



PORT STEPHENS
COUNCIL

Six Month Progress Report

July to December 2024





GUUDJI YIIGU

(GOO-JEE IK-KOO)

We welcome you to Port Stephens – part of the Worimi Aboriginal Nation. Port Stephens Council acknowledges the Worimi people as traditional owners and custodians of the lands and waterways on which we all live, learn, work and play.

We value and respect the Worimi people and the legacy 60,000 years of Aboriginal Nation traditions and culture brings with it. As part of Council's culture of acceptance, diversification and harmony we walk alongside the Worimi people on a journey of listening and learning.

Together we will strive to make this a better place for all people. As guardians of these lands, we ask that you tread lightly to help preserve the biodiversity and respect those who came before as well as those who will follow.

Artwork by Regan Lilley.

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The six-month progress report from July to December 2024 has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Guidelines (September 2021) Essential Element 4.9. ‘The General Manager must ensure that progress reports are provided to the Council, with respect to the principal activities detailed in the Delivery Program, at least every six months.’

All financial figures included in this report are preliminary, unaudited and subject to review as part of the audited 2024-2025 financial statements for Council.



General Manager's message

As 2024 draws to a close, I'm proud to reflect on the progress we've achieved over the past six months towards our Delivery Program 2022-2026.

Welcoming new leadership

In September, we welcomed our new Mayor, Leah Anderson, along with our team of Councillors, which includes 5 newly elected members. Over the past few months, we've worked closely with the Councillors to understand their priorities and those of their communities. We've also guided them through an induction process to familiarise them with the core strategies and plans that drives Council's work.

Delivering on our key priorities

We've undertaken our second Liveability Index Survey, with over 2300 participants sharing with us what they value about their community and their priorities for their place. These insights will shape our future planning and strengthen our conversations with the community moving forward.

Housing continues to be a major focus as we work to bring more diverse and affordable homes to Port Stephens. We're proud to be recognised as the Council with the fastest development application assessment timeframes in the Hunter region. We've also launched a new development application education series to make it easier for developers and residents to submit and move through the development application process.

In addition, we hosted our annual Developer Forum, where we discussed the forecasted housing shortfall and explored innovative ways to achieve a diverse housing mix to meet current and future needs.

Local roads remain a top priority, with enhanced services funded by the Special Rate Variation and a number of significant State and Federal Grants allowing us to improve road safety and connections across the community. We know there is more to be done and we continue to work with our new Council on how we can improve and do more on our roads.

Connecting with our community

Over the past 6 months we've placed a strong emphasis on community education and connection. Our Waste education initiatives including Good for the Hood, Give a Sheet, and the Garage Trail Sale have supported efforts to reduce landfill waste. We've also run road safety programs in local schools to promote safer practices.

We hosted a well-attended Business Leader's Lunch focusing on accessibility and inclusion in the workplace. This event aligned with our Disability Inclusion Action Plan, adopted earlier in 2024, and highlights the importance of employing people with disabilities and creating inclusive spaces.

Supporting young people in Port Stephens has been another area of focus. Through partnerships with key stakeholders, we held a Community Connect Day to link young residents with essential services and facilitated a Youth Mapping Workshop for service providers in Raymond Terrace.

Recognition of great work

We're thrilled to celebrate the success of our Koala Sanctuary team again this year, who earned Silver in the prestigious 'Tourism Attraction' category at the NSW Tourism Awards. Their hard work and passion continue to put Port Stephens on the map as a destination for wildlife conservation and tourism.

I want to acknowledge and thank our dedicated team for their ongoing efforts in delivering projects and services that make a meaningful difference in our community. The highlights shared in this report are just a glimpse of the work delivered from July to December 2024. I encourage you to visit our website to learn more about our achievements and ongoing initiatives.



Tim Crosdale
General Manager of Port Stephens Council



Scorecard

Our six key result measures underpin everything we do at Port Stephens Council:



Service Delivery

Our target: >95% Integrated Plans delivered on time

Achievement: 100%

(As at 31 December 2024)



Community Satisfaction

Our target: A score of 2.94 out of 5* (45% satisfied)

Achievement: A score of 3.08 out of 5* (51% satisfied)

*overall satisfaction with Council's services

(Source: 2024 Community Satisfaction Survey)



Employee Wellbeing

Our target: >80% Employee Engagement

Achievement: 83%

(Source: 2024 Employee Engagement Survey)



Risk Management

Target: >85% Risk Management Maturity score

Achievement: 86%

(As at July 2024)



Financial Sustainability

Our target: Underlying financial result better than budget

Achievement: Anticipated \$1.093M

(Source: December 2024 Quarterly Budget Review)



Asset Management

Our target: 100% asset maintenance ratio

Achievement: 105%

(Source: 2023-2024 Annual Report)



ON TRACK: Operational Plan
Actions are on track to achieve the target



MONITOR: Operational Plan
Actions are within 5% of the target



OFF TRACK: Operational Plan
Actions are > 5% off the target



Six Monthly Report

Snapshot – July to December 2024



Libraries

860 new library members



Thrive Kids

58,500+ childcare places filled



Kids fishing workshops

100 participants



Beach and aquatic centres

511,000+ visits

Our Community

- Community Connect Day with the theme 'Where's Your Head At?' took place in Raymond Terrace.
- Youth Mapping Workshop for Raymond Terrace service providers, with ongoing collaboration to achieve priorities as part of convening the re-establishment of the Youth Interagency.
- We launched a new Mobile Printing Service 'Princh', which enables customers to send print jobs to any library in the world via their phone, tablet, laptop or PC.
- Stage 1 of the Yabang Gumba-Gu engagement report completed, with stage 2 stakeholder engagement now underway.



Transport infrastructure repairs

\$14.7 million



Housing development

Hosted the Developers Forum



DA approvals

Maintained the fastest DA approval timeframe in the region



Capital works projects

28 completed

Our Place

- Business leader's lunch was well attended with focus on business education and awareness around incorporating accessibility and inclusion measures in business, including employment of people with a disability.
- Shop local video developed with local, small business content, used for Christmas promotions.
- RFS bushfire preparedness engagement sessions across Nelson Bay, Salt Ash and Karuah.
- Received a green tick from the NSW Food Authority for Council's Business Inspection Program Annual Surveillance Activity during the 2024 financial year.



Weed treatment

352 hours spent on weed treatments

Coastal Management Plan

Received certification in November 2024

Reduced emissions

40% of ERAP actions in progress

Waste reduction

1 tonne of textiles reused with "Give a Sheet" drop off day

Our Environment

- Consultation for the revised Koala habitat mapping project is underway with key stakeholders, including the Council's Comprehensive Koala Plan of Management (CKPoM) Committee and creation of a Koala Habitat Project Advisory Group.
- We have commenced the implementation phase of the Emissions Reduction Action Plan (ERAP).
- We have seen a high uptake in waste education programs through Council visiting local schools.
- The Final Port Stephens Coastal Management Program received certification from the NSW Minister for Environment.



Financial result

Underlying financial result better than budget

Digital services

165,000+ website visits

Risk Management

86% Risk Management Maturity Score

Liveability

2,300 community members participated in our Liveability Survey

Our Council

- Election of a new mayor and Council.
- Council has continued to advocate for the community around the priorities identified in the Community Advocacy priorities document, tailored to the Federal election.
- The Newcastle Airport Pty Ltd Board has approved a terminal expansion program to undertake significant upgrades of the terminal and other infrastructure including international route expansion along with the current upgrades to the runway.
- The Port Stephens Koala Sanctuary was recognised with a Silver award in the Tourism Attraction category of the NSW Tourism Awards.

Delivery Program update

In this report, we use the icons below to indicate the status of our Operational Plan actions, which form part of the Delivery Program 2022 to 2026.

ON TRACK: Operational Plan Actions are on track to achieve the target



MONITOR: Operational Plan Actions are within 5% of the target



OFF TRACK: Operational Plan Actions are > 5% off the target







Our Community

An accessible and welcoming community respecting diversity, heritage and culture.





C1 Community wellbeing

Improved wellbeing for our diverse community supported by services and facilities

Delivery Program Activity	Operational Plan Action	Status
C1.1.1 Develop and implement the Community Wellbeing Strategy (CWS) to provide services and support for a diverse community	C1.1.1.1 Implement the Community Wellbeing Strategy	
C1.1.2 Implement and develop the Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) to encourage Port Stephens to be inclusive and access friendly	Refer C1.1.1.1	
C1.2.1 Provide a program of education and care services for families and carers of children	C1.2.1.1 Deliver early education and care for children	
C1.3.1 Provide a program of recreational, leisure and community services	C1.3.1.1 Initiate and manage contracts with recreational, leisure and community services	

C2 Recognised traditions and lifestyles

Our community supports the richness of its heritage and culture



Delivery Program Activity	Operational Plan Action	Status
C2.1.1 Implement the Yabang Gumba-Gu Agreement to recognise and support local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	C2.1.1.1 Implement the Yabang Gumba-Gu Agreement	
C2.2.1 Implement Our Incredible Place Strategy	C2.2.1.1 Implement actions of Our Incredible Place Strategy	
C2.3.1 Support the preservation of Port Stephens heritage	C2.3.1.1 Provide support for the preservation of Port Stephens heritage	
C2.4.1 Provide a program for public libraries as contemporary, accessible, vibrant and welcoming community spaces	C2.4.1.1 Deliver public library services, programs and resources	

Our Place

A liveable and connected place supporting community wellbeing and local economic growth





P1 Strong economy, vibrant local businesses, active investment

Our community has an adaptable, sustainable and diverse economy

Delivery Program Activity	Operational Plan Action	Status
P1.1.1 Implement the Economic Development Strategy	P1.1.1.1 Deliver Economic Development Strategy actions	
P1.1.2 Support Destination Port Stephens to attract sustainable visitation to Port Stephens	P1.1.2.1 Provide strategic and financial support to Destination Port Stephens	









P2 Infrastructure and facilities

Our community's infrastructure and facilities are safe, convenient, reliable and environmentally sustainable

Delivery Program Activity	Operational Plan Action	Status
P2.1.1 Provide, manage and maintain community assets in accordance with the SAMP 2024-2034	P2.1.1.1 Provide, manage and maintain community assets in accordance with the SAMP 2024-2034	
P2.1.2 Provide asset and engineering services to meet customer demand	P2.1.2.1 Provide asset and engineering services	
P2.1.3 Deliver the 4 year Public Infrastructure Program	P2.1.3.1 Implement Council's adopted annual capital works program	
P2.1.4 Deliver the program for maintenance of Council's assets	P2.1.4.1 Maintain Council's civil and community infrastructure	

P3 Thriving and safe place to live

Our community supports a healthy, happy and safe place



Delivery Program Activity	Operational Plan Action	Status
P3.1.1 Program to develop and implement Council's key planning documents	P3.1.1.1 Develop, implement and monitor land use plans and strategies	
P3.2.1 Deliver an annual program for Council to provide development services to enhance public safety, health and liveability	P3.2.1.1 Provide development services	
	P3.2.1.2 Provide compliance services	
	P3.2.1.3 Provide ranger services	
	P3.2.1.4 Provide environmental health services	
P3.3.1 Develop a strategic program for Place Plans	P3.3.1.1 Coordinate delivery of endorsed Place Plan actions	
P3.3.2 Provide the Community Financial Assistance Program	P3.3.2.1 Provide financial assistance for the community	
P3.4.1 Provide an emergency management framework that supports emergency services, other agencies and our community	P3.4.1.1 Deliver emergency management services, programs and resources	

Our Environment

Port Stephens environment is clean, green, protected and enhanced



E1 Ecosystem function

Our community has healthy and dynamic environmental systems that support biodiversity and conservation

Delivery Program Activity	Operational Plan Action	Status
E1.1.1 Develop and deliver a program for Council to implement environmental strategies and policies	E1.1.1.1 Develop and monitor environmental policies and strategies	
	E1.1.1.2 Provide environmental impact assessment services and a range of nature conservation, biosecurity and rehabilitation programs	


E2 Environmental sustainability

Our community uses resources sustainably, efficiently and equitably

Delivery Program Activity	Operational Plan Action	Status
E2.1.1 Develop and deliver a program for Council leading the way to a sustainable and climate positive future	E2.1.1.1 Adopt and implement a Carbon Neutral Action Plan (also known as the Emissions Reduction Action Plan)	
E2.2.1 Provide a Waste program to support the reduction of the community's environmental footprint	E2.2.1.1 Implement the Waste Management Strategy 2021- 2031	

E3 Environmental resilience

Our community is resilient to environmental risks, natural hazards and climate change













Delivery Program Activity	Operational Plan Action	Status
E3.1.1 Develop and deliver a program for Council to mitigate environmental risks associated with climate change and natural hazards	E3.1.1.1 Staged implementation of the Port Stephens Coastal Management Program (CMP) incorporating climate change risks	


Our Council

Port Stephens Council leads, manages and delivers valued community services in a responsible way

L1 Governance






Our Council's leadership is based on trust and values of Respect, Integrity, Teamwork, Excellence and Safety (RITES)

Delivery Program Activity	Operational Plan Action	Status
L1.1.1 Deliver the 4-year Workforce Management Strategy	L1.1.1.1 Implement the Workforce Management Strategy	
L1.2.1 Provide and implement strategic direction and governance of Council	L1.2.1.1 Coordinate and deliver Councillor and executive support services	
	L1.2.1.2 Conduct citizenship ceremonies	
	L1.2.1.3 Advocate for community priorities and work with other levels of government and stakeholders	
	L1.2.1.4 Develop shareholder value through an effective partnership with Newcastle Airport	
	L1.2.1.5 Work with Hunter Councils to enhance the Hunter Region	
L1.3.1 Deliver governance services and internal audit program	L1.3.1.1 Deliver governance and legal services and enterprise risk management	
	L1.3.1.2 Implement and coordinate the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC) requirements and internal audit process	
L1.3.2 Deliver the Integrated Planning and Excellence program	L1.3.2.1 Undertake a community satisfaction survey	
	L1.3.2.2 Implement the legislative requirements of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework	
L1.3.3 Deliver the 4-year program for Service Reviews	L1.3.3.1 Implement the annual service review program	
L1.3.4 Deliver the 4-year program for Corporate Systems and Data Management Strategy	L1.3.4.1 Implement annual actions of the Corporate Systems and Data Management Strategy	

L1.3.5 Deliver the Business Excellence Program	L.1.3.5.1 Deliver the Business Excellence Program	
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L2 Financial Management

Our Council is financially sustainable to meet community needs

Delivery Program Activity	Operational Plan Action	Status
L2.1.1 Manage implementation of the Long Term Financial Plan 2024 to 2034	L2.1.1.1 Manage implementation of Council's Long Term Financial Plan 2024 to 2034 and Annual Budget for 2024 to 2025 including Financial Sustainability Strategy and Roadmap	
	L2.1.1.2 Provide statutory reporting to the community and other government organisations	
	L2.1.1.3 Administer rates and charges in accordance with legislative requirements while also incorporating rates assistance provision for the community	
L2.1.2 Manage the property portfolio in accordance with the Property Investment Strategy	L2.1.2.1 Manage the property portfolio in accordance with the Strategic Property work plan	
L2.1.3 Implement the 2022 to 2025 Delivery Plans for Beachside Holiday Parks and Koala Sanctuary	L2.1.3.1 Implement the annual actions of the Beachside Holiday Parks and Koala Sanctuary Operational Plan	

L3 Communication and engagement

Our Council is committed to enabling an engaged and informed community

Delivery Program Activity	Operational Plan Action	Status
L3.1.1 Deliver the 4-year Customer Experience Roadmap and action plan	L3.1.1.1 Develop, implement and monitor Council's Customer Experience Roadmap and Action Plan	
L3.2.1 Deliver the 4-year program for the Communication and Engagement Strategy	L3.2.1.1 Manage Council's communications and community engagement activities	



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