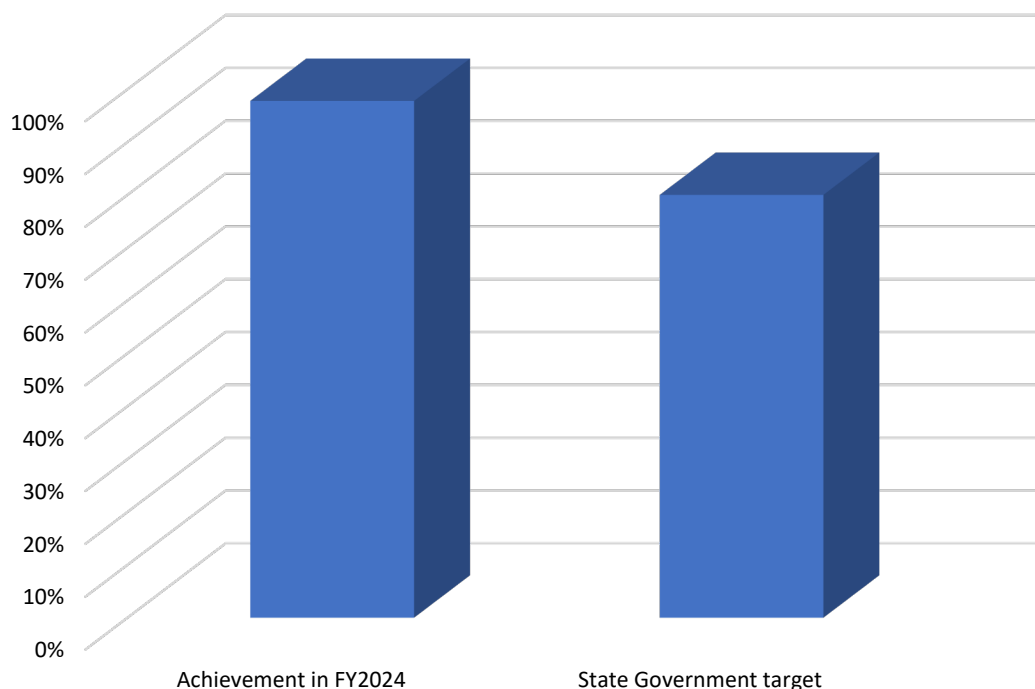


Operating Cash Ratio - Cash generated from operations divided by operating revenue - the extent to which Council was generating cash from each dollar of operating revenue - target was ACHIEVED

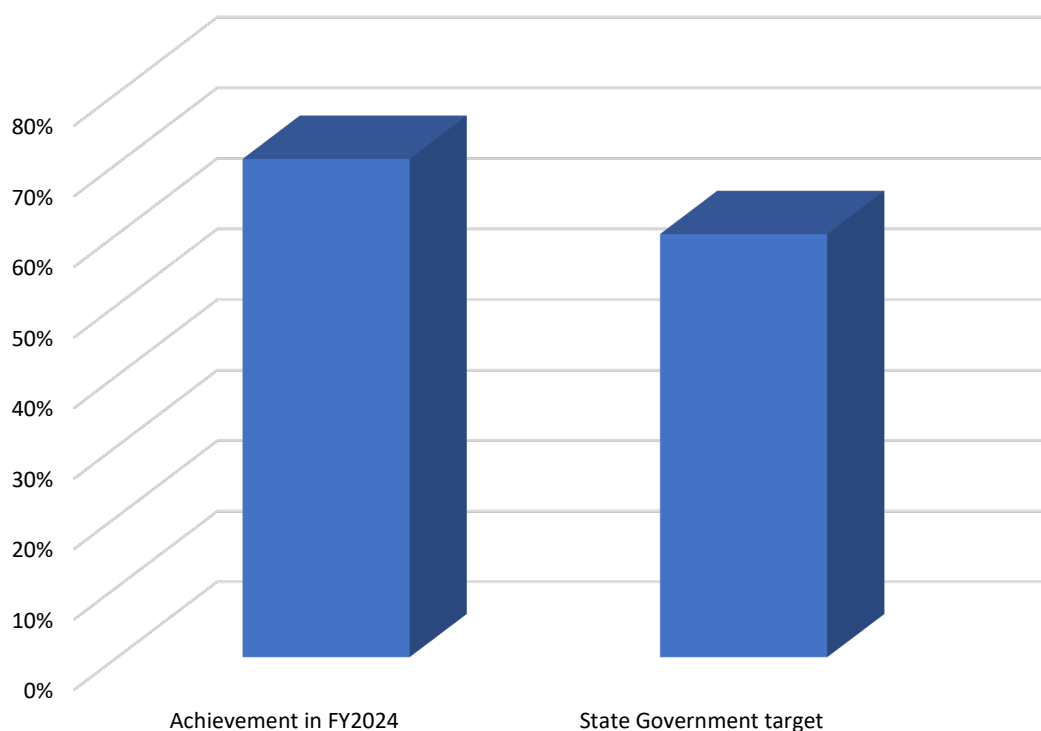




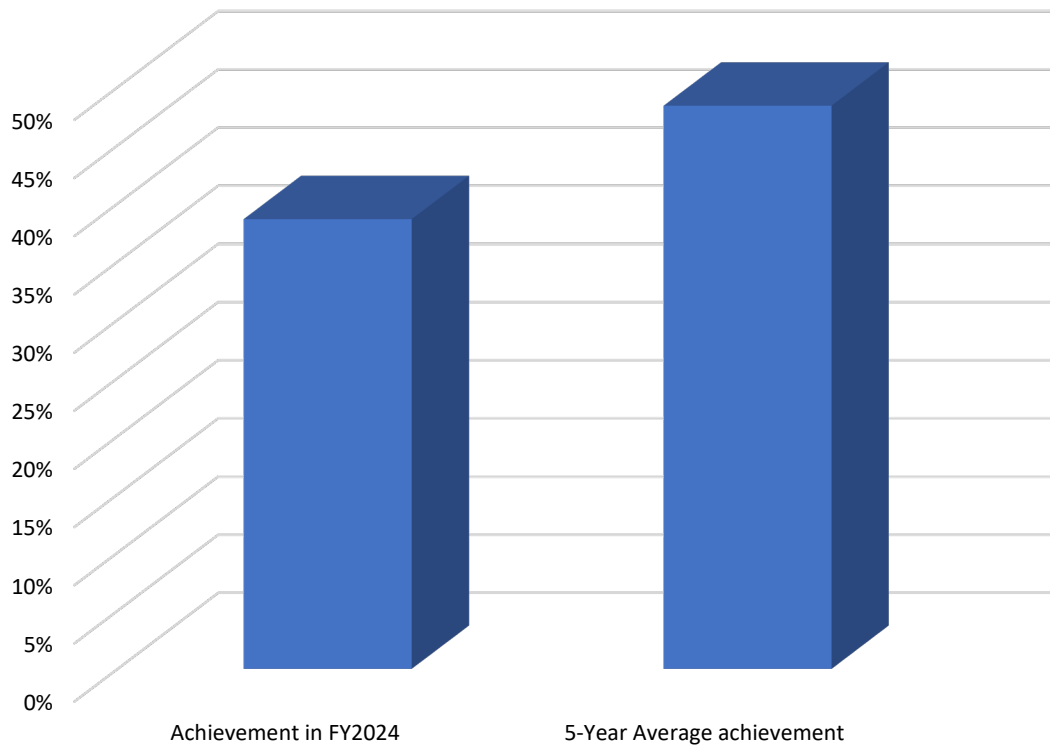
Asset Sustainability Ratio - Infrastructure renewals during the year divided by depreciation expense - the extent to which Council is renewing its assets versus the rate at which they are wearing out - target was ACHIEVED



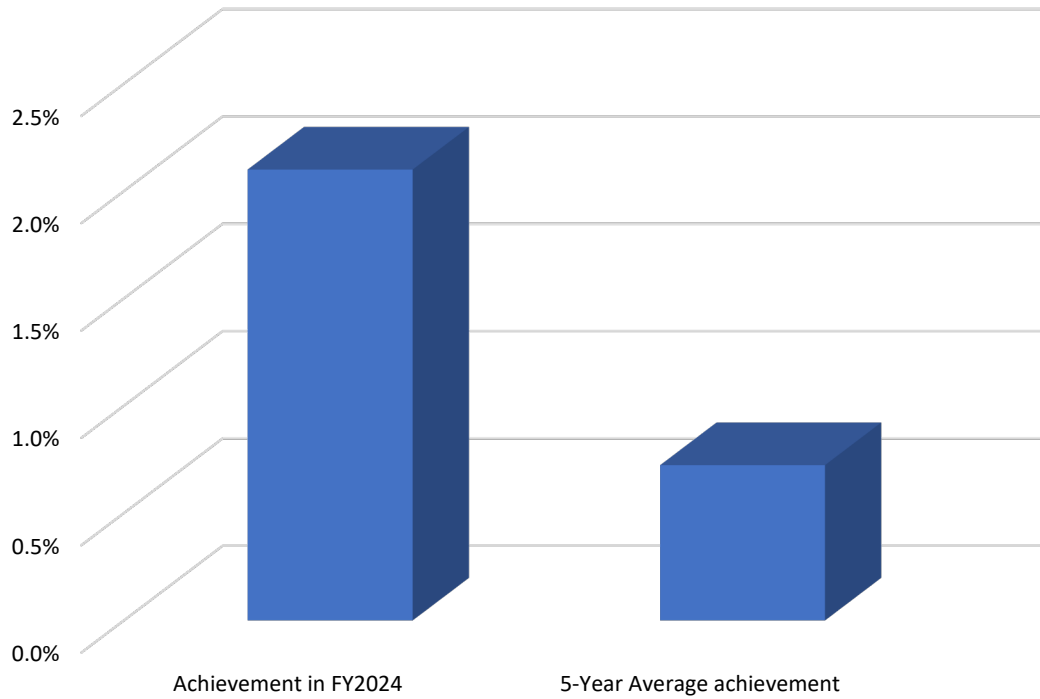
Asset Consumption Ratio - Infrastructure assets at fair value divided by replacement cost - the condition of the community's infrastructure at 30 June 2024 - target was ACHIEVED



Council-Controlled Revenue - Revenue from rates and charges and fees divided by operating revenue - the extent to which the Council is generating its own income - no State Government target was set



Population Growth - Population reported by the Australian Bureau of Statistics at the most recently available 30 June divided by the previous year minus 1 - indicating future potential revenue and expenditure growth - no State Government target was set



# CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

## Information Technology

Council's Information Technology resources consist of a geographically dispersed medium size computer and voice network with multiple branch sites throughout the region, including Esk Administration Office, Kilcoy and Lowood customer service centres, four libraries, works depots, SES depots, Visitor Information Centres, other remote offices and an increasing number of mobile computing devices.

### ***Technology solutions and Council processes***

Ongoing maintenance, changes, upgrades and replacement of computing devices, network infrastructure and associated hardware and software continue in line with Council's budgetary commitments.

The increased availability and implementation of NBN technology upgrades allowed review and enhancement of the electronic document and records management system, resulting in greatly increased accessibility, flexibility and functionality with reduced time and costs.

Upgrades and repairs of telecommunication systems occurred at multiple sites throughout the region, in addition to new CCTV systems installed in Moore to further support Queensland Police.

Renovations to the Esk Administration Office offered the opportunity to review existing systems to improve accessibility and functionality to the workforce and strengthen Council's information systems.

An increase in the frequency, intensity, and variety of cyber security attacks combined with many severe vulnerabilities announced during the year have required increased allocation of resources to this area. Several internal and external cyber security audits have been conducted, with reviews and implementation of the resulting recommendations ongoing. Training is made available for all personnel through workshops to assist in the fight against cybercrime.

### ***eServices and development application tracking system***

Council's eServices portal ([eservices.somerset.qld.gov.au](https://eservices.somerset.qld.gov.au)) continues to provide 24/7 information via our website, including development application details, property information including zoning and other planning overlays, mapping, cemetery register enquiries and access to flood camera images. The portal now also includes an Animal Allowance Calculator in conjunction with the Local Law No. 2 (Animal Management) 2011 and Subordinate Local Law No. 2 (Animal Management) 2011. eServices received over 460,000 page views during the financial year with an increase of 24 percent from the previous year.

### ***Council website and Have Your Say***

The primary corporate website ([somerset.qld.gov.au](https://somerset.qld.gov.au)) received over 500,000 page views during the financial year. Council departments have developed new sections and redesigned others for a more user-friendly and efficient experience.

The Have Your Say section continues to provide online community engagement with 35 public surveys completed since inception, 5 within the last financial year. The website increases awareness of Council services with the introduction of the Expressions of Interest section, redesign of the Public Notices section, as well as the Events section with over 20,000 page views during the financial year.

## Records Management

Council's correspondence is processed by the Records Department and entered into MagiQ, the Electronic Document and Records Management System. Statistics for the past year are outlined below.

Documents Registered	Date Range	Date Range	Date Range	Date Range	Date Range
	2023-2024	2022 - 2023	2021 - 2022	2020 - 2021	2019 - 2020
<b>Total Documents Registered</b>	<b>112,129</b>	<b>98,016</b>	<b>102,820</b>	<b>97,971</b>	<b>83,724</b>
Incoming Documents	25,377	40,814	36,331	32,024	27,537
Internal Documents	4,552	10,666	5,970	5,226	5,759
Outgoing Documents	15,308	28,420	23,143	24,774	22,177
Actioned Documents	9,062	11,142	12,107	10,813	9,015
Customer Requests	5,107	6,608	4,954	4,550	5,267
Councillor Requests	142	366	273	167	86

**Note:** The total documents registered includes document types not listed in the table (e.g. confidential documents, artworks, decision sheets).

During this period, Council received eight applications seeking access to Council's corporate memory under the *Right to Information Act 2009*.

<b><i>Right to Information Applications for Financial Year</i></b>					
	Date Range	Date Range	Date Range	Date Range	Date Range
	2023-2024	2022 - 2023	2021 - 2022	2020 - 2021	2019-2020
<b>Number of Applications</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>8</b>

The response time recorded for tasks sent to officers via Council's electronic document management system are indicated below.

Completed Response Times 2023 - 2024	
0 – 7 days	72.50
8 – 14 days	10.35
15 – 21 days	5.25
22 – 28 days	2.85
29 – 60 days	4.65
61 – 90 days	1.55
91 – 180 days	1.50
180+ days	1.35
TOTAL	100.00%

## Community Development

### ***Active advocacy for improved health services***

Advocacy activities were carried out to improve health services in the region, using a variety of means. The Community Development Coordinator sits on the following committees:

- West Moreton Health Consumer and Community Advisory Council
- Standby Darling Downs West Moreton Advisory Group
- Brisbane North Primary Health Network Social Prescribing Steering Committee
- West Moreton Obesity Advisory Group
- Metro North Health Telehealth Group

Membership provides an opportunity for Somerset residents to have a voice to advocate for their needs. In addition to these opportunities, ad hoc discussions are held with allied health professionals, who are interested in outreaching to the region, to increase participation.

### ***Community Wellbeing Hubs***

The Esk Community Wellness hub continues to attract several health and support services on a regular basis. These include a visiting optometrist and audiologist, aged care service provider, mental health coach and a disability employment service. A Memorandum of Understanding also exists between Council and ALARA Queensland for use of the grounds for a community carwash on Monday mornings. This helps their National Disability Insurance Scheme clients connect positively with community members and is a very popular service.

The Kilcoy Community Wellness Hub continues to grow and now includes Headspace and Stride in addition to two private counsellors, helping to support resident's mental health. Unfortunately, the speech pathology service withdrew during the year, but plans are underway for a paediatric occupational therapy and physiotherapy service to commence early in the 20225FY. The "Hub @ the Hub" commenced in August and has included a diverse range of services. The services collocate on the last Wednesday of each month and provide a one stop shop. Due to staff changes and reduced hours the hub has decreased in size, but services supporting seniors and the financially disadvantaged continue to attend.

### ***Interagency networks and other groups***

Council coordinates two regional interagency networks and these are vital in encouraging support services to outreach into the region. One covers the West Moreton side of the region, taking in the Brisbane Valley and the other Metro North, covering Kilcoy. Most services outreach from either Ipswich or Caboolture and it is important that all services funded to cover the Somerset region do so.

Council has been a strong advocate for the needs of older persons, with most enquiries to the Community Development Coordinator being for support to stay at home or for transport to hospital or medical appointments. Opportunities to address these inadequacies have remained a high priority. The Community Development Coordinator raises transport concerns as well as other issues impacting residents to the West Moreton Older Person's Collaborative and the West Moreton Health Consumer and Community Council.

### ***Events and Activities***

Events provide an opportunity for services to interact with residents in a soft entry approach. This year Council hosted several community events. Once again, the Teddy Bears' Picnic was held in Esk in the September school holidays and the Mad Hatter's Tea Party was held at Lowood in the April school break. Both annual events focus on connecting families with young children to services, during a fun and welcoming activity. The events are supplemented with a free sausage sizzle, children's disco, petting zoo or similar to encourage a good attendance.

Other events provided by Council included the Somerset Wellbeing Festival at Kilcoy and the Regional Seniors' Event in Esk. Council also supported Toogoolawah State School's NAIDOC Day by providing a bus to transport students from Linville and Harlin State Schools to the event.



Mad Hatter's Tea Party, Lowood



Toogoolawah State School NAIDOC Day





Somerset Regional Seniors Event – Somerset Civic Centre

### ***Partnerships***

Council partnered with the Ipswich Community Youth Service to hold the Lowood Youthfest during Youth Week in April 2024. The event was funded through the Department of Health and focused on building the resilience of youth in the region. It featured a concert, fun activities, health and wellbeing service stalls and mini workshops. All the emergency services were in attendance, giving the young people of Lowood an opportunity to connect with their community and develop a deeper understanding of the services and supports that are available to them.

Council once again partnered with members from the Ipswich Police District and Child Safety in the Ipswich and West Moreton Child Protection Week committee and worked with the other members to provide activities in Child Protection Week. Lead volunteer, Judyann Roberts who organises the Esk Intergenerational Playgroup, which is supported by Council, was awarded the Troy Salton Memorial Award by the independent judging panel, for her tireless work in making this service an outstanding success.

### ***Somerset Region Support Service***

Council's Community Development Coordinator role is funded by the Queensland Government. The funding arrangements were renewed in October 2023 for a further five years. Reporting requirements have changed, and reporting must account for both opening hours and output in three areas, linking people with formal and informal support, creating social connections and inclusion and integrate local community action.

Requests for information and supports continued to be predominately from older persons around transport and staying safe in their homes, but the number of people needing financial support increased from various cohorts. Social connection included supporting women's groups, creating a new craft group in Toogoolawah, Movement to Music exercises for seniors, supporting playgroups. Integrating local community action included working with Kilcoy community members to investigate alternative education opportunities for disengaged students.



The service also received \$10,000 in emergency relief funding from the department to assist residents experiencing financial hardship. Initially a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between Council and the Anglican Church of Esk and Toogoolawah to assist in delivering this relief, but due to some logistical challenges with volunteers the MOU was cancelled. Informal arrangements with place-based services now exist, to facilitate the equitable distribution of food and other items across the region. In response to the growing homelessness a support card was developed to help those in need of assistance to have information readily available.

### ***Somerset Social Plan***

The Somerset Social Plan was adopted by Council in July. It was produced after extensive consultation with the community and established eight themes to help direct Council over the short, medium and longer term. It will also provide guidance to the community development role with regards to integrating local community action and social inclusion. To progress these actions, Council approved the establishment of the Somerset Social Plan Advisory Committee which will include service providers active in Somerset, as well as two community members.

## **Community Recovery and Resilience**

Community recovery and resilience building, funded through the Queensland Government Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements, continued throughout the financial year. Council officers were able to utilise funding which remained in place until 30 June, to develop approved projects to build the capacity of the community to prepare for and recover from disasters.

One of the major projects, which proceeded through a partnership with the Queenslanders with Disability Network, was the Building Disaster Inclusive Resilient Communities project to help people living with a disability prepare their own person centred emergency plans. Following on from these forums, a disaster preparedness video was produced by some of the participants. This video will be used by Council on its Disaster Dashboard to encourage all residents to ensure they are prepared ahead of the storm and bushfire season.

Other projects included the distribution of new resident welcome kits containing disaster preparedness information in waterproof wallets, tech savvy workshops for seniors, resilient gardening information sessions at the libraries and attendance at various events and activities to help build community connectedness and to share information.

## **Youth Engagement**

### ***Youth engagement and leadership***

The annual Somerset Youth Leaders' Camp was held at the Gold Coast Recreation Centre from 15 to 17 January 2024. Council provided the opportunity free of charge, inclusive of transport, activities, catering and accommodation, to a record 32 youth leaders from the Somerset region. The invited youth represented the three secondary schools in the Somerset region – Kilcoy State High School (SHS), Lowood LSHS and Toogoolawah TSHS – and would act as student leaders at their respective schools throughout 2024.

The Somerset Youth Leaders' Camp represents an opportunity for young leaders from across the region to share experiences, collaborate and identify their goals as leaders for the year ahead. The camp aims to support the participants as representatives for youth across Somerset and provides a foundation in relationship building between the schools' leaders and between the schools and Council. Participants benefit from activities that support leadership skill development, team building and communication skills, as well as enjoying a variety of

pursuits that participants may not have experienced previously. Following the camp, Council has continued to consult and collaborate with student leaders at their schools.

### **School Holiday Programs**

The Somerset School Holiday Program aims to deliver information and activities to children, youth and families in the Somerset region for the school holiday periods. To promote all known activities on offer to the community, information is sourced for both Council and external organisations' activities and then distributed through various platforms including the School Holiday Program calendar on Council's website, media releases, physical banners, Council's LED screens, newsletters and poster display.

Council developed a wide range of activities for children, youth and families in Somerset during the school holiday periods from July 2023 to June 2024. Activities were organised by various departments and have a range of target audiences; those that were developed and targeted specifically for youth are listed in Table 1. In total, youth targeted events attracted approximately 1,209 attendees during the school holiday periods identified up from 461 the previous year.

Table 1 – Council School Holiday Program activities: events targeted at youth  
(Attendance numbers are broken down to identify participants (P) and spectators and guardians (SG) at events.)

School Holiday Program (SHP)	Council events (youth targeted)	Attendance (Participants=P Spectators/Guardians=SG)
Winter SHP (July 2023)	Somerset Skateboarding and Scooter Championship - Fernvale	35 = (30P 5SG)
Spring SHP (September 2023)	Sport and Movie Magic Kilcoy Sport and Movie Magic Fernvale	120 = (100P and 20SG) 150 = (100P and 50SG)
Summer SHP (December 2023)	Roller Disco - Esk	250 = (200P and 50SG)
Autumn SHP/Youth Week (April 2024)	Youth Movie Matinee – Toogoolawah Sports and Movie Magic Kilcoy Roller Disco Esk	87P 102 = (80P 22SG) 250 = (200P and 50SG)
Winter SHP (June 2024)	Skateboard Roadshow Rumble Esk Sport and Movie Magic Fernvale	65 = (50P 15SG) 150 = (100P 50SG)

### **School Support**

School support is offered on an ongoing basis to the three high schools in the region. This support aims to establish positive relationships between Council and the schools, provide additional opportunities for Council to collaborate and consult with youth and provide opportunities for Council to establish advocacy needs. This support includes Careers expo, wellbeing expo support, school donation points, cash donations and general assistance in response to arising requests, opportunities and news.

School donation points is a joint initiative between Council and the three high schools, which is supported by Council's Wellness Committee and Somerset Libraries. The initiative was successful in providing donations to students in the 2023-2024 year. The individualised donation boxes at Esk, Kilcoy and Lowood Libraries all received significant donations from the

community throughout the year and the contents were delivered to their respective schools where appropriate.

In addition to the school donation points, Council's Wellness Committee has committed to providing cash donations to the schools on a biannual basis with funds distributed to the three schools on a roster or emergency basis. Cash donations to Somerset high schools began in July 2022 and the first recipient was Lowood SHS. This was followed by a donation to Kilcoy SHS in February 2023 and Toogoolawah SHS in December 2023. These contributions have been greatly appreciated by each school to date. The Wellness committee will now be seeking another community group/initiative to donate to in the future as all the local High Schools have received a donation.



Image: Wellness Committee Donation given to Toogoolawah State High School

### ***Emerging Elders Camp***

The annual Emerging Elders Camp took place where first nations students from the Somerset Region attended the Stanley River Environmental Education Camp for three days. Council is an annual supporter of this program covering the cost of transport for Lowood, Toogoolawah and Kilcoy SHS students. This Camp focuses on how Jinibara Elders of the past mentored their communities and how this knowledge can be applied to a student leader in a school setting. Students develop an appreciation for ancient, historical and contemporary Jinibara culture whilst undertaking a canoe or hiking journey, investigating Jinibara tools and technologies, listening to stories, playing tribal games and learning language.

### ***Partnerships***

Council partnered with members from West Moreton Health, Department of Education, Ipswich Community Youth Service (ICYS), Headspace, Ipswich City Council and various other organisations as a part of the "Talkin' It Up" Regional Youth Mental Health Forum steering committee for the annual 2023 and 2024 events. The Talkin It Up event promotes the Wheel of Wellbeing and mental health awareness amongst youth and their peers. Council worked with members of the committee throughout 2023 and 2024 to prepare for the delivery of these events. The 2023 event took place on 14 July 2023 and the 2024 event is scheduled for 2 August 2024.

The Youth Movie Matinee event was created by Noosa Film Festival and funded by the Queensland Government. Ticket entry, popcorn and feature film paid for by Somerset Regional Council. The event included four short videos from Kilcoy SHS, Toogoolawah SHS, Lowood SS and a combined community short film. The activity also included a showing of the feature film "Ghost Busters Frozen Empire".

### ***Youth Engagement Strategy***

The Somerset Youth Engagement Strategy was scheduled for review in 2023. This review was flagged to include youth consultation to ensure a more comprehensive and informed review. Youth consultation, including hard copy surveys and face to face discussions, were undertaken by Council in Term 2, 2023.

A consultant was appointed by Council to assist in drafting the Strategy. The Youth Engagement Strategy is due to be completed by November 2024.

### ***Education and employment***

Council continues to support youth by offering traineeships and apprenticeships and attending school career expo events. Networking and connection between employment services and Interagency meetings and promotion of opportunities online and via email.

### ***Support for young people, parents and carers***

Connection between Somerset schools and available support services were promoted through the Interagency meetings and support at various school-based events. Notices that assist young people, parents and carers were regularly sent to school support staff, school newsletters and included on online platforms. In addition, Council held meetings with the youth leaders at each high school to discuss the Youth Engagement Strategy and discussed any issues and concerns they have within the youth in the Somerset Region. Council also developed a Youth Emergency Card which is a foldable card listing all youth support services within the Somerset Region and distributed them to all three high schools.

## **Sport and Recreation**

The 2023-2024 financial year saw Somerset Regional Council implement a range of programs, projects and events aimed at providing Somerset residents with enhanced opportunities to be physically active. Council continues to search for new initiatives to implement within the community and to improve existing services.

### ***Indoor Sports Facilities Operations***

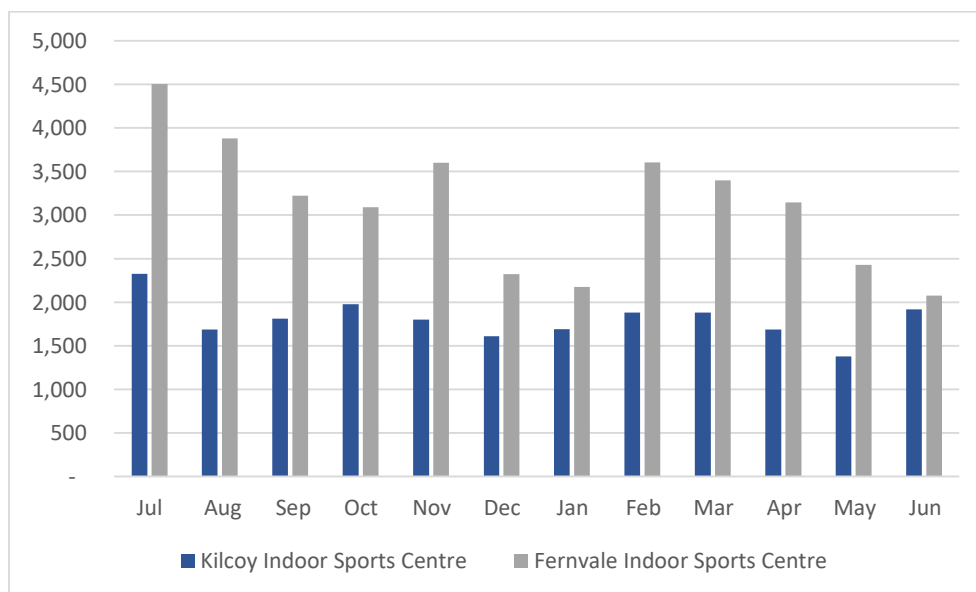
The Fernvale Indoor Sports Centre (FISC), also known as PCYC Fernvale, experienced a significant increase in annual patronage for the 2023-2024 financial year. The facility manager, PCYC Queensland, set membership and attendance records throughout the year and increased patronage of the facility over the year with a high of 4,504 facility visits in July. Membership at the facility decreased, with 931 members recorded as of June 2024. A record attendance for the year was set at 38,109.

PCYC continued to deliver a range of community-based programs at the FISC including the 'Braking the Cycle' program, 'Ruby' program, 'Team Up' program, 'Elevate' program, 'Youth Drop In', 'Boxing After Dark', 'Basketball After Dark', Gymnastics, 'Playtime' and 'Little n Active' programs. Additionally, PCYC ran programs with local schools both onsite at FISC and at school locations.

The Kilcoy Indoor Sports Centre (KISC) saw a decrease in annual patronage in 2023-2024 with a total of 21,653 visits. This figure is higher than the historical average annual patronage

at the facility, which is 19,033 visits per year. Membership at the facility decreased during the 2023-2024 year and finished at total of 82 in June 2023.

The KISC continues to be well utilised by the community, including the Kilcoy Gymnastics Club, Kilcoy Army Cadets, Playgroup and Save the Children who base their regular activities at the facility. The facility manager, Somerset Health and Fitness, continues to partner with health service providers, as well as providing sport and recreation opportunities to students, people with disabilities and the culturally and linguistically diverse community. Collaborative programs, including 'Healthy Knees and Hips' and 'Return to Work', continued in 2023-2024, and the 'All Abilities' program has continued to grow.



Graph: Indoor Sports Centre Monthly Attendances for 2023-2024

### ***Aquatic Facility Operations***

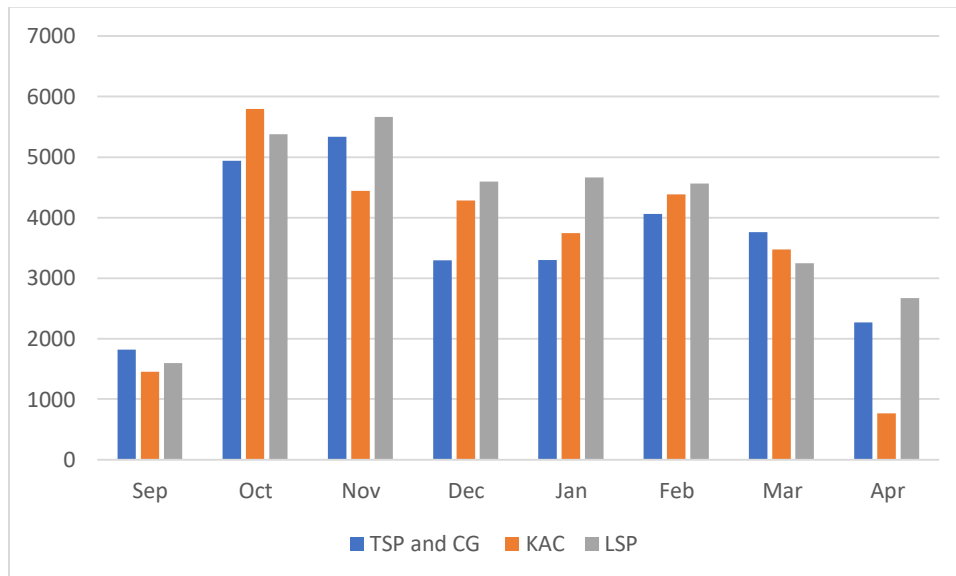
The 2023-2024 pool season saw the Kilcoy Aquatic Centre (KAC), Lowood Swimming Pool (LSP) and Toogoolawah Swimming Pool (TSP) open on Saturday, 16 September 2023. The KAC and TSP closed on Sunday 14 April, whilst the LSP season was extended to Sunday 28 April as part of a trial season extension.

Somerset Health and Fitness is the facility manager for the Toogoolawah Swimming Pool and Community Gym (TSP and CG). The combined facility continued to set monthly attendance records throughout the year and set an annual attendance record for the year with a total attendance of 28,780.

The KAC and LSP, managed by Just Sports n Fitness, saw positive attendances throughout the year. Both facilities had record-breaking monthly attendances throughout the year, with LSP setting an annual attendance record and KAC achieving its second-best annual attendance on record. The KAC and LSP saw total attendances of 28,352 and 32,391 respectively.

Based upon the success of the 2023-2024 LSP season extension and following community feedback, Council resolved a further trial extension to the 2024-2025 LSP season of four weeks (from 31 August 2024 to 13 September 2024 and 19 April 2025 to 3 May 2025) to

confirm community demand for an increased operating season. In addition, Council resolved an extension of hours at the TSP by an additional three hours per week on weekends.



Graph: Aquatic Facility Monthly Attendances for 2023-2024

### ***Promotion of Sport and Recreation***

Sport and recreation activities were provided for children, youth and families throughout 2023-2024. Council provided activities at events including Minden and Esk State Schools' Under Eight days, Teddy Bears Picnic, Youth Fest, KidsQuest and the Somerset Youth Leadership Camp. Other events included providing and supporting school holiday activities such as 'Sport and Movie Magic', 'Somerset Skateboard Championships', 'Somerset Scooter Championships', 'Roller Disco' and 'Pool Movie Nights'.

Australia Day Pool Parties were conducted at each aquatic facility in 2024 with Council providing free entry, entertainment and a barbeque hosted by a local not-for-profit group. KAC and TSP hosted over 200 patrons each and LSP hosted over 300 patrons.

Two Club Workshop Dinners were hosted in 2023-2024. The "Building Better Clubs" workshop was held at the Lowood Bowls Club on 5 September 2023 and saw 21 Somerset club members attend. The "Healthy Clubs" workshop was held at the Toogoolawah Golf Club on 14 May 2024 and hosted 30 Somerset club members. The workshop dinners included guest speakers and provided clubs with an opportunity to network and discuss common club issues and possible solutions.

Council received \$9,520 in funding to run a First Nations skateboarding program under Round 2 of the Queensland Government First Nations Sport and Recreation Program. The program partnered with Indigenous skateboarding team, Songline Skateboarding, and Lowood State High School to deliver a ten-week program to ten First Nations students at the school.

The 123<sup>rd</sup> Queensland Cross Country Championships were held at the Toogoolawah Golf Club on 11 May 2024. This is the third time the event was delivered in a partnership between Queensland Athletics, the Toogoolawah Golf Club and Somerset Regional Council. The event saw over 750 participants.

A Queensland Rugby League Hostplus Cup match was held on 15 July 2023 at the Hopetoun Sport Fields, hosted by the Kilcoy District Football Club (a.k.a Kilcoy Yowies). The successful event saw over 600 spectators attend and was sponsored by Council. Council provided professional line marking, an elevated work platform for livestreaming the event and portable toilets.

In December 2023, Council resolved to support the delivery of the Rogue Escape event annually for three years. The event sees adventure athletes competing over a weekend in kayaking, trekking, mountain biking and navigating. The event will be held at Lake Wivenhoe in October annually from 2024-2026 and Council will provide support via funding and promotion.

In May 2024, Council resolved to support the delivery of the 2024 Somerset Multi-Sport Event organised by Atlas Events. Council will provide funding, promotion and other assistance to support the event.

### ***Somerset Rail Trail Classic 2023***

The Somerset Rail Trail Fun Run or Ride underwent a name change in 2023 and the 20<sup>th</sup> annual event was held on Sunday, 23 July titled the Somerset Rail Trail Classic. The event this year included a run or walk of eight kilometres and three kilometres between Lowood and Fernvale and a ride of 44 kilometres from Esk to Fernvale.

The event saw an increase in registrations from the previous year, up to 952 – which is the second highest recorded registrations for this event. The event raised \$2,450 for the nominated community group beneficiary, Mercy Community Lowood.

### ***Somerset and Somerset Primary Sports Cup***

The sixth annual Somerset Sports Cup was held on 25 August 2023 at Toogoolawah State High School (SHS). This was the second day of this event for 2023 and also included the 'Teachers vs Police' exhibition touch football match. The first day of the seventh annual Somerset Sports Cup (2024) was held on 30 May 2024. Council provided free transport for all schools to attend the events, as well as first aid, trophies and coordination services.

Over 200 students from Kilcoy SHS, Lowood SHS and Toogoolawah SHS competed in each carnival. The format included junior (ages 12-14) and senior (ages 15-17) competitions in soccer, touch football, netball and volleyball. Kilcoy SHS retained the overall trophy for the 2023 Somerset Sports Cup.

The Somerset Primary Sports Cup was held on 15 September 2023 at the Toogoolawah SHS. The event saw approximately 100 students from the Esk, Harlin, Linville and Toogoolawah State Schools participate in a multi-sport round robin carnival. Students in years five and six participated in a range of sports, and Esk and Toogoolawah State Schools shared the overall trophy. Council supported the event through the provision of free transport, trophies and assisting with coordination.

### ***Sport and Recreation Projects***

The 2023-2024 year saw Council undertake significant construction and planning projects to improve community sporting facilities, including:

- Completion of Stage 2 works of the Lowood Swimming Pool refurbishment. Stage 2 works included the construction of a new carparking facility, landscaping and fencing works. The works were undertaken with funding from the Queensland Government South East Queensland Community Stimulus Program.

- Submission of a Development Application for the redevelopment of the Kilcoy Indoor Sports Centre. The redevelopment includes the provision of increased floor space for gym, gymnastics and indoor sports, as well as increased carparking capacity, 24-hour gym facilities, new community multi-purpose space, and improved connectivity to the Kilcoy Aquatic Centre and Hopetoun Sports Fields.
- Completion of the Toogoolawah Swimming Pool Analysis Report for Pool Upgrade and resulting Stage 1 Specifications prepared for future development.
- Completion of restoration works to the Lowood Recreational Complex (LRC) with the support of the Queensland Government through the Community and Recreational Assets Recovery and Resilience Program (CRARRP). Works included refurbishments to the drainage gully of the facility, gully bank stabilisation works, tree removal and pedestrian bridge assessments. Additionally, the Brisbane Valley Soccer Club received \$100,000 through CRARRP and completed flood mitigation and drainage works, as well as purchasing new goal posts and playing equipment, at the LRC facility.
- Notification of two successful applications under the Queensland Government Minor Infrastructure and Inclusive Facilities Fund, with funding of \$250,000 approved for the Fernvale Sports Park irrigation and field refurbishment project and a further \$250,000 approved for a building extension to the Toogoolawah Community Gym.
- Completion of repairs and upgrades at the Hopetoun Sports Fields, including installation of a second pump to ensure sufficient water supply for irrigation purposes along with a fully automated irrigation system. Funding was received through the Queensland Reconstruction Authority Emergency Response and the works were delivered in collaboration with the Kilcoy District Football Club.
- Adoption of the Fernvale Sports Park Master Plan in November 2023. The document outlines the long-term vision for the development of the facility and was created in collaboration with the Fernvale Sports Park Advisory Committee.
- Commencement of works including installation of an irrigation system and field refurbishments (including the installation of new goal posts) at the Esk Football Grounds and an extension of the Brisbane Valley Soccer Clubhouse to include amenities facilities at the Lowood Recreational Complex. The combined value of the works totals approximately \$600,000 with nearly \$370,000 in funding to be provided through the Queensland Government Minor Infrastructure Program.
- Progression of the Somerset Region Sporting Infrastructure Strategy 2024-2028 with a report prepared for Council meeting.
- Completion of various minor capital improvement projects including Kilcoy Aquatic Centre filtration area roof installation, drainage upgrades at Kilcoy Tennis Courts and fencing upgrades at Moore tennis courts.

## **Somerset Libraries, Arts and Culture**

### ***Somerset Libraries***

Community engagement across libraries increased in 2023-24 with a 11 per cent increase in library membership, 69 per cent (10,364 total) increased participation in library programs, a 1 per cent increase in visitation and a 7 per cent (75,964 total) increase in use of the library's physical and digital collections.



International Women's Day and National Youth Week were successfully celebrated, and Create & Grow provided a program of sustainable and creative adult workshops. Children's participation in activities and library outreach programs significantly increased by 86 per cent during 2023-24.

A focus on tech support and tech programs resulted in a 66 per cent increase in one-on-one tech lesson delivery, an 86 per cent increase in walk-in tech help, and 195 community members participating in an intensive 3-month Tech Savvy program.

Library visitation was boosted across the region with the introduction of Saturday opening hours at Kilcoy and Lowood, and changes to printing charges. Kilcoy Library experienced a 21 per cent increase in visitation followed by a 3 per cent increase at Toogoolawah.

In February, libraries increased community access to collections by floating the collection. Use of digital books increased by 23 per cent after making them discoverable through the library catalogue and promotion in the bi-monthly in library eNewsletter.

### ***The Condensery – Somerset Regional Art Gallery***

The Condensery's artistic program for 2023-24 included 11 exhibitions and 39 public programs and workshops, accompanied by an artist-in-residence. 3,854 people visited The Condensery, with 42 per cent of visitors coming from within the Somerset Region and 57 per cent visiting from outside the Region.

The works of over 41 artists were displayed within an artistic program which focused on relevant local, national and global cultural conversations, showcasing excellence, responsive to community aspirations and bringing new ideas and creative practice to the Somerset Region. 65 per cent of artists exhibited were local to the Somerset region.

Other highlights include the development of an Environment Biennial, to be exhibited in early 2025.

Exterior signage to The Condensery was improved with the installation of new entryway signage and lighting.

### ***Events***

Somerset Regional Council continued to deliver a range of corporate, civic and community events. Highlights include the Kilcoy Carnival - Multicultural Festival held in May, with over 1,200 people taking part and the 'Spirit of Somerset' themed Mayoral Gala Charity Ball held in September 2023. The fundraising efforts of the Gala Charity Ball exceeded all previous fundraising outcomes.

Other event highlights included Kids Quest at the Somerset Civic Centre and an Arts Networking event for the region's performing arts creatives.

### ***Somerset Civic Centre***

The Somerset Civic Centre continued to deliver a diverse program of events such as creative development workshops for artists, business networking events, children's theatre shows and civic events such as Australian citizenship ceremonies.

2023 – 2024 saw a total attendance of 10,625 people. Significant capital upgrades were also undertaken to the venue including the installation of internal and external signage, new audio desk, speaker upgrade and digital projector.

***Regional Arts Development Fund (RADF)***

The Regional Arts Development Fund is a partnership between Council and Arts Queensland that supports one-off, short-term projects which offer professional arts, culture and heritage opportunities for our community. Projects have included a First Nations language project, children's drawing workshops, free development workshops for the regions creatives and development workshops and training with local choir.

Over \$47,000 has been allocated to community arts projects around the region under the objectives of Somerset Stories, Wellbeing and Placemaking.

# Arts and Culture

2023 - 2024

## HIGHLIGHTS

In the past year we have:



**97,479**

Visitation to  
Cultural Venues



**628**

Workshops  
and Events



**\$158,347**

Arts and  
Culture Grants  
received

## Somerset Civic Centre



**10,625**

Visitation



**336**

Bookings



Venue upgrades to  
signage, audiodesk, sound  
system and projectors

## Somerset Libraries



Library Membership



**11%**

Increase

**8847**

Members



**10,364** Event Participants



**83,000** Total Visitors

## The Condensery



**3,854**

Visitation



**39**

Events and  
Public  
Workshops



**41**

Artists



**\$65,513**

Grants and  
Funding  
received

## Tourism and Promotions

### ***Tourism Operations and Partnerships***

The 2023-2024 financial year saw Council become a financial member of Southern Queensland Country Tourism (SQCT) and align with SQCT as Council's Regional Tourism Organisation (RTO). SQCT is the RTO for the Toowoomba, Lockyer Valley, Southern Downs and Granite Belt, South Burnett, Goondiwindi and Western Downs Local Government Areas.

Visitor numbers to the Visitor Information Centres were in line with previous years, with visitation strong across the region (refer to table below).

	Number of visitors 1/7/2023 – 30/6/2024	Number of active volunteers
Esk Visitor Information Centre	2,640	10
Fernvale Visitor Information Centre	5,039	19
Kilcoy Visitor Information Centre	8,122	8
The Condensery - Somerset Regional Art Gallery	3,644	7
Total	19,445	44

Table: Centre and Visitation and Volunteer Numbers

Three volunteer famil tours were conducted in 2023-2024. The objectives of the tours were to recognise the valuable contribution of volunteers, provide an opportunity for communication and sharing of experiences across the volunteer cohort, and to increase product knowledge and operator awareness.

A famil tour was held on 6 December 2023 to celebrate International Volunteers Day. The tour focused on Somerset towns, Moore and Linville. The volunteers learnt about local businesses and facilities including Moore Soldiers Memorial Hall and Supper Room Art Gallery, Montrose on Moore, Stonehouse Moore and Wells Rest before arriving at The Linville Hotel to share a dinner and recognise volunteer service milestones. Councillors and the tourism team joined the volunteers to celebrate their contribution to the community.

The second famil was conducted on 20 March 2024 and focused on the northern towns of Somerset. The tour included visits to Jimna township, Jimna Base Camp and Peachtrees Camping and Day Use Area before heading back to Kilcoy for lunch at the Exchange Hotel and a tour around town.

The third famil tour was held on 26 June 2024 and focused on the neighbouring Sunshine Coast Hinterland area. Volunteers visited Woodfordia and learnt about the Woodford Folk Festival, before heading to Maleny. A visit and guided tour around Mary Cairncross Scenic Reserve followed by lunch at Brouhaha Brewery for a paddock to plate experience. The day concluded with a tour of Maleny Chocolate Co and time to explore the main street of Maleny.

### ***Promotions and Advertising***

In 2023-2024, Council continued to progress the Experience Somerset Marketing Implementation Plan (2023-2025) and Promotional Campaign Planner. Council initiated several marketing campaigns including:

- Winter 2023, "Take the Road Less Travelled": A traffic campaign that reached 178,759, made 384,846 impressions and resulted in 874 new visits to the campaign landing page on [experiencesomerset.com.au](https://experiencesomerset.com.au)
- Event campaign, "2023 BVRT Festival of Cycling": A traffic campaign that reached 17,228, made 40,294 impressions and resulted in 741 link clicks to the event holder's ticketing website.
- Spring 2023, "Country is Calling": A traffic campaign that reached 94,586, made 247,292 impressions and resulted in 4,547 new visits to the campaign landing page on [experiencesomerset.com.au](https://experiencesomerset.com.au)
- Summer 2023-2024, "Come Play in Somerset": A traffic campaign that reached 159,438, made 417,793 impressions and resulted in 6,346 new visits to the campaign landing page on [experiencesomerset.com.au](https://experiencesomerset.com.au)
- February 2024, "Win an Esk-cape for two in Somerset" promoted at the Moreton Bay Expo: A leads campaign generating 1600 new leads for the Experience Somerset EDM database.
- Event campaign, "2024 Esk Garden Fair": A traffic campaign that reached 122,553, made 308,177 impressions and resulted in 6,426 link clicks to the event holder's ticketing website.
- QTIC Top Town Awards voting campaign, "Vote for Toogoolawah": A traffic campaign that reached 13,808, made 20,965 and resulted in 403 link clicks onto QTIC's Vote for Toogoolawah page.
- QTIC Top Town Awards voting campaign, "Vote for Kilcoy". A traffic campaign that reached 27,888, made 35,915 impressions and resulted in 481 link clicks onto QTIC's Vote for Kilcoy page.
- Autumn 2024, an evergreen collaborative campaign with Luvya Lockyer, "Feel the Freedom": A traffic campaign that reached 191,544, made 443,448 impressions and resulted in 4,544 new visits to the campaign landing page on [experiencesomerset.com.au](https://experiencesomerset.com.au)

As part of the above campaign work, Council pitched campaign stories and tourism news to targeted media and tourism contacts. As a result, Council obtained free exposure and publicity as outlined below:

- "Recharge the Batteries in Esk – Somerset Joins Queensland's Super Electric Highway": Published by RACQ Road Ahead (EDM and magazine), TV segment on Channel Seven's Weekender, Channel 7 news, Caravanning Queensland, local print media coverage.
- "Record Crowds Set to Race into Somerset": Published by Racing Queensland.
- "Esk Caravan Park Wins Queensland Tourism Award": Published by Sentinel News, Drive Queensland, Lockyer and Somerset Independent.

Council promoted the region through promotional stalls at the following industry events:

- Experience Somerset stall at Moreton Bay Expo held at the Redcliffe Showgrounds from 16-18 February 2024.
- Experience Somerset featured at the Southern Queensland Country Tourism (SQCT) stall at the Let's Go Queensland Caravan and Camping Supershow held at the Brisbane RNA Showgrounds from 5-9 June 2024.

The Experience Somerset brand continues to work with key industry partners and participated in the following initiatives/projects/events to promote the region:

- SQCT took over the management of the SEQ Food Trail website ([seqfoodtrail.com.au](https://seqfoodtrail.com.au)) – ongoing.
- SQCT website, social media and campaign content – ongoing.

- Australia Day Promotional Events – Brisbane Valley Rail Trail User’s Association Ride and Kilcoy Gift Races
- Council worked with Brisbane Valley Farm Direct to establish an inaugural agritourism event, the first of its kind in region, Legends of Beef 2024 at the Toogoolawah Showgrounds on 24 February 2024.
- Council’s submissions for Toogoolawah and Kilcoy gained finalist positions in the Queensland Tourism Industry Council (QTIC) Top Tourism Town Awards in the Tiny Town and Small Town categories. Toogoolawah was awarded Bronze Top Tiny Tourism Town at the QTIC Top Tourism Town Awards ceremony in June 2024.
- Council refreshed the Experience Somerset’s image library with a new series of destination imagery and social media video content. The significant capture of new imagery saw Council officers coordinate photo shoots over multiple days across various locations throughout the region.

The Experience Somerset brand continues to grow, strengthen and gain industry attention. The brand maintains an ongoing presence on [experiencesomerset.com.au](https://experiencesomerset.com.au), social media, Visitor Information Centre activity, trade show representation, campaign work, industry events, initiatives, competitions, and more.

### ***Tourism Strategy Implementation***

The release of the updated tourism website was a significant progression for promotion of the Somerset Region. The reinvigorated Experience Somerset website used the new imagery captured in the 2023/24 film shoots to create a modern and accessible website that showcased Somerset’s exceptional natural assets. The website features an updated Tourism Operator portal, an enhanced events page, smartphone compatibility and integrates search engine optimisation strategies to improve the website’s digital visibility.

A new 60-page edition of the Experience Somerset Visitor Guide was released in May 2024 to cover 2024-2025. 33 Somerset tourism businesses purchased advertising in this edition.

To build and enhance local tourism partnerships Council participated in the Best of Brisbane Region Experiences Support Program, which was delivered with the support of SQCT. The program ran from July to October 2023 and covered 13 modules of training to increase participants’ ability to become a Best of Queensland Experience with 10 Somerset operators participating in the program. The program was received positively by participants with all 10 completing the program. The Transformational Experiences Mentoring Program was run concurrently with four businesses who had already received Best of Queensland Status to develop their experiences further. The results showed that Somerset had 17 operators reach this status this year (double the previous year). The Somerset participants are eager to continue their tourism business development and work more closely together moving forward following the program.

SQCT ran an Agritourism workshop in Somerset in July 2023 with 15 Somerset agricultural based businesses attending the full day workshop in Esk.

## PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Planning and Development Department ensures a range of regulatory, compliance and development assessment obligations are undertaken in accordance with Federal and State legislation and Council's Local Laws. The Department is also responsible for economic development and strategic land use planning for the region.

### Development Assessment

The Development Assessment section is responsible for ensuring that Council achieves the purposes of the *Planning Act 2016*. This occurs through providing advice to the community on planning and development matters as well as co-ordinating and assessing development applications in accordance with the Somerset Region's Planning Scheme.

A breakdown of Development Applications received during the financial year are listed below.

	APPLICATIONS	TOTAL 2022/23	TOTAL 2023/24
Development Applications	Combined	7	7
	Material Change of Use	71	56
	Operational Work	29	22
	Reconfiguring a Lot	26	21
	Building Work assessable against the Planning Scheme	126	102
	Referral Applications	N/A	10
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>218</b>
Planning Certificates		23	12
Survey Plan Endorsements		22	18
Exemption Certificates		11	5

### Inspection Programs

A breakdown of inspection programs completed during the financial year are listed below.

INSPECTION TYPE	TOTAL 2022/23	TOTAL 2023/24
Kennels	51	50
Poultry Farms	20	16
Extractive Industries	9	8



## Planning and Environment Court Appeals

Throughout the financial year Council actively managed several development application Planning and Environment Court Appeals, including:

- *Rayland Development Pty Ltd v Somerset Regional Council* – Planning and Environment Court Appeal No. BD1370 of 2023
- *Main Constructions Pty Ltd v Somerset Regional Council* – Planning and Environment Court Appeal No. BD1852 of 2023
- *FVLH Developments Pty Ltd v Somerset Regional Council* – Planning and Environment Court Appeals No. BD1951-54 of 2023
- *Energex Limited v Somerset Regional Council* – Planning and Environment Court Appeal No. BD2126 of 2023.

## Strategic Land Use Planning

A statutory review of the Local Government Infrastructure Plan (LGIP) was completed during the financial year and will guide Council's future amendment of the LGIP and infrastructure delivery across the region. The major amendment to the LGIP is expected to commence in the next financial year. A major amendment to the Somerset Region Planning Scheme has continued to be progressed, with the issues paper received by Council in December 2023. The amendment will be subject to further Council consideration ahead of submission to the State Government for review.

The Council also actively participated in the ShapingSEQ 2023 review, which took effect on 15 December 2023, and amends ShapingSEQ 2017. ShapingSEQ 2023 is the statutory South East Queensland (SEQ) Regional Plan, encompassing the 12 local government areas, and is the State Government's long-term vision for accommodating growth in SEQ.

## Economic Development

The Council's *Economic Development Strategy* is designed to facilitate the growth and prosperity of the Somerset region's economy over the next 10-20 years and outlines how the Council will positively facilitate this change. The Strategy's actions are focused on three central roles and functions for Council: Marketing and Promotion; Planning for the Future; and Facilitating Change. In November 2023, the Council presented the first annual scorecard that provided an update on the progress of each Strategy action, including engagement with business investors and other strategic regional partners, such as Council of Mayors (SEQ) and advancing legacy opportunities from the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The *Lowood Futures Strategy* was adopted by Council in December 2022. This urban renewal project for Lowood aims to enhance community wellbeing and amplify the town's identity and competitive advantage. The initial planning stages of the Strategy commenced this financial year with detailed design and site investigations underway that have focused on significantly improved public parking, green core and streetscape works. Council also appointed a new Project Place Manager in February 2024 who will be instrumental to progressing Council's centre improvement programs.

The Council adopted the *Kilcoy Streetscape Revitalisation Project Master Plan* in December 2023. The master plan provides a long-term vision and blueprint for Kilcoy and was underpinned by significant community input with a range of engagement and co-design activities occurring between May and September 2023. The initial stages of implementation have commenced including site investigations and developing a delivery program of the master plan concepts and initiatives.



Council has also continued proactive engagement with the State Government and business via the membership of the State Government's Queensland Small Business Friendly Council initiative, including attendance at the annual conference and participating in regular Small Business Friendly Roundtable Meetings.

The Local Business Recovery Officer program also delivered:

- Promotion of the Somerset Grantfinder which has been customised for Somerset residents and provides a one-stop-shop for Federal, State, and local grants.
- Successful applications for the Locally Led Economic Recovery Grant (\$250,000) to deliver the Somerset 'Small Business Boost' Program, and the Category C - Queensland Flooding - Flexible Funding Grant (\$46,000) to develop a Business Recovery and Resilience Plan.
- Face to face business visits to collect business intelligence and feedback around local issues and priorities.
- Maintenance and improvement of the Economic Development webpage, housing the Economic Development Strategy and Prospectus, major projects and information about upcoming business workshops and forums.
- Collaboration with State and Federal agencies on recovery and resilience matters.
- Regular engagement with State Government agencies such as the Queensland Rural Industry Development Authority (QRIDA), Department of Employment, Small Business and Training, and the Small Business (DESBT) Financial Counselling Service, to discuss grant programs and support initiatives.
- Facilitating a pop-up office for QRIDA and DESBT to discuss open grant opportunities and support with applications.
- Attendance at industry events:
  - Drought Management and Farm Business Resilient Planning
  - Ruminati Primary Producer Program
  - Trade and Investment Queensland online workshops: eCommerce 101; International Social Media Marketing
  - Solar and Storage Live conference
  - Small Business Friendly annual conference
- Delivery of workforce capability workshops and recovery and resilience forums, including:
  - Regenerative Agriculture Forum
  - Succession and Estate Planning
  - Small Business Financial Resilience Workshop
  - Farm Business Resilience Plan and Flood Management Plans Workshop
  - Growing your Business Through Modern Marketing
  - Developing a Resilient Business
  - Somerset Business Breakfast
  - Agribusiness Forum
  - Commencement of the Business Planning Course (delivered by University of Sunshine Coast)

## Building and Plumbing Services

The building and plumbing section's role within the Planning and Development Department is to ensure that Council's range of regulatory and compliance obligations, together with the assessment and evaluation of building and plumbing applications, are undertaken in accordance with the relevant Acts, Codes, Standards and Local Laws.

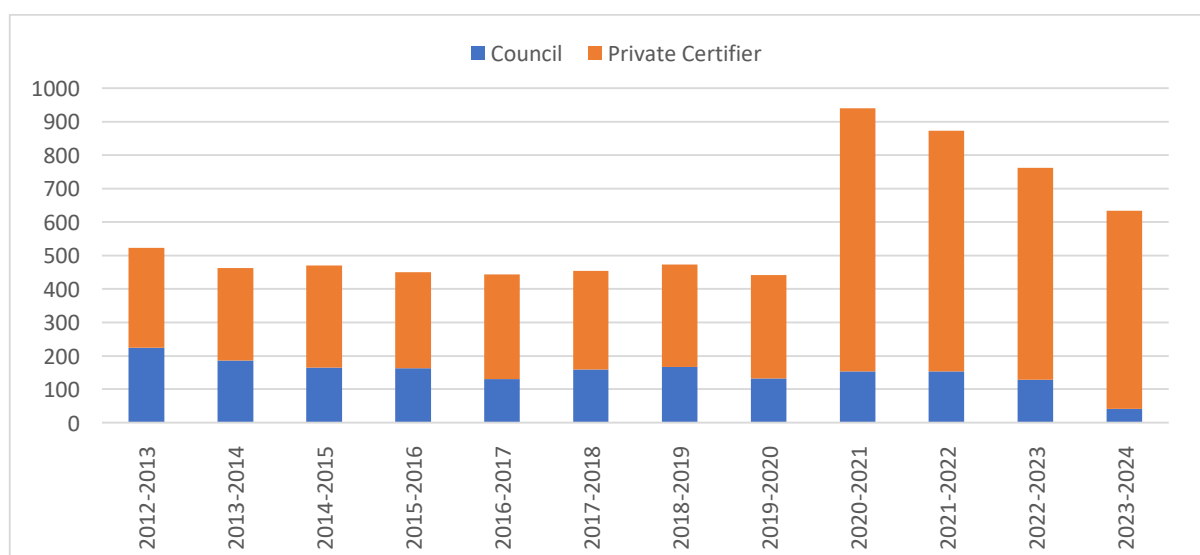
The variety of building and plumbing regulatory inspections that are performed include pool safety services, residential services, amenity and aesthetic services and notifiable plumbing and drainage services.

Other regulatory matters that involve building and plumbing compliance include unapproved works, unlawful use of buildings and overdue servicing of on-site sewerage facilities. This has resulted in the issuing of Show Cause Notices, Enforcement Notices and in some cases, Penalty Infringement Notices (PINs).

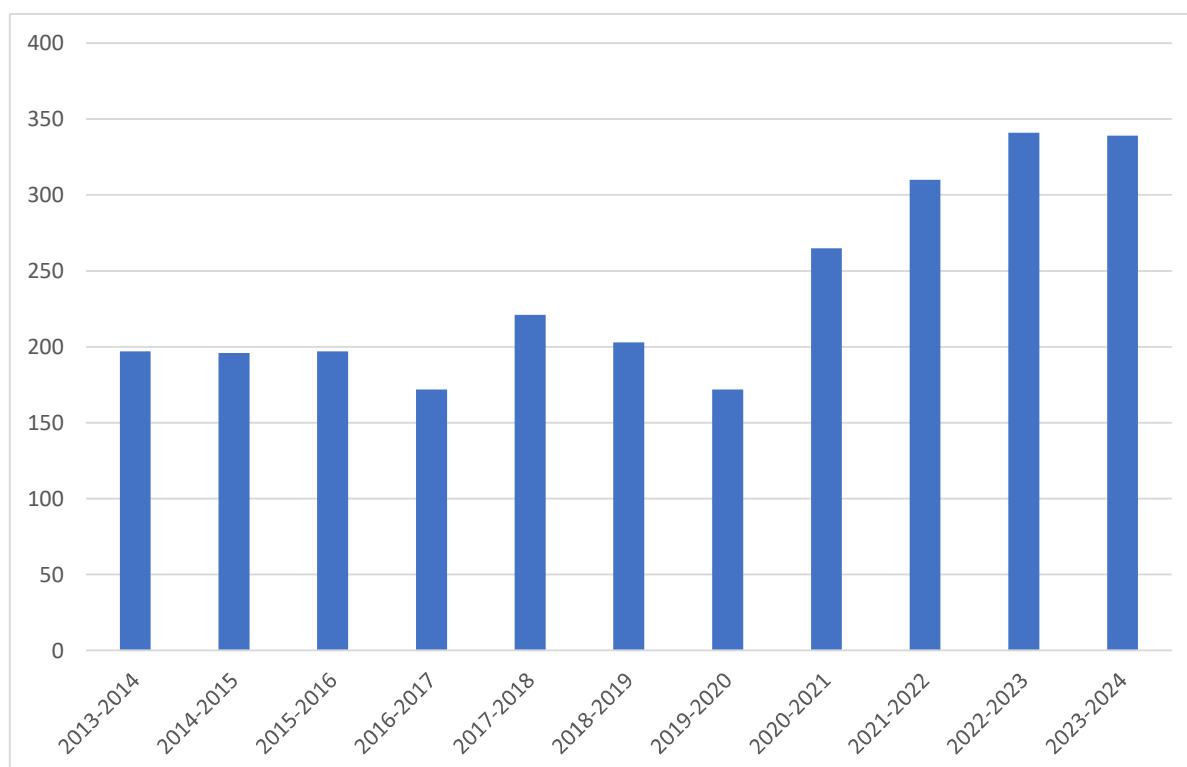
Since completing the voluntary on-site wastewater risk mitigation program in the Linville township catchment area, Council's plumbing inspectors, through partnership with Seqwater, are continuing the delivery of the next phase of the program in the Glamorgan Vale/Fernvale area of the Black Snake Creek catchment. In total, 46 properties have been offered to be part of the program in this area. Currently three properties have taken up the offer and have a new on-site sewerage treatment plant installed. Council's plumbing inspectors will continue to engage with eligible landowners to offer a subsidy for a replacement treatment system that meets the program guidelines.

The total number of building applications approved for the 2023-24 financial year is 634.

Council's share of the total approved building applications is 6.46% (41), compared to last year at 16.9% (129).



The total number of plumbing applications approved for the 2023-24 financial year is 339. This includes 40 amendments to existing approvals.



## Environmental Services

Council's Environmental Services section includes the functions of Environmental Health, Regulatory Services and Pest Management.

### Environmental Health

- Responded to more than 220 customer service requests relating to issues of compliance with the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*, the *Food Act 2006*, the *Waste Reduction and Recycling Act 2011*, the *Public Health Act 2005*, the *Public Health (Infection Control for Personal Appearance Services) Act 2003* and Council's local laws.
- Administered a total of 171 food business licenses consisting of 120 fixed, 34 mobile and 17 temporary food business licenses.
- Conducted more than 130 licensed food business inspections to check compliance with the *Food Act 2006* and the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code.
- Assisted food businesses, community groups, schools, and the general public through the provision of a free online interactive food safety training package. The I'M ALERT food safety training package can be accessed via [www.somerset.imalert.com.au](http://www.somerset.imalert.com.au) or follow the links on Council's website. More than 780 users accessed the site through the Somerset Regional Council log-in during the year.
- Conducted a mosquito survey program in conjunction with Queensland Health in various towns and villages in the region during the months of January to March. The main aim of the annual surveillance program is to establish the level of confidence in:
  - o the assumption that mosquitoes *Aedes aegypti* or *Aedes albopictus* are not present in the Somerset Region, and
  - o the likelihood of early detection – to facilitate eradication.
- Samples analysed by Queensland Forensic and Scientific Services returned no positive results for the target mosquitoes.
- Raised community awareness of mosquito management methods through officer advice, local and social media, and Council's website.

- Delivered a water quality monitoring program for Council operated swimming pools where monthly samples were collected during the swimming season and monitored for compliance with the Queensland Health Water Quality Guidelines for Public Aquatic Facilities 2019.
- Delivered a water sampling service for residents with private drinking water supplies.
- Delivered an annual inspection program on 13 poultry farms to monitor compliance with development approval conditions.
- Completed more than 50 assessments of applications for approval under Council's local laws and subordinate local laws for prescribed activities such as caravan parks and camping grounds, community markets, commercial use of roads and local government-controlled areas, street stalls, and temporary entertainment events.

#### ***Regulatory Services (including Animal Management and Local Laws)***

- Responded to more than 1,080 customer service requests relating to compliance with Council's local laws, the *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008* and other relevant legislation.
- Encouraged responsible pet ownership through information on Council's website, media, officer contact, the provision of dog friendly parks, the provision of rebates for cat de-sexing, euthanasia, and discounted registration for de-sexed dogs.
- Operated a small and large animal pound in accordance with Council's local laws, where a total of 333 animals were impounded, including 108 dogs and 174 cats and 51 stock.
- Delivered an annual inspection program of 50 kennels to monitor compliance with development approval conditions, the *Animal Management (Cats and Dogs) Act 2008* and Council's local laws.

#### ***Pest Management***

- Responded to more than 250 customer service requests relating to issues of compliance with the *Biosecurity Act 2014*.
- Increased awareness and knowledge of biosecurity obligations in relation to pest plants and animals under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*, and the control of pest plants and animals generally through local media, social media, Council's website and attendance at local shows and field days.
- Operated a bait meat subsidy program for landholders who participated in Council's 1080 baiting program, where more than \$1,640 in subsidy payments were made.
- Operated a one third, chemical subsidy program to assist landholders in meeting their biosecurity obligation under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*, where more than \$24,400 in subsidy payments were made.
- Administered a bounty program for wild dogs and feral pigs destroyed within the region, where a total of \$11,535 in bounty payments were made including \$2,325 in wild dog and \$9,210 in feral pig bounty payments.
- Provided an equipment hire program to assist landholders in meeting their general biosecurity obligation under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*.
- Implemented actions listed in the Biosecurity Plan – Invasive Plants and Animals 2020-2025.
- Responded to more than 250 customer service requests relating to issues of compliance with the *Biosecurity Act 2014*.
- Completed a compliance program to ensure that landholders comply with their general biosecurity obligation under the *Biosecurity Act 2014*.
- Operated a 1080 baiting program where more than 3,170 wild dog and 110 feral pig baits were distributed to participating landholders in the region.
- Conducted a pest animal trapping program on Council controlled land and on private land to assist landholders in controlling pest animals such as wild dogs, feral pigs, foxes, and

feral cats. During the period more than 30 feral animals were trapped as part of the program.

- Delivered a pest plant control program on Council-controlled areas and roads and on State-controlled roads under contract, where more than 277,000 litres of herbicide were applied.
- Operated a 50% Lantana Chemical Subsidy Program, where more than \$98,800 in subsidy payments were made.
- Delivered a Lantana Control Program on Council roads and reserves and on Department of Transport and Main Road reserves where approximately 100 hectares of lantana was treated and approximately 200 hectares of lantana was mechanically controlled.

## **Natural Resource Management**

Council has an active role in the maintenance and enhancement of the region's natural resources through a range of partnership, advocacy, educational, stewardship and promotional activities.

### ***Regional Collaboration:***

- Regular participation in the Council of Mayors (SEQ) Resilient Rivers Initiative, including ongoing project(s) in the Black Snake Creek Catchment.
- Continuing partnership and collaborative projects with Healthy Land and Water, Landcare, Bushcare, and allied groups / organisations.

### ***Education and representation:***

- Participation in regional natural resource management related forum/s, and policy/strategy development, including South-East Queensland Local Government Koala and Flying-Fox forums.
- Facilitated wildlife education presentation opportunity for Somerset region schools.

### ***External funding partnerships:***

- Delivery of the Queensland Recovery Authority – Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements, Community and Recreational Asset (Recovery and Resilience) project.
- Delivery of the Onsite Wastewater Risk Mitigation program in partnership with Seqwater in the Black Snake Creek Catchment.

### ***Community Free Trees:***

- Facilitated Council's suite of free tree programs, including three community free tree giveaway events, and schools' national tree day support.
- Delivery of Capital Works Offset Policy, requiring proportional offsetting of Council capital works program/s impacts on vegetation.

### ***Local Delivery, Regional Programs:***

- SEQ Land for Wildlife Program.
- SEQ Fire and Biodiversity Consortium.
- Seqwater – On-site Wastewater Risk Mitigation Program.

# OPERATIONS

The Operations Department consists of the following sections:

- Works Branch
  - o Infrastructure Construction
  - o Infrastructure Maintenance
  - o Workshop
  - o Fleet Management
  - o Cemeteries Management
  - o Landfill Operations
- Engineering Services Branch
  - o Parks and Gardens
  - o Facility Management
  - o Survey and Design
  - o Asset Management
  - o Development Assessment
- Directorate
  - o Disaster Management and State Emergency Service (SES)
  - o Waste Services and Recycling Management
  - o Customer Service System

The following is a summary of the Department's activities in 2023-2024.

## Works

The Somerset region is experiencing continuous growth, and in response, Council's capital works program is also expanding annually to meet the rising demand. This year, Council has undertaken an ambitious and remarkable volume of projects, demonstrating its commitment to addressing the evolving needs of the community.

Capital expenditure for completed and progressed work from Council and the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR) funded projects totalled over \$35 million for the year.

Council has applied for, and received, funding subsidies and grants from numerous State and Federal government programs, including but not limited to:

- Roads to Recovery;
- South East Queensland Community Stimulus Program;
- Queensland Resilience and Risk Reduction Fund;
- Preparing Australian Communities Program;
- Cycle Network Local Government Grants;
- Local Road and Community Infrastructure Program;
- Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme;
- Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program;
- School Transport Infrastructure Program;
- Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangement; and
- Local Economic Recovery Program.

Council has achieved a commendable track record this year by successfully executing a multitude of projects as part of its ongoing construction program. The dedicated works team is

committed to deliver quality civil infrastructure throughout the entire region, making optimal use of both internal expertise and external resources / contractors.

Council has successfully fostered strong collaborative relationship with local contractors to enhance local economy and deliver these works to improve and maintain all its asset classes including but not limited to roads, pathways, bridges and drainage network.

Council's Works Branch has completed projects related to the following asset categories:

- Roads - including reseal, renewal, rehabilitation and safety improvements;
- Stormwater drainage - including under upgrades ground and roadside drainage systems;
- Waste management - landfill, refuse and recycling centre operations, and the capping of a former landcell at Kilcoy;
- Cemeteries; and
- Fleet and workshop.

The Works Branch has also delivered road rehabilitation works on the State controlled roads on behalf of DTMR. This is in addition to the contract maintenance works and surface resheeting on the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail.

The Somerset region was subject to major unprecedented storms and flooding during the months of February, March and May 2022. Council crews and contractors carried out visual inspections to Somerset's extensive 1,483 kilometres of local road network, 77 bridges, 3,626 culverts and multiple parks and community facilities across the region as part of the disaster recovery effort.

Over 3,000 sites across Somerset region were identified as requiring cleaning, flood restoration and recovery works as part of Council's damage assessment following the devastating February, March and May 2022 flood events.

The priority works which occurred were a short-term solution; however, in early 2023 Council commenced the long-term plan for infrastructure restoration under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements, jointly funded by Queensland and Australian Federal Governments. There has been substantial progress in remedying the damage done by the 2022 natural disasters. We anticipate the timeframe for the completion of all work to be December 2024.

### ***Infrastructure Construction and Maintenance***

#### ***Roads and Drainage***

Council delivered its capital works and maintenance programs across the region on roads of both local and regional significance.

Council internal day labour crews reconstructed and upgraded several streets and roads through the region including the following:

- Stage 2 Esk Crows Nest Road, Eskdale - Esk Crows Nest Strategic Regional Connector - Toowoomba Boundary section (anticipated completion September 2024), 50% funded by the Queensland Government South East Queensland Community Stimulus Program;
- Main Street, Lowood – faux footpath stencil;
- Prospect & William Street, Lowood - install underground drainage from Prospect to William through drainage easement to increase capacity drainage;
- King Street, Somerset Dam - two-coat bitumen seal;
- Old Fernvale Road, Fernvale - construct headwall, grass swale and survey at drainage outlet in vicinity of 18 Old Fernvale road;
- Lowood State School, Lowood - footpaths and kerb and channel. 100% funded by the Queensland Government School Transport Infrastructure Program;

- Ellen Street, Lowood – kerb & channel and two-coat seal;
- Murrumba Road Culverts, Coal Creek – installation of new culverts and guardrail and reseal of road. Funded by the Queensland Government Resilience and Risk Reduction Fund;
- Esk State School, Esk, footpaths and kerb & channel – Funding by the Queensland Government School Transport Infrastructure Program;
- Prenzlau Road, Prenzlau – pavement reconstruction of Prenzlau Road, and two-coat seal;
- Schroeder Lane, Fernvale – upgrade from gravel road to bitumen, and seal intersection with Fairney View Fernvale Road;
- Linville State School, Wells Street, Linville – new footpath, reseal of parking area with linemarking and wheel-stops. Funded by the Queensland Government Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme;
- Yowie Park, Kilcoy reconstruction of sections of footpath, and asphalt overlay.



Ellen Street, Lowood – kerb & channel and two-coat seal



Murrumba Road Culverts, Coal Creek – installation of new culverts and guardrail and reseal of road.  
Funding: Queensland Government Resilience and Risk Reduction Fund





Esk State School, Esk, footpaths and kerb & channel  
Funding: Queensland Government School Transport Infrastructure Program



Prenzlau Road, Prenzlau – pavement reconstruction of Prenzlau Road, and two-coat seal;



Schroeder Lane, Fernvale – upgrade from gravel road to bitumen, and seal intersection with Fairney View Fernvale Road



Linville State School, Wells Street, Linville – new footpath, reseal of parking area with linemarking and wheel-stops.  
Funding: Queensland Government Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme



Yowie Park, Kilcoy reconstruction of sections of footpath, and asphalt overlay



On behalf of Council, contractors reconstructed and upgraded several roads and drainage infrastructure through the region including but not limited to:

- Lowood Minden Road (Litzows to Lukritz) – road widening, pavement stabilisation, sealed shoulders, new culverts and pipes. Co-funded by the Australian Government Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program;
- Lowood Minden Road, Zabels Road North intersection upgrade. Co-funded by the Queensland Government South East Queensland Community Stimulus Program;
- Waverley, Sheppards and Lake Manchester Roads – six metre, two-coat bitumen seal, Funding: Australian Government Black Summer Bushfire Recovery BSBR program;
- Clarendon Road, Lowood (O'Reilly's Weir Rd to Patrick Estate Rd) – rehabilitate and widen road. Funded by the Queensland Government Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme;
- Moore amenities, Main Street North, Moore; footpaths, kerb & channel;
- Cressbrook Street, Toogoolawah – culvert replacement and asphalt overlay.



Lowood Minden Road (Litzows to Lukritz) – road widening, pavement stabilisation, sealed shoulders, new culverts and pipes.  
Funding: Australia Government Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program



Lowood Minden Road, Zabels Road Nth intersection upgrade.  
Funding: Queensland Government South East Queensland Community Stimulus Program



Waverley and Sheppards Road, Lake Manchester – six metre, two-coat bitumen seal  
Funding: Australian Government Black Summer Bushfire Recovery program



Clarendon Road, Lowwood (O'Reilly's Weir Rd to Patrick Estate Rd) – rehabilitate and widen road  
Funding: Queensland Government Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme;



Moore amenities, Main Street North, Moore; footpaths, kerb & channel





Cressbrook Street, Toogoolawah – culvert replacement and asphalt overlay.

### *Environment and the path to zero emissions*

Following successful trials in previous years, Council included recycled crumbed rubber on the roads, a product made from waste tyres. The rubber is included in the bitumen binder to improve its material properties as well as benefitting the environment and creating a circular economy.

The road reseal program of works has been made possible with significant Australian Government funding under the Roads to Recovery Program.

Council also commenced investigations to reduce methane emissions for the Esk landfill.

### **Workshop and Fleet Management**

Council's workshop based in the Esk Works Depot, undertakes the majority of the plant and fleet service, routine maintenance and damage repairs, with Workshop staff also carrying out various service and repairs to Council fleet in the field anywhere within the region where the crews are working.

Council has 276 items of plant and 180 floating plant items including: earthmoving plant, State Emergency Service's (SES) plant, light vehicles, trucks, tractors, mowers, slashers, chainsaws, weed eaters, blower pumps, generators and many other portable power tools items. All plant items are serviced on a routine service schedule with other repair and maintenance done as required. The workshop carries out on average 130 services, routine inspections and repairs each month.

Council workshop also carry out auto electrical and air conditioning repairs in house as well as annual Certificate of Inspection (COI) on Council's small to mid-size truck and trailer fleet that require a COI for annual registration.

Workshop also carry out electrical test and tag on around 500 items every three months for Council's portable equipment for the work crews and SES.

Workshop also has a fabrication shop which carry out a wide range of works including:

- Design, build and install toolboxes and storage solutions for Council fleet;
- Fabricate and install handrails for footpath/culverts and guard rails fittings for bridges;
- Fabricate, install and repair a full range of park furniture and park assets;
- Three monthly playground operational inspections and repairs to playground equipment, gates and fences as required; and
- Various other types of maintenance and repairs to Council assets.

### *Council Depots Improvements*

Council initiated improvement program to all of its three major depots located at Esk, Kilcoy and Lowood and successfully completed the following projects:

- Enhancement of training and spaces;
- Improvement to Lunch rooms, kitchen, and furniture;
- General clean up and tidiness; and
- Completed fit out for the Lowood Depot office.

Over the year, Council has completed safety improvements to all depots including:

- Line marking for vehicles parking and pedestrians' movement;
- Electric powered gates;
- Security fences, doors and locks;
- Installed filtered drinking water taps;
- Sealed the entrance to Esk depot from Heap Street including the car park;
- Reconstruction of the driveway of the Kilcoy Depot to meet current standards;
- Improvement to office space, storage areas and sheds; and
- Improved drainage infrastructure at the Kilcoy Depot.

### ***Cemeteries Management***

Council has eight operational cemeteries throughout the region: Fernvale, Wivenhoe Pocket, Lowood, Esk, Caboonbah, Toogoolawah, Moore and Kilcoy, and one closed cemetery at Bryden (Fairview). Most cemeteries have columbarium walls for placement of ashes except for Wivenhoe Pocket and Caboonbah. The Kilcoy Cemetery also has a memorial garden for placement of ashes, which is maintained on a regular basis. All cemeteries are mowed and cleaned regularly. The addition of a Cemeteries Crew to Council's Operations Team this year will ensure continued maintenance of these facilities being undertaken by Council Crews.

Works undertaken at Council's cemeteries this year include:

- new rows constructed in the lawn / beam section of the Kilcoy, Esk and Lowood cemeteries;
- a new footpath around the columbarium wall at Toogoolawah cemetery; and
- four (4) benches in various locations within the Kilcoy cemetery to accommodate visitors.

In addition, the Kilcoy District Progress Alliance has undertaken two successful working bees at the Kilcoy Cemetery.

### ***Landfill Operations***

Council continued work on the capping and rehabilitation of the former Kilcoy landfill site to return the site to a transfer station only, as per the Kilcoy Landfill Conceptual Closure Report prepared by ATC Williams in 2019.

An approval was received from Department of Environment, Science and Innovation to amend Council's Environmental Authority to decommission Jimna Landfill as a waste disposal facility.

A new Site Based Management and Operational Plan for the Esk Refuse and Recycling Centre and Landfill prepared by ATC Williams was introduced in May 2024.

Council has been working with Department of Environment, Science and Innovation to ensure all conditions under its Environmental Authority are being met.

All operations continued as normal at the Esk landfill.

## **Engineering Services**

### ***Parks and Gardens***

This team provides continued maintenance to all Councils parks, reserves and town entries. The team consists of our mowing crew who continually rotate throughout the region ensuring that all parks and reserves are maintain to a suitable level of service. This team is supported by one slasher operator. Our gardening team of one gardener and one assistant gardener maintain all town streetscapes and gardens within the region. Town Stewards are located in Lowood, Fernvale, Esk and Toogoolawah with contractors carrying out Town Steward duties in Kilcoy, Moore and Linville. Town Steward duties include cleaning of Council Amenities blocks, rubbish collection in towns and general maintenance of the main parks within each town. This team carryout inspection of playground equipment throughout the region.

### ***Facilities Management***

This team provides provide ongoing maintenance and inspection of all Council Facilities. Responsibilities include vandalism maintenance, facilities cleaning contract, fire systems contract, solar inspections and repairs, pre-event inspections at showgrounds, electrical testing contract, security cameras and alarms, control of all doors, locks and keys for all facilities, air conditioning and general maintenance issue of all administration and depot facilities.

### ***Survey and Design***

This team provides Engineering Services for the facilitation and production of surveys, detailed designs, on-site support for the construction crews on Council's roads, drainage, and cycleway capital works program projects. They create, prioritise and deliver forward work design projects that are often utilised to seek grant funding, from multiple sources, for delivery of Council's future capital works program. Concept designs are created to assist in the planning of Councils future capital works budgets.

### ***Asset Management***

Maintaining and processing of Council assets, such as roads, bridges, footpaths, kerb and channel, stormwater, parks and gardens, cemeteries and building facilities is a critical function of the Engineering Services Team. Council continually review and improve its asset registers, conditions and databases regarding these assets. Asset Management Plans were developed for the pathways network and the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail.

### ***Development Assessment***

The Engineering Services Team review and approve development works to be undertaken by private developers through the issuing of Operational Works Permits or supporting Council's Planning Team by providing engineering conditions for material change of use or reallocation of lot applications. Some of the operational works projects approved this past year included: Asset 1 at Brouff Road, Old Fernvale Road- Lindemans Road Stage 2, Prospect Street, Lowood and Hedley Park - Stage 9 and Stage 10.

## **Disaster Management and State Emergency Services (SES)**

### ***Mayor Lehmann retires***

After 15 years on the Somerset Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG) Cr Graeme Lehmann, retired as Chair when he informed the group that he would not be running as Mayor in the 2024 elections. During his time as Chair, Cr Lehmann oversaw several disaster activations, including the 2011, 2013, 2015 and 2022 Flood events along with the bushfires that impacted the region in 2018 and 2019.

Council now has a new Chair of the LDMG, Mayor Jason Wendt, who will add considerable expertise to the group in his previous role as Councillor, being a veterinarian in our local community and also having been heavily involved with Qld Fire and Emergency Services as a Local Fire Warden.

### ***Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG)***

All local governments are required to establish an LDMG to support and coordinate disaster management activities within their relevant area. The LDMG consists of members and advisors from several agencies, who each have a disaster management role to play before, during and after a disaster.

During 2023-2024 two LDMG meetings were held. November meeting was held face-to-face, with the May meeting being conducted online via Teams.

Somerset Regional Council representatives attended each of the Ipswich District Disaster Management Group meetings.

Council is a member of Local Area Fire Management Groups and participated in several meetings throughout the year to discuss bushfire mitigation and preparedness.

### ***Disaster Events / Activations***

In the months August to November the region experienced heightened bushfire conditions with the LDMG being placed on ALERT on the 31 October for a fire in the Redbank Creek area. At that time Council provided support to Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) with the provision of electronic signage, water trucks and heavy machinery. Esk-Hampton Road was impacted during the event and remained closed for extended periods of time due to smoke in the area.

November and December saw a number of Heatwave warnings issued, along with an increased number of severe storms in December. Whilst not impacted as severely as our neighbouring local government areas, Christmas Day and Boxing Day did result in several power outages and trees over road that were dealt with by Council staff.

Tropical Cyclone Kirrily impacted the South East Queensland in the last week of January 2024. At one stage there was the potential for rainfall of approximately 500mm in a four-day period across the Somerset region.

Both the Somerset Incident Management Team and the LDMG were placed on alert to monitor the event. Whilst the rainfall levels did not reach forecasted levels, we did see a number of roads closed and in particular Twin Bridges and Savages Crossing remained closed for several days as a result of flows in the Lockyer Creek.

### ***Training and Exercises***

Disaster Management is a core function within Council that ensures we maintain a level of readiness should we be impacted by disaster events. Council does this by training staff in disaster management and utilising their skills should we need to establish our Local Disaster Coordination Centre (LDCC). The following training and exercising were done throughout the 2023/2024 year:

- Council staff were trained in the use of Council WaterRide flood forecasting system;
- Staff attended a Department of Transport and Main Roads (DTMR) preseason event on the Sunshine Coast to exercise arrangements between DTMR and Council;
- A series of "lunch and learn" training sessions were held in Esk and Kilcoy to train staff in the use of Guardian – Council's incident management system;



- Council Staff, Executives and Councillors received training in Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements and Recovery facilitated by QFES and Council;
- Council's Disaster Management Officer and staff attended a multi-district Evacuation Centre exercise in Toowoomba. The exercise tested cross-border communications and Council-to-Council assistance;
- Council attended the Seqwater annual exercise as an observer; and
- Members and observers of the Ipswich Disaster District, which included Council, participated in the District Disaster Exercise – Exercise Incendium.

### ***Plan Reviews / Assessment***

During the year Council constantly reviews its plans and procedures in an effort of continuous improvement. The following plans were assessed over that time:

- The LDMG Terms of Reference were updated and endorsed by the LDMG;
- Standard Operating Procedures for Local Disaster Coordination Centre operations were updated;
- A number of Emergency Action Plans were reviewed and accepted by Council, such as:
  - o Atkinson Dam (Seqwater);
  - o Cressbrook and Perseverance Dams (Toowoomba Regional Council); and
  - o Lake Manchester (Seqwater).

### ***Mitigation Activities***

Council is continuously attempting to reduce risks in the community wherever possible, some key activities undertaken throughout the year were as follows:

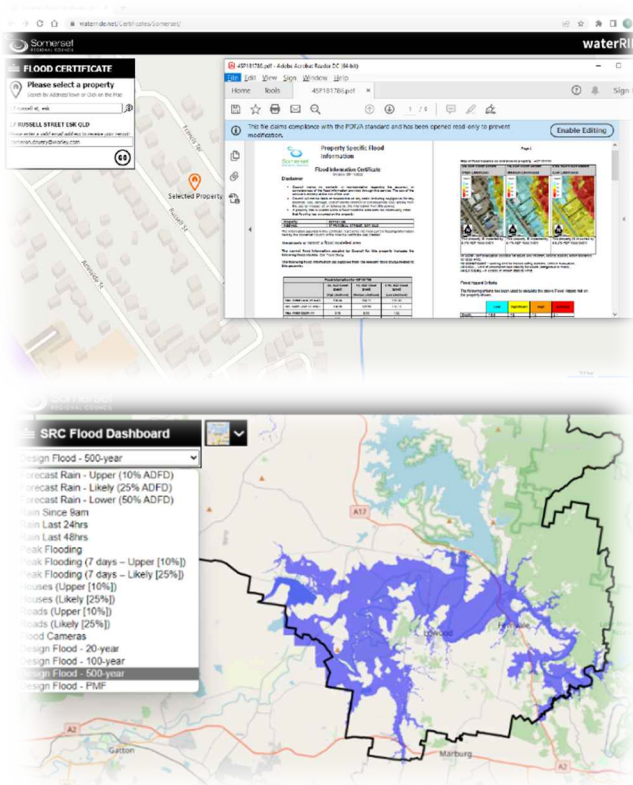
- Council conducted mechanical hazard reduction in the township of Jimna near the Hall and Finch Lane to reduce fire risk at the request of the residents.
- Urban Utilities connected water to the 110,000 litre bushfire tank installed by Council in the township of Jimna.
- Moore Linville Brigade successfully conducted a number of hazard reduction burns in the Moore/Linville area, in particular areas along the Brisbane Valley Rail Trail.
- At the request of the local brigade, Council's slashing program has been expanded in the Linville Camping Grounds to assist in mitigating bushfire risk in that area.
- A fire break at Breens Lane, off Esk-Crows Nest Road was completed at the request of the Biarra Brigade. The brigade believes this break will assist in protecting the township of Esk in the event of a large uncontrolled bushfire.
- Council has engaged consultants for a regional Bushfire Risk Assessment project. This will highlight bushfire risk in the region and assist in future mitigation planning.

### ***Community Engagement***

- Council attended three of the major shows in the region (Esk, Lowood and Toogoolawah), providing a presence and handing out various disaster management related resources and signing people up to the Early Warning Network. Council also attended the Kilcoy Multicultural Festival which was again a huge success.
- The Disaster Management Officer discussed Fernvale mitigation activities since 2011 to approximately 150 West Moreton Anglican College students. This was held at Bill Sharpe Park (Nardoo Lagoon).
- Council met with Jimna residents to discuss disaster preparedness and field questions relating to specific risks in the township. An outcome of these discussions was the fuel reduction activities conducted by Council in the months following.

## Projects

- The Building Inclusive Disaster Resilient Communities project was completed throughout the year. The goal of the project is to build a more inclusive disaster-resilient Somerset region for people with a disability.
- Council helped facilitate a Business Continuity Planning workshop for those in the disability and vulnerable sectors at the Somerset Civic Centre in July. The workshop was developed and run by the Community Services Industry Alliance.
- [Council's Flood Certificate system](#) continues to grow, with over 5,500 certificates produced;
- Council was successful in gaining funding for a number of projects such as the upgrade of Flood Camera infrastructure, and the installation of water and rainfall gauges in a number of locations across the region;
- New Queensland-wide Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) data has been quality assurance tested and provided to Council.
- This LiDAR was used to develop a whole of catchment overland flow flood model.
- Consultants have been engaged for a Historical Flood Mapping project.
- WaterRide Lite deployed in BETA for internal staff to use for flood forecasting.
- Sirens at Lowood and Fernvale were upgraded with new batteries and controllers. These units now have high performance Lithium Batteries which guarantee a 10-year life.



## Emerging Issues

Council has been briefed by Telstra on the closure of 3G in the region, and share the public's concerns. Council has continuously advocated for improved service in the region through Telstra's membership on the Somerset LDMG. Council have stressed to Telstra that any reduction in service as part of the shutdown may impact Council's ability to provide warnings to the public using the emergency alert system during severe weather events. Council will continue to monitor this as the shutdown occurs from 31 August 2024.

## State Emergency Services (SES)

During the year in review, Somerset SES members responded to 91 activations (72 SES tasks and 19 agency support requests) within Somerset, Ipswich, Gold Coast, Logan, Scenic Rim, Brisbane and Cairns local government areas, assisting residents and supporting emergency service operations in the South-East and Far North QFES Regions.

Somerset SES Unit's membership currently stands at 65 active volunteers including 11 new applications for membership during the past twelve months.

Two new Ford Ranger 4WD crew cab utilities were acquired through joint Council and Queensland Government funding of \$192,000 to replace existing SES fleet vehicles for Esk and Lowood SES Groups.

Various improvement projects have been undertaken at the four SES facilities across the Somerset Unit following receipt of extraordinary State Government funding in 2023.

During the period under review, SES members logged:

- 5,155 hours in non-operational functions (training, administration, equipment and facilities maintenance); and
- 1,312 operational hours assisting in the 91 tasks recorded in the Task and Management System as summarised below:
  - o Storm damage;
  - o Sandbagging;
  - o Trees down;
  - o Land and forensic searches;
  - o Flood boat rescues;
  - o Traffic management;
  - o Patient retrieval; and
  - o Crime scene protection.

SES members provided a range of support functions to the following community events in the Somerset Council region during 2023-24:

- Fernvale Fishing Expo;
- 21<sup>st</sup> annual Somerset Rail Trail Classic;
- Lowood Youth Fest;
- Clean Up Australia;
- Toogoolawah Rodeo;
- Lifecycle Cycling Classic;
- Toogoolawah Show;
- Esk Garden & Lifestyle Festival; and
- Esk Races.



Image: Patient rescue and retrieval training





Image: Flood boat operator training



Image: Chainsaw operator training



Image: First aid training

## Waste Services and Recycling Management

### ***Waste Reduction and Recycling Plan 2018-2022***

The Waste Reduction and Recycling Plan (WRRP) was due for renewal in the 2022/2023 Operational Plan; however, its updating has been delayed due to reallocation of available resources to assist and manage the flood restoration response.

Council participated in the preparation of the South East Queensland Waste Management Plan which will inform with the revision of the updated Somerset WRRP. This is due to be completed by 31 December 2024.

### ***Waste Levy***

The Esk weighbridge commenced operation on 1 July 2019, coinciding with the implementation of the Queensland government's waste disposal levy. The weighbridge is in its fourth year of operation. Staff and customers have adapted well to the changes the weighbridge has brought to operations.

In 2022/2023, 9,559 tonnes of Municipal Solid Waste made its way into the Esk landfill, which was a reduction from last year. Over 10,054 vehicles went across the weighbridge in that time.

### ***Wheelie Bin Kerbside Collection***

The general waste and recycling kerbside collection with Ipswich City Council for the whole of Somerset Region has been operating for two years now. The total amount of kerbside recyclables collected for the 2023-2024 financial year and diverted from the landfill was 1,175 tonnes.



The average presentation rate of the kerbside recycling bins in Somerset Region for this financial year was 60%.

Kerbside waste and recycling services were extended along the remainder of Atkinsons Dam Road and Gatton Esk Road during the year. Also, several new housing estates were added to the wheelie bin kerbside collection run in Fernvale, Lowood and Kilcoy areas.

### ***Refuse and Recycling Centres***

The contract for the operation of the Coominya, Harlin and Kilcoy refuse and recycling centres has been going for two years now and is due to expire in one year's time.

Council has continued to monitor the sites for safety for the public, its contractors and its employees by continually auditing its procedures and updating signage as required.

### ***Recycling Programs***

Council continues to participate in a number of recycling programs, for example, mobile muster and the e-waste recycling program, and continues to seek opportunities for more.

### ***Containers for Change***

Council entered into a new agreement with Containers for Change to provide a pop-up container deposit collection within the region due to Anuha no longer taking part in the pop-up container deposit scheme or any recycling activities.

### ***Transfer Stations – Recycling Initiatives***

Council continues to accept cardboard, paper, metal, e-waste, car batteries, glass bottles, and aluminium cans free of charge. These items are collected and taken off site and recycled at various material recovery facilities.

Chippable green waste is also accepted free of charge. The waste is mulched and stockpiled on site at each transfer station and is either sold to the public or reused on Council projects.

### ***Drum Muster***

Council continued to work in partnership with Agsafe to provide the DrumMuster program and the ChemClear program. The DrumMuster program provides for eligible drums to be collected from residents at Council's waste facilities free of charge.

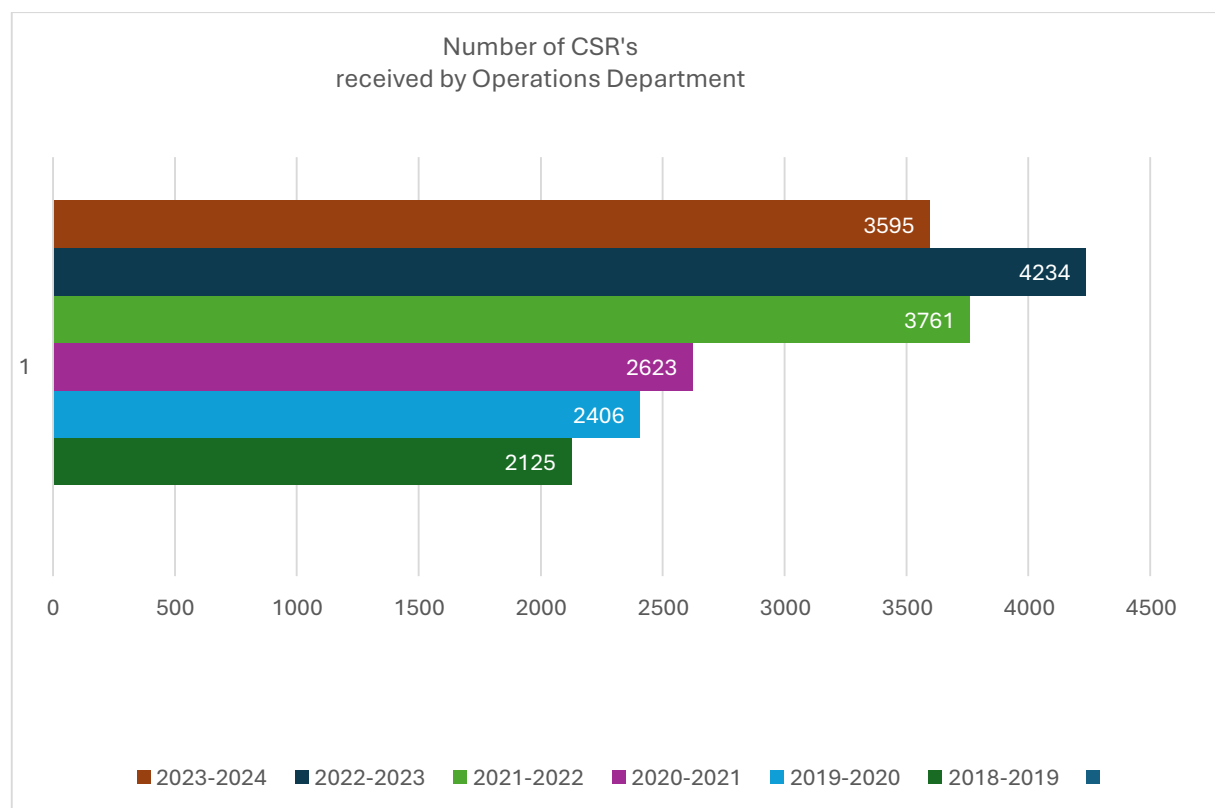
The ChemClear program provides a site for residents to meet with Agsafe to pick up unwanted chemicals.

### **Waste Voucher**

The waste voucher program continued this year with each property receiving two vouchers annually. Each voucher allows residents to dispose of waste up half a cubic metre at no charge, making a total of one cubic metre of waste per year.

### **Customer Service System**

The Operations Department received a total of 3,595 customer service requests for the 2023/2024 financial year. It is believed that the number of requests received has reduced because many roads damaged from the flood events in February, March and May 2022 have been repaired.



# HUMAN RESOURCES AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

(including reporting requirements outlined in the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*)

Council's Human Resource and Customer Service Department is responsible for ensuring employees are trained and work in accordance with relevant legislation, and work health and safety requirements. The department also provides the community's first point of contact with the Council at the Administration and Customer Service Centres.

## Human Resources

### ***Our Workforce***

At 30 June 2024, Council had 218 staff employed in a variety of tenures (status) to meet the operational needs of the organisation.

Status	Number of employees as at 30 June 2023	Number of employees as at 30 June 2024
Full-Time	156	161
Part-Time	22	26
Temporary	5	13
Casual	16	10
Apprentice / Trainee / Cadet	11	8
TOTAL	210	218

### ***Workforce Demographics at 30 June 2024***

Gender	Female	Male
Indoor	73	47
Outdoor	3	95
	76	142

Age	Female	Male
Baby Boomer (1946-1964)	10	28
Generation X (1965-1980)	28	67
Millennials (1981-1995)	26	23
Generation Z (1995- )	12	24
	76	142

Length of Service (years)	# Employees
Less than 10	150
10+	41
20+	20
30+	5
40+	2

Where our Workforce Lives:	
Postcode	Number
4306	21
4311	27
4312	45
4313	25
4314	5
4514	5
4515	35
Other	55

### ***Employee Service Recognition***

Council recognises employees with service of 10 years with a presentation of a certificate of service and appropriate gift at five year intervals.

In October 2023, Council held a group service recognition presentation to acknowledge 18 employees who had reached service milestones during the 2023 calendar year. In total, 280 years of service to Somerset Regional Council was recognised on the day.

### ***Apprenticeships, Traineeships and Study Assistance***

Council continued its support of employment opportunities for apprentices and trainees during 2023-2024 with six employees completing their traineeships / apprenticeships and gaining formal qualifications in their respective areas of study:

- One traineeship in Business Administration – Arts and Culture
- One traineeship in Business Administration – Facilities
- One traineeship in Business Administration – Finance
- One apprenticeship in the Engineering Fabrication Trade - Workshop
- Two apprenticeships in Heavy Commercial Vehicle Mechanical Technology - Workshop

Areas where new trainees and apprentices were appointed were:

- Two apprenticeships in Heavy Commercial Vehicle Mechanical Technology - Workshop
- One traineeship in Business Administration – Records Management
- One traineeship in Business Administration – Finance
- One traineeship in Business Administration – Arts and Culture

These new placements were in addition to the following existing placements:

- One Cadet Finance Officer
- One Cadet Information & Computer Technology Officer
- One apprenticeship in Parks and Gardens – Operations
- One apprenticeship in Civil Construction Plant – Operations
- One apprenticeships in Heavy Commercial Vehicle Mechanical Technology - Workshop



### ***Training and Professional Development***

Council's Study Assistance Policy was made available to employees undertaking nationally recognised Certificate, Diploma and University level courses throughout 2023-2024 relevant to their areas of employment within the organisation.

In addition, Council continued to offer a variety of training / professional development opportunities throughout the year for employees to gain nationally recognised qualifications.

Various other training and professional development opportunities were offered / delivered to support the continued development of Team Somerset in addition to attendance at various industry specific forums, seminars and conferences.

### ***Training / Induction Processes***

Monthly corporate induction programs were provided to new employees on commencement of employment during 2023-2024, where required, to ensure a smooth transition and seamless integration into Council.

The program covers mandatory information including review of relevant human resource and work health and safety legislation, code of conduct, Council procedures, policies and legislative requirements in relevant areas.

Council's online work health and safety management system provided a platform for core induction modules to be completed prior to the commencement of new employees which enhanced onboarding processes. The platform included mandatory code of conduct training requirements for new and existing employees ensuring annual refresher training is completed.

The online system also embedded training needs analysis functionality specific to the employee and roles within the organisation.

### ***Performance Appraisals***

Performance appraisals for all team members continued to be conducted throughout 2023-2024 by relevant supervising personnel. From this process, training needs are identified with appropriate education and training courses sourced, promoted and delivered as required.

### ***Volunteers***

Volunteers are integral to various Council activities such as visitor information centres, library services and community connection points across the Somerset region. Council has approximately 50 active volunteers across these services within the Somerset region as of 30 June 2024.

Council provides the volunteers with induction training, personal development opportunities, familiarisation tours and recognition events i.e. National Volunteers Day etc.

### ***Staff Wellbeing Initiatives***

Council continued its commitment to enhancing the work health and wellbeing of Team Somerset with the wellness committee developing and delivering multiple work health and wellbeing activities, initiatives and interventions throughout the year.

The wellbeing program continues to promote a work environment that aims to foster a workplace culture where health and wellbeing are highly valued.

Council is committed to enhancing work health and wellbeing by:

- creating a healthy culture
- creating and supporting a work health and wellbeing strategy

- establishing and supporting a work health and wellbeing committee
- modifying the work organisations and the work environment
- managing risks to workers physical and mental health
- consulting with workers
- supporting worker participation in work health and wellbeing interventions
- supporting workers to adopt and maintain healthy behaviours.

## **Work Health and Safety**

A Work Health Safety (WHS) Strategic Plan 2022-2025 continued to capture key strategies for achieving Council's Corporate Plan for work health and safety, along with the 2023-2024 annual WHS Operational Plan (action plan).

The WHS Management Plan continued to define Council's health and safety management system and provide a framework and road map. The WHS Operational Plan provided the action plan for the 2023-2024 FY. Health and safety system procedures and safe operating procedures continued to be reviewed and improved in consultation with workers during 2023-2024 ensuring Safety STAR was embedded throughout.

Key performance indicators adopted based on the SMART principle and the monthly WHS Report format tracks progress on KPIs and provides comprehensive and consistent data to management on relevant work health and safety matters.

Further development and implementation of the online health and safety system provided improved functionality across all sections of the organisation. The online system is used for incident and hazard reporting, to submit opportunities for improvement, inductions, training plans and training records, corrective actions, workplace inspections, safety engagements, injury management, contractor management etc.

Core employee online induction modules, and other training collateral, continued to be developed and improved upon, again ensuring Safety STAR is embedded in all WHS Inductions. With an established and embedded training needs analysis, employees continued to self-manage induction training and check on training gaps via the online system. The online health and safety system also provided improved reporting functionality.

Computers installed in all depots across the region continue to provide field-based employees with access to complete online training and inductions, log events and access the document centre via a desktop computer (all functions are also available via smartphone).

QR Code technology continues to provide contractors direct access to the WHS Contractor Induction and workers with direct access to Hazchem safety data sheets.

The WHS Committee met every two months during 2023-2024 with minutes of meetings available to all employees via the online document centre.

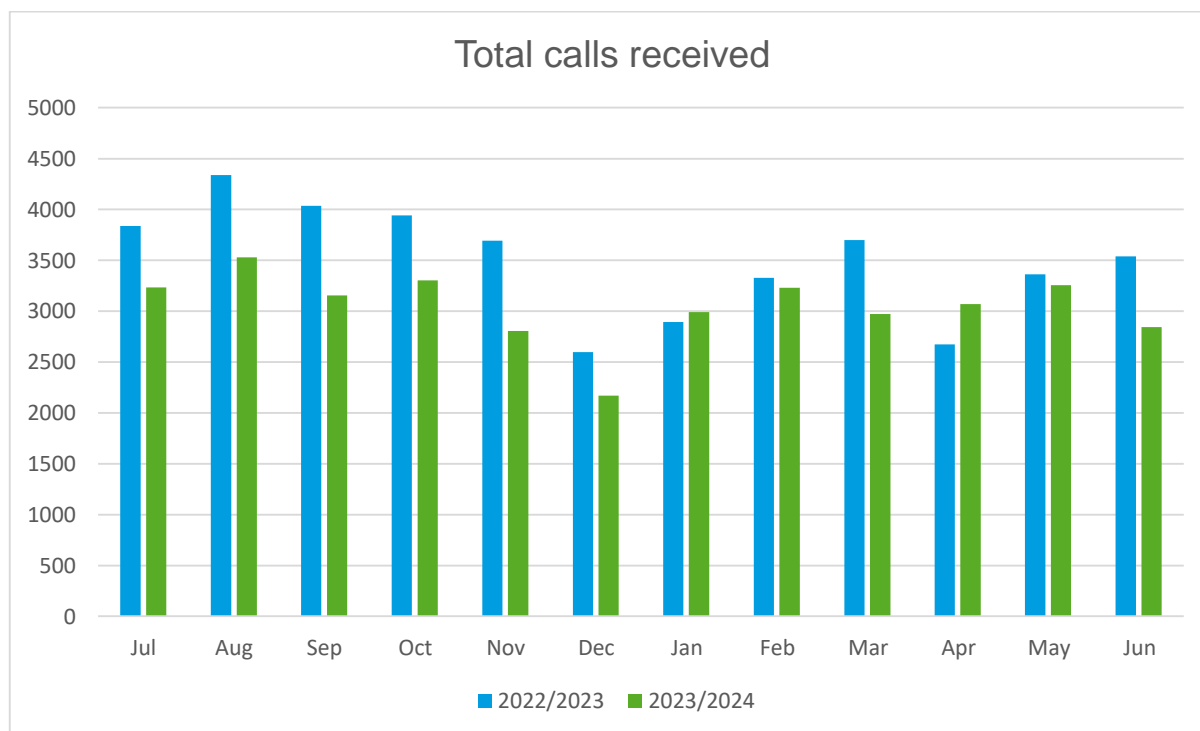
The formal WHS audit schedule continued to ensure the implementation of the plan, do, check, act methodology.

## **Customer Service**

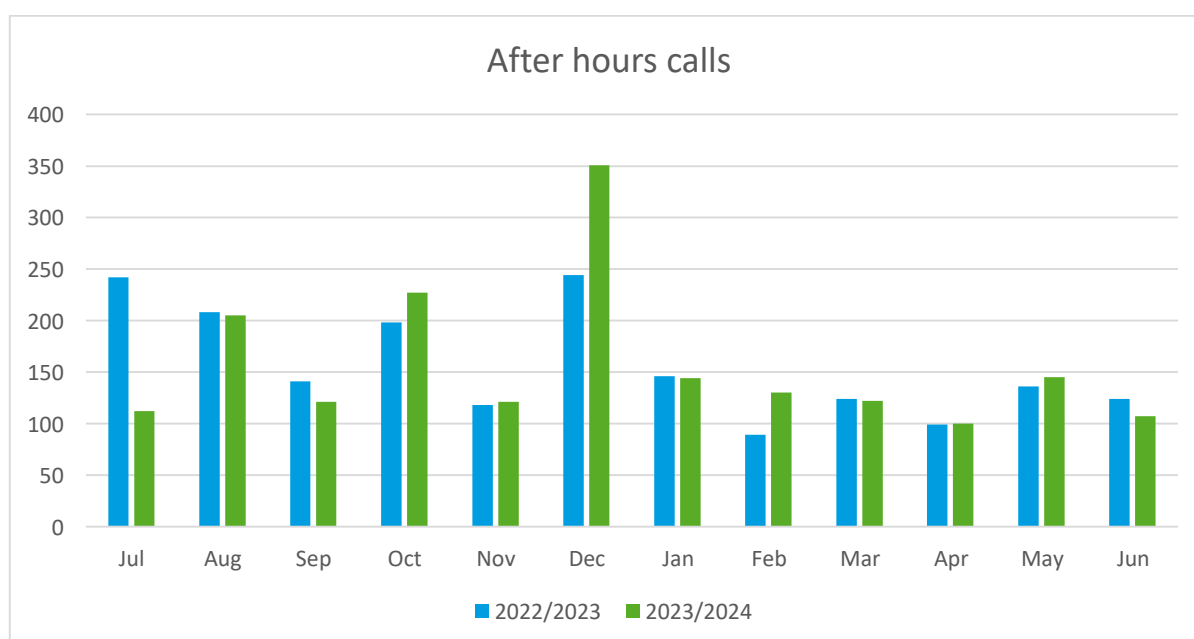
Council's administration and customer service centres are located in Esk, Kilcoy and Lowood. These centres provide a full range of transactions of all Council services during standard business hours, Monday to Friday. In addition, the Lowood customer service centre provides Queensland Government Agency Program (QGAP) services.

Reports on activities from the Customer Service team were presented to Council monthly. During the 2023-2024 the customer service team reviewed and implemented improvements of various systems and processes with particular focus on digitising where practicable.

Council's customer service team answer and direct incoming calls on the main Council phoneline. In 2023/2024 there was an average of 3,045 calls received per month which decreased from 2022/2023 of 3,493 calls per month.

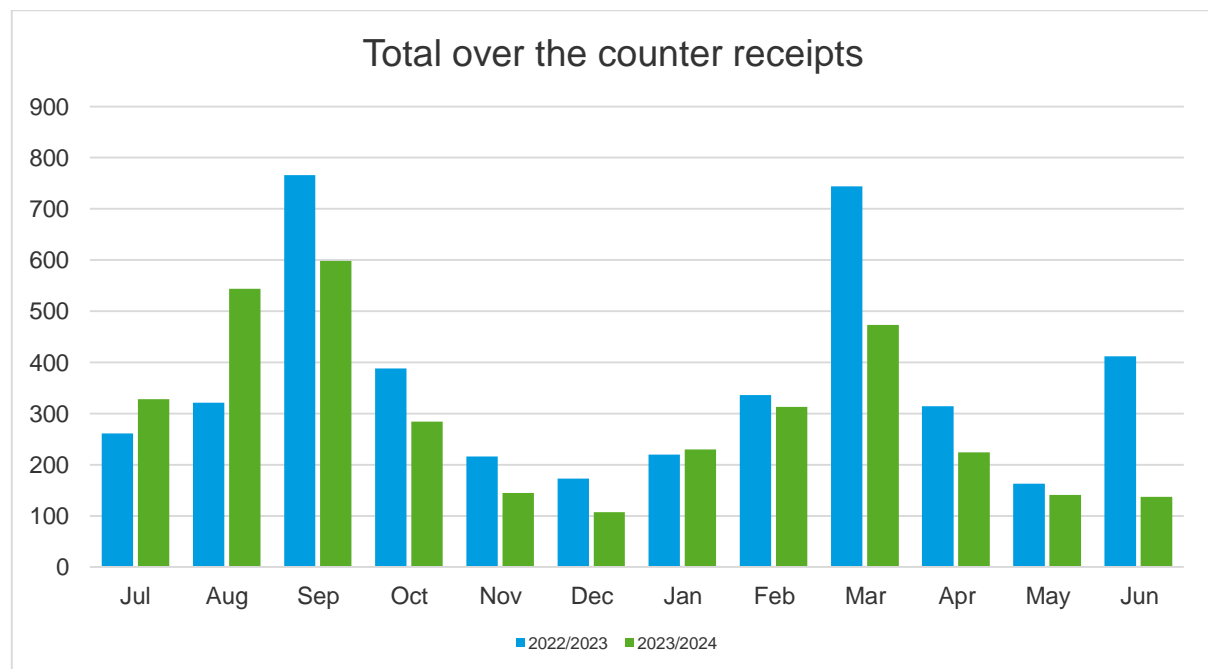


Council's after-hours service is provided by Peak 24/7 Out of Hours Call Centre through Peak Services. In 2023/2024 1,885 calls were received after hours. This is in comparison to 1,869 in 2022/2023.

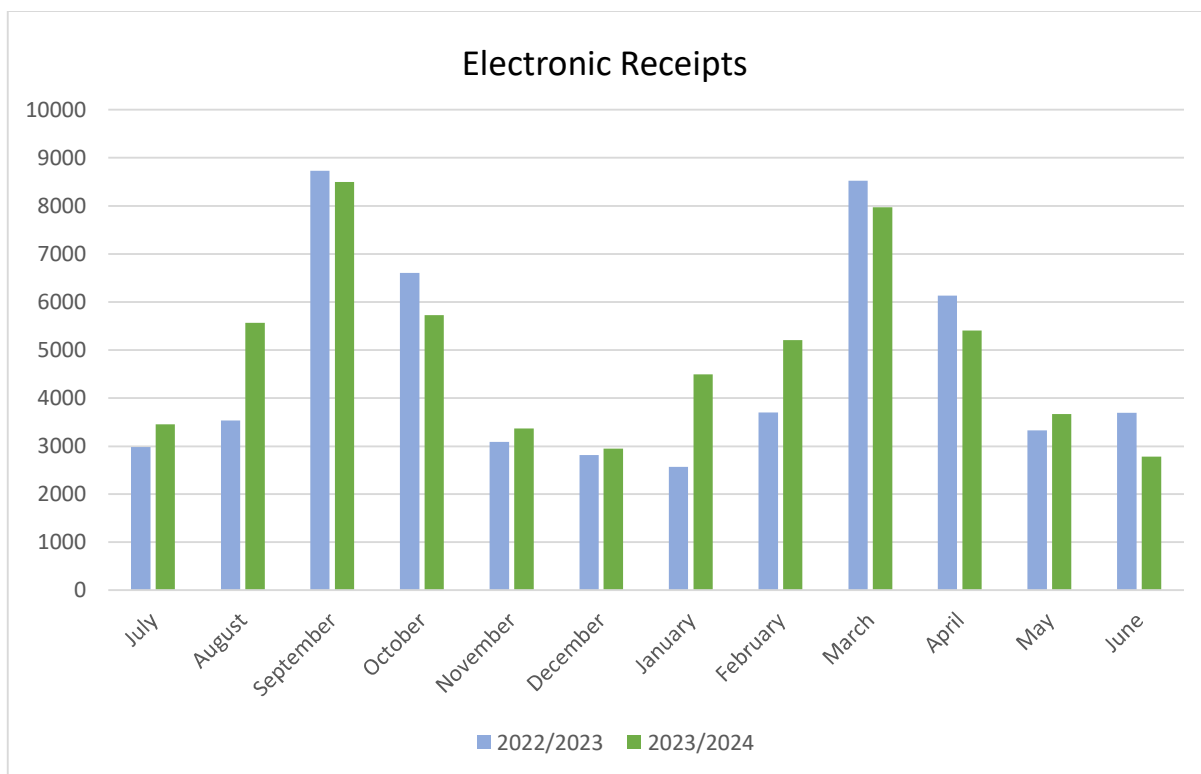


Council has customer service standards that prioritise after-hours requests that require immediate response. Non-urgent matters are recorded and scheduled for processing during standard business hours.

At Council's administration and customer service centres, over the counter receipts are taken for payments such as rates, dog registration, development applications, facility hire costs etc. In 2023/2024 there were 3,524 over the counter receipts taken across the three centres, compared to 2022-2023 there were 4,314 over the counter receipts this is a reduction of 790 receipts.



Council also processes electronic payments, these payments including BPay and electronic funds transfer, for various services such as rates and animal registration. In the 2022-2023 financial year there were 55,716 electronic payments processed. This number increased to 59,103 in the 2023-2024 financial year, reflecting a rise of 3,387 transactions.



### **Queensland Government Agency Program (QGAP)**

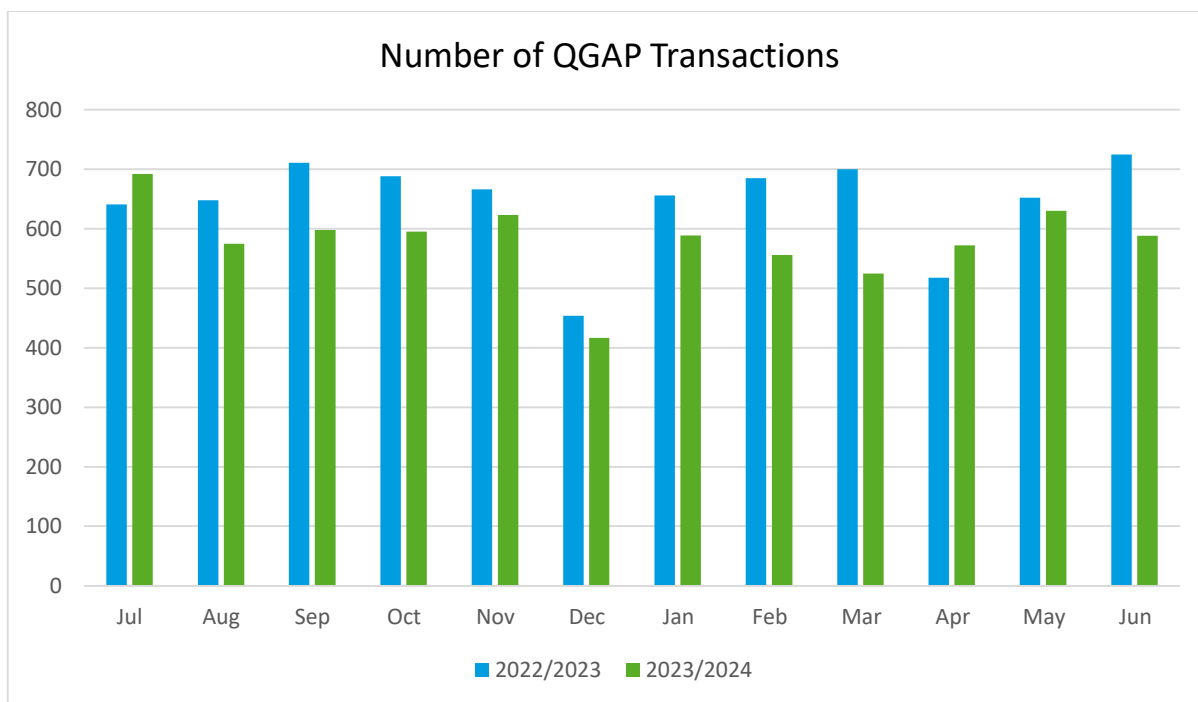
Council has operated a Queensland Government Agency Program (QGAP) at the Lowood Customer Service Centre since the year 2000. QGAP is a network of one-stop-shops for specific Government services in rural and remote Queensland communities. These services include but are not limited to:

- Department of Transport and Main Roads
- Australian Electoral Commission
- Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages
- Electoral Commission Queensland
- Office of Fair Trading
- Housing and Homeless
- Justice of the Peace Activities
- QBE / Suncorp Insurance
- SPER
- Seniors Cards

The agency offers information, services and / or referral for the above Government Departments. Associated transactions can also be conducted from the agency.

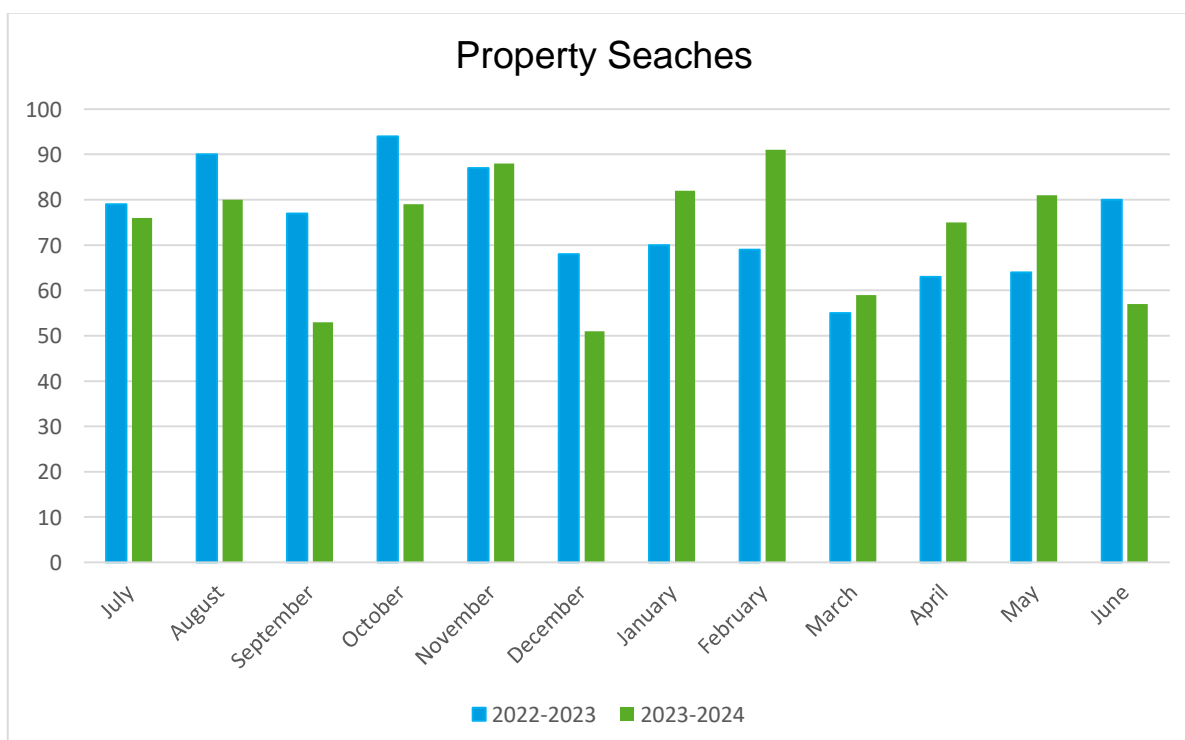
Of all the services offered at the QGAP agency, Department of Transport and Main Roads services continue to be in demand.

	01/07/2022-30/06/2023	01/07/2023-30/06/2024
Total number of Transactions	7,744	6,960
Total collection value	\$977,740.27	\$931,071.68
Average service time per transaction	5.03 minutes	4.55 minutes



### ***Property Searches***

The customer service team oversee Council's property search function. At the Esk Administration Centre there were 872 completed property searches for prospective purchasers during 2023-2024, this is in comparison to 896 in 2022-2023.



## **MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS**

In the 2023/24 financial year, Council's communications function has been pivotal in ensuring effective and timely dissemination of information to the public and media.

Council proactively issued over 100 media releases, showcasing our commitment to transparency and active engagement with the community. Additionally, Council handled about 15 media enquiries per month, maintaining a robust presence in regional and local media landscapes.

Our communications team, consisting of the Communications Manager, casual support staff, and external contractors, played a crucial role in managing a wide range of functions. These responsibilities included producing and distributing media releases, overseeing social media channels, managing Council-owned websites, and coordinating disaster communications. The team also facilitated Council-supported promotions, managed event activities, and provided speechwriting support for elected members as required.

### ***Key Support and Training Initiatives***

In April, following the local government elections, the Communications Manager played a crucial role in supporting the onboarding process for newly elected members. This initiative ensured that all new members were well-acquainted with the communications function, its processes, and methodologies. The onboarding included social media training and awareness sessions, equipping elected members with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively engage with the community through various digital platforms.

### ***Challenges and Adaptations***

The evolving media landscape posed significant challenges throughout the year. Changes in media coverage patterns and shifts in how information is consumed impacted the visibility and reach of Council activities and promotions. Despite these challenges, the communications team adapted by refining our strategies and exploring new channels to effectively reach and engage our audience.

### ***Community Engagement and Promotional Activities***

Council continued to prioritise community engagement through various promotional activities. We produced and distributed flyers and brochures detailing our services and regional activities, ensuring that residents and stakeholders remain informed. Further, our team managed promotional stands at key events across the region, actively promoting Council's services and initiatives.

### ***In summary***

The communications function of Council remains committed to enhancing public awareness and engagement through strategic media relations and effective communication practices. Despite the challenges posed by a dynamic media environment, our dedicated team has successfully navigated these changes, ensuring that the Council's messages and services are communicated to the community. Looking ahead, we will continue to adapt and innovate to meet the evolving needs of our audience and maintain our high standards of transparency and engagement.

# LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

## Resolutions

*Section 185 of the Local Government Regulation 2012*

No resolutions adopting an expenses reimbursement policy were made during the financial year. There were also no resolutions made amending the existing reimbursement policy.

No resolutions changing the threshold for non-current physical assets (s206(2)) of the Local Government Regulation 2012) were made during the financial year.

## Total Remuneration Paid to Each Councillor (including Superannuation Contribution)

*Section 186(a) of the Local Government Regulation 2012*

Total remuneration paid by Council to each of its Councillors for the 2023/2024 financial year:

COUNCILLOR	ALLOWANCE/FEES
Graeme Lehmann	\$102,603.70
Sean Choat	\$ 51,301.92
Cheryl Gaedtke	\$ 51,301.92
Helen Brieschke	\$ 78,933.68
Robert Whalley	\$ 51,301.92
Kylee Isidro	\$ 65,778.72
Jason Wendt	\$ 80,255.52
Michael Bishop	\$ 14,476.74
Brett Freese	\$ 14,476.74
Tiara Hurley	\$ 14,476.74
Sally Jess	\$ 14,476.74
<i>Total Remuneration</i>	<i>\$539,384.34</i>

Total superannuation contributions paid by Council for each of its Councillors for the 2023/2024 financial year:

COUNCILLOR	SUPERANNUATION
Graeme Lehmann	\$12,312.53
Sean Choat	\$ 6,156.18
Cheryl Gaedtke	\$ 6,156.18
Helen Brieschke	\$ 9,471.99
Robert Whalley	\$ 6,156.18
Kylee Isidro	\$ 7,893.38



Jason Wendt	\$ 9,630.63
Michael Bishop	\$ 1,592.45
Brett Freese	\$ 1,592.45
Tiara Hurley	\$ 1,592.45
Sally Jess	\$ 1,592.45
<i>Total Superannuation</i>	<i>\$64,146.87</i>

### **Expenses Incurred by and Facilities Provided to Each Councillor Under the Reimbursement of Expenses Policy**

*Section 186(b) of the Local Government Regulation 2012*

Expenses reimbursed and facilities provided during 2023/2024 were:

<b>COUNCILLOR</b>	<b>EXPENSES</b>
Graeme Lehmann	\$ 21,754.84
Sean Choat	\$ 18,959.59
Cheryl Gaedtke	\$ 21,185.72
Helen Brieschke	\$ 28,886.74
Robert Whalley	\$ 19,202.32
Kylee Isidro	\$ 27,820.53
Jason Wendt	\$ 28,161.06
Michael Bishop	\$ 5,926.96
Brett Freese	\$ 7,609.50
Tiara Hurley	\$ 6,341.96
Sally Jess	\$ 6,923.49
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$192,772.71</i>

No non-cash property was transferred to Councillors.

The following facilities were provided to Councillors following their induction in April 2024:

FACILITIES PROVIDED						
COUNCILLOR	MOBILE PHONE \$	MICROSOFT LICENCING \$	TABLET DATA SERVICE COSTS \$	TABLET \$	ACCESSORIES \$	TOTAL COST (Excluding GST) \$
Cr J Wendt	954.55	605.87	62.89	440.28	141.85	2,205.44
Cr H Brieschke	-	605.87	63.45	440.19	141.85	1,251.36
Cr K Isidro	-	605.87	63.45	440.19	141.85	1,251.36
Cr M Bishop	-	605.87	63.88	440.19	141.85	1,251.79
Cr B Freese	-	605.87	63.88	440.19	141.85	1,251.79
Cr T Hurley	-	605.87	63.45	415.00	141.85	1,226.17
Cr S Jess	-	605.87	63.45	415.00	141.85	1,226.17

### Councillor Meeting Attendance

*Section 186(c) of the Local Government Regulation 2012*

COUNCILLOR	ORDINARY MEETING	SPECIAL MEETING
Cr G Lehmann	13	0
Cr H Brieschke	13	0
Cr S Choat	13	0
Cr C Gaedtke	13	0
Cr K Isidro	12	0
Cr J Wendt	13	0
Cr B Whalley	10	0
<i>Post-Election</i>		
Cr J Wendt	6	1
Cr H Brieschke	6	1
Cr K Isidro	6	1
Cr M Bishop	6	1
Cr B Freese	6	1
Cr T Hurley	6	1
Cr S Jess	6	1

## **\*\*Councillor Misconduct**

Section 186(d), (e), (f) of the Local Government Regulation 2012

s186(1)(d)(i)	There were <b>no orders</b> made under section 150I(2) of the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> .
s186(1)(d)(ii)	There were <b>no orders</b> made under section 150IA(2)(b) of the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> .
s186(1)(d)(iii)	There were <b>no orders</b> made under section 150AH(1) of the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> .
s186(1)(d)(iv)	There were <b>no decisions, orders or recommendations</b> made under section 150AR(1) of the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> .
s186(1)(e)(i)	There were <b>no decisions, orders or recommendations</b> made about a Councillor under s186(d) during the financial year.  A decision/order/recommendation under section 150I(2), 150IA(2)(b), 150AH(1) or 150AR(1) of the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> was made for *insert name of councillor*.
s186(1)(e)(ii)	A description of the unsuitable meeting conduct, conduct breach or misconduct engaged in by each of the councillors.
s186(1)(e)(iii)	A summary of the decision, order or recommendation made for each Councillor.
s186(1)(f)(i)	There were <b>three (3)</b> referred to the Independent Assessor under section 150P(2)(a) of the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> by the local government, a Councillor of the local government or the Chief Executive Officer of the local government.
s186(1)(f)(ii)	With reference to s150P(3) of the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> , there were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>no complaints</b> referred to the Crime and Corruption Commission by the local government, a Councillor of the local government or the Chief Executive Officer of the local government.</li> <li>- <b>no investigations into complaints or Councillor conduct undertaken</b> by the local government, a Councillor of the local government or the Chief Executive Officer of the local government in accordance with any other law.</li> </ul>
s186(1)(f)(iii)	There was <b>one (1)</b> notice given to the Independent Assessor under section 150R(2) of the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> .
s186(1)(f)(iv)	There were <b>no notices</b> given to the Independent Assessor concerning misconduct by any Councillor under section 150S(2)(a) of the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> .
s186(1)(f)(v)	There were <b>*insert number* occasions</b> when information was given to the Independent Assessor in accordance with section 150AF(3)(a) of the <i>Local</i>

	<i>Government Act 2009</i> , so that the Independent Assessor could undertake a preliminary assessment under division 3A of the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> .
s186(1)(f)(vi)	There were <b>no occasions</b> the local government asked another entity to investigate, under Chapter 5A, Part 3, Division 5 of the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> , the suspected conduct breach of a Councillor, for the local government.
s186(1)(f)(vii)	There were <b>no applications</b> heard by the conduct tribunal under Chapter 5A, Part 3, Division 6 of the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> , about whether a Councillor engaged in misconduct or a conduct breach.
s186(1)(g)	There were <b>no referral notices</b> given to the local government by the Independent Assessor under section 150AC(1) of the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> .
s186(1)(h)	<p>There were <b>no referral notices</b> given to the local government by the Independent Assessor under section 150AC(1) of the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i>. Consequently, there were no suspected conduct breaches, and no suspected conduct breaches for which an investigation was not started or discontinued under section 150AEA of the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i>.</p> <p><b>OR</b></p> <p>Of the <b>*insert number*</b> referral notices given to the local government by the Independent Assessor under section 150AC(1) of the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i>, there were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>*insert number*</b> suspected conduct breaches; and</li> <li>- <b>*insert number*</b> suspected conduct breaches for which an investigation was not started or was discontinued under section 150AEA of the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i>.</li> </ul>
s186(1)(i)	There were <b>no decisions</b> made by the local government under section 150AG(1) of the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> during the financial year.
s186(1)(j)	There were <b>*insert number*</b> matters not decided by the end of the financial year under section 150AG(1) of the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> .
s186(1)(k)	The average time taken by the local government in making a decision under section 150AG(1) of the <i>Local Government Act 2009</i> was <b>*insert average time*</b> .

## Administrative Action Complaints

### *Section 187 of the Local Government Regulation 2012*

Council is committed to dealing fairly with administrative action complaints. Council's approach to dealing with complaints is outlined in its Administrative Action Complaints Policy, which became effective on 1 July 2011. This Policy has been reviewed several times since adoption. The scope of the policy is as follows:

The complaints process has been established for resolving complaints by affected persons about administrative action of the Council. However, the complaints process does not apply to a complaint –

- that could be made under the Local Government Regulation 2012 about competitive neutrality issues;
- about official misconduct that should be directed to the Crime and Misconduct Commission;
- made in accordance with the *Human Rights Act 2019*,
- made under the *Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010*; or
- about the conduct and performance of Councillors under Division 6, Part 2, Chapter 6 of the *Local Government Act 2009*.

This policy excludes requests for service, enquiries, suggestions, actions and decisions taken under legislation which provide for separate avenues of appeal, such as decisions made under the *Planning Act 2016*, prosecutions made under Local Laws that are appealable to a Magistrates Court and decisions under the Building Act, unless the complaint relates to administrative actions associated with the action or decision.

There were also various other requests for review of Council's decisions using Council's internal review processes. These are outlined below.

### Departmental Reviews – Level One

Department	2023 – 2024	2022 - 2023	2021 - 2022	2020 - 2021	2019-2020
<b>Corporate and Community Services</b>	0	1	0	0	0
<b>Operations</b>	8	4	5	12	8
<b>Planning and Development</b>	2	6	2	1	0

### Internal Reviews

2023 - 2024	2022 - 2023	2021 - 2022	2020 - 2021	2019-2020
2	6	2	2	3

One Internal Review remains unresolved as of 30 June 2024 and will be carried-forwarded to the 2024-2025 financial year.

### Applications for Review of Local Government Decision

2023 - 2024	2022 - 2023	2021 - 2022	2020 - 2021	2019-2020
4	7	3	2	5

Council's process for managing complaints has ensured that matters raised have been properly considered, that complainants have been offered natural justice and that issues relating to complaints generally have been resolved satisfactorily.

### Overseas Travel

*Section 188 of the Local Government Regulation 2012*

There was no overseas travel undertaken by a councillor or local government employee in an official capacity during the financial year.

## **Grants to Community Organisations**

*Section 189 of the Local Government Regulation 2012*

The local government's expenditure for the financial year on grants to community organisations was \$113,150.12. A further \$63,767.74 was provided in Regional Arts Development Fund grants.

Councillors did not have discretionary funds during the financial year.

## **Annual Operations Report for Each Commercial Business Unit**

*Section 190(1)(c) of the Local Government Regulation 2012*

There were no commercial business units to report for the financial year.

## **Conducting a Joint Government Activity**

*Section 190(1)(d) of the Local Government Regulation 2012*

There was no action taken for or expenditure on a service, facility or activity that was supplied by another local government under an agreement for conducting a joint government activity for which the local government levied special rates or charges for the financial year.

## **Invitations to Change Tenders**

*Section 190(1)(e) of the Local Government Regulation 2012*

There were no invitations to change tenders under section 228(8) of the Local Government Regulation during the financial year.

## **Registers Kept by the Local Government**

*Section 190(1)(f) of the Local Government Regulation 2012*

- Register of Local and Subordinate Local Laws
- Road Register
- Register of Regulatory and Cost-Recovery Fees
- Asset Register
- Councillor Conduct Register
- Delegations Register – Council to Chief Executive Officer
- Delegations Register – Chief Executive Officer to Employee or Contractor
- Register of Interests
- Lobbyist Contact Register
- Register of Council Policies
- Development Application Register
- Cemetery Register
- Food Premise Register
- Infrastructure Charges Register
- Register of Infirm and Medical Wheelie Bin Services
- Number of Wheelie Bin (General and Recycling) Services Register

## **Summary of Concessions for Rates and Charges**

*Section 190(1)(g) of the Local Government Regulation 2012*

Rebates and concessions on rates were as follows:

### **1. Pensioner part-remission of certain general rates as set out in the 2023/2024 Revenue Statement as follows:**

R27. Pensioner rebate of Kilcoy differential general rates

R27.1 Qualifying Pensions

Rebate of part of certain rates and charges as determined by Council from time to time may be granted to owners who are holders of a current valid Queensland pensioner concession card and who are eligible to receive a State Government Pensioner Rate Subsidy under the rules of the State Government Pensioner Rate Subsidy Scheme.

The rebate may be granted under Section 120 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*. Council has decided to phase out the granting of an automatic concession of this kind to pensioners but wishes to protect those pensioners currently receiving the concession from any hardship resulting from the change. Those pensioners in receipt of the pensioner rate subsidy as at 30 June 2008 will continue to receive the subsidy provided they retain other eligibility criteria. However, no new automatic concession will be granted to those pensioners not already in receipt of the concession as at 30 June 2008.

R27.2 Application

A pensioner rebate as above shall apply to differential general rates within the former Kilcoy Shire.

R27.3 Calculation

The rebate of differential general rates within the former Kilcoy Shire shall be equal to:

- \$20 per annum multiplied by;
- The percentage to which the landowners are entitled to receive a State Government Pensioner Rate Subsidy under the rules of that subsidy scheme as issued by State authorities from time to time.

For example, if a full State Government Pensioner Rate Subsidy applies to a rate assessment where differential general rates of \$1,000 would otherwise apply, the landowner shall be entitled to a rebate of \$20 of the rates. If 33% of the full State Government Pensioner Rate Subsidy applies, the landowner shall be entitled to a rebate of 33% of \$20 of the rates.

R27.4 Justification

Council has decided to offer the concession on differential general rates within the former Kilcoy Shire to recognise the financial impact on people of fixed incomes within the former Kilcoy Shire who enjoyed the same level of rebate in previous years.

R27.5 Administration

An application for a State Government Pensioner Rate Subsidy shall be taken to also be an application for Council pensioner rebate. The rules governing eligibility to the State Government Pensioner Rate Subsidy Scheme as issued by State authorities from time to time shall apply in determining eligibility to the Council rebate.

## **2. The following concession as resolved by Council**

"THAT a concession being a rebate of rates and charges be given to the owners of property 35888-00000-000 for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 equal to the difference between the net general rates chargeable for the property and the net amount that would be payable if the property was categorised in rating category 2 because the payment of the rates as categorised would cause hardship."

## **3. The following concession as resolved by Council**

"THAT a rebate of rates and charges be given to the owner of Lot 1 RP28857 assessment 02352-80000-000 for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 equal to the difference between the net general rates chargeable for the property and the net amount that would be payable if the property was categorised in rating category 2 because the payment of the rates as categorised would cause hardship."

## **4. The following concession as resolved by Council**

"THAT pursuant to Sections 120(1)(c) and 122 of the Local Government Regulation 2012 and subject to the following, Council rebate part of the general rates, as calculated below in the following circumstances:

- The ratepayer is the owner of a dwelling where building plans were approved more than ten years before the commencement date of the rating period in which the rebate application was received;
- No final certificate has been issued for the dwelling and it will not be possible to obtain a final certificate without damaging the dwelling or its foundations;
- The dwelling has stood in its current location for longer than ten years with no evidence of structural failure;
- The ownership of the property has changed since the dwelling was constructed; and
- The applicant's property is or was included in differential general rating category 1 or differential general rating category 2.

Calculation of rebate:

The rebate is the difference between the rate otherwise applicable for the property and the rate that would apply if the property hosted a single approved dwelling."

## **Report on the Internal Audit**

*Section 190(1)(h) of the Local Government Regulation 2012.*

For 2023/2024, internal auditors, O'Connor Marsden undertook internal audits and other activities as follows in accordance with the three-year strategic internal audit plan:

<b>Internal audit items to 30 June 2024</b>	<b>Progress</b>	<b>Indicative timing</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Core business processes and / or specific internal audits of identified key business risk: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Information security control environment</li><li>• Fraud and integrity</li></ul>	Completed	Q2	The internal audits have been completed and the reports were presented at the Audit Committee meetings held on 21 February 2024 and 10 July 2024.



Administration and Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of the Three-year Strategic Internal Audit Plan (FY2025 to FY2027) and Annual Internal Audit Plan for FY2025</li> </ul>	Completed	Q3	The Three-year Strategic and Annual Internal Audit Plan were developed and presented to the Audit Committee on 21 February 2024 and 10 July 2024.
Administration and Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Audit Committee Meetings</li> </ul>	Completed	Q1, Q3	Internal audit attended both audit committee meetings held in FY2024

### **Investigation Notices for Competitive Neutrality Complaints**

*Section 190(1)(i) and (j) of the Local Government Regulation 2012*

There were no investigation notices given in the financial year under Section 49 of the Local Government Regulation 2012.

As such, there were no responses required from Council in the financial year relating to QCA recommendations on competitive neutrality complaints under Section 52(3) of the Local Government Regulation 2012.

### **Identify Beneficial Enterprises**

*Section 41 of the Local Government Act 2009*

Nil.

### **Identify Significant Business Activities**

*Section 45 and 46 of the Local Government Act 2009*

Nil.

### **Remuneration and Councillor Advisors**

*Section 201(1)(a), 201(1)(b) and 201(1)(c) of the Local Government Act 2009*

Senior management remuneration is noted in *Attachment 1 – Financial Statements*.

Council did not resolve to allow a councillor to appoint councillor advisors.

# **ATTACHMENT 1 – FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**

**including the audited General Purpose Financial Statement, audited Financial Sustainability Statement and the Long-Term Financial Sustainability Statement**

*Section 183(a), (b), (c) and (d) of the Local Government Regulation 2012*



**Financial Statements**  
**For the year ended 30 June 2024**

**SOMERSET REGIONAL COUNCIL**  
**Statement of Comprehensive Income**  
**For the year ended 30 June 2024**

	<b>Note</b>	<b>2024 (\$ 000's)</b>	<b>2023 (\$ 000's)</b>
<b>Income</b>			
<b>Revenue</b>			
<b>Capital revenue</b>			
Grants, subsidies, contributions and donations	5	19,746	10,148
Gain on the disposal of capital assets	7	215	-
		<u>19,962</u>	<u>10,148</u>
<b>Recurrent revenue</b>			
Rates, levies and charges	3a	30,442	28,421
Fees and charges	3b	2,728	2,246
Rental income		513	434
Interest income	3c	4,522	3,342
Sales revenue	3d	4,606	10,653
Other income	3e	2,605	2,403
Profit from equity accounted investments	15	2,195	1,579
Grants, subsidies, contributions and donations	4	38,205	14,451
		<u>85,815</u>	<u>63,530</u>
<b>Total income</b>		<u>105,777</u>	<u>73,677</u>
<b>Expenses</b>			
<b>Recurrent expenses</b>			
Employee benefits	8	(18,196)	(17,254)
Depreciation	16	(12,664)	(10,964)
Other expenses	9	(947)	(889)
Materials and services	6	(59,638)	(31,683)
Finance costs	9	(833)	(1,817)
		<u>(92,277)</u>	<u>(62,607)</u>
<b>Capital expenses</b>			
Loss on the disposal of capital assets	7	-	(827)
<b>Total expenses</b>		<u>(92,277)</u>	<u>(63,434)</u>
<b>Net result for year</b>		<u>13,500</u>	<u>10,243</u>
<b>Other comprehensive income</b>			
<b>Items that will not be reclassified to net result</b>			
Increase/ (decrease) in asset revaluation surplus	16	48,322	34,162
<b>Total other comprehensive income/ (loss) for the year</b>		<u>48,322</u>	<u>34,162</u>
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>		<u>61,822</u>	<u>44,405</u>

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes and accounting policies

**SOMERSET REGIONAL COUNCIL**  
**Statement of Financial Position**  
**As at 30 June 2024**

	Note	2024 (\$ 000's)	2023 (\$ 000's)
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>Current Assets</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	10	29,238	58,385
Receivables	11	6,537	6,043
Contract assets	13	17,650	94
Inventories	12	780	746
		<b>54,205</b>	<b>65,268</b>
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>			
Receivables	14	53,804	53,804
Equity accounted investments	15	31,930	30,726
Property, plant and equipment	16	522,726	453,718
		<b>608,459</b>	<b>538,248</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>662,664</b>	<b>603,516</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
Payables	18	14,313	11,268
Contract liabilities	13	4,991	11,788
Lease liabilities	17	325	324
Provisions	19	3,456	2,043
		<b>23,086</b>	<b>25,423</b>
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>			
Payables	18	1,463	2,286
Lease liabilities	17	459	373
Provisions	19	11,772	11,371
		<b>13,694</b>	<b>14,031</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<b>36,780</b>	<b>39,454</b>
<b>NET COMMUNITY ASSETS</b>		<b>625,884</b>	<b>564,062</b>
<b>Community Equity</b>			
Retained surplus		377,945	374,090
Asset revaluation surplus	20	183,270	134,948
Reserves	21	64,668	55,024
<b>TOTAL COMMUNITY EQUITY</b>		<b>625,884</b>	<b>564,062</b>

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes and accounting policies

**SOMERSET REGIONAL COUNCIL**  
**Statement of Changes in Equity**  
**For the year ended 30 June 2024**

	<b>Total</b>		<b>Retained surplus</b>			<b>Asset revaluation surplus</b>			<b>Reserves</b>		
	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2023</b>
	(\$ 000's)	(\$ 000's)	(\$ 000's)	(\$ 000's)	(\$ 000's)	(\$ 000's)	(\$ 000's)	(\$ 000's)	(\$ 000's)	(\$ 000's)	(\$ 000's)
Balance at beginning of year	564,062	519,657	374,090	363,692	134,948	100,787	55,024	55,179			
Net result for the year	13,500	10,243	13,500	10,243	-	-	-	-			
Transfers to reserves	-	-	(10,000)	-	-	-	10,000	-			
Transfers from reserves	-	-	356	155	-	-	(356)	(155)			
Other comprehensive income for the year - increase/(decrease) in asset revaluation surplus	48,322	34,162	-	-	48,322	34,162	-	-			
Balance at end of year	<b>625,884</b>	<b>564,062</b>	<b>377,945</b>	<b>374,090</b>	<b>183,270</b>	<b>134,948</b>	<b>64,668</b>	<b>55,024</b>			

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes and accounting policies

**SOMERSET REGIONAL COUNCIL**  
**Statement of Cash Flows**  
**For the year ended 30 June 2024**

	<b>Note</b>	<b>2024</b> <b>(\$ 000's)</b>	<b>2023</b> <b>(\$ 000's)</b>
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>			
Receipts from customers		79,709	73,341
Payments to suppliers and employees		(84,052)	(46,905)
		(4,343)	26,435
Interest received		4,522	3,342
Dividends received		991	1,074
<b>Net cash inflow from operating activities</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>1,170</b>	<b>30,851</b>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Payments for loan to associate		-	(10,000)
Payments for property, plant and equipment		(30,361)	(25,243)
Proceeds from sale of property, plant and equipment		495	742
<b>Net cash (outflow) from investing activities</b>		<b>(29,866)</b>	<b>(34,502)</b>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>			
Repayments made on leases (principal only)		(450)	(438)
<b>Net cash (outflow) from financing activities</b>		<b>(450)</b>	<b>(438)</b>
<b>Net increase (decrease) in cash held</b>		<b>(29,147)</b>	<b>(4,088)</b>
Cash at beginning of reporting period		58,385	62,473
<b>Cash at end of reporting period</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>29,238</b>	<b>58,385</b>

The above statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes and accounting policies



The basis of preparation and the significant accounting policies that have been adopted in the preparation of these financial statements are:

#### 1.01 Basis of preparation

Somerset Regional Council is constituted under the Queensland *Local Government Act 2009* and is domiciled in Australia.

These general purpose financial statements are for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024. They are prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2009* and the *Local Government Regulation 2012*.

Council is a not-for-profit entity for financial reporting purposes and these financial statements comply with Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations as applicable to not-for-profit entities.

These financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention except for the revaluation of certain classes of property, plant and equipment.

#### Recurrent/capital classification

Revenue and expenditure are presented as "recurrent" or "capital" in the Statement of Comprehensive Income on the following basis:

Capital Revenue includes grants and subsidies received which are tied to specific projects for the replacement or upgrade of existing non-current assets and/or investment in new assets. It also includes non-cash contributions which are usually infrastructure assets received from developers.

The following transactions are classified as either "Capital Income" or "Capital Expenses" depending on whether they result in accounting gains or losses:

- disposal of non-current assets
- revaluations of investment property and property, plant and equipment.

All other revenue and expenses have been classified as "recurrent".

Income of local authorities and public authorities is exempt from Commonwealth taxation except for Fringe Benefits Tax and Goods and Services Tax ('GST'). The net amount of GST recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) or payable to the ATO is shown as an asset or liability respectively.

The council uses the Australian dollar as its functional currency and its presentation currency.

Amounts included in the financial statements have been rounded to the nearest \$1,000 or, where that amount is \$500 or less, to zero. There may be differences between financial statements and notes to the financial statements due to the rounding.

#### 1.02 Changes to accounting policies

Unless otherwise stated, accounting policies have been consistently applied throughout the period.

#### 1.03 Adoption of new and revised Accounting Standards

This year Council has adopted all standards which became mandatorily effective for annual reporting periods beginning on 1 July 2023. None of the standards had a material impact on reported position, performance and cash flows. The adoption of the revisions to *AASB 101 Presentation of Financial Statements* resulted in disclosure of material accounting policy information only rather than significant accounting policies. This means that accounting policy information is disclosed only if it related to material transactions, other events or conditions and:

- a) Council has changed accounting policy during the reporting period and this change resulted in a material change to the information in the financial statements.
- b) Council chose (or was mandated to use) the accounting policy from one or more options permitted by Australian Accounting Standards.
- c) the accounting policy was developed in accordance with *AASB 108 Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors* in the absence of an Australian Accounting Standard that specifically applies.
- d) the accounting policy relates to an area for which a Council is required to make significant judgements or assumptions in applying an accounting policy, and the Council discloses those judgements or assumptions in the financial statements.
- e) the accounting required for them is complex and users of the entity's financial statements would otherwise not understand those material transactions, other events or conditions.

#### 1.04 Estimates and judgements

Where necessary judgements, estimates and assumptions have been used in preparing these financial statements.

Those that have a significant effect, or risk causing an adjustment to council's assets or liabilities relate to:

- Revenue recognised over time - Note 3
- Impairment of property, plant and equipment - Note 16
- Valuation and depreciation of property, plant and equipment - Note 16
- Leases - Note 17
- Provisions - Note 19
- Contingent liabilities - Note 22

#### 1.05 Volunteer services

The value of volunteer services received is not material and cannot be reliably measured and is not recognised as revenue.

#### 1.06 Standards issued by the AASB not yet effective

The AASB has issued Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations which are not effective at 30 June 2024, these standards have not been adopted by Council and will be included in the financial statements on their effective date. Where the standard is expected to have a material impact for council then further information has been provided.

**SOMERSET REGIONAL COUNCIL**  
Notes to the financial statements  
For the year ended 30 June 2024

Note 2 (a) - Analysis of Results by Function	Gross program income					Total income (\$ 000's)	Gross program expenses		Total expenses (\$ 000's)	Net result from recurrent operations (\$ 000's)	Net result (\$ 000's)	Assets (\$ 000's)
	Recurrent		Capital				Recurrent (\$ 000's)	Capital (\$ 000's)				
	Grants (\$ 000's)	Other (\$ 000's)	Grants (\$ 000's)	Other (\$ 000's)								
Corporate and Community Services Executive	833	1,537	-	-	-	2,370	9,697	-	9,697	(7,327)	(7,327)	-
Finance	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,592	-	1,592	(1,592)	(1,592)	-
Human Resources/ Customer Service	192	34,753	-	3,037	-	37,982	2,814	-	2,814	32,132	35,168	139,939
Operations	90	1	-	-	-	90	2,521	-	2,521	(2,431)	(2,431)	-
Planning and Development	36,838	4,798	16,530	395	-	58,560	65,096	-	65,096	(23,460)	(6,535)	522,726
Waste management	253	2,058	-	-	-	2,312	4,827	-	4,827	(2,515)	(2,515)	-
	-	4,463	-	-	-	4,463	5,731	-	5,731	(1,269)	(1,269)	-
Total	38,205	47,610	16,530	3,432	-	105,777	92,277	-	92,277	(6,462)	13,500	662,664

**For the year ended 30 June 2023**

Note 2 (a) - Analysis of Results by Function	Gross program income				Total income (\$ 000's)	Gross program expenses		Total expenses (\$ 000's)	Net result from recurrent operations (\$ 000's)	Net result (\$ 000's)	Assets (\$ 000's)
	Recurrent		Capital			Recurrent (\$ 000's)	Capital (\$ 000's)				
	Grants (\$ 000's)	Other (\$ 000's)	Grants (\$ 000's)	Other (\$ 000's)							
Corporate and Community Services Executive	625	1,448	-	-	2,073	8,072	-	8,072	(5,999)	(5,999)	-
Finance	-	-	-	-	-	1,446	-	1,446	(1,446)	(1,446)	-
Human Resources/ Customer Service	5,488	31,133	-	163	36,784	3,606	827	4,432	33,015	32,352	149,798
Operations	175	1	-	-	175	2,309	-	2,309	(2,134)	(2,134)	-
Planning and Development	6,453	10,827	9,021	937	27,239	37,457	-	37,457	(20,177)	(10,219)	453,718
Waste management	1,710	1,579	27	-	3,316	4,288	-	4,288	(999)	(972)	-
	-	4,091	-	-	4,091	5,431	-	5,431	(1,340)	(1,340)	-
Total	14,451	49,078	9,048	1,100	73,677	62,609	827	63,435	922	10,243	603,516

**Note 2.(b)**

**Description of Component Programs/ Functions**

- Corporate and Community Services goals include providing high quality information systems, records, community, recreation, cultural activities and tourism promotion services.
- Executive goals include providing high quality support and advice to the elected council as well as ensuring the implementation of council resolutions, policies and decisions, providing leadership and coordination of departmental operations and performance, corporate planning and public relations management.
- Finance goals include providing high quality administration and optimisation of revenues and expenditures, financial and asset reporting, planning and advice, taxation, internal audit and internal control services and managing Council's financial relationship with Urban Utilities
- Human Resources and Customer Services goals include providing high quality personnel services and customer service functions.
- Operations goals include providing high quality management services of Council's infrastructure, disaster risk management, public spaces, plant and contract works.
- Planning and Development goals include providing high quality land use planning, building regulation, economic development and local law services.
- Waste Management goals include providing high quality collection and disposal of domestic and other refuse services, recycling and the operation of waste facilities.



	2024	2023
Note	(\$ 000's)	(\$ 000's)

### 3. Revenue analysis

#### Revenue recognised at a point in time

##### **AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers**

Grants, subsidies, contributions and donations - recurrent  
Fees and charges

-	-
1,048	913
<u>1,048</u>	<u>913</u>

##### **AASB 1058 Income of Not-for-Profit Entities**

Rates, levies and charges  
Grants, subsidies, contributions and donations - recurrent  
Grants, subsidies, contributions and donations - capital  
Other income

30,442	28,421
800	6,115
3,273	1,103
2,286	2,112
<u>36,802</u>	<u>37,750</u>

#### Revenue recognised over time

##### **AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers**

Fees and charges  
Sales revenue  
Other income

1,680	1,333
4,606	10,653
318	291
<u>6,605</u>	<u>12,278</u>

##### **AASB 1058 Income of Not-for-Profit Entities**

Grants, subsidies, contributions and donations - recurrent  
Grants, subsidies, contributions and donations - capital

37,405	8,336
16,473	9,045
<u>53,878</u>	<u>17,381</u>

#### Other revenue

Profit from equity accounted investments  
Rental income  
Interest income  
Gain on the disposal of capital assets

2,195	1,579
513	434
4,522	3,342
215	-
<u>7,444</u>	<u>5,356</u>

Total revenue

<u>105,777</u>	<u>73,677</u>
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#### (a) Rates, levies and charges

Rates and annual charges are recognised as revenue when the council obtains control over the assets comprising these receipts which is the beginning of the rating period to which they relate. Prepaid rates are recognised as a financial liability until the beginning of the rating period.

General rates	28,567	26,739
Food Act inspection special charge	37	39
Extractive industries inspection program special charge	36	31
Kennels inspection program special charge	18	10
Intensive poultry farm inspection program special charge	23	21
Rural fire levy special charge	319	360
Environmental separate charge	505	501
State Emergency Service separate charge	341	338
Garbage charges	4,334	3,961
Total gross rates and charges	<u>34,180</u>	<u>32,000</u>
Less: Discounts and pensioner remissions		
Discount - General rates	(3,736)	(3,577)
Pensioner remissions	(2)	(2)
Total rate and charges discounts and pensioner remissions	<u>(3,738)</u>	<u>(3,579)</u>
	<u>30,442</u>	<u>28,421</u>

	2024	2023
Note	(\$ 000's)	(\$ 000's)

**(b) Fees and charges**

Fees and charges consist of both cost-recovery fees as defined in the Local Government Act 2009 for which Council has a statutory power to collect and commercial fees and charges which are collected on a contractual basis for matters such as cemetery operations and waste operations

Revenue arising from fees and charges is recognised when or as the performance obligation is completed and the customer receives the benefit of the goods / services being provided. The performance obligation relates to the specific services which are provided to the customers and generally the payment terms are within 30 days of the provision of the service or in some cases, the customer is required to pay on arrival, for example at a camping ground. There is no material obligation for Council in relation to refunds or returns. Licences granted by Council are all either short-term or low value and all revenue from licences is recognised at the time that the licence is granted rather than the term of the licence. Revenue from infringements is recognised on issue of infringement notice after applying the expected credit loss model relating to impairment of receivables for initial recognition of statutory receivables.

Animal control/ local law fees	255	123
Building fees	696	750
Cemetery fees	190	174
Change of ownership fees	76	101
Health and other fees	9	22
Planning and engineering fees	985	583
Property search fees	388	363
Waste fees	129	130
	<u>2,728</u>	<u>2,246</u>

**(c) Interest income**

Interest received from bank and term deposits is accrued over the term of the investment.

Queensland Treasury Corporation	2,335	1,761
Urban Utilities	1,757	1,289
Interest from bank term deposits/ other bank interest	132	136
Interest from overdue general rates and other charges	260	132
Interest from overdue garbage charges	38	24
	<u>4,522</u>	<u>3,342</u>

**(d) Sales revenue**

Sale of goods revenue is recognised when the customer has taken delivery of the goods. Revenue from services is recognised when the service is rendered. Revenue from contracts and recoverable works generally comprises a recoupment of material costs together with an hourly charge for use of equipment and employees. This revenue and the associated costs are recognised by reference to the stage of completion of the contract activity based on costs incurred at the reporting date. Where consideration is received for the service in advance it is included in other liabilities and is recognised as revenue in the period when the service is performed. The contract work carried out is not subject to retentions.

Derived from - State Government transport entities	4,568	10,623
Derived from - other parties	38	30
	<u>4,606</u>	<u>10,653</u>

**(e) Other operating income**

Commissions earned/ administration fees retained	159	123
Ex-Gratia Queensland Treasury payments	1,429	1,298
Tax equivalent receipts - Urban Utilities	858	814
Other income	159	168
	<u>2,605</u>	<u>2,403</u>



	2024	2023
Note	(\$ 000's)	(\$ 000's)

#### 4. Contributions, grants and subsidies - recurrent

##### Government subsidies/ grants used for recurrent expenditure

###### Grant income under AASB 15

Where grant income arises from an agreement which is enforceable and contains sufficiently specific performance obligations then the revenue is recognised when control of each performance obligations is satisfied. The performance obligations vary in each agreement but include performance obligations within AASB 15 grants e.g. events. Payment terms vary depending on the terms of the grant, cash is received upfront for some grants and on the achievement of certain payment milestones for others. Each performance obligation is considered to ensure that the revenue recognition reflects the transfer of control and within grant agreements there may be some performance obligations where control transfers at a point in time and others which have continuous transfer of control over the life of the contract. Where control is transferred over time, generally the input methods being either costs or time incurred are deemed to be the most appropriate methods to reflect the transfer of benefit.

###### Grant income under AASB 1058

Assets arising from grants in the scope of AASB 1058 are recognised at the asset's fair value when the asset is received. Council considers whether there are any related liability or equity items associated with the asset which are recognised in accordance with the relevant accounting standard. Once the assets and liabilities have been recognised then income is recognised for any remaining asset value at the time that the asset is received.

Community/ social services	287	260
Environmental initiatives	100	7
Financial Assistance Grant	192	5,488
Fuel tax credits	129	105
Library grants	145	150
Local Economic Recovery Program - recurrent	200	1,662
Natural disaster preparedness	67	51
Natural disaster recovery arrangements	36,526	6,214
Other recurrent grants	214	206
Regional arts grants	190	50
State Emergency Service	67	82
Training and development	90	175
<b>Total recurrent grants and subsidies</b>	<b>38,205</b>	<b>14,451</b>

#### 5. Contributions, grants and subsidies - capital

##### Capital grants

Capital grants received to enable Council to acquire or construct an item of property, plant and equipment to identified specifications which will be under Council's control and which is enforceable are recognised as revenue as and when the obligation to construct or purchase is completed. For construction projects, this is generally as the construction progresses in accordance with costs incurred since this is deemed to be the most appropriate measure of the completeness of the construction project as there is no profit margin. Where assets are donated or purchased for significantly below fair value, the revenue is recognised when the asset is acquired and controlled by the Council.

##### a. General/ special purpose government subsidies/ grants used for capital purposes

Black Summer Bushfire Recovery Grants Program	1,124	-
Bridges Renewal Program	-	215
Culvert Renewal - Qld Risk Reduction Fund	592	151
Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements - capital	4,548	799
Flexible funding program - Meryll Dray memorial shelters	100	-
Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program	4,058	-
Local Economic Recovery Program - capital	348	2,719
Local Government Grants and Subsidies Program - solar	-	27
Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program - various projects	198	1,913
Roads to Recovery Program	636	1,128
SEQ Community Stimulus - competitive - Lowood Pool	194	1,334

	Note	2024 (\$ 000's)	2023 (\$ 000's)
SEQ Community Stimulus - competitive - Lowood Minden Road		344	-
SEQ Community Stimulus - competitive - Esk Crows Nest Road		1,850	-
SEQ Community Stimulus - allocated funding		1,246	-
State Emergency Service/ disaster management equipment subsidies		57	3
Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme		695	684
Transport other programs		543	75
<b>Total capital grants and subsidies</b>		<b>16,530</b>	<b>9,048</b>

**b. Contributions constrained for capital purposes**

Contribution of monetary assets by developers		395	937
		<u>395</u>	<u>937</u>

**c. Contributions of non-monetary assets**

Non-cash contributions in excess of the recognition thresholds set out in Note 16 in value, are recognised as revenue and as non-current assets. Non-cash contributions below the thresholds are recorded as revenue and expenses.

Physical assets contributed to Council by developers in the form of road works, stormwater infrastructure and recreation assets are recognised as revenue when the development becomes "on maintenance" (i.e. the council obtains control of the assets and becomes liable for any ongoing maintenance) and there is sufficient data in the form of drawings and plans to determine the approximate specifications and values of such assets. All non-cash contributions are recognised at the fair value of the contribution received on the date of acquisition.

Contribution of non-monetary non-current assets by developers at fair value	16	2,822	163
		<u>2,822</u>	<u>163</u>
<b>Total capital grants, subsidies and contributions (a, b and c)</b>		<b>19,746</b>	<b>10,148</b>

**6. Ordinary expense activity analysis**

**Materials and services analysis**

Bridge maintenance and asset management	108	66
Contract upgrade works - State controlled roads	183	4,600
Contributions to volunteer rural fire brigades	319	360
Donations	177	232
Environmental contract works	-	195
Floodplain management planning	8	68
Fringe benefits tax	140	129
Fuel and oil	1,213	1,084
Gravel operations	5	55
Indoor sports centre operations	283	327
Information technology goods and services	476	624
Insurance premiums - property and public liability	386	352
Internal audit services	42	29
Legal services	1,027	318
Library book purchases	128	108
Library operations other than book purchases	139	136
Mechanical parts, tyres and batteries and plant servicing	790	732
Natural disaster recovery arrangements costs	37,292	7,141
Office and communications	675	338
Plant and vehicle registrations	94	90
Road and street maintenance	6,864	5,525
Street lighting	282	268
Somerset civic centre operations	548	406
Subscriptions	111	145
Swimming pool operations	846	564



**SOMERSET REGIONAL COUNCIL**  
**Notes to the financial statements**  
**For the year ended 30 June 2024**

	Note	2024 (\$ 000's)	2023 (\$ 000's)
Tourism operations		561	484
Trails and paths		314	171
Valuation services		306	227
Waste collection contract services		2,790	3,182
Water and sewerage services - Urban Utilities		439	343
Other materials and services		3,093	3,386
<b>Total</b>		<b>59,638</b>	<b>31,683</b>

**7. Gain (loss) on the disposal of capital assets**

(i) Proceeds from the disposal of property, plant and equipment:

Plant and equipment		141	742
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Less: Book value of property, plant and equipment disposed

Plant and equipment	16	(106)	(565)
Buildings and other structures		-	(1,003)
		<u>35</u>	<u>(827)</u>

(ii) Proceeds from the disposal of land (not held for redevelopment)

Less : Book value of land disposed	16	(174)	-
Gain (loss) on the disposal of land		181	-
Gain (loss) on the disposal of capital assets		<u>215</u>	<u>(827)</u>

Gains on the disposal of capital assets are included with income.

Losses on the disposal of capital assets are included with expenses.

**8. Employee benefits**

Total wages and salaries		17,744	16,787
Leave entitlements and other employee related expenses		412	339
Superannuation		1,996	1,878
Total employee costs		<u>20,152</u>	<u>19,004</u>

Employed for:

Capital purposes		1,956	1,750
Operating purposes		18,196	17,254
		<u>20,152</u>	<u>19,004</u>

**9. Finance costs and other expenses**

Included in finance costs are the following :

Interest on lease liabilities (finance costs)		91	152
Increase in the discounted amount arising from the passage of time and the effect of any change in the discount rate - gravel pits		44	70
Increase in the discounted amount arising from the passage of time and the effect of any change in the discount rate - refuse sites		698	1,595
		<u>833</u>	<u>1,817</u>

Included in other expenses are the following :

Audit of financial statements by the Auditor-General of Queensland*		111	102
Councillors' remuneration		746	728
Other Councillor costs		90	60
		<u>947</u>	<u>889</u>

\*Quoted audit fees as per the External Audit Plan relating to the 2023-24 financial statements are \$110,000 (2023: \$106,000).

Councillor remuneration represents salary, superannuation contributions and other allowances paid in respect of carrying out their duties. In addition to these amounts, the Mayor received the use of a fully maintained motor



	2024	2023
Note	(\$ 000's)	(\$ 000's)

vehicle and all Councillors received reimbursement for various expenses incurred. Council has not resolved that councillors are employees. Councillor remuneration is therefore not included in employee costs.

#### 10. Cash and cash equivalents

For the purposes of the statement of financial position and the statement of cash flows, cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, all cash and cheques receipted but not banked at year end and deposits at call with financial institutions. It also includes bank overdrafts and liquid investments with short periods to maturity that are readily convertible to cash at the council's option without penalty and that are subject to a low risk of changes in value. The council considers term deposits with original maturities of less than six months to be cash equivalents.

Cash on hand – petty cash and cash floats	7	8
Cash at bank - operating fund (including unrepresented cheques)	1,083	3,033
Less cheques drawn but not presented at balance date	(30)	(3,572)
Cash at bank – other	33	389
Term deposits	1,000	1,000
Short term investments at call	27,145	57,528
Balance per statement of cash flows	<u>29,238</u>	<u>58,385</u>

There were no externally imposed expenditure restrictions at reporting date on any cash asset.

Short term investments at call are held with the Queensland Treasury Corporation. The short term investments at call bear floating interest rates as detailed in note 30.

#### 11. Receivables (current)

Receivables are amounts owed to council at year end. They are recognised at the amount due at the time of sale or service delivery. Settlement of trade debtors is required within 30 days after the invoice is issued. Rate debts fall due 42 days after issue of a rate assessment notice.

Debts are regularly assessed for collectability and allowance is made, where appropriate, for impairment. All known bad debts were written-off at 30 June. If an amount is recovered in a subsequent period it is recognised as revenue. Receivables are measured at amortised cost which approximates fair value at reporting date.

Because Council is empowered under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2009 to sell an owner's property to recover outstanding rate debts, Council does not generally impair rate receivables.

Council applies normal business credit protection procedures prior to providing goods and services to minimise credit risk. The council does not require collateral in respect of trade and other receivables.

The carrying amounts of trade receivables are assumed to approximate their fair values due to their short-term nature.

Rates and charges	3,178	2,360
Goods and services tax (GST) refundable	841	393
Other debtors accrued	1,085	1,001
Other debtors levied	1,418	1,830
Less: loss allowance	<u>(172)</u>	<u>(168)</u>
	6,350	5,417
Prepayments	<u>187</u>	<u>626</u>
	<u>6,537</u>	<u>6,043</u>

Interest was charged on outstanding rates at a rate of 11.64% per annum (2023 - 8.17%). No interest is charged on other debtors. There is no concentration of credit risk for rates and utility charges and fees. Overall credit loss of current receivables is not considered material.

	Note	2024 (\$ 000's)	2023 (\$ 000's)
The exposure to credit risk for receivables by type of counterparty was as follows:			
Rates and charges		3,178	2,360
State and Commonwealth Government - levied		1,206	1,641
State and Commonwealth Government - accrued		183	8
Goods and services tax (GST) refundable		841	393
Other - levied		212	189
Other - accrued		902	993
Less: loss allowance		(172)	(168)
Total		<u>6,350</u>	<u>5,417</u>

## 12. Inventories

Inventories held for sale		
Land purchased for development and sale	63	63
Inventories held for distribution		
Stores, sundry and road making materials	716	682
Total current inventories	<u>780</u>	<u>746</u>

Inventories held for distribution are:

- goods to be supplied at no or nominal charge and
- goods to be used for the provision of services at no or nominal, charge

These goods are valued at cost, adjusted, when applicable, for any loss of service potential.

Land acquired by Council with the intention of reselling it (with or without further development) is classified as inventory.

## 13. Contract balances

Contract assets represents the excess of costs incurred in relation to a contract with the customer or construction of an asset over the amounts that council has invoiced the customer or the grantor. Where Council has invoiced the customer or the grantor amounts in excess of what it has incurred in relation to a contract or in constructing an asset, this gives rise to a contract liability.

Contract assets	<u>17,650</u>	<u>94</u>
Contract liabilities		
Funds received upfront to construct Council controlled assets	4,776	6,066
Non-capital performance obligations not yet satisfied	216	5,721
	<u>4,991</u>	<u>11,788</u>

Contract liabilities consist of capital and non-capital grants where funds have been received prior to performance obligations being satisfied.

Revenue recognised that was included in the contract liability balance at the beginning of the year		
Funds to construct Council controlled assets	4,057	2,830
Non-capital performance obligations	5,508	898
	<u>9,565</u>	<u>3,728</u>

### Significant changes in contract balances

Council received capital and non-capital grants during the year in advance of performance obligations being satisfied in respect of multiple programs and purposes. During the year Council expended greater amounts on eligible Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA) approved projects than it received. The difference has been recognised as revenue and as a contract asset consistent with AASB 15. Council expects to receive the contract asset as cash within the next 12 months.

### Satisfaction of contract liabilities

The contract liabilities in relation to capital grants relate to funding received prior to the work being performed since revenue is recognised as Council constructs the assets. Council expects to recognise the contract liability as income within the next 12 months.



	2024	2023
Note	(\$ 000's)	(\$ 000's)

#### 14. Receivables (non-current)

Participant loan - Central SEQ Distributor-Retailer  
Authority trading as Urban Utilities (UU)

53,804	53,804
--------	--------

Council held equity participant debts with Urban Utilities valued at \$53,804,033 as at balance date. Further information about the relationship between the council and Urban Utilities is contained at Note 15. The loan receivables are subject to agreements that provide for monthly interest-only payments until 30 June 2028 and for interest based on a mixture of fixed and variable interest rate components with an interest rate set based on the recommendations of Queensland Treasury Corporation. The equity participant debt is treated as a non-current receivable. This debt is not secured.

The weighted average interest rates applying at balance date were: 3.65% 3.27%

#### 15. Equity accounted investments

##### 15a Carrying value of investments

###### Non-Current

Right to participate in the profits of Central SEQ Distributor-Retailer Authority trading as Urban Utilities - opening balance  
Plus 0.826% share of income of Urban Utilities less distributions received or receivable  
Closing balance - investment in associate accounted for

30,726	30,221
1,204	506
31,930	30,726

##### 15b Summarised financial information

The following table illustrates summarised financial information of the associate, Urban Utilities:

###### Extract from the associate's statement of financial position:

Current assets	443,939	368,278
Non-Current assets	7,006,787	6,761,164
	7,450,726	7,129,442
Current liabilities	345,023	337,833
Non-Current liabilities	3,241,321	3,072,934
	3,586,344	3,410,767
Net assets	3,864,382	3,718,675
Share of associate's net assets	31,930	30,726

###### Extract from the associate's statement of comprehensive income:

Revenue	1,648,209	1,508,048
Net profit	265,903	204,446
Add : Other comprehensive income	(198)	36
Less : Other adjustments	-	(13,278)
Net profit, other comprehensive income and other adjustments	265,705	191,204
Share of associate's net profit	2,195	1,579

	Note	2024 (\$ 000's)	2023 (\$ 000's)
Council's share in the associate's profits and losses resulting from transactions with Urban Utilities has been analysed as below and judged to be immaterial to the closing value			
Sales by Somerset Regional Council to Urban Utilities		33	25
Purchases by Somerset Regional Council from Urban Utilities		439	343
Investment revenue by Somerset Regional Council from Urban Utilities		1,757	1,289
Sales revenue as a percentage of Urban Utilities operating expenditure		0.00%	0.00%
Purchase expenditure as a percentage of Urban Utilities operating revenue		0.03%	0.02%
Investment revenue as a percentage of Urban Utilities operating expenditure		0.13%	0.10%

The South East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009 (the Act) established a statutory body called the Central SEQ Distributor-Retailer Authority on 3 November 2009 to deliver water and wastewater services within the local government areas of Brisbane City, Ipswich City, Scenic Rim region, Lockyer Valley region and Somerset region. The Authority trades as Urban Utilities. Urban Utilities (UU) is an unincorporated entity and is domiciled in Brisbane, Australia.

Under the Act, governance arrangements for the Authority were established in a Participation Agreement, which provides for participation rights to be held by the participating councils to be negotiated between the councils. Somerset Regional Council holds 0.826% of the rights to participate in the profits of Urban Utilities. These rights held are recognised as investment assets as they represent a resource controlled by Council as a result of past events and from which future economic benefits are expected to flow.

Notwithstanding that the Act does not permit the transfer of participation rights to another party (except by Ministerial approval), Council controls the investment in participation rights because it is entitled to the benefits of holding and realising the investment. Included in the definition of financial assets is any asset that is an investment in an associated entity.

The participation rights represent equity of the entity and accordingly the participation rights held by Council meets the definition of a financial asset. An investment in an associate is recognised and measured in accordance with the requirements of AASB 128 Investments in Associates and Joint Ventures. Although Council holds less than 1% of the participation rights of UU, the operation of the participation agreement allows Council to exert significant influence over UU because any three of the minority participants are potentially able to operate together to prevent a board appointment. Conversely any two minority participants together with Brisbane City Council are able to appoint board members to UU. The Authority's Board is comprised of independent directors. No individual Council has the ability to dominate the Authority's decision making so as to obtain greater benefits from its activities than any other participant.

AASB 128 requires an investment in an associate to be accounted for using the equity method. Under the equity method, the share of the profits or losses of the associate is recognised in profit or loss and the share of the movements in equity is recognised in other comprehensive income. Investments in associates are carried in the statement of financial position at cost plus post-acquisition changes in the Council's share of net assets of the associate. Dividends received or receivable from associates reduce the carrying amount of the investment. When the Council's share of losses in an associate equals or exceeds its interest in the associate, including any unsecured long-term receivables, the Council does not recognise further losses, unless it has incurred obligations or made payments on behalf of the associate.

As a party to the Participation Agreement, the council receives a proportional share of net profits as a participation return. Returns are paid from post-tax operating profits (after adjusting for capital receipts). The Authority operates under a tax equivalent regime; with all tax paid distributed to the participating Councils on a pro-rata basis to their participation rights.

Council held 8,000 shares in SEQ Regional Recreation Facilities Pty Ltd at year end. This company is not traded on an active market and the investment is valued at nil. The holding was initially recorded at cost (\$8,000) and subsequently fully impaired to a nil value.



**16 PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT**

**For the year ended 30 June 2024**

Basis of measurement

**Asset values**

Opening balance  
 Additions at cost  
 Contribution of non-monetary assets by developers at fair value  
 Disposals  
 Revaluation adjustment to the asset revaluation surplus  
 Transferred between classes  
 Closing gross value

Land	Buildings and other structures	Roads	Plant and equipment	Right of use assets	Total completed assets	Work in progress	Total
	Fair value 2024 (\$ 000's)	Fair value 2024 (\$ 000's)	Cost 2024 (\$ 000's)	Cost 2024 (\$ 000's)	2024 (\$ 000's)	Cost 2024 (\$ 000's)	2024 (\$ 000's)
23,616	85,672	518,953	21,350	1,305	650,895	14,380	665,275
-	-	-	3,268	446	3,714	27,094	30,808
115	-	2,707	-	-	2,822	-	2,822
(174)	(1,228)	-	(349)	(334)	(2,085)	-	(2,085)
1,825	-	31,576	-	-	33,400	-	33,400
-	2,230	27,490	-	-	29,721	(29,721)	-
25,381	86,675	580,725	24,268	1,417	718,466	11,753	730,219

**Accumulated depreciation and impairment**

Opening balance  
 Depreciation provided in period  
 Depreciation on disposals  
 Revaluation adjustment to the asset revaluation surplus  
 Internal transfers  
 Accumulated depreciation at period end  
 Book value at period end

-	22,420	178,634	9,849	654	211,557	-	211,557
-	1,380	9,651	1,273	359	12,664	-	12,664
-	(1,228)	-	(243)	(334)	(1,805)	-	(1,805)
-	-	(14,922)	-	-	(14,922)	-	(14,922)
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	22,572	173,363	10,879	679	207,494	-	207,494
25,381	64,103	407,362	13,389	737	510,972	11,753	522,726

**Revaluation adjustments**

Total revaluation adjustments increment/ (decrement)  
 Adjustment to asset revaluation surplus (note 20)  
 Revaluation adjustments to Income

1,825	-	46,497	-	-	48,322	-	48,322
1,825	-	46,497	-	-	48,322	-	48,322
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Opening asset revaluation surplus (note 20)  
 Closing asset revaluation surplus (note 20)

14,361	30,432	90,156	-	-	134,948	-	134,948
16,185	30,432	136,653	-	-	183,270	-	183,270

Book value of assets disposed of (refer note 7)

(174)	-	-	(106)	-	(280)	-	(280)
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Additions comprise:

Renewals  
 Other additions or transfers  
 Total additions

-	363	10,425	-	-	10,788	-	10,788
-	1,868	17,065	3,268	446	22,646	(2,627)	20,020
-	2,230	27,490	3,268	446	33,434	(2,627)	30,808

16 PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

For the year ended 30 June 2023

Basis of measurement

Asset values

Opening balance	
Additions at cost	
Contribution of non-monetary assets by developers at fair value	
Disposals	
Revaluation adjustment to the asset revaluation surplus	
Transferred between classes	
Closing gross value	

Land	Buildings and other structures		Roads		Plant and equipment		Right of use assets		Total completed assets		Work in progress		Total
	Fair value	Fair value	Fair value	Fair value	Cost	Cost	Cost	Cost	Cost	Cost	Cost	Cost	
2023	2023	2023	2023	2023	2023	2023	2023	2023	2023	2023	2023	2023	2023
(\$ 000's)	(\$ 000's)	(\$ 000's)	(\$ 000's)	(\$ 000's)	(\$ 000's)	(\$ 000's)	(\$ 000's)	(\$ 000's)	(\$ 000's)	(\$ 000's)	(\$ 000's)	(\$ 000's)	(\$ 000's)
23,340	77,338	479,271	601,856	1,193	20,714	1,193	23,028	8,988	610,844	25,534	163	(3,854)	32,588
-	-	-	111	-	2,215	291	-	-	25,534	-	-	-	-
52	-	(1,913)	(182)	(1,579)	-	(179)	-	-	163	-	-	-	-
-	2,863	29,500	-	-	-	-	-	-	32,588	-	-	-	-
224	7,384	10,252	-	-	-	-	-	-	17,636	(17,636)	-	-	-
-	85,672	518,953	21,350	1,305	650,895	14,380	665,275	-	-	-	-	-	-
23,616													

Accumulated depreciation and impairment

Opening balance	
Depreciation provided in period	
Depreciation on disposals	
Revaluation adjustment to the asset revaluation surplus	
Internal transfers	
Accumulated depreciation at period end	
Book value at period end	

-	22,081	172,407	9,451	514	204,453	-	-	-	204,453	204,453
-	1,188	8,045	1,412	319	10,964	-	-	-	10,964	10,964
-	(910)	(182)	(1,014)	(179)	(2,285)	-	-	-	(2,285)	(2,285)
-	61	(1,636)	-	-	(1,574)	-	-	-	(1,574)	(1,574)
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
-	22,420	178,634	9,849	654	211,557	-	-	-	211,557	211,557
-	63,253	340,319	11,501	650	439,338	14,380	453,718	-	-	-
23,616										

Revaluation adjustments

Total revaluation adjustments increment/ (decrement)	
Adjustment to asset revaluation surplus (note 20)	
Revaluation adjustments to Income	

224	2,802	31,136	-	-	34,162	-	-	-	34,162	34,162
224	2,802	31,136	-	-	34,162	-	-	-	34,162	34,162
-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Opening asset revaluation surplus (note 20)

Closing asset revaluation surplus (note 20)

14,137	27,630	59,020	-	-	100,787	-	-	-	100,787	100,787
14,361	30,432	90,156	-	-	134,948	-	-	-	134,948	134,948

Book value of assets disposed of (refer note 7)

-	(1,003)	-	(565)	-	(1,568)	-	-	-	(1,568)	(1,568)
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Additions comprise:

Renewals

Other additions

Total additions

-	6,308	5,819	-	-	12,127	-	-	-	12,127	12,127
-	1,076	4,433	2,215	291	8,015	5,392	13,407	-	-	-
-	7,384	10,252	2,215	291	20,142	5,392	25,534	-	-	-

16 PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

Accounting policy matters

Each class of property, plant and equipment is stated at cost or fair value less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation and accumulated impairment loss.

Items of property, plant and equipment with a total value of less than the following thresholds are treated as an expense in the year of acquisition. All other items of property, plant and equipment are capitalised.

Asset class	Capitalisation threshold
Land	\$ 1
Plant and equipment	\$ 5,000
Buildings and other structures, roads, bridges and drainage	\$ 10,000

(i) Acquisition of Assets

Acquisitions of assets are initially recorded at cost. Cost is determined as the fair value of the assets given as consideration plus costs incidental to the acquisition, including freight in, architect fees and engineering design fees and all other establishment costs.

Property, plant and equipment received in the form of contributions are recognised as assets and revenues at fair value by Council valuation where that value exceeds the recognition thresholds for the respective asset class. Fair value means the amount for which an asset could be exchanged, or a liability settled, between knowledgeable, willing parties in an arm's length transaction.

(ii) Capital and operating expenditure

Direct labour and materials and an appropriate proportion of overheads incurred in the acquisition or construction of assets are treated as capital expenditure. Assets under construction are not depreciated until they are completed and commissioned, at which time they are reclassified from work in progress to the appropriate property, plant and equipment class.

Routine operating maintenance, repair costs and minor renewals to maintain the operational capacity and useful life of the non-current asset is expensed as incurred, while expenditure that relates to replacement of a major component of an asset to maintain its service potential is capitalised.

(iii) Valuation

Land and improvements, buildings and all infrastructure assets are measured on the revaluation basis, at fair value, in accordance with AASB 116 Property, Plant and Equipment and AASB 13 Fair Value Measurement. Plant and equipment and work in progress are measured at cost.

Non-current physical assets measured at fair value are revalued where required so that the carrying amount of each class of asset does not materially differ from its fair value at the reporting date. This revaluation involves either the application of a suitable index to the cost elements of each asset or involves an assessment of the value by someone with requisite skills and qualifications. This process involves the valuer physically sighting a representative sample of Council assets across all asset classes and making their own assessments of the condition of the assets at the date of inspection.

The frequency of valuation and the relationship of valuers to the council for each class property, plant and equipment is as follows:

Asset class	Basis of measurement	Date of last revaluation	Relationship between valuer and the council	Frequency of revaluation	Note
Land	Revaluation	30 June 2024	Independent registered valuer	Every 5 years	
Buildings and other structures	Revaluation	30 June 2023	Independent registered valuer	Every 5 years	
Roads	Revaluation	30 June 2024	Suitably qualified council employee	Annually	
Right of use assets	Cost	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	17
Plant and equipment	Cost	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	

Any revaluation increment arising on the revaluation of an asset is credited to the asset revaluation surplus of the appropriate class, except to the extent it reverses a revaluation decrement for the class previously recognised as an expense. A decrease in the carrying amount on revaluation is charged as an expense, to the extent it exceeds the balance, if any, in the revaluation surplus relating to that asset class.



16 PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

On revaluation, accumulated depreciation is restated proportionately with the change in the carrying amount of the asset and any change in the estimate of remaining useful life.

In the intervening years between valuations, Council monitors relevant indicators for changes in land and building and other structures values each year including reports by the Queensland Valuer-General and relevant producer price indexes issued by the Australian Bureau of Statistics for any indication that land and buildings and other structures may have increased materially in value. Council will obtain roughness index data on its sealed road network every three years in order to better inform the management of its road assets.

Plant and equipment is measured at depreciated cost.

Separately identified significant components of assets are measured on the same basis as the assets to which they relate.

(iv) Depreciation

Land is not depreciated as it has an unlimited useful life. Depreciation on other property, plant and equipment is calculated on a straight-line basis so as to write-off the net cost or revalued amount of each depreciable asset, less its estimated residual value, progressively over its estimated useful life to the council.

Management believes that the straight-line basis appropriately reflects the pattern of consumption of all Council assets.

Assets are depreciated from the date of acquisition or, in respect of internally constructed assets, from the time an asset is completed and commissioned ready for use.

Where assets have separately identifiable significant components that are subject to regular replacement, these components are assigned useful lives distinct from the asset to which they relate. Any expenditure that increases the originally assessed capacity or service potential of an asset is capitalised and the new depreciable amount is depreciated over the remaining useful life of the asset to the council.

Major spares purchased specifically for particular assets that are above the asset recognition threshold are capitalised and depreciated on the same basis as the asset to which they relate.

The depreciable amount of improvements to or on leasehold land is allocated progressively over the estimated useful lives of the improvements to the council or the unexpired period of the lease, whichever is the shorter.

The depreciation methods, residual values and estimated useful lives of property, plant and equipment are reviewed end of each annual reporting period and adjusted where necessary to reflect any changes in the pattern of consumption, physical wear and tear, technical or commercial obsolescence, or management intentions.

The condition assessments performed as part of the annual valuation process for assets measured at written down current replacement cost are used to estimate the useful lives of these assets at each reporting date. Details of the range of estimated useful lives for each class of asset are shown below:

Asset class	Range of Estimated Useful Life in Years	Depreciation method used
Land	Not depreciated	Not depreciated
Buildings and other structures	10 to 135	Straight line
Plant and equipment	3 to 50	Straight line
Right of use assets	3 to 5	Straight line
Roads	10 to 200	Straight line

(v) Impairment

All non-current physical and intangible assets are assessed for indicators of impairment on an annual basis. If an indicator of possible impairment exists, the Council determines the asset's recoverable amount. Any amount by which the asset's carrying amount exceeds the recoverable amount is recorded as an impairment loss.

**16 PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT**

(vi) Other property  
Council holds immaterial assets that are held by lessees under operating leases.

These assets are incorporated in property, plant and equipment and are included in the "land" and "buildings and other assets" classes above. The assets are maintained on leases so that they can be used for Council owner occupier purposes in the future. It is considered that these assets do not meet the definition of investment property under AASB140.5 *Investment Property*. Lease amounts receivable are disclosed in Note 26.

**Fair Value Measurements**

(i) Recognised fair value measurements

Council measures and recognises the following assets at fair value on a recurring basis: land, buildings and other structures and roads.

In accordance with AASB 13, Fair Value Measurements are categorised on the following basis:

- Level 1 - Fair value based on quoted prices (unadjusted) in active markets for identical assets or liabilities
- Level 2 - Fair value based on inputs that are directly or indirectly observable for the asset or liability
- Level 3 - Fair value based on unobservable inputs for the asset and liability

The following table categorises fair value measurements as either level 2 or level 3 in accordance with AASB 13. Council does not have any assets or liabilities measured at fair value which meet the criteria for categorisation as level 1.

The fair values of the assets are determined using valuation techniques which maximise the use of observable data, where it is available, and minimise the use of entity specific estimates. If all significant inputs required to fair value an asset are observable, the asset is included in level 2. If one or more of the significant inputs is not based on observable market data, the asset is included in level 3. This is the case for Council infrastructure assets, which are of a specialist nature for which there is no active market for similar or identical assets. These assets are valued using a combination of observable and unobservable inputs.

The table presents the Council's assets and liabilities measured and recognised at fair value at balance date.

**As at 30 June 2024**

	Level 2 (\$ 000's)	Level 3 (\$ 000's)	Total (\$ 000's)
Land	25,381	-	25,381
Buildings and other structures	-	64,103	64,103
Roads	-	407,362	407,362
	<u>25,381</u>	<u>471,465</u>	<u>496,846</u>

**As at 30 June 2023**

	Level 2 (\$ 000's)	Level 3 (\$ 000's)	Total (\$ 000's)
Land	23,616	-	23,616
Buildings and other structures	-	63,253	63,253
Roads	-	340,319	340,319
	<u>23,616</u>	<u>403,571</u>	<u>427,187</u>

There were no transfers between levels 1 and 2 during the year, nor between levels 2 and 3. Council's policy is to recognise transfers in and out of the fair value hierarchy levels as at the end of the reporting period.

Council's valuation policies and procedures are set by Council's Chief Executive Officer and Director Finance acting in consultation. They are reviewed annually taking into consideration an analysis of movements in fair value and other relevant information.



16 PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

Specific valuation techniques used to value Council assets comprise:

(i) Land (level 2)

Land was independently valued as at 30 June 2024 at fair value by Mr Jake Musgrave (Registered Valuer No 5308) of APV Valuers and Asset Management following a desktop review. Level 2 valuation inputs were used to value land in freehold title. Land was independently valued as at 30 June 2023 at fair value by Mr Daniel Atherton (Registered Valuer No 2962) of APV Valuers and Asset Management. Level 2 valuation inputs were used to value land in freehold title.

Reserve land does not have a value for the purpose of the financial statements of Somerset Regional Council. The valuer indicated that he determined land valuations based on relevant sales of land in the locality and that he had undertaken research of the various submarkets within the regional council area through the analysis of sales evidence and discussions with real estate agents. The valuer indicated that he had also taken into consideration the zoning and current use of council land and any characteristics of land which may adversely affect the usefulness of a lot including contamination.

The valuer assumed for the purpose of the valuation that Council would not be required to liquidate any asset or undertake any land transactions on adverse terms. The valuer applied an approach to valuing land that considers the potential purchase costs of similar land in the same area.

(ii) Buildings and other structures (level 3)

Buildings and other structures were independently valued as at 30 June 2023 at fair value by Mr Daniel Atherton (Registered Valuer No 2962) of APV Valuers and Asset Management following a desktop review.

Mr Atherton conducted a valuation based on physical inspection of all assets as at 30 June 2021. Asset conditions were assessed in detail during the 2021 valuation and inspection process and valuers relied on management advice that there had been no material change in the condition of any asset during 2022/2023 in assessing valuations as at 30 June 2023. The 2023 desktop valuation was commissioned mainly to ensure that rising building costs were appropriately reflected in Council's financial statements.

The valuer indicated that values were determined using a current replacement cost method of valuation and included consideration of obsolescence and impairment, actual construction costs by Somerset Regional Council and those of nearby recent projects completed by others. Rawlinsons Construction Guide or similar guides and other valuations.

The valuer considered asset condition and attributes of assets such as dimensions and materials through physical inspection of all assets valued. The valuer considered how these factors might impact on the assets' highest and best use to potential market participants. The valuer has assessed a residual value of nil for all buildings and other structures.

Inputs to the valuation included the design and construction, average cost of construction, condition and consumption score for each component of each asset as well as the dates of acquisition and decommissioning.

As these are supported by observable evidence obtained via inspection and market evidence they have been classified as level 2 valuation inputs. The unobservable inputs (such as the relationship between condition and the assessed level of remaining service potential of the depreciable amount) required extensive professional judgement and impacted significantly on the final determination of fair value. As such these assets were classified as having been valued using level 3 valuation inputs.

Significant unobservable input

Residual value  
Estimated life  
Estimated remaining life

Range of inputs

0%  
10 years to 135 years  
1 year to 107 years

Relationship of unobservable inputs to fair value

The higher the residual value percentage, the higher the fair value  
The longer the estimated life, the higher the fair value  
The longer the estimated remaining life, the higher the fair value

The producer price index (PPI) issued by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) for building construction in Queensland increased by 6.0% between June 2023 and June 2024. As a result, Council assessed that there was no material overall movement in the value of its buildings and other structures during 2023/2024 and therefore Council did not engage valuers to reassess the value of buildings and other structures as at 30 June 2024.

(iii) Roads (level 3)

All Council road infrastructure assets were fair valued using written down current replacement cost. This valuation comprises the asset's current replacement cost (CRC) less accumulated depreciation calculated on the basis of such cost to reflect the already consumed or expired future economic benefits of the asset. Council first determined the gross cost of replacing the full service potential of the asset and then adjusted this amount to take account of the expired service potential of the asset. There was 1,503 linear kilometres of constructed roads.

**16 PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT**

CRC was measured by reference to the lowest cost at which the gross future economic benefits of the asset could currently be obtained in the normal course of business. Where existing assets were over designed, had excess capacity, or were redundant an adjustment was made so that the resulting valuation reflected the cost of replacing the existing economic benefits based on an efficient set of modern equivalent assets to achieve the required level of service output within the council's planning horizon.

The unit rates (labour and materials) and quantities applied to determine the CRC of an asset or asset component were based on a "Greenfield" assumption meaning that the CRC was determined as the full cost of replacement with a new asset including components that may not need to be replaced, such as earthworks.

Council categorises its road infrastructure into urban and rural roads and then further sub-categorises these into sealed roads, gravel roads, formed roads, other surfaces, underground drainage and paths. Roads are managed in segments of various length between logical geographic nodes. The segments average 839 metres in length. All road segments are then componentised into subgrade, base course/ pavement, wearing course and intermediate course (where applicable).

Council assumes that environmental factors such as soil type, climate and topography are consistent across each segment. Council also assumes a segment is designed and constructed to the same standard and uses a consistent amount of labour and materials for its construction type.

CRC was calculated by reference to asset linear and area specifications, estimated labour and material inputs, services costs, and overhead allocations. Council assumes that pavements are constructed to depths of 300 mm.

This class of asset incorporates drainage including 95 kilometres of underground drainage assets in mainly urban areas.

Council categorises its underground drainage assets by material including concrete and polyvinyl chloride (PVC) pipework and by size and depth.

Council assumes that environmental factors such as soil type, climate and topography are consistent across each geographic area where underground drainage is located. Council also assumes that each segment of underground drainage is designed and constructed to the same standard and uses a consistent amount of labour and materials for its construction type.

CRC for underground drainage was calculated by reference to asset linear metres and area specifications, estimated labour and material inputs, services costs, and overhead allocations.

This class of asset incorporates paths including 64 kilometres of sealed footpaths and cycleways in mainly urban areas and 18 kilometres of unsealed paths which are mainly within sections of disused rail corridor.

Council categorises its paths by material including concrete, bitumen and gravel and by width.

Council assumes that environmental factors such as soil type, climate and topography are consistent across each segment of path. Council also assumes a segment of path is designed and constructed to the same standard and uses a consistent amount of labour and materials for its construction type.

CRC for paths was calculated by reference to asset linear and area specifications, estimated labour and material inputs, services costs, and overhead allocations. Council assumes that concrete pavements are constructed to a depth of 100mm using 25 Mpa reinforced concrete.

Road assets were valued by Council's Chief Executive Officer, Mr Andrew Johnson ( MIEAust, CPEng, RPEQ). Road assets were valued as at 30 June 2024. Mr Johnson relied on dimensional, condition, costing and other data collected during the period to assess the values of road assets and their components.

Roads were valued at fair value being current replacement cost.

Replacement costs were assessed based on unit rates which were supported by the council's experience in carrying out its own road construction activities. During 2023/2024, Council obtained data in respect of the condition of its road assets. This data was used as a basis for assessing the condition of road assets at 30 June 2024 unless alternate information was available.

Council has collected and inspected imagery and pavement roughness data for all constructed road segments. A consumption assessment was undertaken based on the International Roughness Index (IRI) and observation and inspection of the assets. The measurements and inspection outcomes were used to provide an estimate of current asset health, the proportion of health remaining and the remaining useful lives of assets.



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Council has relied on external data in forming the views about the overall condition of its road assets. The local government area was subject to two natural disaster declarations during 2021/2022 relating to floods that impacted the condition of road assets. All roads were open to traffic as at 30 June 2024 however restoration work was occurring to improve their condition.

This external data is as follows:

Engineering consultants Shepherd Services Pty Ltd were engaged to collect and report on sealed and unsealed road condition data.

Shepherd Services Pty Ltd obtained road condition data during June 2024, capturing data for all sealed and unsealed constructed roads

The assessed condition of each road segment has been based on an analysis of indicators from this dataset except where other condition information was available.

Remaining lives of assets were assessed based on both condition and year of construction.

Average current replacement costs (\$ per sqm of road area) for each of the key components were:

	2024	2023	Percentage increase
Pavement (sealed and unsealed roads)	\$ 36,290	\$ 33,190	9.34%
Bitumen seal (wearing course - 80%)	\$ 4,3360	\$ 3,9680	9.27%
Bitumen seal (wearing course - 20%)	\$ 1,0840	\$ 0,9920	9.27%
Bitumen seal (intermediate course)	\$ 5,4200	\$ 4,9600	9.27%
Subgrade	\$ 0,5300	\$ 0,4870	8.83%

Average current replacement costs (\$ per linear metre of underground drainage) for key pipe types by material, diameter and class were:

	2024	2023	Percentage increase
Concrete - 1500mm diameter- class 2	\$ 2,160.40	\$ 2,076.20	4.06%
Concrete - 375mm diameter- class 2	\$ 297.40	\$ 285.80	4.06%
Concrete - 1800mm diameter- class 2	\$ 2,925.00	\$ 2,811.00	4.06%
Concrete - 1350mm diameter- class 2	\$ 1,811.30	\$ 1,740.70	4.06%
Concrete - 750mm diameter- class 2	\$ 757.10	\$ 727.60	4.05%
Concrete - 600mm diameter- class 2	\$ 488.60	\$ 469.60	4.05%

Council's roads and underground drains were valued by Council's Chief Executive Officer, Mr Andrew Johnson (MIEAust, CPEng, RPEQ). Roads were valued at fair value being current replacement cost as at 30 June 2024. Mr Johnson relied on dimensional, condition, costing and other data collected during the period to assess the values as at this date. Council's roads consist of pavement, seal, subgrade and other components. Replacement costs for these assets were assessed based on unit rates which reflected the council's experiences in constructing roads and Council's labour cost increases pursuant to relevant industrial instruments. There was an active market for bitumen road sealing during the year and unit rates used are consistent with those previously achieved by the council. Underground drainage unit rates been indexed by reference to Australian Bureau of Statistics producer price index 3101 road and bridge construction Brisbane (A2333727L) for the year to 30 June 2024 at 4.06%. This was considered appropriate based on Council's recent experiences in underground pipe asset construction.

In determining the level of accumulated depreciation, roads were disaggregated into significant components which exhibited different useful lives.

Road conditions were assessed using the following table:

Definition	Rating	Percentage of design life remaining	Comment on any change from FY2023
Over 30% of the road requires reconstruction	1	20%	No change
10% to 30% of the road requires reconstruction	2	30%	No change
Less than 10% of the road requires reconstruction plus patching and surface correction	3	50%	No change
Minor patching and surface correction	4	70%	No change
No attention required	5	90%	No change

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All of Council's underground drainage network is relatively new and is in excellent condition. In determining the level of accumulated depreciation, remaining useful lives were calculated based on condition assessments. Underground drainage conditions were assessed using the following table:

Definition	Rating	Reduction in design life	Comment on any change from FY2023
Failed	1	90%	No change
Poor	2	70%	No change
Fair	3	30%	No change
Good	4	20%	No change
Excellent	5	0%	No change

Council's path network has an average age of 13 years and sealed paths have an average condition rating of 2.0 (good condition).

In determining the level of accumulated depreciation, remaining useful lives were calculated based on condition assessments. Path conditions were assessed using the following table:

Definition	Rating	Percentage of design life remaining	Comment on any change from FY2023
Very good	1	90%	No change
Good	2	70%	No change
Fair	3	50%	No change
Poor	4	30%	No change
Very poor	5	20%	No change

As detailed above Council's road network has been valued using written down current replacement cost. This method utilises a number of inputs that require judgement and are therefore classed as unobservable. While these judgements are made with the greatest care, and based upon years of experience, different judgements could result in a different valuation. The table below summarises the effect that changes in the most significant unobservable inputs would have on the valuation:

Significant unobservable input	Range of inputs	Relationship of unobservable inputs to fair value
Estimated life	10 years to 200 years	The longer the estimated life, the higher the fair value
Estimated remaining life	1 year to 200 years	The longer the estimated remaining life, the higher the fair value
Condition rating	1 to 5 as above	The better the condition rating, the higher the fair value
Standard construction unit rate per square metre (road)	\$0.5300 to \$36.29 as above	The higher the standard construction unit rate, the higher the fair value
Standard construction unit rate per linear metre (underground drainage)	\$297.40 to \$2,925.00 as above	The higher the standard construction unit rate, the higher the fair value

Council bridges were fair valued using written down current replacement cost. This valuation comprises the asset's current replacement cost (CRC) less accumulated depreciation calculated on the basis of such cost to reflect the already consumed or expired future economic benefits of the asset. Council first determined the gross cost of replacing the full service potential of the asset and then adjusted this amount to take account of the expired service potential of the asset.

CRC was measured by reference to the lowest cost at which the gross future economic benefits of the asset could currently be obtained in the normal course of business. Where existing assets were over designed, had excess capacity, or were redundant an adjustment was made so that the resulting valuation reflected the cost of replacing the existing economic benefits based on an efficient set of modern equivalent assets to achieve the required level of service output within the council's planning horizon.

The unit rates (labour and materials) and quantities applied to determine the CRC of an asset or asset component were based on a "Greenfield" assumption meaning that the CRC was determined as the full cost of replacement with a new asset including components that may not need to be replaced, such as earthworks.

Council categorises its bridges into steel, concrete, timber and concrete/timber composite hydraulic structures. Council assumes that environmental factors such as soil type, climate and topography are consistent across each bridge. Council also assumes a bridge is designed and constructed to the same standard and uses a consistent amount of labour and materials for its construction type.



16 PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

CRC was calculated by reference to asset linear and area specifications, estimated labour and material inputs, services costs, and overhead allocations.

Council's bridges and hydraulic structures were valued by Council's Chief Executive Officer, Mr Andrew Johnson (MIEAust, CPREng, RPEC). Bridges were valued at fair value being current replacement cost as at 30 June 2024. Mr Johnson relied on dimensional, condition, costing and other data collected during the period to assess the values as at this date. Council's bridges primarily consist of either all timber structures, all concrete structures or composite structures that include both concrete and timber components. Replacement costs for these assets were assessed based on unit rates which reflected the council's experiences in constructing bridges. Condition data for bridges was obtained through regular inspection activities including taking core samples of major timber components and level two inspection reports prepared for Council by consulting engineers in respect of a number of bridges. Remaining lives of assets were assessed based on both condition and year of construction. No residual value was applied in respect of any bridge.

Average gross replacement costs (\$ per sqm of deck area) for major bridge types were:

	2024		2023		Percentage change
All concrete	\$	8,579 per square metre	\$	6,990 per square metre	22.73%
Composite concrete and timber	\$	3,776 per square metre	\$	3,080 per square metre	22.60%

Unit rates applied for 2024 were higher compared to rates applied for 2023. This was considered appropriate based on Council's recent experiences in bridge construction activities. Council contracted to construct two bridges during the financial year following open market competitive processes at significantly greater cost per square metre of deck area than had previously been experienced.

In determining the level of accumulated depreciation, remaining useful lives were calculated based on condition assessments.

Conditions were assessed using the following table:

Definition	Rating	Reduction in design life	Comment on any change from FY2023
Timber or part-timber bridge with measured girder stress of 60 Mpa or greater	5	90%	No change
Timber or part-timber bridge with measured girder stress of between 40 Mpa and 60 Mpa	4	50%	No change
Timber or part-timber bridge with measured girder stress of between 30 Mpa and 40 Mpa	3	30%	No change
Timber or part-timber bridge with measured girder stress of between 20 Mpa and 30 Mpa	2	15%	No change
Good	1	5%	No change
All-concrete or part-concrete bridge requiring no maintenance	0	0%	No change

As detailed above Council's bridge network has been valued using written down current replacement cost. This method utilises a number of inputs that require judgement and are therefore classed as unobservable. While these judgements are made with the greatest care, and based upon years of experience, different judgements could result in a different valuation. The table below summarises the effect that changes in the most significant unobservable inputs would have on the valuation:

Significant unobservable input	Range of inputs	Relationship of unobservable inputs to fair value
Estimated life	30 years to 100 years	The longer the estimated life, the higher the fair value
Estimated remaining life	0 years to 100 years	The longer the estimated remaining life, the higher the fair value
Condition rating	0 to 5 as above	The lower the condition rating, the higher the fair value
Standard construction unit rate per square metre of deck	\$3,776 to \$8,579 as above	The higher the standard construction unit rate, the higher the fair value

(vi) Plant and equipment

Plant and equipment are shown in the statements at historical cost less accumulated depreciation.



**2024**  
(\$ 000's)

**2023**  
(\$ 000's)

#### **17. Leases and finance cost on leases**

Council has leases in place over vehicles and equipment. Where Council assesses that an agreement contains a lease, a right of use asset and lease liability is recognised on inception of the lease. Council does not separate lease and non-lease components for any class of assets and has accounted for lease payments as a single component.

The right-of-use asset is measured using the cost model where cost on initial recognition comprises: the lease liability, initial direct costs, prepaid lease payments, estimated cost of removal and restoration, less any lease incentives received. The right-of-use is depreciated over the lease term on a straight-line basis and assessed for impairment in accordance with the impairment of asset accounting policy.

The lease liability is initially recognised at the present value of the remaining lease payments at the commencement of the lease. The discount rate is the rate implicit in the lease, however where this cannot be readily determined then the Council's incremental borrowing rate for a similar term with similar security is used.

Subsequent to initial recognition, the lease liability is measured at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method. The lease liability is re-measured whether there is a lease modification, or change in estimate of the lease term or index upon which the lease payments are based (e.g. CPI).

Where the lease liability is re-measured, the right-of-use asset is adjusted to reflect the re-measurement.

#### **Exceptions to lease accounting**

Council has applied the exceptions to lease accounting for both short-term leases (i.e. leases with a term of less than or equal to 12 months) and leases of low-value assets. Council recognises the payments associated with these leases as an expense on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

#### **Leases at significantly below market value / Concessionary leases**

Council has elected to measure the right of use asset arising from the concessionary leases at cost which is based on the associated lease liability at initial recognition.

#### **Terms and conditions of leases**

Vehicles - Council leases sedans and utilities which are used for operational purposes, they generally have a lease term of between 3 and 5 years. The lease payments are generally fixed for the term of the lease.

Equipment - Council leases a number of items of office equipment which are considered low value and are therefore not subject to lease accounting. The items have lease terms ranging up to 3 years and fixed payments for the term of the leases.

#### **Right of use assets**

Please refer to the right of use asset class in note 16.

#### **Lease liabilities**

The table below shows the maturity analysis of the lease liabilities based on contractual cashflows and therefore the amounts may not be the same as the recognised lease liability in the statement of financial position.

Remaining term		
Not later than 1 year	391	369
Later than 1 year, but not later than 2 years	261	232
Later than 2 years, but not later than 3 years	175	126
Later than 3 years, but not later than 4 years	113	75
Later than 4 years, but not later than 5 years	73	27
Total	<u>1,013</u>	<u>829</u>
Current lease liabilities per statement of financial position	325	324
Non-current lease liabilities per statement of financial position	<u>459</u>	<u>373</u>
Total per statement of financial position	<u>785</u>	<u>698</u>

**2024**  
(\$ 000's)

**2023**  
(\$ 000's)

**Amounts included in the statement of comprehensive income related to leases**

The following amounts have been recognised in the statement of comprehensive income for leases where Council is the lessee

Interest on lease liabilities (finance costs)	91	152
Depreciation of right of use assets	359	319
	<u>451</u>	<u>471</u>
Total cash outflows for leases	<u>450</u>	<u>438</u>

**Leases at significantly below market value - Concessionary / peppercorn leases**

Council has a small number of leases at significantly below market for land and buildings which are used for community purposes.

Council does not believe that any of the leases in place are individually material.

**Council as a lessor**

Council has a small number of low value operating leases in place as a lessor, mostly over land.

When Council is a lessor, the lease is classified as either an operating or finance lease at inception date, based on whether substantially all of the risks and rewards incidental to ownership of the asset have been transferred to the lessee. If the risks and rewards have been transferred then the lease is classified as a finance lease, otherwise it is an operating lease. If the lease contains lease and non-lease components then the non-lease components are accounted for in accordance with *AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers*. The lease income is recognised on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

Where Council retains the risks and rewards relating to a lease, they are classified as operating leases. Rent from property is recognised as income on a periodic straight line basis over the lease term.

**18. Payables**

**Current**

Trade creditors	1,087	280
Sundry accruals	9,071	7,096
Prepaid rates	1,283	1,091
Other liabilities	1,273	1,314
Employee entitlements - annual leave	1,469	1,365
Employee entitlements - accrued hours	131	122
	<u>14,313</u>	<u>11,268</u>

**Non-Current**

Other liabilities	1,463	2,286
	<u>1,463</u>	<u>2,286</u>

Trade creditors are recognised upon receipt of the goods or services ordered and are measured at the agreed purchase/ contract price net of applicable discounts other than contingent discounts. Amounts owing are unsecured and are generally settled on 30 day terms.

A liability for annual leave is recognised. Amounts expected to be settled within 12 months are calculated on current wage and salary levels and includes related employee on-costs. Amounts not expected to be settled within 12 months are calculated on projected future wage and salary levels and related employee on-costs, and are discounted to present values.

No part of the employee entitlements for annual leave or accrued hours is considered to be non-current based on recent rates achieved in the taking of annual leave. As Council does not have an unconditional right to defer this liability beyond 12 months, annual leave is classified as a current liability.

Lump sum annual payments received prior to 30 June 2024 (reflecting three years of annual payments (2024–25 – 2026–27) that were prescribed by the Waste Reduction and Recycling Regulation 2011) have been treated as either current or non-current liabilities depending on the period they are for.



<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
(\$ 000's)	(\$ 000's)

#### **19. Provisions**

A liability for long service leave is measured as the present value of the estimated future cash outflows to be made in respect of services provided by employees up to the reporting date. The value of the liability is calculated using current pay rates and projected future increases in those rates and includes related employee on-costs. The estimates are adjusted for the probability of the employee remaining in the council's employment or other associated employment which would result in the council being required to meet the liability. Adjustments are then made to allow for the proportion of the benefit earned to date, and the result is discounted to present value. The interest rates attaching to Commonwealth Government guaranteed securities at the reporting date are used to discount the estimated future cash outflows to their present value.

Where employees have met the prerequisite length of service and Council does not have an unconditional right to defer this liability beyond 12 months, long service leave is classified as a current liability. Otherwise it is classified as non-current.

A provision is made for the cost of restoring refuse dumps and quarries where it is probable the Council will be liable, or required, to do this when the use of the facilities is complete.

A provision is made for future costs of restoration of gravel pits where it is probable the council will be liable, or required, to incur such a cost on the cessation of use of the facility. This liability is provided in respect of roadside gravel pits. Management estimates that the restoration will occur in 2027.

The provision is measured at the expected cost of the work required, discounted to current day values using the interest rates attaching to Commonwealth Government guaranteed securities with a maturity date corresponding to the anticipated date of the restoration. Gravel pits are on State reserves which the council does not control. The cost of the provisions for restoration of these is therefore treated as an expense in the year the provision is first recognised. Changes in the provision not arising from the passing of time are treated as an expense or income.

The provision for refuse restoration is calculated as the present value of anticipated future costs associated with the closure of the dump sites, decontamination and monitoring of historical residues and leaching on these sites. The calculation of this provision requires assumptions such as application of environmental legislation, site closure dates, available technologies and engineering cost estimates. These uncertainties may result in future actual expenditure differing from amounts currently provided. Because of the long-term nature of the liability, the most significant uncertainty in estimating the provision is the costs that will be incurred. The provision recognised for dump sites is reviewed at least annually and updated based on the facts and circumstances available at the time.

This is the present value of the estimated cost of restoring the refuse disposal sites to a useable state at the end of their useful life. Landfills in Kilcoy and Jimna have closed and management estimates that restoration of these sites will occur over the next five years at a cost of \$1,492,669. Council has resolved an intention to replicate the existing regional landfill in Esk at the current site prior to the end of life of landfill cell stage 4. It is intended that the replicated landfill will be located adjacent to the current landfill and will use common leachate facilities, sediment ponds, drainage and other infrastructure to the current landfill. The current landfill is expected to require rehabilitation after 2032 at a cost of \$5,546,067 (in 2024 dollars).

Estimates have been prepared for Council by consulting engineers, ATC Williams Pty Ltd. Shave and Brett Local Government Specialists supplied guidance in respect of forecast cost index factors averaging 8.05% and discount rates averaging 4.44%.

Changes to the restoration provisions resulting from the passing of time (the unwinding of the discount) are treated as a finance cost.

	2024 (\$ 000's)	2023 (\$ 000's)
<b>Current</b>		
Long service leave	2,253	2,043
Restoration of refuse sites	1,204	-
	<u>3,456</u>	<u>2,043</u>
<b>Non-Current</b>		
Long service leave	367	380
Restoration of refuse sites	10,960	10,601
Restoration of gravel pits	446	391
	<u>11,772</u>	<u>11,371</u>
Details of movements in provisions:		
Long service leave		
Balance at beginning of financial year	2,423	2,518
Long service leave entitlement arising	2,449	1,948
Long service leave entitlement paid	(2,253)	(2,043)
Balance at end of financial year	<u>2,619</u>	<u>2,423</u>
Restoration of gravel pits		
Balance at beginning of financial year	391	298
Additional provisions	12	22
Increase in the discounted amount arising from the passage of time and the effect of any change in the discount rate - gravel pits	44	70
Balance at end of financial year	<u>446</u>	<u>391</u>
Restoration of refuse sites		
Balance at beginning of financial year	10,601	8,721
Additional provisions	1,333	285
Amounts used	(468)	-
Increase in the discounted amount arising from the passage of time and the effect of any change in the discount rate - refuse sites	698	1,595
Balance at end of financial year	<u>12,163</u>	<u>10,601</u>
<b>20. Asset revaluation surplus</b>		
The asset revaluation surplus consists of the following components:		
Land	16,186	14,361
Buildings and other structures	30,432	30,432
Road assets	136,653	90,156
Balance of asset revaluation surplus (note 16)	<u>183,270</u>	<u>134,948</u>

The asset revaluation surplus comprises adjustments relating to changes in value of property, plant and equipment that do not result from the use of those assets. Net incremental changes in the carrying value of classes of non-current assets since their initial recognition are accumulated in the asset revaluation surplus.

Increases and decreases on revaluation are offset within a class of assets. Where a class of assets is decreased on revaluation, that decrease is offset first against the amount remaining in the asset revaluation surplus in respect of that class. Any excess is treated as an expense. When an asset is disposed of the amount in the surplus in respect of that asset is retained in the asset revaluation surplus and is not transferred to retained surplus. The balance of the asset revaluation surplus is not available for distribution to any person because it is represented by non-current assets including infrastructure that is required to provide services to the community.



**SOMERSET REGIONAL COUNCIL**  
**Notes to the financial statements**  
**For the year ended 30 June 2024**

**21. Reserves**

**2024**

**A. Reserves held for future capital expenditure**

Self insurance reserve  
Constrained works reserve

**Total reserves held for future capital expenditure**

**B. Reserves held for future recurrent expenditure**

Land Sales Reserve

**Total reserves held for future recurrent expenditure**

**Grand total**

Opening balance (\$ 000's)	Transfer from retained surplus for future expenditure (\$ 000's)	Transfers to retained surplus, amount expended in the period (\$ 000's)	Closing balance (\$ 000's)
43,804	10,000	-	53,804
389	-	(356)	33
44,193	10,000	(356)	53,837
10,831	-	-	10,831
10,831	-	-	10,831
55,024	10,000	(356)	64,668

**2023**

**A. Reserves held for future capital expenditure**

Self insurance reserve  
Constrained works reserve

**Total reserves held for future capital expenditure**

**B. Reserves held for future recurrent expenditure**

Land Sales Reserve

**Total reserves held for future recurrent expenditure**

**Grand total**

Opening balance (\$ 000's)	Transfer from retained surplus for future expenditure (\$ 000's)	Transfers to retained surplus, amount expended in the period (\$ 000's)	Closing balance (\$ 000's)
43,804	-	-	43,804
543	-	(155)	389
44,347	-	(155)	44,193
10,831	-	-	10,831
10,831	-	-	10,831
55,178	-	(155)	55,024

The above reserves represent funds that are accumulated within the council to meet anticipated future needs. The reserves are either cash backed reserves or backed by non-current receivables from Urban Utilities. In each case the amount relates to a perceived future requirement which is not currently a liability.

The Australian Accounting Standards Board "Framework for the Preparation and Presentation of Financial Statements" discusses the potential legal or other restrictions that may exist in some places in respect of cash backed reserves. There are no legal restrictions on the council in respect of funds identified as represented by cash backed reserves per se.

- The self insurance reserve and is held for managing Council's uninsured risk
- The constrained works reserve was created to ensure sufficient funds are available to carry out future capital works which the council is potentially obliged to perform together with non-binding commitments. It represents unspent infrastructure charges, capital grants and similar items.
- The land sales reserve was established to represent the sale proceeds of properties sold by Council.

**2024**  
(\$ 000's)

**2023**  
(\$ 000's)

## **22. Contingent Liabilities**

Various claims may be made against Council in the ordinary course of its business activities.

After consulting legal advisers, Council considers that there are no claims against Council as at balance date that required a provision to be recognised or a contingent liability to be disclosed in the financial report.

### **Memberships of Insurance Schemes**

Somerset Regional Council is a member of the local government self-insurance scheme, Local Government Workcare. Under this scheme the Council has provided an indemnity towards a bank guarantee to cover bad debts which may remain should the self insurance licence be cancelled and there was insufficient funds available to cover outstanding liabilities. Only the Queensland Government's workers compensation authority may call on any part of the guarantee should the above circumstances arise.

The Council's maximum exposure is:

994	832
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Somerset Regional Council is a member of the local government mutual liability self-insurance pool, LGM Queensland. In the event of the pool being wound up or being unable to meet its debts as they fall due, the trust deed and rules provide that any accumulated deficit will be met by the individual pool members in the same proportion as their contribution is to the total pool contributions in respect to any year that a deficit arises. As at 30 June 2024 the financial statements reported an accumulated surplus and it is not anticipated any liability will arise.

## **23. Superannuation**

Council contributes to the Brighter Super Regional Defined Benefits Fund (the scheme), at the rate of 12% for each standard permanent employee who is a defined benefit member. This rate is set in accordance with the Brighter Super trust deed and may be varied on the advice of an actuary. The Regional Defined Benefits Fund is a complying superannuation scheme for the purpose of the Commonwealth Superannuation Industry (Supervision) legislation and is also governed by the Local Government Act 2009. The scheme is managed by the Brighter Super trustee.

The scheme is a pooled defined benefit plan and it is not in accordance with the deed to allocate obligations, plan assets and costs at the council level.

Any amount by which the scheme is over or under funded may affect future contribution rate obligations, but has not been recognised as an asset or liability of the Council.

Technically council can be liable to the scheme for a portion of another local government's obligations should that local government be unable to meet them. However the risk of this occurring is extremely low and in accordance with the Brighter Super trust deed changes to council's obligations will only be made on the advice of an actuary.

The last completed triennial actuarial assessment of the scheme was undertaken as at 1 July 2021. The actuary indicated that "At the valuation date of 1 July 2021, the net assets of the scheme exceeded the vested benefits and the scheme was in a satisfactory financial position as at the valuation date." The measure of vested benefits represents the value of benefit entitlements should all participating employees voluntarily exit the scheme. The Council is not aware of anything that has happened since that time that indicates the assets of the scheme are not sufficient to meet the vested benefits, as at the reporting date.

No changes have been made to prescribed employer contributions which remain at 12% of employee salary or wages and there are no known requirements to change the rate of contributions.

The next triennial actuarial review is due on 1 July 2024.

The most significant risks that may result in Brighter Super increasing the contribution rate, on the advice of the actuary, are:

Investment risk - The risk that the scheme's investment returns will be lower than assumed and additional contributions are needed to fund the shortfall.

Salary growth risk - The risk that wages or salaries will rise more rapidly than assumed, increasing vested benefits to be funded.



**SOMERSET REGIONAL COUNCIL**  
**Notes to the financial statements**  
**For the year ended 30 June 2024**

	2024 (\$ 000's)	2023 (\$ 000's)
Superannuation contributions made to the Regional Defined Benefits Fund	90	95
Other superannuation contributions for employees	1,906	1,783
Total superannuation contributions paid by Council for employees:	<u>1,996</u>	<u>1,878</u>

**24. Reconciliation of net result to net cash inflows from operating activities**

Net result for year	13,500	10,243
Non-cash operating items :		
Contribution of non-monetary non-current assets at fair value	5 (2,822)	(163)
Share of the profit of associated entity accounted for using the equity method not adjusted for distributions received	15 (2,195)	(1,579)
Add back distributions received from the profits of associated entity	991	1,074
Depreciation	16 <u>12,664</u>	<u>10,964</u>
	8,638	10,296
Investing and development activities :		
Add back lease interest	17 91	152
Net (gain)/ loss on disposal of non current assets	7 <u>(215)</u>	<u>827</u>
	(124)	979
Changes in operating assets and liabilities :		
(Increase)/ decrease in receivables	(494)	1,280
(Increase)/ decrease in inventories	(34)	(221)
(Increase)/ decrease in contract assets	(17,556)	1,287
Increase/ (decrease) in provisions	1,814	1,877
Increase/ (decrease) in contract liabilities	(6,796)	3,209
Increase/ (decrease) in payables	<u>2,222</u>	<u>1,901</u>
	(20,845)	9,333
Net cash inflow from operating activities	<u>1,170</u>	<u>30,851</u>

**25. Trust Funds**

Monies collected or held on behalf of another entity yet to be paid out to or on behalf of that entity

<u>810</u>	<u>950</u>
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Funds held in the trust account on behalf of outside parties include those funds from the sale of land for arrears in rates, deposits for the contracted sale of land, security deposits lodged to guarantee performance and unclaimed monies (e.g. wages) paid into the trust account by the council. The council performs only a custodian role in respect of these monies and because the monies cannot be used for Council purposes, they are not considered revenue nor brought to account in the financial statements.

**26. Commitments and contracts**

(a) Operating leases where Council is lessor (revenue)

Council leases commercial premises under operating leases.

The minimum lease receipts are as follows:

Not later than 1 year	240	199
Later than 1 year, but not later than 2 years	122	141
Later than 2 years, but not later than 3 years	114	50
Later than 3 years, but not later than 4 years	93	45
Later than 4 years, but not later than 5 years	84	39
Later than 5 years	<u>306</u>	<u>181</u>
	959	655



**2024**  
(\$ 000's)

**2023**  
(\$ 000's)

(b) Contractual commitments – capital expenditure

At the reporting date, the Council had the following obligations under contract and which have not been recognised as liabilities:

Buildings	2,294	1,220
Plant and equipment	911	1,798
Infrastructure assets	2,306	5,451
	<u>5,511</u>	<u>8,469</u>

These expenditures are payable within the next 12 months.

**27. Related parties**

Transactions with associates - please refer to note 15 (Urban Utilities)

**(a) Transactions with key management personnel (KMP)**

KMP include the mayor, councillors, the chief executive officer and directors. The compensation paid to KMP comprises:

Short term employee benefits	1,372	1,288
Short term non-employee benefits (Councillor remuneration)	746	728
Post employment benefits	176	177
Long term benefits	25	(36)
Termination benefits	-	-
Total	<u>2,319</u>	<u>2,157</u>

Detailed remuneration disclosures of councillors are provided in the annual report. Comparative information has been revised to reflect certain non-cash benefits.

**(b) Transactions with other related parties**

Other related parties include close family members of KMP and any entities controlled or jointly controlled by KMP or their close family members. These include a spouse, child, dependent, parent or sibling of a KMP.

Details of transactions between council and other related parties are disclosed below:

Purchases of civil contracting services from an entity that is controlled by close family members of Mayor Cr Jason Wendt, at arm's length and in the normal course of council operations.	12,506	7,672
Purchases of civil contracting services from an entity that employs close family members of Councillor Helen Brieschke, at arm's length and in the normal course of council operations.	1,253	783
Purchases of road making materials from an entity that employs a close family member of Councillor Kylee Isidro, at arm's length and in the normal course of council operations.	29	47
Purchases of road making materials from an entity that employs a close family member of Councillor Kylee Isidro, at arm's length and in the normal course of council operations where Councillor Isidro was in a close personal relationship with Director Operations, Mr Craig Young.	29	-
Purchases of materials and services from an entity that is closely controlled by close family members of Council's Director Corporate and Community Services, Mr Daniel Rowe, at arms length and in the normal course of council operations.	535	-
Investment with Bendigo and Adelaide Bank Ltd - interest received Council acquired a term deposit with Bendigo and Adelaide Bank Ltd at arm's length and in the normal course of operations. Councillor Brett Freese is a Director of Somerset Region Community Enterprises Limited which owns the Lowood Bendigo Bank branch as a franchise.	33	-

	2024 (\$ 000's)	2023 (\$ 000's)
Investment with Bendigo and Adelaide Bank Ltd - interest received Council acquired a term deposit with Bendigo and Adelaide Bank Ltd at arm's length and in the normal course of operations. A close family member of Mayor Cr Jason Wendt is a Director of Somerset Region Community Enterprises Limited which owns the Lowood Bendigo Bank branch as a franchise.	33	27
Investment with Bendigo and Adelaide Bank Ltd - interest received Council acquired a term deposit with Bendigo and Adelaide Bank Ltd at arm's length and in the normal course of operations. Councillor Michael Bishop is a Director of Bendigo Community Bank Nanango, Yarraman, and Blackbutt.	33	-

#### **(c) Outstanding balances**

The following balances are outstanding at the end of the reporting period in relation to transactions with related parties:

Cash and Cash Equivalents	-	1,000
Receivables	-	-
Payables	13	-
Loans and guarantees	-	-
Commitments	-	-

The cash equivalents balance is an investment with Bendigo and Adelaide Bank Ltd referred to in (b) Transactions with other related parties in respect of Cr Wendt, Cr Freese and Cr Bishop.

The payable balance is for the purchase of civil contracting services from an entity that is controlled by close family members of Councillor Jason Wendt, at arm's length and in the normal course of council operations.

#### **(d) Transactions with related parties that have not been disclosed**

Most of the entities and people that are related parties of council live and operate within the Somerset Regional Council area. Therefore on a regular basis ordinary citizen transactions occur between council and related parties including payment of rates and charges, dog registration and use of council facilities and services at the standard rates scheduled by council. Council also performs maintenance and construction work on public assets that are used by related parties as ordinary citizens. Council has not included these types of transactions in its disclosure where they are made on the same terms and conditions available to the general public.

#### **28. Executive remuneration**

Disclosed remuneration under S 201 of the Local Government Act 2009 represents the total of:

1. Gross salary paid to relevant employees as detailed on the statements of earnings issued by Council for the income year.
2. Reportable superannuation contributions in favour of the relevant employees as detailed on the statements of earnings issued by Council for the income year to those employees.
3. Reportable fringe benefits provided to relevant employees at the value detailed on the statements of earnings issued by Council for the income year to those employees.

Total senior management remuneration as per statements of earnings:	1,536	1,317
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The number of relevant employees was:

Employees with a total remuneration package in the range of \$100000–\$199999	3	2
Employees with a total remuneration package in the range of \$200000–\$299999	3	3
Employees with a total remuneration package in the range of \$300000–\$399999	1	1



## **29. Events after balance date**

There were no material subsequent events after the balance date.

## **30. Financial instruments**

Somerset Regional Council's activities expose it to a variety of financial risks including interest rate risk, credit risk and liquidity risk.

### **Risk management framework**

Somerset Regional Council is responsible for the establishment and oversight of the risk management framework, together with developing and monitoring risk management policies.

Council approves policies for overall risk management, as well as specifically for managing credit, liquidity and interest rate risk. Management approves a financial management risk framework that provides additional guidance for managing these risks.

The council's risk management policies are established to identify and analyse the risks faced, to set appropriate limits and controls and to monitor these risks and adherence against limits. The council aims to manage volatility to minimise potential adverse effects on the financial performance of the council.

The council's audit committee oversees how management monitors compliance with the council's risk management policies and procedures, and reviews the adequacy of the risk management framework in relation to the risks faced by the council. The council audit committee is assisted in its oversight role by internal audit. Internal audit undertakes both regular and ad hoc reviews of risk management controls and procedures, the results of which are reported to the audit committee.

### **Credit risk**

Credit risk is the risk of financial loss if a counterparty to a financial instrument fails to meet its contractual obligations. These obligations arise principally from the council's investments and receivables. Exposure to credit risk is managed through regular analysis of credit counterparty ability to meet payment obligations.

Investments in financial instruments are required to be made with Queensland Treasury Corporation (QTC) or similar state/ commonwealth bodies or financial institutions in Australia, in line with the requirements of the *Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982*.

The council minimises its exposure to financial risk on investments in the ways outlined in its investment policy.

Under this policy and applicable legislation, risk management strategies include:

- restrictions on what types of financial institutions and products council will invest in as outlined below.
- the council does not invest in derivatives or other high risk investments.
- when the council borrows, it borrows from the Queensland Treasury Corporation unless another financial institution can offer a more beneficial rate, taking into account any risk.

The Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982 regulates the council's investment activities.

The council's financial instruments consist mainly of at call deposits with banks, short-term deposit investments, contract assets and liabilities and accounts receivables and payables.

### **Liquidity risk**

Liquidity risk is the risk that the Council will encounter difficulty in meeting the obligations associated with its financial liabilities that are settled by delivering cash or another financial asset.

Council held no interest bearing debt at balance date.

The Council's approach to managing liquidity is to ensure, as far as possible, that it will have sufficient liquidity to meet its liabilities when they are due, under both normal and stressed conditions, without incurring unacceptable losses or risking damage to the Council's reputation.

The Council manages its exposure to liquidity risk by maintaining sufficient cash deposits to cater for unexpected volatility in cash flows.

The most significant liquidity risk to Somerset Regional Council is the completion of flood restoration work pursuant to Commonwealth State Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA). Works undertaken during 2023-2024 under DRFA are outlined in Note 6 (Natural disaster recovery arrangements costs) which exceeded cash funding received for those works during 2023-2024. DRFA recurrent expenditure represented 40% of total recurrent expenses during 2023-2024 (2022-2023 - 11%).

While it is not considered that any credit facility will be required, Council's debt policy provides that "Council may have need for short term working capital facilities to manage large cash outflows associated with natural disaster relief and recovery arrangements related projects". Council has experience in successfully establishing a short term working capital facility with Queensland Treasury Corporation for similar purposes in previous years.

### **Interest rate risk**

The Council's exposure to interest rate risk, which is the risk that the value of a financial instrument will fluctuate as a result of changes in market rates and the weighted average interest rate by maturity periods is set out in the table below. For interest rates applicable to each class of asset or liability refer to individual notes to the financial statements.

Exposure arises predominantly from assets and liabilities bearing variable interest rates. At 30 June 2024, Council has no fixed rate or variable rate borrowings and interest rate risk on borrowings is managed through the absence of borrowings. Borrowing by the Council is constrained by the provisions of the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982.

Council has an investment policy which sets an objective to maximise earnings on cash investments within approved risk guidelines and to ensure the security of funds.

Interest rate risk relating to investments has been managed through the use of both Queensland Treasury Corporation (QTC) Cash Fund investments so that Council achieves Queensland State Government investment returns and through investment in term deposits with fixed interest rates where appropriate. Council does not undertake any hedging of interest rate risk.

In terms of Standard and Poor's ratings, all investments were A plus-rated products with A plus-rated institutions or better other than \$1 million which was invested in BBB plus-rated products or better through certain qualifying banks with local branches.

As at 30 June 2024 all cash investments complied with the investment policy.

In assessing whether to invest in A plus-rated products other than Queensland Government investments, Council officers assess whether the investment product would have a more advantageous rate of interest available at the time, for that investment type, and in a way that is considered most appropriate given the circumstances.

Council also holds an equity participant loans receivable with Urban Utilities with interest rates as described in note 14.

Actual cash and investment balances as at balance date were as follows:

	<b>2024</b> (\$ 000's)	<b>2023</b> (\$ 000's)
Working cash, trust funds and cash on hand	1,123	3,429
Less cheques drawn on operating fund but not presented at balance date	(30)	(3,572)
BBB plus-rated products at BBB plus-rated financial institutions or better	1,000	1,000
QTC Pooled Cash Management Fund	27,145	57,528
Equity participant loan - Urban Utilities	53,804	53,804
<b>Total</b>	<b>83,042</b>	<b>112,189</b>



Interest rate risk has been measured using sensitivity analysis.

The sensitivity analysis used and described below is unchanged on the method reported in the financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2023.

If market interest rates increased or decreased by 1%, the net result attributable to the Council in respect of cash assets and cash equivalents would be increased or decreased as follows:

<b>Interest rate risk sensitivity analysis</b>	<b>2024</b> (\$ 000's)	<b>2023</b> (\$ 000's)
Impact on net result of 1% market interest rate increase on financial assets	282	589
Impact on equity of 1% market interest rate increase on financial assets	282	589

The above interest rate sensitivity analysis depicts the outcome to net result should there be a 1% increase in market interest rates. The calculations assume that the rate would be held constant over the next financial year, with the change occurring at the beginning of that year. It is assumed that interest rates on overdue rates would not change. If the rates decreased by 1% the impact would be equal in amount in the reverse direction. Because Council holds no interest bearing liabilities, there is no interest rate risk in respect of financial liabilities and no sensitivity analysis is required.

The above analysis does not include the equity participant loan with an interest rate setting mechanism described in note 14.

<b>Interest rate and maximum credit risk disclosures</b>						<b>Weighted average effective interest rate %</b>
<b>Financial Instrument</b>	<b>Note</b>	<b>Floating Interest Rate (\$ 000's)</b>	<b>Fixed Interest Rate (\$ 000's)</b>	<b>Non- interest Bearing (\$ 000's)</b>	<b>Total (\$ 000's)</b>	
<b>As at 30 June 2024</b>						
<b>Financial Assets</b>						
Cash assets and cash equivalents 1	10	-	-	1,060	1,060	0.00%
Cash assets and cash equivalents 2	10	27,179	-	-	27,179	4.73%
Cash assets and cash equivalents 3	10	-	1,000	-	1,000	5.20%
Receivables 1	11	-	3,178	-	3,178	11.64%
Receivables 2	11	-	-	3,359	3,359	0.00%
Investments	14	-	53,804	-	53,804	3.65%
Total financial assets		27,179	57,982	4,419	89,579	
Weighted average interest rate		4.73%	4.11%	0.00%	4.10%	
<b>Financial liabilities</b>						
Payables		-	-	14,313	14,313	0.00%
Lease liabilities		-	785	-	785	6.95%
Provisions		-	-	15,228	15,228	0.00%
Total financial liabilities		-	785	29,542	30,326	
		0.00%	6.95%	0.00%	0.18%	
Net financial assets		27,179	57,198	(25,123)	59,253	



Financial Instrument	Note	Floating Interest Rate (\$ 000's)	Fixed Interest Rate (\$ 000's)	Non- interest Bearing (\$ 000's)	Total (\$ 000's)	Weighted average effective interest rate %
<b>As at 30 June 2023</b>						
<b>Financial Assets</b>						
Cash assets and cash equivalents 1	10	-	-	(532)	(532)	0.00%
Cash assets and cash equivalents 2	10	57,917	-	-	57,917	4.14%
Cash assets and cash equivalents 3	10	-	1,000	-	1,000	4.30%
Receivables 1	11	-	2,360	-	2,360	8.17%
Receivables 2	11	-	-	3,683	3,683	0.00%
Investments	14	-	53,804	-	53,804	3.27%
Total financial assets		57,917	57,164	3,151	118,232	
Weighted average interest rate		4.14%	3.49%	0.00%	3.71%	
<b>Financial liabilities</b>						
Payables		-	-	11,268	11,268	0.00%
Lease liabilities		-	698	-	698	6.24%
Provisions		-	-	13,414	13,414	0.00%
Total financial liabilities		-	698	24,682	25,380	
		0.00%	6.24%	0.00%	0.17%	
Net financial assets		57,917	56,466	(21,531)	92,852	

**(b) Net fair value**

Fair value is the amount at which an asset could be exchanged, or a liability settled, between knowledgeable willing parties in an arm's length transaction. The fair value of trade and other receivables and payables is assumed to approximate the value of the original transaction, less any allowance for impairment.

**SOMERSET REGIONAL COUNCIL**  
**MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATE**  
For the year ended 30 June 2024

These general purpose financial statements have been prepared pursuant to Sections 176 and 177 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* (the Regulation) and other prescribed requirements.

In accordance with Section 212 (5) of the Regulation we certify that:

(i) the prescribed requirements of the *Local Government Act 2009* and the *Local Government Regulation 2012* for the establishment and keeping of accounts have been complied with in all material respects; and

(ii) the general purpose financial statements present a true and fair view, in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards, of the Council's transactions for the financial year and financial position at the end of the year.



Cr Jason Wendt  
Mayor

Date: 24 October 2024



Andrew Johnson  
Chief Executive Officer

Date: 24 October 2024

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Councillors of Somerset Regional Council

### Report on the audit of the financial report

#### Opinion

I have audited the financial report of Somerset Regional Council.

The financial report comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2024, the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, notes to the financial statements including material accounting policy information and the certificate given by the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer.

In my opinion, the financial report:

- a) gives a true and fair view of the council's financial position as at 30 June 2024, and of its financial performance for the year then ended; and
- b) complies with the *Local Government Act 2009*, the Local Government Regulation 2012 and Australian Accounting Standards.

#### Basis for opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with the *Auditor-General Auditing Standards*, which incorporate the Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial report* section of my report.

I am independent of the council in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)* (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the financial report in Australia. I have also fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code and the *Auditor-General Auditing Standards*.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

#### Other information

The councillors are responsible for the other information.

The other information comprises the information included in the entity's annual report for the year ended 30 June 2024, but does not include the financial report and our auditor's report thereon.

At the date of this auditor's report, the available other information in Somerset Regional Council's annual report for the year ended 30 June 2024 was the current-year financial sustainability statement (audited ratios), current-year financial sustainability statement - contextual ratios (unaudited) and long-term financial sustainability statement.

My opinion on the financial report does not cover the other information and accordingly I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. However, as required by the Local Government Regulation 2012, I have formed a separate opinion on the current year financial sustainability statement.

In connection with my audit of the financial report, my responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial report and my knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this information, I am required to report that fact. I have nothing to report in this regard.

### **Responsibilities of the councillors for the financial report**

The councillors are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2009*, the Local Government Regulation 2012 and Australian Accounting Standards, and for such internal control as the councillors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

The councillors are also responsible for assessing the council's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless it is intended to abolish the council or to otherwise cease operations of the council.

### **Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial report**

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

A further description of my responsibilities for the audit of the financial report is located at the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board website at:

[https://www.auasb.gov.au/auditors\\_responsibilities/ar4.pdf](https://www.auasb.gov.au/auditors_responsibilities/ar4.pdf)

This description forms part of my auditor's report.

### **Report on other legal and regulatory requirements**

In accordance with s. 40 of the *Auditor-General Act 2009*, for the year ended 30 June 2024:

- a) I received all the information and explanations I required
- b) I consider that, the prescribed requirements in relation to the establishment and keeping of accounts were complied with in all material respects.

### **Prescribed requirements scope**

The prescribed requirements for the establishment and keeping of accounts are contained in the *Local Government Act 2009*, and the Local Government Regulation 2012. The applicable requirements include those for keeping financial records that correctly record and explain the council's transactions and account balances to enable the preparation of a true and fair financial report.

*Jacques Coetzee*

29 October 2024

Jacques Coetzee  
as delegate of the Auditor-General

Queensland Audit Office  
Brisbane



Somerset Regional Council  
Current-year Financial Sustainability Statement  
For the year ended 30 June 2024

Type	Measure	Target (Tier 4)	Actual Current Year	5-Year Average	Council Narrative
<b>Audited ratios</b>					
Liquidity	Unrestricted Cash Expense Cover Ratio	Greater than 4 months	4	16	Target achieved
Operating Performance	Operating Surplus Ratio	Greater than 0%	(8%)	(3%)	Target not achieved
Operating Performance	Operating Cash Ratio	Greater than 0%	8%	16%	Target achieved
Asset Management	Asset Sustainability Ratio	Greater than 80%	98%	104%	Target achieved
Asset Management	Asset Consumption Ratio	Greater than 60%	71%	67%	Target achieved
Debt Servicing Capacity	Leverage Ratio	0 to 3 times	N/A	N/A	N/A debt held

The current year financial sustainability statement is prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Regulation 2012 and the Financial Management (Sustainability) Guideline 2024. The amounts used to calculate the 6 reported measures are prepared on an accrual basis and are drawn from the Council's audited general purpose financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2024.

**Certificate of Accuracy**  
For the year ended 30 June 2024

This current-year financial sustainability statement has been prepared pursuant to Section 178 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012* (the regulation).

In accordance with Section 212(5) of the Regulation we certify that this current-year financial sustainability statement has been accurately calculated.

  
Cr Jason Wendt  
Mayor

Date:

24 October 2024

  
Andrew Johnson  
Chief Executive Officer

Date:

24 October 2024

## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Councillors of Somerset Regional Council

### Report on the Current-Year Financial Sustainability Statement

#### Opinion

I have audited the accompanying current-year financial sustainability statement of Somerset Regional Council for the year ended 30 June 2024, comprising the statement, explanatory notes, and the certificate of accuracy given by the Mayor and the Chief Executive Officer.

In accordance with s.212 of the Local Government Regulation 2012, in my opinion, in all material respects, the current-year financial sustainability statement of Somerset Regional Council for the year ended 30 June 2024 has been accurately calculated.

#### Basis of opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with the *Auditor-General Auditing Standards*, which incorporate the Australian Auditing Standards. My responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the current year financial sustainability statement* section of my report.

I am independent of the council in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including Independence Standards)* (the Code) that are relevant to my audit of the statement in Australia. I have also fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code and the *Auditor-General Auditing Standards*.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

#### Emphasis of matter – basis of accounting

I draw attention to the note which describes the basis of accounting. The current-year financial sustainability statement has been prepared in accordance with the Financial Management (Sustainability) Guideline 2024 for the purpose of fulfilling the council's reporting responsibilities under the Local Government Regulation 2012. As a result, the statement may not be suitable for another purpose. My opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

#### Other Information

The councillors are responsible for the other information.

The other information comprises the information included in the entity's annual report for the year ended 30 June 2024, but does not include the financial sustainability statement and our auditor's report thereon.

At the date of this auditor's report, the available other information in Somerset Regional Council's annual report for the year ended 30 June 2024 was the general-purpose financial statements, current-year financial sustainability statement - contextual ratios (unaudited) and the long-term financial sustainability statement.

My opinion on the current-year financial sustainability statement does not cover the other information and accordingly I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. However, as required by the Local Government Regulation 2012, I have formed a separate opinion on the general-purpose financial report.

In connection with my audit of the financial sustainability statement, my responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial sustainability statement and my knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement of this information, I am required to report that fact. I have nothing to report in this regard.

**Responsibilities of the councillors for the current year financial sustainability statement**

The councillors are responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the current-year financial sustainability statement in accordance with the Local Government Regulation 2012. The councillors responsibility also includes such internal control as the councillors determine is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of the statement that is accurately calculated and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

**Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the current year financial sustainability statement**

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the current-year financial sustainability statement as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this statement.

My responsibility does not extend to forming an opinion on the appropriateness or relevance of the reported ratios, nor on the council's future sustainability.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, I exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. I also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the statement, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the council's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of material accounting policy information used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the council.

I communicate with the council regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

*Jacques Coetzee*

29 October 2024

Jacques Coetzee  
as delegate of the Auditor-General

Queensland Audit Office  
Brisbane

Somerset Regional Council  
Current-year Financial Sustainability Statement - Contextual Ratios  
For the year ended 30 June 2024


Type	Measure	Target (Tier 4)	Actual Current Year	5-Year Average	Council Narrative
<b>Contextual ratios (unaudited)</b>					
Financial Capacity	Council-Controlled Revenue	No target set	39%	48%	No target set
Financial Capacity	Population Growth	No target set	2%	1%	No target set

The current year financial sustainability statement - Contextual Ratios is prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government Regulation 2012 and the Financial Management (Sustainability) Guideline 2024. The amounts used to calculate the 2 reported measures are prepared on an accrual basis and are drawn from the Council's audited general purpose financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2024 or from Australian Bureau of Statistics published population data.

Certificate of Accuracy  
For the year ended 30 June 2024

This current-year financial sustainability statement (contextual ratios) has been prepared pursuant to Section 178 of the Local Government Regulation 2012 (the regulation).

In accordance with Section 212(5) of the Regulation we certify that this current-year financial sustainability statement has been accurately calculated.

  
Cr Jason Wendi  
Mayor

  
Andrew Johnson  
Chief Executive Officer

Date: 24 October 2024

Date: 24 October 2024



Somerset Regional Council  
Long term financial sustainability statement  
Prepared in conjunction with the 2023/2024 financial statements

Measure	Council- Controlled Revenue	Population Growth	Asset Renewal Funding Ratio	Operating Surplus Ratio	Operating Cash Ratio	Unrestricted Cash Expense Cover Ratio	Asset Sustainability Ratio	Asset Consumption Ratio	Leverage Ratio
Target Year	N/A	N/A	N/A	Greater than 0%	Greater than 0%	Greater than 4 months	Greater than 80%	Greater than 60%	N/A
FY2025	67%	2%	N/A	(2%)	21%	10	172%	72%	N/A
FY2026	67%	1%	N/A	1%	24%	10	76%	72%	N/A
FY2027	67%	1%	N/A	1%	24%	10	38%	71%	N/A
FY2028	68%	1%	N/A	1%	24%	10	53%	71%	N/A
FY2029	68%	1%	N/A	1%	24%	9	61%	71%	N/A
FY2030	68%	1%	N/A	1%	24%	9	18%	70%	N/A
FY2031	68%	1%	N/A	1%	24%	9	36%	69%	N/A
FY2032	68%	1%	N/A	1%	24%	9	39%	69%	N/A
FY2033	68%	1%	N/A	1%	24%	8	12%	68%	N/A
FY2034	68%	1%	N/A	1%	24%	8	29%	67%	N/A

Council's financial management strategy comprises its budget, financial forecasts, investment policy, debt policy, procurement policy, revenue policy, revenue statement and its long-term asset management plan. The financial management strategy encompasses all the various actions that will result in the forecast measures of financial sustainability detailed above that were adopted by Council. Council's financial management strategy is consistent with its corporate plan and operational plan. Council's long term financial forecast demonstrates its financial sustainability by reference to the State Government's recommended targets.

Certificate of Accuracy  
For the long-term financial sustainability statement prepared as at 30 June 2024

This long-term financial sustainability statement has been prepared pursuant to Section 178 of the Local Government Regulation 2012 (the regulation). In accordance with Section 212(5) of the Regulation we certify that this long-term financial sustainability statement has been accurately calculated.

  
Cr Jason Wendt  
Mayor

  
Andrew Johnson  
Chief Executive Officer



For more information  
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