

Six Month Progress Report

July to December 2025



GUUDJI YIIGU

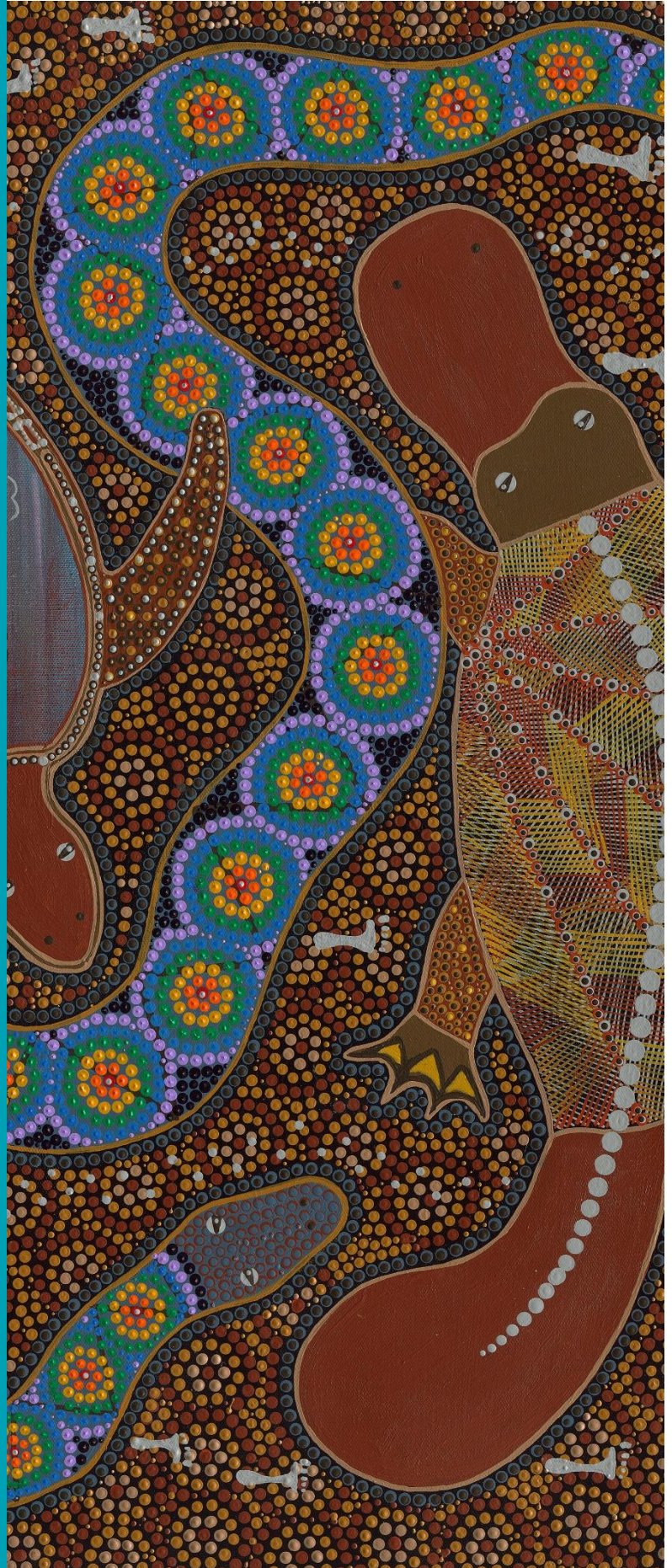
(GOO-JEE IK-KOO)

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 2025 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 2025-2026 financial statements for Council.



General Manager's message

During the second half of 2025, our commitment to delivering sustainable infrastructure and housing for our growing community has continued to be a priority. While the year was not without weather challenges, the past six months have allowed us to move from crisis response to proactive planning and service delivery following the natural disasters earlier in the year. This period of relative stability has enabled us to accelerate major projects while maintaining the direct community engagement that is central to everything we do.

Our commitment to roads remains a top priority. Through the record \$29 million Roads Acceleration Program (RAP), we've successfully completed pavement rehabilitation of Medowie Road and Clarence Town Road, significantly improving safety and drainage for local commuters. In December, we commenced developing a Roads Futures Strategy to ensure our road management is efficient, transparent, and aligned with community expectations. This review includes analysing and using data collected from a current pothole repair trial on high-traffic routes, aimed at identifying appropriate long lasting repair options. Beyond these local works, we continue to advocate for the reclassification of major regional routes to secure permanent state and federal funding to restore roads damaged by the 2025 natural disasters.

We have made significant strategic growth and sustainable development progress in the latter half of 2025. Council officially endorsed the Salamander Bay Town Centre Place Plan, guiding the balance of new housing and commercial opportunities with the protection of our natural assets, such as the Mambo Wetlands. We progressed the future of Medowie town centre by launching the draft Medowie Town Centre Masterplan for public exhibition, an important step toward creating a vibrant, modern and welcoming heart for Medowie. We also welcomed global opportunities provided by the new international terminal at Newcastle Airport, delivering a boost to our local economy and forecast to inject substantial investment over the coming decades and creating thousands of jobs.

Throughout this busy period, fostering community connections has remained a core pillar of our work. Between July and December 2025, we delivered a range of programs, including a month-long NAIDOC Week celebration and our vibrant "It's On!" festive program, which culminated in New Year's Eve fireworks at Nelson Bay. We also continued to invest in the next generation by launching the 2025 to 2026 Community Funding Program, offering over \$450,000 in grants and scholarships to support local talent.

I want to thank our staff and the community for their support during this productive six-month period as we work together to ensure Port Stephens remains a place where our community thrives.

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 December 2025)



Community satisfaction

Our target: A score of 2.94 out of 5*
Achievement: A score of 3.01 out of 5*
*Overall satisfaction with Council's services
(Source: 2025 Community Satisfaction Survey)



Employee wellbeing

Our target: >80% Employee Engagement
Achievement: 81%
(Source: 2025 Employee Engagement Survey)



Risk management

Target: >85% Risk Management Maturity score
Achievement: 86%
(As at June 2025)



Financial sustainability

Our target: Underlying financial result better than budget
Achievement: Anticipated \$1.322M
(Source: December 2025 Quarterly Budget Review)



Asset management

Our target: 100% asset maintenance ratio
Achievement: 108.24%
(Source: 2024-2025 Annual Report)



ON TRACK: On track to achieve the target



MONITOR: Within 5% of the target



OFF TRACK: > 5% off the target



Snapshot – July to December 2025



Our community

- **Customer Experience Live Chat** – We’ve launched Webchat to the community, giving our customers another convenient way to connect with us online.
- Launched **The Place Is Yours***, a youth-led project which aims to empower young people to shape their community, build new skills and foster a sense of pride in their community through a series of workshops, training and projects.
- With a review underway, over 200 responses were received via the Join the Conversation campaign for **Our Incredible Place Strategy**. The data will be incorporated into the 2026 to 2031 plan for supporting events, arts and culture within the community.
- Over \$450,000 across various grants and scholarships has been released under the 2025 to 2026 Port Stephens **Community Funding Program** offering financial support to community groups, event organisers, athletes, businesses and schools.

* Supported by Federal and State Government funding.



Activations

222
events held



Beach visits

375,000+ visits to
One Mile, Birubi and
Fingal Bay



Childcare places

54,000+ childcare
places filled



Library programs

384 programs

Our place

- We’ve rolled out educational content on road maintenance, following our **Roads Acceleration Program Communications Plan** being shared with the Communication and Engagement Advisory Group (CEAG) early last month.
- Following the recent Natural Disasters – Council has supported the community by compiling our largest ever **disaster claim** (>\$40M) evidence package.
- **24/25 Local Housing Strategy Annual Report** – 50% of the planned actions have been completed or are currently underway. We remain the Council with the fastest approvals in the Hunter region with an average of 49 days, and have approved over 660 houses, including a new social and affordable housing development in Raymond Terrace.
- **Place Plans** – Council adopted the Tilligerry Place Plan and Salamander Bay Place Plan in August and November 2025 following broad community engagement and will now progress to implementation planning.



DA approvals

396



Roads expenditure

\$19.7 million



Capital Works in progress

4 projects



Capital Works completed

9 projects



Our environment

- **Koala Habitat Mapping** – Over 200 drone and detection dog surveys completed across the LGA with over 75% participation from landholders volunteers. Data will support the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEE) preparing an updated Koala habitat map, expected June 2026.
- **Coastal Management Program (CMP)** – commencement of Stage 2 Shoal Bay Sand Nourishing Works and expected completion of Corlette Sand Nourishment Works project in 2026 (Special Rate Variation Funding).
- **Culturally Informed Cool Burns** – The final year of Culturally Informed Cool Burns was delivered with Worimi LALC on Worimi lands in September, funded under the Council's Environmental Trust Grant. These final burns mark the completion of the 3-year Cultural Burning grant project.
- Over two weekends in November, residents participated in the **Port Stephens Garage Sale Trail**, resulting in 162 garage sales, 1351 participants across the region and 36,008 items listed for reuse sale.



Bush regenerated
10.8 hectares



Bin collections
1.8 million bin lifts



Weed treatment
690 hours of treatments



Waste diversion
36,000+ reuse items listed for sale

Our Council

- The **International Terminal at Newcastle Airport** – opened in September with the first flights to Bali taking off in October. Domestic flights have also increased with flights to Perth and Hobart now on offer.
- The endorsement of the **Salamander Town Centre Place Plan** in November 2025 further supports Council's approach to Property Investment and Development delivering housing stock, income generating opportunities and investment in our community.
- Continued implementation of **Financial Sustainability Strategies** contribute to Council's key priorities (roads, drainage, footpaths, housing and environment).
- **Community Catch Ups** were held to provide the opportunity to chat with local Councillors and Council Staff. In addition to our Community Catch Ups, Mayor Leah Anderson held multiple **Monthly Mayor Meetups**.



International flights
Now operational



New citizens
42 conferees from 17 countries



Financial result
Anticipated underlying financial result better than budget



Community Catch Ups
3 with Councillors
10 with Mayor

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 2025 to 2029.

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, welcoming and connected community respecting diversity, traditions and culture



C1 Community wellbeing

Our community feels connected, included, supported and has access to services and facilities to support their wellbeing

Delivery Program Activity	Operational Plan Action	Status
C1.1.1 Implement the Community Wellbeing Strategy (CWS) to provide services and support for a diverse community	C1.1.1.1 Implement the actions of the Community Wellbeing Strategy	
C1.1.2 Develop and implement the Disability Inclusion Action Plan to encourage Port Stephens to be inclusive and access friendly	Refer to C1.1.1.1	
C1.2.1 Deliver 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 Deliver and manage community recreational, leisure and community facilities	C1.3.1.1 Initiate and manage recreational, leisure and community services	
C1.4.1 Deliver a program for public libraries as contemporary, accessible, vibrant and welcoming community spaces	C1.4.1.1 Deliver public library services, programs and resources	
C1.5.1 Refer to C1.4.1 and E1.1.1		




C2 Traditions & culture

Our community supports the richness of its traditions and culture

Delivery Program Activity	Operational Plan Action	Status
C2.1.1 Deliver the Yabang Gumba-Gu Agreement to recognise and support local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	C2.1.1.1 Implement actions of the Yabang Gumba-Gu Agreement	
C2.2.1 Implement the Events, Arts and Culture Strategy	C2.2.1.1 Implement actions of the Events, Arts and Culture Strategy	

C3 Connecting with community

Our Council is committed to enabling an engaged and informed community







Delivery Program Activity	Operational Plan Action	Status
C3.1.1 Deliver the 4-year Customer Experience Roadmap and Action plan	C3.1.1.1 Develop, implement and monitor Council's Customer Experience Roadmap and Action Plan	
C3.2.1 Implement the Communication and Engagement Strategy	C3.2.1.1 Deliver Council's communications and community engagement activities	
	C3.2.1.2 Council will continue to advocate and engage with Department of Communities and Justice, as the owners of the Tomaree Headland site, to find suitable short, medium and long-term options for the site.	

Our place

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




P1 Housing, tourism & economy


Our community has adaptable, sustainable and diverse housing, tourism and economy

Delivery Program Activity	Operational Plan Action	Status
P1.1.1 Implement the Economic Development Strategy, including ongoing support for sustainable tourism	P1.1.1.1 Implement actions of the Economic Development Strategy	
P1.1.2 Develop and implement Beachside Holiday Parks and Koala Sanctuary Business Plans	P1.1.2.1 Implement the annual actions of the Beachside Holiday Parks and Koala Sanctuary Operational Plan	
P1.2.1 Develop and implement Council's key planning documents	P1.2.1.1 Develop, implement and monitor land use plans and strategies	
P1.2.2 Implement the Local Housing Strategy, focusing on housing diversity, affordability and supply for our community	P1.2.2.1 Implement the actions of the Local Housing Strategy	
P1.3.1 Develop an annual program for Council to provide development services to enhance liveability	P1.3.1.1 Deliver the annual program of development services	
P1.4.1 Develop shareholder value through an effective partnership with Newcastle Airport	P1.4.1.1 Develop shareholder value through an effective partnership with Newcastle Airport	

P2 Infrastructure, facilities & connections



Our community's infrastructure, facilities and connections are safe, convenient, reliable and adequately resourced

Delivery Program Activity	Operational Plan Action	Status
P2.1.1 Deliver, manage and maintain community and property assets in accordance with the Strategic Asset Management Plan 2025-2035 (SAMP)	P2.1.1.1 Deliver, manage and maintain community and property assets in accordance with the SAMP 2025-2035	
P2.1.2 Deliver asset and engineering services to meet customer demand	P2.1.2.1 Deliver 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	
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P3 Community safety

Our community feels safe and resilient




Delivery Program Activity	Operational Plan Action	Status
P3.1.1 Develop an annual program for Council to provide compliance services to enhance public safety and health	P3.1.1.1 Deliver the annual program of compliance services	
P3.2.1 Deliver an emergency management framework that supports emergency services, other agencies and our community	P3.2.1.1 Deliver emergency management services, programs and resources	

Our environment

Port Stephen’s environment is protected, enhanced, sustainable and resilient



E1 Environmental balance

Our community’s natural and built environment supports biodiversity conservation, and is sustainably balanced and resilient to environmental risks, natural hazards and climate change

Delivery Program Activity	Operational Plan Action	Status
E1.1.1 Develop and implement a program for Council to deliver technical environmental advice, strategies and policies	E1.1.1.1 Develop and monitor environmental policies and strategies	
	E1.1.1.2 Deliver technical environmental advice, and impact assessment services	
E1.2.1 Develop and implement a program for Council to mitigate environmental risks associated with climate change and natural hazards	E1.2.1.1 Implement actions in the Port Stephens Coastal Management Program (CMP)	

E2 Environmental sustainability

Our community uses resources sustainably, efficiently and equitably


Delivery Program Activity	Operational Plan Action	Status
E2.1.1 Develop and implement a program for Council to lead the way to a sustainable and climate positive future	E2.1.1.1 Implement actions in the Emissions Reduction Action Plan	
E2.2.1 Deliver a Waste program to support the reduction of the community's environmental footprint whilst providing efficient services	E2.2.1.1 Implement the Waste Management Strategy 2021-2031	



Our Council

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

L1 Resources & finance

Our Council is resourced, financially sustainable and advocates to meet community needs

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 Develop and implement strategic direction and governance of Council	L1.2.1.1 Coordinate and deliver Councillor and executive support services	
	L1.2.1.2 Advocate for community priorities and work with other levels of government and stakeholders	
	L1.2.1.3 Work with Hunter Councils to enhance the Hunter Region	
L1.3.1 Deliver Governance Services and internal audit program	L1.3.1.1 Implement governance and legal services and enterprise risk management framework	
	L1.3.1.2 Implement and coordinate the Audit Risk and Improvement Committee (ARIC) requirements and internal audit processes	
L1.3.2 Deliver the Integrated Planning and Reporting program	L1.3.2.1 Deliver the legislative requirements of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework	
	L1.3.2.2 Complete the Community Satisfaction Survey	
L1.3.3 Deliver the 4-year program for Service Reviews and Continuous Improvement Strategy	L1.3.3.1 Implement the annual Service Review program and actions of the Continuous Improvement Strategy	
L1.4.1 Implement the 3-year Digital Strategy and Roadmap	L1.4.1.1 Implement annual actions from the Digital Strategy and Roadmap	

L1.5.1 Implement the Long-Term Financial Plan 2025 to 2035	L1.5.1.1 Implement Council's Long-Term Financial Plan 2025 to 2035 and Annual Budget for 2025 to 2026 including Financial Sustainability Strategy and Roadmap	
L1.5.2 Implement the Property Investment Strategy	L1.5.2.1 Implement actions and projects in the Property Investment Strategy	



PORT STEPHENS
COUNCIL